Changes in Official Language Policies and the Trajectories of Nation Building in Post-Soviet Republics

by

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Changes in Official Language Policies and the Trajectories of Nation Building in Post-Soviet Republics

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To my family

ABSTRACT

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Only a handful of currently spoken languages receive some form of legal recognition in state institutions around the world. Such recognition, which may or may not reflect sociolinguistic reality, is predicated on a complex constellation of factors. A symbolic link between languages and group identities and its implications for nation-building feature prominently among them. On the one hand, this makes official language policy choices highly contestable. On the other, once adopted, such policy choices remain "sticky" and difficult to change. What conditions then make official language policy change possible? This dissertation elaborates on the necessary combination of factors that affect the direction and timing of such policy changes.

The design of the research is based on the combination of cross-country and within-case historical comparison, which explains the changes of official language policies or the lack thereof by addressing the empirical puzzle of policy divergence in three post-Soviet republics: Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia. These three countries chose similar official language policies at the time of obtaining independence, and two of them (Belarus and Latvia) changed their policies during the first decade of independent nation-building.

The findings of the research indicate that changes in official language policies take place when realignments within elite groups dramatically altered policy-relevant resources of different language policy advocacy coalitions. The findings also demonstrate the constraining effects of the dominant discourse on nationhood and understanding of nation on elite preferences and feasible policy options.

Keywords: language policy, nation building, policy change, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia.

ÖZETÇE

Sovyet sonrası Cumhuriyetlerde Resmi Dil Politikalarının Değişimi

ve Ulus İnşasının Gidişatı

Yury Katliarou

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Dünyada kullanılan binlerce lisan arasında devlet kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından tanınmaya layık görülen dillerin sayısı oldukça azdır. Bir dilin devlet tarafından tanınması, toplumsal-dilsel gerçeği doğrudan yansıtmaksızın çeşitli unsurlara dayanarak gerçekleşir.

Dil ve grup kimlikleri arasında oluşan simgesel bağ ve böyle bir bağın ulus inşa sürecine etkisi, bu unsurlar arasında önemli bir yer tutar. Bir yandan bu durum, olası resmi dil politikalarını hassas, çelişkili ve tartışmalı bir politika kategorisine taşırken; öte yandan tartışma sonucu kabul edilen bir resmi dil politikası değişime direnç gösterme niteliğini de kazanır.

Bu durumda resmi dil politikası hangi koşullarda değişebilir? Bu doktora tezi, böyle bir değişimin zamanlama ve doğrultusunu etkileyen unsurların birleşimini incelemektedir. Araştırma, ampirik bilmeceyi oluşturan Belarus, Ukrayna ve Letonya vaka ülkeleri arasında ve her ülke içinde ayrı zamansal karşılaştırma biçiminde tasarlanmıştır. Bu üç komşu eski Sovyet ülkesi, ilk başta benzer resmi dil politikalarını seçtikten sonra politikalarda değişim konusunda hızla farklılık göstermeye başlamıştır. Bağımsız ulus inşasının onuncu yıldönümü sonrası Ukrayna'da eski dil politikası hala yürürlükteyken Belarus ve Letonya ise kendi politikalarını ters doğrultuda yenilemişlerdir.

Araştırmanın bulgularına göre resmi dil politikasının değişimi, seçkin grupları arasındaki güç paylaşımında dengenin bozulup yeniden oluşmasından kaynaklanan, desteklenen dil politikası bağlamında birleşen müdafaa koalisyonunun güçlenmesi ile meydana gelmektedir. Buna ek olarak ulus inşa sürecini ve ulusal kimliği tanımlayan egemen söylem, seçkinlerin politika tercihleri ve muhtemel politika seçenekleri üzerinde şekillendirici ve sınırlandırıcı bir etki göstermektedir

Anahtar kelimeleri: dil politikası, ulus inşası, politika değişimi, Belarus, Ukrayna, Letonya.

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Istanbul, March 2023

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Linguistic diversity observed in the world is truly stunning. More than seven thousand languages are spoken today;[1] and this number can hardly be fixed or finalized since new language are constantly discovered, while many others disappear. The linguistic map of the world is not only extremely rich but also dramatically unequal. The speakers of twenty-three languages make up more the half of the Earth's population, whereas one third of languages are associated with less than one thousand speakers.[2]

A living language is not just "a communicative system composed of arbitrary elements which possess an agreed-upon significance within a community."[3] Languages are symbolically loaded and often treated as values of their own, worth nurturing and protection from various threats. The perception of a natural bond between a language and its speech community and the power of language to foster collective identities make language dimension an integral component of identity politics.[4] People are ready to engage in collective action and, if necessary, even take up arms or sacrifice their lives in the name of "their" language.

Inequality between languages is not just numerical, but also legal and political. There are many more languages in the world than independent states or autonomous political units and very few languages are privileged enough to be officially attached to a political entity of their own. More than half of the world's countries have codified this attachment legally: "about 125 of the world's constitutions mention language, and about 100 of them name one or more official or national languages with special privileges of use."[5] Others have established this connection more subtly through a variety of language requirements and language choices in multiple domains, such as using a specific language for public education, official communication, office work, publishing legislation and official

[1] "How many languages are there in the world?" Ethnologue. Languages of the World, https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages/.
[2] Ethnologue. Languages of the World.
[3] John Edwards, *Language and Identity: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53.
[4] Ronald Schmidt, "Political Theory and Language Policy," in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. Thomas Ricento (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 95-110.
[5] Bernard Spolsky, *Language Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8.

documents, or requiring proficiency in certain languages as precondition for immigration or naturalization.

As of 2015, there were 74 countries with population more than 200 thousand that, in one way or another, recognized multiple languages as official, as opposed to 100 countries with a single official language. While a handful of countries recognized more than ten different official languages, many others shared same official language or languages, English, Spanish, French and Arabic being the most common such shared languages. Consequently, there were approximately 250 unique languages recognized as official at either regional or national level. This number constitutes only an extremely small share - around three per cent - of the total number of the world's living languages, which highlights how rare and exceptional it is for a language to enjoy official recognition by the state.

The process of policy selection is never neutral, since the recognition of the status of one or multiple languages elevates them above all others that remain unrecognized. Official language policies reflect and reinforce power relations and power hierarchies between speech varieties and those communities who are associated with them. In this respect, language policy is similar to other public policies of a state. For example, welfare policies reflect and reinforce both dominant perceptions about the nature of economic relations and actual power relations between socioeconomic groups. Language policies, together with policies on race and citizenship, are the cornerstones of identity politics and of power relations between identity groups in a given state and are deeply imbedded in the prevailing understanding of national identity.

Language policies allocate material and non-material benefits and burdens to various strata of society, similarly to public policies that target other policy domains. However, unlike other policies, language policies are not as precise and selective. They engage with very large and loosely defined groups, which often amount to the country's total population. All the speakers of an officially recognized language at least in principle can enjoy access to all state-provided facilities in their language. On the contrary, the speakers of other languages have to invest additional time and resources to master the official language to access them. At the group level, the state takes responsibility for the development of institutions related to the management and maintenance of the recognized language. The speakers of languages

without official recognition must bear the costs of such activities. Official language policies may even inflict outward punishments on the speakers of non-recognized languages in the form of fines for using those languages in public.

Perhaps equally importantly, language policies provide symbolic benefits for the speakers of an officially recognized language by linking the associated language to the state and thus strengthening claims for the dominance of its speakers in the political system. Language policies indicate whose linguistic identity is recognized, promoted, and entrenched in institutions and whose linguistic identity is neglected, discouraged or stigmatized by the state.

In many instances, material and non-material implications of language policy choices are so intermingled that they can be treated only as a complex and mutually reinforcing whole. People continue to struggle for their preferred vision of language policy even when many material incentives are not in place anymore. The last monolingual Welsh-speaking communities had already diluted within the majority of English speakers by the middle of the 20th century and less than one fifth of adult population was recorded as being able to speak the languages in the 1961 census.[6] Nevertheless, a political struggle for the greater recognition of the Welsh language and move towards official bilingualism in Wales has been most active and enjoyed the greatest public support precisely since the second half of the 20th century. One episode of language policy contestation took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[7] In 1979, the newly elected conservative government of the United Kingdom decided to put a hold on the launching of a Welsh-language television channel S4C. This decision sparked the largest public protests in the history of post-war Wales. On May 5, 1980, Gwynfor Evans, the former leader of Plaid Cymru, a nationalist Welsh political party, announced a hunger strike. Eventually, S4C was launched on November 1, 1982.

This episode from the history of official language policy change in Wales is illustrative. It clearly demonstrates that language policies can be the target of very strong emotional

[6] Kenneth O. Morgan, "Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background," *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, no. 1 (1971): 171.
[7] Colin H. Williams, "The Celtic World," in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 267-285.

attachments; that disagreements about the policy outlook can mobilize not only selected politicians but also wider population; and finally, that official language policy revision can be highly conflictual.

1.1 When and Why Do Language Polices Change?

The primary goal of this dissertation is to explain the changes of official language policies or the lack of such changes. In some cases, official language(s) that were chosen at the time of obtaining statehood change in the following years of independent nation building. In other cases, the initially chosen official language policies remain virtually intact. This dissertation elaborates on the necessary combination of factors that affect the direction and timing of such policy changes.

The assessment of this variation provides theoretical and analytical contributions to the understanding of the language policy change – an issue that is significantly underexplored and undertheorized from a comparative perspective. Major literature on language policy and planning is mostly insulated from the theoretical discussion on policy process and policy change that has developed in economics, policy studies, sociology, and political science. This dissertation links the topic of official language policy to the general discussion on policy process through the comparative evaluation of both geographically (former Soviet republics) and thematically (language policy) novel cases.

Owing to the paramount significance of language-related issues to the formation and transformation of nation state and national identity, official language policies bear a crucial importance as symbolic reflection of more general politics of nation building. A change in an official language policy, such as the adoption of official multilingualism, monolingualism, or other combinations of the ways, in which different languages are granted with respective statuses, should be evaluated as probably the most fundamental marker that indicates the transformation of the definition of nationhood in this country. Therefore, another contribution of this works rests in addressing this gap by bridging the change in official language policies with the underlying transformation of the prevailing discourses of nationhood.

Fourteen post-Soviet republics[8] represent an excellent empirical field for the exploration of the underlying factors that account not only for initial selection but also for the transformation of official language policies. Post-Soviet countries can be approached as a "natural laboratory" for research on official language policy, since they make up a relatively small universe of cases, whose important characteristics resemble the ones of the natural experiment type of research design. In the post-Soviet context, this transformation has also been taking place against the background of more general efforts to shape the direction and content of independent nation building.

Language planning and management has remained a salient political issue in multiple parts of Eurasia ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991.[9] The most dramatic example of the continuing relevance of language question for the region is that a proposed amendment in the Ukrainian legislation on languages was an important triggering event for Russia's annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014.[10] Therefore, research on the past and present of language policies in post-Soviet countries is relevant for the field of area studies and its findings contribute to a better understanding of the political and social dynamics of the region.

There is no doubt that the Soviet experience should be treated as substantially different in its form and policies from the classical colonialisms of the Western imperial powers. However, at least in cultural terms, the legacy of the Soviet period in post-Soviet republics is similar to the situation of post-colonial societies. In terms of language, natural economic and administrative need for *a lingua franca* and the promotion of Russian as the "second mother tongue" produced a large number of assimilated and non-assimilated bilinguals and conditioned almost a universal decline in the use of other languages in the Soviet Union. The period following the collapse of the Soviet Union involved attempts at creating and then transforming official language policies, which unfolded concurrently with the search for a renewed meaning and content of nation-building projects in post-Soviet republics. The

[8] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

[9] Examples include multiple changes of official scripts (Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and discussions about such changes (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Tatarstan), language (re)standardization and de-Sovietization (to various degrees in all republics), toleration or suppression of the rights of linguistic minorities (likewise in all republics with a possible exception of Armenia).

[10] John Biersack and Shannon O'Lear, "The geopolitics of Russia's annexation of Crimea: narratives, identity, silences, and energy," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no 3 (2014): 249.

choice of official language polices had to address the issues of the promotion of titular languages as the cornerstones of independent nation building, while confronting almost universal command and widespread use of the Russian language among the population. Therefore, post-Soviet experience in language policy choices is not unique, despite its peculiar characteristics, and it can be linked to the broader post-colonial experiences in language policy and planning.

All cases in the universe share the common legacy of Soviet policies on ethnicity and nationhood, its language policies and practices. All the cases, albeit to varying degrees, had been exposed to the growing dominance of Russian as *de facto* all-Union official language, which was promoted in multiple public domains, such as education, administration, official communication, media, military and alike. The concerns about the future of national languages, fears of linguistic assimilation and responses to these fears and concerns by elites in titular republics involved pronounced demonstration effects and a significant degree of mutual learning in terms of policy creation. These effects are reflected in the timing and wording of various language laws adopted by the Soviet republics during the period of national awakening shortly before the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic was the first to adopt such a law in January 1989. The law made Estonian the sole official language of the republic. It, however, included a specific reference to Russian as the language of communication with other Soviet republics and mother tongue of significant portion of the population of Estonia.[11] Other republics quickly followed suit with the Turkmen SSR being the last in May 1990.[12] For many of them it did not take long to engage in the revision of the initial language legislation and reconsideration of official language policies.

Among the fourteen post-Soviet republics, three are particularly suitable for such an inquiry into the subsequent language policy change – Belarus, Latvia, and Ukraine. All three countries started with essentially similar language formulae, combining aspirations for the

[11] Zakon Estonskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1989, http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Estonia/Estonia_Language1989_Russian.htm/.
[12] Zakon Turkmenskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1990, http://medialaw.asia/document/-349/.

promotion of the titular language as official language[13], while keeping Russian as the language of "interethnic communication". In these three countries, language legislation was adopted in the form of language laws prior to the first competitive elections to local supreme councils, held in 1990, and prior to the subsequent achievement of independence. During the first decade of independence, the original common template of "national language plus a language of interethnic communication" was revised in the two of them. Latvia quickly rejected the original template with the amendment of the language law in 1992, which dropped any references to the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication.[14] Belarus rejected the original template as well but moved in an opposite direction than Latvia by granting Russian the status of an official language in the 1995 referendum.[15] In Ukraine, there was no alteration of the status of Russian language throughout the 1990s.[16] Consequently, this dissertation examines the divergence of official language policies of these three post-Soviet republics. In doing so I focus my attention on the types of policy change, actors that were involved in this process, varieties of materteral and non-material resources they utilized, and discursive practices they employed.

1.2 Language Policy, Official Language, Monolingual and Bilingual Language Policies

A major terminological confusion may arise from the fact that language policy and planning can refer either to the field of inquiry or to a range of phenomena observed in the empirical world. Wright describes language policy and planning as the discipline that "enquires into all aspects of the language arrangements of all human societies."[17] She also provides an implicit definition of language planning as the ways in which political leaders

[13] In fact, a more accurate translation of this term from all three languages is *state language* (*дзяржаўная мова* in Belarusian, *державна мова* in Ukrainian; *valsts valoda* in Latvian). In English-language academic sources, the term *official language* is used to describe a corresponding language status elsewhere. Therefore, this work uses terms *official language* and *state language* interchangeably, unless further clarifications are provided in specific situations.
[14] Frank Knowles, "Ethno-Linguistic Relations in Contemporary Latvia: Mirror Image of the Previous Dispensation?" *Current Issues in Language and Society* 6, no. 1 (1999): 48-56.
[15] Alexandra Goujon, "Language, Nationalism, and Populism in Belarus," *Nationalities Papers* 27, no. 4 (1999): 661-677.
[16] Daniel Beauvois, "Linguistic Acculturations and Reconstructions in the ULB Group (Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus)" in *Language, Nation and State Identity Politics in a Multilingual Age*, eds. Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 201-213.
[17] Sue Wright, *Language Policy and Language Planning: From Nationalism to Globalisation* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 15.

intervene in the language choices and behavior of their citizens, which are grouped into status, corpus and acquisition planning activities.[18] Even though discussions on language policy most often focus on politicians and state officials, the concept itself should not be restricted to public policies alone. International organizations, private companies and individual families can develop and implement their own language polices.[19] Spolski distinguishes three components of the language policy of a speech community: "its language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning, or management."[20] This dissertation uses a narrower definition of language policy that excludes language beliefs, ideologies and language practices. They are subsumed under a more general category of language regime – "language practices as well as conceptions of language and language use as projected through state policies and acted upon by language users."[21] Therefore, a language policy is "a policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language."[22] This definition is sufficiently broad, because it encompasses subjects and activities that are commonly associated with language policy and planning; but it does not limit the range of policy actors to state officials.

In practice, this dissertation engages with the output of public policy process - language policies that are explicitly codified in legal documents. The concept of official language policy, employed throughout the text of the dissertation, stands for policy mechanisms that impact the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language and are defined, legally codified and implemented by state. The typology of language functions, proposed by Stewart in 1962, includes the earliest definition of the official language as "the legally

[18] Wright, *Language Policy,* 47-48.
[19] Spolsky, *Language Policy*, 40.
[20] Spolsky, *Language Policy*, 5.
[21] Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal "State Traditions and Language Regimes: Conceptualizing Language Policy Choices," in *State Traditions and Language Regimes*, eds. Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal (Montreal: MgGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 6.
[22] David Cassels Johnson, *Language Policy* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.

appropriate one for all politically and culturally representative purposes."[23] Such legally entitled purposes will commonly include use in administration, official communication and public education.

I propose the following judicial[24] typology of official language policies for the purposes of the research: monolingual official language policy; monolingual official language policy with recognized minority languages; bilingual (multilingual) official language policy; bilingual (multilingual) official language policy with a hierarchy of recognized languages. Monolingual official language policy is a language policy that recognizes a single language as official within a polity's boundaries. Monolingual official language policy with recognized minority languages is a language policy that remains officially monolingual but provides legal guarantees for the use of certain minority languages.[25] Bilingual (multilingual) official language policy is a language policy that recognizes multiple co-official languages. Bilingual (multilingual) official language policy with a hierarchy of recognized languages is a language policy that recognizes multiple official languages but grants them unequal statuses. The status of a particular language may be inferior in geographic terms (regional official language) or in terms of symbolic primacy (working language as opposed to national language). A number of post-colonial nations employ such a symbolic differentiation. For example, the constitution of Kenya states that: "(1) the national language of the Republic is Kiswahili. (2) The official languages of the Republic are Kiswahili and English."[26] The Irish constitution states that: "The Irish language as the national language is the first official language. The English language is recognized as a second official language."[27]

Other concepts may require additional clarification, when Soviet and post-Soviet language-related issues and policies are discussed. The first is the notion of mother tongue, or native

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[23] William A. Stewart, "An Outline of Linguistic Typology for Describing Multilingualism," in *Study of the Role of Second Languages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*, ed. Frank A. Rice (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics of the Modern Language Association of America, 1962), 20.
[24] This typology should not be conflated with typologies that engage with the variety of sociolinguistic situations in different countries, i.e., the use of different languages by population.
[25] Spolsky aptly labels such polices as "'monolingual but . . ."
[26] Constitution of Kenya, 2010, http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xql?actid=Const2010/.
[27] Constitution of Ireland, 2015, https://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/The_Constitution/Bunreacht_na_h%C3%89ireann_October_2015_Edition.pdf/.

language - "the language which a person acquires in early childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of the country where he or she is living."[28] In other words, it is a language (or multiple language in the cases of individual multilingualism) that a person has grown up speaking since early childhood.

Due to the difficulties of objective measurement, statistical data tend to reflect the number of self-reported mother-tongue speakers. Data collectors can unintentionally distort this number in the process of designing the questionnaire or recording and aggregating the answers. Furthermore, non-linguistic considerations, perceptions and motivations can influence individual reports on one's mother tongue and hence the overall number of mother-tongue speakers of a particular language.

Thus, it is more appropriate to define a mother tongue or a native language as a language a person *claims* to have grown up speaking in family, at least for those societies where language-related issues are particularly salient, such as the societies of the former Soviet Union.

Population censuses are the primary source of language-related statistical data in the post-Soviet region. State-conducted censuses have had a long history of not only recording but also simultaneously constructing target societies by creating, merging or erasing social identities through categorization and classification. Such constructivist activities are ubiquitous in the area of language use and linguistic identities for the two following reasons. First, group identities are commonly built upon linguistic similarities among their members, so that borders between languages groups often become the contours of political boundaries. As Arel suggests

> Recording the language of the putative members of the nation can become a crucial tool to assert and legitimize a territorial claim. The census is the prized instrument to "officialize" the territorial distribution of language communities. It is an inherently political instrument, since the choice of particular categories

[28] Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics,* 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 386.

> derives from political choices. Identities being the product of subjective assessments, a "neutral" identity category is an oxymoron.[29]

Second, censuses operate with a finite number of options for linguistic identification, which inevitably simplifies the complex picture of numerous language varieties – dialects and sociolects – spoken by population.

For the sake of brevity, the term "titular language" is used throughout the text of the dissertation in order to describe the languages of the fourteen post-Sevier republics.[30] The language of the titular nation (Rus. *язык титульной нации/iazyk titulnoi natsii),* or titular language, is the language of an ethnic group whose ethnonym is used as the basis for the name of an independent state or an administrative unit. Finally, lingua franca, or a language of wider communication, is "an auxiliary language used to enable routine communication to take place between groups of people who speak different native languages."[31] In the Soviet context, the Russian language was the most common language of wider communication both within[32] and among Soviet Republics. The concept of lingua franca is an empirical category, based on language practices and language choices in society. However, the status of the language of wider communication can also be reflected in legislation, such as in the language laws of the Soviet Republics, adopted in 1989-1990.

1.3 Operationalization and Measurement of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of the research is official language policy. This dependent variable is absent in those countries whose language polices lack explicit and consistent legal codification and can only be inferred from actual language choices and practices.[33] An integrative typological framework, suggested by Hornberger, divides language policy and planning activities into three categories - corpus, status and acquisition planning.[34] The

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[29] Dominique Arel, "Language categories in censuses: backward- or forward-looking?" in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses,* eds. David I. Kertzer and Dominique Arel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 115.
[30] Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Moldovan, Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen.
[31] David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics,* 6th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 282.
[32] Probably, except for Georgia.
[33] For example, in Japan.
[34] Nancy H. Hornberger, "Frameworks and Models in Language Policy and Planning," in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. Thomas Ricento (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 29.

primary focus of this research is on status planning, and only secondary - on acquisition planning (schooling and language teaching). The issues of corpus planning (language reforms, alphabet reforms, language purification and alike) are not addressed in the dissertation due to being only indirectly connected to the question of official status. Nonetheless, the same ideational drivers can account both for decisions in corpus-planning activities, such as language purification or the adoption of rules for borrowing from foreign languages, and for choices in the provision of official statuses to languages spoken in a country.

The definition of official language policy, employed for this research, refers to the *de jure* recognition and attribution of statuses to particular speech varieties in a state, usually in the constitution or a separate language law. Therefore, official language policy is operationalized as the volume of legislation (constitution, language law, law on education, law on minorities) that defines the statuses of particular language (national, titular, official, regional and alike). In practice, this dissertation predominantly deals with the variation in the status of the Russian language, because it is the most meaningful variation across the former Soviet Union.

The measurement is based on the typology proposed in the previous section. If only one language is explicitly defined in such legislation, the country's official language policy is considered monolingual. If one language is explicitly defined as official, but there is supplementary legislation on the use of minority languages, the country's official language policy is considered monolingual with recognized minority languages. If more than one language is explicitly defined in such legislation and the normative framework attributes these languages with equal statuses, the country's language policy is considered multilingual. If more than one language is explicitly defined, but different languages are attributed with different statuses, the country' official language policy is considered multilingual with a hierarchy of languages. The hierarchy of languages can be reflected through spatial differences if legislation contains a close that restricts the official status of a language to a lower-level administrative unit of the country. Alternatively, the hierarchy of languages can be symbolic. Legislation reflects this symbolic hierarchy by using different

adjectives for the description of the statuses of different languages: language of interethnic communication, administrative language, official language, state language.[35]

Table 1.1: Numerical representation of the values of the dependent variable.

Policy	Value
Monolingual language policy	0
Monolingual language policy with recognized minority languages	1
Multilingual language policy with a hierarchy of languages[36]	2
Multilingual language policy	3

The values of the dependent variable are represented numerically in Table 1.1. Higher values denote the greater degree of the expression of multilingualism in legal documents. In other words, the higher the value is the more the language policy deviates from the ideal type monolingualism. Consequently, such changes in national legislation that lead to the amendment of the previously codified statuses of languages are considered changes in official language policy.

1.4 Universe of Cases: Official Language Policies in Fourteen Post-Soviet Republics

The Soviet Union was an example of an officially multiethnic state, where individual-based, passport ethnicity coexisted with territorially based autonomy for ethnic homelands – titular republics.[37] A distinct language of ancestry (not necessarily the one that is actually spoken by an individual) – 'mother tongue' – served not only as a major criterion for belonging to an ethnic group but also as the sole justification for such a group's eligibility for official recognition. Quite often, languages and the boundaries of ethnolinguistic groups

[35] Whereas in most cases terms official and state language are used interchangeably, the language law of Kyrgyzstan differentiates between official and state languages, maintaining the symbolic hierarchy between the two.

[36] The variety of statuses that can be assigned to different languages within the multilingual official framework and their changes require a case-by-case assessment, which cannot be captured by a single numerical value and might require more nuanced measurement.

[37] Rogers Brubaker, "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutionalist Account," *Theory and Society* 23, no. 1 (1994): 47-78.

were defined and assigned to the population by the Soviet scholars and officials purely arbitrarily, involving a huge amount of identity construction.[38]

Ideally, the three components – titular language, titular republic and ethnic identity – would match and reinforce one another in what would be the perfect embodiment of ethnonationalist ideal. That is an ethnic group X, whose membership can be traced along, whose language is also X, populates an administrative unit that is designated for this group and reflects X identity in its name. In practice, however, that was never the case throughout Soviet history, because of forced and voluntary migrations and imperfect drawing of administrative boundaries, which left sizeable ethnic minorities inside of virtually all administrative units. In some of them titular ethnic groups never comprised the majority of population.[39] Moreover, passport ethnicity was a major obstacle, preventing homogenization through assimilation, thus, creating an unresolvable tension between ethnonational framework and increasing ethnic heterogeneity.[40]

Later on, such a dual territorial-individual institutionalization of ethnicity also came into a latent conflict with efforts for the construction of a common supranational identity of the Soviet Union, which in great part implied the progressive assimilation of non-Russian ethnic groups into the dominant Russian culture.[41] In terms of language, this conflict was reflected in the continuing symbolic prominence of titular languages as identity markers in Soviet republics and progressing policies of the promotion of Russian as the common language. The latter can be traced back as early as to 1930s with the introduction of mandatory Russian languages classes, development of new Cyrillic alphabets for previously Romanized languages and the unification of the rules of borrowing and spelling of foreign words, which favored the influx of Russian vocabulary.[42] Education reforms of 1958 are widely accepted as another major contribution to the process of Russification. Most importantly, the reforms made the teaching of titular languages in non-titular schools optional, further limiting the possibility of homogenization through assimilation at the republican level. In the following years, Soviet language policies had been characterized by

[38] Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, 53, no. 2 (1994): 414-452.
[39] For example, in the Karelian ASSR.
[40] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 451.
[41] Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (NY: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003).
[42] Grenoble, *Language Policy*.

the continuing promotion of Russian as "the second mother tongue," introduction of the language in kindergartens, shrinking volumes and numbers of titles of publications in titular languages. By the 1980s, the state policies, which aimed at the spread of Russian language, which often happened at the expense of other language of the Soviet Union, had generated concerns about the future of titular languages among parts of intelligentsia in titular republics. These concerns had been present even in such republics as Armenia and Georgia, which were relatively "better-off" in terms of the maintenance of their titular languages.

Table 1.2: Share of ethnic Russians and people with Russian as mother tongue in 1989.[43]

	Russian as Mother Tongue	**Ethnic Russians**	**Titular Population with Russian as Mother Tongue**
Estonia	34.80%	30.30%	1%
Latvia	42.10%	33.96%	2.60%
Lithuania	11.70%	9.40%	0.30%
Belarus	31.90%	13.20%	19.70%
Ukraine	32.80%	22.10%	12.20%
Moldova	23.10%	12.96%	4.30%
Georgia	8.90%	6.30%	0.20%
Armenia	2%	1.60%	0.30%
Azerbaijan	7.50%	5.60%	0.40%
Kazakhstan	47.40%	37.80%	1.40%
Uzbekistan	10.70%	8.30%	0.40%
Kyrgyzstan	25.60%	21.50%	0.30%
Tajikistan	9.70%	7.60%	0.50%
Turkmenistan	11.90%	9.50%	0.70%

The census of 1989 (continuing the tradition of other Soviet censuses) measured neither language proficiency nor the actual language use. Stating a particular language as one's mother tongue should not be equated with using it as the primary language at home or even with the ability to speak it fluently. In addition to the spread of Russian as the second

[43] "Rezultaty perepisi SSSR," Demoskop Weekly, http://demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php/.

language, in all republics, except Armenia, ethnic Russians also made up a sizeable proportion of local population. In a few republics, a noticeable share of titular population also indicated Russian as their mother tongue – making up double digits in Belarus and Ukraine and more than one percent in Latvia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan.

Table 1.3: The status of the Russian language in the legislation of Soviet republics.

	Date	**Law**	**Russian Language**
Estonia	18.01.1989	Language Law[44]	Widely spoken
Lithuania	25.01.1989	Decree on the Use of State Language[45]	Communication with other SSRs
Latvia	05.05.1989	Law on Languages[46]	Interethnic communication
Tajikistan	22.07.1989	Law on Language[47]	Interethnic communication
Moldova	01.09.1989	Law on Functioning of Languages[48]	Interethnic communication
Kazakhstan	22.09.1989	Law on Languages[49]	Interethnic communication
Kyrgyzstan	23.09.1989	Law on State Language[50]	Interethnic communication
Uzbekistan	21.10.1989	Law on State Language[51]	Interethnic communication
Ukraine	28.10.1989	Law on Languages[52]	Interethnic communication
Belarus	26.01.1990	Law on Languages[53]	Interethnic communication
Turkmenistan	24.05.1990	Law on Language[54]	Interethnic communication

In sum, all fourteen republics entered the final years of perestroika under conditions of official multilingualism. Russian was an all-Union official language, which dominated the most important spheres of language use, such as administration, communication in

[44] Zakon Estonskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1989,
[45] Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybinės Kalbos Istatymas, 1995, https://www.e-tar.lt/rs/legalact/TAR.0B0253BB424C/format/OO3_ODT/.
[46] Latvijas Padomju Socialistiskas Republikas Valodu Likums, 1989, http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vidusskolai/VALODA/v9-6.htm/.
[47] Zakon Tadzhikskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1989, http://medialaw.asia/document/-261/.
[48] O funktsionirovanii iazykov na territorii Moldavskoi SSR, 1989, http://lex.justice.md/ru/312813/.
[49] O iazykakh v Kazakhskoi SSR, 1989, https://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=1005765/.
[50] O gosudarstvennom iazyke Kirgizskoi SSR, 1989, https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30235295/.
[51] O gosudarstvennom iazyke Uzbekskoi SSR, 1989, http://lex.uz/pages/GetAct.aspx?lact_id=108915/.
[52] Pro movi v Ukrainskii RSR, 1989, http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/8312-11?test=4/UMfPEGznhhIqa.ZiwvoPQYHI4FUs80msh8Ie6/.
[53] Zakon Belaruskai Savetskai Satsyialistychnai Respubliki ab movakh, 1990, http://miram.livejournal.com/433570.html/.
[54] Zakon Turkmenskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke 1990, http://medialaw.asia/document/-349/.

industries, military and sciences. Titular languages remained official in their respective republics, and, in some cases, there were also official languages of autonomous regions. At the same time, the sociolinguistic situation and ethnolinguistic self-identification of the local population were different among these countries as the results of 1989 population census indicate (Table 1.2).

Considering the salience of language for identity politics in the Soviet Union, it is not very surprising that almost all republics addressed language issues in their policies even prior to the achievement of independence. The dates of acceptance of language laws by republics and the statuses given to the Russian language are listed in Table 1.3.

Initially, there were two models of status planning for the languages of the Soviet republics. The first model defined the titular language as the sole official language of the country, making it officially monolingual. The status of Russian was downgraded to the one of a minority language or the language of communication with other Soviet republics. The second model combined the designation of official status to the titular language and the status of the language of "interethnic communication" to the Russian language, hence maintaining some form of multilingualism, but clearly specifying the symbolic hierarchy of languages. This approach can also be interpreted as a compromise between the aspirations of nation building and the sociolinguistic reality.

Overall, five countries did not provide official status to Russian in 1989 - Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The situation of the republics of the Caucasus is exceptional in this regard, since they did not have to change their legislation *de jure*, because the versions of their Brezhnev constitutions had already provided official status only to their titular language and did not mention Russian. This exception was the outcome of the public protests in Georgia and the subsequent compromise by the communist authorities.[55] No major changes of statuses of languages took place in the following years in these republics. New language laws that were adopted after independence reconfirmed the official monolingualism in four of them. Armenia adopted a language law in 1993.[56]

[55] Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*.
[56] Zakon Respubliki Armeniia "O iazyke," 1993, http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=1793&lang=rus/.

Lithuania and Estonia introduced new laws in 1995.[57] Azerbaijan introduced a similar law only in 2003.[58] Only Georgia, although it does not provide any official status to the Russian language, is an officially multilingual state because of the official status of the Abkhazian language in Abkhazia, confirmed by 1995 constitution and 2015 language law.[59] However, the territory of Abkhazia is not controlled by Tbilisi.

Nine countries provided Russian with a somewhat ambiguous status of "language of interethnic communication"[60] - Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.[61] In Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan this status is further clarified as the language of interethnic communication of the peoples of the USSR. The collocation "language of interethnic communication" indicates that it is not a minority language, and it implies interethnic communication both within and beyond the borders of a republic. Latvia was chronologically the first republic to introduce this term to its language-related legislation.

Two republics from this group later improved this status to the one of an official/state language. Belarus did it in 1995 and Kyrgyzstan in 2000. Therefore, these countries moved towards a greater degree of officially institutionalized multilingualism. However, only in Belarus, the question on the status of the Russian language was directly subjected to the popular vote during a referendum in 1995. In Kyrgyzstan, the provision of official status to Russian was initiated by a presidential decree.[62] In other countries, language-related legislation was decided in the 1990s with population only indirectly involved – through voting in the parliament.

Kazakhstan transformed the status of the Russian language. Both 1995 Constitution and 1997 Language Law, while guaranteeing the supreme status of Kazakh, provided Russian

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[57] Uldis Ozolins, "Between Russian and European Hegemony: Current Language Policy in the Baltic States," *Current Issues in Language and Society* 6, no. 1 (1999): 6-47.
[58] O Gosudarstvennom Iazyke v Azerbaidzhanskoi Respublike, 2003, http://www.caa.gov.az/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=120:law-of-the-rofa-on-the-state-language-of-the-rofa&Itemid=173&lang=ru/.
[59] Zakon Gruzii o Gosudarstvennom Iazyke, 2015, http://www.bsu.ru/content/page/16174/o-gosudarstvennom-yazike.pdf/.
[60] The Russian original is *язык межнационального общения.*
[61] Nina Mechkovskaya, "Status i funkstii russkogo iazyka v poslednikh sovetskikh zakonakh o iazyke," *Russian Linguistics* 16, no. 1 (1992): 83.
[62] Ob ofitsialnom iazyke Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki*,* 2000, http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/443/10?cl=ru-ru/.

with a clearly specified status of an administrative language.[63] In four republics - Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Turkmenistan - the status of Russian as the language of interethnic communication remained unchanged throughout the 1990s. In Moldova, however, according to the constitution of 1994,[64] Russian, in addition to the status of the language of "interethnic communication" nationwide, also received the status of an official language in the newly established Gagauz autonomous region.

Two republics – Latvia and Uzbekistan - downgraded the status of the Russian language. In Latvia, this change came through the amendment of the 1989 language law in 1992.[65] In Uzbekistan, this change came with the amendment of the previous language law in 1995.[66] All references to the Russian language were dropped in the legislation of these two countries. A new language law, adopted in Latvia in 1999, restricted the status of minority languages to the Livonian only, treating all other languages, including Russian, as foreign[67].

1.5 Case Selection and Empirical Puzzle

Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia are the three former Soviet republics that are selected as the cases for the research. In terms of sociolinguistic conditions, all three countries had significant portion of population that named Russian as their mother tongue, what makes the provision of some officially recognized status to this language plausible. There is a difference, however, in the share of titular population that listed Russian as their mother tongue in 1989. It was much higher in Belarus and Ukraine than in Latvia, although Latvia was ahead of its Baltic neighbors with regards to the spread of assimilated bilingualism among its titular population.

These three republics initially introduced similar official language policy templates with Russian as "language of interethnic communication" (symbolically relatively high, but in practice an ambiguous and vague status), titular language as official language, and some

[63] William Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan: Formulations in policy documents 1987–1997," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 2 (1998): 171-186.
[64] Konstitutsiia Respubliki Moldova, 1994, http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?id=311496&lang=2/.
[65] Latvijas Republikas Likums Par grozijumiem un papildinajumiem Latvijas Padomju Socialistiskas Republikas Valodu likuma, 1992, http://www.vvk.lv/index.php?sadala=135&id=165/.
[66] Zakon Respubliki Uzbekistan 'O vnesenii izmenenii i dopolnenii v zakon "O gosudarstvennom iazyke Respubliki Uzbekistan," 1995, http://www.lex.uz/acts/121433/.
[67] Official Language Law, 1999, https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/14740-official-language-law#_ftn1&pd=1/.

forms of linguistic "affirmative action" for the latter. In all three countries, the original common template of "national language plus a language of interethnic communication" had been adopted in the form of language laws prior to the first competitive elections to supreme councils that took place in spring 1990. In the following years, however, in two of these three republics official language policies were transformed, albeit according to completely different trajectories (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Changes in the status of the Russian language in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia in the 1990s.

	Belarus	**Ukraine**	**Latvia**
Initial Official Language Policy			
Date of adoption	1990	1989	1989
Type	Multilingual hierarchy	Multilingual hierarchy	Multilingual hierarchy
Numerical Value	2	2	2
Status of Russian	interethnic communication	interethnic communication	interethnic communication
Official Language Policy Amendments between 1992 and 2001			
Date of adoption	1995	No changes	1992
Type	Bilingual	Multilingual hierarchy	Monolingual
Numerical Value	3	2	1
Status of Russian	Co-official/state	Interethnic communication	Foreign

Latvia rapidly rejected all official recognition of the Russian language in 1992. During the rest of the decade, state policy was focused on the promotion of the titular language, coupled with an increasingly restrictive approach to the use of Russian. The negative change in the dependent variable culminated with the 1999 Language Law that relegated Russian to the status of a foreign language in Latvia. Therefore, a decisive change in the dependent variable in the negative direction is observed in the Latvian case.

Belarus continued with the support for the spread of use of Belarusian without altering the status of Russian as the language of interethnic communication. A rapid change in official language policy came with the outcomes of the 1995 referendum, which included a question about the provision of the status of the second official language to Russian. With the positive results of the referendum, which were reflected in amendments to language-related legislation, Belarus became fully bilingual. Moreover, the type of bilingualism adopted in Belarus is commonly described as an optional one. It means that every individual and institution can use one of the two languages at their preference. Hence, there is no obligation to use or to be proficient in both languages for official communication, provision of public services, etc. All state support for linguistic Belarusization was subsequently abandoned. Therefore, the Belarusian case also represents a decisive change in the dependent variable, but its direction is completely opposite to the Latvian case.

Throughout the 1990s, the situation in Ukraine was characterized by modest support for the spread of the use of Ukrainian without altering the status of Russian. No alteration of language-related legislation took place, despite Leonid Kuchma, the Ukrainian president between 1994 and 2004, expressed an intention to change the language law and upgrade the status of the Russian language.[68] Hence, there was no change in the dependent variable during that period.

Ukraine's 1989 official language policy formular was eventually amended in 2012 with the new Law on the Principles of Language Policy. The law has provided with a status of regional languages those languages that are spoken by at least 10% of population of an administrative region, thus introducing regional multilingualism.[69] Although nominally the status of Russian language became lower than the one of interethnic communication (vague and ambiguous but applicable at the national level), to the status of a regional language (together with other 17 languages), in practice Russian was eligible for the status of a regional language in 13 out of 27 Ukrainian regions. In February 2014, the Ukrainian parliament voted for the annulment of 2012 Law on the Principles of Language Policy. The decision was subsequently vetoed by the acting president and had been under the review of

[68] Juliane Besters-Dilger, "Natsiia ta mova pislia 1991 roku – ukrainska ta rosiiska v movnomu konflikti," in *Ukraina. Protsesy natsiotvorennia*, ed. Andreas Kappeler (Kyiv: K.I.S, 2011), 352-264.
[69] "Ob Osnovakh Gosudarstvennoi Politiki," *Odna Rodina*, October 22, 2012, http://odnarodyna.org/content/ob-osnovah-gosudarstvennoy-yazykovoy-politiki/.

the constitutional court until 2018.[70] In 2018, under political conditions dramatically different from those that had existed in the late 1980s – 1990s, the 2012 language law was repealed and replaced with Law on State Language that turned Ukraine into an officially monolingual country.

In sum, the empirical puzzle of the proposed research can be formulated as follows: Why did official language policies in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia diverge after the acquisition of independence? More specifically, why did the status of the Russian language, which was initially the "language of interethnic communication" in all three republics, was changed in different directions?

1.6 Summary of My Argument

In explaining the divergence of language policy outcomes in Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine the research will follow an elite-based approach within the general logic of the Advocacy Coalition Framework of public policy change, originally proposed by Sabatier[71] and later developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith[72] and Sabatier and Weible[73] among others. This framework is sufficiently developed and applied for the empirical analysis of public policy change in North America, Latin America and Europe. Its major analytical advantage, which makes it particularly suitable for the analysis of language policy, is an emphasis on the importance of core beliefs held by policy actors. Core beliefs about a public policy's nature either reinforce or suppress immediate material interests and provide long-lasting demarcation lines for policy advocacy coalitions made up of policy entrepreneurs, opinion leaders, experts and members of interest groups among others.

I argue that two independent variables played the biggest role in the process of official language policy change in all cases. The first variable is the presence of two alternative

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[70] "Verkhovnaia rada otmenila zakon o statuse russkogo iazyka," *RIA Novosti*, February 23, 2014, https://ria.ru/world/20140223/996527008.html/.
[71] Paul A. Sabatier, "Knowledge, Policy-Oriented Learning, and Policy Change: An Advocacy Coalition Framework," *Science Communication* 8, no. 4 (1987): 649-692.
[72] Paul A. Sabatier, "Policy Change over a Decade or More," in *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*, eds. Paul A. Sabatier and Hank C. Jenkins-Smith (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 13-40.
[73] Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications," in *Theories of Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Boulder: Westview Press, 2007): 189-222.

discourses on nationhood, which emerged in the period of the rapid social, political and economic changes of the early 1990s, shaped the core beliefs of the two antagonistic advocacy coalitions for official language policy, helped their maintenance and conditioned possibilities for finding allies among political elites. Attitude towards the Soviet period of nation building is the relevant fault line that distinguishes such alternative discourses in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts. Alternative discourses on nationhood, which differ in the interpretation of the period of history that preceded the critical juncture, serve as the ideational drivers and sources of justification for one or the other language policy. In other words, a discourse on nation building represents a core belief that shapes language policy preferences and serves as a fundament for advocacy coalition formation and guidance in search for allies.

The second variable is the presence of three groups of political elites – post-Soviet, pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet – each of whom to a varying degree could supply either of the coalition with allies in decision-making authorities. Different relative positions of each elite group in the political system provided advocacy coalitions with policy-relevant resources and accounted for the adoption of different official language policy formulae. The ambivalent status of post-Soviet elite group and their role as policy brokers were crucial for achieving a policy compromise between otherwise antagonistic advocacy coalitions in those cases where hierarchical bilingualism prevailed.

Consequently, changes in official language policy took place when a major realignment of the elite groups dramatically altered policy-relevant resources of each advocacy coalition. Shifting alliances and the balance of powers across elite groups explain the direction and scope of policy change in situations, when elite alternation cannot be indisputably identified as obtaining a hegemonic majority.

An explanation for differences in official language policy changes, as applied to the empirical puzzle of this dissertation, is necessarily temporally bounded and shaped by the duration of the post-Soviet period. Temporal contextualization informs the content of competing discourses on nationhood and determines the most relevant divisions within political elites. The dissertation uses the formal dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 as a cut-off point, marking the end of the preparatory phase of *perestroika* and *glasnost*

under Gorbachev (the late Soviet period) and the beginning of "the post-Soviet period" in the history of the region.

The selection of an endpoint presents a much more challenging task as the duration of the post-Soviet stage in the independent state and nation building of the fifteen former Soviet republics is a complex question, which can be answered differently, depending on the precise definition of what it means to be "post-Soviet" in social, economic, political, and cultural terms. To tackle this issue, an arbitrary period of the first ten years of independence (1992-2001) is selected as the temporal focus of this research and its explanatory argument. The end of the decade roughly corresponds to the completion of the full cycle of secondary education by the first generation of students who went to school after independence. In other words, during those years the absolute majority of both general population and political elites was made up of those who had received their education and spent most of their lives in the Soviet Union. Therefore, between 1992 and 2001, the cumulative impact of independent state and nation building and of generational changes within both elites and general population over time was still not profound enough to produce significant transformative effects on prevailing discourses on nationhood and on core beliefs, relevant to language policy preferences.

In brief, the argument can be stated as follows. All three republics entered the period of independent nation building having the necessary background conditions for policy changes. The peculiar situation shared by these cases is that there were two genuinely antagonistic advocacy coalitions for language policy change – monolingual and multilingual - whose core beliefs stemmed from different interpretations of nationhood. In contrast, the political landscape was divided into three major sections of political elites – post-Soviet elites, pro-Soviet counter elites and anti-Soviet counter elites. The latter two elite groups served as the natural political allies of the two advocacy coalitions. The post-Soviet elite group served an ambivalent role. On the one hand, its members could take up the role of policy brokers and mediate the policy outcome. Alternatively, they could ally with either counter elite, which would lead to the strengthening of the position of one or the other advocacy coalition.

Both advocacy coalitions managed to gather significant political resources, such as powerful allies in authorities, mainly composed of corresponding groups of counter-elites; loyal mobilizable troops; and sizeable strata of population supportive of their favored versions of language policy. On its own, such a situation was conducive to an inconclusive and inconsistent language policy with a high potential for a policy change. A major realignment of political elites, such as the rapprochement of post-Soviet elites with either of the counter-elite and a non-democratic exclusion of the remaining group, which resulted in either of the two antagonistic advocacy coalitions being deprived of policy-relevant resources, became the necessary condition for such changes.

Occupying the dominant position in the political system in the late 1980s, ruling elites, which later would turn into the post-Soviet elite group, initially served as policy brokers and mediated official language policy outcomes according to a compromise formula of hierarchical bilingualism. Having lost political monopoly, post-Soviet elites employed different strategies for coalition building in the period when the political field became competitive.

In Latvia, the alliance between post-Soviet elites and nationalist counter-elites had been already forming prior to the 1990 election to the Supreme Council. Later, with the help of a restrictive citizenship law, the coalition deprived pro-Soviet counter-elites of their electoral base. This realignment strengthened the monolingual advocacy coalition, which pushed towards a monolingual language policy. When nationalist elites replaced the post-Soviet elites as the dominant group, the policy became even more proscriptive towards the Russian language.

In Belarus, post-Soviet elites engaged in cooperation with the pro-Soviet counter-elites in their struggle with anti-Soviet elites as early as in 1993. The 1994 presidential elections resulted in the unanticipated victory of a candidate who represented pro-Soviet counter elites. A subsequent crush on the parliament rendered anti-Soviet counter-elites irrelevant. This realignment of political elites dramatically increased the policy-relevant resources of the multilingual advocacy coalition. When the pro-Soviet elites became dominant with a progressive shift to personal authoritarianism, the official language policy became even less prescriptive, turning into “optional” bilingualism with the introduction of 1998 language

law. In both cases, the solution to the initial stalemate was a non-democratic one. In contrast, no permanent alliance was forged in Ukraine during that period; both pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet elite groups remained relevant political actors and policy stalemate continued throughout the 1990s.

1.7 Research Design and Methodology

The proposed research is a structured, focused comparison of three cases, purposefully selected from a limited universe of cases, in which the remaining eleven cases will serve as 'shadow' cases. The method of structured, focused comparison requires that a common set of general questions is "asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection".[74] The comparison is focused as long as it does not address the cases in all their complexity but deals "only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined."[75] Taken together, these principles allow for contingent generalizations across cases.

The arbitrary selection of cases for a structured, focused comparison should be avoided.[76] Three cases, which are selected for my research, do not neatly fit into the category of most similar (MSSD) systems research design, but approximate it with regards to geographical location, recent political, social, and cultural legacies, and, most importantly, initially adopted official language policies. Some basic demographic, economic, linguistic, and political indicators for Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia are summarized in Table 1.5.

The selection of cases for the cross-country comparison is made partly on the dependent variable. Selecting on the dependent variable has faced important methodological criticisms, most prominently by King, Keohane and Verba.[77] Nevertheless, it can be justifiable and even advisable for small N comparisons within a limited universe of cases, as long as the sufficient range in the variance of the dependent variable is present and the selection of cases is not consciously manipulative and made on *both* dependent and

[74] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 67.
[75] George and Bennett, *Case Studies*.
[76] George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 69.
[77] Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

independent variables.[78] In this relation, the three cases, selected for the research, exhibit a full range of change in their official language policies, observed in post-Soviet countries. In the 1990s, Belarus adopted bilingual, official language policy, Latvia became officially monolingual, whereas Ukraine's official language policy did not change. Only in the second half of the 2010s, Ukraine moved towards official monolingualism.

Table 1.5: Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia in the 1990s according to selected indicators.

	Belarus	**Ukraine**	**Latvia**
Geographic Sub-Region	European part of former USSR	European part of former USSR	European part of former USSR
Population (m)[79]	10.2	51.7	2.7
Urbanization (%)[80]	65	67	71
GDP per Capita (int. $)[81]	5452	5060	8284
Freedom House Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free
Ethnic Russians (%)[82]	13.2	22.1	33.96
Russian Speakers (%)[83]	31.9	32.8	42.1
Russian and Titular Language[84]	Closely related	Closely Related	Somewhat Related
Titular Language in the Brezhnev-Era Constitution	No 'state' status	No 'state' status	No 'state' status
Initial Language Policy	Hierarchical bilingualism	Hierarchical bilingualism	Hierarchical bilingualism
Change in DV	+1	0	-1

Most similar systems design is also applicable for the within-case comparison of each of the three cases at times T0 (ending with the adoption of the first language law) T1 (ending

[78] Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd ed. (NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).
[79] "Rezultaty perepisi SSSR (1989)," Demoskop Weekly, http://demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php.
[80] "Rezultaty perepisi SSSR (1989)," Demoskop Weekly.
[81] "GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $)," World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD?end=2016&locations=LV-BY-UA&start=1995; 1995 taken as the earliest year for which data is available for all countries.
[82] "Rezultaty perepisi SSSR (1989)," Demoskop Weekly.
[83] "Rezultaty perepisi SSSR (1989)," Demoskop Weekly.
[84] Based on the language family/language group. Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian are the three closely related languages that make up the Eastern branch of the Slavic language group. Latvian and Russian are related, since they belong to the Balto-Slavic branch of the Indo-European language family.

with adoption of the new/amendment of the existing language legislation after the achievement of independence) and T2 (following the change of the official language policy at T1). Such a within-case comparison allows for holding most of the variables constant and strengthening claims about the causal mechanism at work for a particular policy change.

The causal narrative of the dissertation is structured around historical episodes that contributed towards language policy content, brought about language policy changes, or could have brought them, but didn't. Five episodes that brought actual changes are the adoption of initial language laws in 1989-1990, amendment of the policy in Latvia 1992 and in Belarus in 1995. Other relevant episodes include the first competitive election of 1990, failed communist coup in the August of 1991, acquisition of independence in 1991, first elections after independence, adoption and amendment of major pieces of legislation, such as constitution or citizenship law.

The set of analytical questions, which structure the investigation of the cases, is the following: What types of local political elites were present, based on their attitudes to the period of Soviet history? What was the position of each elite group with regards to their access to political power and decision-making? What kind of alterations in elites' position preceded changes in official language policies? What historical references and references to national identity were invoked when language policy options were introduced? What kind of limitations or discursive blocks were imposed on policy advocates and policymakers by the dominant discourse on nation-building?

Process-tracing is the primary within-case research method that is used in this dissertation. Process-tracing "attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variable) and the outcome of the dependent variable."[85] Process-tracing searches for the multiple pieces of evidence that prove that the proposed variables are present, they are linked in a causal way and account for the change of the dependent variable. In the course of the research I identify elite groups, demonstrate that their attitudes towards nation-building both co-vary with and drive language policy preferences; that language policy outcomes and their changes depend on

[85] George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 206.

the nature of inter-elite compromise and strategies of coalition-building; and that changes in language polices are accompanied with the changes in the state-promoted nation-building narrative.

Evidence, used for the construction of the causal narratives of empirical cases, is collected with the help of several data-gathering technics, including the analysis of secondary sources, such as historical accounts and academic publications; current and obsolete legal documents and pieces of legislation; teaching materials, such as schoolbooks; speeches, interviews and memoirs by political actors; official publications and websites with relevant statistics, election results and information on members of parliament. Original data was gathered through the analysis of periodical publications, retrieved during in-person (Belarus) and online (Ukraine and Latvia) archival research. Sources in English, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and, to a limited degree, also in Latvian,[86] were used for gathering the data.

1.8 Dissertation Outline

The first chapter of the dissertation introduces the research question, empirical puzzle, research design and methodological framework. The second chapter proceeds with a review of theoretical perspectives on language policy and policy change, followed by a discussion about the relationship between language and nation-building. The third chapter presents alternative explanations, identified in exiting academic literature, applicable for the empirical puzzle of the dissertation, and formulates the causal argument of this study. Remaining chapters are dedicated to the dissertation's three empirical cases. The fourth chapter establishes historical background for relationship between nation-building and language in Belarus and traces the influence of major political realignments in the Belarusian politics on language policy debates and changes between 1990 and 1995. The fifth chapter evaluates the lack of language policy changes in the 1990s in Ukraine. The sixth chapter discusses an early change and the entrenchment of the monolingual language policy in Latvia with a language policy change in 1992. The conclusion of the dissertation presents the findings of the research, summarizes empirical evidence, collected from the

[86] Only official websites and similar sources that require limited knowledge of the Latvian language.

three cases, and proceeds with assessment on potential for generalization of the findings across and beyond the post-Soviet universe of cases.

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Chapter 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation chapter lays down a theoretical framework for my explanatory argument and the analysis of language policy changes in post-Soviet republics. First, I review nascent literature on language policy and planning in relation to the topic of language policy change. I then proceed with a review of different approaches towards public policy change and justify my choice of the Advocacy Coalition Framework as the general framework for official language policy change analysis. I continue by establishing a link between official language policy and nation-building as the core belief that shapes alternative language policy options and directs actors in struggle for their implementation. In the final section I explicate the peculiar trajectory of the Soviet nation building that made this link even more conspicuous in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts and directed the menu of choice for policy advocates and policy makers alike.

2.1 Language Policy and Planning

In general, the question of language policies has been addressed in the literature beginning from the second half of the 20th century, but it did not result in the development of an overarching theory of language policy.[1] Early academic works in language policy and planning (LPP)[2] were characterized by a technical, problem-solving approach with the focus on status planning as the selection of an appropriate language formula for 'new' nations. The output included typologies both of state policies and of sociolinguistic situations, which were often descriptively inaccurate or ontologically problematic, that is 'mixing up' the policy and the actual linguistic situation in the society or substituting one

[1] Thomas Ricento, "Ideology, Politics and Language Policies: Introduction" in *Ideology, Politics and Language Policies. Focus on English,* ed. Thomas Ricento (Philadelphia: John Benjamins North America, 2000), 1-8.
[2] Einar I. Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 68, no. 4 (1966): 922-35; Heinz Kloss, "Types of Multilingual Communities: A discussion of ten variables," *Sociological Inquiry* 36 (1966): 7–17; Charles A. Ferguson, "Language Development," (1968) in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Papers on Language in Society, 1959-1994. Charles A. Ferguson*, ed. Thom Huebner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Joshua A. Fishman, "Language Problems and Types of Political and Socio-cultural Interaction: A Conceptual Summary," in *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, eds. Joshua A. Fishman, Charles A. Ferguson and Jyotirindra (New York: Wiley, 1968), 491-498.

for the other.[3] In short, the early state of the research was focused on conceptualizing and theorizing about planning rather than about policies *per se*. In response, critical approach[4] in research on LPP drove attention to the role of languages and language polices in hierarchization and stratification of populations, role of global languages in maintaining neocolonialism, as well as to normative bias of earlier 'technocratic' writings in the area. Beginning with the 1990s, the issues of language loss,[5] policies of multiculturalism and language policies in the education of ethnic minorities,[6] concepts of language ecology and linguistic diversity,[7] linguicism, linguistic genocide and linguistic human rights[8] have gained increasing attention.

Overall, from the point of view of comparative politics, the topic of the theory of official language policy as an autonomous political development seems to be scarcely addressed in the existing literature. In this relation, an important contribution was made by David Laitin, who employed the principles of economic game theory for modeling official language policy outcomes in post-colonial states as the interplay of individual and group language choices.[9] Laitin's framework has been criticized for being economically-driven and attempting to predict language policy outcomes at the national level from individual and group-level utilitarian language choices alone, whereas in reality there are both utilitarian, and non-utilitarian forces that affect policy-related decisions.[10] A language policy, unlike

[3] See Harold Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996) for a more detailed and comprehensive criticism of the earlier approaches to language policy and planning.
[4] Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alastair Pennycook, *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (London: Longman, 1994).
[5] Michael Krauss, "The World's Languages in Crisis," *Language* 68, no 1 (1992): 4-10.
[6] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
[7] Luisa Maffi, "Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 599-617; David Harmon, "Losing Species, Losing Languages: Connections Between Biological and Linguistic Diversity," *Southwest Journal of Linguistics* 15 (1996): 89–108.
[8] Tobe Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson, "Linguistic Human Rights, Past and Present," in *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*, eds. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 71-110.
[9] David D. Laitin, *Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); David D. Laitin, "The Game Theory of Language Regimes," *International Political Science Review /Revue internationale de science politique* 14, no 3 (1993): 227-239.
[10] Robert, Phillipson, "Political Science," in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 94-108.

policy towards religion and race, can never be neutral.[11]There is always an element of choice that reflects construction and maintenance of social hierarchies, economic, symbolic, cultural and political domination and subjugation.[12] Nevertheless, Laitin's work is important for locating the issues of language policy choices within a more general political process and emphasizing the role of local elites and their motivations in pushing for particular policy outcomes.

2.2 Policy Change

Existing academic literature on language policy and planning lacks a widely accepted and comprehensive framework for the analysis of language policy change, which can be employed for explaining the divergence of official language policies. In this subchapter, I will first discuss language policy change in the context of general institutional development and then proceed with a review of more specific frameworks for policy analysis and policy change. I will conclude with the review of the Multiple Advocacy Coalitions framework and provide argumentation for its selection as the conceptual framework for my argument and analysis of empirical cases.

2.2.1 Institutional Perspective

An institution is a ubiquitous phenomenon of social life. Functionalist/rationalist definitions of the concept suggest that institutions are sets of rules that govern the behavior of actors in a given area. Approached from this perspective, institutions are established in order to solve problems that arise before multiple actors who need to harmonize their behavior in order to achieve certain goals. Alternatively, a sociological understanding of institutions pays attention not only to regulative but also to the constitutive role of institutional arrangements, because institutions have the intrinsic quality of constructing and reinforcing actors' identities.

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[11] Jonathan Pool, "The Official Language Problem," *The American Political Science Review 85*, no 2 (1991): 495-514.

[12] Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, "Linguistic Human Rights"; Sue Wright, "Language Policy, the Nation and Nationalism," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, ed. Bernard Spolsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59-78; Colin H. Williams, "Language Policy, Territorialism and Regional Autonomy," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, ed. Bernard Spolsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012),174-202; Robert McColl Millar, *Language, Nation and Power: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); John Edwards, *Language and Identity: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

An official language policy can be conceptualized as state institution that sets the rules of behavior in the area of language choices. It provides regulations about language or languages that are to be used by actors in the areas of public communication, education, and official documentation. At the same time, it constitutes officially monolingual or multilingual corporate and individual actors, reinforces certain linguistic identities and discourages others. A language policy not only proclaims one or several languages official but also sets principles for language standardization and normalization. Therefore, it constructs and re-constructs an official language by carving it out of countless speech varieties and associating it with an appropriate grammar, vocabulary, norms of orthography and orthoepy.

The revival of interest towards state and state institutions among the scholars of sociology and political science since 1980s – a neo-institutional turn - has made its own contribution to the development of explanatory frameworks for the emergence and change of institutional arrangements.[13] The most important common ground for such studies is that while the origins of particular institutional arrangements are contingent on a combination of historically specific factors, institutions are relatively stable, once established, and have multiple inbuilt mechanisms of self-preservation that allow to survive for long historical periods.

Path dependence is a common concept that describes such subsequent institutional developments. It "characterizes specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties".[14] Institutional genesis corresponds to critical junctures – the adoption of an arrangement from two or more possible alternatives, which shapes subsequent institutional developments for long periods[15]

Mahoney groups the studies of the process of institutional change into four major clusters, which also somewhat parallel to the three varieties of institutionalism in political science by

[13] Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[14] James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, no 4 (2000): 507.
[15] Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier*, Shaping the Political Arena: Critical junctures, the labor movement, and regime dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Hall and Taylor.[16] The first cluster consists of utilitarian explanations of institutional arrangements, which borrow heavily from mainstream economic theories and the general rational choice framework. From this perspective, institutions are established as the outcome of cost-and-benefit assessments of involved actors Existing institutions are abandoned when increased competitive pressures and actors' learning over time make it in their self-interest to alter previously established arrangements.

Functional explanations presume that initial origins of an institution can be explained in a teleological fashion by looking at the subsequent beneficial effects of such institutions. Once established, however, institutions tend to persist as long as they continue to provide some functional use for the system, even if there are better hypothetical alternatives. Since building new institutions is costly, an already existing institutional framework is itself an important asset. Consequently, actors can maintain and adjust institutional arrangements through layering and conversion when their initial beneficial effects diminish.[17] Major external shocks, such as wars and economic crises, make institutions functionally obsolete and open way for institutional change.

Power-based approaches assume that institutions emerge out of power struggle. Once established, they are appropriated, reinforced and expanded by a particular power group, which benefits from the institutional arrangement. Such arrangements persist as long as an elite group that benefits from the existing arrangement is sufficiently strong to impose its continuation onto opposing fractions. Institutional change eventually comes when the power group is defeated by the cotenants or splits into rivalry fractions.

The final group of explanations is based on the constitutive and cognitive role of institutions. The decision of actors to reproduce an institution derives from the logic of appropriateness - self-understanding of what is the right thing to do.[18] An institution remains in place as long as a consensus by actors about its righteousness prevails.

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[16] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* XLIV (1996): 936-957.
[17] Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis," in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschmeyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208-240.
[18] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science."

Conversely, an institutional change takes place when there is a major crisis of legitimacy of the existing institutional arrangement.

This brief summary of approaches to institutional persistence and change demonstrates the extreme complexity of the phenomenon and variety of forces that are at play: the interests and benefits of rational actors, institutional autonomy and inertia, power struggle and power distribution imprinted in institutional design, cognitive role of institutional arrangements and their intimate connection to the dominant belief systems of the actors involved. Such fundamental historical analyses imply a longer time framework of at least several decades of institutional development and a focus on grand structural causes of institutional transformation. In contrast, the empirical puzzle of this dissertation is related to short-term and mid-term developments in official language policies. It is more interested in the immediate causes of policy selection and policy adjustment over a period of a decade or so. At the same time, my explanatory framework of language policy divergence in former Soviet republics is fully compliant with more general institutional perspectives that assume the leading role of ideational forces and power arrangements in institutional developments.

2.2.2 Policy Perspective

The origin of the field of inquiry in language policy and planning in the context of sociology of language and sociolinguistic and its early focus on the practical issues of language planning and management in new nation states have kept language policy somewhat detached from the general developments in the study of policy process. Language policy possesses certain unique characteristics compared to other public policies conventionally studied by scholars in the field. Its target population may be extremely broad; material benefits and burdens are often obscure; coherent interest groups and committed policy entrepreneurs are not always clearly identifiable. Notwithstanding the abovementioned considerations, language policy is clearly a public policy – "anything a government chooses to do or not to do."[19]

Policy studies as a subdiscipline of political science has emerged in the United States of America in the 1960s and 1970s. In a way, the development of policy analysis was a

[19] Thomas R. Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992), 2.

natural response to the grand theories of politics, most explicitly formulated in David Easton's seminal work on the political system. In this regard, policy analysis requires the unpacking of the "black box" of the government in order to trace and attempt to understand and explain the hows and whys of policymaking.

The biggest challenge for policy analysis is the extreme complexity of policymaking. There are hundreds of individual and corporate actors involved in the process in various roles and at various stages. These actors pursue a variety of goals and hold different perceptions about policy problems, which they may or may not state explicitly or even be unaware of holding such perceptions. Different policies and policy decisions are not isolated from one another neither thematically nor temporally. Instead, they are interconnected through policy spillovers and feedback loops. Policy output is disseminated in multiple pieces of legislation at different levels of government, which might not be in full consistency with each other. Finally, multiple momentous and long-lasting external factors of various origins constantly influence policy process.

Given the complexity of the task, a lens that is based on sound analytical assumptions is a necessary precondition for an empirical investigation into policymaking. Until the 1980s, "the stages heuristics", or "the policy cycle model",[20] had guided the analysis of policy process. It divided the policy process into a series of stages, such as agenda-setting, policy formulation, adoption of legislation, policy implementation and evaluation. The stages heuristics still remains a useful tool for mapping policy process and is commonly employed in textbooks for the students of policymaking.

Since the 1980s, the model has faced severe criticisms from within the field of policy analysis. The framework is not engaged with the issue of the substantive policy content and its connection to the policy making process. Likewise, it does not differentiate between the types of relevant actors and their motivations. Most importantly, the model does not meet the criteria of a genuinely causal theory, since it does not include any causal claims concerning changes in the process of policymaking.

[20] Paul A. Sabatier, "The Need for Better Theories," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Cambridge MA: Westview Press, 2007), 3-16.

The following set of questions guides an inquiry into the process of policy change: What has really changed? How do policies change? When do they change? Why do they change?[21]Above-mentioned challenges to studying policy process account for the fact that all theoretical frameworks that try to explain a policy change incorporate multiple interconnected factors of various origins and rely on combinatory causality that assumes a variety of causal paths and causal mechanisms, which can potentially condition such changes. The most well-established frameworks for the study of policy dynamics include the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework,[22] the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework,[23] the Multiple Streams Approach,[24] the Policy Generations Framework,[25] the Advocacy Coalition Framework,[26] and approaches that attempt to integrate and synthesize the components of these frameworks.[27]

Multiple scholars have contributed to the development of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework for more than three decades within a more general umbrella of rational choice institutionalism. Therefore, it maintains an organic link to an array of

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[21] Giliberto Capano, "Understanding Policy Change as an Epistemological and Theoretical Problem," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 1, no 1 (2009): 7-31.
[22] Elinor Ostrom, "Institutional Rational Choice: An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Cambridge MA: Westview Press, 2005), 21-64.
[23] Frank Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Frank Baumgartner, Christian Breunig, Christoffer Green-Pedersen, Bryan D. Jones, Peter B. Mortensen, Michiel Nuytemans and Stefaan Walgrave, "Punctuated Equilibrium in Comparative Perspective," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no 3 (2009): 603-20.
[24] John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2014); Nikolaos Zahariadis, *Ambiguity and Choice in Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003); Nikolaos Zahariadis, "The Multiple Streams Framework: Structure, Limitations, Prospects," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Cambridge MA: Westview Press, 2007), 65-92.
[25] Michiel S. De Vries, "Developments in Europe: The idea of policy generations*," International Review of Administrative Sciences* 65, no. 4 (1999): 491-510; Michiel S. De Vries, "The Secret and Cost of Success: Institutional change and policy change," in *Governance in Modern Society: Effects, Change and Formation of Government Institutions*, eds. Oscar van Heffen, Walter J. M. Kickert and Jacques J. A. Thomassen (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000), 61–86.
[26] Paul A. Sabatier, "Knowledge, Policy-Oriented Learning, and Policy Change: An Advocacy Coalition Framework," *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization* 8, no. 4 (1987): 649-692; Paul A. Sabatier and Hank C. Jenkins-Smith (eds.), *Policy Change and Learning: An advocacy coalition approach* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1993); Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Cambridge MA: Westview Press, 2007): 189-222; Christopher M, Weible and Daniel Nohrsted, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Coalitions, learning and policy change," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*, eds. Eduardo Araral Jr., Scott Fritzen, Michael Howlett, M Ramesh and Xun Wu (NY: Routledge,2013), 125-137.
[27] Carter A. Wilson, "Policy Regimes and Policy Change," *Journal of Public Policy* 20, no. 3 (2000): 247-274.

utilitarian explanations of institutional development, mentioned in the previous section. Concisely, the IADF assumes that "analysis of the public sector should be no different in its basic assumptions from the studies of the market-oriented private sector".[28] The framework provides policy analysis with a general outlook on multi-tier decision-making in institutional settings by looking at relevant action arenas and decision-making actors. The analysis involves the reconstruction of an action situation based on a common set of variables such as the set of participants, their specific positions and levels of control over choice, allowable actions, possible outcomes, information available to participants, and the costs and benefits assigned to actions and outcomes. The specification of actors, resources, relevant structural conditions and particular institutional settings allows for making stronger or weaker predictions about a particular policy outcome resulting from a given policy situation.

In sum, the IADF represents more of an overarching purview that aids the analysis of the process of policy selection rather than a full-fledged casual theory. Therefore, it does not provide specific insights into the particular casual mechanisms of policy change. With its strong focus on political economy and problem-solving perspective, the IADF seems to be less suitable for a straightforward analysis of situations similar to the adoption of official language policies in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts, because it leaves out such questions as the origins of particular preferences of the actors involved. At the same time, it provides a particularly useful heuristic for mapping possible policy outcomes, based on the number of actors, their weight and policy preferences. I employ such deductive mapping of policy outcomes in order to model possible language policy outcomes in former Soviet republics.

Empirical observations about public policy change suggest that public policies are typically quite resilient, but radical policy innovations do occur from time to time after periods of relative stability.[29] The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory postulates that a possibility of non-

[28] Michael D. McGinnis and Paul Dragos Aligica, "Institutional Analysis and Political Economy," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*, eds. Eduardo Araral Jr., Scott Fritzen, Michael Howlett, M Ramesh and Xun Wu (NY: Routledge, 2013), 87.

[29] Graeme Boushey, "The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory of Agenda-Setting and Policy Change," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*, eds. Eduardo Araral Jr., Scott Fritzen, Michael Howlett, M Ramesh and Xun Wu (NY: Routledge, 2015), 128; James L. True, Bryan D. Jones, and Frank R. Baumgartner,

incremental policy change emerges when a policy issue moves beyond normal decision-making arenas and 'breaks free' from the routine cycle of policymaking. "To understand forces leading to both policy stability and rapid change in a single political system, punctuated equilibrium theory approaches the study of public policy longitudinally by exploring how focusing events, institutional venues, policy ideas and policy entrepreneurs interact to produce policy change."[30]

The framework employs the concept of bounded rationality as the microfoundation for decision-making process. Limited by time constraints and scarcity of information, decision-makers cannot engage in a comprehensive search for a solution for each and every policy problem. Therefore, under normal circumstances policymaking takes place in a relatively small policy subsystem, made up of a limited number of actors who routinely engage with the topic. Such policy subsystems enjoy a monopoly in the policy field and are guided by a common stable policy image – "a mixture of empirical information and emotive appeals."[31]

Since each potential decision is accompanied by a degree of uncertainty about possible consequences, incremental decision-making is a usual response by limiting solution searches to a small set of local alternatives and making small adjustments to the existing policy course. Dramatic policy changes are also impeded by the general institutional bias towards stability and by the difficulty of overcoming various veto points.[32] All of these factors, taken together, reinforces negative policy cycles, which impede potential policy changes.

Sweeping changes happen during the periods of policy disequilibrium when "a focusing event directs system-wide attention onto a new salient dimension of public policy issue, elevating it to the forefront of the institutional and mass political agendas".[33] The appearance of the policy issue on the system-wide political agenda is thus the key factor that makes rapid policy change possible. Such shifts in political agenda open up a window of opportunity for policy entrepreneurs to push for a dramatic policy shift. Policy issue

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"Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Cambridge MA: Westview Press, 2007), 155.

[30] Boushey, "The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory," 139.

[31] True et al., "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory," 165.

[32] George Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How political institutions work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[33] Boushey, "The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory," 141.

receives disproportionate attention of the mass publics and of those political leaders who would not engage with it under normal circumstances. Typically, these newcomers are the proponents of change who help overcome the status-quo bias.[34] Thus, exogenous shocks, or focusing events, set the mechanism of policy change in motion. Changes in the policy image, receptivity of institutional venues, participation of interest groups and policy entrepreneurs converge to produce policy change over time.

In sum, the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework conceptualizes the longitudinal patterns of policy change in mature political systems. The essential sources of rapid policy change are external but filtered through the political system. External events trigger changes in agenda setting, decision-making venues and the composition of involved actors; and produce sweeping policy changes.

A noteworthy contribution to policy analysis, which incorporates a constructivist dimension into the general logic of the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework, is the social construction framework.[35] The authors argue that policy design is closely linked to the constructed image of the target population, which they define as groups actually chosen to receive benefits and burdens through the various elements of policy design. The social constructions of different target populations complement the cognitive limitations of decision-makers and institutional bias towards status quo and jointly contribute to policy stability. The relationship between social constructions and policy design is also reciprocal so that already existing policies reinforce and consolidate the prevailing socially constructed images of particular groups.

Ingram and Schneider differentiate target populations according to their political powers and prevailing social images into four categories – advantaged, contenders, dependents and deviants. Advantaged groups, such as middle-class families or small business owners, enjoy both significant political powers and a positive social image as deserving and important for the general well-being of society. Contender groups, such as large businesses,

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[34] True et al., "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory."

[35] Helen Ingram and Anne L. Schneider, "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (1993): 334-47; Helen Ingram and Anne L. Schneider, "Social Construction (Continued): Response," *The American Political Science Review* 89, no 2 (1995): 441-46; Helen Ingram and Anne L. Schneider, "Introduction: Public Policy and the Social Construction of Deservedness," in *Deserving and Entitled*, eds. Helen Ingram and Anne L. Schneider (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 1-28.

also enjoy significant political powers but suffer from a negative social image of being selfish or morally suspect. Dependent groups, such as families in poverty or minorities, lack significant political powers but enjoy a positive social image mostly associated with sympathy. Deviant social groups lack both political powers and a positive social image. Illegal immigrants, criminals and drug users commonly fall into the deviant category.

The general logic of public policy design will comply with the following template: through public policies the government will allocate extensive benefits to advantaged groups, empty burdens and hidden benefits to contender groups, demanding and inadequate benefits with hidden burdens to dependent groups, and mostly burdens and no benefits to deviant groups. Incremental policy revisions will only exacerbate the already existing pattern of unequal distribution of benefits and burdens.

The authors argue that a change in public policy design will concur with a change in the social construction of a target population. They list a number of factors that may contribute to the transformation of the dominant social construction and hence to changes in public policies.[36] An external event can trigger changes in the socially constructed image of a particular group. For instance, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 affected the image of the Muslim and Arab population in the USA, which had its implications on state policies on security and fight with terrorism. Social movements are another powerful agent of change in prevailing social constructions. The cumulative effect of the work of various types of entrepreneurs also contributes to such changes. Other factors that may lead to the transformation of existing constructions are advances in scientific and technology, spillovers from other policy areas, and changes in the demographic characteristics of a long-standing target population.

Finally, increasing policy returns over time can eventually generate changes in prevailing social constructions. Once more and more benefits are allocated to an advantaged group, the total among of benefits becomes too disproportionate, which aids the transformation of the group's perception towards a more negative direction. The formerly advantaged group eventually becomes perceived as "spoiled" and receiving more benefits than it actually deserves.

[36] Ingram and Schneider, "Introduction," 8-16.

In principle, the social construction framework of policy process can be appropriated for the analysis of official language policies so that one can hypothesize the following map of the target population. An official language policy will provide an advantaged linguistic group with multiple material and non-material benefits and entitle it with related privileges. The policy will recognize an associated language as national or official. The members of the advantaged linguistic group will also enjoy a positively constructed image of the principal bearers of national identity and culture. Provisions regarding the protection of minority languages will target the language of a linguistic group that is constructed as dependent and worth sympathy and protection. The language of a linguistic group that is constructed as contender will receive limited or no official recognition on paper, but language use will not be restricted in practice. The state will suppress the use of the language of a deviant linguistic group through various legal restrictions and punishment mechanisms.

The framework is consistent with my argument about the changes in official language policies in the former Soviet republics. Undoubtedly, the dominant social images of targeted linguistic groups have greatly affected specific language policy designs. However, the framework is best suited for the analysis of those empirical cases where the target population makes up a coherent, clearly identifiable social group. In contrast, language policies in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts engaged with the simultaneous construction and reconstruction of the contested images of multiple, very broad and often overlapping target populations, such as Russian-speaking population, titular population, Russified titular population, ethnic Russians, ethnolinguistic minorities and others. I also suggest that in the Soviet context, a prevailing discourse on nationhood already subsumes the dominant social images of multiple ethnolinguistic groups as its integral component.

The Multiple Streams Approach, developed by John W. Kingdon,[37] is another framework for policy analysis that links policy changes to changes in political agenda. Kingdon turns to the garbage can model of decision making in organizations in order to depict policy process. In the garbage can model, "choice is conceptualized as a garbage can into which participants, who drift in and out of decisions, dump largely unrelated problems and

[37] Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies.*

solutions. No one person controls the process of choice, and fluctuating attendance, opportunities, and attention give the process highly dynamic and interactive qualities."[38]

The framework conceptualizes the policymaking process as made of three largely independent streams – problems, solutions, and politics. The problem stream consists of social problems. The policy stream consists of proposed policy solutions or policy alternatives. The politics stream consists of elections and electoral struggle. Different groups of actors dominated the three streams. Multiple advocacy groups and civil society actors identify and define societal problems. Policy specialists, experts and members of epistemic communities develop possible policy solutions and policy alternatives. Elected politicians operate in the politics stream and their primary concern is to maintain their position in the system.

Only at certain points in time focusing events may open a window of opportunity for a policy change. There are both predictable and unpredictable windows of opportunity. Predictable windows appear at times of scheduled policy renewals. Unpredictable windows can open because of policy spillovers, perturbations within the political stream or external shocks and pressing problems that demand an immediate response.

The likelihood of a policy change during such windows is the highest when the three streams of policymaking are linked so that the policy issue becomes firmly fixed on a decision agenda. Such linking means that a problem is recognized, a policy solution is available and political conditions are conducive for giving the issue serious attention. If no ready solution is available for a policy issue or a societal problem is not clearly identified by the time of the opening, a policy change is unlikely.

Kingdon stresses the critical role of policy entrepreneurs in coupling the three streams at times of such windows of opportunity.[39] Qualities, which are necessary for successful policy entrepreneurship, are expertise, ability to speak for others, authoritative decision-making position, political connections, negotiating skills and persistency. Political entrepreneurs should be skillful, committed and prepared in advance in order to grab an opportunity to advocate for a policy change when an opportunity window opens. Therefore,

[38] Zahariadis, "The Multiple Streams Framework," 66.
[39] Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*,179-180.

a successful policy change takes place when a window of opportunity is open, all three streams contain necessary elements ready for linking, and policy entrepreneurs successfully couple them with one another.

The Policy Generations Approach, which has been developed by de Vries,[40] departs from the concept of the bounded rationality of decision-makers and relative attention paradigm. The set of problems constantly operating in the background is much larger than the capacity of policy makers to address it; and the dominant political culture of the period accounts for those policies that are selected and those policy issues that are neglected by policymakers, summed up as policy generations. An external shock, such as war or major economic perturbations, triggers a crisis that brings previously neglected problems to the forefront and a passage between two policy generations takes place.

Both the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework and Multiple Streams Approach rely on the role of external triggers and changes in systemic agenda as the necessary conditions for a sweeping policy change. The Policy Generations Approach also links policy changes to changes in policy-making agenda but locates them within more general policy cycles and includes the dominant political culture of the period as the variable that explains the content of policy issues that are selected or neglected by policymakers.

Such frameworks are especially suitable for the analysis of the period preceding the adoption of the first tier of language laws in the Soviet Socialist Republics in 1989 and 1990. Activists in different republics had already identified Russification and the progressing loss of linguistic identity as a societal problem prior to the period of policy debate, which mostly took place in the second half of 1980s. For example, a Ukrainian dissident Oleksa Hirnyk burned himself in the city of Kaniv, protesting against the suppression of the Ukrainian language, culture and history by the Soviet authorities in 1978.[41]

Policy solutions, such as proactive official languages policies that included measures to promote titular languages, could be easily extracted from the legacies of early Soviet policies on ethnicity and nationhood. However, the dominant political culture of the period

[40] De Vries, "Developments in Europe; De Vries, "The Secret and Cost of Success."
[41] Oleh Bazhan and Yurii Danyliuk, *Ukraiinskyi natsionalnyi rukh: osnovni tendentsiyi i etapy rozvytku (kinets 1950-kh – 1980-ti roki)* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriyi Ukrayiny NAN Ukrayiny, 2000), 110-111.

included a commitment to constructing a common Soviet identity and strengthening interethnic ties. The official policy image of the period was grounded on a claim that the nationality question had been mostly resolved in the Soviet Union. In terms of language policy and planning, governmental institutions prioritized the necessity to improve the knowledge of the Russian language by the non-Russian ethnic population of the Soviet Union to the level of a "second mother tongue."

Only a chain of focusing events in the second half of the 1980s brought about necessary political changes and elevated the issue of language policy to the decision agendas of the Soviet republics. Arguably, the most important such event was the declaration of the policies of perestroika and glasnost, which had tremendous spillover effects on all other aspects of political, economic and social life of the Soviet Union. Other events include the intensification of interethnic tensions and eruption of interethnic conflicts, of which a conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, broken out in 1988, had probably the most far-reaching effect. Policy entrepreneurs, who have gained access to new arenas, such as media and civil society organizations, successfully coupled the problem of the demise of titular languages to proposed policy solutions – an official language policy that prioritizes the status of the titular language. Finally, politicians responded to the hot topic on the agenda by adopting laws on official languages.

Nevertheless, whereas these frameworks for policy analysis stress the role of policy entrepreneurs they do not directly address the question of why particular entrepreneurs eventually become successful in turning their policy preferences into actual public policies. Such frameworks are preoccupied with the question of when and under what conditions policy change can happen rather than with specific policy content and the direction of change, such as language policy divergence in the empirical cases of this dissertation. Besides, frameworks that focus on changes in political agenda are less suitable for a comparative analysis of those cases where the problem of language policy constantly remained on the agenda following the adoption of the initial language laws. In Belarus, Latvia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, language issues had arguably remained politically salient well into the first decade of independence, but the initially similar official language policies of these countries subsequently changed at different times and according to different trajectories.

Considering these limitations, I primarily rely on the Advocacy Coalition Framework for policy analysis as the most appropriate lens for the investigation of the language policy change in the empirical cases of this dissertation. Paul A. Sabatier presented the Advocacy Coalition Framework in his article published in 1987.[42] Its initial scope of applicability was limited to highly competitive and pluralistic environment of the American politics. The framework was subsequently developed, expanded and refined by multiple scholars in the 1990s and 2000s so that it could be appropriated for policy analysis in other empirical contexts. Concisely, the framework's claim is that "policy change is best seen as fluctuations in the dominant belief systems within a given policy area/subsystem over time."[43]

Sabatier suggested shifting the locus of policy analysis from specific formal institutions and organizations to policy subsystems - "those actors from a variety of public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue."[44] The precise profile of actors involved can change across policy issues, geographic and historical contexts. The framework stresses the ideational component of policy process by arguing that policy participants hold strong beliefs and are motivated to translate those beliefs into public policy. Policy actors seek allies among those who hold similar beliefs in the policy subsystem. If such groups of actors sustain coordination over time, they form an advocacy coalition.

The framework assumes the threefold belief structure of policy actors - deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs. Deep core beliefs are both the most general and most rigid components of the belief system. They come into being during the formative years and consist of ideological leanings and perceptions about righteousness of certain basic principles of social, economic, and political life. Policy core beliefs stem from deep core beliefs and reflect a general understanding about what would be the right policy to address a policy issue. Secondary beliefs incorporate ideas about the particular details of policy design and implementation and can be altered relatively easily, compared to deep core and policy core beliefs.

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[42] Sabatier, "Knowledge, Policy-Oriented Learning."
[43] Sabatier, "Knowledge, Policy-Oriented Learning," 650.
[44] Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, *Policy Change and Learning*, 17.

The assumption about the centrality of belief system, in turn, suggests two following aspects of policy process. First, since policy preferences stem from the core beliefs of policy actors they remain stable over relatively long periods. Second, advocacy coalitions, which are formed around common beliefs, tend to endure, even if they cannot reach immediate success. In this regard, they are different from so-called minimal-size coalitions. Multiple advocacy coalitions may form around a policy issue, each promoting and defending its own preferred policy alternative.

Antagonistic advocacy coalitions develop a shared attitude to each other of what Sabatier refers to as "devil shift" – tendency to perceive the opponents as eviler than they actually are. Combined with the overall rigidity of core beliefs, such an attitude severely limits the possibility of cooperation and compromise between antagonistic advocacy coalitions. Under such circumstances, the presence, active role and political weight of policy brokers – "a category of actors whose dominant concerns are with keeping the level of political conflict within acceptable limits and reaching some "reasonable" solution to the problem"[45]– will condition the possibility of a compromise policy outcome. Otherwise, a particular public policy will be the reflection of the policy core beliefs of the dominant advocacy coalition. Critical paths to policy change will be associated with the changes in beliefs of the dominant coalition or its replacement with an advocacy coalition that was previously in minority.

Except for a general reference to coalition resources, the original version of the framework remained salient on the issue of more clear-cut differentiation between the characteristics of a dominant advocacy coalition, whose policy version is adopted, and minority coalitions. Sabatier and Weible[46] partially addressed this shortcoming and suggested adding a typology of policy-relevant resources. Those include the presence of allies in authority; support by public opinion, access to information; support by "mobilizable troops" – organizations and groups that engage in contentious politics; financial resources; and skillful leadership. The biggest challenge posed by incorporation of various types of coalition resources in empirical research is that aggregating such resources into a single

[45] Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, *Policy Change and Learning*, 27.
[46] Sabatier and Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework."

composite variable reflecting the general strength or weight of a particular coalition is extremely difficult.

In the absence of major shifts between advocacy coalitions, secondary policy adjustments may still accumulate over time and account for a noticeable alteration of the original public policy through the mechanism of policy-oriented learning. Policy-oriented learning is an incremental cognitive process, in which the members of the dominant advocacy coalition refine their policy beliefs based on the new information generated by policy implementation and policy feedback. This path precludes dramatic policy changes, because policy-oriented learning does not affect core beliefs and policy core beliefs. In this case, policy change is gradual, and norm governed.

Internal and external shocks and exceptional cases of negotiated agreements make up the menu of alternative paths for policy change. Internal shocks are those events, such as major and apparent policy failures with far-reaching societal consequences, which seriously challenge the belief system of the dominant coalition and simultaneously strengthen the belief system of the alternative coalition. Simultaneously and relatedly, such shocks also cause the redistribution of policy-relevant resources, available to each coalition by raising doubt and giving incentives for defection among coalition members and its political allies, but also affecting the mood of the general public, demobilizing some social movements and civil society groups while galvanizing others. Unlike internal shocks, which affect both believe systems and coalition resources, external shocks, such as changes in socioeconomic conditions, regime changes and outputs form other subsystems, lead to the redistribution of coalition resources and opening or closing of venues within the policy subsystem without directly affecting the belief systems.

Finally, more recent modifications of the Advocacy Coalition Framework add a negotiated agreement as an alternative path of policy change, suggesting that under very specific conditions sweeping public policy shifts still can be observed even in the absence of major external or internal perturbations.[47] Among others, such conditions include a protracted nature of the conflict, a hurtling policy stalemate, and consensual decision-making culture.

[47] Sabatier and Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework."

Empirical case studies that employ the framework start with the identification of the properties of the policy subsystem, stable and unstable parameters of the broader policy system, identification of major policy advocacy coalitions and the components of their core beliefs.[48] The analysis of the trajectory of policy change proceeds with the identification of stable parameters of the system, resources available to rivalry coalitions and with the process tracing of causal factors that accounted for redistribution of coalition resources or/and changes in the core beliefs of the advocacy coalitions and led to the subsequent policy change.

In comparison to other approaches to policy analysis, the Advocacy Coalition Framework provides a number of particular advantages as the point of departure for empirical research on language policy change. The proponents of policy alternatives are grouped and differentiated based on stable ideational criteria, instead of purely utilitarian concerns or immediate benefits. This differentiation is especially relevant for public policies with a very pronounced non-material dimension and less pronounced and ambiguous material implications. Unlike other approaches, which contrast policy status-quo with policy change, the ACF is also more equipped for the analysis of policy change as competition among multiple policy alternatives. As different advocacy coalitions back and promote corresponding policy alternatives the content of policy change is determined by the advocacy coalition, which eventually acquires the dominant position in decision-making. Besides, the concept of policy subsystems allows for a necessary degree of flexibility of analysis in immature political systems, such as post-Soviet regimes, since it is not limited to formal political arenas and institutions.

In sum, policymaking is a complex process, characterized by a plurality of relevant actors, arenas, and causal factors of various origins, which are contingent to geographic and historical circumstances. Yet despite such complexity and variation, policymaking is not a completely random, chaotic, and idiosyncratic process. This dissertation appropriates the propositions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework for a comparative analysis of policy

[48] Sarah Tadlaoui, "The Land Reform Policy in Colombia: Advocacy Coalitions and Policy Contradictions," in *Analyzing Public Policies in Latin America: A Cognitive Approach*, eds. Melina Rocha Lukic and Carla Tomazini (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 25-38; Veronica Huencho-Figueroa, "The Process of Indigenous Policy in Chile: An Analysis from the Advocacy Coalition Framework," in *Analyzing Public Policies in Latin America: A Cognitive Approach*, eds. Melina Rocha Lukic and Carla Tomazini (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 39-62.

change in the empirical cases as the most convenient tool for structuring the comparison and narrowing down the scope of enquiry of the research.

2.3 Definition of Nationhood as Core Belief for Language Policy Preferences

The goal of this section is to provide a theoretical context and historical background that explain why official language policies tend to have affinity with nation building and bear a prominent symbolic weight in this relation, rather than being the subject of exclusively utilitarian calculations and management of linguistic diversity. In no way this section can be considered a comprehensive and exhaustive survey of the complex relationship between language, nation and nation state. However, even this necessarily brief discussion illustrates that the connection between linguistic and national components of modern statehood is ubiquitous and what ultimately varies is not its presence but origins and salience. More specifically, a nation building project, regardless of its origin, would have a propensity for official monolingualism. Conversely, official multilingualism requires an explicit justification for its compatibility with a particular discourse of nationhood.

2.3.1 Language and Nation

Various definitions of nation tend to share a common core that refers to some form of a horizontal community aspiring for or having control over a political unit of its own. Conversely, nationalism is a political ideology that postulates that national and political boundaries should coincide. Such definitions, while operationally useful, except for their political character, tell little about the substantive nature of a national unit and its presumed 'natural' boundaries. The scarcity of substantive elements in these definitions, which are also somewhat tautological and recursive, is the resulting compromise on the debate about the timing and causes of nationalism and the origins of nation state.[49]

The phenomenon of nationalism and nation state formation is not and shall not be inherently linguistic. In practice, the relationship between language and nation(-building) seem to be more often than not quite prominent. Broadly speaking, there are two major distinct modes through which this connection may arise. The first mode is ethnocultural,

[49] In my view, this debate is essentially unresolvable given the heterogenous character of nation state formation in different regions and historical periods, which in causal terms can best be described as equifinality.

where the significance of language for ethnically defined nationhood is the replication of relationship between language and ethnicity.[50] The second mode is statist, in which modern state fosters linguistic unity to achieve sociocultural homogeneity within its administrative borders. Regardless of the mode, this connection can either take an explicit form as the ideology of linguistic nationalism or remain less openly articulated but yet detectible and consequential for policy making.

The first mode pertains to nationhood, defined in predominantly ethnic terms, where the underlying ethnic core is closely related or equated with the corresponding linguistic group. Linguistic German nationalism of the late 18th -19th centuries (represented by classical works of Herder and Fichte) has produced the most radically essentialist view on the role of language in nationhood. According to Fichte, culture in general and language in particular is the 'soul' of a nation, the latter being its most important distinguishing characteristic.[51] In other words, linguistic and cultural bonds, which are primordial and objective, are also the defining aspects of a nation. By the last quarter of the 19th century, most new nationalist movements in Europe developed on the fringes of multiethnic empires. Thus, given the stateless conditions of such nationalisms and their antagonism to the political unit that harbored them, ethnic and linguistic nationalism became the prevailing norm in Europe.[52]

Ethnocentric nationalism as such has great potential to engender close links with language, even when it is not articulated as openly and explicitly as in the German case. Scholarly approaches to ethnicity differ vastly in their views on the genesis of the phenomenon, its durability and malleability, role of individual choices and other aspects. Despite vast differences, all major approaches seem to share a point of agreement regarding the defining feature of an ethnic group that pertains to an idea of kinship and relatedness of its members[53] that transcend easily traceable and verifiable boundaries. As membership in a

[50] A number of scholars (Walker Connor, Pierre van den Berghe, Paul Brass, Anthony D. Smith.) argue that common ethnicity is a necessary precondition for nationhood A more widespread approach is to distinguish nationhood types by the modes of their relation to ethnicity. However, empirically the majority of nationalisms tend to be ethnic in their nature (Thomas Hylland Eriksen*, Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* [London: Pluto Press, 1993], 118).
[51] May, *Language and Minority Rights*.
[52] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Miroslav Hroch, *European Nations: Explaining Their Formation* (London, New York: Verso, 2015).
[53] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1978 [1922]); Richard A. Schermerhorn*, Comparative Ethnic Relations: A framework for*

modern-day ethnic group is too broad to be delineated in definitive and unambiguous terms[54], it must rely on perceptions, feelings and beliefs about relatedness by origin, often reinforced by one or more secondary markers that "prove" the correctness of such beliefs.[55]

The commonality of language (or a specific dialect) is by no means the necessary element or marker of ethnic identity. But it is, arguably, one of the most powerful and ubiquitous ones. We can often observe a fusion of linguistic and ethnic identities in practice, reflected in the frequent use of the term "ethnolinguistic." This equivalency is not new. According to Bartlett, a strong sense of connection between language and ethnic community and fusion of the two was present in Europe in the Middle Ages.[56] The word "language" was commonly used in contemporary medieval accounts, written in multiple European languages, as the substitute for people who spoke it.

In some contexts, such as Canada, Switzerland or Belgium, linguistic identities subsume ethnic identities all together for the practical purposes. In other contexts, they remain conceptually separate, but clearly related and often conflated. For example, Soviet administrators maintained a distinction between an individual's spoken language and ethnicity, cemented it in population censuses and personal identification documents; but most ethnic categories in Soviet lists still originated from the imperial academic research on linguistic groups in the Russian Empire and the 1897 census, which registered language and religion.[57]

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theory and research (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Anthony D. Smith, "Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no 3 (1992): 436-56; Clifford Geertz, "Primordial Ties," (1963) in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40-45; Pierre L. Van den Berghe,"Does Race Matter?" *Nations and Nationalism* I, no. 3 (1995): 359-68; Joshua A. Fishman, "Social Theory and Ethnography," in *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter Sugar (Santa Barbara: ADC-Clio, 1980), 69-99.

[54] By the impossibility if the delineation of membership I mean that relatedness cannot be unambiguously verified by blood tests (at least up until very recently) or historical records of common ancestry for each and every individual. Although there are certain genetic peculiarities, which seem to be more or less associated with certain ethnic backgrounds, such peculiarities are based on the prevalence of certain genetic features among essentially socially defined populations and are probabilistic in their nature. In case of ethnicity, a degree of genetic relatedness through common ancestry can also be a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Paul Brass (*Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* [New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991]) notices, the sense of kinship might be reinforced and reproduced by ethnic differentiation that establishes explicit or tacit rules of endogamy and exogamy. Once such rules are established, an isolated genetic pool begins to form.

[55] Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (Westport CT, London: Praeger, 1987), 27-28.

[56] Robert, Bartlett, *The Making of Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994).

[57] Valerii Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 30.

The frequent co-variance of ethnic and linguistic identities is explained by the fact that language has unique features that allow it to serve as an efficient cultural substitute for blood relatedness. As Nash notices, "successful mastery of language implies learning it from birth, in the context of the kinship or primary group. Learning a language as an adult or as a latter-in-life accomplishment is not the same as being a 'native' speaker of the language".[58] Bourdieu refers to such early formation of linguistic identity as *linguistic habitus* that comprises an integral part of an one's social self, beginning at early childhood.[59] It is extremely difficult for an outsider to 'fake' one's membership to a particular speech community, because "few people retain the ability to mimic the phonetics of a language learned after puberty".[60] Thus, an individual linguistic background is quickly and involuntarily revealed in daily interaction. To rephrase Marshall McLuhan's famous book title, medium (i.e., speech variety) itself also serves as a clear message (of being an insider or an outsider).

At the group level, language is closely intertwined with ethnically relevant cultural content (myths, poems, songs, etc.), for much of it is linguistic in nature.[61] The link between ethnic "knowing" and language - that is the group's ability to express itself only in its authentic language - is not universal but very common and powerful.[62] A perceived or real threat to the shared authentic language is then equated with a threat to the persistence of the community that speaks this language.

Language is also much less malleable and susceptible to sweeping changes than various cultural markers, such as commonalities in dress, housing, food, religious beliefs and practices, etc. Thus, it is especially suitable and frequently used for the purposes of demarcating ethnic boundaries, such as boundaries of ethnic autonomies.[63]

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[58] Manning Nash, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press. 1989), 12.
[59] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).
[60] Van den Berghe, "Does Race Matter?" 365-66.
[61] Fishman, "Social Theory and Ethnography"; Joshua A. Fishman, "The Truth about Language and Culture (and a Note about its Relevance to the Jewish Case)," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 109 (1994): 83-96; Nancy C. Dorian, "Linguistic and Ethnographic Fieldwork," in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25-41.
[62] Fishman, "Social Theory and Ethnography."
[63] May, *Language and Minority Rights*.

Since language is commonly passed in a natural way from parents to children it engenders very strong primordial feelings of ancestry and relatedness.[64] According to Anderson, the emergence of shared readership in vernacular languages played a crucial role in engendering the feeling of belonging to a common national community. However, linguistic continuity, experienced by an individual, rarely exceeds three generations, meaning that once a language shift occurs, a language revitalization project unfolds or language standardization and suppression of dialects takes place, a newly adopted or substantially altered language starts to be passed onto following generations in a natural way. Language is also sufficiently inclusive because it transcends (but nor erases) class differences and allows for relatively smooth intergenerational assimilation of outsiders into the recipient linguistic community: "It is a collective memory which perpetuates itself at the cost of an individual forgetting of 'origins.' It is also very universalistic and transcends class, status, gender, even actual origins once someone is assimilated enough, like second-generation migrants".[65]

Such feelings of relatedness through a shared language do not necessarily disappear after the "ancestral" language is no longer spoken. Language shifts have been common in ethnically and linguistically diverse environments, especially in situations of empirical domination and in the course of migrations. Individual linguistic choices can be subjected to various economic, social and political pressures and incentives so that community members might opt for the mastery of a non-native language for their children[66] even to the potential determents of their mother tongue. But I would argue that intergenerational language loss, which may eventually result from such individual choices is mostly an unforeseen and unintended consequence. Even when such a loss occurs there is often a continuing psychological attachment to the "lost" language.[67] Many immigrant communities, which underwent linguistic shifts, still express their special feelings and

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[64] Benedict, Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 67-81; Fishman, "Social Theory and Ethnography."
[65] Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, eds. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), 99.
[66] David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
[67] John Edwards, *Language and Identity: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

emotional attachments towards an 'associated' language.[68] Moreover, in some contexts, an individual's inability to understand or speak his or her "own" language or dialect can be grounds for embarrassment or shaming by the larger community.[69]

In summary, a spoken common language operates as a strong proof (at least in the eyes of its speakers) of some form of relatedness and commonality in origin due to its being usually passed on in family and immediate social environment at a very young age. Unlike other cultural markers, language identity is revealed and practiced on a daily basis by virtue of its communicative function. Language also serves as a vessel for much of immaterial ethnically charged cultural content. Even a forgotten ancestral language may continue to act as a historical artifact and symbolic manifestation of relatedness at the group level and help reinforce the myth of common origin. Such residual ancestral linguistic elements can also be manifested in geographical toponyms[70] and personal names.[71]

Therefore, ethnic identity will naturally tend to seek reinforcement from a corresponding linguistic identity if one exists. Moreover, it is questionable whether a common ethnic identity can emerge in the absence of some initial shared linguistic background. In other words, the latter might be a necessary but not sufficient element for the formation of ethnic identity, while being a common element in its perpetuation and reinforcement. An ethnocultural nation building project will be strongly influenced by an affinity between language and ethnic identity, reflected in the official language policy of the corresponding nation state.

An alternative pathway that links nation building and language is the utilization of the latter by modern state as tool of public communication, administration and cultural standardization.[72] A shared standard language, spoken by all the members of a national unit, serves the primary communicative function, through which the desired degree of

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[68] Carol M. Eastman, *Language Planning, an Introduction* (San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1983).
[69] Giles Howard and Nikolas Coupland, *Language: Context and Consequences* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company,1991), 96.
[70] Diarmait Mac Giolla Chriost, *Language, Identity, and Conflict: A Comparative Study of Language in Ethnic Conflict in Europe and Eurasia* (London, New York: Routledge. 2003).
[71] Bjorn H. Jernudd, "Personal Names and Human Rights," in *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*, eds. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 121-134.
[72] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2d. ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

centralization, unification and efficient administration can be achieved.[73] Besides, the promotion of a common language is necessity both for social and cultural congruency and for the unification of people into a single political community. Finally, if the political aspect of the nation state is taken into account, there is also a need for a common language of public political dialogue that is crucial for exercising modern democracy.[74] In the result, a particular language becomes affiliated with a nation state and undergoes institutionalization – the process, by which the language comes to be accepted or taken for granted in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal.[75] Universal mass education plays a crucial role in this process: "If language and politics were a country, education would be its capital, the great centralised and centralising metropolis that everyone passes through, from which the country is run and where its future course is determined."[76] Standardized education provides the society with competence required for the institutions of the modern state[77] and produces a historically unprecedented degree of linguistic uniformity at the mass level.

The linguistic raw material for such a common standardized language is not random. A natural candidate is a version of vernacular, usually spoken by the population living in and around the administrative capital or otherwise significant economic and political center. The choice of the local vernacular as a shared standard language is rational since it is quicker and more cost-efficient to adopt such a vernacular as the means of administration and education state-wide. However, local vernaculars also serve an important symbolic purpose of differentiation, as the idea of nation "minimizes its internal differences and maximizes external ones" hence, "the rational national ideal demands that there be single linguistic code"[78]. In other words, the ideology of nationalism produces a desire to have a distinct common language.[79] The desire to have a shared but distinct national language is

[73] Edwards, *Language and Identity*.
[74] Alan Patten and Will Kymlicka, "Language Rights and Political Theory: Context, Issues, and Approaches," in *Language Rights and Political Theory*, eds. Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-51
[75] May, *Language and Minority Rights.*
[76] John E. Joseph, *Language and Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 46.
[77] Jacob T. Levy, "Language Rights, Literacy, and the Modern State," in *Language Rights and Political Theory*, eds. Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 231-236.
[78] Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation."
[79] Karl Deutsch, "The Trend of European Nationalism--the Language Aspect," The American Political Science Review 36, no. 3 (1942): 533-541.

apparent in examples when closely related speech varieties are standardized into different languages and linguistic dissimilarities are highlighted, although for the utilitarian purposes of communication, trade and the overall economy of scale it would have been more practical to share a common standard. Such examples include, but are not limited to, the standardization of the Azerbaijani language vis-a-vis Turkish; separate literary standards for closely related Scandinavian and East Slavic languages; separate Czech and Slovak languages. The most recent example of this tendency is the overall direction of language planning in the countries of former Yugoslavia towards the maximization of differences among the local spoken Southern Slavic varieties, once referred to as a common Serbo-Croatian language but currently claimed to be separate Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin languages.

Thus, state-centered nation building projects have a propensity to rely on a single and preferably distinct national language as the tool of social, economic, political and cultural standardization and homogenization within state boundaries. At the level of language policy this propensity is reflected in the overall push for official monolingualism and low tolerance for linguistic diversity as such. When a nation building project succeeds in establishing a nation state the distinction between the two pathways that link nation and language becomes less apparent. The associated language in ethnocultural nation states becomes institutionalized in a wide range of public domains. State-centered nation building projects tend to incorporate multiple symbols and cultural markers into their official historical narratives and strengthen the symbolic role of the common language. According to Balibar, all nations are fictive ethnicities in the sense that they tend to reimagine themselves in ethnic terms when a nation state is established; and common language plays a key role in this process, second only to the role of phenotypical/racial differences and commonalities.[80]

Given a strong tendency for a nation state to be congruent with official monolingualism, under which circumstances can particular nation building projects be reconciled with official multilingualism? One alternative is to redefine a political unit as harboring more than one community with their associated languages. Such situation can be conceptualized

[80] Balibar, "The Nation Form," 96.

either as multiethnic nationhood, in which nation is defined as consisting of a plurality of ethnolinguistic groups, or a multinational statehood, in which a state becomes a shared vessel for nation building projects by multiple nations, defined in ethnocultural terms. The former vision is congruent with the dominant Western perspective on nations and nationalism, which implies that each modern state is coterminous with a nation state, encompassing a single political nation.[81] The latter vision is in line with an understanding of nations as numerically sizable and politically conscious ethnic groups, which by extension means that most states are not in fact nation-states.[82] Despite stark conceptual differences, both visions produce similar policies towards ethnocultural diversity and institutional arrangements, including the recognition of multiple official languages.

Another alternative is to reject the principle of ethnic and linguistic congruency and redefine the core ethnic group in multilingual terms. This alternative arises when an ethnic group is affected by a language shift under colonialism or imperial domination, and assimilated bilingualism becomes a prevailing norm among its members. Rather than re-emphasizing the affinity between language and ethnicity and striving to resolve the incongruence of sociolinguistic situation with this image through proactive state policies of official monolingualism, bilingualism is accepted, and languages are assigned different functions and symbolic spaces in the nationhood narrative.

2.3.2 The Nationalities and Language Questions in the Soviet Union

A number of crucial conceptual and political Soviet-era developments in the areas of nation-building and management of ethnic and linguistic diversity have left the post-Soviet region with their long-lasting legacies. On the one hand, the Soviet rhetoric and subsequent policies established and cemented an objectivist definition of nation as a subcategory of ethnicity. On the other hand, the eschatological expectations of the fusion and eventual erosion of national differences under communism never disappeared from the official narrative.

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[81] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence (Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism)* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1985).
[82] Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a…" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1, no 4 (1978): 379-88.

Roger Brubaker famously argued that the problematic Soviet legacy in the domain of nation building originates in the coexistence and simultaneous institutionalization of two, essentially incompatible, definitions of nationhood – individual ethnocultural and political territorial: "The Soviet scheme of institutionalized multinationality was characterized … by a fundamental tension, at once conceptual and political, between two independent, even incompatible definitions of nationhood: one territorial and political, the other personal and ethnocultural."[83] I suggest that the troublesome heritage of the Soviet period stems precisely from the *lack* of political territorial definition of nationhood at the republican level against the backdrop of multiethnic reality of the Soviet Union. Such a definition of nationhood implies that all those who happen to live on the territory of a particular political entity are qualified to be considered its full members. This notion was missing in the Soviet Union. At the union level, the USSR presented itself as a collection of nations and nationalities, for whom it served as the locus of political self-determination. From this perspective, it was more of a multinational state than a multiethnic nation. Soviet republics represented a classical example of ethnic nationhood – an administrative unit that was linked to a particular ethnic group by name, language and cultural institutions. It is correct that some Soviet theorists of nationalism paid special attention to the territorial aspect of nationhood. Stalin himself included the common territory as a necessary component of his definition of nation. According to Bromley, a prominent Soviet theorist of nationality, only the part of ethnic group that resides in its homeland forms a nation.[84] However, residing in the same territory is not synonymous with territorial nationhood, since it is a required but not sufficient element: one has to belong to the titular ethnos *and* reside in the titular homeland to be considered part of the nation. In practice, Soviet administrative units were never ethnically and linguistically homogenous; but this fact alone does not turn them into territorial nations. Indeed, all prerequisites for territorial nationhood, such as republican citizenship or authority to follow autonomous policies, aiming at cultural homogenization at the republican level, were absent. In short, while Soviet nations were defined n ethnic terms and entitled to their exclusive homelands, they could never effectively realize this

[83] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 35.
[84] Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict*.

entitlement – expel or assimilate other ethnicities, residing on the territory of such ethnically designated administrative units.

Why did the first socialist state turn to active promotion and institutionalization of ethnocultural and linguistic heterogeneity despite the fact that classical Marxist doctrine was mostly suspicious or at best indifferent to the question of nationalism? The rise and proliferation of national movements in Central and Eastern Europe by the late 19th and early 20th century made it apparent that nationalism held continuing relevance as a potent and explosive political ideology. The attitudes of prominent socialist thinkers and political figures of that period varied but mostly fell within the two radically opposite perspectives. The first perspective, held by Rosa Luxemburg, shared the skepticism of classical Marxism and its view that nations were the product of capitalism - a false consciousness that masked the real struggle between economic classes.[85] Once the capitalist system withers away national differences become irrelevant. The second perspective was held by the group of Austrian socialists.[86] In their view, national differences transcended the capitalist state and class divisions. In fact, progress towards a socialist society would *increase* the role of ethnocultural differences as the only meaningful identity categories once class differences disappeared. Consequently, some combination of federalism and non-territorial ethnocultural autonomy would be the political arrangement that best served a multiethnic/multinational socialist state.[87]

Russian Bolsheviks were split in their views on the nationalities question, but as a rule gravitated towards some form of a compromise between the two extremes, especially in view of their initial rejection of ethnic federalism and cultural-national autonomy.[88] Lenin's position seemed to be more in line with the classical Marxist view, but his policy preferences in this area were more flexible, pragmatic and informed by specific political

[85] Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 7; Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923*, revised ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.
[86] Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, 24-26.
[87] Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union,* 24.
[88] Vladimir Lenin, "Kriticheskiie zametki po natsionalnomu voprosu," 1913, in *Valdimir Lenin. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th ed., vol. 25. (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1973), 143-150. Lenin not only rejected the idea of federalism and decentralization, but also the idea of national characteristics as the defining criterion for regional autonomy. At most, it should be evaluated together with economy and other considerations.

context.[89] Despite Stalin's criticism of the Austrian solution to the nationalities question through a combination of ethnic federalism and non-territorial cultural autonomy, his personal view on nations seemed to differ somewhat from that of Lenin, as his ontologically objectivist definition of nation, coined in 1913, demonstrates: "A nation is a historically constituted, *stable* community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."[90] Unlike the Austrians, he did subscribe to the idea of possible weakening and eventual disappearance of national differences: "It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, *its beginning and end.*"[91] But apparently, he envisioned a very long temporal horizon for this process.

Despite ideological differences and preferred political responses to the nationalities question, at least limited satisfaction of language-related demands was viewed positively across the socialist camp.[92] Russian socialists embraced the position that state should provide language rights to linguistic minorities as early as by 1904,[93] and Lenin himself firmly opposed to the idea of single official language for the Russian state.[94] The Bolsheviks remained principally committed to this position throughout and after the October revolution,[95] while flipping 180 degrees on the question of political autonomy and federalism, which ended up being the organizing principle of the Soviet Union. Having faced unprecedented nationalist resistance during the Civil War, Lenin and Stalin had to alter their pre-revolutionary positions regarding the scope of political concessions to the national movements. Lenin turned to the advocacy of federalism and right of self-determination, whereas Stalin favored restricted autonomy only, which became the subject

[89] Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, 35.
[90] Iosif Stalin, "Marksizm i natsionalnyi vopros," 1913, in *Stalin, Iosif. Sochineniia*, 2nd vol. (Moscow: OGIZ; Gosudarstvennoie izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1946), 296.
[91] Stalin, "Marksizm i natsionalnyi vopros," 297.
[92] Smith, *The Bolsheviks*, 18-19.
[93] Iosif Stalin, "Kak ponimaet sotsial-democratiia natsionalnyi vopros?" 1904, in *Stalin, Iosif. Sochineniia*, 2nd vol. (Moscow: OGIZ; Gosudarstvennoie izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1946), 32-55.
[94] Vladimir Lenin, "S. G. Shaumianu," 1913, in *Valdimir Lenin. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th ed., vol. 25. (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1973), 233-236.
[95] "Already in the years of civil war, the Soviet governments adopted laws establishing the equality of languages in courts and administration, the free choice of language in schooling, and the protection of minority languages" (Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993], 102).

of a serious disagreement between the two in in the early 1920s.[96] Both of them, however, overcame strong intraparty opposition, which was probably supported by the majority of rank-and-file Bolsheviks, in the course of defining the nationalities policies of the newly founded Soviet state.[97]

Support for local languages was driven by two practical considerations, bundled together with the idea of symbolically dismantling Great Russian chauvinism, inflicted upon minorities during the czarist era. On the one hand, Bolsheviks had to appease regional national movements, which were closely associated with ethnocultural and linguistic revivalism vis-a-vis Russian cultural and linguistic domination. On the other hand, state-supported use of local languages would serve as a more relatable medium for the dissemination of socialist ideas and help containing anti-Russian sentiments and secessionist demands. For Stalin, provision of state support for local languages was the ultimate answer to national tensions:

> What concerns the national minority the most? The national minority is discontented by the absence of rights for the native language, not by the absence of the national [political] unit. Let it use its native language and the discontent will disappear of itself. The national minority is discontented by the absence of schooling in native language, not by the absence of the national [political] unit. Provide it with such native schooling and the discontent will lose any ground.[98]

Clearly, the issue of language was an integral part of the discussion on nations and nation building early on and remained such in the following years. Stalin's definition of nation, which subsequently became the standard definition, with minor modifications used in the Soviet Union up until its dissolution,[99] is valuable in this context. He highlights the commonality of language as the first in the list of characteristics that distinguish a nation and rejects a possibility of a multilingual nation: "A common language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations! There is no nation which at one

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[96] Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1991), 22-23.
[97] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities*, 240.
[98] Stalin, "Marksizm i natsionalnyi vopros," 363.
[99] Valerii Tishkov, *Etnologiia i politika. Nauchnaia publitsistika* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), 17.

and the same time speaks several languages."[100] Moreover, all other characteristics, included in the seemingly objective definition, such as territory, economic life, psychological makeup and common culture, are in fact much vaguer than the commonality of language.

Thus, the definition of nation was primarily linguistic, especially in its practical application to "stateless" nations and nationalities.[101] At least partially, the focus on language could be explained by the fact that despite being a conspicuous identity marker, it remained a medium that could equally effectively channel any, including ideologically desirable, content.[102] Moreover, the task of the Soviet government was to assist and encourage national development in native languages. Stalin's response to a note regarding the artificial cultivation of a Belarusian nationality, which he received during X Party Congress of 1921 is exemplar in this regard. Stalin stated that "that is not true, for there exists a Belarusian nation, which has its own language, different from Russian. Consequently, the culture of the Belorussian people can be raised only in its native language".[103] During the congress, Stalin also stated that linguistic nativization of cities in Soviet republics, such as Ukraine, is an inevitable and desirable process.[104] The congress marked the end of the intra-party debate on the future course of Soviet policies on nationalities and official beginning for the Soviet policies of *korenizatsiia* - the promotion of national cadres in positions of administrative power, state support for education, publishing and cultural activities in national languages, development of cultural and educational institutions, such as national theaters, operas, universities, academies of sciences, etc.[105] In a sense, the Soviet Union began to function as a pseudo federal state in which genuine political federalization was substituted with encouragement of ethnocultural particularism.

Despite the overall focus on language and an essentially linguistic understanding of nation at the collective level, at the individual level language and ethnic identity were treated as two separate categories. The population census, conducted after the formation of the Soviet

[100] Stalin, "Marksizm i natsionalnyi vopros," 294.
[101] Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 427-428.
[102] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 418.
[103] Smith, *The Bolsheviks*, 27.
[104] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities*, 30.
[105] Terry D. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Union, included separate questions on *natsionalnost* and native language immediately following each other. The census results mentioned 145 unique languages and 185 nationalities, derived from the lists prepared by the All-Union Academy of Science's commission on research of the tribal composition of the USSR's population.[106] The discrepancy in the census between the two categories appears larger than it seems because the associated languages of some numerically small ethnic groups were not listed separately and because the census also included a number of ethnoreligious[107] and regional[108] identities. The formal separation of ethnic and linguistic identities was facilitated by subsequent institutional changes. With the introduction of the Soviet passport system in 1932, nationality became a personal and virtually immutable characteristic, because it was assigned to individuals based on the nationality of their parents. Individual nationality was recorded in internal passports, military IDs, birth certificates, as well as in various official forms and questionnaires.[109] In contrast, language remained a self-reported category.

The two identity categories did not match for a sizeable number of people already in 1926 when the first census was conducted. In and of itself such a mismatch may not necessarily be considered a challenge of particular significance. However, it was perceived as a deviation from the norm from and considered as anomaly and such "denationalized" individuals were supposed to be encouraged to re-embrace their native languages.

The idea that national differences are supposed to weaken and eventually disappear under socialism, proclaimed by Lenin on multiple occasions, remained in the background, posing a looming threat to the future of Soviet nationalities and causing concerns among local elites. Stalin's response to Buryat comrades during his speech at the Communist University of the Tailors of the East in 1925 reflects an attempt to soothe the concerns of titular elites:

> Buryat comrades rise a question regarding the assimilation of certain nationalities in the process of building of a proletarian culture common to all

[106] *Vsesoiuznaia perepis naseleniia 17 dekabria 1926 g. Kratkie svodki. Vypusk IV: Narodnost i rodnoi iazyk naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow: TSSU SSSR, 1928).
[107] Such as Adjars (Muslim Georgians), Hemshins (Muslim Armenians), Kriashens (Christian Tatars), Karaites and Yezidi Kurds.
[108] Such as Georgian and Central Asian Jews.
[109] Tishkov, *Etnologiia i politika*, 356.

> mankind. Definitely, some nationalities can be subjected and, probably, will be subjected to assimilation. Such cases happened before in history. However, this process of assimilation of certain nationalities does not exclude but presupposes the opposite process of strengthening and developing of a number of living and evolving nations, for a particular process of assimilation of certain nationalities is the product of the general process of national development. This is why possible assimilation of some isolated nationalities does not negate but confirms the absolutely correct statement that a proletarian culture common to all mankind does not preclude but presupposes and feeds the national culture of peoples, in the same way as the national culture of peoples does not preclude but complements and enriches the universal proletarian culture.[110]

Therefore, in Stalin's view, while some isolated nationalities (not nations!) might assimilate, the general direction was of national flourishing, reflected in Soviet policies of the period. However, policies that encouraged ethnocultural differences were also questioned and criticized within the party ranks, for they clearly went against the expectation of the eventual weakening of national differences. In 1929, Stalin addressed this criticism in his response to letters by comrades Meshkov, Kovalchuk and others. In his response, Stalin claimed that the destruction of old bourgeoise nations serves as the fundament for the development of the new socialist nation that maintains the same national form. The victory of socialism in one state:

> [D]oes not create conditions necessary for the merging of nations and national languages … quite the opposite, this period creates favorable conditions for the revival and flourishing of nations, previously oppressed by the czarist imperialism and currently liberated from the national oppression by the Soviet revolution. The Soviet state should remain committed to the cultural development of its nations, carried in their national languages, because million-

[110] Iosif Stalin, "O politicheskikh zadachakh universiteta narodov Vostoka: Rech na sobranii studentov KUTV 18 maia 1925 g." in *Stalin, Iosif. Sochineniia*, 2nd vol. (Moscow: OGIZ; Gosudarstvennoie izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1946), 140.

> strong popular masses can only be successful in the matters of cultural, political and economic development on in the native, national language.[111]

Even after the ultimate global victory of socialism the disappearance of separate nations (clearly closely dependent on linguistic assimilation and loss of national languages) will take place very gradually. When a common world-scale economy starts to shape there will be a necessity for some form of linguistic unity, first in the form of a supplementary lingua franca at the global or perhaps at the regional level. Only at the final (and apparently extremely remote) stage, separate languages and nations will be replaced by some form of common language.

In sum, Stalin's response watered down rather than resolved the contradictory nature of the official Soviet view on nationalities. It also demonstrated that the hypothetical merging of nations was understood mostly as linguistic assimilation, highlighting the dominance of the perception about an organic connection between a nation and its associated language.

Interestingly enough, the contemporary view of the Soviet state on the future of nationalities found its counterpart in the Soviet linguistics of the period when "the new teaching about language", founded and promoted by Nicholas Marr, gained its momentum. Although Marr's theses were originally unrelated to the socialist doctrine, he successfully capitalized on the parallels between the two by selectively incorporating Marxist arguments into his writing and speeches throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[112] "The new teaching about language" rejected the conventional genealogical approach to comparative linguistics and classification of languages into families as "bourgeois science" and postulated that language was a superstructure that reflected the class consciousness of its speakers.[113] Therefore, lexical and grammatical evolutionary changes in languages could be explained by changes in underlying socioeconomic conditions; and formation of a new socialist society would bring about corresponding linguistic transformation. Although Marr died in 1934 his disciples, Ivan Meshchanin being the most prominent among them, remained

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[111] Iosif Stalin, "Natsionalnyi vopros i leninizm: Otvet tovarishcham Meshkovu, Kovalchuku i drugim," 1929, in *Stalin, Iosif. Sochineniia*, 11th vol. (Moscow: OGIZ; Gosudarstvennoie izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1949), 333-355.
[112] Vladimir Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa: Marr i Marrizm*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2004), 68-69.
[113] Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa,* 34-41.

influential in Soviet academic circles[114] up until 1950, when Stalin himself openly dismissed Marrism for falsely claiming that languages originated in class continuousness.[115]

Neither the general principle of ethnonational pseudo-federalism nor the assumptions and ideological arguments framing the nationalities question in the Soviet Union were fundamentally challenged, let alone successfully altered, in decades that followed the 1920s.[116] Soviet polices on nationalities and languages, however, underwent a turn since the beginning of the 1930s. By the 1930s, the center grew suspicious of the uncontrolled flourishing of national sentiments in titular republics and respective national projects were decisively cropped in order to be more socialist in content. The underlying vision of the Soviet Union as a multinational state remained intact, but it was supposedly already leaving the stage of flourishing and entering the stage of rapprochement and merging of nations.[117] Previously established local-level institutions for ethnic minorities (essentially, anyone who did not belong to the titular ethnicity of a higher level administrative unit) were dissolved,[118] some ethnic categories were discarded or merged together, probably reflecting Stalin's view that some isolated small nationalities would assimilate and disappear in the course of socialist development. Most importantly, in the 1930s a great shift took place regarding the position of Russians, the Russian language and culture. From the bearer of Great Russian Chauvinism, it turned into the most Soviet nation with the most progressive culture, great history and a model for all other peoples.[119]

Several important changes in language acquisition and corpus-planning policies of the period were also congruent with this turn. The first was the introduction of the Russian language as the obligatory subject in all non-Russian schools in 1938.[120] Other elements included reforms of titular languages that introduced the new rules of borrowing

[114] If not for the value of their research and claims which were criticized by other Soviet linguists already in 1920s and 1930s, but for the positive reception on the part of administrators and other public figures.
[115] Iosif Stalin, "Marksizm i voprosy iazykoznaniia," 1950, in *Stalin, Iosif. Sochineniia*, 16th vol. (Moscow: Pisatel, 1997), 104-138.
[116] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 442.
[117] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities*, 138.
[118] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities*, 58-61.
[119] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 452-454.
[120] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 443.

terminology, designating Russian as the primary source of such borrowings, and changes of alphabets from Latin to Cyrillic for a number of non-Slavic languages in 1937-39.[121]

Overall, from Stalin's death in 1953 onwards, it was established that "classes and their 'ideologies' came and went, but nationalities remained. In a country free from social conflict, ethnicity was the only meaningful identity."[122] The eventual merging of nations was to happen in such a distant future that it would be meaningless to expect it, but some rapprochement, understood primarily in linguistic terms, was possible and desirable.[123] This perspective seem to have continued informing and directing much of the Soviet scholarly literature on ethnicity and nationalism. Post-World War II Soviet scholarly literature on ethnic processes remained committed to an ethnocentric definition of nation.[124] The scholarly discussion of the 1960s was taking place around the refinement of Stalin's definition, resulting in the growing acceptance of the notion of ethnic self-identity as a key component of an ethnonational category. The general view of that period was that while ethnic self-identity was a form of consciousness, it was still a derivative of objective factors.[125] The commonality of language was generally recognized as a crucial factor in ethnogenesis, albeit with an important caveat, such as a possibility of preserving ethnic self-identity even after the original mother tongue is lost.[126] Different formations - tribes, ethnic groups (*narodnost*) and nations - were conceptualized as the reflection of different stages in social and economic development of the same ethnic core.[127] The dominance of the territorial-political meaning of the term nation in Western European languages, as opposed to an ethnocentric understanding, was explained by the fact that Western European states consolidated around a relatively homogenous ethnic core.[128] Likewise, distinction between "bad" forced assimilation and natural assimilation, understood primarily in

[121] Julian Bromley, ed. *Sovremennyie etnicheskie protsessy v SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 267.
[122] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 449.
[123] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment," 449.
[124] Julian Bromley and Viktor Kozlov, "The Theory of Ethnos and Ethnic Processes in Soviet Social Sciences," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 3 (1989): 425-438.
[125] Bromley and Kozlovv, "The Theory of Ethnos."
[126] Bromley and Kozlovv, "The Theory of Ethnos."
[127] Bromley, *Sovremennyie etnicheskie*, 11-13.
[128] Bromley, *Sovremennyie etnicheskie,* 14.

linguistic terms, and the ongoing rapprochement of nations under socialism remained unchallenged.[129] For example, Bormley and Kozlov as late as in 1989 argued that

> [interethnic] integration usually takes place within the framework of a multi-national state that facilitates gradual reconciliation and merges in culture and other ethnic parameters… The formation of a new people – the *Soviet people* – plays an important role in the further development of these processes by the establishment of a unified economy and ideology through the widespread use of the Russian language as an interethnic medium, through the many characteristics of Soviet culture and the Soviet way of life, and through their reflection in national consciousness.[130]

The concept of the Soviet people was considered to be both the embodiment and the vehicle of the process of rapprochement. The use of the concept itself could be found already in the 1920s and it was increasingly used during the 1930s,[131] but Khrushchev introduced it to the official discourse in 1961, during XXII party congress.[132] The same reference to "a new historical community of people" was made by Brezhnev ten years later, during XXIV party congress in 1971[133] and was included in the preamble of the 1977 Soviet constitution.[134] Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev referred to the multinational Soviet people as an accomplished fact and a sign of ideological unity, progress and national rapprochement in the Soviet Union. Some scholars view the use of the Soviet people as the introduction of an alternative national identity,[135] while others evaluate it as merely superficial and supranational.[136] However, it was never explicitly articulated that the concept of Soviet people was to compete and replace national identities as an alternative of

[129] Bromley, *Sovremennyie etnicheskie,* 20-22.
[130] Bromley and Kozlov, "The Theory of Ethnos," 435-436.
[131] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 450.
[132] Nikita Khrushchev, "Doklad Pervogo sekretaria TsK KPSS tovarishcha N. S. Khrushcheva 18 oktiabria 1961 goda: O programme Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo soiuza," in *Materialy XXII sezda KPSS* (Moscow: Gospolitizadat, 1962).
[133] Leonid Brezhnev, "Otchetnyi doklad tsentralnogo komiteta KPSS XXIV sezdu Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo soiuza: Doklad generalnogo sekretaria TSK KPSS tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva," *in XXIV sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: Stenograficheskii otchet,* vol. 1. (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1971), 26-131.
[134] Konstitutsiia (Osnovnoi zakon) Soiuza sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik 1977 g. (Riga: Avots, 1985).
[135] Sener Akturk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 197-228.
[136] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 28.

the same order. Likewise, it did not explicitly challenge neither the multinational character of the Soviet Union nor the ethnocentric definition of nationhood and the ethnic character of titular republics, as apparent from the corresponding entry in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.[137]

Neither Khrushchev nor Brezhnev explicitly listed the Russian language as the component of the new Soviet identity in their party reports. Nevertheless, the spread of Russian-titular bilingualism was treated as the most tangible and desirable symptom of its formation. The use of Russian was itself considered a positive sign of national development, since "in view of increasing cultural level of those [non-Russian] peoples the knowledge of native language only ceases to satisfy their new needs, which is the most important prerequisite of the widespread bilingualism."[138] In terms of language policies, a positive view on the rapprochement of nations as the Soviet Union advanced in its development was reflected in the facilitation of the spread of the Russian language as the all-Union lingua franca. The educational reform of 1957-58, among other innovations, provided the parents of school students with a possibility to attend schools with the medium of instruction of their choice and opt out of learning titular languages in Russian-medium schools.[139] The reform had important sociolinguistic implications as it contributed to a decrease in the number of titular language schools and lack of knowledge of titular languages by migrants from outside of Union republics. Equally importantly, it rendered obsolete the principle of congruency between ethnic identity and medium of instruction for secondary education, which had been mostly followed prior to the reform. In the 1970s and early 1980s, developments in the Soviet educational system included the improvement of the training of Russian language teachers, Russian language materials and introduction of the Russian language as early as in kindergartens.[140] Often there was an unofficial division of labor between Russian and titular languages, when most administrative and economic activities were conducted primarily in the former and cultural activities were conducted in the latter.

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[137] Suren Kaltakhchian, "Sovetskii narod," in *Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 3rd ed., vol. 24, book 2 (Moscow: Sov. Entsiklopediia, 1976), 25.
[138] Bromley, *Sovremennyie etnicheskie*.
[139] Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (NY: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 57.
[140] Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 58

Despite functioning as such in practice, Russian was not formally declared the official language of the Soviet Union, probably reflecting the continuing symbolic influence of Lenin's opposition to the idea of a common official language. The 1977 constitution referred only to an opportunity to receive education in native languages and to "the languages of the Union and autonomous republics" in the context of issuing official documents and conducting legal proceedings. The 1978 constitutions of the Union republics did not include a provision regarding the official language with a notable exception of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, all republican constitutions included provisions about publishing legislation in both titular language and Russian.[141] Likewise, all republican coats of arms included the phrase "proletarians of all countries, unite!" in titular languages and in Russian. Only in the April of 1990, a separate law designated Russian the status of the all-Union official language, after all the language laws of the Union republics had already been adopted.[142]

To conclude, the conceptual framework for the Soviet nationalities question remained overwhelmingly ethnocentric from the very moment of its establishment to its disintegration. At the group level, ethnic and national identities were closely associated with corresponding linguistic categories, although there always remained a conceptual and institutional separation between the two. The titular languages of autonomous republics rose to a particularly prominent position among elements that were incorporated in their respective nation building projects. The actual ethnolinguistic situation never fully reflected neither the supposedly ethnic charter of the republics nor the symbolic prominence of associated languages, since none of them was ethnically and linguistically homogenous. Quite the opposite, varying initial degrees of heterogeneity that emerged in the process of administrative border drawing, were later sustained and furthered due to continuous migration flows, as well as the spread of assimilated bilingualism and linguistic Russification on the part of titular population. However, despite the continuing efforts in the official and academic discourses of the post-war Soviet Union to further disassociated language from national identity, there remained an underlying assumption that the two

[141] "Zakonodatelstvo SSSR-Konstitutsiia," Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoie dvizhenie SSR, 2018, http://nodussr.ru/konstituciya/.
[142] Zakon SSSR ot 24.04.1990 "O iazykakh narodov SSSR," Zakony i parvo. http://www.zaki.ru/pagesnew.php?id=1729.

should match, which was, among other things, reflected in a tendency to report one's associated ethnic language, rather than the actual language primarily spoken at home, as mother tongue during population censuses.

All politicians, public figures and scholars had to positively reference the Leninist ambivalent take on the role of nations in history that simultaneously declared its commitment to national development and welcomed internationalism and the eventual disappearance of national differences under socialism. For instance, during his report at XXVI Party Congress Brezhnev reiterated the official narrative:

> Life convinces us that the intensive economic and social development of each of our republics is speeding up the process of their all-round rapprochement. The flourishing and mutual enrichment of national cultures and the formation of the culture of a united Soviet people – a new social and international community – are taking place [simultaneously]. This process is unfolding exactly as it is supposed to unfold under socialism: on the principle of equality, brotherly cooperation and voluntariness. The party has watched after the strict observance of these Leninist principles. We will never renounce them![143]

Since national differences originally were closely associated with linguistic differences, this ideological stance posed an essentially unresolvable dilemma regarding sociolinguistic situation in the Soviet Union. Is linguistic assimilation, which in the Soviet context meant the widening use of the Russian language, a symptom of injustice and oppression, and state polices should fight it? Or is it a positive sign of historical progress towards rapprochement and friendship among nations and nationalities, and state police should encourage it? Official Soviet discourse and language policies were initially overwhelmingly dominated by the former, but increasingly tilted towards the latter as the use of Russian was promoted and bilingualism was celebrated. However, the same ideological stance still implied that multilingualism at the republican level is the sign of eventual, even if very distant, national decline and a threat to that nation's existence if one continued to define it in ethnolinguistic

[143] Leonid Brezhnev, "Otchet tsentralnogo komiteta KPSS XXVI sezdu kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo soiuza i ocherednye zadachi partii v oblasti vnutrennei i vneshnei politiki: Doklad generalnogo sekretaria TsK KPSS tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva," in *XXVI sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: Stenograficheskii otchet,* vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1981), 75.

terms. This persisting conceptual and ideological ambiguity formed the basis of core beliefs about language policies, shared by policy advocates and policy makers, and shaped the discussion on official language policies and directions in which policy changes took place in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts.

Those who did not see the Soviet experience of socialist development and rapprochement of nations as a positive compensation for the weakening of ethnolinguistic national identity, would seek to reinforce the latter. Official monolingualism would be a policy option that is the most congruent with this vision of nationhood. For those for whom the Soviet experience was positive, worth of weakening the ethnolinguistic character of national identity, the two alternative models of nationhood, that had already been introduced into the Soviet discourse, could be utilized as the reason for the continuation of official multilingualism at the republican level even after the acquisition of independence. One was to argue for a nationhood model, based on the model of the Soviet Union as a whole – a political entity that harbored multiple nationalities. The other was to embrace the sociolinguistic developments that had accumulated since World War II, including an increasing functional separation of languages, and redefine ethnic nationhood in post-linguistic terms (i.e., a particular common language is important in national formation, but may not necessarily be spoken widely by its members later in the future) in order to justify the continuation of official multilingualism after the acquisition of independence.

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Chapter 3
ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS AND ARGUMENT

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss alternative explanations that can be plausibly attributed to the topic of official language policy change in the early post-Soviet context. A brief review of the nascent literature on language policy and planning, which was provided in the previous chapter, indicates that there is a scarcity of arguments that can be directly used to explain official language policy divergence in general, as well as conditions, timing, and direction of policy change. Therefore, I also infer some of the alternative explanations from the general literature that do not formulate them explicitly. Overall, most alternative explanations focus on the role of structural variables. Such variables do play a contributing role in setting the context of policy change but provide limited explanatory power for addressing the empirical puzzle of this dissertation. In the second section of this chapter, I proceed with the discussion of my original argument, structured in accordance with the Advocacy Coalition Framework of policy change analysis, which I develop within the general perspective of elite-driven policy change. My argument is contextualized so that it better incorporates the specific properties of my universe of cases in order to address the empirical puzzle of language policy change in the post-Soviet context. Therefore, the argument represents a form of mid-range theorizing; that is, theorizing that is better tailored to explain an empirical puzzle, but remains limited in its geographical and temporal applicability beyond the cases that are included in the research.

3.3 Alternative Explanations of Language Policy Change

In this section, I review alternative explanations that are formulated explicitly or can be inferred from the general literature on language policy and planning, which can be applied to the divergence of official language policies in the empirical cases selected for the dissertation. Table 3.1 presents such explanations, grouped according to the level of origin (domestic or international) and nature (utilitarian or normative) of independent variables. The remainder of the section will cover these explanations in detail.

Table 3.1: Alternative explanations of language policy change.

	domestic	international
utilitarian	• ethnolinguistic diversity • policy implementation costs	• gains in foreign trade
normative	• colonial legacies • political regime • characteristics of ruling elites	• geopolitical orientation • international normative pressure

3.1.1 Ethnolinguistic Diversity

The principal assumption that links the ethnolinguistic composition of society to its language policy is that societal multilingualism (coexistence of multiple linguistic groups) should eventually be institutionalized through state policies as official multilingualism. Taken in isolation, the ethnolinguistic composition of society can be viewed only as precondition that makes the adoption of a particular language policy more likely. Nevertheless, officially monolingual but linguistically diverse polities are also common.

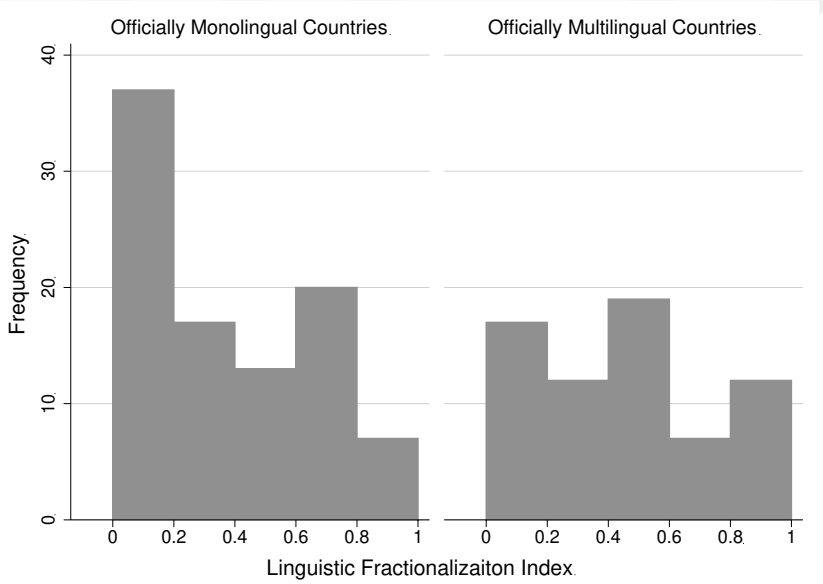

Figure 3.1: Distribution of countries with single/multiple official languages by linguistic fractionalization

Figure 3.1 depicts the distribution of countries by linguistic fractionalization within the groups of countries that have one or multiple official languages. As expected, countries with one official language cluster at lowest levels of linguistic fractionalization but

outnumber officially multilingual countries at all but the highest levels of linguistic fractionalization. In contrast, countries with multiple official languages are more evenly distributed across levels of linguistic fractionalization. In this relation, Finland is a good example of a relatively homogenous country that has two official languages– Finnish and Swedish. Both languages share an equal official status at the national level, while only 5.2% of Finland's population speaks Swedish as their first language.[1] In short, there seems to be no demographic thresholds for adopting a specific language policy.

Table 3.2: Shares of Russian speakers in Soviet republics in 1979 and 1989.

	Ethnic Russians		**Russian as mother tongue**		**Titular nationality with Russian as mother tongue**	
	1979	1989	1979	1989	1979	1989
Estonia	27.91%	30.30%	31.74%	34.80%	0.99%	1.05%
Latvia	32.82%	33.96%	40.24%	42.10%	2.15%	2.57%
Lithuania	8.95%	9.40%	10.99%	11.70%	0.21%	0.26%
Belarus	11.90%	13.20%	28.30%	31.90%	16.49%	19.73%
Ukraine	21.11%	22.10%	31.34%	32.80%	10.93%	12.24%
Moldova	12.80%	12.96%	21.61%	23.10%	3.3%	4.31%
Georgia	7.44%	6.30%	10.55%	8.90%	0.47%	0.23%
Armenia	2.36%	1.60%	3.16%	2%	0.56%	0.31%
Azerbaijan	7.89%	5.60%	11.63%	7.50%	1%	0.42%
Kazakhstan	40.80%	37.80%	49.85%	47.40%	1.37%	1.36%
Uzbekistan	10.82%	8.30%	13.41%	10.70%	0.4%	0.45%
Kyrgyzstan	25.88%	21.50%	30.21%	25.60%	0.36%	0.33%
Tajikistan	10.38%	7.60%	12.8%	9.70%	0.55%	0.50%
Turkmenistan	12.63%	9.50%	15.34%	11.90%	0.74%	0.71%

Changes in linguistic demography, which happen due to language shifts and migration, are usually gradual and accumulate their impact incrementally. Taken in isolation, they can hardly account for language policy changes, which are momentous events. Only the changes of state borders can result in rapid changes in the linguistic composition of society. A clear example of such change is formally bilingual Czechoslovakia's dissolution along

[1] "Finland," CIA World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/finland/.

its administrative borders into monolingual Czech and Slovak Republics in 1993. Additionally, a great degree of reversed causality should not be overlooked while discussing the role of ethnolinguistic composition of society in language policy choices. Like other policies on nation-building, official language policy can either reinforce ethnolinguistic diversity through its institutionalization or decrease it by stimulating assimilation.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to review the role of ethnolinguistic demographic factors in the context of language policy selection in the former Soviet republics. Statistical data from the censuses of 1979 and 1989 is summarized in Table 3.2.[2] Two censuses are included in order to capture the most recent demographic trends that had been taking place prior to the adoption of language laws. The table includes the share of ethnic Russians in total population and the share of those who indicated Russian as their mother tongue, regardless of ethnicity, indicating the general ethnolinguistic situation. The share of those who indicated titular nationality and Russian as their mother tongue in total titular population stands for the effects of linguistic assimilation.

Table 3.3: Shares of Russian speakers in Soviet republics.

Share of Russian-Speakers	**Republic**
High and increasing	Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine
High and decreasing	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan
Moderate and increasing	Moldova, Lithuania
Moderate and decreasing	Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Low and increasing	none
Low and decreasing	Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan

The overall sociolinguistic situation and trends in the fourteen Soviet republics are summarized in Table 3.3. Arbitrarily, the share of people who consider Russian their mother tongue that are lower than 10% is considered low in the table. The share between 10% and 30% is considered moderate. The share above 30% is considered high. The republics, in which the share of Russian speakers declined between 1979 and 1989,

[2] Based on data from *Chislennost i Sostav Naseleniia SSSR. Po dannym Vsesoiuznoi prerepisi naseleniia 1979* (Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1984) and from "Vsesoiuznaia perepis naseleniia 1989 g. Raspredeleniie naseleniia SSSR po natsionalnosti i iazyku, naseleniia soiuznyh respublik po naiboleie mnogochislennym natsionalnostiam i iazyku," *Demoscope Weekly*, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_lan_89.xls.

demonstrate a downward trend. The republics, in which this share increased, have an upward trend. According to this bi-partial share/trend categorization, Soviet republics are grouped into six clusters. There are no republics that had low but increasing share of Russian speakers between 1979 and 1989. In three out of five remaining clusters, there is variation among republics both in their initial and in subsequent language policy choices. Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine all had high and increasing shares of Russian speakers, yet two of them changed their language policies in opposite direction, whereas there was no policy amendment in Ukraine in the 1990s.

From a simple congruence testing of the ethnolinguistic variable and language policy outcomes, it is possible to conclude that demography plays an important but only an indirect role in decisions about official languages. Moreover, some subsequent policy changes took place in the direction, which was opposite to the demographic trends. For example, Kazakhstan changed the status of the Russian from the language of interethnic communication to administrative language in the period when the share of ethnic Russians and other non-titular ethnic groups was rapidly declining due to out-migration.[3]

3.1.2 Policy Implementation Costs

The hypothesized role of economic considerations and material limitations can be briefly stated as follows. All public policies require the allocation of material resources, and the costs of policy implementation, associated with the adoption of different types of official language policies, vary significantly. The recognition of multiple official languages requires a state to allocate greater material resources to language policy implementation, compared to the recognition of only one official language. Consequently, poorer countries should prefer to remain officially monolingual, while richer countries can "afford" official multilingualism; and economic decline should incentivize a move towards a single official language, whereas economic growth would give more incentives to institutionalize additional official languages.

[3] Dave, "The Shrinking Reach."

The underlying principle of an official language policy in modern nation state is "language rationalization"[4] or "linguistic convergence."[5] Therefore, multilingualism is a costly deviation if economic considerations are taken into account. From a practical point of view, a fully monolingual language policy is the most-cost efficient one and higher costs of policy implementation are associated with the increase of the number of recognized languages. The exact costs of policy implementation are difficult to estimates, since language policies target very large population groups in multiples domains, but they are certainly perceived to be high: "the costs of language policies are largely unknown, and are liable to be the stuff of wild fantasies – usually in the form of cataclysmic expectations of uncontrollable expenditure if diversity-preserving policy measures were adopted."[6] Adding another language to the set of official languages requires justifications that outweigh efficiency concerns. Even if a strong non-material justification exists, the question of balance between the efficiency and fairness of language policies involves an assessment on the part of state officials.[7] The area of education is the most sensitive to economic considerations, since it might be too expensive to develop teaching materials and to train teachers in a number of different languages.[8] Besides, moving away from a monolingual language policy creates additional costs in administration, which are otherwise absent, such as translation of legislation and administrative correspondence: "The day-to-day affairs of a country's administration and even its legislative proceedings will soon be overtaxed, tangled, and inefficient if transacted in more than three languages."[9] Taking into account economic considerations, a lack of material resources available to the government might incentivize it to avoid the recognition of multiple official languages. Conversely, changes

[4] David Laitin, *Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9-12.
[5] Sue Wright, *Language Policy and Language Planning. From Nationalism to Globalisation* (New York, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 8.
[6] Francois Grin, "Economic Considerations in Language Policy," in *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, ed. Thomas Ricento (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 88.
[7] Jonathan Pool, "The Official Language Problem," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 2 (1991): 495-514.
[8] Eric A. Anchimbe, *Language Policy and Identity Construction: The Dynamics of Cameroon's Multilingualism* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013).
[9] Heinz Kloss, "Types of Multilingual Communities: A discussion of ten variables," *Sociological Inquiry* 36 (1966): 7-17.

in official language policies should be expected in those countries that experienced economic growth or decline. In the early post-Soviet context, a sharp economic decline, which accompanied transition to market economy, should have led to the proliferation of officially monolingual language policies.

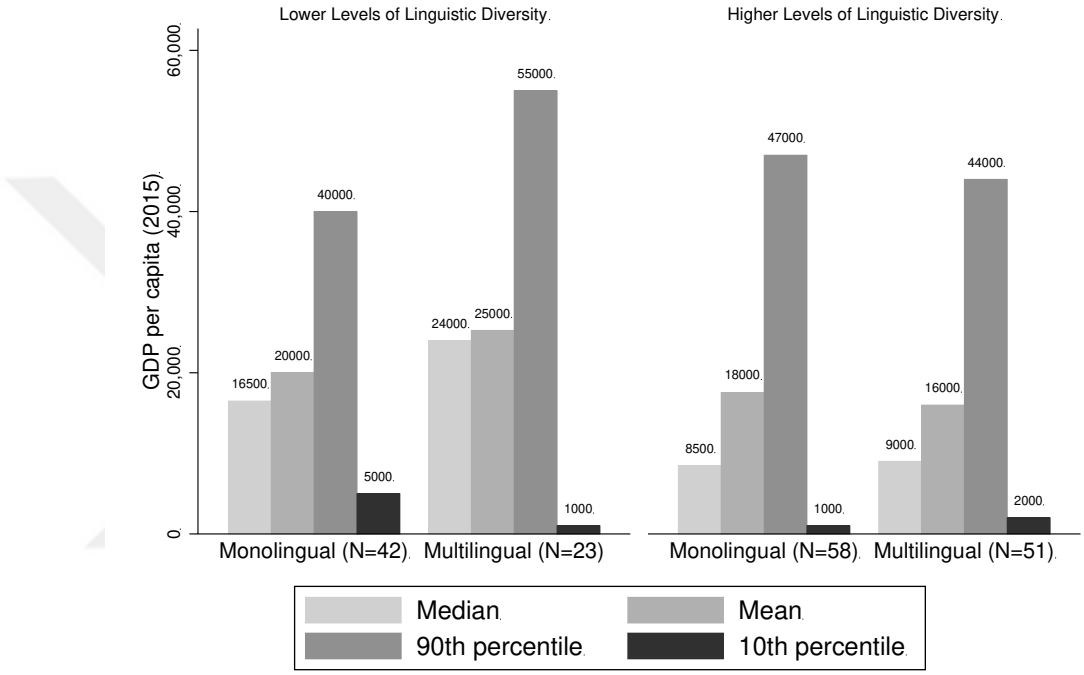

Figure 3.2: Differences in the GDP per capita between officially monolingual and multilingual countries.

However, variation in economic conditions seems not to be congruent with differences in official language policies, both in general and in the cases of the former Soviet republics in the 1990s. The review of cross-country statistical associations (Figure 3.2) does not provide sufficient evidence that economic underdevelopment hampers multilingualism, since officially bilingual and multilingual countries[10] are found among the poorer countries of the globe. Among countries with less linguistic diversity,[11] the ones that have multiple official

[10] Data for official languages is taken from Sener Akturk, *Regimes of Ethnicity Data Set,* v. 2015, http://home.ku.edu.tr/~sakturk/indexregimesofethnicity.htm, and from "Languages," CIA World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/languages/.

[11] Data for linguistic diversity, measured by linguistic fractionalization index (LFI), is adopted from Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat and Romain Wacziarg, "Fractionalization," *Journal of Economic Growth* 8, no. 2 (2003): 155-94. Countries that have LFI lower than 0.3 are included into the group with lower levels of linguist diversity.

languages seem to be slightly richer than the ones that have one official language, whereas there seems to be very little or no difference in the GDP per capita between the groups of officially monolingual and officially multilingual countries among those that have more linguistic diversity.[12] However, differences between the mean GDPs per capita are not statistically significant to suggest that those groups of countries are substantially dissimilar in the levels of their economic prosperity.[13]

Table 3.4: 1992-2001 GDP growth for post-Soviet republics that initially adopted Russian as language of interethnic communication.

	92	**93**	**94**	**95**	**96**	**97**	**98**	**99**	**00**	**01**
Belarus	-9.6	-7.6	-11.7	-10.4	2.8	11.4	8.4	3.4	5.8	4.7
Kazakhstan	-5.3	-9.2	-12.6	-8.2	0.5	1.7	-1.9	2.7	9.8	13.5
Kyrgyzstan	-13.9	-15.5	-20.1	-5.4	7.1	9.9	2.1	3.7	5.4	5.3
Latvia				-1.8	2.4	9	6.5	2.7	5.4	6.5
Moldova					-5.9	1.7	-6.5	-3.4	2.1	6.1
Tajikistan	-29	-16.4	-21.3	-12.4	-16.7	1.7	5.3	3.7	8.3	9.6
Turkmenistan	-15	1.5	-17.3	-7.2	6.7	-11.4	7.1	16.5	5.5	4.3
Ukraine	-9.7	-14.2	-22.9	-12.2	-10	-3	-1.9	-0.2	5.9	9.2
Uzbekistan	-11.2	-2.3	-5.2	-0.9	1.7	5.2	4.3	4.3	3.8	4.2

Despite the lack of the statistical association between a country's level of economic prosperity and adoption of one or multiple languages as official at the global level, it is still plausible that economic differences contributed to language policy divergence among the post-Soviet republics. In the post-Soviet region, republics with similar economic conditions first adopted different language policies and then changed them or left them intact (Table 3.4).[14] Belarus elevated the status of Russian language in 1995, by the end of a prolonged and severe recession. Kyrgyzstan made Russian official in the times of economic growth,

[12] Data taken from "GDP per capita, PPP (current international $)," World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD.

[13] As per the results of the independent group t-test (t value -0.0871 for the means of monolingual and multilingual countries; t value -1.2460 for the means of monolingual and multilingual countries with lower levels of linguistic diversity; t value 0.3552 for the means of monolingual and multilingual countries with lower levels of linguistic diversity), which do not reject the null hypothesis of means being different purely by chance.

[14] Based on data from "GDP growth (annual %),"World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=LV-BY-UA-MD-KZ-UZ-KG-TJ-TM

but at a very low absolute point. Neither Latvia nor Uzbekistan amended their official monolingual policies, which had been adopted in the time of economic recession, during the periods of economic recovery. In fact, Latvia's official language policy became even more prohibitively monolingual in the period of economic growth. In Ukraine, a discussion regarding the possible official status of the Russian language was taking place amidst the most prolonged economic recession among all the post-Soviet republics.

In sum, the availability of resources and potential implementation costs seem to have rather limited impact on the choice of official language policy. It is reasonable to suggest that the lack of resources would have stronger negative influence on the policy implementation (efficiency and success) rather than on the adoption of the policy per se.[15] In addition, it must be highlighted that keeping Russian as official language in the former Soviet republics was associated with lower implementation costs than would have been the introduction of an additional official language from a scratch, for teaching materials, instructors, as well as widespread knowledge of the language on part of the officials had already been present at the time.

3.1.3 Gains in Foreign Trade

This argument views the adoption of multiple official languages as a tool to maintain or increase economic benefits from international trade. By adopting a particular language policy, the government may pursue anticipated future economic gains, related to foreign trade and investments. More specifically, the adoption of a certain regional or global language as official is assumed to be providing business and trade-related benefits that might balance the costs of pursuing multilingual official language policy. The likelihood of such economically motivated language policy choices is the highest in post-colonial settings, because maintaining a colonial language as official facilitates economic ties with the former metropolitan power and other former colonies: "the story of economically

[15] Bhavna Dave, "The Shrinking Reach of the State: Language Policy and Implementation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan," in *The Transformation of Central Asia*, ed. Pauline Jones Luong (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 120-155.

motivated language laws exists whenever there is a withdrawal – if not the death – of an empire."[16]

Liu, Roosevelt and Wilson Sokhey claim to have found evidence[17] that economically motivated language laws have contributed to changes in the language policies of post-Soviet countries. The authors argue that those countries who want to maintain high trade flows with Russia and/or other post-Soviet states will make their language polices more multilingual by recognizing the Russian language in their legislation. However, the research faces a few challenges that limit its findings. First, the operationalization of the dependent variable is somewhat ambiguous since a law that does not explicitly mention the Russian language should not necessarily be anti-Russian. Likewise, a law that mentions the Russian language is not necessarily pro-Russian, because it may, in fact, downgrade the status of the language.

The second challenge comes from the configuration of the dataset and selection of observations. The observations with the positive value of the dependent variable are extremely few (14 out of 233) and most of them are not independent from one another (five country-year observations are from Belarus, four are from Ukraine, three from Kazakhstan). For instance, the change of the Belarusian constitution conditioned follow-up changes in its language law and law on education. Therefore, those are the symptoms of the same language policy change rather than the isolated episodes of "pro-Russian" language laws. Thus, a situation where the same phenomenon is measured multiple times damages the reliability of the research findings.

The third challenge comes from the operationalization and measurement of the dependent variable as the share of the trade with Russia in the country's total foreign, since the share is a relative indicator, dependent on the overall volume of foreign trade. In fact, the share of trade is the measurement of its diversification and not of its absolute volume. Trade volume with a country can increase in absolute figures while it simultaneously decreases as the share of total foreign trade. The opposite situation is equally plausible. Additionally, the

[16] Amy H. Liu, Megan Roosevelt and Sarah Wilson Sokhe, "Trade and the Recognition of Commercial Lingua Francas: Russian Language Laws in Post-Soviet Countries*," Economics and Politics* 29, no. 1 (2017): 66.
[17] Liu et al., "Trade and the Recognition."

diversification of trade flows is a much more rational goal than maintaining the overdependence on a single trade partner, so countries should be motivated to decrease the share of trade with a single partner in their foreign trade, instead of maintaining or increasing it.[18]

Table 3.5: Share of trade with former USSR in the 1990s in nine post-Soviet republics that initially recognized Russian language as language of interethnic communication.

	93	**94**	**95**	**96**	**97**	**98**	**99**	**2000**	**Status of Russian**
Belarus	62	88	68	66	72	71	66	68	raised (1995)
Kazakhstan	19	68	66	67	56	48	38	39	revised (1995)
Kyrgyzstan	74	74	61	68	60	52	44	52	raised (2000)
Latvia	38	40	46	40	35	30	27	27	lowered (1992)
Moldova	67	95	85	87	79	64	57	55	not changed
Tajikistan	36	39	54	51	53	52	64	65	not changed
Turkmenistan	40	50	59	84	---	88	44	51	not changed
Ukraine	12	59	51	62	53	51	45	46	not changed
Uzbekistan	15	53	58	46	48	43	41	50	lowered (1995)

Finally, but most importantly, the causal mechanism that links the desire to maintain high trade flows with a country to adopt language-related legislation is somewhat obscure. There seems to be no uncontestable connection that can link the adoption of a law that allows for establishing minority schools to trade or even to investment flows, which are supposed to be attracted. Moreover, it does not provide an explanation, other than "desire not to be dependent on Russia" that motivates countries to adopt "anti-Russian" language-related legislation. Therefore, one should assume that there are two dissimilar groups of countries – those whose motivations in language-related legislation are economically-driven and those whose motivations are not. After all, the Baltic states have maintained high volumes of trade with former USSR countries in the 1990s as the shares of their overall foreign trade[19] (Table 3.5) and did not adopt "pro-Russian" language legislation. The difference between the trade volumes of Ukraine and Kazakhstan do not seem to be big enough to explain, while there was no official language policy revision in the former and there was one in the

[18] Even the Belarusian government has been repeatedly referring to diversification as target for foreign trade policies, despite having entered multiple trade agreements and economic integration projects with Russia.
[19] Share of trade is based on data from Katherine Barbieri and Omar M. G. Keshk, *Correlates of War Project Trade Data Set Codebook*, Ver. 4.0, 2016, http://correlatesofwar.org.

latter. The trade volumes of Belarus and Moldova are high enough to suggest that both countries should have adopted multiple "pro-Russian" language laws, while it was true only in the Belarusian case.

On a global scale, the weight of such considerations in decisions, related to official language policies, seems to be overestimated as well. The rise of English as global lingua franca did not lead to the adoption of "pro-English" language laws, nor was it generated or facilitated by their adoption in the first place: "The weight of the evidence shows that the spread of English is a result of forces not under the control of putative language managers."[20] The fact that the knowledge of Russian remains an advantage on the Latvian job market to such an extent that ethnic Latvians are in a disadvantaged position due to the lack of language skills[21] is a vivid example of market forces at work that contradict the country's official language policy.

In sum, the official language policy is a phenomenon, which is shaped primarily by domestic factors and for which economic considerations regarding foreign trade seem to be playing a secondary role. Anticipated economic gains seem to be even less of an explanatory factor in the case of post-Soviet language policy divergence and the relationship itself might be mostly spurious.

3.1.4 Geopolitical Orientation

Geopolitical orientation and the preferred vector of regional integration might be an intervening variable that could potentially account both for the maintenance of high trade volumes with Russia and the adoption of official multilingual language polices that provide the Russian language with an official status. This assumption suffers from the fact that prevailing geopolitical orientations and choices in regional integration itself require a separate explanation. Already in the early 1990s Latvia, together with other Baltic states, explicitly reoriented itself towards the Western European projects of political and economic integration, signing a free trade agreement with the EU in 1994 and officially applying for

[20] Berdard Spolsky, *Language Policy* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.
[21] "Latviiskaia realnost: bez znaniia russkogo iazyka nelza naiti rabotu," *Otkryto.lv*, August 22, 2013, http://rus.jauns.lv/raksts/aktualno/111177-latviyskaya-realnost-bez-znaniya-russkogo-yazyka-nelzya-nayti-rabotu.

membership in 1995.[22] Belarus and Ukraine chose to maintain various degrees of formal integration with Russia in the 1990s. Whereas Belarus was the only one to engage in multiple bilateral integration projects in the 1990s,[23] these projects followed changes in the official language policy that had taken place already in 1995 rather than accompanied or preceded them. It seems reasonable to assume that official language policy changes, prevailing pro-Russian orientation and opting for integration projects with Russia are at least partly autonomous consequences of other causal mechanisms at work.

3.1.5 Pressure by International Organizations

The role of international organizations in shaping the domestic policies of states is multifaceted, although the exact extent of their influence is subject to the ongoing scholarly debate, and it also clearly varies across different organizations and historical periods. International organizations may provide rational incentives to comply with specific policy templates and sanction mechanisms for their violation.[24] They can perform the role of the "teachers" of certain norms and assist member states in implementing policies that are compliant with such norms,[25] as well as establish formal legal frameworks that are incorporated in domestic legislation or used as reference points in domestic judicial practices.[26] They can be appropriated as additional tools of leverage by certain domestic political actors in struggle for policy change.[27] Finally, international organizations that institutionalize and formalize a particular norm may serve as vehicles and arenas for the "shaming" of states whose policies violate this norm into compliance even when formal coercive mechanisms are weak or absent.[28]

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[22] Seija Lainela, "Baltic Accession to the European Union," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 31, no. 2 (2000): 204-216.
[23] Such as the Treaty on Establishment of the Commonwealth of Russia and Belarus in 1996; Treaty on the Union of Russia and Belarus in 1997; Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State in 1999.
[24] Xinyuan Dai, *International Institutions and National Policies* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
[25] Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms," *International Organization* 47, no 4 (2004): 565-598; also, John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez, "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (1997): 144-181 for the role of international organizations in promoting specific domestic policy templates across the globe.
[26] Jose E. Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-Makers* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[27] Lisa L. Martin and Beth Simmons, "Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 729-757.
[28] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887–917; Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink,

Norms, related to language rights and recognition of multiple languages, have received very limited institutionalization at the international level. Legally binding documents, developed by the United Nations Organizations,[29] convey only the general principle of non-discrimination and freedom in the matters of using one's language. The recognition of linguistic diversity and institutionalization of language rights is most advanced in Europe,[30] but even there it remains limited in scope and influence it has on domestic policies.[31] In the 1990s, the responsibilities of the state before ethnolinguistic minorities were incorporated into the legal framework of the Council of Europe through 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages[32] some of which are also repeated in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,[33] albeit in a much more condensed form. Neither document explicitly mentions the provision of special legal status, but they encourage (rather than mandate) the use of minority languages in public communication, education, media and the like. In addition to the fact that such language-related legislation has a non-binding character, it primarily targets the language use of minority and regional languages rather than the overall nature of an official language policy, especially of such its symbolic dimension as granting a language official status. In practice, the status of a minority language is interpreted as mutually exclusive with the status of an official language, since the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages explicitly refers to the protection of languages that have no official status, unless a signatory state requests an exception from this principle. The charter leaves the interpretation of the status of a minority language to the states themselves, and the states are the ones to decide what communities are considered national minorities. For example, Germany, who was one of the initial signatory parties of the charter, defines only Danish, Sorbian, Frisian and Romani

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eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[29] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, United Nations, 1965, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations, 1966, https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx.

[30] Fernand De Varennes, "Language Rights as an Integral Part of Human Rights," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* 3, no. 1 (2001): 15-25.

[31] Uta Loeckx, *Dil Hakkı: Azınlık Dilleri ve Çokdilli Yaşam* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2016): 14.

[32] The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Council of Europe, 1992, https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/text-of-the-charter.

[33] Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Council of Europe, 1995, https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/157.

as languages covered by the provisions of the charter.[34] Moreover, whereas the minority rights discourse can serve as a tool for pushing the agenda towards multilingualism, it can also be employed as the justification for not providing language-related rights to "migrant" communities, let alone any official recognition of their languages.[35] Then president of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga in her interview to a Russian newspaper in 2004 dismissed all the parallels between Latvia, Canada and Belgium regarding the situation with languages by referring to the difference between "historically rooted linguistic communities" in the latter two and the "inflow or Russian-speakers as the result of occupation" in the former.[36] In relation to the empirical puzzle of the dissertation it must be noted that Latvia never singed the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Ukraine ratified it only 2005,[37] while Belarus and Kazakhstan are not even the members of the Council of Europe.

In short, the role of international organizations in influencing the official language policies of nation states is too limited to serve as the source of profound language policy change, since the discourse on language rights is not yet firmly institutionalized and reflected in binding international legislation. Consequently, appealing to non-binding normative principles can be a powerful but still only an auxiliary tool that can be employed for the justification of claims for the provision of language rights. Most likely, the scope of policy changes that can arise from such normative pressure is confined to a shift from a monolingual official language policy to a monolingual official language policy with recognized minority languages. Even in the latter case, the ultimate decision of what languages should be considered minority ones is in the hands of the national government.

3.1.6 Colonialism and Pre-Colonial "Great Traditions"

Another group of explanations links cross-country differences in official language policies to the peculiarities of their pre-colonial and colonial historical legacies. Shortly stated, the argument suggests that a colonial language will be kept as official in post-colonial

[34] "Regional and Minority Languages in Germany," Deutschland.de, November 25, 2015, https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/germany-europe/regional-and-minority-languages-in-germany#.
[35] European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages "does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants."
[36] "Prezident Latvii Vaira Vike-Freiberga: 'My khotim sdelat russkikh latyshami,'" *AiF*. May 12, 2004, http://www.aif.ru/archive/1632196.
[37] Chart of Signatures and Ratifications of Treaty 148, Council of Europe, https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148/signatures

countries, especially if it is "a great international language." Colonialism is definitely an important force, which affects official language polices in post-colonial nation-states.[38] It accounts for the formation of linguistically unified bureaucratic and economic elites, supporting the maintenance of the colonial language as part of the official language policy formula.[39] There is an assumption that a higher utilitarian value of "great international languages" of former colonial powers will make them more likely to remain part of official language policy formula.[40]

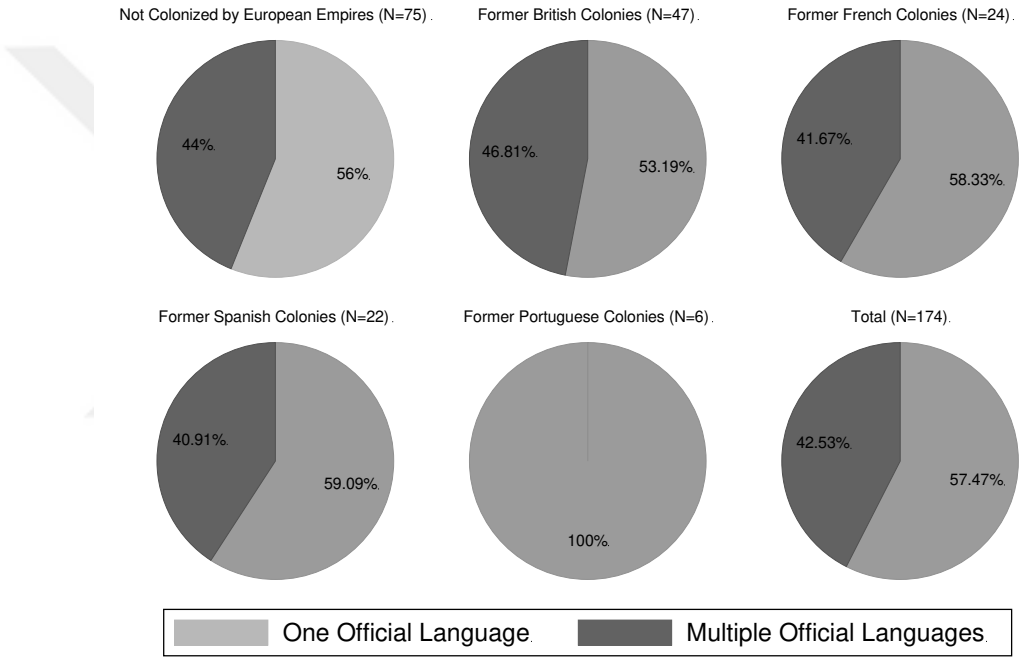

Figure 3.3: Countries with single or multiple official languages by colonial legacies.

However, colonialism might not necessarily be conductive to the implementation of official multilingualism. Empirically, there is negligible differences in the shares of countries with one or multiple official languages between former colonies of European powers with "great international languages" (British, French, Spanish and Portuguese) and the rest of the world (Figure 3.3). Only former British colonies comprise a slightly more multilingual group, as

[38] Spolsky, *Language Policy*.
[39] Laitin, *Language Repertoires*.
[40] Einar I. Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 68, no 4 (1966), 922-935.

compared to non-colonized countries, while countries with one official language are more numerous among all other former colonies.[41]

Former colonies end up being officially monolingual through two diametrically opposed paths. Some former colonies strip the language of former colonizer of any official status and keep an indigenous vernacular as their only official language, while some former colonies keep the former colonial language as their only official language. In cases where population is too heterogeneous and there is no unifying pre-colonial "Great Tradition", it is most likely that the former colonial language will be the only official language. "Great Tradition", a concept coined by Joshua Fishman in 1969, refers to a "widely accepted and visibly implemented belief-and-behavior system of indigenously validated greatness"[42] [so that it can be equated with the narrative of nationhood – *Y.K.*] that is available "to provide the indigenized and symbolically elaborated laws, beliefs, customs, literature, heroes, mission and identity appropriate for nationwide identification." Countries, which had such a unified tradition, either reject the colonial language or use it only provisionally in addition to the national language in the first years of independence. Countries, which have multiple "Great Traditions", such as India, will end up with official multilingualism.

Arguments, which are based solely on the colonial legacies, have an insufficient explanatory power to predict language policy outcomes, since they do not discriminate between the cases of countries that had their indigenous traditions, but maintained the colonial language and became multilingual (for example Malta recognizes both English and Maltese as its official languages), and those cases where the colonial language was completely rejected in favor of the indigenous language and official language policy became monolingual (Tunisia is a good example of official monolingualism despite continuing widespread use of the French language; likewise Cyprus recognizes English merely as the language of court hearings). Furthermore, colonial experience cannot account for the subsequent policy changes that have taken place in various post-colonial countries.

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[41] Data for colonial legacies is obtained from Paul R. Hensel, *ICOW Colonial History Data Set*, v. 1.1, 2018, http://www.paulhensel.org/icowcol.html.

[42] Joshua A. Fishman, "National Languages and Languages of Wider Communication in the Developing Nations," *Anthropological Linguistics* 11, no. 4 (1969): 113.

While quantifying the presence or absence of one or multiple pre-colonial "Great Traditions" might be quite challenging, the overall level of linguistic diversity (operationalized as linguistic fractionalization) might serve as a reasonable indirect indicator. Therefore, we can anticipate that more former colonies among the most linguistically diverse ones (which are least likely to have a unifying indigenous "Great Tradition") and the least linguistically diverse ones (which are most likely to have such an indigenous "Great Tradition") would opt for monolingualism either in the colonial or indigenous language respectively than among moderately linguistically diverse countries. However, the proportions of officially monolingual and multilingual countries for the least and moderately linguistically diverse former colonies are exactly the same; and the share of countries with one official language among the most linguistically diverse former colonies is only marginally larger (Figure 3.4: Former colonies with single or multiple official languages by linguistic fractionalization.).

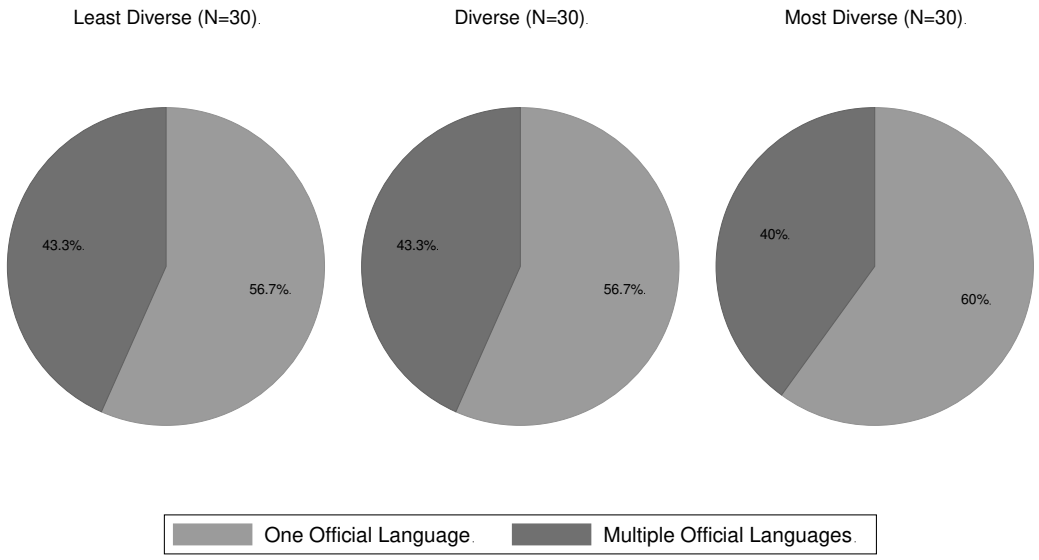

Figure 3.4: Former colonies with single or multiple official languages by linguistic fractionalization.

Nevertheless, the presence of alternative "Great Traditions" in different Soviet republics could have accounted for at least their initial choices of official language policies. A major problem that arises once such an explanation is applied to the former Soviet Union stems from the fact that Fishman's framework limits the possibility of the development of indigenous "Great Traditions" only to the pre-colonial historical period. The Soviet

experience is peculiar in this regard, because it also carries the legacies of Soviet nation building, which had been discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. These legacies include major efforts in language standardization and the development of vocabularies of titular language, establishment and maintenance of titular cultural, educational and scientific institutions, teaching titular national histories and literatures: "According to the new party line, all officially recognized Soviet nationalities were supposed to have their own nationally defined 'Great Traditions' that needed to be protected, perfected and, if need be, invented by specially trained professionals in specially designated institutions."[43] In other words, all fourteen countries received their indigenous socialist "Great Traditions" in addition to pre-Socialist ones in cases where there such, by the time of independence in 1991.[44]

Consequently, a socialist "Great Tradition" is also suitable for justifying official monolingualism in post-Soviet republics, considering the fact that it was only later supplemented with the narrative of rapprochement of socialist nations and favorable views on titular-Russian bilingualism. In such circumstances what could make the justification even more credible is the presence of a strong pre-Soviet "Great Tradition" in addition to the Soviet one. Table 3.6 includes the duration of pre-Soviet independent statehood (dates in square brackets indicate contested and/or unsuccessful attempts), pre-Soviet literacy rates[45] and the markers of the beginning of national language standardization (publication of the first grammars and dictionaries) as symptoms of the strength of pre-Soviet "Great Traditions" in fourteen former Soviet republics. I assume that longer periods of independent statehood, higher literacy rate and the earlier standardization of the titular language indicate the presence of a strong non-Soviet indigenous "Great Tradition" in such countries and that these countries should end up with monolingual official language polices in their titular languages.

The three Baltic Republics had fully standardized languages, high literacy rates (significantly above the average of 43% for 14 republics) and the longest periods of

[43] Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 446-47.
[44] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 101.
[45] Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse," *World Politics* 59, no. 1 (2006): 83-115.

independent nationhood. Moldova is second with the longest period of statehood, but only as part of the Romanian state, and with a medium literacy rate. Unlike for the rest of the republics, in the Moldovan case the Romanian nationhood serves as an alternative "Great Tradition," and not a separate Moldovan one. Ukraine has both a moderate pre-Socialist literacy rate and short-lived attempt on establishing an independent statehood. Belarus follows Ukraine but lags in each aspect. The five Asian republics make up the last group, which has low literacy rates, with Kazakhstan being somewhat advanced, compared to the remaining four. Consequently, such a variation in the symptoms of the strength of an alternative "Great Tradition" does not fully explain even the differences in initial language policy choices. More importantly, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia all selected the same initial language policy formula in 1989-1990, while they differed in the strengths of their alternative traditions of statehood.

In sum, colonial legacies have important direct and indirect impact on language policies in former colonies. Former colonies are influenced by the prolonged use of a colonial language in administration and education, which facilitated the spread of bilingualism among more educated social strata. There is also an indirect impact through state and nation building, since introduction of institutions of modern state and administrative borders,[46]as well as ideas of nationalism among local intellectual elites all contribute to the development of indigenous nationalisms according to the blueprints "imported" from the cores of colonial empires.[47] However, both initial conditions and colonial experiences are too heterogeneous to assume that the impact of colonial legacies can exhaustively explain the variation in initial official language policy choices, let alone their subsequent changes.

[46] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London, New York: Verso, 2006).
[47] David K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (London, Bansingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1982).

Table 3.6: Pre-Soviet statehood traditions in former USSR.

	Pre-Soviet Statehood	*Literacy Rate*	*First available grammar*	*First available dictionary*	*Initial status of Russian and changes if any*
Estonia	1920-40	99%	17th century	17th century	foreign/minority
Latvia	1921-40	93%	18th century	18th century	interethnic → foreign/minority
Lithuania	1920-40	77%	17th century	17th century	foreign/minority
Belarus	[1918-19]	42%	20th century	19th century	interethnic → official
Ukraine	[1918-19]	46%	19th century	19th century	interethnic (→ regional → foreign)
Moldova	[1918], 1920-40	46%	18th century	18th century	interethnic → interethnic, regional
Georgia	1918-1921	65%	18th century	17th century	foreign/minority
Armenia	1918-1920	56%	17th century	17th century	foreign/minority
Azerbaijan	1918-1920	20%	19th century	19th century	foreign/minority
Kazakhstan	[1917-1920]	18%	19th century	19th century	interethnic → administrative
Kyrgyzstan		12%	20th century	20th century	interethnic → official
Uzbekistan		11%	20th century	20th century	interethnic → foreign/minority
Tajikistan		4%	20th century	20th century	interethnic
Turkmenistan		10%	20th century	20th century	interethnic

3.1.7 Political Regime and Recognition of Multiple Official Languages

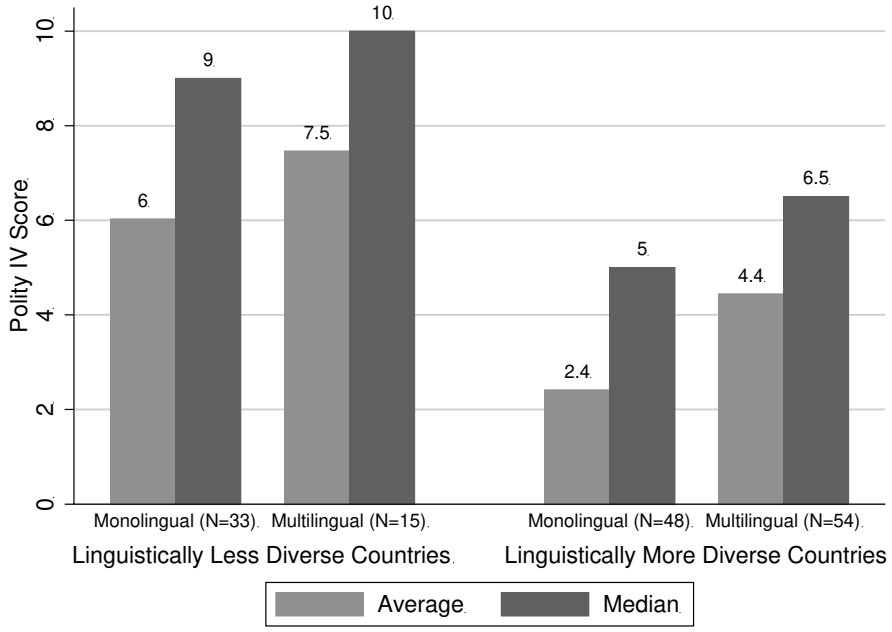

Figure 3.5: Average and median Polity IV scores for countries with single or multiple official languages.

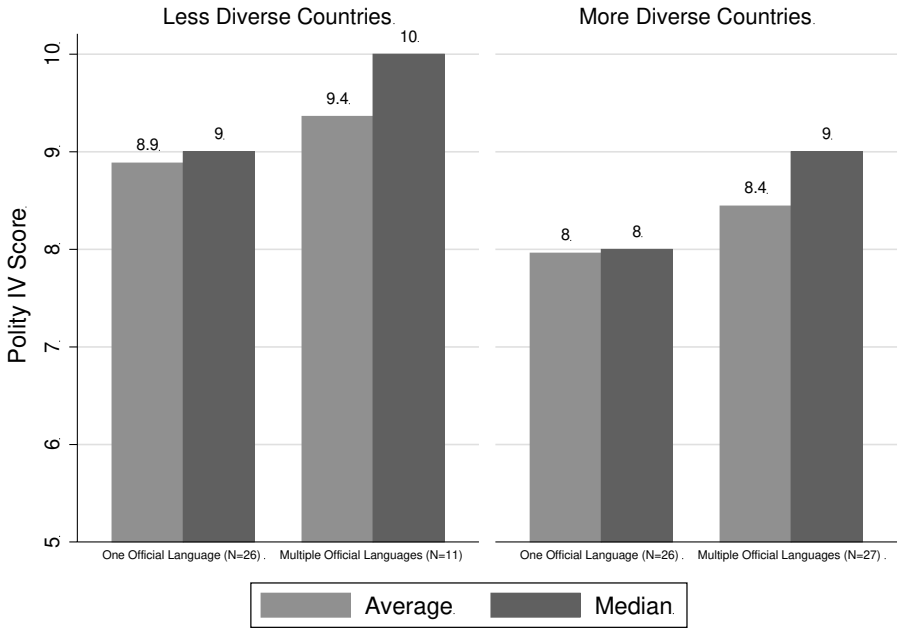

Figure 3.6: Average and median Polity IV scores for countries with single or multiple official language with scores higher than 5

Another factor that may potentially influence the character of language policies is the receptiveness of political institutions to a normative discourse on language rights and linguistic human rights. This discourse has been gradually evolving and gaining prominence starting at the end of World War II towards the end of the 20th century.[48] For most of the time, however, the discourse was limited to the recognition of negative language rights.[49] Positive language rights, such as the right to education in mother tongue, gained attention only recently.[50] In principle, a more democratic environment, supported by the presence of a broader discourse on multiculturalism and acceptance of cultural and ethnolinguistic diversity, should be more responsive to the concept of language rights and language-related demands by linguistic groups. Therefore, liberal democracies should be more sensible and accommodating to the ideas of officially recognized multilingualism.[51] Autocracies, on the other hand, should be more suppressive of any sort of rights claims and political demands by minority groups, including the adoption of multiple official languages.

Empirically, the characteristics of political regimes seem to be somewhat related to the recognition of multiple official languages at the cross-national level. Charts in Figure 3.5 demonstrate that both less and more linguistically diverse officially multilingual countries have higher average and median Polity IV scores (which measure the degree to which a political system is autocratic or democratic).[52] But this association seems to be much less pronounced for regimes which meet a certain democratic threshold (Polity IV scores higher than 5), as represented in Figure 3.6. In other words, it is probably more common among autocracies to recognize a single official language, compared to more democratic regimes. However, the overall majority (58%) of more democratic regimes still have one official language; and only a marginal majority (50.9%) of simultaneously more democratic and linguistically more diverse countries have multiple official languages.

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[48] Xabier Arzoz, "The Nature of Language Rights," *JEMIE 6; European Centre for Minority Issues* (2007): 1-35.
[49] Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 91-125.
[50] Sue Wight, "The Right to Speak One's Own Language: Reflections on Theory and Practice," *Language Policy* 6, no 2 (2007): 203-224.
[51] David D. Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence* (Oxford UK, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[52] Monty G. Marhsall, Ted Robert Gurr and Keith Jaggerth, "2018 POLITYTM IV PROJECT: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2018," Center for Systemic Peace, 2018, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4v2018.xls.

Table 3.7: 1992-2001 Polity IV scores of former Soviet republics.

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Armenia	7	7	7	3	-6	-6	5	5	5	5
Azerbaijan	1	-3	-3	-6	-6	-6	-7	-7	-7	-7
Belarus	7	7	7	0	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7
Estonia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	9	9
Georgia	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Kazakhstan	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4
Kyrgyzstan	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Lithuania	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Moldova	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8
Tajikistan	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-5	-1	-1	-1	-1
Turkmenistan	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9
Ukraine	6	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6
Uzbekistan	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9

This general relationship does not hold true in the more specific case of official language policy divergence among post-Soviet republics (Table 3.7). The characteristics of political regimes varied significantly among those Soviet republics who adopted Russian as the language of interethnic communication. In Belarus, greater recognition of the Russian language took place against the backdrop of authoritarian consolidation. Both democratic Latvia and extremely autocratic Uzbekistan lowered the status of the Russian language. Ukraine's score fluctuated without moving in the direction of either greater democratization or stronger autocratic elements.

In summary, it is plausible that more democratic environments are more conducive to the eventual adoption of multiple official languages. However, there still exists a great variation within both officially multilingual and monolingual countries in terms of their regime characteristics. Besides, some non-democratic regimes may prefer to provide extensive language rights to various ethnolinguistic groups in exchange for their withdrawal from political participation. Leninist polices on languages in the Soviet Union are a great example of such a strategy. More importantly, official language policy choice and changes in the former Soviet Union seem not to be congruent, if not contrary to this

general premise, since more authoritarian post-Soviet republics provided the highest level of recognition to the Russian language in the first decade of independence.

3.1.8 Characteristics of Ruling Elites

The final group of explanations for language policy choices attributes policy variation to the variation in the characteristics of the ruling elites – most typically to their ethnolinguistic background. Consequently, an elite change is the key explanatory variable that causes the revision of official language policies.

As early as in 1968, Fishman proposed the juxtaposition of nationalist and "nationist" elites in terms of preferred nation-building strategies and the choice of official language polices in post-colonial countries.[53] In those post-colonial countries, in which nationist elites dominate the political field, nation-building efforts will be directed towards downplaying cultural and linguistic differences and constructing a common civic identity. Hence, a colonial language will remain the main official language at the national level. Those post-colonial countries, in which nationalist elites are dominant, will follow the model of ethnic nation building and have a monolingual language policy in an indigenous language. Fishman does not discuss the mechanism of policy changes, but such a change can be inferred as originating from the change of the elite type in power.

Brass[54] suggests a different distinction between the two following types of elites, based on their attitudes towards colonial language. Low-level elites made up of writers, teachers and local bureaucrats promote the use of the vernacular. They strive for the displacing of the colonial language as the language of oppression and disempowerment. Dominant elites, which are bilingual, will defend the language of colonial rule as the fit instrument for modernity and a tool to maintain the power of the upper class. A compromise between the aspirations of the two elite groups will shape the official language policy outcome. The degree of recognition of the vernacular language and the status of the former colonial language will depend on the exact power relations of the two groups and condition a monolingual official language policy in national language, monolingual official language

[53] Joshua A. Fishman, "Nationality-Nationalism and Nation-Nationism," in *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, eds. Joshua A. Fishman, Charles A. Ferguson and Jyotirindra Das Gupta (New York: Wiley, 1968), 39-51.
[54] Paul R. Brass, "Elite Interests, Popular Passions, and Social Power in the Language Politics of India," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 3 (2004) 353-375.

policy in colonial language, or multilingual official policy. Brass is concerned with the issue of empowerment and interest-based preferences of elite groups, but ideational justifications for language choices are also evident, since there is a contrast between the notions of liberation from oppression and defending modernity. The post-Soviet experience suggests that the dominant elites of the previous period may reject the colonial language completely, despite controlling the government, as the examples of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan demonstrate.

A theoretical framework that connects changes in types of ruling elites to changes in state policies on nation building, including official language policies, is proposed by Akturk in 2012.[55] The typology of regimes of ethnicity and nationhood, put forward by the author, singles out seven policies that define the nature of a country's regime of ethnicity and nationhood, according to three ideal types – monoethnic, antiethnic and multiethnic. Recognition of multiple official languages is considered an indicator of the multiethnic nature of the regime in a particular polity. Consequently, a change in official language policy in one or the other direction signals the broader transformation of an ethnicity and nationhood regime.

In addition to regime typology, the author also provides a causal mechanism for regime change. Since policies on ethnicity and nationhood are among the most fundamental policies that reflect that polity's collective identity, understanding of citizenship and alike, they are extremely resilient, and their changes are relatively rare events. Two independent variables – the presence of counter-elites that represent constituencies with grievances about the existing policy(ies), and an alternative discourse on ethnicity and nationhood – are the necessary preconditions. The policy change itself becomes possible only when these counter-elites, equipped with an alternative discourse, obtain a hegemonic majority in political institutions.

In relation to the change of official language policy, this framework directs the focus towards the presence of particular constituencies with grievances, related to language use and/or its symbolic status, counter-elites that can represent such grievances, and an alternative discourse on nationhood that includes a significant linguistic component. In

[55] Sener Akturk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

some cases of language policy change, such as in Rwanda and South Africa, this path seems to be clearly reproduced. In both countries, counter-elites acquired a hegemonic majority in political institutions (through a civil war in Rwanda[56] and a landslide electoral victory in South Africa[57]) and, among others, brought changes to those countries' official language policies. However, the framework, other than predicting the change itself, does not provide a more detailed explanation for the scope of such changes.

In this regard, the changes of official language policies in post-Soviet republics require a more nuanced measure instead of a simple dichotomy, since the transformation of local political field cannot always be easily conceptualized as the change of the hegemonic majority. In some post-Soviet countries, such as Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, there were only minor changes within ruling elites in the first decade of independence. Yet, changes in official language policy still took place there. Thus, the post-Soviet cases of language policy changes raise a question about alternative or supplementary paths towards policy change or persistence within the context of broader transformation of regimes of ethnicity and nationhood.

Liu and Rick develop a causal explanation[58] of policy changes in cases when the elite shifts are not hegemonic. Changes in language policy will take place at critical junctures in political history if the counter-elites, representing minority ethnolinguistic groups, are strong enough to be co-opted into a coalition by the ruling majority. If coalitional constraints are absent, the government can shift towards the official monolingual policy. If an alternative linguistic group can effectively threaten the government, the latter is likely to co-opt this group and provide it with some linguistic concessions, moving language policy towards multilingualism. The level of effective threat is measured as the degree of political organization, presence of external support and ability to pose credible challenges to the state, such as violent protests and secessionism.

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[56] Beth Lewis Samuelson and Sara Freedman Warshauer, "Language policy, multilingual education, and power in Rwanda," *Language Policy* 9, no 3 (2009): 191–215.
[57] Jon Orman, *Language Policy and Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Springer, 2008).
[58] Ami H. Liu and Jacob I. Ricks, "Coalitions and Language Politics: Policy Shifts in Southeast Asia," *World Politics* 64, no 3 (2012): 476-506.

Malaysia is identified by the authors as the empirical case which experienced the change of official language policy. The authors claim that this change in language policy took place in the unchanging nation-building context, in which "the 'vision of ethnic nationalism that enshrined Malay privileges' was always present."[59] However, the Malaysian constitution named Malay as "national language", while English was allowed to be used for official purposes in the first ten years after independence.[60] The change of official language policy in Malaysia was associated with the termination of the provisional clause, rather than with the redistribution of previously allocated legal statuses.[61] Therefore, it is questionable to what extent this change can be regarded as the genuine change of the official language policy.

Access to power on its own is not a sufficient condition for a language policy change. In the review of the attempted language policy changes in Taiwan,[62] Dupré demonstrates how the lack of connection with an alternative discourse on nationhood can impede the transformation of the official language policy even when most favorable political conditions for such changes are present.

Likewise, the argument that co-optation of the most challenging ethnolinguistic minority leads to linguistic concessions and multilingualism does not confirm in the case of Bulgaria. In the 1990s, the local Turkish minority, which had been subjected to severe pressure during the communist rule,[63] became an important political force. The Movement for Rights and Freedoms, a political party associated with the Turkish minority, not only entered the parliament but also joined ruling coalitions on multiple occasions.[64] Nevertheless, Bulgaria remained officially monolingual.

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[59] Liu and Ricks, "Coalitions and Language Politics," 480.
[60] Federal Constitution of Malaysia, 2010, https://www.slideshare.net/mbl2020/constitution-of-malaysia.
[61] The introduction of provisional clauses represents a peculiar case of official language policy outcomes. None of the post-Soviet republics included such provisional clauses regarding the statuses of languages into their language legislation.
[62] Jean-Francois Dupre, "Mandarin State Tradition and Language Regime Change in Taiwan," in *State Traditions and Language Regimes*, eds. Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal (Montreal: MgGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 154-169.
[63] Milena Mahon, "The Turkish minority under communist Bulgaria—politics of ethnicity and power," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 1, no 2 (1999): 149-162
[64] Dia Anagnostou, "Nationalist legacies and European trajectories: Post-Communist liberalization and Turkish minority politics in Bulgaria," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 5, no 1 (2005): 89-111.

Cross-nationally, there exists only a weak correlation (0.19) between the number of ethnic groups that have access to executive political power and the number of officially recognized languages.[65] Figure 3.7 depicts the distribution of officially monolingual and officially multilingual countries by the number of ethnic groups with access to political power. Multiple ethnic groups have access to political power in 46 percent of countries with one official language.

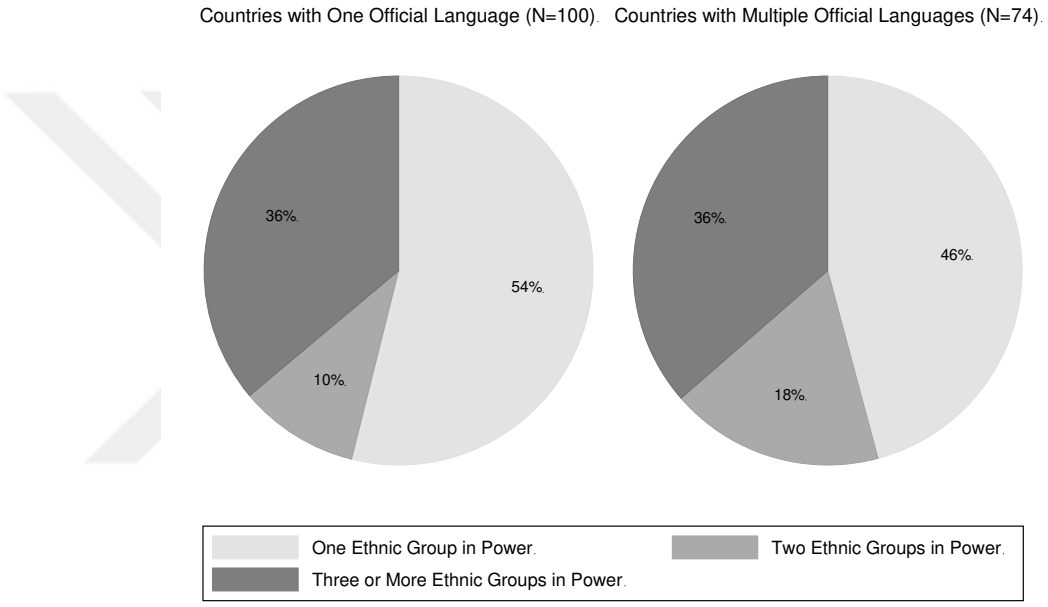

Figure 3.7: Countries with single and multiple official languages by number of ethnic groups in power.

Among countries with multiple official languages, three or more ethnic groups have access to political power in 36 percent of them, two ethnic groups – in 18 percent, while 46 percent have only one ethnic group that has access to political power. Thus, the ethnic composition of ruling elites (and by extension, changes in such a composition) on its own seems to be insufficient for explaining official language policy outcomes.

A common challenge that arises with regards to explanations based on the conflict and compromise among different ethnic groups is that such explanations imply the fixed nature of preferences in terms of language policies: An ethnic group always wants to promote its own language to an official status. If it views this option as "unrealistic", it will strive for

[65] Data for the number of ethnic groups in power is taken from Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Armed Conflict dataset. Ethnic Power Relations*, ver. 3.0, http://www.epr.ucla.edu/WarlistEPRVersion3.xls.

the promotion of an ethnically neutral language. Such explanations also imply that ethnolinguistic elites are monolithic in their attitudes. However, there is nothing deterministic in the fact that ethnolinguistic majority should view the provision of official language status to other languages as concession. At the same time, it is not self-evident that minority groups would necessarily strive for linguistic concessions and that such concessions would be only limited to the recognition of their titular language. Among the post-Soviet countries, the Moldovan case is an example of a situation where the Gagauz ethnic minority managed to pose a tangible threat of secession to the central government in early 1990s and obtained linguistic concessions and territorial autonomy, which it hadn't had in the Soviet period. The Gagauz did not obtain linguistic concessions either for their vernacular or for the Russian language. Instead, they opted for both of them simultaneously, thus making the Gagauz autonomous region officially trilingual.[66]

In summary, my explanation of the language policy divergence in post-Soviet countries is in partial agreement with arguments that claim that the characteristics of political elites and the balance among their factions play an important role in shaping official language policy outcomes. However, I avoid the essentialization of elites' attitudes towards languages and argue against elite differentiation exclusively along ethnic lines. I also argue that elites' preferences cannot be reduced to rational interests alone. Instead, they are embedded in and mediated by broader attitudes to the preferred conceptions of nationhood that may or may not partially overlap with ethnic divisions in society. Moreover, not all elite groups should necessarily have preferences for different language policies of the same strength.

3.2 Argument: Language Policy Choices in Former Soviet Republics

This section presents an explanatory framework (Figure 3.8) for the analysis of post-1991 official language policy changes in Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia. After a brief review of the background conditions, in which language policy changes unfolded, the section proceeds with the summary of main characteristics of two antagonistic language policy advocacy coalitions – monolingual and multilingual. In the remainder of the section, I assess policy relevant resources that were available to policy advocacy coalitions in the late Soviet and

[66] Charles King, "Minorities policy in the post-Soviet republics: The case of the Gagauzi," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20, no. 4 (1997): 738-756.

early post-Soviet contexts and outline alternative language policy outcomes. In short, official language policy change or a lack thereof and its directions were a byproduct of a major elite realignment that dramatically enabled the resources of either monolingual or multilingual official language policy advocacy coalition.

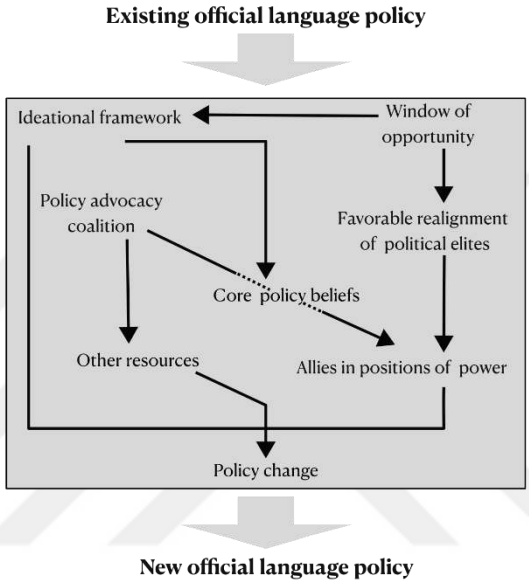

Figure 3.8: Visual representation of the general explanatory framework

3.2.1 Background Conditions

Official language policy is an institution, shaped by values, written and unwritten norms, and the expected codes of conduct. Official language policies are the reflections of more general language regimes – "language practices as well as conceptions of language and language use as projected through state policies and acted upon by language users."[67] The language regime of a state overlaps with this state's regime of nationhood, since language is the key element that links ethnicity to nationalism. Both are embedded in more general state traditions, originating from this country's political history.

A profound change in official language policy that would alter its overall character happens on rare occasions. Official language policies tend to endure under the normal course of

[67] Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal "State Traditions and Language Regimes: Conceptualizing Language Policy Choices," in *State Traditions and Language Regimes*, eds. Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal (Montreal: MgGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 6.

events, when existing state traditions remain unchallenged, and a particular concept of nationhood prevails. An institutional change can come only following great shocks, which create a window of opportunity for altering previously stable institutions. In all other situations, changes in language policies, if any, will be norm-governed or norm-restricted changes, such as institutional layering and policy adjustments through policy learning. The provision of education in mother tongue to ethnic minorities in a country, which has a single official language, can be an example of such institutional layering.

Such shocks include, but are not limited to, the acquisition of independence, state disintegration, civil war, foreign intervention, and profound regime changes. These windows of opportunity are both structural and ideational. They are structural in the sense that new actors get an opportunity to access political power and influence the process of policymaking. They are ideational in the sense that new ideas and discourses gain impetus and enter political agenda so that the policy image that was previously hegemonic can be questioned and challenged.

The question of official language policy does not arise following such changes if the previous language regime was stable, meaning that the professed statuses of languages matched the expectations of their users. The contestation of language policy will take place only if the previous language regime carried a mismatch, marked by internal inconsistencies and incongruences. Therefore, a change in official language policy will be expected during windows of opportunity only in countries that previously had a hegemonic language regime. Under such a regime, there is a profound mismatch between the desired and actual language statuses, masked by hegemonic discursive practices.[68] In the case of the former Soviet Union, the inherited tension was present in language regimes of the Union republics. The policies of glasnost and eventual collapse of the USSR served as a critical juncture that made policy revisions in those countries possible.

[68] Sonntag and Cardinal, "State Traditions," 8.

3.2.2 Advocacy Coalitions

Table 3.8: Core beliefs and policy beliefs of advocacy coalitions.

Advocacy Coalition	**Attitude Towards Soviet History**	**Appropriate Nationhood Model**	**Policy Beliefs**
Monolingual	Negative	Monoethnic and language-centered	Language is the key to national survival. The titular language should be promoted at the expense of the "oppressor" Russian language.
Multilingual	Positive	Monoethnic, but not language-centered	Russian is the second mother tongue, and the primary means of communication; the titular language should have mostly decorative functions.
		Multinational/ multiethnic	Russian is the mother tongue of people in a multiethnic/multinational republic, which deserves equal recognition.
		Or the hybridization of the two	

Policy changes do not automatically originate from the underlying structural conditions. Moreover, the presence of such conditions does not guarantee that they will be actualized in the form of policy change demands. Specific interest groups and policy entrepreneurs must seize the opportunity, explicitly articulate these demands and pressure politicians for the implementation of policy changes. I suggest that in the post-Soviet republics, two following relevant advocacy coalitions of policy entrepreneurs had been formed by the end of the 1980s: a coalition that advocated a monolingual language policy and a coalition that advocated a bilingual language policy. Table 3.8 summarizes the core beliefs, policy beliefs and the preferred official language policy formulas of the two advocacy coalitions.

The major fault line in the core beliefs of the members of these advocacy coalitions, which has informed their preferences for official language policy, is the preferred vision of nationhood that post-Soviet republics should follow in the course of independent nation

building. More specifically, differences in the core beliefs of the two groups stem from the interpretation of the part of the narrative of independent nationhood that addresses the period of nation building that preceded the acquisition of independence in 1991.

The monolingual policy advocacy coalition shared the first attitude, which was the rejection of the Soviet period of nation building, especially its post-1920s part, and its strongly pronounced multiethnic character, "brotherhood of nations" and stress on the positive progressive role of the Russian language. The Soviet period was negatively contrasted with pre-Soviet political history: "In the nationalist discourses of the present movements for self-determination in the Soviet Union, the brief period of independence has been transformed into a moment of light to contrast with the long, dark experience with the Soviet rule, which in turn is depicted as the destruction of the national."[69] The period of *korenizatsiia* and active celebration of ethnonational particularism in the early Soviet period served this role of the historical reference point in those Soviet republics who had no history of independent pre-Soviet statehood. A monoethnic language-centered vision of nationhood in titular republics, which presupposed the congruency of polity, ethnicity and associated language, and which had been attacked but never been completely rejected or dismantled in the Soviet period after 1920s, was to be reembraced and reinforced. An officially monolingual policy in the titular language was to serve as the key component in this process.

The multilingual advocacy coalition shared the second attitude, which reflected the positive evaluation of the Soviet period in national history. The Soviet past was treated as the principal source of modern nationhood. Likewise, this group shared a favorable attituded towards post-1920s Soviet policies and practices on nation-building that aimed at promoting the brotherhood of nations, condemned ethnic chauvinism, stressed the progressive role of the Russian language in the social and economic development of Soviet republics. In fact, many members of this policy advocacy coalition might be skeptical of national independence all together. The process of dismantling the original monoethnic language-centered vision of nationhood was to be continued during independent nation-building along the two major dimensions, laid out in the Soviet period. One was to

[69] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, 101.

downplay the role of titular language as the common marker of ethnic identity. The other was to appropriate the multinational vision of the common Soviet statehood for individual republics. The precise vision of independent nationhood supported by the multilingual policy advocacy coalition, featured the elements of the two narratives, but in relatively ethnically homogenous republics that experienced a more profound language shift, the overall monoethnic vision of nationhood, which was not centered on language, was more strongly accentuated, whereas in more ethnically diverse republics, the narrative of a multinational statehood/multiethnic nationhood was also introduced. Both visions justified an officially multilingual language policy that would institutionalize Russian as official, reflecting its position as the second mother tongue for the titular population, language of progress, and language of communication between ethnicities in the republic.

I distinguish relevant advocacy coalitions according to their core beliefs about the appropriate form of nationhood and interpretation of the Soviet legacies on nation-building because of three following reasons. First, selection of ideas about nationhood as core beliefs for language policies seems appropriate based on a strong link between language and national identity, evident from the discussion in the previous chapter. Second, preliminary empirical data from the cases of this dissertation provides strong evidence for the correctness of this choice. Finally, despite an organic relationship between the two, beliefs about nationhood and preferences for language policy are sufficiently distinct phenomena. This analytical distinction precludes a potentially tautological categorization of actors based on their policy preferences alone or beliefs about appropriate language policies, directly derived from such preferences. It also makes my argument explicitly falsifiable if tested in other empirical cases in the post-Soviet context or similar contexts of post-colonial language policy change. Hypothetically, an advocacy coalition for a language policy could have also combined a negative attitude to the Soviet period with a strong preference for official multilingualism, which would be informed by some other core beliefs, such as collective cultural rights and the Western discourse of multiculturalism.

While justification for contrasting preferences for language policy comes from the legacies of the Soviet period, there are also perceived benefits for an actor if one or the other official language formula is enacted. Monolingual advocacy coalitions drafted their members primarily from within the ranks of humanitarian intelligentsia, writers, teachers in

humanities and the like. The members of a monolingual advocacy coalition, as a rule, had an excellent command of their titular language or committed themselves to achieving it in the nearest future. At the same time, their knowledge of the "colonial" language might not always have been sufficient. Therefore, the members of this coalition would have benefitted the most from a monolingual official language policy. The more proactive and restrictive – that is the one that not only encourages the use of the titular language but also punishes the use of other languages – the language policy would be the greatest privileges this coalition would enjoy.

The multilingual advocacy coalition drafted the majority of its membership from among non-titular or completely Russified administrative and party officials, technical intelligentsia, former activists of Soviet public organizations, members of military and security forces. The members of the multilingual advocacy coalition would be the biggest 'losers' of the monolingual official language policy. Their knowledge of the titular language was limited, and they lacked motivation to invest personal resources to improve it, so they aspired for an official status for the Russian language. Core beliefs, which stem from the Soviet vison of nationhood, precluded this coalition from advocating a monolingual language policy in the Russian language, so the titular language was to be kept as official alongside Russian. Nevertheless, the members of this coalition would benefit the most from a more laissez-faire bilingual language policy, when state did not demand bilingualism from its individual citizens and did not oblige itself to provide all the necessary services in their preferred language.

In general, individual preferences of coalition members for different language policies should not be considered as either fully normative or fully utilitarian, but as forming along both dimensions simultaneously. Consequently, such preferences should not be assigned to actors based exclusively on their sociolinguistic background. Russophone actors may develop a strong ideational connection with the negative attitude to Soviet history, embrace the monoethnic nation-building model and join the coalition that advocates a monolingual language policy. Likewise, actors from within titular cultural elites, such as prominent writers, may admire Soviet history, approve of the principles of Soviet nation building and join the multilingual advocacy coalition.

3.2.3 Allies in Authority: Political Elite Groups in Late Soviet and Early Post-Soviet Contexts

I argue that in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet context the most important resource for policy advocacy coalitions was an ability to secure "powerful allies in authority" in numbers and positions, sufficient for making a policy change possible. The political space of the post-Soviet republics in that period harbored three distinct groups of political elites that could potentially turn policy visions promoted by each advocacy coalition into actual language policies – anti-Soviet, pro-Soviet and post-Soviet elites. These three groups are distinguished based on their political backgrounds, ideological leanings and core beliefs about nation-building.

Rightist and nationalist political parties and candidates, representing anti-Soviet political elites, are the most likely political allies for the monolingual advocacy coalition since they share essentially similar core beliefs in that they condemn and want to "unmake" the Soviet period of national history. For the same reason, unreformed communist and leftist parties and candidates, representing pro-Soviet political elites, will be the most likely political allies for the multilingual advocacy coalition, since they both share a belief about the Soviet period being the golden age of national history.

Some members of these elite groups can also be active participants in language policy advocacy coalitions, but most politicians are not necessarily constantly concerned with the issue of official language policy. Similarities or differences between their core beliefs and the core beliefs of the two advocacy coalitions make them either more likely or less likely allies of the latter. Figure 3.9 illustrates this relationship.

Titular political elite groups, or nomenklatura, that held privileged positions in the system in the pre-independence period but also presided over the transition to political independence make up the post-Soviet elite group. The fact that they have an ambiguous attitude towards Soviet history discourages their permanent association with the cause of either advocacy coalition based on the similarity of core beliefs. On the one hand, the power position of this group originates from the Soviet period, therefore post-Soviet elites do not want to condemn it unconditionally or completely reject its legacies. On the other hand, they also need to justify the continuation of their leadership role in newly

independent nation states so that they prefer to incorporate the Soviet period into a longer thread of the history of national development by maintaining some of its principles, policies and practices and discontinuing others.

Once in control of the political system, this group plays the role of policy brokers. As a rule, the members of the post-Soviet elites know their titular language. Even if this

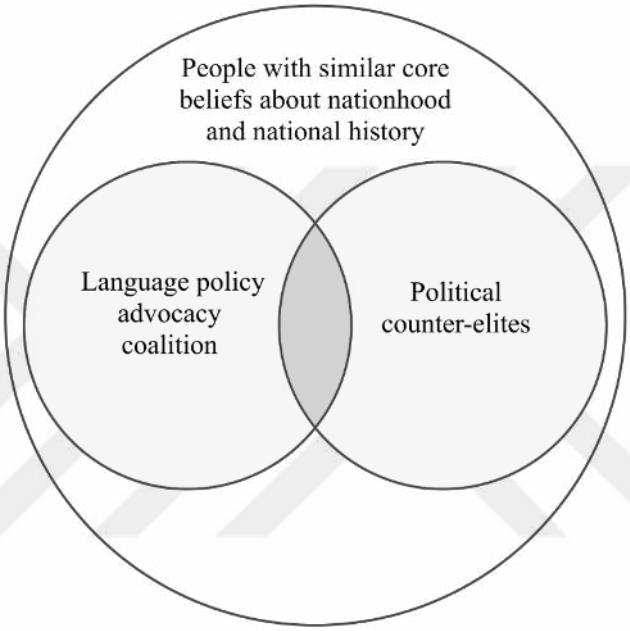

Figure 3.9: Relationship between advocacy coalitions and counter-elites.

knowledge is not perfect it can be improved relatively easily. They also have a good command of the Russian language, which was the language of their higher education and work-related activities. On their own, the members of this elite group are the least zealous actors of change, since they do not have especially strong preferences for a particular language policy and find the policy options of declaring some sort of primacy for the titular language or keeping official recognition of the Russian language equally (un)appealing. Consequently, the members of post-Soviet political elites will tend to support the policy status quo or favor some form of hierarchical bilingualism as a compromise policy outcome when pressured by the rival advocacy coalitions. However, major political realignments such as an alliance with either pro-Soviet or anti-Soviet political elites, diminish the

possibility of policy brokership by post-Soviet political elites and dramatically increase the policy-relevant resources and strengthen the cause of one or the other advocacy coalition.

3.2.4 Other Policy Relevant Resources

Other policy-relevant resources that contribute to the success of an advocacy coalition include favorable public opinion and the support of "mobilizable troops" in the form of mass protests, manifestations, petitions and the like. The role of these resources seems to be the greatest in the non-competitive political settings of the late Soviet period. In the following period, public opinion and the support of mobilizable troops played mostly an auxiliary role in keeping the issue of language policy on the decision-making agenda and facilitating the attraction of political allies.

The favorable opinion of the majority of the population is the most crucial resource of an advocacy coalition in case a question about official language is subjected to a referendum, and official language policy is changed through a public vote as a result. The favorable opinion makes pushing for such a referendum a viable strategy of policy change for this advocacy coalition. An advocacy coalition that cannot rely on the support of the majority of the general public will try to avoid a referendum at all costs. Such a referendum took place in the 1990s only in Belarus. Latvia held its own unsuccessful referendum in the 2010s – almost a decade and a half later. A public vote about official language policy never took place in Ukraine, although public opinion was in favor of official bilingualism in the middle of the 1990s. An opinion poll from 1995 indicated that 52% of Ukraine's population supported the idea of making Russian an official language and 32.6% were against it.[70] This scarcity of referenda is not surprising considering that the promotion of the language policy question to a public vote already requires the utilization of other resources, such as the support of important political figures, by an advocacy coalition in order to overcome institutional and political obstacles to such a referendum.

[70] "Za roky nezalezhnosti kilkist prykhylnikiv nadannia rosiiskoi movi statusu derzhavnoii zmenshylasia," *Tyzhden,* March 20, 2012, http://tyzhden.ua/News/45328.

Table 3.9: The share of votes against independence in republican referenda held before the disestablishment of the Soviet Union.

Republic	**Share of Votes against Independence**
Republican Referendums that were held before the August 1991 failed Coup Attempt	
Latvia	24.69%
Estonia	21.6%
Lithuania	6.54%
Georgia	0.5%
Republican Referendums that were held after the August 1991 failed Coup Attempt	
Ukraine	7.74%
Turkmenistan	5.94%
Armenia	0.49%

Opinion polls are the direct measurement of the views of the general public regarding the issue of language policy. Electoral data from elections and public votes on different but related issues can provide supplementary evidence in assessing the extent to which an advocacy coalition group could relate its cause to the general public. Locally organized referendums on the question of independence from the Soviet Union, which took place in some Soviet republics in 1991 and an all-Union referendum on the continuation of the Soviet Union, held on March 17, 1991, by central authorities, are the examples of such electoral evidence.

Nine republics held locally initiated referendums on the independence from the Soviet Union - Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Table 3.9). However, referendum results cannot be directly compared across all nine republics. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan held their referendum post factum - at the very end of the year, when the Soviet Union was already legally disestablished. Out of the remaining seven, four republics held their referendums in the spring of 1991 - before the failed coup attempt of August 1991. Three republics held their referendums after the failed coup attempt but before the formal disestablishment of the Soviet Union. This temporal distinction is important, since the failed coup signaled a major power change in Moscow, a swing in the general mood about the continuation of the Soviet state and decreased the

prospects for the survival of the USSR. Therefore, only the results of referendums within these two groups can be compared directly.

Table 3.10: Share of votes against the continuation of the Soviet Union.

Republic	**Share of Votes Against the Continuation of the Soviet Union**
Ukraine	28.0%
Belarus	16.1%
Azerbaijan	5.8%
Uzbekistan	5.2%
Kazakhstan	5.0%
Kyrgyzstan	4.0%
Tajikistan	3.1%
Turkmenistan	1.7%

The shares of the votes cast against independence in seven Soviet republics are summarized in Table 3.10.[71] I assume that the voters who cast their votes against independence would also be the most likely supporters of the multilingual advocacy coalition on official language policy. In the first-tier referendums, Latvia had the highest and Georgia had the lowest share of votes against independence from the Soviet Union. However, the majority of population in the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia and Autonomous Region of South Ossetia boycotted the Georgian referendum.[72] In the second-tier referendums, Ukraine had the highest share of such votes, while this share was the lowest in Armenia.

The contrast between the results of the two referenda in the same countries is a good indicator that public opinion is susceptible to fluctuations and sensible to the socio-political context, media coverage, activities of authorities and opinion leaders and framing of the questions themselves. Therefore, I argue for a cautious interpretation of data regarding public opinion on the issue of language policy and against using it for explaining actual

[71] "Soobshcheniie Tsentralnoi komissii referenduma SSSR Ob intogakh referenduma SSSR, sostoiavshegosia 17 marta 1991 goda," Gorbachev-Fond, https://www.gorby.ru/userfiles/file/referendum_rezultat.pdf.
[72] Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution* (London, Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005), 64.

language policy changes without addressing the question of why politicians decided to go along with the preferences of the majority of the population.

Table 3.11: Anti-Soviet protests, September 1985–August 1989.

Nationality	**more than 100 000**	**More than 10 000**
Armenians	102	175
Azerbaijanis	18	27
Georgians	10	25
Lithuanians	7	50
Latvians	7	17
Estonians	4	11
Ukrainians	1	39
Moldovans	1	17
Belarusians	0	5
Uzbeks	0	3
Kazakhs	0	0
Kirgiz	0	0
Tajiks	0	0
Turkmens	0	0

Mobilizable troops that can engage in collective action, such as mass protests, is another policy-relevant resource, which allows either of the advocacy coalitions to pressure decision-makers, attract new political allies and encourage or discourage certain policy decisions. One indirect indicator of the presence of potentially mobilizable troops for the monolingual advocacy coalitions in the countries of the region, especially around the time when the first wave of language laws came, is the number of anti-Soviet demonstrations. Table 3.11[73] lists the number of major anti-Soviet protests by titular nationalities of Soviet republics between September 1985 and August 1989. According to the data, the number of anti-Soviet demonstrations was the highest in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine, while there were no protests in Central Asia. It should be noted that differences in political settings across the Soviet republics, such as the degree of tolerance of political dissent and

[73] Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

civic activities by the republican authorities, certainly affected the scope of protest activities in that period.

The subsequent empirical research focuses on ally seeking as the major policy-relevant resource of advocacy coalitions and elite realignment as the major cause of its alteration. Nevertheless, the chapters of the dissertation dedicated to post-Soviet republics also address the role of public opinion on official language policy in each of the four cases and review specific events, such as mass demonstrations, petitions, and activities of civil society groups, which were connected to the issue of official language policy contestation.

3.2.5 Language Policy Outcomes

In those cases where post-Soviet elites had a monopoly or near monopoly in the political system and none of the two counter-elite groups was sufficiently strong to challenge the position of post-Soviet elites, they could assume the role of policy brokers between the two advocacy coalitions and push for hierarchical bilingualism as policy compromise. Such cases correspond to the situation of the adoption of the first wave of language laws in 1989-1990. This subsection presents a simplistic model of predicted official language policy outcomes for those cases, in which both advocacy coalitions were active and had sufficient policy-relevant resources to be vocal and pressure the authorities; and post-Soviet elites shared political field with pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet elites as relevant political actors. I suggest the following tri-partial categorization for the qualitative measurement of the position of the three elite groups in the political system: irrelevant, relevant, and dominant. A completely powerless elite group will fall into the irrelevant category. A group that has weight to access political institutions and influence decision-making process is considered a relevant group. A group that controls the political system, most importantly the executive branch, is the dominant group. Hypothetical policy outcomes are summarized in Table 3.12.

The reconfirmation of an official language policy with a hierarchy of languages would be expected when both anti-Soviet and pro-Soviet elites are relevant political actors and post-Soviet elites open to situational cooperation with and partial co-optation of the two in the political field, while maintaining the dominant position in the system. Alternatively, post-Soviet elites can forge a permanent political alliance with either group and antagonize the

other. In those cases when post-Soviet elites forge a political alliance with pro-Soviet elites the multilingual advocacy coalition receives a boost in resources – the number of allies among political authorities - which can be utilized for the official language policy change towards official multilingualism.

Table 3.12: Elite groups and possible language policy outcomes.

Dominant Elite Group	**Allied Elite Groups**	**anguage Policy Outcome**
Post-Soviet	1. None	Previous policy status quo and a policy stalemate
	2. Pro-Soviet elites	Bilingual (potentially including some compensatory measures for the maintenance of the titular language)
	3. Anti-Soviet elites	Monolingual (potentially less repressive)
	4. Both	Hierarchy of languages
Anti-Soviet	1. None	Monolingual (potentially more repressive)
	2. Post-Soviet	Monolingual (potentially less repressive)
Pro-Soviet	1. None	Bilingual (only declarative support for the titular language)
	2. Post-Soviet	Bilingual (potentially including some compensatory measures for maintenance of the titular language)

In those cases when such a permanent alliance is formed with anti-Soviet elites, the monolingual advocacy coalition receives a major advantage. In both situations, the power of post-Soviet elites as neutral policy brokers significantly diminishes and the brokership will take place only around secondary beliefs about specific details of the advocated official language policy. In the absence of an established framework of cooperation or permanent alliances with either pro-Soviet or post-Soviet elites, a policy stalemate and the continuation of the previous status quo in official language policy is the most likely outcome. It will constantly be challenged by both advocacy coalitions, for each of them will have sufficiently strong political allies to maintain the issue on the agenda. Finally, in

cases when either of the two groups of counter-elites solely or in alliance with post-Soviet elites dominates the political system, we expect monolingual or bilingual official language policies to prevail, since such situation dramatically increase the policy-relevant resources of respective advocacy coalitions.

Therefore, the change or the lack of change of the official language policy in the first decade of independence will be primarily driven by changes in the relative positions of different elite groups in the political system, resulting in the empowering and disempowering of the two antagonistic policy advocacy coalitions. The remainder of the dissertation proceeds with the case-by-case investigation of the developments in the official language policies in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia Two research objectives guide it in addition to the documentation of historical developments in official language policies and the identification of the configuration, activities and strategies of policy advocacy coalitions The first objective is to test my argument about elite realignment's decisive role in language policy changes against the empirical data from the cases. The second objective is to detect possible factors that accounted for differences in the patterns of interaction between elite groups across the cases, that is, at least partially, to address so-called problem of "the causes of causes."

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Chapter 4
BELARUS

Modern-day Belarus is an example of "optional" bilingualism, which has no intention to reverse linguistic Russification, resulting in the dominance of the Russian language in all major public domains and the use of Belarusian in specific, mainly cultural, institutions. Unlike in the Soviet period, however, the teaching of both Russian and Belarusian is mandatory in all schools, regardless of their medium of instruction. The popular image of the most Sovietized republic and Belarus's orientation towards political, economic and military integration with Russia may create an impression that its current official language policy has been the pre-determined and inescapable outcome of independent state- and nation-building. However, the research reveals that this impression is largely incorrect and transitioning to current official language policy, whose main outline was introduced only in 1995, did not happen in a straightforward and teleological manner. The forthcoming sections of the dissertation chapter first establish relevant historical background and then investigate the process of formulating the original official language policy and its subsequent overhaul.

4.1 Historical Background

The formation of the Belarusian nation fits the definition of a belated type of national movement – a category elaborated by Miroslav Hroch in his comparative historical study of the national movements of "smaller" European nations.[1] Given the constellation of unfavorable historical factors, which were at play in the Belarusian case, the relative success of the domestic national movement is quite striking. At the turn of the 20th century, Belarusians were a stateless and an overwhelmingly rural[2] nation-in-formation that was still poorly integrated into the modern capitalist economy and thus had not yet acquired sizeable indigenous bourgeois and labor classes.[3] The prospects of the Belarusian national cause seemed even more gruesome at that point because, throughout the 19th and early 20th

[1] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 25-29.
[2] Only 2.6% percent of Belarusians lived in urban centers as per 1897 census (Andrew Savchenko, *Belarus - A Perpetual Borderland* [Leiden, London: Brill, 2009], 56).
[3] Ryszard Radzik, *Vytoki suchasnai belaruskastsi* (Minsk: Medisont, 2012), 174.

century, the territory of modern-day Belarus (Figure 4.1)[4] was simultaneously claimed by two powerful nationalisms – Polish and Russian – both founding their claims on a combination of historical-territorial and ethnolinguistic grounds.[5] Linguistically, the region represented a continuum of related speech varieties, influenced by layers of lexical and grammatical borrowings so that no sharp linguistic boundaries could be drawn. There was no single linguistic feature that would define the Belarusian vernacular. Instead, it was a unique combination of such features, which could also individually be found in other neighboring speech varieties, that constituted the peculiar character of the Belarusian language as it is known today.[6]

Figure 4.1: Map of Belarus

[4] An original map, created by the author.
[5] This was in clear contrast to the neighboring ethnic Lithuanians, which remained equally rural and lacking a distinct upper class but were too distinct linguistically to be presented as speaking a dialect of Polish or Russian (Radzik, *Vytoki suchasnai belaruskastsi*, 185). Therefore, the imperial authorities, in their struggle to diminish Polish influence in the region were much more favorable towards education in the Lithuanian language (Savchenko, *Belarus*, 55).
[6] Alena Markava, "Language, Identity, and Nation: Special Case of Belarusian State- and Nation Formation," The Journal of Belarusian Studies 8, no 3 (2018): 25-39.

Moreover, the region's religious heterogeneity meant that no religious sect or denomination could be elevated to the role of the "national" Belarusian church. At the advent of the First World War, Belarusian nationalism was still transitioning from literary and ethnographic stages to a political one, nationalist political organizations were weak, and their outreach to the masses of the population remained extremely limited. It was not possible to talk about the existence of mass-level national consciousness that would supersede localism and particularism in the form of association with the immediate religious community and geographic location, brilliantly reflected in Yanka Kupala's tragicomic play "Tuteishyia" (the Locals).

Nevertheless, against all odds, less than a decade later, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), which possessed all attributes of nationhood – a capital, border, literary language, educational, cultural and political institutions - was recognized as the constituting member of the Soviet Union.[7] With the Soviet annexation of Eastern Poland in September 1939, resulting in the "unification" of Western and Eastern parts of present-day Belarus into a single political unit, the territory of the BSSR came to encompass the absolute majority of ethnically Belarusian lands[8] that had been depicted on the ethnographic and linguistic maps of the empirical period. In 1945 Belarus was also accepted as the founding member of the United Nations. The real political significance of this event is questionable since the BSSR had no autonomy from Moscow in foreign policy, but the symbolic significance is undeniable.

The Soviet experience undoubtedly played a crucial role in shaping and consolidating the modern Belarusian nationhood, leading to this unquestionable success. However, it would be a fallacy to assume that Soviet nation-building policymakers operated ex nihilo and created the Belarusian nation out of their goodwill. Quite the opposite, an organic continuation can be traced between the early Soviet and pre-Soviet developments in nation-building. Therefore, this section will begin with a historical summary of developments that led to the birth of the Soviet Belarusian national project and then continue with the formation and institutionalization of the Soviet nationhood.

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[7] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 77.

[8] With the exception of three major exceptions: Bialystok (became part of BSSR in 1939 but was transferred to Poland in 1945), areas around Vilnius (transferred from Poland to Lithuania in 1939) and Smolensk (was part of the RSFSR).

It is hardly possible to talk about Belarusian political nationalism prior to the Russian Revolution of 1905. The only exception can be found in a few publications in the illegal newspaper *Homan* by ethnically Belarusian students in Saint Petersburg, who were members of the revolutionary *Narodniks* movement of the Russian Empire in the last quarter of the 19th century, attempting to define the Belarusians in national terms in their writings.[9] Even when the first parties and organizations that possessed a national political orientation were established at the beginning of the 20th century, it was not until 1918 when explicit demands for an independent Belarusian ethnonational political unit were articulated. Until then, the Belarusian nationalism had been advanced by younger generations of intellectuals, originating primarily from lower social strata, within the framework of the struggle for linguistic and cultural autonomy either in the Russian state or in a federation with Lithuanian and Poland. In other words, "Belarus finished the 'long nineteenth century' with a romantic nationalist intelligentsia and weak nationally-inspired movements,"[10] appearing not to be sufficiently prepared to take advantage of opportunities for nation-building that were brought by World War I and the February Revolution. Nevertheless, the relative weakness of the Belarusian national program on the verge of the Bolshevik revolution and a minimal scope of its penetration to popular masses, largely explainable by the cultural and political history of the region, did not preclude the eventual successful establishment of the Belarussian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1919-20.

The territory of modern-day Belarus was incorporated into the Russian Empire between 1772 and 1795 when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was partitioned by the three neighboring imperial powers. The Commonwealth was brought about by the Union of Lublin, signed between the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) in 1569. The GDL –a medieval principality ruled by a Baltic dynasty, which was also majority Slavic and Orthodox Christian and used a variety of Eastern Slavic vernacular as its administrative and legislative language – has been interpreted by Lithuanian and Belarusian nationalists alike as the ultimate source of their statehood, causing disagreements regarding the salience and precise character of relations between the Baltic

[9] Siarhei Tokts and Aliaksandr Smalianchuk, "Narys historyi Belarusi kantsa XVIII – pachatku XX st.," in *Historyia Belarusi Kantsa XVIII- Pachatku XX st. u dakumentakh i materyialakh*, ed. Aliaksandr Smalianchuk (Vilnius: EHU, 2007), 22-23.
[10] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 9.

and Slavic elements of the Duchy.[11] Regardless of the disagreements in the interpretation of this period of regional history, a distinct "Ruthenian" element, united by religion, language and political loyalty, had clearly formed in the GDL by the 16th century.[12] According to some views, it could already be characterized as some form of a proto-national identity confined to the upper strata of the population.[13]

The Union of Lublin, which was concluded under political and military pressure by the Polish Kingdom amidst continuing warfare between the GDL and the Tsardom of Russia,[14] altered the course of the political and social history of the region. Often described by nationalist historians as choosing the lesser evil, the Union marked the beginning of centuries-long Polish political, cultural and linguistic domination. The Polish influence was facilitated by the success of the counter-Reformation movement in the 17th century,[15] aided by educational activities of the Jesuit Order and directed against Protestants and those Orthodox Christians who refused to accept the church union of 1596.[16] As a result, local nobility, which was initially predominantly Orthodox and later converted to various Protestant denominations, ended up being overwhelmingly Catholic and culturally Polonized.[17]

Another peculiar consequence of the Union of Lublin was the administrative separation of present-day Belarusian and Ukrainian lands because, in the course of negotiations, the Kingdom of Poland annexed the Ukrainian territories of the GDL.[18] The modern-day border between Belarus and Ukraine still approximates the administrative border between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that was established in 1569. The Union also extended political privileges and autonomies of the Polish *szlachta*[19] to their Lithuanian counterparts. This favored the growth and augmentation of the political,

[11] Daniel Z. Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).
[12] Robert I. Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[13] Frost, *The Oxford History*.
[14] Frost, *The Oxford History*.
[15] Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State.*
[16] Union of Brest, establishing the so-called Uniate or Greek Catholic Church on the territory of the Commonwealth, which retained traditional local church hierarchy and some rites but accepted the papal supremacy and doctrinal points of the Catholic Church.
[17] Frost, *The Oxford History*.
[18] Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State*, 62-63.
[19] The class of Polish landed nobility which enjoyed extensive political rights and privileges, including the right to elect the king.

military and economic power of the landed nobility and facilitated the economic and political decline of "the third estate" (urban gentry, craftsmen and merchants) as the economic development of cities and towns was halted by the rural nobility through the imposition of domestic tariffs and limitations in trade.[20] Urban centers, especially those located in the eastern and central parts of the GDL, also suffered enormously from military raids by Russian armies.[21] In short, no urban bourgeois class, which could have later become a base for social changes and the bearer of the ideas of political nationalism, was formed in the region in that period, and the courts of rural nobility remained the principal loci of economic, political and cultural life.

By the time when the internally and externally weakened Commonwealth was partitioned, the aristocracy of the GDL was already firmly Polish in its cultural and political orientation, albeit often possessing distinctive regionalist "Lithuanian" sentiments and attachments.[22] Polish intellectual and cultural dominance continued after the partition. Vilnius University, which had been the principal institution of higher learning in the region since 1579, remained an important center of Polish cultural and political thought after the partition and harbored a number of intellectual clubs and organizations that entertained the ideas of political nationalism and reestablishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[23] Nobility-led anti-Russian rebellions, such as the 1831 uprising, were coordinated from the Congress Kingdom of Poland[24] and were pro-Polish in their orientation.[25] Only during the uprising of 1863, which included an autonomous Lithuanian section, one of its principal participants Konstanty Kalinowski (Kastus Kalinouski) wrote and published his newspaper in the Belarusian vernacular and directly addressed the Belarusian people.[26] Even though the Lithuanian section played only an auxiliary role in the uprising and did not challenge

[20] Aliaksandr Smalianchuk, ed., *Historyia Belarusi Kantsa XVIII- Pachatku XX st. u dakumentakh i materyialakh* (Vilnius: EHU, 2007).
[21] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 31.
[22] Zakhar Shybeka, *Narys history Belarusi (1795-2002)* (Minsk: Entsyklapedyks, 2003)
[23] Shybeka, *Narys history Belarusi.*
[24] Also known as the Polish Tsardom or Polish Kingdom, was an autonomous political unit under Russian rule, established during the Congress of Vienna on the formerly Prussian territories.
[25] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 46-50.
[26] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 46-50.

the unity of the future Polish state,[27] from the early 20th century onwards, Kalinowski has been treated as a national political hero by Belarusian historiographers.[28]

The uprisings failed in significant part due to the fact that they managed to secure only limited involvement of local peasantry masses.[29] The uprisings had an important effect on the attitudes of the Russian authorities. Following the partition, local Polish and Polonized nobility continued to enjoy all of their political and legal rights under the Russian Empire.[30] Political unrest made the Russians much more suspicious of the Polish domination and the political and cultural legacies of the Commonwealth period. In 1839 the Uniate (Eastern/Greek Catholic) Church, sometimes described as the only potentially "national" Belarusian church,[31] was formally abolished, and all of its dioceses were transferred under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.[32] In 1840, the administrative division of the region was changed, and the names *Belorussia*[33] and *Lithuania* were banished from official use in favor of *the North-Western Region* and persisted only as ethnographic categories.[34] In the same year, Russian became the official language of administration and education of the region, while all laws and regulations that had been in place from the times of the GDL were abolished and replaced with the legislation of the Russian Empire.[35] After 1863, the authorities remained committed to linguistic Russification as a tool to eliminate Polish influence, carried under the supervision of Kornilov, Head of the Vilnius education district.[36] Printing and publishing in the Belarusian vernacular, which was still considered the dialect of Polish,[37] was outlawed and to be replaced with standard Russian. The education system of the region was taken under the exclusive control of the government

[27] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 46-50.
[28] Nicholas P. Vakar, *Belorussia: The Making of a Nation* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 72.
[29] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 73.
[30] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 67.
[31] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 40; Vakar, *Belorussia*, 68-69.
[32] Shybeka *Narys history Belarusi.*
[33] The name *Belorussia* itself had been previously introduced by the Russian officials to denote the Slavic-speaking part of the region and justify its "unification" with the rest of the Russian state during Russian-Polish wars.
[34] Smalianchuk *Historyia Belarusi,* 53; Vakar, *Belorussia*, 3.
[35] Smalianchuk *Historyia Belarusi,* 52.
[36] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 54.
[37] It was also generally perceived as such by the local population, especially its Catholic part (Radzik, *Vytoki*, 184-185) – representing an example of diglossia with a social hierarchy of language use, in which Belarusian was considered the low, localized version of Polish, suitable for daily communication whereas standard Polish was the language of "high culture," used for official purposes.

and the Orthodox Church but was of low quality and efficiency (even compared to neighboring regions) as the number of schools (one primary school for 33 villages) and attending students (less than 10% of all eligible boys and less than 1% of girls) remained very low.[38]

In the second half of the 19th century, Russian imperial ethnographers began to "discover" the peculiar character of the local vernacular and also established that it was more closely related to Russian than to Polish, but distinct enough to classify it as a separate *Belorussian* speech alongside *Velikorussian* and *Malorussian* varieties of the Russian language.[39] Guided by the political philosophy of Western Russianism,[40] such discoveries did not result in the legalization of the Belarusian language in public institutions. While it was acceptable to collect folklore in the local vernacular and study its peculiarities, Russian was to remain the sole means of education and publishing, thus making it extremely difficult for an indigenous literary tradition to take roots. The literary phase of the Belarusian national "awakening" began within the general Polish literary framework of the mid-19th century. It was initiated by local Polish intelligentsia[41] and continued by a small group of indigenous writers who had to publish their works abroad.[42] Most prominent among them, hailed as the "first truly Belarusian literary figure," Francisk Bohuszevicz (Bahushevich) (1840-1900) not only wrote and published his poems in the Belarusian vernacular but also articulated a language-centered conception of the nation and equated language loss with the loss of national identity.[43]

The Russian Revolution of 1905-1907 brought political liberalization, necessary for the transition of Belarusian nationalism towards the stage of political mobilization. New tools for disseminating nationalist ideas appeared when more than half a century-long ban on printing in the local vernacular and using it in schools was lifted. The immediate result of the lift was the opening of publishing houses in Vilnius and Saint Petersburg, which began printing books in Belarusian.[44] The first legal Belarusian newspaper *Nasha Dolia,*

[38] Radzik, *Vytoki*, 176-177.
[39] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 73.
[40] Ryszard Radzik, *Vakol identychnastsi belarusau* (Minsk: Limarius, 2017).
[41] Tokts and Smalianchuk, "Narys history," 17.
[42] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 83-84.
[43] Tokts and Smalianchuk, "Narys history," 23; Savchenko, *Belarus*, 63; Vakar, *Belorussia*,: 82.
[44] Tokts and Smalianchuk, "Narys history," 25.

established in Vilnius in September of 1906, was deemed politically too radical by the authorities and quickly shut down.[45] In its place, *Nasha Niva* was established in November of the same year. *Nasha Niva* became the principal outlet for a new generation of indigenous writers, who later became recognized as the "classics" of Belarusian literature.[46] Equally importantly, the newspaper served as an arena for political discussions,[47] in which a romanticized, peasant-oriented and language-centered[48] conception of the Belarusian nation, subjected to continuing economic and cultural oppression and requiring a proper "awakening," was developed and became the de-facto standard understanding of nation thereafter.[49] In 1910, Vatslau Lastouski, a self-taught historian, political activist and contributor to *Nasha Niva*, completed and published *A Short History of Belarus,* the first explicitly Belarusian piece of historiography[50]. Laustouski's vision of the Belarusian national history, which he traced back to the principalities of the Kievan Rus' and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and explicitly juxtaposed to Poland and Russia,[51] marked the beginning of a historical narrative that has dominated Belarusian historiography ever since.[52]

The freedom of publication opened the door for rapid advancements in language standardization. Whereas a distinct written tradition in the Western Russian variety of the Old Eastern Slavic language[53] had developed in the GDL in the 16th century,[54] it did not receive an organic continuation in the following centuries as the Polish language became dominant. Instead, the emerging literary standard of the late 19th and early 20th century developed solely based on contemporary vernaculars and relied either on the Latin or Cyrillic scripts for its transcription. The issue of the standard alphabet was not settled until

[45] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 87.
[46] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 87-90.
[47] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 64.
[48] Smalianchuk, *Historyia Belarusi*, 303-310.
[49] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 65-66.
[50] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 65.
[51] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 75.
[52] The role of Russia as the main antagonist was downplayed in official Soviet historiography from 1930s to 1980s and was "reinstalled" during the 1990s.
[53] The predecessor of modern Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian. In some sense, modern Russian inherited more continuity with this medieval tradition hailing from the territory of the GDL printing technologies and first grammar books were brought to the Russian Tsardom from the territory of the Duchy.
[54] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 62.

1910 when the editorial board of *Nasha Niva* opted for the exclusive use of the Belarusian variation of the Cyrillic script.[55]

The revolution also brought to life first national political organizations. Most of them were left-leaning or socialist in their ideological orientation and initially resembled political discussion clubs rather than full-fledged political parties.[56] At that stage, the aspirations of nationalist political entrepreneurs remained realistically limited to cultural autonomy within the Russian state. Likewise, they still had to reach out to the generally much more conservative, predominantly illiterate masses of the native rural population and build up a stable and broad popular base to claim representativeness and political legitimacy.[57] As Belarusian cities remained majority non-Belarusian, domestic national political organizations (Belarusian Socialist Hramada being the most prominent among them) had to compete and cooperate with the local branches of Russian, Jewish and Polish political groups, some of which were hostile to the idea of Belarusian national autonomy.[58]

By 1915, the German-Russian front in the First World War cut through the Belarusian territory west of Minsk and stabilized there until 1918. Vilnius, which had previously emerged as a center of Belarusian cultural activities and harbored nationally minded Belarusian intelligentsia, remained under the German occupation and played no role in the events that immediately followed the February and October Revolutions in 1917. The German administration was open to cooperation with national political groups on the occupied territories. Vilnius-based Belarusian activists, jointly with local Polish, Jewish and Lithuanian counterparts, advocated for German assistance in restoring the GDL as a federal state. However, they also had to compete with Kaunas-based Lithuanian nationalists from the Lithuanian Council, who advocated for a Lithuanian nation-state with only cultural autonomy for the Belarusian territories.[59]

In the same period, Minsk, which remained under Russian control, emerged as an alternative political center for the Belarusian national movement. The First Congress of Belarusian Organizations was held there in March 1917. The delegates established the

[55] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 90.
[56] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 70-71.
[57] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 86.
[58] Savchenko, *Belarus*.
[59] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 93-95.

Belarusian National Committee, which first strived to establish Belarusian political autonomy within a new Russian Federation.[60] Having met with an unfavorable reaction from the Provisional Government in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg), it turned to cultural activities, preparing native teaching cadres and developing an education system that would promote the Belarusian national agenda[61]. The Bolsheviks, who also operated in the region, had little contact with national organizations and, in their political propaganda, targeted the two-million strong Western Army, dislocated on the territory of Belarus.[62] After the October Revolution, Belarus quickly fell under the control of the Bolshevik regime of *Western Region and Front*,[63] whose cadres came primarily from within the military ranks[64] and whose leadership (which did not include a single ethnic Belarusian)[65] was hostile to local nationalists and did not recognize the activities of the BNC. Support for Belarusian national interests within the central Bolshevik government came not from the regional Bolshevik commandership but from the Belarusian Regional Committee (BRC), made up of Belarusian refugees, attached to the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies in Petrograd.[66] Likewise, it was the central government that encouraged the organization of the first All-Belarusian Congress. The congress took place in December 1917 and included both BNC and BRC-supported delegates. The initial BRC position was that of regional autonomy, whereas the BRC delegates favored the declaration of political independence that could later be followed by an association with the Soviet Russia.[67] The latter position prevailed, but the congress was dispersed before its conclusion by the local Bolshevik military commandership[68], and the congress's executive council kept operating in the underground.[69]

In February 1918, the German troops launched an offensive against the Bolshevik regime and quickly established control over the territory of Belarus. The executive committee of

[60] Tokts and Smalianchuk "Narys history," 28.
[61] Smalianchuk, *Historyia Belarusi,* 247-276.
[62] Natallia Halimava, ed., *Historyia Belarusi (1917-2000)* (Brest: BrDU, 2004), 4.
[63] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi*, 6-8.
[64] Mikhail Kastsiuk, ed. *Historyia Belarusi: Belarus u 1917-1945 gg*, vol. 5 (Minsk: Ekaperspektyva, 2006), 54, 95.
[65] Kastsiuk, *Historyia Belarusi*, 95.
[66] Kastsiuk, *Historyia Belarusi,* 95.
[67] Kastsiuk, *Historyia Belarusi*, 92.
[68] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 71.
[69] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi,* 9-12.

the council of the All-Belarusian Congress could legalize its activities.[70] Its political leadership engaged in negotiations with their Vilnius colleagues who had previously organized the Belarusian People's Committee there,[71] and having succeeded in convicting the Vilnius faction to abandon support for regional federalist political projects,[72] on March 25, 1918 jointly declared the independence of the Belarusian People's Republic (BNR) that was to encompass all the territories, populated by ethnic Belarusians.[73] The German administration was reluctant to recognize the authority of the council of the newly declared republic and (unlike in Lithuania or Ukraine) did not allow for the formation of locally controlled military units.[74] The Germans were also suspicious of the BNR leadership since it was ideologically leftist.[75] Without real political control, the Council of BNR was primarily preoccupied with diplomatic, educational and day-to-day administrative activities. After the German capitulation in November 1918, the Council sought to negotiate with the Bolsheviks concerning future relations between the Soviet state and BNR, but most of its members eventually left Minsk shortly before the Soviet troops arrived following the German retreat in December 1918.[76] Although the BNR was never officially recognized by major political actors and lacked real political power and popular legitimacy, since no elections were held at that period, its declaration undoubtedly played a significant role in convincing the Bolshevik leadership of the validity of the Belarusian national cause.[77] Consequently, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was declared on January 1 (14), 1919, which came as an unpleasant surprise to the military commandership of the *Western Region and Front*.[78]

A looming threat of a military conflict with Poland, which had obtained independence thanks to the German capitulation, became a justification for an almost immediate transfer of the eastern provinces of the newly declared BSSR to the RSFSR and the unification of the former with Soviet Lithuania into a joint Lithuanian-Belarusian SSR (LitBel) with a

[70] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi*, 12.
[71] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi.*
[72] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 72.
[73] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi*, 13.
[74] Vakar, *Belorussia*, 103-107.
[75] Kastsiuk, *Historyia Belarusi,* 99.
[76] Aliaksandr Kavalienia, Viachaslau Danilovich, Valantsin Mazets and Siarhei Tratstsiak, *Belaruskaia Narodnaia Respublika – krok da nezalezhnastsi* (Minsk: Belaruskaia navuka, 2018).
[77] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 73; Vakar, *Belorussia*, 108.
[78] Kastsiuk, *Historyia Belarusi,* 106.

capital in Vilnius.[79] Historians tend to evaluate the LitBel political project as an attempt to create an artificial "buffer state" that would contain Polish aspirations in the region and help strengthen the Bolshevik claims for those Lithuanian territories that still remained in control of the Kaunas-based Lithuanian Council. Nevertheless, the Soviets were not able to avoid an open confrontation with Poland, which broke out in the spring of the same year. The unintended consequence of the Polish intervention was the salvation of the Lithuanian anti-Bolshevik government, which was about to be toppled by the Soviet troops and local Bolshevik guerillas, as the Red Army had to concentrate resources on the defense against the advancing Polish army. The Bolsheviks recognized Lithuania's independence, which meant that the idea of a joint Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet state became irrelevant, and the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was declared for the second time on July 31, 1920.[80] The Polish-Soviet War, during which both sides at some points found themselves on the verge of a military collapse, was concluded in March 1921 with the Treaty of Riga, according to which the new Polish-Soviet border would cut across the Belarusian territory less than 20 km west of Minsk. Western Belarus was annexed by the Polish state, and the course of national development there continued autonomously from the Soviet experience until it was occupied by the Soviet Union and incorporated into the BSSR in 1939.

In summary, Belarusian nationalism was still in its formative phase when the Bolsheviks seized control of the Russian central government in November 1917. Its belated character, lack of popular engagement, the region's exposure to the calamities of the First World War and competition against neighboring nation-state projects with partially overlapping claims over the Belarusian territory all contributed to its original weakness in taking advantage of rapid political changes. The emerging national discourse of that time was centered on economic, social and cultural grievances and support for the native language. Peasant romanticism and focus on language were in a way inevitable because the nationalist ideology had to overcome persisting localism and religious divisions; and could not rely on the historical memory of a distinctively Belarusian political unit or an established "high" culture of upper classes in that process. Under given circumstances, the fact that Belarusian political activists and advocates of the national cause were able to convince the central

[79] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi*, 15-16; Vakar, *Belorussia*, 109.
[80] Halimava, *Historyia Belarusi*, 18.

Bolshevik authorities to recognize the Belarusian national unit must be evaluated as a great success of the Belarusian nation-building. With the establishment of the BSSR, the national leadership of the newborn republic acquired all the necessary tools to engage in the top-down dissemination of national ideas and finally begin turning local "peasants into Belarusians."[81]

4.2 T0: Making of Modern Belarus - Soviet Experience

A few significant events in the Soviet period bearing lasting influence on Belarusian nation-building can be singled out: short-lived Belarusization of 1920, abruptly ended by a wave of Stalinist repressions, the devastating impact of World War II, as well as post-war modernization and urbanization leading to societal changes of unprecedented scale. Together they formed discursive, social and political contexts, in which the language question reemerged in the public discourse in the late 1980s and the language law of 1990 was adopted.

This section intentionally leaves out discussion about the Belarusian national movement on the territories annexed by Poland as the result of the Riga Treaty because no viable competing nation-building project that would have had a lasting impact on modern nation building emerged on the territories of modern-day Belarus controlled by Poland between the two wars. The Belarusian national movement there continued to evolve parallel to the Soviet nation-building experiment. Somewhat naturally, it was initially heavily inspired and motivated by the example of the Belarussian SSR just across the border to the east and was also actively supported by the Soviet Union. The movement was met with varying degrees of toleration and repression by the Polish authorities. However, while the Belarusian national movement in interwar Poland shall not be considered marginal or irrelevant, by the 1930s, it had already been on the decline in terms of the number of organizations, radicalism and intensity of pollical activity.[82] Its impact on nation-building after the annexation of Western Belarus and its incorporation in the BSSR in September 1939 has also been quite limited. Moreover, the city of Vilnius, the only major urban settlement of the region which had previously been a center of the Belarusian national

[81] To paraphrase the title of Eugene Weber's famous book, dedicated to the formation of the French nation.

[82] Vakar, *Belorussia*.

movement, was transferred under the jurisdiction of independent Lithuania less than a month after the annexation as the result of the Soviet-Lithuanian Mutual Assistance Treaty signed on October 10, 1939. The general perception of the interwar period in the history of Western Belarus as the period of national oppression by the Polish authorities culminating in liberation and unification of the nation with the Soviet help had been entrenched in Belarusian historiography and literature from that point onwards.

The experience of the first decades of the newly founded Soviet Belarus, on the other hand, have had a lasting impact on the discussion about Belarusian nationhood up to present time, more specifically, the policies of Belarusization of the 1920s, implemented as part of the support of ethnic and national identities by the central authorities of the Soviet Union. Changes in administrative borders between Russian and Belarusian republics, which more than doubled the territory of the BSSR and increased its population from 1.5 to 5 million, took place in 1924 and 1926. The enlargements mostly accomplished the consolidation of ethnographically Belarusian regions in a single administrative unit.[83]

The official beginning of the nationalities policies in the Soviet Union was announced at the XII Congress of the Communist Party in March of 1923, but the implementation of the actual policies had already begun in 1921.[84] Lenin's turn to promoting socialism through the national medium was seen as a way of closing the gap between peasantry and working classes, shaping the general direction of development for national cultures and controlling national sentiments, which could potentially challenge the integrity of the Bolshevik state. In each Soviet republic, the policies received a corresponding name, such as Belarusization or Ukrainization, and reflected specific local conditions and circumstances.

In Belarus, the policies aimed to reach out to the native rural population and by promoting native culture, cadres, language and a sense of overarching national identity to partially compensate the Polish and Russian dominance in major urban centers. As elsewhere, local communist administration had to collaborate extensively with nationally oriented intelligentsia concerning cultural activities, establishment and operation of cultural and educational institutions, as well as standardization of the Belarusian language, even though

[83] Alena Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi: Palityka Belarusizatsyi (1924-1929)* (Minsk: Haliafy, 2016), 54.
[84] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 87.

it admitted that such collaboration was more of a necessity which lacked a solid ideological foundation since most of the intelligentsia came from non-Bolshevik background. The directions that the policies of Belarusization took place are summarized in the 1924 resolution by the Central Executive Committee of the Belarusian Communist Party, titled "Concerning the practical activities in the area of implementation of nationality policy." The resolution stipulated multiple activities, such as transferring education to the Belarusian language, preparation of necessary cadres, printing of dictionaries, teaching materials, newspapers, literature; support for theater and cinema, switching to Belarusian as the language of official communication in administrative institutions.

Such a rapid top-down introduction of Belarusian into the educational system was met with suspicion or open resistance from some parents and teachers, especially in urban centers and on the territories transferred to Soviet Belarus from the Russian SFSR during border changes between the two republics.[85] Thus, the promotion of Belarusian had to be accompanied by propaganda that was supposed to combat "the lack of national consciousness" and elevate the prestige of local vernacular as the medium of education among the population. Despite difficulties associated with the ongoing shortage of resources, materials and cadres, the policy of Belarusization of secondary education was a resounding success in the countryside and achieved significant progress in urban areas.[86] Transition to Belarusian in universities and other institutions of post-secondary education did not take off until 1924 and was slowed down by the lack of trained cadres and technical literature.[87] Attempts to widen the use of Belarusian language as the language of communication in state and party administration beyond official publications and in the military were the least successful.[88]

In conclusion, despite the overall short duration, lack of resources and materials, and superficial implementation in certain domains, by 1929 the policy of Belarusization accomplished several important goals. Key educational and cultural institutions were established throughout the republic. The codification and standardization of the Belarusian language were mainly completed and supported by the growing mass of printed media,

[85] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 96-97, 104-107.
[86] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 98.
[87] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 141-142.
[88] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 247-248.

including literature, newspapers, technical documentation, dictionaries, etc. The policy elevated the status and prestige of the Belarusian language in the eyes of local people who had previously viewed it as merely a local vernacular unfit for education or official communication. Equally importantly, the ideological foundation behind the policy manifested an intrinsic connection between individual ethnonational identity, national consciousness and the language; and this perspective was disseminated among the population. During this period, Belarus was officially multilingual with four official languages. However, a clear hierarchy of languages was established as Belarusian was to be promoted as the primary language of the republic even at the expense of Russian or Polish.

The political climate in the Soviet Union changed dramatically in 1929 - the year of the "great break," convening the new direction which the construction of a socialist society must take. In the same year, dedicated commissions, incentivized by Moscow, evaluated nationalities' policies in titular republics to make sure they complied with the general line of the central government. The report on Belarus[89] harshly criticized the dominance of "national democratic forces" in this process. It stated that those forces completely neglected the decisive role of class struggle and the October Revolution in the history of the Belarusian nation at the expense of nationalist bourgeois agenda, which was widely disseminated through literature and educational materials. The report marked the end of the temporary alliance between the ruling communist elites and nationally oriented intelligentsia. Purges in public institutions against "national democratic" elements started almost immediately and were later followed up by waves of arrests and trials, effectively destroying local cultural elites.[90]

The policy of Belarusization, which had ostensibly been highjacked by such elements, was to be reevaluated and adjusted to better serve the purpose of building a new socialist state and society that would genuinely reflect a "brotherhood of nations" united by the Russian people. The language reform of 1933 was supposed to clean the Belarusian language from elements and features that created "artificial barriers" with the Russian language.[91] In the same year, the central committee of the Belarusian communist party decided to increase the

[89] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 249-255.
[90] Leanid Lych*, Mizhvaennaia belarusizatsyia i iaie uroki* (Minsk: Vostok, 2014), 102-125.
[91] Lych, *Mizhvaennaia belarusizatsyia.*

proportion of schools with Russian as the medium of instruction. In 1938 the Russian language also became a mandatory subject in all schools. However, the immediate effect of such changes on secondary education was moderate – approximately 90% of students still studied in Belarusian-language schools in that period.[92]

A crush on Belarusian intelligentsia, the tightening of ideological limits of cultural policies and the constant threat of persecution for bourgeois nationalism severely limited the scope of Belarusization in the 1930s. Party officials still declared their commitment to the continuation of the policy but refrained from any concrete measures. In sum, the 1930s did not immediately reverse the course of Belarusization of the previous decade but shut down the potential for its meaningful continuation and expansion.

World War II wrought devastating economic and demographic effects on the country. The war had since occupied a pivotal position in the national myth of Soviet Belarus and became the de-facto starting point of modern state and nation-building, reinforced through visual art, literature and historiography.[93] Local party elites who hailed from the ranks of war-time guerilla and remained the dominant group for the following twenty years actively encouraged the perpetuation of this myth of a devastating war and rebirth from the ashes in part to justify their central role in the republic's power system as well as the transfer of a massive amount of economic aid from the center.[94] Generous investments allowed for a rapid post-war economic reconstruction, massive industrialization and urbanization of unprecedented scale, with Minsk taking the disproportionate share of the growth and acquiring unrivaled economic and demographic dominance over the rest of the republic.[95]

Labor migration from other parts of the Union was rather limited, precluding the emergence of ethnic tensions which plagued other Soviet republics in the second half of the 1980s, but was noticeable in major urban centers. The fact that many cadres in administration, industries, professional and higher education came directly from Russia or were educated there contributed to a growing split between a "low" countryside Belarusian-speaking culture and a "high" Russian-speaking urban culture. The relatedness of the two languages

[92] Markava, *Shliakh da savetskai natsyi*, 263-265.
[93] David P. Marples, *Belarus: A denationalized nation* (London, NY: Routledge, 2012).
[94] Savchenko, *Belarus*, 140.
[95] Marples, *Belarus*.

made the situation somewhat similar to a split between a vernacular and literary language spoken by educated elites, the adoption of the latter being necessary for upward social and economic mobility. A general ideological turn in the Soviet policies regarding languages and nation-building that took place after the war solidified this split and facilitated the assimilation of the former countryside dwellers into the Russophone urban environment even further. The school reform of 1959 allowed students in Russian schools to opt out of studying Belarusian "in conformity with the wishes of students and their parents."[96] The effect of the changes was extreme in the urban areas: in Minsk, the share of those who did not study Belarusian approached 90% by the end of the 1960s.[97] Local communist party leadership remained rather indifferent to this process, more focused on the continuation of the investment inflow, maintenance of the proportionally higher economic growth and assurance of relative administrative autonomy from the center. Both Kiryl Mazurau, the First Party Secretary of the BSSR from 1956 to 1965, and its successor Piotr Masherau, used Belarusian in official speeches, although the actual level of language proficiency of the latter was questioned.[98] However, being ideologically committed communists, they never challenged the developments in the nationalities policies that were taking place in that period.

In sum, throughout the post-war years, Belarusian became the language of the countryside with its aging and shrinking population and of few designated cultural activities, maintaining some of its symbolic value, while Russian occupied all other major domains of language use.

4.3 T1: Language Law of 1990. Compromise amidst General Turmoil

During *perestroika*, the period of comprehensive administrative and economic reforms which the Soviet Union embraced in the second half of the 1980s, local communist elites remained in complete political and administrative control in the Belarusian SSR. However, accumulating social and economic issues, coupled with the gradual relaxation of censorship and increased tolerance of civil society organizations, facilitated the formation of domestic

[96] Siarhei Zaprudski, "Mounaia palityka u Belarusi u 1990-ia gady," *ARCHE-Pachatak* 1, no 21 (2002): 98-112.
[97] Stanislau Stankevich, *Rusifikatsyia belaruskaie movy u BSSR i supratsiu rusifikatsyinamu pratsesu* (Minsk: Navuka i tekhnika,1994).
[98] Vasil Bykau, *Douhaia daroha dadomu* (Minsk: Kniha, 2004).

non-systemic political groups and movements. Focusing on such issues as the actual scope of Stalinist repressions, consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, degradation of the national culture and the declining use of the national language, such groups managed to gain traction in the public sphere and a degree of recognition despite initial hostility exhibited by the administration and official media.

The Belarusian Popular Front "Renaissance" (*Belaruski Narodny Front* "*Adradzhennie,"* or BNF), modeled after the popular fronts of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, eventually became the key political actor channeling the demands and grievances of such groups. The leader of the BNF Zianon Pazniak, a historian and archeologist involved in the uncovering of the burial sites for the victims of Stalinist purges, is perhaps, one of the best examples of local anti-Soviet elites.

Pazniak rose to prominence after he co-authored and published an article titled "Kurapaty – Road to Death" in the monthly literary journal *Litaratura i Mastatstva* on June 3, 1988. The article included the collection of testimonies from the witnesses of mass executions by the NKVD that took place on a site north of Minsk in 1937-1938 and the findings of recent archeological excavations in the area.[99] The publication of the article itself caused a great public reaction. Shortly after the publication, Pazniak started organizing public meetings and demonstrations dedicated to the topic. The largest such gathering took place on November 1 and was faced with mass detentions and police brutality. Public outcry after the events and the attention of Moscow media and officials forced local party officials to form of a special parliamentary commission that would investigate mass executions at Kurapaty.[100]

During the preparation for mass events and demonstrations calling attention to Stalinist crimes, Pazniak and like-minded social activists decided to form an organizational committee for the BNF. The BNF, in general, was dominated by the intelligentsia[101], many of whom had also been involved in anti-communist activities. The front remained in an antagonistic relationship with most local party and administrative officials, unlike the more

[99] Zianon Pazniak and Iauhen Shmyhaliou, "Kurapary – Daroha smertsi," *Litaratura i Mastatstva,* June 3, 1988, 14-15.
[100] Bykau, *Douhaia daroha.*
[101] The organizing committee established in October 1988 consisted of journalists, linguists, philologists, historians, many of whom had previously engaged in multiple anti-Soviet activities.

cooperative popular fronts of the Baltic states. Suggestions for a future language law, laid out in the organization's charter, can be summed up as the adoption of official monolingualism in the Belarusian language with some transitional provisions and recognition of certain linguistic rights for the country's ethnic minorities.[102] The political program of the BNF was considered radical for the time, but its advocacy for legal and administrative measures aimed at saving the Belarusian language from extinction was viewed sympathetically by many members of the communist administration and state officials. According to Bykau, the official administration was also more than happy to demonstrate some concern for the titular language in order "to pacify the loud ones and especially the BNF, which raised language issue during every public gathering," as well as "to pull nationally active (intelligentsia) groups away from the radical ideas put forward by the BNF."[103]

The Commonwealth for the Belarusian Language (*Tavarystva Belaruskai Movy*), a state-initiated and sponsored organization whose primary goal was the promotion of the use of the Belarusian language, which was established in June of 1989, harbored the BNF's sympathizers and favored the designation of official status to the Belarusian language. The Commonwealth was chaired by the first secretary of the Writers' Union of the BSSR and the Supreme Council deputy Nil Hilevich. Although Hilevich had earlier distanced himself from Pazniak and his increasingly anti-communist position, he was a long-term champion of the Belarusian language and "the greatest nationalist" in the Communist Party of Belarus.[104]

The Permanent Commission on National (Ethnic) Issues and International (Interethnic) Relations under the Supreme Council of the BSSR was established on November 19, 1988, together with similar commissions in other republics in line with a general change in nationalities policies in the Soviet Union.[105] In other republics, the priorities of corresponding commissions revolved around the mitigation of interethnic tensions or outright ethnic conflicts on their territories. In contrast, considering the relative absence of

[102] "Rezaliutsyi (Ukhvaky) ustanouchahas ziezdu Belaruskaha narodnaha frontu 'Adradzhenne,'" *Naviny Belaruskaha Belaruskaha narodnaha frontu "Adradzhenne,"* July 6, 1989, 7.
[103] Bykau, *Douhaia daroha,* 648-649.
[104] Bykau, *Douhaia daroha,* 590.
[105] *Zviazda,* November 19*,* 1988; *Sovetskaia Belorussiia,* November 23, 1988.

such tensions in the republic, the Belarusian commission's work primarily focused on assessing the conditions of the titular language and developing a legal framework for its promotion. This commission was headed by Ivan Chyhrynau, a Belarusian-language writer who had previously taken part in the parliamentary commission on the crimes of the Stalinist period.

In part, the ease with which push for hierarchical bilingualism with an elevated status for the Belarusian language gathered allies from within the local ruling elites can be explained by the fact that many of them shared the core belief about the ethnolinguistic roots of nations and the importance of titular languages for nation-building and national survival. Public debates on the current state and future of the Belarusian language reflected the prevalence of the same core beliefs and served as the ideational framework for the development and adoption of the language law.

The abysmal situation with the use of the Belarusian language and the speed of Russification was a major concern for activists among the intelligentsia already in the first half of the 1980s, but the structural political conditions would not provide a legitimate public forum for voicing and discussing language-related issues. It is not surprising that political and social changes initiated by the central Soviet government headed by the new Secretary-General of the CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev were seen as a window of opportunity for language activists to force reactionary local administration into a public discussion about the situation with the Belarusian language. On December 15, 1986, 28 prominent members of Belarusian intelligentsia wrote a letter to Gorbachev in which they summarized the recent history of the Belarusian language, such as Leninist policies and the Belarusization of the 1920s, Stalinist repressions, post-war neglect and creeping Russification amidst accusations of divisive nationalism by local administration faced by those who call attention to the current situation with language use.

The text of the letter[106] contains explicit references to the authors' core beliefs about language as the ultimate source of nation-building and preservation: "Language is the soul of a nation, the ultimate realization of its cultural uniqueness, the foundation of its proper spiritual existence. As long as its mother tongue lives, a nation has a historical future. Once

[106] Zmitser Sanko "List 28-mi," *Veritas* 1, no 3 (2005): 6-11.

its language is in decline, a nation's culture deteriorates, its people seize to exist as the national historical organism, as the invaluable part of the broader human civilization." The letter also calls for a protective legislative framework that would reflect the value of the national language: "The Belarusian language is one of the key components that justifies the existence of the Belarusian statehood. Therefore, the language should be protected by legislation." The letter contains multiple references to the Leninist policies and views on relationships between languages and uses such references as an ideological ground for suggesting changes to the current approach to the issue that central and local communist administrations took.

The reaction to the letter was not immediate, but eventually, the Central Committee of the CPSU sent a commission that evaluated the situation with the Belarusian language.[107] No immediate changes in policies or attitudes of the local administration followed this visit, but none of the signatories faced any repressions.[108] Less than a year later, in the autumn of 1987, a public discussion on the state of Belarusian language was initiated on the pages of the largest Belarusian-language newspaper *Zviazda*. The discussion, which continued throughout 1988 and 1989, was structured around letters by readers, responses to letter, op-eds and "round tables" by academicians, lawyers, writers, as well as by interviews with state officials, among others. While the initial scope of the discussion was mostly confined to the limited use of the Belarusian language in secondary education, it quickly expanded to encompass multiple areas pertaining to language use and legal status.[109] Prominent themes included the danger of language loss that would lead to "the loss of the culture, history, spirit of the people"; the necessity of state measures and judicial support for the "language of the autochthonous people that provided the republic with its name." S.J.D. Krutalevich from the Institute of Philosophy and Law under the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR specifically called for further discussion on the need for declaring Belarusian an official language, reevaluation of the positive aspects of the language policy of the 1920s, and the

[107] Bykau, *Douhaia daroha,* 583-584.
[108] Bykau, *Douhaia daroha.*
[109] *Zviazda*, September 10, 1988, 1,3.

rejection of a "bastardized" understanding of the concepts of language interaction and merging of nations.[110]

Later in the same year, the newspaper published interviews with the first deputy minister of education, the head of the TV and radio broadcasting company and the chairman of the state publishing committee, in which all three assured their commitment to the promotion of the use of the Belarusian language in the domains of their responsibility.[111] Letters discussing the activities of the informal organization *Talaka,* such as pickets for a return to the pre-Soviet flag and coat of arms, were published in November of the same year.[112] Whereas the majority of published opinions viewed the organization's activities negatively, an interesting transition to the language question was also introduced in the concluding editorial paragraph. It suggested that restoration of the national language should be more important than changing official symbols since the loss of the language would lead to the loss of the nation as such so that any discussion on national symbols would be rendered irrelevant.

It must be noted that *Zviazda*, somewhat understandably, considering it was the only major daily media outlet that used Belarusian as the medium of publication, seemed to favor the position that advocated measures for the promotion of Belarusian. None of the letters by readers selected for publication on its pages was critical of efforts to increase the use and elevate the prestige of the titular language. The opposing views, such as references to the artificial nature of the Belarusian language, importance of freedom in language choices, dangerous connection to the rise of nationalism, were presented only indirectly and accompanied by counterarguments or refutations. The first opinion that criticized the adoption of Belarusian as the official language was published only in January of 1989. A. Filimonau, a member of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR, argued against the official status on the grounds that it would negatively impact the work of multiethnic personnel at large factories.[113] However, his opinion was followed by a response that, among others, called for a critical evaluation of such conservative positions, hailing from Brezhnev's Era of Stagnation.

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[110] *Zviazda*, April 7, 1989.
[111] *Zviazda,* August 26, 1988; *Zviazda,* September 2, 1988; *Zviazda,* September 3, 1988.
[112] *Zviazda,* November 5, 1988.
[113] *Zviazda,* January 27, 1989.

In March, *Zviazda* published an interview with the minister of culture Y. Vaitovich titled "The only way forward is the restoration of the Belarusian culture" in which he stated the following: "I am Belarusian. Therefore, there cannot be any "buts" in regard to the language – I fully support our native language."[114] Members of the Language Commission under the Belarusian Cultural Fund also shared their opinions regarding the current state of the titular language on the newspaper's pages.[115] Most notably, they concurred on the point that arguments such as freedom of language choice could not be considered when there is a threat to the nation's existence due to previous state policies. Other opinions included a clearly outlined proposal for hierarchical bilingualism, with Russian's role reserved mostly for external communication.[116]

Whereas the general tone of the discussion presented by the newspaper leaned towards a pro-Belarusian language policy, which was especially evident from the selections of readers' letters published throughout 1989, it also included alternative points of view. Among such dissenting opinions were two articles co-authored by Dzmitruk and Tozik.[117] The first article[118] argued that Belarus was objectively a multiethnic and multilingual state that should base its identity primarily on the territorial principle, and the concept of a titular nation should be discarded as outdated. The second article[119], published in October 1989 when the new language law was already in development, argued that party ideology and scientific approach suggest the implementation of official bilingualism in the country: "As concerning the state language, in our view, objective conditions, historical circumstances and future development of the republic, prevailing public attitudes, moral and psychological dispositions of the population all form the foundation for the functioning of both Belarusian and Russian as two state languages." Another opinion, favoring official bilingualism as an objective necessity for the republic likening its situation to the one of

[114] *Zviazda*, May 30, 1989.
[115] *Zviazda*, June 13, 1989.
[116] *Zviazda*, July 23, 1989.
[117] Anatoly Tozik is an example of pro-Soviet counter elites, who made his career in the KGB and subsequently joined the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus under A. Lukashenka.
[118] *Zviazda*, July 27, 1989.
[119] *Zviazda,* October 20, 1989.

Switzerland, was published[120] by an affiliate of the Institute of Philosophy and Law A. Tsikavenka in September 1989.[121]

A somewhat different tone of the discussion about the state of the Belarusian language was presented by *Sovietskaia Belorussiia*, the largest local daily Russian-language newspaper during the same period. *Sovietskaia Belorussiia* more thoroughly documented the evolution of the official narrative and approach of the local administration to the language question, which initially included the acknowledgment of an ongoing language shift and increasing dominance of the Russian language, as well as a need to move towards a more balanced form of bilingualism. A meeting between the officials at the Ministry of Education and representatives of the Republican Writers' Union that took place in March 1988 and discussed the problems of bilingualism in education was covered on the pages of the newspaper.[122] *Sovietskaia Belorussiia* also published a speech by renowned and decorated writer Ivan Shamiakin at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPB, during which he raised concerns about the desired state of bilingualism and genuine equality of languages, and referred to the state of the Belarusian language as "our biggest problem" that should be corrected "if we wish to remain a nation with its own language and culture."[123] In September of 1988, *Sovietskaia Belorussia* published an interview with the chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Council of the BSSR Heorhi Tarazevich. Among other topics, Tarazevich also touched upon the language issue. He acknowledged the problem with the declining use of Belarusian and invoked references to Leninist principles in ethnic and linguistic areas but argued against making Belarusian the sole state language in the republic as it might eventually cause more harm and suggested focusing on other state-sponsored measures instead.[124]

In sum, during the initial phase of the public discussion on the language issue, local political and administrative elites seem to have shared general beliefs about the value of titular language stemming from the early Soviet ethnolinguistic understanding of nationhood. They readily accepted the idea of state involvement and state-sponsored

[120] *Zviazda*, August 23, 1989.
[121] Interestingly, Tsikavenka's career also took a steep rise in the second half of the 1990s when he eventually became a judge in the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Belarus.
[122] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, March 24, 1988.
[123] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia,* May 14, 1988.
[124] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia,* September 14, 1988.

measures to promote the Belarusian language, short of completely overhauling the existing legal framework for official language policy.

In November 1988, *Sovietskaia Belorussiia* published an article by Aliaksandr Maisenia, titled "Mother Tongue: An epiphany."[125] In the article, the author argues against demands for monolingualism and stripping Russian of any recognized status, but also goes against the opposite extreme of "objective fatalism," i.e., arguments that linguistic shift towards Russian is all but natural and should not be fought. He traces the origins of such "objective fatalism" to the first post-war decades when "deformation of the ideological foundations of the Leninist nationalities policies" happened and "the blurring of national peculiarities was presented as a progressive and natural tendency." The author advocates search for a bilingual formula in which "the unconditional priority in the cultural sphere should be given to the national language," while the use of Russian should complement rather than replace the use of Belarusian in other spheres.

By early 1989, increased visibility of informal public organizations and democratic activists that called attention to the language issue, opinions on the topic by the intelligentsia, as well as readiness to admit the problem and take measures in addressing demonstrated by some high-level administrative officials, made adoption of a language law in the republic in the nearest future a tangible possibility. Additionally, first such laws had just been adopted in the Estonian SSR and neighboring Lithuanian SSR. In both republics, Russian received close to no recognition. From this point, public discussion on the language situation in Belarus became increasingly focused on searching for an appropriate legal formula that the country should adopt for its forthcoming language law.

In March*, Sovietskaia Belorussiia* published materials that discussed the period of the Soviet Belarusization of the 1920s.[126] These publications were later followed by an article under the authorship of a historian Dr. P. Petrikov who presented an alternative perspective on the subject. Petrikov relied on Lenin's arguments against an all-Union official language and against coercion in this area and the crucial role of the Soviet Russia in the formation of the modern Belarusian statehood as the ideological justification for the implementation of laissez-faire multilingualism in the BSSR: "One must not search the root causes of the

[125] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia,* November 26, 1988.
[126] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, March 27, 1989; *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, March 28, 1989.

current language situation in the BSSR in forced Russification and Russian Soviet chauvinism, both of which have never existed. Belarus's past is inseparable from Russia, the BSSR is inseparable from the Soviet Russia, and most likely would have no future without it either. It is us, Belarusians, who should remind ourselves about this fact when we discuss measures on widening the language use domain of the Belarusian language." … "It is necessary to take care of the equality of all languages that population or its certain sections choose to use on the territory of the Belarussian SSR."[127]

In contrast to *Zviazda*, *Sovietskaia Belorussiia* also allowed for more views expressed in readers' letters published on its pages. In February 1989, it published four such letters, two of which expressed satisfaction with the current language situation.[128] The first letter argued that the widespread use of Russian ensured that all ethnic minorities peacefully lived together in Belarus and that forcing the Belarusian language on the population would harm interethnic relations. The other letter stipulated that Russian should also be considered a native, or national, language for Belarusians and a source of their culture and national identity. Therefore, both Russian and Belarusian should be recognized as co-official languages since both are the "mother tongues" of the titular ethnic group.

These letters are a good indication of the actual range of opinions regarding the language issue among the general population, which were also relatively underrepresented in the printed media, which favored a discussion driven by opinion leaders, intelligentsia and officials. Partly to address this issue, on April 26, 1989, *Sovietskaia Belorussiia* initiated a so-called readers' referendum on the question of official language inviting its readers to fill out a survey and send it back to the editorial office. The survey result, which was eventually published five months later, by no means qualify for the result of scientific sociological research that would require a representative sample (fact acknowledged by the authors of the summary report), is nevertheless instructive in the absence of other data.[129] According to the report, the editorial board received approximately 2000 such surveys. 44.2% favored Belarusian as the sole official language, 34.9% two official languages, 14.7% would like to see Russian as the only official language. Three-quarters of those who

[127] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, April 26, 1989.
[128] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, February 15, 1989.
[129] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, September 11, 1989.

chose the latter option defined themselves as non-Belarusians. The recognition of Belarusian as the sole official language was more widespread among the younger generation and self-ascribed proletariat groups, whereas it found the least support among older generations and employees of administrative institutions. Shortly after the survey results, historian L. Lych published a review of letters he received in response to multiple articles and opinion pieces he had previously published on the pages of *Sovietskaiia Belorussiia* and elsewhere.[130] He noted that the biggest proponents of the status quo were older people and those who viewed favorably social and political developments in BSSR and the USSR in the 1960s and 1970s. He also dismissed calls for a referendum on official languages, made by some readers, as premature on the grounds that "a Belarusian, assimilated in more than one generation, would not be unable to assess the importance of his or her mother tongue objectively."

Local officials, at least those who were closely involved with the matters of language publicly, found themselves more familiar with the ethnolinguistic understanding of nationhood, which prioritized the role of titular language in nation-building and maintenance. What followed from this understanding was that the current situation with the Belarusian language was abnormal and posed a threat to the continuation of the national republic and that the titular language deserved a special elevated status, even if some form of bilingualism would still be maintained. For example, in an interview for the newspaper, the chairman of the Permanent Commission on National Issues and International Relations under the Supreme Council of the BSSR Ihar Chyhrynau described the commission's guiding principles as follows: "maintaining the general principle of bilingualism in the republic it is necessary to improve the knowledge of the Belarusian language, create conditions for granting it the official status in the future." He added that "other measures aimed at bringing the language back to a position that a national language should enjoy in a national republic are also developed."[131] In another interview,[132] I. I. Bulyko, head of the department under the central committee of the CPB responsible for the supervision of sciences and education, once again invoked the importance of the development of national languages in accordance with Lenin's teachings and expressed his support for the official

[130] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, September 19, 1989.
[131] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, June 18, 1989.
[132] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, August 11, 1989.

status of the Belarusian language that "would stimulate the renaissance of the mother tongue but would not put other languages in the republic in an unfair position." Bulyko mentioned that the central committee was aware of the fact that direction outlined for a new language policy would be seen as unsatisfactory by the proponents of official monolingualism and defenders of official bilingualism alike: "The analysis of letters arriving at the Central Committee demonstrates that while there is a lot of positive feedback, there is also quite a lot of criticism from the left and right." In yet another interview,[133] the secretary of the central committee of CPB responsible for ideology V. Pechennikov, discussing the topic of national revitalization, claimed that initial Leninist nationalities policies had been profoundly deformed and national nihilism could be at least as dangerous as nationalism.

By that time, members of the BNF and actors among sympathetic intelligentsia and officials in public and educational institutions and organizations had formed the monolingual policy advocacy coalition. Whereas the preferences of individual actors differed concerning the degree and scope of concessions to the Russian language and its speakers, they shared a view that the Belarusian language had to be granted a legally superior status as a starting point for its revitalization, which in turn would be crucial for the preservation and strengthening of the Belarusian national identity. The drafting of the language law began in September 1989 when a dedicated commission was formed in the Supreme Council. The commission included already mentioned writers Nil Hilevich and Ihar Chyhrynau, and linguist Aliaksandr Padluzhny, among others.[134]

On September 12, 1989, Padluzhny published an article[135] in *Zviazda* as a follow-up to the inauguration of the commission's work. In the article, he evaluates the language situation in Belarus and concludes that the current mode of bilingualism, to which he refers as diglossia with Belarusian taking a subordinate position, is not sustainable and has to be changed. He mentions proposals by the BNF and other organizations and concludes that the most appropriate formula for a new language law would be to grant Belarusian an official status and designate Russian as the language of interethnic communication. He lists two primary

[133] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, October 25, 1989.
[134] Ina Studzinskaya, "30 hadou tamu pryniali zakon ab movah iaki apiaredziu nezalezhnasts Belarusi," *Radyo Svaboda*, January 26, 2020, https://www.svaboda.org/a/30395601.html.
[135] *Zviazda*, September 12, 1989.

reasons for keeping Russian in some recognized capacity. The first is to avoid fears of rapid and forced imposition of the national language and curtail potential adverse reaction to the language law by part of the population, similar to adverse reactions after such laws were adopted in Estonia or Moldavia. The second is the necessity to have a common working language at the Union level. The final draft of the new language law was published in republican newspapers in December and was explicitly guided by the formula laid out by Padluzhny. The law passed through the Supreme Council on January 26, 1990 and was scheduled to be enforced by September 1. However, the enforcement of some of its provisions was postponed to the terms of three to ten years. The text of the law[136] begins with a preamble that states an intention to reverse an ongoing language shift as the reason for the law's adoption: "However, in recent years the sphere of use of the language of native people of Belarus, who gave this republic its name and who make up the majority of its population, has dramatically narrowed. The language's survival is under threat. This situation has necessitated the protection of the Belarusian language on its ethnic state territory. Such a protection system is only possible if the Belarusian language is granted the status of the state language in the Belarusian SSR." The law is quite detailed in denoting various areas in which the state language should take priority, such as: the language of decision-making and resolutions in political and administrative bodies (Article 7); the language of office administration and communication in public institutions (Article 8); the language of public meetings, sessions, plenums and alike (Article 12); the language of documentation concerning elections (Article 13); the language of prosecutor supervision (Article 19); the language of international agreements (Article 21); the primary language of pre-school and secondary education (Articles 23 and 24); the language of culture (Article 28); the language of mass media (Article 29); the language of publicly displayed announcements, signs, and alike (Article 31); the language of information on consumer goods produced for the domestic market (Article 32).

In sum, profound social and political transformations in the second half of the 1980s created an opportunity for local language policy activists to introduce a discussion about the state and status of the Belarusian language to the public sphere. Core beliefs about the pivotal role of language in justifying ethnonational statehood, shared by many intellectuals,

[136] Zakon ab movah u Belruskai SSR, 1990, https://miram.livejournal.com/433570.html.

public figures, politicians, opinion leaders, shaped the direction and limitations of the discussion, as well as allowing communist officials to safely incorporate the narrative of language protection and promotion into their rhetoric. There is a good indication that alternative opinions on the desired role and status of languages in the republic were willingly or unwillingly underrepresented in the public discourse, compared to their popularity among the general population. However, as the law was being developed, both existence of dissenting factions and limitations imposed by sociolinguistic reality were considered. The law was a compromise[137] that fully satisfied neither advocates for eventual monolingualism from the right as it lacked a clear pathway or strict enforcement mechanisms for transitioning away from Russian nor the proponents of bilingualism who saw it as contradicting sociolinguistic reality and opening way to forced Belarusization. The 1990 language law, which established the formula of hierarchical bilingualism as the guiding principle for language policy in Belarus, survived the disintegration of the Soviet Union until it *was de facto* amended during the 1995 referendum and revised de jure in 1998.

4.4 T2: Towards the 1995 Referendum on Official Languages

The official language policy that was introduced in 1990 was meant to be maintained and implemented within the framework of the closed and centralized Soviet political system. However, this system began to weaken rapidly with subsequent institutional changes. First such change was brought by the outcomes of the first competitive election to the Supreme Council of the BSSR, which was held in March of 1990. For the first time, the republican parliament seized to be a purely decorative body, rubberstamping decisions made by party officials, and assumed the functions of a conventional legislature as a venue for lawmaking and debates between groups with different political orientations, including the members and sympathizers of the BNF.

The second crucial change came in the aftermath of a failed attempt of a *coup d'état* against Mikhail Gorbachev on August 19, 1991. By that time the Communist Party of the BSSR had already been moving towards more orthodox positions. Anatoly Malofeyev was

[137] Alexandra Goujon, "Language, Nationalism, and Populism in Belarus," *Nationalities Papers* 27, no. 4 (1999): 661-677.

elected as the new first secretary of the CPB in November 1990 and was described as the biggest hardliner among the potential candidates.[138] Malofeyev had openly criticized Gorbachev and policies of perestroika and glasnost. The defeat of the anti-Gorbachev communists in Moscow crippled the legitimacy of their Belarusian counterparts, who had welcomed the coup attempt. On the 25th of August, under the pressure of the non-Communist opposition of the BNF and amidst continuing public protests on the square in front of the parliament building, the Supreme Council gathered for an emergency session. During the session, the deputies ousted the incumbent chairman of the Council Nikolay Dementey who had sided with the coup. His position was taken by the deputy chairman Stanislau Shushkevich. After intense and prolonged deliberations and discussions, the Supreme Council adopted the Declaration of Independence, supported by 253 deputies.

The pro-independence opposition continued to capitalize on the momentum created by the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and complete disorientation of the local party officials. On September 19th, 1991, the BNF managed to convince the majority of the deputies to vote in favor of changing the official name of the country form the BSSR to Republic of Belarus and adopting a new national flag and coat of arms.

Nevertheless, the exact nature of the republic's relationships with the Soviet Union in the following months remained ambiguous, as well as the future of the Soviet Union itself until it was legally dissolved on December 8, 1991. On December 7, 1991, the political leaders of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine meet at a state dacha, located in the Brest region of Belarus. The agreements, signed during this meeting and later became known as the Belovezh Accords, abolished the Union Treaty of 1922, thus formally dissolving the USSR. Allegedly, the decision to formally dissolve the Soviet Union came rather spontaneously during the meeting and was not anticipated by the participants.[139] With the ratification of the Accords by the Supreme Council on December 10, Belarus finally completed its road towards political independence.

During the first two and a half years of its independence Belarus remained a parliamentary republic. Despite this fact, the genesis of local parties had just begun, and the domestic political landscape was dominated by post-Soviet elites that had obtained their positions

[138] Siarhei Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta tretsi* (Prague: Radyo Svaboda, 2018), 170-172.
[139] Stanislav Shushkevich, *Moia zhizn. Krusheniie i voskresheniie SSSR* (Moscow: ROSPEN, 2012).

before independence (Table 4.1). Stanislau Shushkevich – the chairman of the Supreme Council – became the formal head of state, whereas the chairman of the Council of Ministers Viachaslau Kebich assumed the role of the chief executive.

Table 4.1: Elite groups in the first years of independence (1992-1995).

Elite Group	*Pro-Soviet*	*Post-Soviet*	*Anti-Soviet*
Leadership	After 1993, de facto Aliaksandar Lukashenka	Vichaslau Kebich	Zianon Pazniak
Access to political power	At least 29 MPs nominated by the Belarusian Republican Union of the Veterans of War and Labor.	Council of Ministers, chaired by Kebich, Local governments, Communist nomenklatura in the parliament, loosely united under parliamentary group "Belarus"	At least 27 members of the BNF Situational alliance with Shushkevich and Communist intelligentsia in the parliament such as poet Nil Hilevich
Position	Relevant	Dominant	Relevant

The 1990 election to the Supreme Council of the BSSR took place on the 4th of March according to a two-round majoritarian formula. Whereas multiple candidates were allowed on the ballot in 310 single-member districts, no official endorsement by alternative parties was permitted. Additionally, 50 out of 360 seats in the Supreme Council were reserved for delegates, nominated by the Belarusian Republican Union of the Veterans of War and Labor (29), Belarusian Society of People with Disabilities (7), Belarusian Society of Visually Impaired People, and Belarusian Society of People with Hearing Impairment (7).[140]

The election produced a parliament in which 90.5% of the deputies were nominally affiliated with the Communist Party, but the actual political leanings of individual members

[140] Daria Gerasimovich, *Personalnyi Sostav Verkhovnogo Sovieta Respubliki Belarus 12-go sozyva: prosopograficheskoie issledovaniie,* thesis (Minsk: Istoricheskii fakultet BGU, 2015).

and parliamentary groups were more complex and fluid.[141] Candidates, affiliated or endorsed by the Belarusian Popular Front, enjoyed a degree of electoral success, especially in districts in larger urban centers. The parliamentary faction of the BNF was formed following the election and consisted of around 30 members, headed by Pazniak.[142]

Since May 1990 the BNF officially declared the political independence of Belarus as its ultimate goal, cementing its anti-Soviet ideological position. In its parliamentary activities, the BNF was able to benefit from the support of reliable allies and sympathizers among the remaining members of the Supreme Council. The exact extent of such support is difficult to define, but the number of signatories (82 MPs) of the official letter of support for the Lithuanian government and condemnation of the violent actions of the Soviet troops during the stand-off in front of the Lithuanian parliament on the 13th of January 1991.[143] The so-called Parliamentary Democratic Club, which collected the signatures of more than 100 members at its inauguration, can be considered the widest circle of the BNF's allies. However, it never managed to properly institutionalize and transform into a coherent functioning political group, in great part due to vast differences in political orientations of its signatories.

While numerically small, the BNF remained the most coherent, disciplined and active parliamentary group, which was able to exert influence over "the amorphous parliamentary majority"[144] on multiple occasions. Most notably, during the adoption of Declaration of Independence, but also when successfully opposing the institution of presidency, which was discussed in 1991 after Russia and Ukraine introduced it.

The chairman of the Council of Ministers Viachaslau Kebich is an example of politician whose successful party career continued in the post-Soviet period. He received his education in machinery building engineering but later rose to chief administrative positions at large industrial enterprises until he joined the Communist party apparatus in 1980.

[141] Andrei Kazakevich, "Belaruski parlament epokhi nezalezhnastsi: evaliutsyia deputatskaha korpusu, 1990-2010," *Palitychnaia Sfera* 15, no 2(2010): 44-70.
[142] Siarhei Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta pershy* (Prague: Radyo Svaboda, 2016); Kazakevich, "Belaruski parliament"; Valery Bulhakau, ed., *Nainoushaia historyia belaruskaha parlamentaryzmu* (Minsk: Analitychny Hudok, 2005).
[143] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta pershy*, 23.
[144] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta pershy*, 81.

Between 1985 and 1990, prior to his appointment as the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Kebich served as the head of Gosplan of the BSSR.[145]

Kebich was readily accepted by post-Soviet nomenklatura[146]. He frequently demonstrated opportunism and flexibility in political views. In 1991, he condemned the coup attempt in Moscow and showed his support for the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, Kebich was among the signatories of the Belovezh Accords. This fact was later used against Kebich by his political rivals on the left, most notably by Lukashenka during the 1994 presidential campaign.

Kebich heavily relied on Soviet nostalgia once he "much earlier than Lukashenka, will turn to Soviet myths in order to gain the support of older generations, exploiting their nostalgic feelings about the Soviet past."[147] He also championed the idea of economic, monetary and political integration with Russia, as the ultimate solution to continuing economic difficulties, and remained suspicious of market reforms. In the parliament, Kebich was supported by a pro-governmental parliamentary group "Belarus", which included approximately 100-150 deputies, consisting mostly of nomenklatura and administrative officials.[148]

Kebich did not seem to hold any particularly strong beliefs about nation-building and the role of language in this process. This ambivalent attitude and context-dependency in the matters of language is expressed on the pages of his memoirs where he recalls providing the following question to the answer "What is your native language" at a party interview: "I used to think in Belarusian, but now I think in Russian".[149] Kebich used Russian language in his official speeches, but at a meeting with intelligentsia in 1992 he also openly expressed his support for the continuation of the cultural revival and the official status of the Belarusian language. However, during the 1994 presidential campaign he stated that he personally favored official bilingualism and suggested that the status of the Russian language could be decided through a referendum.[150]

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[145] Viacheslav Kebich, *Iskusheniie vlastiu: iz zhizni premier-ministra* (Minsk: Paradoks, 2008).
[146] Siarhei Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta druhi* (Prague: Radyo Svaboda, 2017).
[147] Navumchyk *Dzievianosta druhi.*
[148] Kazakevich, "Belaruski parliament."
[149] Kebich, *Iskusheniie vlastiu.*
[150] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, March 20, 1994.

The chairman of the Supreme Council Stanislau Shushkevich belonged to technical intelligentsia, held a PhD in physics and had been involved in academic activities at the Belarusian State University for much of his career. Allegedly, his decision to enter politics and compete for a seat in the Supreme Council in the 1990 election was rather spontaneous. Unlike Kebich, Shushkevich has held much more consistent beliefs about Belarusian nation-building and the role of the Belarusian language. He allied himself firmly with the position of the BNF regarding the official status of the Belarusian language.[151] However, Shushkevich chose to distance himself from the BNF group and maintain a degree of political neutrality, even though he relied on their support when elected as the deputy chairman. Shushkevich's lack of political commitment, desire to minimize open political confrontation in favor of compromise-seeking caused widespread frustration within the ranks of the BNF.[152]

At the beginning of 1992, the BNF proposed several comprehensive political reforms and called for an early election in order to form a parliament which would properly reflect the political and institutional changes that happened since 1990. Shushkevich opposed this idea. Having failed to pass its propositions in the parliament, the BNF collected almost half a million signatures in favor of a referendum on the early election, but Shushkevich refused to call for an urgent parliamentary session that would formally initiate such a referendum. Instead, he advocated for the continuation of work of the current parliament until it developed and adopted a new constitution. This failed alliance between the chairman of the parliament and the BNF that potentially precluded an early election proved to be crucial in defining the subsequent course of the Belarusian political history.

In 1993, during the debates on the future constitutional design, Shushkevich conceded to pro-Kebich deputies, who demanded the introduction of the institution of popularly elected president. Likewise, by the end of the same year he agreed to sign the 1992 Collective Security Treaty, which he had previously opposed in favor of the neutral status of the republic. Shushkevich's reluctance to support the initiatives of the Kebich cabinet in the area of integration with Russia resulted in increased hostility of the pro-government

[151] Shushkevich, *Moia zhizn*, 110.
[152] Siarhei Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty* (Prague: Radyo Svaboda, 2015).

members of parliament and determined his eventual demise. Shushkevich was voted out by the Supreme Council in January of 1994 and replaced by Miachaslau Hryb.[153]

Coincidentally, Aliaksandar Lukashenka played an important role in ousting Shushkevich from his position. Lukashenka raise to prominence earlier that year when he was appointed as the chairman of a parliamentary commission that investigated instances of corruption among political figures. He presented the commission's findings to the Supreme Council on December 13, 1993.[154] The report named a great variety of administrative figures and politicians across political spectrum. Substantively, this anti-corruption report, which was extensively covered in the media, consisted predominantly of minor infringements, cases of nepotism or allegations, not supported by sufficient evidence for a criminal investigation.[155] Shushkevich was named in the report for allegedly not paying for a box of nails used for repairment of his summer house. Nevertheless, Lukashenka's aggressive rhetoric solidified his image as a non-conformist truth-seeker who is not afraid to challenge authorities, which greatly aided his presidential campaign which stater less than in three months. Apparently, the report was prepared with the help of the editorial board of *Sovietskaiia Belorussiia* with a tentative approval of Kebich.[156]

Aliaksandar Lukashenka, a former Komsomol activist and the head of a collective farm in the Mahiliou region was elected to the Supreme Council He initially joined the Democratic Club and later created parliamentary group "Communists for Democracy" but did not commit to either.[157] He showed little interest for legislative work but readily used various opportunities for speeches in the parliament, which were regularly covered by the media. In terms of ideological background, "[b]oth Kebich and Lukashenka represented political forces that were similarly oriented towards Russia, but with the following difference: the former was part of the old post-Soviet nomenklatura, while the latter represented the young and aggressive Komsomol generation that was frustrated with the actions of former Communist party officials and ruling cadres."[158] Kebich targeted nomenklatura, "red directors" and administrative officials. Lukashenka's target audience consisted of rural

[153] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty*.
[154] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty*.
[155] For example, BNF members were accused of owning imported cars.
[156] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty.*
[157] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty.*
[158] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty.*

population, marginalized and impoverished social groups, severely hit by socio-economic transformation, lower-level military and security personnel, and protest voters, distrustful of established political forces.[159] This populist orientation was reflected in the slogan of his electoral campaign: "I am neither with the right nor with the left. I am with the people." He signaled his political leanings by wearing a pin with the Soviet symbolics, lamenting the collapse of the Soviet Union, and calling for some form of its restoration. [160]

Admittedly, Kebich did not considered Lukashenka a serious opponent and was late to realize the seriousness of threat coming from his candidacy, considering his anti-establishment appeal to the protest voter, dissatisfied with economic situation and the ruling government. On the 23rd of June 1994, Lukashenka won the first round of the election with 45% of the votes (Table 4.2). Some of Kebich's supporters from within the nomenklatura ranks started defecting already after the first round.[161]

Table 4.2: Results of the 1994 presidential election.

Candidate	**Party Affiliation**	**First Round**	**Second Round**
Aliaksandar Lukashenka	None	44.82%	80.34%
Viachaslau Kebich	None	17.33%	14.17%
Zianon Pazniak	BNF	12.82 %	
Stanislau Shushkevich	None	9.91%	
Aliaksandar Dubko	Belarusian Agrarian Party	5.98%	
Vasili Novikau	Belarusian Communist Party	4.29%	

On the 2nd of July, the BNF held an urgent party meeting, where a call to voters to ignore the second round was prepared: "The results of the first round of presidential election proved the political collapse of Kebich's mafia-like pro-Moscow nomenklatura regime. … The nation was not able to look past Lukashenka's laud populist promises and realize that he represents a similar, but younger and more aggressive mafia-like nomenklatura. … In the second round, we will not support either kind of nomenklatura. The Popular Front will not show up at the polling booths for this election, which lacks real alternative and pushes

[159] Grigory Ioffe, *Reassessing Lukashenka: Belarus in cultural and geopolitical context* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[160] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, May 13, 1994.
[161] Kebich, *Iskusheniie vlastiu*.

Belarus into an abyss."[162] According to circumstantial evidence, some voters who initially supported Pazniak still took part in the second round and cast their vote for Lukashenka as an anti-establishment candidate.[163] The second round, which was held on the 10th of July, turned into vote of no confidence for Kebich and his government, which unsurprisingly resulted in Lukashenka's landslide victory. The turnout for the second tour dropped from 79% to 70.6%.

Interestingly enough, while Lukashenka had advocated a status for Russian, "equivalent to the one of the state language"[164] when serving as deputy in the parliament, he did not include an explicit promise of official bilingualism in his program for the 1994 presidential election, despite criticizing pressure on Russian-speakers.[165] Aliaksandar Feduta, member of Lukashenka's campaign team and the head of the department of social and political information at the presidential administration, provided an ambiguous answer about the possibility of changing official language policy in the future in a newspaper interview published in the autumn of the same year.[166] However, political groups which endorsed Lukashenka's candidacy[167] and supported him before and during the electoral campaign[168] declared official status of the Russian language as one of their priorities. The most radical such group was Slavic Sobor "White Rus" – a political party, established in 1992, which adhered to an eclectic mixture of anti-Westernism, pan-Slavism, Soviet nostalgia, and anti-Semitism.[169]

It must be noted that on the pages of major printed media, the majority of which remained in state ownership but enjoyed significant autonomy in their editorial policy, advocates for bilingualism had been vocal since 1992. *Sovietskaia Bielorussiia* was one of the biggest platforms for arguments in favor of amending the official language policy.[170] Liudmila Masliukova, journalist and coordinator of the political department, describes "the editorial consensus" that emerged in the newspaper at the time as follows: "Ok, sovereignty we can

[162] *Svaboda* 26*,* July 1994, 2.
[163] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta chatsviorty*, 314
[164] Goujon, "Language, Nationalism."
[165] Goujon, "Language, Nationalism."
[166] *Respublika*, September 11, 1994.
[167] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, February 1, 1994.
[168] *Respublika*, May 12, 1994.
[169] *Belaya Rus* 2, 1993; *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, April 16, 1994.
[170] Siarhei Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty* (Prague: Radyo Svaboda, 2015).

accept. But sovereignty should not be accompanied by the stink of nationalism. Russia is our closest country. Organized crime and anarchy must be eradicated. Soviet heritage should be cherished."[171] In other words, the editorial team shared a pro-Soviet and pro-Russian orientation and rejected Belarusian nationalism. Masliukova recalls that the election of Ihar Asinski as the chief editor of the newspaper solidified and strengthened this consensus. Indeed, Asinski expressed similar views on the pages of *Sovietskaia Bielorussiia*: "One can adopt a single state language, while ignoring the will of the population (not even asking its opinion). This is what has happened here. Yet people will keep thinking in Russian! … It's not me who betrays the Motherland by considering himself the citizen of the Soviet Belarus, but you, nationalists, who reject and betray all the deeds and accomplishments of the Belarusian people throughout the 70 years of the Soviet Union, all the ideals for which one fourth of our people died [during WWII]." In another article, Asinski argued that "instead of restoring nationalism, we need to restore patriotism and admiration for the Motherland and its glorious international [interethnic] past, which have been senselessly lost." Throughout 1993 and 1994 the newspaper kept publishing articles and letters from the readers, criticizing "forced" Belarusization and advocating for the official status of the Russian language to ensure the preservation of multinational peace and harmony in the republic.

The election of Lukashenka inspired advocates for official bilingualism to put greater efforts into their activities. In the fall of 1994, the Slavic Sobor established the committee "For the Free Choice of the Language of Education," which organized a protest in front of the building of the Minsk City Council, demanding Russian-language education. The protest was joined only by a few dozens of parents.[172] But it was sympathetically and extensively covered by state media.[173] In the same period, Popular Movement "Belarus" unsuccessfully tried to initiate a referendum on the amendment of the language law by submitting multiple requests to the parliament, which were rejected based on their unconstitutional character.[174]

[171] Natalia Kulinka and Natalia Fedorova, *Vremia nesbyvshikhsia nadezhd* (Moscow: Ozon, 2014).
[172] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[173] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[174] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*

The autumn of 1994 witnessed the first moves by Lukashenka towards the consolidation of his personal rule, increasing tensions and lack of cooperation between the newly elected president and the parliament. Even before his election, Lukashenka stated that he would not associate with any parliamentary force and instead prioritize close cooperation with security bodies and KGB in his fight against organized crime and corruption. Soon it became apparent that the president was not willing to compromise with the parliament, even though at least the plurality of deputies held relatively positive, albeit somewhat belittling, attitudes towards Lukashenka.[175] This political deadlock was exacerbated by the fact that the 1994 constitution was ambiguous about the exact principles of power sharing between the two branches of the government.[176] On November 11, in a live TV appearance Lukashenka threatened to remove and arrest those who were obstructing his policies.[177]

At the same time, the economic situation had been worsening[178] and Lukashenka's approval rating had been dropping to as low as to 26% by the end of the year.[179] In December, the BNF parliamentary group prepared and presented a report concerning the corruption in Lukashenka's government - just one year after Lukashenka himself presented a similar report. The president responded with the blanket ban on the publication of the report's content in the media. Consequently, all major newspapers released their issues with blank spaces in place of the text of the anti-corruption report. This was the form of protesting against the first instance of open censorship of the mass media in independent Belarus.[180] Even *Sovietskaiia Belorussiia,* which had been extremely loyal in covering Lukashenka before during and after his electoral campaign, followed suit.[181]

In February 1995, Lukashenka revealed his intention to conduct a referendum on official languages, national symbols, integration with Russia and the right of the president to dismiss the parliament. Aliaksandr Feduta speculates that the idea of a referendum came to Lukashenka right after the December corruption report as a way to take revenge on the parliament and especially on the BNF, for whom the status of the Belarusian language and

[175] Aleksandr Feduta, *Lukashenko: Politicheskaia biografiia* (Moscow: Referendum, 2005).
[176] Uladzimir Rouda, *Palitychnaia Sistema Respubliki Belarus* (Vilnius: EHU, 2011).
[177] Feduta, *Lukashenko.*
[178] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[179] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[180] Feduta, *Lukashenko.*
[181] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, December 20, 1994.

adoption of the new flag and coat of arms were considered the most valuable symbolic achievements.[182]

On March 18, 1995, *Zviazda* published two declarations signed by 74 members of the Supreme Council, in which they asked the president to initiate referendums on national symbols and on the state status of the Russian language.[183] Almost half of the signatures came from the deputies nominated by the Belarusian Republican Union of the Veterans of War and Labor, the rest – from a few military officials and those deputies who used to hold prominent positions in the party and administrative institutions of the BSSR, but lost them after 1991.[184] On March 23, Lukashenka presented questions for the referendum to the Supreme Council. Besides the question on two official languages, it included three following questions: return to modified Soviet national symbols, support for economic integration with Russia and the president's ability to dismiss the parliament. He also demonstrated new designs of the national flag and coat of arms (slightly updated versions of the flag and coat of arms used in the BSSR).[185]

Lukashenka's proposal provoked a thorough discussion in the parliament, which continued until April 11. A group of deputies from the BNF (19 people), fearing that continuing pressure on the parliament would eventually result in the approval of the proposed referendum, declared a hunger strike.[186] This move had an immediate impact and all questions, except for the one concerning integration with Russia, failed to obtain the necessary number of votes. After the parliamentary session was concluded the deputies which were taking part in the hunger strike remained in the parliament building. At night, special forces violently removed the protestants from the building, ostensibly in attempt to protect their lives after information about a bomb in the building had been received. Next day Lukashenka denied his involvement in the incident and promised to investigate it later but kept pressuring the demoralized parliament and its chairman Miachaslau Hryb (summoning him for private consultations) until the Supreme Council voted positively on all four questions om April 13.

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[182] Feduta, *Lukashenko.*
[183] *Zviazda,* March 18, 1995.
[184] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[185] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*
[186] Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty.*

The referendum was held on May 14, 1995, with a turnout of 64.8%. An organized and coordinated propaganda campaign on the national television that not only encouraged positive answers to all four questions but also smeared and demonized those who opposed the referendum,[187] unfolded during the month that preceded the voting day. The infamous pseudo-documentary "Hatred: Children of Lies", which likened the BNF to the collaborationist authorities established during the Nazi occupation, was shown twice during the campaign.[188]

Table 4.3: Results of the 1995 referendum

Question	**Yes**	**No**
Do you agree with assigning the Russian language the status equal to that of the Belarusian language?	83.3%	12.7%
Do you support the suggestion about the introduction of the new State flag and State Coat of Arms of the Republic of Belarus?	75.1%	20,47 %
Do you support the actions of the President aimed at economic integration with Russia?	83.3%	12.5%
Do you agree with the necessity of the introduction of changes into the acting Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, which provide for early termination of the plenary powers of the Supreme Soviet by President of the Republic of Belarus in the case of systematical or gross violations of the Constitution?	77.7 %	17.8%

Lukashenka obtained affirmative results for each question put on the ballot, including the introduction of official Russian-Belarusian bilingualism (Table 4.3). The referendum marked a decisive policy change and a turn to the new language policy of laissez-faire bilingualism, whose optional character was legally entrenched in the new version of the language law, adopted in 1998. The linguistic component of national identity was silenced. In many cases, the use of the Belarusian language outside of designated cultural reservations was discouraged and punished.

[187] *Svaboda,* May 6, 1995, 2.
[188] Feduta, *Lukashenko*; Navumchyk, *Dzievianosta piaty*.

4.5 Conclusion

The gradual depoliticization of the language question in the following decades allowed for a more explicit endorsement of the bilingual concept of nation. A quote from Lukashenka's speech in 2015 exemplifies this peculiarity: "We have two native languages – Russian and Belarusian. Both Russian and Belarusian are the heritage of our nation. … But I support the Belarusian language as well. This is what differentiates us from Russians. If you don't have such peculiarities, your own Belarusian language, you are simply a Russian."[189] Nevertheless, the same language policy framework of optional bilingualism that was mainly introduced in 1995 and was officially codified in 1998 in the revised language law[190] has remained unchanged. In most cases this framework benefits the use of the Russian language since no translation into Belarusian is required by law. However, the same is true in those few situations, in which only the Belarusian language is used and no translation into Russian is provided.[191]

As this chapter intends to demonstrate, despite Lukashenka's core believes about language,[192] nation, the Soviet past, and post-Soviet future, which closely allied him with advocates for the official status of the Russian language, such a radical change of the language policy was not inevitable. Rather it was a byproduct of political struggle and intention of the incumbent president to put post-Soviet nomenklatura into a subjugated position and marginalize anti-Soviet nationalist political elites.[193]

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[189] "Lukashenko: Belorusskii iazyk otlichaet nas ot russkikh kak natsiiu," REGNUM, January 29, 2015, https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1889696.html.
[190] Zakon Respubliki Belarus ot 13 iiulia 1998 g. №187-Z 'O vnesenii izmenenii i dopolnenii v Zakon Respubliki Belarus "O yazykakh v Respublike Belarus," http://pravo.levonevsky.org/.
[191] For example, Belarusian banknotes contain information only in the Belarusian language. The Department of Public Transportation of Minsk exclusively uses Belarusian for announcements, printed instructions, tickets, names of bus stops and subway stations.
[192] Some jokingly attribute it to the fact that he hated his mother-in-law who happened to be a teacher of Belarusian language and literature.
[193] The emigration of Zianon Pazniak from the country in 1996 can be considered a symbolic milestone in this process.

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Chapter 5
UKRAINE

For the first two decades of Ukraine's independence, the official language policy formula, adopted in the Ukrainian SSR in 1989, had remained in place. The Ukrainian case is quite unique in this regard, since all changes to the official language policy came very late, compared to all other post-Soviet republics, where language statuses, introduced in Soviet-time laws, had already been re-affirmed or amended. This chapter of the dissertation investigates the causes of such an exceptionally long lifespan of a policy and policy-defining legislation that prevailed, despite the language question's presence on the political agenda and the existence of several time points at which policy changes could have happened. The forthcoming sections of the dissertation chapter first establish relevant background in terms of narratives on Ukrainian nationhood and contribution of language to Ukrainian nation-building and then investigate the process of formulating the original official language policy, conditions of its continuation, and causes for its exceptionally late overhaul.

5.1 Geographical Portrait

Figure 5.1: Map of Ukraine and its main historical regions.

Ukraine is comprised of up to two dozen geographically, culturally, and ethnically distinct regions,[1] whose territorial extents sometimes coincide with but more often cut across the official boundaries of the country's administrative units (Figure 5.1).[2] These regions not only vary greatly in their topography, climate, economy, religious and ethnolinguistic make-up but also carry different political and cultural historical legacies. History-related regional differences originate from the fact that, in the past, various parts of modern Ukraine had been ruled by the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires, the Kingdom of Poland, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Moreover, the territory of present-day Ukraine had never been controlled by a single state prior to the 20th century. The majority of Western Ukraine joined the USSR after the German-Soviet partition of interwar Poland in 1939. In 1940 Southern Bessarabia, or Budjak region, and Northern Bukovina joined the Ukrainian SSR after the Soviet annexation of those territories, previously controlled by Romania. In 1945, Transcarpathia became part of Ukraine as the result of Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement. Ukraine's administrative unification was eventually complete in 1954, when the Crimean Peninsula was transferred from the Russian SFSR under the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian SSR.

Such a late political consolidation is likely to have strengthened the role of the aforementioned differences in shaping the trajectory of nation building in post-Soviet Ukraine and contributing to the formation of multiple narratives of the Ukrainian statehood until present moment. However, it is important to stress that multiple socio-cultural, ethnic, and linguistic divisions in the Ukrainian society overlay, cut across and often blur regional boundaries. This is especially evident in the country's major urban centers. Therefore, geographic reductionism, especially the infamous juxtaposition of "pro-European" West and "pro-Russian" East, which is often found in the mainstream and even academic

[1] Left-Bank and Right-Bank Ukraine, divided by the Dnieper; four macro regions - Central, Southern, Western and Eastern Ukraine; plethora of overlapping ethnographic regions and historical provinces.
[2] The original map is created by the author based on maps in David R Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2007); Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and nation building* (London and NY: Routledge, 1998); Serhii Plokhy, *The gates of Europe: A history of Ukraine* (NY: Basic books, 2015); Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: a history*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Western literature, is not suitable for representing the country's complex socio-political past and present.[3]

5.2 Ukraine's History from a Nation Building Perspective

As with the cases of many other "stateless" nations of the 19th century's Central and Eastern Europe, it would not be possible to construct a coherent historical narrative of an uninterrupted Ukrainian statehood that could be claimed as predecessor to the modern nation-state. Instead, there exists a collection of isolated episodes which are selectively interpreted and incorporated in narratives about the origin of the Ukrainian nation and statehood. in the 1990s' Ukraine. The fact that the mainstream Ukrainian historiography of the 1990s simultaneously drew upon pre-Soviet historical writings by Hrushevskii, the Soviet historical tradition, the critical interpretation of this tradition during and after *perestroika*, as well as upon works by émigré Ukrainian authors from the USA and Canada, made the eclectic nature of such narratives even more pronounced. The mainstream narratives of the Ukrainian national history incorporate four major episodes: the existence of Kievan Rus' between the 9th and 13th centuries; 'national liberation' struggle by the Cossacks and the formation of Cossack 'states' in the 17th and 18th centuries; the cultural and political revival of the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries that culminated in the proclamation of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic in 1918; and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

5.2.1 Kievan Rus'

Kievan Rus' is a historical term that refers to several culturally and politically interconnected Eastern Slavic principalities which existed on the territories of modern-day Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia in the late medieval period. The city of Kiev, whose well-known nickname is "the mother of the Russian cities", had remained the region's most important political, cultural, and religious center until the Mongol army captured and ransacked it in 1240, massacring most of the city's population in the process. Since the publication of the first three volumes of *History of Ukraine-Rus'* by Mykhailo Hrushevskii in 1898-1900, this historical period has remained essential to all mainstream narratives on

[3] Mykola Riabchuk, *Dvi Ukraiiny: realni mezhi, virtualny voiny* (Kyiv: Krytyka 2003), 19-23.

the origin of the Ukrainian statehood. For example, the text of the 1991 declaration of independence builds upon such narratives by referencing "the one-thousand-year tradition of state building in Ukraine".[4] Likewise, the republic's official currency *hryvnia* is named after a unit of measurement which was used in Kievan Rus'. Some of the currency's banknotes and coins also contain the images of grand princes Volodymyr (Vladimir) the Great and Yaroslav the Wise.[5] On a superficial level, Kiev's status as the capital of modern Ukraine is the most conspicuous element that justifies historical continuity between Kievan Rus' and the Ukrainian state. However, the legacy of this period is still shared by all three Eastern Slavic nations. Thus, Ukrainian nation-building narratives tend to emphasize the proto-Ukrainian character and some level of Southern Rus's cultural distinctiveness from, or even superiority over the northern and eastern parts of Kievan Rus'.[6] The most radical versions of such narratives claim that deep ethnocultural differences existed already in that period and were caused by the prevalence of Finno-Ugric and Baltic populations in the 'periphery', as opposed to the Slavic 'purity' of the population in areas around Kiev.[7]

The narrative of Kievan Rus' as the state of (proto-)Ukrainians is instrumental in establishing the 'antiquity' of the Ukrainian statehood, but it has to compete with powerful alternatives, such as the one of a common Eastern Slavic state, whose legacies had no contribution to the process of separation of the Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian nations, which began centuries later. In fact, the modern Russian narrative of uninterrupted statehood, constructed on the basis of toponymic equivalence, dynastic links between the rulers of ancient Kiev and Moscow,[8] and the continuity of church institutions[9] presents a very powerful challenge to any Ukraine-centric narrative of Kievan Rus'. After the demise of Kiev amidst the Mongol invasion, the regional history was shaped by a rivalry between the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia in the west and south-west and the Grand Duchy of

[4] Pro proholoshennia nezalezhnosti Ukraiiny, *Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady,* 1991, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1427-12#Text.
[5] One- and two-hryvnia banknotes, respectively.
[6] Mykola Kotliar "Kyiivska Rus," in *Istoriia Ukraiiny*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 1997), 47-48.
[7] Raiisa Ivanchenko*, Istoriia bez mifiv: Besidy z istoriii ukraiinskoii derzhavnosti*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: MAUP, 2007), 68-72; Leonid Zalizniak, *Starodavnia istoriia Ukraiiny* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2012), 420-446. Zalizniak even claims that Russian and Belarusians are Mestizo groups which were formed throughout colonization of those territories by proto-Ukrainians.
[8] Evgenii Pchelov, *Riurikovichi: Istoriia dinastii* (Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2003), 380.
[9] Dmitrii Pospelovskii, *Pravoslavnaia Tserkov v istorii Rusi, Rossii i SSSR* (Moscow: Bibleisko-bogoslovskii institut sv. Apostola Andreia, 1996), 95-124.

Vladimir (later Moscow) in the north-east. The former is hailed as the continuation of the ancient Ukrainian statehood and proof of Ukraine's historical European orientation,[10] whereas the latter is considered the beginning of the Russian statehood. The Rurikid dynasty in Galicia–Volhynia was interrupted in the first half of the 14th century, and its territory was captured and annexed by the Kingdom of Poland by the middle of the same century.[11] In contrast, the Grand Duchy of Vladimir (since 13 - the Grand Duchy of Moscow), had achieved control over other Eastern Slavic territories throughout the 14th and 15th centuries (most notably, the Novgorod Republic and the Principality of Tver), while also ending its initial political dependency on the Great Horde.

5.2.2 Cossack Revolution

The second such historical period that plays a pivotal role in the construction of all Ukrainian nation-building narratives is the Cossack rebellions which swept the territory of modern Ukraine in the 17th and 18th centuries and led to the formation of so-called Cossack statehood. In the mainstream Ukrainian historiography this period is referred to as the one of revolutionary struggle for national self-determination.[12] Political entities, formed by Cossacks in this process, are described in terms of Ukrainian national statehood.[13] On the spiritual level, the freedom-loving character of Cossacks is frequently contrasted with feudal subservience in the Russian Tsardom. The military alliance of the Cossack leadership with the Russians and the eventual incorporation of Cossack lands on the left bank of the Dnieper into the Russian state[14] are viewed as the unfortunate outcome of

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[10] Subtelny, *Ukraine*.

[11] Paul R. Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 114-126.

[12] Valerii Smolii and Valerii Stepankov, "Ukraiinske natsionalne vidrodzhennia. Stvorennia kozatskoii derzhavy," in *Istoriia Ukraiiny*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Istoriia Ukraiiny Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 1997), 77-113; Bohdan Lanovyk and Mykola Lazorovych, *Istoriia Ukraiiny: Navchalnyi posibnyk*, 3rd ed. (Kyiv: Znannia-Press, 2006), 133-173.

[13] Ivan Rybalka, *Istoriia Ukraiiny. Chastyna 1: Vid naidavnishykh chasiv do kintsia XVIII stolittia* (Kharkiv: Osnova, 1994), 207; Valerii Smolii and Valerii Stepankov, "Derzhavna ideia za kozatskoi doby," in *Istoriia ukraiinskoho kozatstva*, vol. 1, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyiv: "Kyievo-Mohilianska akademiia," 2006), 238; Vitalii Vlasov, *Istoriia Ukraiiny: 8 klas* (Kyiv: A.S.K, 2000), 121-129.

[14] The Cossack rebellions were the outcome of increasing animosities between the Polish authorities, Polish landlords, and Catholic Church on the one side and the self-governed Cossack communities of the southern and southeastern frontiers of the Commonwealth, as well as local peasantry and orthodox clergy, on the other. Religious-sectarian tensions played a major role in these rebellion in addition to struggle over self-governance and land control. The Cossacks, whose identity had been in large part formed on a religious basis, resisted the Church Union of 1596 and subsequent attempts by the Polish Catholic Church to suppress religious dissent during Counter-Reformation. A major anti-Polish Cossack uprising, led by Bohdan Khmelnitsky, erupted in 1648. The de facto status of defendants of the Orthodox faith made them more willing to cooperate and ally

unfavorable military and political circumstances, exploited by the Russian authorities. This perspective is a clear departure from Soviet historical narratives, developed in the 1930s,[15] which interpreted Cossack rebellions mainly through the lens of class struggle between peasantry and landowners, and presented Russia's expansion as "re-unification" of Eastern Slavic peoples in one state. The cult of Bohdan Khmelnitsky, which was established in the Soviet Union in 1940s,[16] has survived in the post-1991 Ukraine; but its emphasis shifted from the 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement and the narrative of re-unification[17] to Khmelnitsky's military leadership and state-building efforts between 1648 and 1654.[18] Likewise, Hetman Mazepa, who defected from the Russian czar and allied with the Swedish king during the 1709 Battle of Poltava, and thus had been labeled as traitor in Russian and Soviet historiography, received a much more positive coverage as another Ukrainian political and military leader in pursuit of national independence.[19]

Cossackhood has been a crucial symbolic component of the modern Ukrainian identity. In addition to the extensive coverage of the Cossack period in mainstream historical publications and textbooks, Ukrainian nationalism incorporates numerous cultural artifacts and images,[20] associated with the Cossack period. Bohdan Khmelnitsky and Ivan Mazepa are depicted on Ukrainian banknotes. Despite its former role in the Soviet Ukrainian nation-building project, the *hopak* dance (the 20th-century choreographic interpretation of the Cossack musical traditions) is re-imagined and praised as "positive cultural self-identification"[21] in independent Ukraine. Cossack references are also indirectly included in

with Russia in their struggle against the Catholic Polish Crown. In 1654 Khmelnitsky signed the Pereiaslav Agreement, declaring political loyalty to the Russian czar in exchange for military support against the Poles. Russia's newly acquired regions initially preserved various degree of internal political autonomy, but it was gradually reduced. It was completely abolished in 1785 (Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 276).

[15] Russian turn in social historiography when Russian czarist and imperial past was reinterpreted in a positive light. It can be contrasted with the Soviet Ukrainian historiography of the 1920s, which had negative view of Cossack alliance with Moscow.

[16] Andrei Portnov, "Bogdan Khmelnirskii. Ukraiinskiie raznochteniia," Mezhdunarodnyi Memorial: Proiekt "Uroki istoriii," June 27, 2012, https://urokiistorii.ru/articles/bogdan-hmelnickij-ukrainskie-razno. There are more than 120 monuments erected in honor of Khmelnitsky on the Ukrainian territory. The oldest is from 1888 and the newest is 2010.

[17] Subtelny, *Ukraine*.

[18] Smolii and Stepankov, "Derzhavna ideia."

[19] Marples, *Heroes and Villains*.

[20] Such as traditional Cossack clothes and hairstyle.

[21] Yuliya Pivtorak, "Ukrainian Hopak: From Dance for Entertainment to Martial Art," *Congress on Research in Dance Conference Proceedings 2016* (2016): 299–305.

the Ukrainian nation-building project through the 19th century literature,[22] such Taras Shevchenko's poetry and Nikolai Gogol's historical novel *Taras Bulba*.

The inclusion of the Cossack rebellions and Cossack statehood in nation-building narrative has its drawbacks, challenges, and points of contestation. Afterall, the most important outcome of this period was the transfer of Cossack-controlled lands under the Russian authority and the eventual abolition of any Cossack political autonomy. Moreover, the Cossack identity was based on religion and social status, rather than on some ethnonational ties or national consciousness in its modern sense.[23] Likewise, the Cossack political institutions of that period only loosely resembled those of a full-fledged state, whereas political aspirations remained more pragmatic than an uncompromised struggle for political independence. Finally, any historical discussion of the Cossack rebellions must address the issue of antisemitism. During Khmelnitsky-led uprising, some Cossack troops committed pogroms and massacres of local Jewish population. The memories of these tragic events, described in the 1653 book by Nathan ben Moses Hannover, have been preserved in the Jewish literature and historical traditions.[24] Unfortunately, antisemitic rhetoric and violence against Jews is regularly downplayed or completely omitted by modern narratives on Ukrainian nationhood, despite being a recurring tragic theme in many episodes of Ukraine's history.

5.2.3 Ukrainian People's Republic

The third episode, essential to all modern historical narratives of Ukrainian nationhood, is the declaration of independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) by the Ukrainian Central Council[25] in January 1918. The declaration of independence was

[22] Ideas of nationalism and romanticism in literature, arts, and in historiography were introduced into regional intellectual circles in this period. In the Ukrainian context these ideas pertained to extensive use of local vernacular in all literary genres and admiration with the Cossack history and all the lost freedoms it supposedly represented. Such themes were well represented in the works of Taras Shevchenko, the most famous literary figure of this period and the most well-recognized classic of the Ukrainian literature overall.
[23] Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected nation*, 4th ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, EPUB); Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 169, 192.
[24] Amelia M. Glaser, "Bohdan Khmelnytsky as Protagonist: Between Hero and Villain," in *Stories of Khmelnytsky: competing literary legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack uprising*, ed. Amelia M. Glaser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 1-22; Shaul Stampfer, "What Actually Happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?" *Jewish History* 17, no 2 (2003): 207–227; Zenon E. Kohut "The Khmelnytsky Uprising, the Image of Jews, and the Shaping of Ukrainian Historical Memory," *Jewish History* 17, no 2 (2003): 141–163; Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 201-202.
[25] Established in the aftermath of the February revolution by soldier, worker, and peasant deputies.

preceded by the declaration of an autonomous Ukrainian People's Republic within the Federal Russian Republic in November 1917. The texts of both documents refer to the state of the Ukrainian people. At the same time, they include promises for national-personal autonomy to all other nationalities, residing within its boundaries, such as Russians, Jews and Poles, among others. The proclamation of the UNR was the culmination of the first phase of the so-called national Ukrainian revolution.[26] It also embodied all the intellectual work, which had been carried out by nationally oriented cultural elites in the Dnieper Ukraine throughout the second half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. Thanks to intelligentsia's foundational efforts, there already existed groups of nationally oriented political activists, who could take a pro-active role in shaping local political developments amid the general revolutionary turmoil.

The collapse of the Russian monarchy in March 1917 and the resulting power vacuum created an excellent opportunity for nationally oriented organizations to strengthen their presence in the Ukrainian political landscape. In Kiev, the Society of Ukrainian Progressives (*Tovarystvo Ukrainskykh Progresystiv*, or TUP) in cooperation with local social-democrats and representatives of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary party established the Central Council[27] as a nationalist alternative to the soviets of workers and deputies. The Central Council managed to acquire a degree of legitimacy, thanks the support of the deputies that came to the Ukrainian National Congress, which was held in Kiev on the 19th of April. [28]The council quickly began to act as the *de facto* national parliament and its General Secretariate functioned as the executive branch of government.

The Central Council established sovereignty over the city of Kiev and had at least some influence and support in the rural areas of central Ukraine. Other urban centers, however, remained under the effective control of local soviets, dominated by Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, the council's relatively strong bargaining position allowed its leadership to begin negotiations with the Provisional Government in Petrograd concerning Ukraine's political autonomy. The Bolshevik takeover of Russia's capital in November 1917

[26] A period of, commonly described as such in the mainstream Ukrainian historiography, which covers events that took place on Ukraine's territory between the 1917 February Revolution and 1918 (frequently extended until the 1920 Riga Peace Treaty).
[27] Subtelny, *Ukraine,* 322.
[28] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 470-475.

disrupted the fragile balance of political powers. At first, the Central Council took a cautious stance against the new government, but the relations between the two quickly deteriorated, following disputes about control over troops, stationed on the Ukrainian soil, as well as about the role of city soviets of peasants and workers in Ukraine's administration. The conflict escalated during the winter of 1917-18, when Bolsheviks seized power in major urban centers, such as Kharkiv, Odessa and Ekatirinoslav (Dnipro). In January, there broke out a military conflict, referred to as the Ukrainian-Soviet War in the mainstream Ukrainian historiography. In February, shortly after the declaration of the UNR's independence, the secretariate of the Central Rada had to flee Kiev in the anticipation of the city's takeover by the Bolshevik troops. Despite the shaky status of its government, the UNR received diplomatic recognition from the Central Powers in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.[29] The treaty severed as the formal justification for the German occupation and "protection" of Ukraine's territory against the Bolsheviks. Thanks to advancing German army, the Central Council was able to return to Kiev one month after its initial escape.[30] The German military administration quickly grew weary of the council's socialist-leaning leadership, in-fighting within its ranks, and inability to control local peasantry and enforce the collection of grain supplies which were to be shipped to Germany. The Central Council was eventually dismissed by the Germans on April 29th, 1918 and replaced by the reactionary government of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi.[31] German-backed Skoropadskyi's rule began to crumble when the defeat of the Central Powers in the First World War became imminent. Meanwhile some members of the Central Council (collectively known as the Directory), including former minister of defense Symon Petliura, declared a rebellion against the hetman. The Directory announced the re-

[29] This treaty was concluded between 9 and 20 February, separately from a treaty with the Soviet Russia.
[30] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 486.
[31] Interestingly enough, the 8-month period of Skoropadskyi's rule over the newly proclaimed "Ukrainian State" represented an alternative project of Ukrainian nation-building, which, while conservative in its character, was more ethnically and linguistically inclusive than the one promoted by the UNR's leadership (Stephen Velychenko, *State building in revolutionary Ukraine: a comparative study of governments and bureaucrats, 1917–1922* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011], 105). This was arguably informed by Skoropadskyi's personal attitude towards national question in Ukraine and his disapproval of UNR leadership's too radical approach (Iaroslav Pelenskyi, ed*., Pavlo Skoropadskyi: Spohady. Kinets 1917 – Hruden 1918* [Kyiv: Instytut skhidnoevropeiskykh doslidzen NAN Ukraiiny, 1995], 132).

establishment of the UNR immediately after the evacuation of the German troops from Kiev in December of 1918.[32]

This announcement marked the beginning of an extremely chaotic and bloody period in Ukraine's modern history. Its territory became a battle arena for at least six major factions: the combined forces of the Directory and the West Ukrainian People's Republic (*Zakhidno Ukraiinska Narodna Respublyka*, or ZUNR) declared by Ukrainian parliamentarians, party leaders and the clergy of Eastern Galicia amidst the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the Bolsheviks; the Whites, the Entente, represented by the French troops; newly independent Poland; and the anarchists of the Ukrainian countryside. The warfare ended on March 18, 1921, when the two surviving factions – the Poles and the Bolsheviks – singed the Riga Peace Treaty.

Despite its brevity, limited appeal to the wider masses of population, incomplete character, and ultimate failure, an attempt by the Central Rada to establish a nation-state had important practical and symbolic consequences for the course of the Ukrainian nation-building. The crucial symbolic significance of the UNR for the nation-building discourse comes from its unambiguously national character. Official symbols, adopted by Ukraine after 1991 (a yellow and blue flag and a coat of arms, depicting the trident of Yaroslav) were first used by the Ukrainian People's Republic. An image of the building which hosted the UNR's Central Council in Kiev and a portrait of historian Mikhailo Hrushevskyi, who was the council's chairman and the de facto head of state, are present on the fifty-hryvnia bill. This period is also integral to those narratives on Ukrainian nation-building which are hostile to the Soviet historical legacies, since it provides such narratives with an alternative tradition of statehood and supplies them with the first Ukrainian martyrs of the Soviet aggression.[33]

On the practical level, the UNR's existence and the difficulties, faced by the Red Army when taking control over Ukraine's territory, contributed to the decision of the Bolshevik leadership to proceed with the ethnic federal model of state organization and to implement

[32] Velychenko, *State building*, 120.
[33] Such as the death of 300 drafted schoolboys who were sent to fight the advancing Bolshevik troops at Kruty near Kiev (Subtelny, *Ukraine,* 352).

state policies, supporting and promoting ethnocultural diversity.[34] The administrative borders of the Ukrainian SSR mostly coincided with territories claimed by the UNR in November of 1917,[35] except for Volhynia, which had been annexed by Poland. Notably, those included the provinces of the modern Eastern and Southern Ukraine.[36] Some former members of the Central Rada, most notably, Hrushevskii, were also welcomed in Soviet Ukraine and could continue their work there throughout the 1920s.[37]

5.2.4 Soviet Ukraine

The fourth episode in the history of Ukrainian state- and nation-building is highly polarizing, but extremely consequential due to its chronological proximity and the sheer amount of social, economic, political and cultural transformation it brought about. Within a short period, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic acquired all formal attributes of a nation-state, including national symbols, political and administrative institutions, its own branch of the ruling communist party, complete system of education, scientific and cultural organizations, etc. Thanks to the Soviet policies of affirmative action for titular nationalities, ethnic Ukrainians were the biggest 'winners' of this rapid institutional development, which necessitated the fostering of new administrative, cultural and scientific elites.[38] The Soviet Ukraine turned into the economic, agricultural and scientific powerhouse of the Soviet Union, making up 15.6% of the USSR's GDP in 1990.[39] The Ukrainian SSR specialized in such sectors as mining, energy generation, metallurgy, machinery building, production of grain and sunflower seeds, manufacturing of chemicals,

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[34] George O. Liber, *Soviet nationality policy, urban growth, and identity change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27-28, 31-32.
[35] Universal Ukraiinskoii Tsentralnoii Rady (III), 1917, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/n0005300-17#Text.
[36] These territories, located by the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, had been under tentative control of various nomadic peoples, until they became part of the Golden Horde, Crimean Khanate, and the Ottoman Empire. The region, alternatively known as *Novorossia* (New Russia) had been gradually annexed by the Russian Empire throughout the 18th century. Ethnic Ukrainians, who had a leading role in the agricultural colonization of the new region, comprised the largest proportion of its population in the countryside (Liber, *Soviet nationality,* xx). The region's new urban centers, founded by the imperial administration after the annexation, had little to no ethnic Ukrainian presence.
[37] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 541-542.
[38] Liber, *Soviet nationality;* Plokhy, *The gates of Europe*, 230-233.
[39] Natalia Baryshnikova and Antonina Sukhorukova, "Sotsialno-ekonomicheskoie razvitiie stran postsovetskogo prostranstva: tri desiatiletiia posle sotsializma," *Moskovskii ekonomicheski zhurnal* 3 (2021): 195.

defense industry and aerospace engineering. The latter two had strategic importance to the military-industrial complex of the USSR.

Post-1991, the absolute majority of administrative, economic, scientific and educational institutions had been repurposed and continued to serve the needs of the independent Ukrainian state. Likewise, in the first decade of independence, the experience of living in the Soviet Union was shared by the absolute majority of Ukraine's population. Arguably, the recency and abundance of both material and non-material Soviet heritage posed additional challenges for developing any mainstream narrative on Ukrainian nation-building that would manifest a radical departure from Soviet legacies. The Ukrainian state, still led predominantly by post-Soviet elites, adopted a cautious and ambivalent approach to incorporating the Soviet period into its mainstream discourse on nation-building. Most notably, it continued to keep the most important national holidays of the Soviet era, such as the Victory Day, and the October Revolution Day,[40] as non-working days.

Historical narratives about the past, constructed by Ukrainian historians in the 1990s, continued and expanded on the critical re-evaluation of the Soviet period, which had begun during *perestroika*. Besides, scholars from the West (many with ethnic Ukrainian roots) were able to join and influence the discourse on Ukrainian nation-building. Thus, official historiography of the 1990s, including the first editions of textbooks, was somewhat more radically anti-Soviet than the general public discourse. Perhaps, the somewhat natural tendency of anti-Soviet counter-elites to concentrate in such professional fields, as humanities and social sciences, could account for this disparity.

The official historiography of the 1990s generally presented the Soviet Union, especially during Stalin's rule, as totalitarian regime, hostile to Ukrainian nation-building. Stalinist purges and repressions against political and cultural elites were discussed in terms of assaults on national development, similarly to such discussions in national historical narratives in other post-Soviet republics. The uniquely Ukrainian theme is the one of the 1932-33 famine in the Ukrainian SSR. The tragedy of mass-scale starvation in the Ukrainian SSR in 1932-1933, known as *Holodomor*, was framed as a criminal policy,

[40] This example is especially striking since the 7th of November was scrapped from the list of non-working days only in 2000. In contrast, it was dropped both in Latvia and in Belarus with the acquisition of independence.

implemented by the Stalinist regime and targeting the Ukrainian people.[41] Although the conceptualization of *Holodomor* as genocide was yet to become universal, it was already introduced in some textbooks and publications.[42]

The importance of *Holodomor* for the mainstream discourse on the Ukrainian nation-building skyrocketed in the early and mid-2000s,[43] following the evolution of the general political context, increasing visibility of the anti-Soviet conceptualizations of Ukrainian nationhood, and the continuing efforts by Ukrainian diasporas in Canada, the USA and elsewhere to promote this issue domestically and internationally. The interpretation of this tragic period in Ukrainian history as genocide against the Ukrainian people was fully embraced by the Ukrainian state from 2003 onwards.[44]

Perhaps, the greatest departure from the Soviet historical tradition took place when discussing the events of World War II. The war itself was re-interpreted as the struggle between two predatory totalitarian empires for the regional dominance, large part of which took place on the Ukrainian soil. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists - Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*OUN-UPA)*, previously described as the pro-Nazi fascist ultra-nationalist group,[45] involved in war crimes against civilian population, was re-evaluated as the nationally-minded equivalent of anti-Nazi communist guerillas.[46] Collaboration between *OUN-UPA* and the Nazi regime was presented as situational and non-ideological cooperation, caused by the necessity to choose "the lesser evil" when fighting for an

[41] Marples, *Heroes and Villains*, 48-50.
[42] For example, Stanislav Kulchytskyi, "URSR v umovakh utverdzhennia totalitarnoho ladu," in *Istoriia Ukraiiny*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyiv: Alternatyvy,1997), 287-288. In the West, the topic of Holodomor had been researched and paid increasing attention since the late 1970s – early 1980s, mainly thanks to support of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and the USA (Georgii Kasianov, "Istoricheskaia politika v Ukraine i Golodomor," *Proshlyi vek* 1 [2013]: 280). Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute was the primary institution, responsible for the promotion of Holodomor studies in the USA, starting in 1980 (Frank Sysyn, "Thirty Years of Research on the Holodomor: A Balance Sheet," *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 2, no 1 [2015]: 2-16). A seminal monograph by Roberts Conquest cemented the genocide-like interpretation of the 1932-33 famine (Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986], 272).
[43] The official day dedicated to the remembrance of the victims of starvation ("Pro vstanovlennia Dnia pamiati zhertv holodomirov," *Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady*, 1998, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1310/98/ed19981126#Text) was introduced by Kuchma during the last year of his first term. The importance of this day grew in the following years.
[44] Kasianov, "Istoricheskaia politika," 318.
[45] *Radianska entsiklopediia istorii Ukraiini*, vol. 3 (Kyiv: AN URSR,1971), 294.
[46] For example, Fedir Turchenko, Petro Panchenko and Serhii Tymchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraiiny. Chastyna druha (1939-2001)* (Kyiv: "Heneza," 2001), 373-375.

independent Ukrainian state. Attention was given to the growing animosity between the two, which led to *OUN-UPA*'s decision to begin attacks on German troops in 1943.

Despite this dramatic change in the historic narrative, the leader of *OUN-UPA* Stepan Bandera remained a controversial and relatively minor historical figure, and had limited visibility in the public discourse in the 1990s. Only in the three Western regions of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopol, local administrations were involved in the promotion of Bandera's historical legacy through the construction of monuments, naming of streets and commemorative events. Even there, the scope of such promotion remained comparatively small until late 2000s.[47]

In sum, the critical deconstruction of the Soviet period of the Ukrainian state- and nation-building was mostly accomplished during the first decade of independence.[48] The mainstream historical narrative retained the elements of cautious approval of the Soviet-era economic modernization and institutional development, as well as reserved but mostly favorable attitude towards the inclusion of formally Polish territories into the Ukrainian SSR in 1939.[49] However, this version of the narrative initially had limited presence in state-promoted public discourse on nationhood and stayed confined mostly within scholarly circles and educational institutions, where its adoption was also mediated and often impeded by the Soviet-trained teaching staff.

5.3 Language as Driving Force for Ukrainian Nation Building

5.3.1 Ukrainian Nationalism and the Language Question in the Russian Empire

As has been illustrated in the previous section, Ukrainian nationalism could not appeal to a history of an uninterrupted statehood or target already existing state institutions. Likewise, the unity of the Orthodox church, which was reinstated in the Ukrainian regions of the Russian Empire, has prevented the emergence of profound religious-sectarian differences between the majority of Ukrainians and Russians. Therefore, the protection of

[47] "Pamiatniki Banderi ie tilky v triokh oblastiakh Ukraiiny," ZAXID.NET, July 21, 2011, https://zaxid.net/pamyatniki_banderi_ye_tilki__v_troh_oblastyah_ukrayini_n1231790.
[48] Iurii Shapoval, "Komunistychnyi totalitaryzm ta ioho obraz u suchasnykh pidruchnykakh v Ukraiini," in *Ukraiinska istorychna dydaktyka: Mizhnarodnyi dialoh (fakhivtsi riznikh kraiin pro suchasni ukraiinski pidruchnyky z istoriii)*, eds. Magdalena Telus and Iurii Shapoval (Kyiv: "Heneza," 2000), 43-44.
[49] For example, Turchenko et al., *Novitnia istoriia,* 8, 84-85.

ethnolinguistic boundaries has been the single most important driving force of the Ukrainian nationalism since the 19th century. For the most part, this boundary demarcation needed to be done vis-a-vis the closely related Russian language.

Throughout the 18th century, the Russian Empire had continued taking over Ukrainian territories from the declining Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The latter completely disappeared from the political map in 1795, when it was partitioned by Russia, Austria and Prussia. Consequently, the 19th-century Ukrainian linguistic nationalism developed within the broader socio-linguistic context of the Russian Empire. There, however, remained one crucial exception.[50] The territory of modern-day Lviv, Ternopol and Ivano-Frankivsk regions was annexed by Austria in 1772 and subsequently became known as East Galicia. Galicia remained a province of the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its eventual disintegration at the end of the First World War. Thus, this region found itself under very different political circumstances and in a different socio-linguistic context. Galicia harbored a large Polish population, and ethnic Poles were dominant among local economic and administrative elites. Thus, the local variety of ethnolinguistic Ukrainian nationalism had to compete against the Polish language and Polish cultural dominance.

In the beginning of the 19th century, the provinces of *Malorossia*[51] retained many cultural and ethnographic peculiarities but were administratively, economically, and culturally integrated into the Russian Empire. The lack of legal, administrative, or other barriers that would prevent social mobility meant that cultural, political, and military elites of the Ukrainian origin were an integral part of the Russian imperial elites, even if some of them still maintained regional sentiments and some feeling of regional patriotism.[52] Various forms of local vernacular, predominantly spoken by rural population, were perceived as a non-standard regional variety of the literary Russian language akin to other dialects that

[50] Two more regions, besides Galicia, also remained outside of the Russian empire, but they played marginal role in language-centered Ukrainian nationalism and nation-building. Transcarpathia had remained under the Hungarian rule since 10th century. Bukovina, which had previously been part of the Principality of Moldavia was also annexed by Austria in 1775.

[51] *Russia Minor*, used interchangeably with *Ukraine* in that period (Aleksei Miller, *"Ukrainskii vopros" v politike vlastei i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii [vtoraia polovina XIX v.]* [Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2000]; Mykola Riabchuk, *Vid Malorossii do Ukraiiny: paradoksy zapizniloho natsiestvorennia* [Kyiv: Krytyka, 2000]).

[52] Svetlana Lukashova, "Malorossiia i malorossiiane v Rossiiskoi imperii v XVIII v.: strategii integratsii," in *Malorossy vs ukraintsi: Ukrainskii vopros v nauke, gosudarstvennoi i kulturnoi politike Rossiiskoi imperii i SSSR*, eds. Elena Borisionok and Mariia Leskinen (Moscow: Institut slavianovedeniia RAN, 2018), 82-84.

could be found in the Empire.[53] Nevertheless, until the second half of the 19th century, the use of *prosta mova*[54] was ubiquitous in daily communication, administration and even in the institutions of higher education. Restrictions on the use of vernacular were applied to book printing. However, they seemed to be dictated primarily by the notion of "appropriateness": non-standard varieties such as the Ukrainian vernacular should be reserved only for "lower" literary genres.

The separation of languages according to domains of language use was likely the product of the region's literary tradition. The modernization and standardization of the Russian language was influenced by literary sources from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which were written and published in the medium of what is now commonly referred to as the Ruthenian or "old" Ukrainian/Belarusian language. Moreover, Ukrainian (and Belarusian) clergy had disproportionate administrative, liturgical, and theological influence on the Russian Orthodox Church and the ideology of the Russian state[55] from the 16th century onwards. In the first half of the 18th century, Western-origin clergy made up 70% of the upper levels of the church hierarchy in Russia.[56] During the same period, many writers of Ukrainian origin contributed to the ongoing standardization of the Russian language.[57] Leading Russian grammarians and lexicographers of the time also built their work on the grammars of the written Ruthenian language, published in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. These cultural exchanges and interactions led to the formation of an imperial "high" culture, which not only differed from the localized cultural context of the Ukrainian lands but was also distinct from the cultural traditions of pre-imperial Muscovy. In a sense, the modern Russian imperial project and the Russian language of the 18th century were at least partially a collaborative effort, as opposed to one-sided cultural

[53] Lukashova "Malorossiia i malorossiiane," 84.
[54] Lit. "simple language" (Wilson, *The Ukrainians*).
[55] The Synopsis, published in Kiev in 1674 was the first attempt at a comprehensive history of Eastern Slavs. All major Russian historiographers of the 18th were familiar with this work. The Synopsis stipulated political continuity between medieval principalities and the contemporary Russian state and narrated a history of a single Russian people, united by faith, language, and their common origin in Kievan Rus. The treatise laid foundation for the doctrine of the tri-partite Russian people, destined to be united in a single Russian state, which eventually became dominant within academic and political circles of the Russian Empire.
[56] Wilson, *The Ukrainians*.
[57] Svitlana Iermolenko, "Peredmova," in *Istoriia ukraiinskoii movy: Khrestomatiia*, eds. Svitlana Iermolenko and Anatolii Moisiienko (Kyiv: Lybid, 1996); Wilson, *The Ukrainians.*

assimilation. Hence, some modern-day "Russophile" authors of Ukrainian origin[58] claim that the Russian Empire should be considered a Ukrainian (proto)nation-state, and that modern Russian language is the organic continuation of the Ukrainian linguistic and literary traditions.

The standardization of literary Ukrainian language was mostly accomplished throughout the second half of 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. The process of standardization was primarily based on folklore heritage and contemporary spoken vernacular, which had been quite distinct from the written language standard of the previous centuries. The grammars of the Ukrainian language, prepared in this period, shared the same general principle of phonemic orthography, designed to reflect the spoken language in writing. Moreover, due to Austria's positive attitude to Ukrainian nation building in the region, Galicia, whose dialects had developed in relative isolation under German, Polish and Hungarian influences, played an important role in the standardization and promotion of the Ukrainian language. As the result, both Russian and Ukrainian are still significantly different from the old written language of Kievan Rus',[59] so that the epic poem *Tale of Igor's Campaign* has to be included in school curricula in both Ukraine and Russia under the sections of "ancient Ukrainian" and "ancient Russian" literature respectively in its translated form. However, texts, written in 16th and 17th centuries, appear more similar to modern Russian than to modern Ukrainian, precisely due to differences in the modes and historical contexts of language standardization.

Multiple publications, which documented the grammatical and lexical peculiarities of the language, spoken by Malorussians/Ukrainians and the *Rusyn* (also known as *Rusin* or Ruthenian) population of the Austrian Empire, were released in the first half of the 19th century.[60] Major literary works which used modern Ukrainian also appeared during the same period, with the first such piece being a burlesque poem-parody of Virgil's *Aeneid*, written by Ivan Kotliarevskii and published in 1798.[61] At that time, Ukrainian still lacked a standard alphabet and universally accepted rules of spelling. Moreover, those who wrote in

[58] Oles Buzina, *Tainaia istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, 8th ed. (Kyiv: Arii, 2015); Andrei Vadzhra, *Ukraina, kotoroi ne bylo. Mifologiia ukrainskoi ideologii* (Moscow: Iauza-Press, 2015, EPUB).
[59] Stepan Bevzenko, *Istoriia ukraiinskogo movoznavstva* (Kyiv: "Vyshcha shkola," 1991).
[60] Bevzenko, *Istoriia ukraiinskogo*, 17. The first such book was published in Saint Petersburg in 1818.
[61] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 358.

the Ukrainian vernacular or promoted its use in both Russian and Austrian empires, were themselves ambiguous about the vernacular's precise status and relation to the Russian language. Thus, there existed awareness and recognition of the cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of the south-western regions of the Russian Empire, but this distinctiveness was yet to be politicized and weaponized by pro-Ukrainian nationally oriented activists in their struggle against the increasingly assimilationist imperial policies.

Assimilationist attitude towards the population of Russia's westernmost provinces was the byproduct of the state's reaction to the November Uprising of 1830-31, which swept through the former territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[62] Despite its failure, the uprising demonstrated the potency of Polish claims for an independent statehood and the implications for such claims for the territories of modern-day Belarus, Lithuania, and Western and Central Ukraine, which used to be part of the Commonwealth. Russian intellectual circles, as well as the imperial administration, were incentivized to articulate and disseminate an ideological response that would weaken the reach and scope of Polish nationalism. In particular, Belarusians and Ukrainians were to be considered parts of a tri-patriate Russian nation ,[63] and this consideration should inform state policies in the areas of language use in printing and education. Any activities and organizations, associated with the promotion of linguistic and ethnocultural particularism, were perceived as detrimental to the official ideology of the state.[64] Modest political liberalization, which happened in the 1850s during the reign of Alexander II, helped reignite the cultural and educational activities of Ukrainophile groups and organizations, known as *hromadas*.[65] However, the second major Polish uprising, which began in 1863, put an end to the tolerance of such activities in the region. The Valuev Decree, issued in 1863 by the minister of internal affairs, "ended the Russian-Little Russian debate by administrative fiat and with a message that was unequivocal: There is no Little Russian or Ukrainian language, and those who

[62] Subtelny, *Ukraine,* 209-211.
[63] Miller, *"Ukrainskii vopros"*; Aleksei Miller, "Triada grafa Uvarova," Publichnyie lektsii Polit.ru, March 5, 2007.
[64] After the arrests of participants in the Kiev-based secret society the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, which took place in 1847, and were followed by exile sentences (including for Taras Shevchenko and the creator of the first version of Ukrainian phonetical alphabet Panteleimon Kulish), the czarist administration grew more suspicious of any cultural activities on Ukraine's territory (Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 363-364).
[65] Subtelny *Ukraine*.

believe there is [they] represent a minority and most likely an anti-imperial, separatist minority."[66] The notion of such a decree was first conceived by the Kiev Censorship Committee, whose chairman Orest Novitskii addressed Valuev and expressed his concerns about a dangerous idea, promoted by Polish insurgents and their allies, that the Malorussian dialect was a separate language.[67] The decree severely restricted (but did not ban completely) book-printing in Ukrainian.[68] Restrictions on language use were further expanded with the 1876 Ems Decree and its follow-ups, which mandated a ban on publishing original works in Ukrainian, with minor exceptions for historical sources and folklore. In the latter case, publications had to use the general rules of Russian orthography and only those letters, which were present in the standard Russian alphabet of that time.[69] It also forbade using the language at schools and theaters, as well as importing books from abroad.[70]

In Ukrainian historiography this period is often described in terms of colonial-style linguicide, committed by the Russian Empire against Ukrainians.[71] Other sources are less radical in their assessments of the impact of imperial policies towards the Ukrainian language, citing the progressive relaxation of restrictions on the use of the language in decades that followed the Ems Decree, and the failure of the Russian authorities to consistently implement all the prescribed measures, such as preventing the smuggling of publications from Austro-Hungary. In any case, the suppression of Ukrainophile cultural activities and severe limitations on the use of the Ukrainian language in public domains damaged the development of the Ukrainian nationalism and made the dissemination of nationalist sentiments among population especially difficult. On the verge of the First World War, most ethnic Ukrainians remained unurbanized, illiterate and virtually

[66] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 394.
[67] Tatiana Tairova-Yakovleva, "'Valuevskii tsirkular'" i zapret ispolzovaniia ukrainskogo iazyka," *Vestnik SPbGU* 2, no 4 (2013): 56-57.
[68] Aleksandr Arefiev, "Russkoiazychnoie obrazovanie na Ukraine – istoriia i sovremennost," *Vestnik rossiiskoi akademii nauk* 88, no 12 (2018): 1091.
[69] Volodymyr Panibudlaska, ed., *Natsionalni protsesy v Ukraiini. Dokumenty i materialy. Dovednik. Chastina 1* (Kyiv: "Vyshcha Shkola," 1997), 284; V.M. Danylenko, Ia.V. Vermenych, P.M. Bondarchuk, L.V. Hrynevych, O.O. Kovalchuk, V.V. Masnenko and V.M. Chumak, "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv: peredumovy, zdobutky, uroky* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriii Ukraiiny NAN Ukraiiny, 2003), 13-14.
[70] This measure primarily targeted Ukrainian-language publications in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
[71] For example, Vitalii Sarbei and Feodosii Steblii, "Pid vladoiu Rosiiskoii ta Avstriiskoii imperii," in *Istoriia Ukraiiny*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 1997), 138-139.

untouched by the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism.[72] Another consequence of assimilationist policies in Russian-controlled Ukraine was the rise of East Galicia as the primary center of Ukrainian nationalism. The standardization and promotion of the Ukrainian language, book printing, Ukraine-oriented history writing and other associated cultural and, increasingly, political activities freely continued there, either tolerated or encouraged by the Austrian authorities.

5.3.2 Rusyns of Eastern Galicia

In struggle against the official imperial ideology and restrictive policies of the Russian Empire, language-centered national Ukrainian project greatly benefitted from the fact that similar political and social challenges were met with a diametrically opposite response in Austria (Austro-Hungary since 1867). The cultural stage of the Ukrainian national awakening there began right after the annexation of the region. The *Rusyns* made up the majority of population in the region, but mostly resided in the countryside, whereas Lviv and other urban centers were mostly Polish and Jewish. Unlike Moscow, Vienna did not abolish the Uniate, (i.e., Greek Catholic) Church, which turned into the *de facto* national church of the local Ukrainian population,[73] while the clergy served the function of the first proto-national elite group.[74] However, church institutions played only an auxiliary role in national awakening, which focused on the question of common language, instead of appealing to a shared religious identity. The Greek Catholic Church continued to use a version of Church Slavonic for its religious services and publications, as well as for instruction at schools, which it oversaw.[75] This written language, however, was relatively ill-suited for modern literature and other day-to-day activities, since it was quite distinct from the spoken vernacular. Thus, in the first half of the 19th century, Galician national awakening was characterized by debates within the circles of local intelligentsia about the modes of standardization for the language of the *Rusyns*, as well as by some cultural

[72] These conditions were not unique to Ukrainians but shared by the majority predominantly rural population of the Russian Empire. There, despite the outstanding pace of economic and institutional changes during the last quarter of the 19th century, major state institutions, such as modern-type bureaucracy, military, mass education system, remained much weaker and more limited in scope than their counterparts in the West. (Boris Mironov, *Rossiiskaia impreriia: ot traditsii k modernu*, vol. 3, 2nd ed. [Saint Petersburg: "DMITRII BULANIN," 2018]).
[73] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 398.
[74] Subtelny, *Ukraine,* 214.
[75] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 401.

activities and folklore gathering. Polish nobility and gentry, while being a numerical minority, retained political, cultural and economic dominance in the region.

The 1848 revolution in Austria was the turning point in the development of the Ukrainian national movement. The Austrian authorities pursued the strategy of encouraging ethnonational divisions and promoting ethnic particularism in the region as the countermeasure to secessionist aspirations of local Poles.[76] Vienna recognized *Rusyns* as an official nationality and encouraged the establishment and expansion of *Rusyn* cultural and educational institutions, political organizations,[77] newspapers, etc. By doing so, Austria simultaneously strengthened the position of a loyal counterforce against the Polish national movement and weakened the position of regional Russophile groups. These groups of Rusyn intellectuals considered the Rusyn people an integral part of the Russian nation and advocated for the use of the Russian language as the literary standard and medium of instruction in Eastern Galicia.[78]

The standardization of the local vernacular and operation of national Ukrainian organizations in Galicia continued in a favorable political environment throughout the remainder of "the long" 19th century. Galician *Rusyns* were able to absorb all major cultural achievements of the Ukrainian national awakening in the Russian Empire, such as literature, historiography and works on language standardization. When conditions for the national revival in the Dnieper Ukraine worsened, Galicia took the lead in this collaborative national project. Lviv, and other cities in Austro-Hungary provided safe havens for Ukrainian intellectuals and political activists from the East, who could continue their work there.

The outbreak of the First World War, which pitted the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empire against each other, had catastrophic consequences for Galicia's Russophile groups. The Austrian authorities considered pro-Russian sentiments or connections to Russia the

[76] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 409.
[77] The Supreme Ruthenian (Rusyn) Council, established in Lviv in the same year, proclaimed the existence of a separate people, distinct from both Poles and Russians and united by the common language (Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 410-411).
[78] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 438-445. The Russophile alternative to Ukrainian nationalism remained viable, despite increasingly suspicious and even hostile attitude of the Austrian authorities (Mariia Klopova, *Rusiny, russkiie, ukraintsy. Natsionalnye dvizheniia vostochnoslavianskogo naseleniia Galitsii v XIX – nachale XX veka* [Moscow: Indrik, 2016], 225-262).

evidence of actual or potential collaboration with the enemy, sufficient for persecution, detention or execution of alleged collaborators. The assessments of the scope and character of the repressions vary. Some Russian publications describe those events as genocide-like policies against Russian/Russophile population of Galicia.[79] Other sources, while avoiding such radical interpretations, also acknowledge the overall devastating effect of widespread repressions on the Russophile movement in Galicia during World War I.[80] As the result, by the time when Austro-Hungary disintegrated, only pro-Ukrainian activists were capable of mobilizing Rusyn population along national-political lines. The turbulent events of 1917-1921 ended with the violent takeover of Galicia by Poland. The Polish authorities maintained a hostile attitude towards Ukrainian nationalism, discouraged the use of the Ukrainian language, and on multiple occasions engaged in the open persecution of Ukrainian activists.[81] Poland's policies in Galicia led to two important implications. The first was the consolidation and ideological radicalization of political nationalism in Western Ukraine under the *OUN*. The second was the renewed centrality of the Dnieper Ukraine (in the form of newly proclaimed Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) for Ukrainian nation-building.

5.4 T0: Language Policy in the Soviet Period

In 1922, the Bolshevik leadership made a strategic decision to organize the Soviet state according to the principles of ethnic federation. Nationally oriented politicians and intelligentsia in titular republics were co-opted to work with communist administrations on establishing national institutions, preparing national cadres and promoting the use of titular languages in administration, education, and printing. In the context of the Ukrainian SSR, this period is known as Ukrainization.[82] Throughout the 1920s, the polices of Ukrainization were influenced by intra-party debates, personal preferences of administrative and party

[79] This characterization is based on the history of Thalerhof internment/concentration camp, as well as on materials from Thalerhof Almanac, published in Lviv in 1924-32 (Nina Pashaeva, *Ocherki istorii russkogo dvizheniia v Galichine XIX – XX vv*. [Moscow: GPIB Rossii, 2001], 140-149; Mikhail Smolin, ed., *Russkaia Galitsiia i "mazepinstvo"* [Moscow: Impreskaiia traditsiia, 2005], 210).
[80] Wilson, *The Ukrainians*; Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 464-66; Subtelny, *Ukraine,* 341.
[81] Magosci, *A history of Ukraine*, 596-598.
[82] Those policies, implemented at local and regional level, also positively affected "national minorities," living in the Ukrainian SSR (Russians, Poles, Romanians, Jews, Bulgarians and others), who received school education in their languages (Hennadii Iefimenko and Larysa Iakubova, "Natsionalni vidnosyny v radianskii Ukraiini [1923-1938]," in *Natsionalne pytannia v Ukraiini XX – pochatku XXI st.: Istorychni narysy*, ed. Valerii Smolii [Kyiv: Nika-Tsentr, 2012], 250-251).

figures, and lack of enthusiasm from local authorities in some regions of the republic, such as Odessa and Donetsk. Consequently, Ukrainization often lacked consistency, and was implemented haphazardly and with *ad hoc* modifications. Nevertheless, by 1927 ethnic Ukrainians had already become the majority in the Ukrainian Communist Party, although not all of them had a good command of the Ukrainian language.[83] By 1929, 97.2% percent of students of Ukrainian ethnicity were receiving their education in schools which used Ukrainian as the language of instruction.[84]

In line with the ethnolinguistic understanding of Soviet nationhood, the Ukrainian language served both as a medium for the policies of Ukrainization and as the main yardstick, against which the success of those policies was measured. This fact had important implications for language codification and corpus-planning.[85] The Ukrainian vocabulary had been modified and expanded mainly through the incorporation of regionalisms, especially originating in Galicia, while measures were taken to avoid excessive orientation towards the Russian language in this process. Work on the unification of Ukrainian orthography (so-called *skrypnykivka*) had also been finalized by 1928.[86] In general, the question of language planning was handled throughout this period by titular republics without much interference by Moscow.

The conditions for Ukrainian nation-building, including language-related matters, drastically changed in the early 1930s, when Stalin, together with multiple other institutional, ideological and policy changes, also overhauled the Soviet policy on nationalities. From that point onward, the policy must contribute to maintaining and strengthening the "brotherhood of nations", while eradicating bourgeois nationalist tendencies in the cultural development of titular republics. The declaration of war on the elements of bourgeois nationalism turned Ukrainian cultural elites, including those who had initially been welcomed by the Soviet authorities upon their return from emigration, into a

[83] Danylenko et al., "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv.*
[84] Danylenko et al., "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv,* 91
[85] Danylenko et al., "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv,* 128-29; Elena Levkiievskaia, "Razvitiie ukrainskogo iazyka i istoriia iego nauchnogo issledovaniia v sovetskii period," in *Malorossy vs ukraintsi: Ukrainskii vopros v nauke, gosudarstvennoi i kulturnoi politike Rossiiskoi imperii i SSSR*, eds. Elena Borisionok and Mariia Leskinen (Moscow: Institut slavianovedeniia RAN, 2018), 483-526.
[86] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 604; Danylenko et al., "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv*; Iermolenko, "Peredmova."

target for political repressions.[87] The Stalinist purges also affected nationally minded members of the party and state apparatus. As the result, the Ukrainian national movement suffered dramatic losses in terms of human capital. To complement this policy shift on the ideological level, a new version of Ukrainian history, which emphasized Russia's positive role in liberating the Ukrainian people from Polish-Lithuanian oppression, was developed. Lastly, the Russian language became a mandatory subject in all schools.[88]

The new policy direction also had its effect on the Ukrainian language. A special commission was inaugurated in 1933 with the goal of evaluating and correcting "work done on the language front."[89] The commission arrived at a conclusion that the unification of orthography and expansion of vocabulary had been done by nationalists in order artificially widen the gap between Ukrainians and Russians. In the revised Ukrainian orthography and rules of spelling and grammar this "artificial gap" was eliminated.[90] General vocabulary and professional terminology were updated in the 1930s and in the first post-war years. The 1948 Ukrainian-Russian dictionary was the final product of those efforts.

The language policies in the post-Stalinist period were guided by a general view that ongoing language shift and linguistic Russification were the symptoms of progress and cultural rapprochement among the nations and nationalities of the Soviet Union. Therefore, state policies in the areas of education and public use of language should not impede these sociolinguistic changes. In the 1960s, the Union leadership proclaimed Russian "the second mother tongue" of the Soviet people. The Ukrainian SSR, together with the BSSR and some other republics, was considered to have the most favorable conditions for the successful achievement of a mother-tongue-like status for the Russian language.[91] The process of Russification, encouraged and applauded by both Union and republican governments, progressed in the following decades as the direct result of language policy in education, and as the byproduct of rapid urbanization and assimilation of migrants from the countries into the Russophone city culture. After the 1958-1959 school reform, which gave

[87] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 602-603.
[88] Danylenko et al., "*Ukraiinizatsiia" 1920-30-kh rokiv,* 342.
[89] Larysa Masenko, ed., *Ukraiinska mova u XX storichchi: istoriia linhvotsydu. Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: "Kyievo-Mohilianska akademiia," 2005), 6.
[90] Masenko, *Ukraiinska mova,* 7-17.
[91] Masenko, *Ukraiinska mova*, 20-21.

parents freedom of choice regarding the language of education for their children,[92] the share of children who studied in Ukrainian schools was on the decline and dropped below 50% in the 1990/91 academic year (Figure 5.2).[93]

Figure 5.2: Share of school students studying in Ukrainian and Russian between 1950 and 1990

Ukrainian intelligentsia started expressing grievances and concerns about the future of the Ukrainian language as early as 1963, at a conference on culture and language, held in Kiev.[94] Language-related grievances were also shared by political dissidents and Ukrainian diasporas in the West.[95] The leadership of the Ukrainian SSR viewed such grievances as symptoms of malicious Ukrainian nationalism and suppress them with disproportionate harshness. The dissent was virtually eradicated by Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi, who replaced Petro Shelest[96] as the first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party in 1972.[97] Under

[92] At the level of the Ukrainian SSR, the reforms were regulated by the corresponding republican law, adopted on the 17th of April 1959 (Olga Lavrut, "Vidlunnia Zakonu 'Pro zmitsnennia zviazku shkoly iz zhyttiam i podalshyi rozvytok systemy narodnoii osvity v Ukraiinskii RSR' v Ukraiinskii RSR: dosvid pershykh rokiv," *Hileia: navukovii visnyk* 109 [2016]: 71).
[93] The figure is based on data, complied in Tipa_bandera (pseud.) "Statystyka mov navchannia v shkolakh Ukraiiny z 1950 po 2011 rr.," LiveJournal, November 4, 2019, https://tipa-bandera.livejournal.com/283156.html.
[94] Oleh Bazhan, "Rukh za poshyrennia ukraiinskoii movy v period 'khrushchovskoii vidlyhy,'" in *Nabukovy zapiski. Tom 65. Istorychni nauki* (Kyiv: "Kyievo-Mohilianska akademiia," 2007), 40-49.
[95] Viktor Kotyhorenko, "Ukraiina bahatonatsionalna pislia Druhoii svitovoii viiny (1945-1991)," in *Natsionalne pytannia v Ukraiini XX – pochatku XXI st.: Istorychni narysy*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyiv: Nika-Tsentr, 2012), 489-492.
[96] Shelest was much more concerned with the issues of Ukrainian language and culture and favored the Leninist style of nation-building for Soviet Ukraine (Plokhy, *The gates of Europe*, 304-305).

Shcherbytskyi, the Ukrainian language fell into disuse within the party apparatus, official correspondence, speeches, etc. Thus, the Ukrainian SSR entered the years of perestroika under the conditions of widespread assimilated bilingualism and decline in use of Ukrainian.

Language played a key role in defining Ukrainian nationhood even before 1923; and this role was only reinforced and strengthened by the prevalence of an ethnolinguistic understanding of nation in the Soviet view on nationalism and national identity. However, the official language policy and language practices of the Ukrainian SSR, coupled with an emerging discourse on the multiethnic character of the republic, only facilitated linguistic Russification. This state of affairs was naturally perceived as an existential threat to the language-centered Ukrainian national project and to its claims for a dedicated monoethnic "homeland." Within the more liberal political, cultural, and social environment of *perestroika*, this perception was about to enter the Ukrainian public discourse.

5.5 T1: The 1989 Language Law

The Ukrainian SSR, which was governed in that period by one of the most conservative administrations in the Soviet Union, was quite reluctant to embrace new social and political developments, associated with the policies of perestroika. The republic's leadership was suspicious of civil society, non-governmental organizations, public movements and initiatives. Local party leadership continued to treat the topics of language policy, titular language and national identity as closely connected to malicious Ukrainian nationalism. In order to "re-legitimize" the language issue in the official discourse, coalition for official monolingualism had to utilize multiple opportunities, tools and resources, and seek support from new political groups, such as *Narodnyi Rukh Ukrayiny*.[98] First, the Union of Ukraine's Writers, and later Shevchenko's Society of the Ukrainian Language, established in February 1989, served as the coalition's main institutional outlets. The language law, reflecting the symbolic primacy of the Ukrainian language, was eventually adopted by the Ukrainian SSR on October 28, 1989, under the continuing political monopoly of the

[97] Mariya Yarmolenko, "Movna polityka v URSR v 40-80-kh rokakh XX stolittia," *Navukovi zapysky IPiEND im. I.F. Kurasa NAN Ukraiiny* 3, no 65 (2013): 370.
[98] Ukrainian People's Movement, colloquially referred to as *Rukh*, which was the equivalent of similar popular fronts elsewhere throughout the USSR.

communist party amidst economic problems and the ongoing liberalization of the public discourse.

At IX Congress of the Union of Ukraine's Writers, held in 1986, Oles Honchar and Pavlo Zahrebelnyi expressed concerns about the current state and future of the Ukrainian language, which they framed in terms of the language's importance for national culture and "national character."[99] The speakers also criticized views about the inadequacy of the Ukrainian language for serving the republic's social, political, scientific and economic needs. Arguably, those concerns and criticisms echoed ongoing tension between the linguocentric understanding of nationhood and the spread of Russian as sign and vehicle of socio-economic progress. In the following years, Ukrainian writers remained in the forefront of advocacy for language policy change. In their argumentation, policy advocates invoked the legacies of Leninist policies. A speech by poet B. I. Oliynyk at XIX All-Union CPSU Conferences in Moscow on the 1st of July 1988 can be a good example:

> One of the heaviest hitting legacies of the [Stalinist] cult is the distortion of the Leninist nationalities policy. There is no use in pinpointing those who are responsible for the situation at the regional level, because it is a universal tragedy. Both the causes and consequences of this distortion are equally gruesome. In Ukraine, in particular, the consequences are such that the national language has ended up on the margins of the nation's spiritual and material-productive life. It has been disappearing from official correspondence, state and party administration. Moreover, there already no Ukrainian-language schools in many Ukrainian cities. In almost all universities, students are deprived of an opportunity to receive education in the language of their mothers. The situation in kindergartens is equally saddening.[100]

Language-related demands, expressed within official institutions, did not explicitly target the distribution of official statuses in the republic, but focused primarily on state support for the use of Ukrainian in official matters and the area of education. The status of the Russian

[99] *Svoboda*, July 30, 1986, 2; *Svoboda*, July 31, 1986, 2; *Svoboda*, August 1, 1986, 2, 4.
[100] *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 28 iiunia – 1 iiulia 1988: Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988), 30.

language was yet to be challenged in this process. As late as on the 28th of October, 1988, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi publicly stated that "while national-Russian bilingualism continues to develop based on the democratic principle of freedom of choice, the area of use of the Ukrainian language, which was previously unjustifiably narrowed, is being now expanded."[101] In the same speech, he also reiterated commitment to the ideal of the brotherhood of peoples" and stressed the importance of good interethnic relations for the Ukrainian society.

In his 1987 letter to Gorbachev,[102] the Ukrainian dissident, writer, and journalist Viacheslav Chornovil stated a much more radical position on national development and situation with titular languages in Soviet republics. In the letter, Chornovil shared a critical outlook on the Soviet version of Ukraine's history and explicitly put accountability for detrimental policies in the areas of language, education and culture, among others, on the central administration in Moscow. He also claimed that a comprehensive overhaul of the nascent Soviet nationalities' policies had to include the recognition of official status for national languages in republican constitutions and return to the principles of *korenizatsiia* in language promotion. Although the letter had limited immediate impact on the general character of public discussion in Ukraine due to lack of coverage and ongoing campaign against Chornovil in official republican media, it articulated a clear policy goal in the area of language, connected to a predominantly anti-Soviet discursive context. Chornovil's letter was also declared an agenda-shaping document[103] for the self-printed journal *Ukraiinskyi Visnyk*, whose publication was renewed in the same year.

Between 1987 and 1989, the Ukrainian SSR witnessed the proliferation of informal civil society organizations, pre-occupied with such issues as the implementation of perestroika-inspired political and economic reforms, protection and popularization of ethnocultural heritage, promotion of ecological and anti-nuclear agendas, re-evaluation of national history, etc. Several such organizations, concerned with the protection of the Ukrainian language and culture, put forward demands for radical changes to official language policy.

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[101] Petro Tolochko and Heorgii Kriuchkov, eds., *Shcherbytskyi Volodymyr Vasiliovich. Politychny portret na foni epokhi* (Kyiv: "ADEF-Ukraiina," 2018), 654.
[102] Valentyna Chornovil, ed., *Viacheslav Chornovil. Tvory v desiaty tomakh*, vol. 6 (Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2009), 78-103.
[103] Chornovil, *Viacheslav Chornovil,* 120.

Most prominent among them were the Lviv-based student union *Tovarystvo Leva* (founded in October 1987) and the dissident group *Ukrainian Helsinki Union* (founded in July 1988).[104] The activities of such more radical organizations helped strengthen the position of monolingual advocacy coalition in shaping the design of the new official language policy.

The mainstream faction within the advocacy group for granting Ukrainian an official status, initially operated within the Union of Ukraine's Writers. Language-related concerns, expressed by local cultural intelligentsia, finally received a dedicated institutional embodiment in the form of *Tovarystvo ukraiinskoii movy im. Tarasa Shevchenka* (Shevchenko Society of the Ukrainian Language, TUM).[105] The TUM was established in June 1988, as a Lviv-based regional organization, headed by renown writer Roman Ivanychuk, but its offices began to open in other regions of the Ukrainian SSR. The all-Ukrainian Shevchenko Society of the Ukrainian Language was officially inaugurated at a conference, held in Kiev on the 11th and 12th February 1989. The preamble to the founding charter of the society is, arguably, a perfect example of ethnolinguistic understanding on national identity:

> A national language is the nation's supreme spiritual heritage. Language is the soul of the nation. A nation that loses its language ceases to exist. The full-fledged spiritual life and productive material activity of the nation and all its members are only possible thanks to the national language. The language accumulates the experience of the previous generations, reflects all the scientific achievements. The realization of the nation's intellectual potential is predicated on the national language's development level and its position in society.[106]

In terms of policy suggestions, the TUM advocated for Ukrainian receiving the status of the state language, complemented with practical measures, encouraging its wide-spread use. The fellows of the society immediately began lobbying for the adoption of a new language law in the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR. In the following months, public

[104] Kostiantyn Levchuk, *Hromadski orhanizatsiii Ukraiiny: stvorennia ta diialnist (1985-1996 rr.)* (Vinnytsia: Edelveis i K, 2009), 91, 97.
[105] Levchuk, *Hromadski orhanizatsiii,* 101-103.
[106] "Den ukraiinskoii pysemnosti ta movy," Ofitsiinyi sait Nizhynskoii miskoii rady, March 11, 2021, https://nizhynrada.gov.ua/files/2021-11-03/frqABuZenw.pdf.

manifestations, letters to the deputies and other activities within the framework of the national campaign for the language law generated additional pressure on decision-makers.[107] Just like in the Belarusian case, the Shevchenko Society of the Ukrainian Language naturally harbored many national-minded political activists, concerned with the current language situation. However, in Ukraine, the TUM also served as a crucial institutional foundation for the creation of the oppositional political movement *Narodnyi rukh Ukraiiny za perebudovu* (Ukraine's Popular Movement for Perestroika, *Rukh*); and thus, it was always organically linked to the latter.

The idea of an umbrella political movement, similar to popular fronts in other Soviet republics, was first proposed within Kiev Writers' Union at the end of 1988[108] and became finalized with the publication of the movement's program document draft in *Literaturna Ukraiina* on the 16th of February 1989.[109] The overall tone of the document remained somewhat less radical than in the equivalent documents of other popular fronts. Likewise, it avoided direct attacks on the Soviet Union and communist ideology, in contrast to the documents and publications of informal student and dissident organizations, where such attacks and demands for independence were already present. On the one hand, more moderate rhetoric was meant to unite both communist and non-communist forces. On the other hand, it was also a practical choice to appear less antagonistic to the republican administration. In terms of desired language policy changes, the program draft followed the spirit of the TUM's charter. Guided by the conceptual equivalency between state institutions, nationhood, and "mother tongue", it also criticized the free choice of language of education. Thus, from the time of its founding, *Rukh* functioned as a natural ally and institutional resource for the monolingual coalition. The movement also attracted many anti-Soviet elites of dissident background, including Viacheslav Chornovil, whose core beliefs about the Ukrainian nationhood justified support for the elevation of the status of the Ukrainian language. Ideally, this elevation of the status would take the form of official monolingualism. However, activists within *Rukh* were also aware of the fact that strictly

[107] Taras Shamaida, "Mova na chasi," Texty.org.ua, February 14, 2017, https://texty.org.ua/articles/74505/Mova_na_chasi_Jak_rozroblenyj_gromadskistu_zakonoprojekt-74505/
[108] Levchuk, *Hromadski orhanizatsiii,* 100.
[109] "Do 25-ii richnytsi stvorennia hromadsko-politychnoii orhanizatsiii 'Narodnyi Rukh Ukraiiny za perebudovu,'"Derzhavnyi arkhiv Odeskoii oblasti, 2014, https://archive.od.gov.ua/vystavky-on-lajn/do-25-yi-richnyczi-stvorennya-gromadsko-politychnoyi-organizacziyi-narodnyj-ruh-ukrayiny-za-perebudovu.

monolingual language policy was not a feasible option, as it would, among other things, alienate the movement's supporters in predominantly Russian-speaking areas, especially among the striking miners of Donbass.

Intentions to establish *Rukh* as an official organization were met with a reactionary response from the Shcherbytskyi government. Notably, Leonid Kravchuk, who was the head of the ideological section of the Communist Party of Ukraine, was among those, actively involved in the party's attempts to contain and weaken *Rukh's* organizational potential.[110] At the same time, the party leadership rejected the idea of the movement's outward suppression, suggested by hardliners within security forces. Administrative barriers and negative campaign in state media delayed *Rukh's* formalization at the republican level for almost nine month - until September 9-10, 1989. On those dates, the movement's constitutional congress was held in Kiev.[111] At the congress, delegates officially adopted *Rukh's* program and charter, and elected poet Ivan Drach as its head. The program dedicated a lot of attention to the national question, clearly defining it in ethnocentric terms and assuming the hierarchical nature of relations between the titular group and ethnic minorities:

> The full realization of all national rights by ethnic groups, residing in Ukraine, is predicated on their recognition of the fact that Ukraine is the historical homeland for the Ukrainian nation, and it is the only territory in the world, where the nation's proper existence and development are possible. National language and consciousness are important factors in the process of ethnic communities' integration. …Rukh interprets the national question in Ukraine as the question of existence and development of the Ukrainian nation, ethnic groups, and national minorities, as well as the question of their integration into the united society. Th core of such a society is formed by the people, whose name is also the name of its national state.[112]

[110] Volodymyr Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny: Diiovi osoby ta vykonavtsi* (Kyiv: Abrys, 1994), 115.
[111] Hryhorii Honcharuk, *Narodnyi Rukh Ukraiiny: Istoriia* (Odesa: Astroprint, 1997), 51-52.
[112] Volodymyr Panibudlaska, ed., *Natsionalni protsesy v Ukraiini. Dokumenty i materialy. Dovednik. Chastina 2* (Kyiv: "Vyshcha Shkola," 1997), 545.

A delay between the announcement of the new public organization and its formalization at the republican level had a number of implications. The first implication was the elevated weight of sections and branches of *Rukh* from those regions, in which local administrations were less hostile to their operation, such as Lviv and Ternopil. The second implication was especially close cooperation between *Rukh* activists and the TUM, which was already an officially recognized organization. Finally, dissident groups, such as *Ukrainian Helsinki Union* obtained even more disproportionate influence on the day-to-day activities of the movement, since they, unlike the regime-adjacent cultural intelligentsia, were more committed to political work under administrative constrains.[113]

The above-mentioned developments took place against the backdrop of deepening economic crisis and protest activities throughout the Ukrainian SSR. One demographic group, involved in the political process, was comprised of university students in such cities as Lviv, Kiev and Kharkiv. Students, together with political dissidents and recently rehabilitated former *OUN-UPA* members and their families, made up a social base for the most radical informal organizations of nationalist and anti-Soviet orientations. Coal miners were the other group that was on the forefront of protest activities. Mass strikes broke out among the miners of the Donbass in July-August 1989 and continued with lower intensity throughout the rest of the year. Although the majority of miners' grievances were socio-economical in nature, some strikers' committees also put forward political demands, including the resignation of the first secretary of the republican communist party.[114] In September, Shcherbytskyi indeed resigned and was replaced by Volodymyr Ivashko. But this resignation was long in making due to Shcherbytskyi's advanced age and declining health conditions.[115]

Thus, by the time the Supreme Council was about to complete its work and adopt the new language law, the communist regime of the Ukrainian SSR, while retaining political monopoly, had to withstand a much higher level of pressure from a bigger number of diverse public actors than it used to deal with at the beginning of 1989. The language law

[113] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*,156.
[114] Maksim Kazakov, "Shakhtery Donbassa byli odnoi iz osnovnykh sil, borovshikhsia za nezavisimost Ukrainy," *Hromadske Radio*, October 5, 2018, https://hromadske.radio/ru/publications/shahtery-donbassa-byly-odnoy-yz-osnovnyh-syl-borovshyhsya-za-nezavysymost-ukrayny-ystoryk.
[115] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 164.

was finally adopted on the 28th of October 1989.[116] Its preamble, among other things, stated that "Ukrainian language is one of the defining elements of the Ukrainian people's national distinctiveness." Article 2 declared Ukrainian the sole state language of the Ukrainian SSR. Article 4, however, included following provisions regarding the languages of interethnic communication: "Ukrainian, Russian, and other languages are the languages of interethnic communication in the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR guarantees free use of the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication among the peoples of the Soviet Union." Consequently, Ukrainian was simultaneously designated with the status of state language and the language of interethnic communication in the republic. Russian was referred to both as the language of interethnic communication in the republic and as the language of interethnic communication at the Union level. Despite convoluted wording, the law clearly differentiates the symbolic statuses of Ukrainian and Russian and postulates the primacy of the former. In the following sections, the language law clearly prioritizes the use of Ukrainian in various sphere of public life but provides multiple reservations and options for the use of Russian. For instance, the personnel in administration and other public institutions are required to have a sufficient command of both Ukrainian and Russian (Article 6); legislation of the highest level is to be published in the two languages (Article 10); official personal documents, such as birth certificates, diplomas, passports should be bilingual (Article 14); both Russian and Ukrainian remain mandatory subjects in all schools (Article 27), scientific publications can be made in either Ukrainian or Russian (Article 30).

In sum, the 1989 language law was an example of the hierarchical bilingualism of transitional character, which elevated the symbolic status of the national language and prioritized its use in multiple public domains, while continuing the use of Russian in multiple public domains. A compromise pieces of legislation, which was qualitatively different from the previous official discourse of Russian-titular bilingualism, became possible thanks to rapidly increasing relevance of *de facto* anti-Soviet elites in the public life amidst changing socio-economic circumstances and uncertainties, related to the future course of political reforms in the USSR. Chronologically, the Ukrainian law was adopted much later than similar laws in the Baltic republics and Moldavian SSR. This fact had a

[116] "Pro movy v Ukrayinskii RSR" *Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady*, 1989, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/8312-11/ed19891028#Text.

clear demonstration effect and helped initiate and expedite the process of law-making. The resulting official language policy formula did not fully satisfy advocates for official monolingualism on the one hand, and galvanized advocacy groups, united around the idea of official bilingualism, on the other. Nevertheless, the 1989 language law remained in place for more than two decades after its adoption.

5.6 T2: Policy Continuity in The First Decade of Independence

The 1989 language policy formula, which recognized the symbolic primacy of the titular language and postulated state support for its use and development, while also acknowledging the special status of the Russian language, remained unchanged during the first decade of Ukraine's independence. Both language policy advocacy coalitions continued to challenge the status quo, but neither was presented with a window of opportunity to achieve success, due to the nature of political landscape, character of power transition, and the resulting lack of decisive realignment among relevant elite groups. Thus, this section of the chapter focuses on following critical junction that could have disrupted a status quo and opened a possibility for a decisive language policy change - the early parliamentary and presidential elections of 1994 and the adoption of constitution in 1996.

The two final years of the Ukrainian SSR brought about important institutional changes, which established political pluralism and allowed oppositional groups to take part in the political process and gain access to decision-making. The overall contours of the Ukrainian political system were also outlined during this period. The 1990 election to the Supreme Council produced a legislature with an amorphous communist majority and a vocal nationally minded opposition. On the verge of the country's independence, the post-Soviet elites, coalescing around the figure of Leonid Kravchuk, emancipated themselves from the communist nomenklatura's more conservative circles and legitimized their control over the executive branch of the government through presidential elections.

The 1990 election to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet took place in the general atmosphere of uncertainty with regards to the future course of perestroika amidst continuing economic crisis, ongoing ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and growing tensions between the secessionist government of the Lithuanian SSR and Gorbachev administration in Moscow. The communist party in Ukraine was still able to rely on its administrative

resource and achieve favorable election results. However, both ideologically and organizationally, it found itself in a much more vulnerable position than just one year ago. So-called democratic forces, united under *Rukh's* umbrella, utilized the time before the election in order to expand the scope of their outreach to the general population through political agitation, distribution of printed materials and mass demonstrations. The most known such public event was a 700-km human chain that linked Kiev and Lviv. The chain commemorated the Union Act of January 22, 1918, [117] and meant to symbolize the continuing unity of the Ukrainians.

The first round of the election was held on the 4th of March. The second round took place two weeks later. In total, 442 deputies were elected to the Supreme Soviet. Deputies, endorsed by the opposition and referred to as the Democratic Bloc, managed to win 111, or 25%, of the seats. Some notable winners were well-known dissidents from the Ukrainian Helsinki Group: Viacheslav Chornovil, Stepan Khmara, and Levko Lukianenko.[118] Besides, both future presidents - Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma[119] – successfully ran as deputies from the Communist Party of Ukraine.

The Supreme Soviet, which began its operation in May, was eventually split along the following lines. The majority of seats (239, or 53%) belonged to the conservative communist block *For Sovereign Soviet Ukraine,* headed by Oleksandr Moroz. The minority of communists (41, or 9% of seats) united under the somewhat more progressive *Democratic Platform of the CPU*, which later reorganized itself into a new political party PDVU, *Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine.* The rest of deputies (125, or 28%) formed the faction *Popular Rada*, which consisted of the nationally oriented non-communist core and their allies of the communist background. Initially, the first secretary of the CPU Volodymyr Ivashko became the head of the Supreme Soviet, but he was soon summoned to join the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow. In July, Leonid Kravchuk was elected to replace departing Ivashko.[120] Even before his election as chairman, Kravchuk had been sending mixed signals about the possibility of cooperation between *Rukh* and the

[117] "1990 – symvolichnyi lantsiuh zluki "Ukraiinska khvilia" vid Kieva do Lvova," Ukraiinskyi Instytut Natsionalnoi Pamiati, https://uinp.gov.ua/istorychnyy-kalendar/sichen/21/1990-symvolichnyy-lancyug-zluky-ukrayinska-hvylya-vid-kyyeva-do-lvova.
[118] *Svoboda*, March 23, 1990, 1.
[119] *Svoboda,* April 14, 1990, 4.
[120] *Svoboda,* July 25, 1990, 1.

communist institutions, provided that *Rukh*'s leadership moderates its position and keeps the most radical elements in check.[121]

For the remaining year and a half of the Ukrainian SSR, the issue of language on the republican scale was overshadowed by more immediate concerns and challenges, such as the distribution of political and economic powers, the restoration of alternative church institutions, the adoption of new national symbols, the nature of relations between Ukraine and the Kremlin, the potential comprehensive restructuring of the USSR, preparation of a new union treaty, and last but not least – the possibility of eventual independence. However, language-related issues did not disappear from the political agenda completely, but rather shifted mostly to the regional level, where the new language policy was meant to be implemented. Due to greater opportunities for international contacts and visits,[122] the Ukrainian diaspora took active role in discussion about the state and future of the Ukrainian language, including calls for language "purification" and the reform of the system of writing.[123]

The first achievement of the new Supreme Soviet and the first major instance of cooperation among parliamentary factions was the *Rukh*-led adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine on the 16th of July.[124] Another example of parliamentary cooperation was response to the most well-known political protest of that year – the so-called *Revoliutsiia na hraniti (*Revolution on Granite).[125] Student protests erupted in Ukraine's capital on October 2-17, 1990, and turned into a hunger strike at an improvised tent camp on the Square of October Revolution (currently Independence Square/*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*). The Supreme Council began negotiations with the students and eventually gave in to almost all of their demands. Those demands included the resignation of the head of the council of ministers Vitalii Masol, nationalization of the CPSU's property in Ukraine, limiting the geography of compulsory military service for Ukrainians to the territory of the republic, and the withdrawal of discussion about a new union treaty from

[121] *Svoboda,* March 8, 1990, 2.
[122] *Svoboda*, July 26, 1990, 2.
[123] *Svoboda,* May 16, 1990, 2.
[124] Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine*, 725.
[125] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 245.

the current political agenda.[126] The one exception was demands for a new parliamentary election, conducted on the principles of competition among multiple parties. Instead, the "reconciliatory" parliamentary commission suggested a referendum on the issue of a new parliamentary election, scheduled for 1991. As participants of the student protests recall, unwillingness to go for a new election was shared by the communist majority and many representatives of the Democratic Bloc, including the de facto leader of its most radical faction Viacheslav Chornovil.[127]

At the second congress, held on 25-28 October 1990, Rukh completed its transformation into an anti-communist organization, dropped word *perestroika* form its name and discarded previously declared intensions of productive co-operation with the communist party.[128] The last months of 1990 and the beginning of 1991 was the time of internal disagreements and in-fighting within Rukh, and the period of the movements' ideological drift towards a more nationalist platform. The communist nomenklatura used Rukh's relative weakness and increasing radicalization to recuperate and revamp its political strategy, while also exploiting language- and identity-based animosities between the country's western, southern and eastern regions.[129]

Kravchuk's figure is arguably the best example of amorphous post-Soviet elites, who are driven less by deep ideological commitments than by career opportunities and political conjuncture. In multiple sources he is described as a "national communist." This characteristic, however, seems to be too generous, if compared to some genuine examples of this phenomenon, such as the Communist Party of Lithuania under the leadership of Algirdas Brazauskas, which broke away from the CPSU in 1989 and was fully committed to struggle for independence.[130] During 1990, Kravchuk frequently changed his position on many issues of symbolic importance. For example, he first condemned the removal of Lenin statues in some cities in Western Ukraine, but later suggested during a press-

[126] *Svoboda*, October 24, 1990, 4.
[127] Oles Donii, "Pochemu «studencheskaia revolyutsiia» tak i ostalas 'na granite'?" *Den*, July 31, 2012, https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/article/panorama-dnya/pochemu-studencheskaya-revolyuciya-tak-i-ostalas-na-granite.
[128] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 220.
[129] Mykola Riabchuk, "Civil Society and Nation Building in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (London and NY: Routledge, 1998), 91.
[130] Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).

conference that there were too many Lenin statues in Kiev.[131] Similarly, Kravchuk constantly oscillated between disapproving, ignoring or supporting the adoption of new national symbols.[132] In 1991, Leonid Kravchuk took over the discourse of self-determination, when he pushed for an additional question about Ukraine's sovereign status in any future union during the referendum on the continuation of the USSR. The all-union referendum, held on 17 March 1991, produced affirmative results for both questions. 70.2% of voters supported the preservation of the USSR,[133] while 80.2% cast their votes in favor of Ukraine's sovereign status. During the unsuccessful August coup, initiated by the conservative faction of the CPSU in Moscow, Kravchuk took an extremely cautious approach, but changed his rhetoric and turned critical of the communist party after the coup's failure became imminent.[134] On the 24th of August, the Supreme Soviet declared Ukraine's independence. The final milestone in Kravchuk's transformation into the national leader of independent Ukraine was achieved after a victorious presidential election, which took place on the 1st of December 1991.

Decision to move to the presidential form of government was made by the Supreme Soviet on the 24th of June 1991, less than two weeks after Boris Yeltsin had been elected as the president of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic.[135] However, by the time of the election, political circumstances in the republic changed dramatically. Ukraine had already declared its independence and the communist party had been banned, following the failed coup attempt. Conservative communist groups remained disoriented and Kravchuk was entering the presidential race with essentially no opposition on the left.[136] Three candidates, belonging to the right-wing opposition joined the race, because national-democratic forces

[131] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny,* 234.
[132] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 132, 134, 136.
[133] Already during the referendum, it was clear that certain regions had political orientation vastly different from the rest of the republic. Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil region overwhelmingly voted "no" and the capital was split in half (Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 265).
[134] Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraiiny*, 269-273.
[135] Ievhen Iakunov, "Iak v Ukraiini ziavylasia posada Prezydenta, i chomu vitse-prezydenta vyrishyly ne obyraty," *Ukrinform*, February 16, 2019, https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/2638804-ak-v-ukraini-zavilasa-posada-prezidenta-i-comu-viceprezidenta-virisili-ne-obirati.html.
[136] Valeri Khmelko and Andrew Wilson, "Regionalism and Ethnic and Linguistic Cleavages in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (London and NY: Routledge, 1998), 60.

failed to unite and put forward a single candidate.[137] The outcome turned into a resounding victory for Kravchuk already in the first round (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: 1991 presidential election in Ukraine

Presidential Candidate	**Vote Share**
Status quo/Post-Soviet elites	
Leonid Kravchuk	61.6 %
Anti-Soviet counter-elites	
Viacheslav Chornovil	23.3 %
Levko Lukianenko	4.5%
Ihor Iukhnovskii	1.8%
Others (combined)	8.9%

Kravchuk's 1991 electoral program *Nova Ukraiina - 5 D* was a glaring example of center-left[138] populist "kitchen sink", which had little to no concrete information about his future policy commitments. The text of the program included a paragraph, titled *Dukhovnist* (Spirituality), which referred to the issues of national identity, culture and language:

> The soul of Ukrainians, their national consciousness, language, culture, tradition had been destroyed throughout centuries. Our sacred duty is to provide for the Ukrainian nation's spiritual renaissance, understood in the most general sense of this term, and to simultaneously guarantee free national and cultural developments for the representatives of all nationalities that make up the Ukrainian people.[139]

This paragraph is a good illustration of ambiguous and contradictory legacies of Soviet-era discourse on nation-building and national identity, since it simultaneously refers to an ethnolinguistic Ukrainian nation and to a multiethnic Ukrainian people. Another such

[137] Honcharuk, *Narodnyi Rukh*, 121-123.
[138] Khmelko and Wilson, "Regionalism," 61.
[139] "Peredvyborna programa kandydata u Prezydenty Ukraiiny Leonida Kravchuka, 1991," Konstituanta, October 2014, https://constituanta.blogspot.com/2014/10/1991.html.

document is a leaflet, produced and distributed during the 1991 electoral campaign, titled *To Russian Compatriots*[140]. The leaflet includes the following passages:

> Ukraine has decisively stepped onto the path to independence. Together with Ukrainians and other peoples, twelve million Russians are fully at home on Ukraine's land. I will do all I possibly can in order to meet the political, economic, social and spiritual needs of the Russian population, to provide the state protection of its lawful interests. Under no circumstances any forced Ukrainization of Russians will be allowed. … Let's build an independent Ukraine as the shared home of Ukrainians, Russians, and all other nationalities, living on its territory!

The text of the leaflet alludes to the multiethnic character of the Ukrainian state and promises the protection of all possible rights and needs of the Russian population. Arguably, it presents those rights and needs not as the ones of a national minority, but as the ones of a co-constituent national group. Since another national referendum, this time asking about support for Ukraine's independence, was scheduled on the same day with the presidential election, campaign materials for the two were distributed simultaneously and reinforced one another. This was especially true for Kravchuk, who was both a presidential candidate and the republic's *de facto* ruler as the head of the Supreme Soviet. A Russian-language leaflet, titled *Dear Compatriots*![141] and signed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet contained explicit references to the ethnonational and linguistic diversity of Ukraine's population:

> The citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their nationality and religious affiliation are Ukraine's children. As hard-working Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Belarusians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Tatars, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks and representatives of other nations, we are capable of bringing prosperity to our country. … A language which a Ukrainian citizen uses is irrelevant if this same citizen speaks about an independent Ukraine and Ukraine's lawful rights.

[140] Visualhistory (pseud.), "Agitatsiia za nezavisimost Ukraiiny," LiveJournal, July 16, 2013, https://visualhistory.livejournal.com/293188.html#cutid1.
[141] Visualhistory, "Agitatsiia."

Thus, in December 1991 Ukraine became an independent (semi-)presidential[142] republic, headed by the former communist party official who rebranded himself as the champion of 'healthy' nation-building, contrasting himself to 'radical' nationalist opposition. This practice of mixing post-communist/populist and moderate nationalist discourses,[143] while forming situational alliances with representatives of both anti-Soviet and pro-Soviet elites within and outside the parliament, continued throughout Kravchuk's presidency and was also picked up by his successor.

Within this hybrid discursive framework, the areas of culture and education were outsourced to more nationally oriented forces, which were tasked with carrying out the program of national 'revival'. However, the continuing economic collapse, widespread corruption, crumbling institutions and lack of rule of law most certainly made a big contribution to the fact that many provisions of the 1989 language law were not implemented properly and evenly across regions. For example, in the 1995/1996 academic year, 88% of schoolchildren studied in Ukrainian in the western regions (a 27% increase, compared to 61% in 1990/91) and only 29.2% in the eastern and southern regions (a 6.7% increase, compared to 22.5% in 1990/91).[144] The Russian language continued to dominate in print and on television. In fact, the share of Ukrainian-language publications by volume stagnated and even declined by the second half of the 1990s (from 54% in 1991 to 47% in 1995).[145] The lack of the official status for the Russian language was in great part compensated by the equal lack of decisive attempts to alter the patterns of language use and to re-demarcate the linguistic space through government interventions.[146]

The status quo could not fully satisfy either of the two language policy advocacy coalitions. For the advocates of official monolingualism, the slow pace of Ukrainization and continuing widespread use of Russian were a sign that more drastic policy measures should

[142] The position of the president, introduced in 1991, was not compatible with the strictly parliamentary principles of the Soviet constitution. The proper demarcation of branches of government immediately became the main point of disagreement between the president and the parliament.
[143] Irina Zherebkina and Sergei Zherebkin, *Kiborg-natsionalizm, ili Ukrainskii natsionalizm v epokhu postnatsionalizma*. (Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2019, EPUB).
[144] Vladimir Malinkovich, "Stepen ukrainizatsii obrazovaniia na Ukraine." IGPI, March 10, 2005, http://www.igpi.ru/info/people/malink/1111152776.html.
[145] Serhii Hirik, "Knyhovydannia v Ukrayini," *Velyka ukraiinska entsyklopediia*, April 28, 2022, https://vue.gov.ua/Книговидання_в_Україні. These numbers include only domestically published books. (i.e., does not reflect the presence of imported Russian-language literature).
[146] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, 127.

be taken.[147] In the eyes of the multilingual coalition, the unchallenged rhetoric of Ukrainian as the only true mother tongue of ethnic Ukrainians in state-owned media was a harbinger of an upcoming assault of the use of Russian.[148] In 1993-94, pro-Russian groups in regional and local councils (mainly Eastern Ukraine) attempted to compensate for the "inadequate status of the Russian language" by declaring it official at regional and local levels.[149] In 1994, the regional authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk even conducted local consultative referenda, which included the question on the Russian language's potential co-official status (89% and 91% voted in favor in Donetsk and Luhansk regions respectively).[150] These challenges, however, did not transfer to the national level.

In general, the issues of language and language use never lost their relevancy but remained overshadowed by economic and security concerns among the general population, and by political elites' struggle about the ultimate design of Ukrainian political system and the distribution of powers within its institutions. If conducted in the 1990s Ukraine, a hypothetical referendum on language policy would most likely trigger a lot of resistance from the nationalist camp but still had a chance to lead to the provision of official status for the Russian language, especially with strong backing of this option by the government (as was the case with the Belarusian referendum). For example, an opinion poll from 1995 (which by no means should be treated as the substitute for the distribution of votes in an actual referendum) revealed that 52% of Ukraine's population supported the idea of making Russian an official language and 32.6% were against it,[151] indicating noticeable popular support for official bilingualism.

Attitudes towards the CIS, cooperation with Russia and the use of Russian as official language remained an important factor differentiating voters' preferences for right-wing as opposed to center and left-wing parties.[152] However, the only political force, unambiguously advocating for official bilingualism and a Soviet-style internationalist

[147] Kuzio *Ukraine*, 133.
[148] Khmelko and Wilson "Regionalism," 71, 77-78.
[149] Dominique Arel, "Language politics in independent Ukraine: Towards one or two state languages?" *Nationalities Papers* 23, no 3 (1995): 597-622.
[150] Aleksandr Afanasiev, *Ukraina – chetvert veka nezalezhnosty. Kniga pervaia.* 1991-1999 gody (Noginsk: Osteon-Grupp, 2018, EPUB).
[151] "Za roky nezalezhnosti kilkist prykhylnikiv nadannia rosiiskoi movi statusu derzhavnoii zmenshylasia," *Tyzhden*, March 20, 2012, http://tyzhden.ua/News/45328.
[152] Khmelko and Wilson "Regionalism," 69.

approach to the question of nation-building in Ukraine,[153] - the re-established Communist Party of Ukraine, led by Donetsk-born former Komsomol secretary Petro Symonenko - continuously remained in opposition to the government.[154] At times, it was also in conflict with its sisterly Socialist Party of Ukraine, headed by Oleksandr Moroz which declared similar, but more moderate ideological positions. The main issues of contestation between the executive and the parliament, led by Ivan Pliushch, who came from the agricultural professional background and was the head of Kyiv Regional Administration in 1984-1990, pertained to the future constitutional design and the powers of different branches of government, the pace and scope of market reforms, the nature and the degree of integration with Russia and other post-Soviet republics. In 1992, the parliament became more active once the communist forces there recuperated after the August coup and disintegration of the Soviet Union. In general, the legislature opposed any potential expansion of the presidential powers while the CPU and SPU were in favor of abolishing the institution of president all together.

Political situation in the first years of independence was complicated by the fact that shortly after his election as the president of Ukraine, Kravchuk began to seek rapprochement with anti-Soviet counter-elites and attempted to turn *Rukh* into a party of power. According to the claims of Kravchuk's former advisors, this was a rather unexpected turn, which was at least in part associated with the president's overestimating *Rukh's* popular support and the perspectives of the movement in future elections,[155] as well as with the disproportionate influence of *Rukh*-affiliated members of Kravchuk's team on the president.[156] Kravchuk joined *Rukh's* third congress, held in March 1992. There his presence was met with the confrontational attitude of Chornovil who rejected an idea of political alliance with Kravchuk and his ruling team, composed mainly of nomenklatura.[157] At that time Chornovil largely achieved the consolidation of power within the organization, effectively

[153] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, 125.
[154] Nikolai Mikhalchenko and Viktor Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe: ot Leonidii k Viktorii,* vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: IPiENI imeni I.F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy, 2012).
[155] Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 1, 250.
[156] Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 1, 257
[157] In a way, this was the mirror image of the relationship between the head of the Belarusian parliament Stanislau Shushkevich, who also the nominal head of state in Belarus as it remained a parliamentary republic, and the BNF. In the Belarusian case, it was Shushkevich who was too hesitant to form a stable political alliance with the Front.

putting an end to previously existing collective leadership. Consequently, Kravchuk not only failed to achieve backing from Rukh, but also further alienated the pro-Soviet faction.

In addition to (and, arguably, at least partially because of) increasingly difficult relations with the parliament, [158] Kravchuk's presidency was accompanied by the lack of structural reforms, unprecedented economic collapse, tough negotiations with Russa about supplies of oil and gas and the status of the Black Sea Fleet, pro-Russian separatism in Crimea, and prolonged miners' strikes. In the autumn of 1993, striking miners demanded Kravchuk's resignation. In response, the government and parliament finally agreed to schedule early parliamentary and presidential elections for the 27 of March 1994 and the 26th of June 1994 respectively.

Table 5.2: 1994 parliamentary election in Ukraine

Parliament Faction	**Seats**	**Share**
Leftist/Pro-Soviet bloc, including:	123	31%
Communist Party of Ukraine		
Socialist Party of Ukraine		
Peasant Party		
National democratic bloc, including:	40	10%
Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh)		
Ukrainian Republican party		
Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists		
Other small parties	16	3%
Independents	226	56%
TOTAL	405	100%

[158] Similarly in Russia but there Yeltsin used military force against the parliament in October 1993, strongly impressed Ukrainian politicians and contributed to their commitment to find a 'more civilized' solution to the conflict between the branches of government. (Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 1, 439)

The results of the parliamentary election (Table 5.2) produced a left-leaning, fragmented parliament with a non-partisan majority (many of those deputies were of the communist nomenklatura origin).[159] The leftist bloc, consisting of the Socialist Party, the re-established Communist Party, and Peasant Party emerged as the strongest partisan group. The exact numerical distribution of seats among the three groups (leftist bloc, national democratic bloc, and amorphous pro-incumbent center, mostly represented by "independent" deputies) fluctuated throughout the rest of the parliamentary term, but the general balance of powers remained relatively stable: None of the parliamentary blocs had enough seats to unilaterally push through its political agenda, but all the blocs had enough strength to hamper or block its opponents from attempting to do so.[160]

Table 5.3: Candidates in the 1994 presidential election.

Candidate	**Party Affiliation**	**Backed/Supported by**
Leonid Kravchuk	None	State bureaucracy, cultural intelligentsia
Leonid Kuchma	None	Nomenklatura of industrial background and "red directors"
Oleksandr Moroz	Socialist Party	Pro-Soviet communists
Voldymyr Lanovii	None	*Rukh*
Valerii Babich	None	Some entrepreneurs
Ivan Plushch	None	Nomenklatura of agrarian background and directors of collective farms
Petro Talanchuk	None	None

Oleksandr Moroz was elected as the new speaker of the parliament with Kravchuk's support, motivated by his desire to neutralize Ivan Pliushch. Moroz was also backed by deputies, coalescing around recent (October 1992 – September 1993) Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, in exchange for Moroz's promise not to nominate a communist/socialist candidate for the upcoming presidential election. Despite his successful, albeit procedurally questionable, election to the speaker's position, Moroz did not keep this promise[161] and

[159] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 26-33.
[160] Roman Solanchyk, "The Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine: Prospects for Stability," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (London and NY: Routledge, 1998), 29.
[161] Nikolai Mikhalchenko and Viktor Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe: ot Leonidii k Viktorii,* vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: IPiENI imeni I.F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy, 2012), 13

joined the presidential race as the only candidate, officially affiliated with a political party (Table 5.3).[162]

Table 5.4: Results of the 1994 presidential election.

Candidate	First Round	Second Round	
	Results	Endorsement	Results
Leonid Kravchuk	38.4%	Grudgingly by *Rukh*	45%
Leonid Kuchma	31.2%	Indirectly by pro-Soviet groups who declared that they were against Kravchuk	52.2%
Oleksandr Moroz	13.3%		-
Volodymyr Lanovii	9.5%		-
Valerii Babich	2.5%		-
Ivan Plushch	1.2%		-
Petro Talanchuk	0.5%		-
Against all	3.4%		2.8%

In the 1994 presidential election (Table 5.4), the incumbent lost in the second round to his former prime-minister Leonid Kuchma, who once was a "red director" at the strategic defense enterprise of all-Union significance.[163] Kuchma and Kravchuk belonged to the same post-Soviet group of elites. They both drew their primary support and received endorsements from the centrist factions of the parliament. Moreover, both candidates at different points in their electoral campaigns openly argued for the improvement of the status of the Russian language. Kuchma's electoral program, titled *To Prevent a National Catastrophe, through Order and Moral Honesty – to Harmony and Prosperity*,[164] included the following reference: "I will support the development of national culture and the Ukrainian language as the state language. I will advocate for the provision of official status for the Russian language with the preservation of the current status of Ukrainian."

[162] The table is compiled based on Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 2, 444-452
[163] Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 2, 17-18.
[164] Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 2, 18-22.

Kravchuk's electoral program[165] with a similarly convoluted title *Through the Consensus of All Citizens to the Strengthening of the State and the Intensification of Reforms* also included language-related promises: "I stand for … the state status of the Ukrainian language, two official languages (Ukrainian and Russian) in Ukraine, taking into account the linguistic peculiarities of the country's regions."

Kravchuk attempted to compensate for economic failures by appealing to the achievements of independent state- and nation-building and perspectives of cooperation with the West. Kuchma, on the other hand, advocated for prioritizing economic stabilization over hastily implemented programs of national 'revival', for pragmatism in both domestic and foreign policies, and for closer cooperation with Russia without losing ties to the West. However, Kuchma did not promote any drastically different understanding of the Ukrainian nationhood.[166] The main difference between candidates was their choices of situational electoral alliances and campaign members. Kuchma's team included the representatives of pro-Soviet and adjacent counter-elite circles. He also received more favorable coverage in the Russian media. Kravchuk managed to obtain half-hearted support from some members of *Rukh*, but only in the second round of the election. Thus, this time it was Kuchma as a moderate candidate against the 'nationalist' Kravchuk.[167]

Kuchma abandoned his intention to make Russian co-official soon after being elected.[168] He dismissed his campaign team[169] and replaced initial appointees to ministerial positions within the first two years of his presidency, which were marked by the continuation of the economic crisis, struggle with the Supreme Rada[170] about the content of the future constitution, and a conflict and crackdown on the separatist pro-Russian regional

[165] "Peredvyborcha prohrama kandydata u Prezydenty Ukraiiny Leonida Kravchuka, 1994," Derzhavnyi arkhiv Sumskoii oblasti, https://daso.archives.gov.ua/do-dnya-narodzhennya-kravchuka/.
[166] Alexander Motyl, "State, Nation and Elites in Independent Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (London and NY: Routledge, 1998), 6-9.
[167] Rukh's radicalization indeed took place during Kravchuk's presidency (Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 1), and the activities of far-right antisemitic groups increased (Aleksandr Burakovskiy, *Khronika evolutsii "natsionalnoi ideii" Ukrainy i ievrei. 1987-2016 gody. Kniga dokumentalnoi publitsistiki.* [Boston: M-Graphics, 2017])
[168] Volodymyr Kulyk, "Language Policy in Ukraine: What People Want the State to Do," *East European Politics and Societies* 27, no 2 (2013): 280–307.
[169] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, 141.
[170] Solanchyk, "The Post-Soviet Transition," 23-24.

government in Crimea, followed by concessions in terms of region's autonomy in the 1996 constitution.[171]

In the parliament, communists remained the main oppositional force and the strongest political faction, having elected Oleksandr Moroz as its chairman. Communists were also consistently opposing the broadening of presidential powers and the continuation of the presidential system in general.[172] Kuchma intended to strengthen the position of the executive vis-à-vis the legislature and submitted the new Law on Power to the parliament.[173] Having failed to obtain the necessary support, he contemplated the idea of a referendum on the question of the division of powers. The fresh memories of the Belarusian referendum undoubtedly played part in the Ukrainian parliament's greater openness for cooperation. The parliament members, including representatives of Rukh, came up with an initiative to adopt the Constitutional Agreement about power sharing. The legislature approved the agreement, while the communists were the only major political force who voted against it.[174]

Thus, by the time of negotiations about the new Ukrainian constitution the most committed supporters of Russian as the second official language found themselves in opposition to the president. The final draft of the constitution, adopted by the parliament in 1996, included multiple compromises, including the issue of official language, but provided Kuchma with political powers he had aspired for. The constitution of 1996 did not negate the 1989 language law but mentioned[175] Russian only once and next to other languages of national minorities:

> The Ukrainian language is the state language of Ukraine. State guarantees the full development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life on all of Ukraine's territory. Ukraine guarantees the free development, use and protection of the Russian language, other languages of

[171] Solanchyk, "The Post-Soviet Transition," 32-33; Marc Nordberg, "State and Institution Building in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (London and NY: Routledge, 1998), 46.
[172] Mikhalchenko and Andrushchenko, *Ukraina razdelennaia v sebe*, vol. 1.
[173] Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma*, 100-104.
[174] Motyl, "State, Nation and Elites," 10; Kuzio *Ukraine under Kuchma,* 105-106.
[175] Konstytutsiia Ukraiiny, 1996, Verkhovna Rada Ukraiiny, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80/ed19960628#Text.

> Ukraine's national minorities. State facilitates the learning of languages of international [*mizhnarodnoho* as in "international organization" or "international relations" in the original] communication. The use of languages is guaranteed by the Constitution and regulated by law.

The byproduct of this development was the lack of official language policy change and "the de facto if not de jure compromise over language"[176] in the Ukrainian constitution. The linguistic component of national identity maintained its symbolic importance but remained divorced from the actual socio-linguistic reality and the language use patterns of large groups of population.

Throughout the remaining years of his first term Leonid Kuchma continued to build a network of personal alliances and nepotistic ties to enhance his political power. In the parliament, he most closely relied on cooperation with the "amorphous" center – primarily with deputies elected from his regional stronghold of Dnipro and with former central government officials.[177] Arguably, Kuchma also facilitated the completion of Ukraine's system of pluralistic regional oligarchies through his privatization campaign. Kuchma's views on the nature of the Ukrainian nation-building did not differ substantively from the ones of Kravchuk. Coming from the Russian-speaking background and using Russian during his presidential campaign, Kuchma quickly switched to Ukrainian as the language of official communication. Both Kravchuk and Kuchma supported a historical narrative on the Ukrainian nationhood, which neither endorsed nor completely negated the Soviet experience. Kuchma was only somewhat more explicit in articulating the necessity of including "benign" elements of the Soviet past.[178] The (in)famous book, written by Leonid Kuchma and first published at the end of his second presidential term in 2003, was titled *Ukraina – ne Rossia* (Ukraine is not Russia). Perhaps, this book provides the most instructive summary of the attitudes of the nascent ruling elites in Ukraine towards questions of national history, identity, and language. The following compilation of excerpts from the book demonstrate Kuchma's acknowledging of the Soviet contributions to the Ukrainian state and nation-building:

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[176] Alfred Stepan, "Ukraine: Improbable Democratic 'Nation-State' but Possible Democratic 'State-Nation'?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 21, no 4 (2005): 279-308.
[177] Solanchyk, "The Post-Soviet Transition," 27.
[178] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, 65-66.

> I find the idea of building our future on the complete rejection of our most recent history utterly unacceptable. Without exceptions, all national experience is important for the new Ukraine.[179]…There are claims that this [communist regime] is a Russian invention. This hypothesis, comforting for Ukrainians, may also exist. However, the alternative one seems more plausible. That is, the Soviet version of communism was the collaborative project of representatives of many nations.[180] … Regardless of personal attitudes towards the 1920s, it must be acknowledged that had the Ukrainization of our school system not been conducted in that period, our current independence would most likely be impossible. History demonstrated that the Ukrainian school system, which educated tens of millions of people, turned out to be the most important and most reliable component of the Ukrainian self-awareness in our country.[181]

The other compilation of arguments from Kuchma's book illustrates the seemingly important, but also ambivalent role of the Ukrainian language for independent nation-building:

> Language is one of the most important parameters of statehood. In Ukraine this language is, naturally, Ukrainian.[182] ...The natural borders of any nation are best defined by its language. It connects all classes and all territories, inhabited by its people.[183] Ukrainian nation (nation-state) is forming not as an ethnic, but as a political and civic phenomenon. What do I mean by "forming"? I mean that it is going through the consolidation process, whose necessary element is social-cultural consolidation. Are there any contradictions arising from this understanding? Will this process be hampered by the language question? This will not happen provided that all rights and liberties of all social groups are protected, and the general cultural policy of the state is balanced and sound.[184] The Russian language will always remain one of the most important subjects in our schools; the Russian language must never feel itself foreign in Ukraine.

[179] Leonid Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia* (Moscow: Vremia, 2003), 26.
[180] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 120.
[181] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 284.
[182] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 267.
[183] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 270.
[184] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 294.

> This question has nothing to do with the presence or absence of "official bilingualism."[185]

In summary, the nature of the transition from Kravchuk to Kuchma can be best described as rotation and evolution within the post-Soviet elite group, which had grown increasingly attached to the perks of ruling over an independent state of their own. Nothing comparable to radical changes in the distribution of access to decision-making among different elite groups, which happened in Belarus and Latvia, took place in Ukraine in the 1990s. Power was maintained by nationalizing post-Soviet elites, while both counter-elites of anti-Soviet and pro-Soviet ideological origin remained relevant and autonomous political forces. Consequently, there was no substantive alteration in the prevailing discourse on nationhood and on the associated mainstream historical narrative. As has been demonstrated in Section 5.2.4 of this chapter, the narrative remained both firmly stable throughout the 1990s and also dual in character: its more academic version was leaning towards an anti-Soviet tradition, whereas its version, projected by public officials and through state institutions, was more moderate. Hence, Ukraine did not experience any major shifts in the role of titular language for national identity, and no overhaul of the official language policy took place in that period.

5.7 Conclusion and the 21st Century Post-Scriptum

The case of official language policy continuity in the 1990s Ukraine demonstrates that question of language has symbolic importance and ability to engender attachments beyond simple utilitarian considerations, especially in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet context. The survival of the 1989 language law throughout the 1990s and early 2000s also supports the general argument of this dissertation about the primary contribution of elite configuration and the character of the prevailing discourse on nationhood to particular official language policy outcomes. Therefore, any major policy changes can only be possible after changes to these primary contributors.

The Soviet-era official language policy in Ukraine remained in place even in the aftermath of the 2005 Orange Revolution, which through extrajudicial alteration of political process

[185] Kuchma, *Ukraina – ne Rossiia*, 313.

set in motion elite realignment and accelerated inter-generational elite replacement.[186] Interestingly enough, Oleksandr Moroz was among those politicians who supported oppositional[187] candidate Viktor Yushchenko in the second tour of the 2004 presidential election and subsequently joined mass protests against electoral fraud. In the result of the protests, the initial outcomes of the second round, which granted victory to the serving Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, were successfully challenged. Support by Moroz and his party was provided in exchange for the reforms of political system that would weaken the powers of the president and strengthen the parliament.

The program of unsuccessful candidate Yanukovych included references to languages, which were in line with the policy framework of the time: "We will consistently reaffirm the state status of the Ukrainian language. We will ensure the free development of the Russian language, the promotion of the languages of ethnic groups and distinctive national cultures."[188] Yushchenko's program did not mention the issue of language at all.[189]

Language policy was revamped only in 2012, under the supposedly pro-Russian[190] Viktor Yanukovych, who eventually won his presidency in 2010. In his 2010 electoral program,[191] Yanukovych included a separate paragraph, dedicated to the language question, with the heading *Two Languages – One Country*:

> I strive for the real enforcement of European standards of democracy, relentless protection of human rights and freedoms. **I stand for granting the status of the second state language to the Russian language** [emphasis in the original]. I am a consistent supporter of solving this issue in a civilized manner,

[186] Elite transformation had been gradually happening due to the natural reasons of aging of older politicians and their replacement with those who began their carriers in independent Ukraine. Both Yushchenko and Yanukovych achieved the heights (and lows) of their political carriers in post-1991 Ukraine. This is even truer for Yuliya Timoshenko.
[187] By the time of the election, he was the leader of *Nasha Ukraiina* (Our Ukraine) - the largest political bloc in the 2002 parliament, which was also in opposition to Kuchma. Previously Yushchenko worked as the head of the Central Bank and in December 1999 – April 2001 as Prime Minister under Kuchma's presidency.
[188] "Predvyborna prohrama kandydata na post Prezydenta Ukraiiny, Yanukovych Viktor Fedorovych, 2004," Tsentralna vyborcha komisiia, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2004/wp009b927.html.
[189] "Predvyborna prohrama kandydata na post Prezydenta Ukraiiny, Yushchenko Viktor Andriiovych, 2004," Tsentralna vyborcha komisiia, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2004/wp0099579.html.
[190] Whereas the pro-Russian image of Yanukovych was largely maintained in domestic and foreign (both Western and Russian) media, the post-factum evaluation of his and his party *Partiia Rehioniv* (Party of Regions)'s actual policies and decisions somewhat challenge the validity of this label.
[191] "Predvyborna prohrama kandydata na post Prezydenta Ukraiiny, Yanukovych Viktor Fedorovych, 2010," Tsentralna vyborcha komisiia, https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2010/WP0011.html.

> of following a balanced approach to state's language policy, which adequately responds to the language needs of the society and meets all universally recognized norms of international law and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

Multiple references to human rights and international norms, as well as the conspicuous absence of any mentioning of national identity is a good illustration that Soviet-time discourse on multiethnic republic and the 'brotherhood of peoples' was already much less prominent. The expectations of those who hoped for the introduction of official Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism at the national level were proven false. The 2012 law *On the Foundations of State's Language Policy*[192] did not change the status of Ukrainian as the only official language at the national level. Instead, it introduced an option for official multilingualism in those regions where another language is spoken by at least 10% of the population. Among other things, the law declared the following aims and principles:

> The recognition of all languages that are traditionally used within state borders or on part of its territory as national heritage, the prevention of the use of language markers for discrimination or provision of any privileges.
>
> Guaranteeing full development and functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in all spheres of public life on all territory of the state, which should be supplemented by the creation of opportunities for the parallel use of regional ad minority languages on those territories and in those cases where it is deemed appropriate.
>
> Support for the use of regional languages and the languages of minorities in spoken and written form in the spheres of education and mass media, and provision of opportunities for their use in regional and local administrations and courts, in economic and social life, when organizing cultural events, and in other spheres of public life within the borders of those territories where those languages are used, taking into account the status of each language.

[192] "Pro zasady derzhavnoyi movnoyi polityky" *Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady*, 2012, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5029-17/ed20120703#Text.

This law did not change the position of Ukrainian as the only official language at the national level and continued the general framework of hierarchical bilingualism. In practice, the Russian language was the biggest beneficiary of the new policy framework, which, unlike, previous legislation, listed numerous concrete guarantees for the use of regionally recognized official languages. Therefore, it was not surprising that the law triggered a lot of controversy and was met with criticism and protests from the right-wing opposition and pro-Ukrainian language activists.[193]

The new law came in force in 2013, but its implementation was mostly abandoned after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, or *Euromaidan*, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and Moscow-backed secessionist conflict in the Donbass region. This dissertation does not intend to provide an overview of this complex and tragic chapter of the most recent Ukrainian history, which has been extensively covered elsewhere in the academic literature. Within the context of this study, the two most relevant developments in post-2014 Ukraine were a decisive blow to the balance of powers among different elite groups and the progressive merging of the anti-Soviet narrative of nationhood and interpretation of national history with the broader anti-Russian and anti-imperial narrative. The flight of Yanukovych to Russia in the aftermath of *Euromaidan* and Russia's invasion and involvement in the civil conflict in Donbass practically disqualified forces associated with Yanukovych and other politicians with pro-Russian orientation from Ukrainian politics. Moreover, the annexation of Crimea and the loss of Ukrainian control over parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions excluded their mostly Russian-speaking and ethnically Russian population from the electorate. Thus, right-wing, pro-Western and anti-Russian political groups received crucial symbolic and electoral advantages. Even under these exceptional circumstances, it took another five years for Ukraine to finally shift in 2019 to official monolingualism, which reserves limited linguistic rights only for the languages of "indigenous" minorities and minorities whose languages are also thew official language of the EU.[194]

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[193] Pavel Zaiats, "Verkhovnaia Rada priniala skandalnyi zakon o iazykakh (video)," ZN.UA, July 3, 2012, https://zn.ua/POLITICS/verhovnaya_rada_prinyala_skandalnyy_zakon_o_yazykah.html.

[194] "Pro zabezpechennia funktsionuvannia ukraiinskoii movy iak derzhavnoii," *Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady*, 2019, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=2704-19#Text.

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Chapter 6
LATVIA

Latvia has inherited a pre-Soviet history of state-tolerated ethnolinguistic diversity, larger Russian speaking minority than either Belarus or Ukraine, and the highest level of interethnic marriages among fifteen Soviet republics. The country's capital has remained a multiethnic city, where Russian is used as the language of wider communication even in the 2010s. In other words, Latvia has had all the background conditions for introducing official bilingualism or at least granting Russian some degree of official recognition. Indeed, Russian did receive the status of "language of interethnic communication" in 1989. However, Latvia quickly discarded this language policy of hierarchical bilingualism and replaced it with official monolingualism in 1992.

This dissertation chapter investigates such a decisive policy change, which took place despite all the potential reasons to maintain some form of official bilingualism. The chapter's forthcoming sections first establish the historical background of Latvian nation-building and then proceed with identifying circumstances and factors, accounting for Latvia's quick departure from hierarchical bilingualism in the 1990s.

6.1 Historical Background

The country of two million inhabitants, Latvia appeared on the political map for the first time only in the aftermath of the First World War. Despite the "youth" of its statehood, Latvia's 20th-century political history is a rich and turbulent one. The country witnessed two German occupations and two major episodes of civil conflicts, fueled by ideological differences. It also lived through two separate independent periods, interrupted by fifty years of the Soviet rule in the form of the Latvian SSR.

Local vernacular has played a pivotal role in defining and maintaining Latvian identity since the first national awakening of the 19th century. But its distinctiveness and uniqueness were noticed and recognized by outsiders even prior to that.[1] Latvian is one of the only two

[1] Svetlana Ryzhakova, *Latyshskii iazyk: istoricheskiie preobrazovaniia i sotsiokulturnyie aspekty bytovaniia.* (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 2006), 4.

living Baltic languages[2] – a separate group within the Indo-European language family, which retained the largest number of linguistic features, also present in the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European. The uniqueness and small number of speakers have likely contributed to concerns about threats to language survival and development.

Figure 6.1: Map of Latvia's cultural-historical regions.

Despite the country's small size and flat terrain, covered with marshlands and forests, Latvia exhibits a surprisingly noticeable degree of cultural and religious heterogeneity, owing to the historical legacies of political powers that controlled various parts of modern-day Latvia. Article 4 of the 1922 Constitution lists Latvia's four major cultural regions – Vidzeme, Latgale, Kurzeme and Zemgale (Figure 6.1).[3] The latter two, together with the subregion of Selija, also make up the historical region of Courland and Semigallia on the left bank of the Daugava River. The regions of Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale are also represented by three stars on the Latvian coat of arms.

[2] The other Baltic language is Lithuanian, spoken by less than three million people in neighboring Lithuania. Other Baltic languages disappeared from the linguistic map of the world when advancing Germans and Slavs exterminated or completely assimilated their speakers. Standard Latvian and Lithuanian share a lot of common vocabulary and basic grammar but remain sufficiently different from each other to prevent mutual intelligibility. These linguistic differences are less pronounced and more gradual across the neighboring regional dialects of both languages. Samogitian and Latgalian are the two major examples. Strong regional identities and autonomist movements in areas where those language varieties are spoken, strengthen claims for their recognition as separate languages and not as dialects.

[3] The original map is created by the author, based on Daina Bleiere, Ingvars Butulis, Antonijs Zunda, Aivars Stranga and Inesis Feldmanis, *Istoriia Latvii. XX vek* (Riga: Jumava, 2005).

In the 13th century, Latvia's territory became a target for German colonization, which took place under the pretense of spreading Christianity among the local pagan population during the so-called Northern Crusades. The Livonian Order, founded by German knights, had ruled Latvia for the three following centuries until it was succeeded in 1561 by the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, equally German in character. In the 16th-18th centuries, the Russian state, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Sweden with varying degrees of success competed for political control over the region. The territory of modern-day Latvia was eventually annexed by the Russian Empire after the final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. However, *Ostsee* Germans continued to play a disproportionately large role in the political, cultural, and economic life of the region until mid-20th century.

6.1.1 19th Century's National Awakening

Throughout the 19th-century national awakening, Latvian intellectuals had to operate under the general constraints of the Russian imperial administration and against the centuries-long dominance of the region's non-native elites.[4] The emergence of the modern Latvian nationalism in that period was the product of yet another intelligentsia-led movement,[5] which appealed to the ethnocultural and linguistic differences between the predominantly peasant local population and regional ruling classes. Nevertheless, the 19th-century Latvian national movement developed under a set of somewhat unique domestic conditions, which influenced its direction, scope and character.

High literacy rates among ethnic Latvians, compared to the majority of population in the Russian Empire, was one such relevant condition. As local church institutions embraced the Protestant Reformation, the German clergy introduced the use of vernacular for religious purposes and began encouraging basic literacy among the local peasantry in order for them to be able to read the Bible and other religious texts. The use of vernacular required translating and publishing activities, which were done by the clergy, starting in the 16th

[4] Mostly German and Germanized; but also Polish in Latgalia, which was annexed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th century.
[5] Collectively known as the New (or Young) Latvians. Most notable figures include J. Alunas, K. Valdemars, K. Barons, M. Korgzemis (pen name Auseklis) and others (Arnolds Spekke, *History of Latvia: an outline* [Riga: Jumava, 2006 (1948)],280-282).

century.[6] The complete Latvian text of the Bible was eventually produced and printed in 1685-1689 by the Pastor of Marienburg Ernst Gluck[7]. These developments laid grounds for further standardization of the Latvian language,[8] as well as provided a starting point for ethnographic research on the Latvian folklore, culture and history by the Baltic German intellectuals.[9] Local German enthusiasts founded the Latvian Literary Society in 1816 and Society for History and Archeology.[10] In 1822, Pastor C. F. Watson founded the first Latvian weekly newspaper *Latweeschu Awises* (Latvian Newspapers).[11] Consequently, widespread literacy made printed media, such as books, journals and newspapers, an effective and wide-reaching tool for the dissemination of nationalist ideas among the general population, whereas accumulated ethnographic, historical and linguistic material allowed for a quicker transition beyond the initial literary phase of nation-building.

Tensions between the imperial center and local administrations, dominated by the German-speaking aristocracy and bourgeoisie, were the second factor, strongly influencing the Latvian national movement in the 19th century. Thanks to the predominantly ani-German character of the movement, Russian authorities showed tolerance for Latvian nationalist activism as long as it challenged and weakened the German influence in the region. Likewise, the Russification policies of the last quarter of the 19th century primarily targeted the Baltic Germans, which meant that the Latvian language did not face the degree of repression, similar to the one faced by Belarusian and Ukrainian vernaculars. Latvian was still used in elementary schools, and Latvian-language publications, while being censored, were never completely banned.[12]

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[6] Spekke, *History of Latvia,* 201.
[7] Spekke, *History of Latvia,* 220.
[8] The first Latvian grammar was written by J.G. Rehehusen, the Pastor of Aizkraukle, and was printed in Riga in 1644 (Spekke, *History of Latvia*, 202)
[9] Spekke, *History of Latvia*, 220. One such notable was J. G. Herder, who lived and worked in Riga in 1764-1769 (Spekke, *History of Latvia* ,263). G. Merkel *Die Letten* (the Latvians) publish in Leipzig in 1797 (Spekke, *History of Latvia*, 264).
[10] Spekke, *History of Latvia,* 12.
[11] Spekke, *History of Latvia*, 270.
[12] Except for Latgalia, which was part of the Vitebsk and Polotsk provinces and, thus, was subjected to the same language and educational policies as other provinces occupying the territory of modern-day Belarus (Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*).

The region's economic transformation in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is the final factor influencing the Latvian national movement in that period. Whereas the majority of ethnic Latvians remained rural,[13] the region already began to experience the effects of the rapid industrialization and urbanization. Social and economic changes began when serfdom was abolished in the two Baltic provinces (in 1817 in Courland, and in 1819 in Livonia/Livland), following Napoleon's brief occupation of the region. As the result, local peasants obtained personal freedom three decades earlier than their counterparts in other parts of the Russian empire. The abolition of serfdom took place without land distribution schemes to supplement this process. Thus, a large mass of landless peasantry, ready to migrate to urban centers, was created.

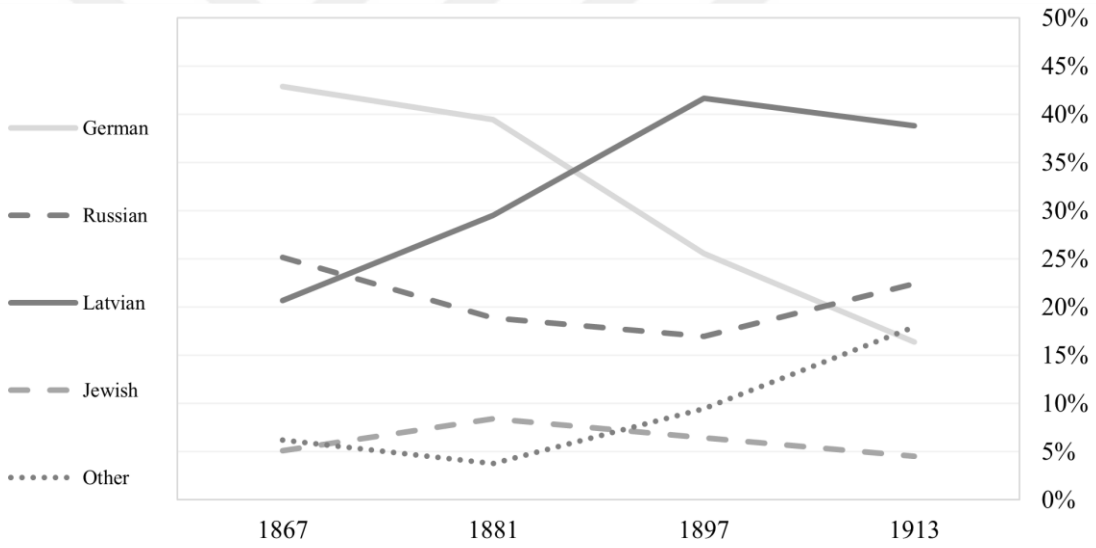

Figure 6.2: Changes in Riga's population by ethnic composition from 1867 to 1913.

Much of rural-to-urban migration was directed to Riga and Libava (modern-day Liepaja), especially in second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when these coastal cities showed unprecedented rates of economic development and population growth. Formerly a medieval center of commerce in the Hanseatic League, the 19th-century Riga evolved into an important trading port and manufacturing center.[14] Between 1867 and

[13] 62% of population within modern Latvian borders lived in the countryside in 1913 ("Latviiskaia SSR," *Bolshaia Sovietskaia Entrisklopediia*, vol. 14 [Moscow: Sovietskaiia entsiklopediia, 1973], https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/bse/102311/Латвийская).
[14] BSE, "Latviiskaia SSR."

1913 the city's population more than quadrupled and reached 480 000, making it the sixth largest city in the Russian empire.[15]

Riga's explosive growth due to migration of labor from the countryside meant that, for the first time in the city's history, ethnic Latvians (people who declared Latvian as their language) became the plurality of its inhabitants (Figure 6.2). Higher urbanization rates and more numerous indigenous working class, compared both to the empire's average and to the neighboring Estonians and Lithuanians, accounted for the strength of Latvian labor, social-democrat and socialist movements. During the first Russian revolution, which unfolded between 1905 and 1907, Riga and other cities in the provinces of Courland and Livonia were the major centers of workers' demonstrations and violent clashes with the czarist authorities. Likewise, Latvian Bolsheviks had realistic power aspirations during the February and October revolutions of 1917 and were a major faction in the ensuing civil war. Left-wing political parties also continued to play an important role in the politics of independent Latvia between the two world wars.

In short, Latvian nationalism developed under a set of favorable conditions, such as higher literacy rates, more established literary tradition, and the movement's increasingly urbanized social base. However, it was simultaneously affected by some hindering factors, such as the lack of a statehood tradition, the centuries-long domination of German administrative, religious and economic elites, and competition between domestic left-wing and right-wing political forces for control over the course and direction of Latvia's political future. In terms of political goals, nationally minded Latvian intellectuals and political activists were mostly content with establishing a political and cultural autonomy that would include all ethnically Latvian territories. Rapidly changing domestic and international circumstances in the violent aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution radically changed the pace of Latvian nation-building and provided an opportunity to achieve a functioning nation-state already by 1920.

[15] Evgenii Shtid, ed., *Perepis naseleniia v g. Rige I Rizhskom patrimonialnom okruge ot 5 dekabria 1913 g. I vypusk* (Riga: tip. Miullera ,1914) 35.

6.1.2 First World War

The First World War brought tremendous economic and demographic losses to the Courland and Livland Provinces of the Russian Empire and virtually devastated the territory of modern-day Latvia. The 1915 frontline stabilized dozens of kilometers away from Riga and left half of the country under German occupation.[16] Advancing German army not only set in motion large refugee flows but also forced the Russian authorities to evacuate all Riga's strategically important industrial enterprises and their personnel away from enemy lines into more remote provinces.

In the autumn of 1918, when the war was about to end in defeat for the Central Powers, there existed three main parties with claims on Latvia's political future. The first such party was made up of those nationally oriented intellectuals and political activists who remained in occupied Riga and united into the People's Council of Latvia (*Latvijas Tautas Padome, LTP*). It was the Council, consisting of some 60 people, which proclaimed an independent Latvian state on the 18th of November 1918,[17] and formed a provisional government, headed by the leader of the Latvian Farmers' Union (*Latviesu Zemnieku Savieniba, LZS*) Karlis Ulmanis. Despite almost sacred symbolic significance for the Latvian nation-building narrative, the proclamation of independence had limited immediate impact on the social and political life of the country, still controlled by Germany's military administration.[18]

Petrograd and Moscow-based Latvian communists, encouraged and supported by the Bolshevik leadership, constituted the second group with claims for political control over Latvia. The provisional communist government proclaimed the establishment of Soviet Latvia already in December 1918. Following the proclamation, the regiments of Latvian

[16] Riga eventually fell to the Germans in September 1917. The loss of Riga was a huge blow to nationally oriented Latvian political activists, who lost trust in the Russian government and moved towards establishing the Provisional National Council in the town of Valka. This happened right around the time of the October Revolution in Petrograd. Germany's winter offensive, which preceded the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on the 3rd of March 1918, resulted in the occupation of the remaining Latvian territories.
[17] Andrejs Plakans, "Death and Transfiguration: Reflections on World War I and the Birth of Latvian State," in *Latvia – A Work in Progress? 100 Years of State- and Nation-Building*, ed. David J. Smith (Stuttgart: ***ibidem*** Press, 2017, EPUB), section 3, paragraph 2.
[18] Plakans, "Death and Transfiguration," section 3, paragraph 3.

Red Riflemen[19] together with other units of the Red Army launched a successful offensive against German and White Russian troops. Riga was taken by the communist forces on the 3rd of January 1919. The First Congress of the Latvian Soviets was conveyed in the city between the 13th and the 15th of January. The congress legitimized the communist regime and adopted an extremely concise constitution[20] of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic[21] - first such document in Latvian history. The Ulmanis government had to flee with the retreating German troops to Libau (modern-day Liepaja)– the only city in modern-day Latvia which did not fall under the Bolshevik control in that period.

The third group, involved in the struggle over the political future of the Baltics, consisted of *Ost See* Germans and those 'mainlanders' who volunteered to join local military units with an intent to permanently settle in the region, attracted by promises of land by the Ulmanis government, once Bolsheviks were ousted from Latvia. The short-lived cooperation between Germans and the Ulmanis cabinet ended on the 16th of April 1919, when the cabinet was overthrown. Ulmanis evacuated to a ship off the Latvian coast and had to stay there under French and British protection. After the coup, a new government, controlled by the German military leadership, was created. Even though an ethnic Latvian was appointed as its prime minister, the government reflected a project, based on the idea of establishing either an independent state of the *Ost See* Germans or a new German province on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. The military units of *Baltische Landeswehr* were successful in fighting the Bolsheviks and capturing Riga in May 1918; and the short-lived Latvian communist government followed the retreating Red Army into Latgalia.

Meanwhile, the Estonian army (it also had sizeable ethnically Latvian regiments within its ranks[22]) was moving into the territory of modern-day Latvia from the north.[23] This military operation was supported by Britain and France and approved by the exiled Latvian

[19] Tatiana Zazerskaya, *Latvia's Ordeal: Nation Building in War and Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Academica Press, 2021, EPUB), section 3.2, paragraphs 4-5.
[20] Latvijas Socialistiskas Padomju Republikas Satversme, 1919, Historia.lv. https://www.historia.lv/dokumenti/latvijas-socialistiskas-padomju-republikas-satversme-1511919.
[21] Not to be confused with Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LatSSR), which existed as part of the USSR in 1940-1990.
[22] North Latvian Brigade.
[23] Jointly with White Russian armies it had previously repelled the Bolsheviks from the territory of modern-day Estonia. When advanced into Latvia, the White Russian Northern Army was on the offensive against the Bolsheviks in an attempted to take Petrograd (Zazerskaya, *Latvia's Ordeal*).

government. A brief conflict between the Estonian and German troops resulted in the defeat of *Landeswehr* and dismantling of the pro-German government. Ulmanis and his cabinet made their return to Latvia and began establishing state institutions, as well as working with the Allied powers on consolidating, training, and equipping a national army, capable of fighting the Bolsheviks and taking Latgalia.

At that time, the communist Russian government had already been involved in fighting on multiple fronts. In order to concentrate on defending against the White Russian armies and countering an ongoing Polish offensive further south, the Bolsheviks opted for ceasefire with the Latvian government and the governments of other countries, situated along the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, and started negotiations about future peace terms. Prolonged peace negotiations, which lasted for almost a year, concluded with the signing of the Latvian-Soviet peace treaty on the 11th of August, 1920, in which the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic officially recognized the Latvian state.[24] Despite their initial reluctance to support Latvia's bid for independence, the Allied Powers eventually followed suit in 1921, once it became evident that the communist regime in Russia was here to stay at least for the foreseeable future and needed to be contained by *cordon sanitaire* of newly independent state along its western border. Hence, independent Latvia officially appeared on European political maps.

6.1.3 Interbellum Latvia

In the first decade of its independence, the Latvian republic enthusiastically engaged in state- and nation-building, borrowing heavily from the examples of the most modern democratic constitutional designs of that time.[25] In those year, national educational, cultural, and scientific institutions were either established from the scratch or repurposed from previously existing imperial ones. It was also the time when the standardization of the modern Latvian language was mostly completed, and transition to the present-day version of the Latvian alphabet took place.[26] However, Latvian democracy was short-lived as it was

[24] Latvia and Russia - Treaty of Peace, 1920, World Legal Information Institute. http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/LNTSer/1920/63.html.
[25] Ringolds Balodis, "Development of the Normative Regulation on the Official Latvian State Language During the First Period of Independence," *Journal of the University of Latvia* 15 (2022): 93-136.
[26] From the one, which was based on the German alphabet and system of writing, to the one which uses a unique combination of three diacritics. The modern alphabet was officially adopted in 1922.

dismantled in the result of the 1934 coup d'état. The former prime minister, the leader of the Latvian Farmers' Union and the "father" of Latvia's independence Karlis Ulmanis declared himself the nation's *vadonis*[27] and established a personalist dictatorship, backed by the country's military.[28] Transition to right-wing authoritarianism brought a decisive change in discourse on Latvian nationhood, attitudes towards ethnic minorities, and policies towards ethnocultural and linguistic diversity.

The multiparty period was characterized by increasing political fragmentation[29] and often violent clashes between ideological opponents[30] against the backdrop of enduring economic challenges and war-induced deindustrialization, depopulation and deurbanization. However, it was also the time of active minority participation in Latvian politics and public life. In the parliament, minority parties frequently assumed the role of 'kingmakers' with disproportionate influence on lawmaking and the formation of coalitional governments.

Already in December of 1919, the National Council passed a law on Latvian educational institutions. The law obliged the state to provide ethnic groups with schooling in their native languages, hence creating the most liberal minority education regime in Europe.[31] Earlier in August, the council engaged in drafting and discussing a law on language rights. By guaranteeing regional status for minority languages in those districts, where their speakers made up more than 20% of population the proposed draft would officially establish a multilingual language policy. The draft was never adopted and was subsequently 'buried' in the parliamentary committees as delegates from right and center-

[27] Literally meaning "leader", or "guide", akin to German *Fuhrer*
[28] Deniss Hanovs and Valdis Teraudkalns, *Ultimate Freedom - No Choice: The Culture of Authoritarianism in Latvia, 1934–1940* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 1-38.
[29] Already on the 17th and 18th of April 1920, multiparty elections to the Constitutional Assembly of Latvia took place. The Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party (LSDSP) obtained the largest number of seats in the assembly (57 out of 150, or 38%), followed by the Farmers' Union (26 seats, or 17.3%) and the Farmers' Party of Latgale (17 seats, or 11.3%). More than dozen other parties, including ethnically Jewish, German and Russian ones, obtained at least one seat. The Constitutional Assembly performed the function of a provisional legislature, tasked with drafting and adopting all the fundamental laws, most important of them being the Latvian Constitution. In total, four elections to the Latvian parliament (*Saeima*) were held between 1922 and 1934. The LSDSP was the largest party but mostly remain in opposition to multiple unstable coalition of agrarian and other center-right and right parties.
[30] Uldis Kreslins, "Dvizheniie 'aktivnogo natsionalizma' v Latvii: 1922-1934," *Zhurnal rossiiskikh i vostochnoevropeiskikh istoricheskikh issledovanii* 1, no 16 (2019): 30-31.
[31] Marina Germane, "Latvians as a Civic Nation: The Interwar Experiment," in *Latvia – A Work in Progress? 100 Years of State- and Nation-Building*, ed. David J. Smith (Stuttgart: ***ibidem*** Press, 2017, EPUB), section 2, paragraphs 16-17.

right parties criticized its text for not establishing a clear hierarchy of languages by explicitly designating Latvian with official status at the national level.

The 1922 Latvian constitution proclaimed it a democratic parliamentary republic, in which the sovereign power belonged to the people of Latvia.[32] The original text lacked any references to the role of ethnic Latvians or the status of the Latvian language, as the latter was to be included in the second part of the constitution, dedicated to fundamental rights and freedoms. This part was to be drafted and adopted separately. Debates on provisions regarding official languages were complicated by the insistence of deputies from Latgalia to designate the Latgalian vernacular as the official language of their region. Ultimately, the position of Latgalian deputies was decisive in the failure to adopt the second part of the constitution.[33] Latvia proceeded to function as *de-facto* multilingual state, fully committed to providing public education in minority languages. During that time there were no restrictions or regulations on the use of minority languages, as well as on the Latgalian vernacular, in media and in public institutions, including the parliament. The nascent situation with language policy and language use did not satisfy right-wing parties and Latvian nationalist organizations, who advocated for the state's greater role in promoting the Latvian language.

The legal framework for the official language policy of the Latvian state was eventually established by the Regulation of on the Official Language, prepared by the ruling conservative agrarian coalition, and submitted for approval by the parliament in the February of 1932.[34] Despite heated debates and opposition from minority parties and social democrats, the regulation was eventually approved and came into force in the spring of the same year. The regulation declared Latvian the state language of the republic and mandated its use in official communication. Russian and German were allowed to be used by local governments in those districts where the speakers of the aforementioned languages made up the majority of population. The regulation mandated the teaching of the Latvian language in all minority schools. Other than that, it did not interfere with the existing system of secondary education and the use of minority languages in media, commercial

[32] Satversme (Constitution) 1922, Likumi.lv. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/57980-latvijas-republikas-satversme.
[33] Balodis, "Development of the Normative Regulation."
[34] Balodis, "Development of the Normative Regulation," 122-125.

activities and religious services. The adoption of this piece of legislation was at least in part motivated by considerations, stemming from the conflict between the ethnolinguistic understanding of Latvian nationhood and nascent language practices in the multilingual and multiethnic Latvian society. The following passage from the speech of the member of the parliament, poet Karlis Skalbe, can be illustrative in this regard:

> [T]his law should be issued due to simple respect for our State. If we respect this State, we respect the official language. Where there is a State, there is an official language. In Latvia, it can be no other language but Latvian because the Latvian nation is the majority here. … Latvia cannot be at the same time Russian, German or Polish, just like a man cannot have three souls in his breast, or, at one and the same time, three totally different political orientations! ... [E]ach state has a certain backbone, and this backbone is the majority nation, its language and culture.[35]

Following the coup, Ulmanis's authoritarian regime began promoting ethnocentric nation-building, symbolically defined by the infamous slogans "Latvian Latvia" and "Latvia for Latvians".[36] All political parties were banned, but the activities of left-leaning and socialist ones were treated with particular harshness. The economic policies of the regime included a wide-scale nationalization program for many previously privately-owned industries. This program disproportionately affected Germans and Jews, who were overrepresented among industry owners. At the level of public discourse about ethnic minorities, the regime produced a mixture of assimilationist and exclusionary messages. The state drastically decreased support for schooling in minority languages and adopted the 1935 Law on State Language.[37] The law was based on the Regulation on the Official Language but mandated wider use of Latvian in commerce and introduced fines for the violation of its provisions. The regime also began a crackdown on Latgalian regionalism and the use of the Latgalian vernacular. The latter was to be completely replaced by standard Latvian in regional media and educational institutions. This period was also characterized by active corpus planning

[35] Cited from Balodis, "Development of the Normative Regulation," 125.
[36] Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, "Latvia: the challenges of change," in *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuani*a, eds. David J. Smith, Artis Pabriks, Aldis Purs and Thomas Lane London and NY: Routledge, 2006), 173-174.
[37] Balodis, "Development of the Normative Regulation," 127-128.

through linguistic purism and 'nationalization' of the Latvian language's vocabulary.[38] In congruence with the new national ideology, the Latvian government also enthusiastically cooperated with the Nazi Germany, when in 1939 it called for the repatriation of Baltic Germans. In total, some 50 000 Latvian Germans opted to leave.[39] Considering that there were 62 000 ethnic Germans in Latvia according to the 1935 census,[40] the 1939-1940 repatriation resulted in almost complete disappearance of the local German minority.

Ulmanis's regime collapsed together with the loss of Latvia's independence in 1940. In face of a military threat from the Soviet troops, stationed at the border and on the country's territory, the Latvian government was pressured into organizing the first parliamentary election since 1931. The election took place on the 14th and 15th of July 1940, under the conditions of *de-facto* Soviet occupation.[41] All seats were won by communist deputies, who formed a socialist government and applied for Latvian membership in the USSR. The annexation was completed on the 5th of August, when the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a law on the admission of the Latvian Republic.[42]

In brief, by the time of annexation by the Soviet Union, the Latvian nation-building project was still in development; and associated policies were not yet particularly entrenched and consistent. In terms of Latvia's nation-building history, the legacy of interwar republic is too complex and contradictory to be unconditionally embraced by ethnocentric narratives on Latvian statehood. The years of authoritarian rule represent the biggest challenge in this respect. On the one hand, some form of discussion about the non-democratic and repressive nature of the regime, which flirted with antisemitism and relied on fascist-like ideology, is unavoidable. On the other hand, the favorable consequences of the ethnonationalist turn for national consolidation, the elevation of the titular ethnic group's symbolic status and the promotion of the Latvian language are undeniable. Moreover, the majority of those older Latvians who at the times of *perestroika* positively remembered pre-Soviet independence,

[38] Ryzhakova, *Latyshskii iazyk*, 12-13.
[39] Pabriks and Purs, "Latvia," 176.
[40] "Population by ethnicity at the beginning of year. 1935-2022," Oficialas statistikas portals. https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/en/OSP_PUB/START__POP__IR__IRE/IRE010/table/tableViewLayout1/).
[41] Elena Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953 (*Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 85-92.
[42] "O priniatii Latviiskoi Respubliki v sostav SSSR, 1940," Elektronnaia biblioteka istoricheskikh dokumentov, http://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/137496-zakon-verhovnogo-soveta-sssr-o-prinyatii-latviyskoy-respubliki-v-sostav-sssr-5-avgusta-1940-g#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4.

associated it with Ulmanis's rule, since it was the period of their youth, and most of them received secondary education during those years.[43]

6.2 T0: Latvian SSR before Perestroika

The Soviet regime was interrupted by the Nazi occupation of Latvia's territory within the first month of World War II. In Latvia, the war had many characteristics of a civil conflict. Many Latvians welcomed the German occupation as the lesser evil, which put an end to a year of Stalinist repressions and deportations. The Nazi ideology viewed the sizeable portion of ethnic Latvians as racially fit for future Germanization, once the Baltic lands were re-colonized.[44] Therefore, with the major exception of local Jews, the civilian population was not subjected to mass imprisonment, deportation or extermination by the occupying authorities. Many Latvians either volunteered or were drafted into the Nazi army or police units.[45] Local recruitment was especially encouraged after 1942, when Germany started to experience severe soldier shortages due to mounting losses on the Eastern Front.[46] Upon the restoration of the Latvian SSR, some members of these military units organized into ani-Soviet partisan groups and continued to operate on Latvian territory for the rest of the 1940s.[47] Mass deportations of socially 'unreliable elements' and rapid collectivization in the countryside, carried out by the communist government in that period, were at least in part motivated by the need to weaken the social base of armed anti-Soviet resistance.[48]

Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, Latvia's educational and cultural institutions were synchronized in their form and content with the rest of the USSR. This process was shaped by the late Stalinist vision of nationalities policies, which meant that nation-building was to

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[43] The authoritarian government was heavily involved in schooling already in 1934 (Gaston Lacombe, "Nationalism and education in Latvia, 1918–1940," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 28, no 4 [1997]: 309-338; Aldis Purs, "'Unsatisfactory national identity': School inspectors, education and national identity in interwar Latvia," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 35, no 2 (2004): 97-125). Hence, virtually all Latvians who were born after the First World War, received at least part of their education under those circumstances.
[44] Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*, 255.
[45] Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*, 269-277.
[46] As the anti-Nazi communist guerrilla movement in other occupied territories of the USSR grew stronger, ethnically Latvian SS brigades took part in mass killings of the civilian population in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia in retaliation for helping the partisans. In 1944, Latvian troops were merged into the Latvian Legion.
[47] Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*, 341-342.
[48] Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml,* 180.

be closely supervised in order to make sure its socialist character and prevent the growth of bourgeois nationalism. Likewise, the state-supported development of titular culture and language should not negate the positive contribution of Russian language and culture to the social, economic, political, and cultural integration of the USSR. Until 1959, the Latvian SSR was ruled by a faction in the republican communist party, commonly referred to as 'national communists.'[49] While ideologically committed to a socialist Latvia, members of this faction sought to continue implementing the principles of *korenizatsiia* by promoting Latvian cadres, mandating proficiency in Latvian and Russian, and providing training in the Latvian language for arriving personnel. Just like in the 1920s, these policies were supposed to help strengthen support for the socialist system among the titular population and attract more ethnic Latvians into party ranks. The republican leadership also attempted to manage and control migration flows[50] through housing policies and the institute of *propiska*,[51] and advocated for a more gradual pace of industrialization.

Forestry and agriculture were the main sectors of economic activity in interwar Latvia. Therefore, the post-war economic recovery plan for the republic envisioned rapid industrialization through the construction of multiple factories and power plants, and the creation of necessary infrastructure.[52] As the Latvian SSR had very limited human resources[53] for the realization of such an ambitious project, skilled and unskilled labor force, as well as administrative cadres, had to be pulled from elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Labor migration would profoundly change the ethnolinguistic composition of Latvia and become one of the greatest grievances, expressed by anti-Soviet counter-elites during *perestroika*.

[49] Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*, 369-379.
[50] Geoffrey Swain, "'Come on Latvians, Join the Party – We'll Forgive You Everything': Ideological Struggle during the National Communist Affair, Summer 1959," in *Latvia – A Work in Progress? 100 Years of State- and Nation-Building*, ed. David J. Smith (Stuttgart: *ibidem* Press, 2017, EPUB).
[51] Union-wide system of regional and local residence permits, which regulated and restricted the migration and settlement of population, especially in big cities.
[52] Anton Kolotievskii, Valentin Purin and Aleksandr Jaunputnin, *Latviiskaia SSR* (Moscow: Geografgiz, 1955).
[53] The population growth was already stagnant during the interwar years and was exacerbated by human losses during the war. Widespread collaboration and anti-Soviet resistance also contributed to this problem. Post-war deportations and arrests of former collaborators forced a lot of people to flee abroad. Among those who stayed, many would be considered ideologically unreliable to take administrative positions.

The period of 'national' communism was brought to an end in 1959, when, at the closed session, the republican leadership (Janis Karlbenrzins, Eduards Berklavs) were accused of following Beria's criminal policies[54] of ethnic favoritism and discrimination against the Russian language and ethnic Russians.[55] Despite Khrushchev's visit to Riga, the Kremlin's overall involvement in the affair was more limited than it is commonly presented, as both the initial accusations and subsequent push for changes in the party leadership came from within the Latvian Communist Party.[56] The session triggered changes in party leadership was followed by purges within the party ranks. Arvids Pelse, who was likely responsible for the promotion of the case against national communists, became the party's new first secretary. Prior to this promotion, Pelse, who left for the Soviet Union, when the 1919 Bolshevik government in Riga collapsed, served as the secretary of propaganda and ideology of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party.

This leadership change fixed the general political environment of the Latvian SSR until the final years of *perestroika*.[57] During his rule, Pelse demonstrated unconditional loyalty to the center and readiness to implement the general party line with regards to economic policies, administration and education. In 1966, he was rewarded with a position in the Central Committee of the CPSU. His successors - Augusts Voss and Boriss Pugo - followed similar paths and continued their political carriers in Moscow after serving as the first secretaries of the LCP in 1966-1984 and 1984-1988. In those years, the industrial production in the Latvian SSR increased forty times, compared with the 1940 level. The republic grew into an all-Union center of advanced machinery building and electronics manufacturing and had a per-capita income that was 20%-higher than the USSR's average.[58] Due to Latvia's geographic location and long coastal line, it had large military presence and hosted some strategic defense facilities, such as the Liepaja Naval Base and missile detecting radar in Skrunda.

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[54] Swain, "Come on Latvians"; Aldis Purs, *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012).
[55] Swain, "Come on Latvians"; Purs, *Baltic Facades*.
[56] Swain, "Come on Latvians"; Purs, *Baltic Facades*.
[57] John Hidden and Patrick Salmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century*, revised ed. (London and NY: Longman, 1994), 141.
[58] Tsentralmoie statisticheskoie upravleniie SSSR*, Narodnoie khoziaistvo SSSR v 1985 g.* (Moscow: "Finansy i statistika," 1986).

Both Voss and Pugo were Russia-born Latvians, more proficient in Russian than in their supposed mother tongue[59] and well familiar with the intricacies of party politics in Moscow. Under their leadership, policy on nationalities in the republic reflected the ideological commitment to strengthening 'the brotherhood of peoples' by promoting the use of Russian and suppressing any signs of 'bourgeois' nationalism. Over the same period, the share of ethnic Latvians in the republic dropped below 53%, whereas Riga became a majority-minority city, in which non-Latvians comprised more than half of population.[60] In the absence of state's encouragement to learn Latvian, the increasingly non-Latvian ethnic composition of major urban center and the cumulative effects of Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's reforms in the system of education[61] favored the establishment of Russian as primary working language, which performed the role of *lingua franca* not only at the level of the Soviet Union, but also inside the Latvian SSR itself.

Nationally minded intellectuals, dissidents, and Latvian emigres in the West were alarmed by these ethnolinguistic changes in the republic's demography and lamented possible negative consequences of such changes for the future of the titular nation and its language. However, such alarms were largely ignored by the conservative communist leadership and could not be presented to the public inside Latvia. An anonymous letter by 17 Latvian Communists was published abroad in 1979.[62] In a lengthy manner, it summarized grievances, related to ethnolinguistic situation in Latvia and presented the 1959 changes in party leadership, the immigration of mostly Russian-speaking workers from Russian, Ukraine, and Belarus, and the promotion of the Russian language in education, media, product branding, etc. as elements of a coherent plan, aimed at harming the Latvian nation, and, possibly, even dismissing the Latvian SSR altogether. The letter had almost no impact domestically; but it was picked up by nationalist groups within the diaspora. To what extent the claims and accusations of the letter's authors reflected the objective reality or fears, exaggerations and misattribution of motives is an open question. It, however, does not

[59] Purs, *Baltic Facades*.
[60] Bleiere et al., *Istoriia Latvii*, 392.
[61] The reform not only left choice for the language of education in the hands of students' parents, regardless of their ethnicity but also allowed opting out of studying the titular language completely.
[62] Anonymous, "The 17 Latvian Communist Protest Letter. 1979," in *Lettonie - Russie: traités et documents de base in extenso*, ed. Ansis Reinhards (Riga: Bibliothèque nationale de Lettonie, 1998), http://www.letton.ch/lvx_17com.htm.

change the fact that this interpretation of Soviet period in Latvia's nation-building (minus references to Marxism-Leninism and nationalities' policies under Lenin) was later widely adopted in post-Soviet Latvia.

In conclusion, the Latvian SSR approached *perestroika* as one of the most economically developed and 'international' Union republics. In addition to ethnic heterogeneity, it also had the highest proportion of interethnic marriages (27.5%) out of all republics.[63] One-sided bilingualism[64] became the norm in all major urban centers. Language-related concerns and grievances were excluded from public discourse. Assimilated bilingualism (whose best available measurement could be declaring Russian as mother tongue) among ethnic Latvians was not a widespread phenomenon, but the share of such people had been steadily increasing and was the highest in the Baltics. However, the seemingly stable status quo in terms of language policies and practices was about to be radically challenged in the second half of the 1980s.

6.3 T1: Perestroika in Latvia and Introduction of Hierarchical Bilingualism

The short-lived official policy of hierarchical bilingualism was introduced during the time when Latvia was undergoing a rapid political transformation, mass mobilization and polarization along ideological and ethnolinguistic lines. The first seeds of political and social changes in the Latvian society were sawn in 1986 when local intelligentsia and environmental activists launched a successful signature campaign, coordinated through the journal *Literatura un Maksla* (Literature and Art), against plans to construct a new hydroelectric plant on the Daugava River.[65] Around the same time, dissidents and former political prisoners began organizing first "calendar demonstrations", commemorating such historical events as Stalinist deportations, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the declaration of independence in 1918. These demonstrations were the first public expression of anti-Soviet sentiments.[66] Another development took place in 1988, when Latvian intelligentsia,

[63] Svetlana Lourie, "Mezhnatsionalnyie braki kak chast sovetskogo gosudarstvennogo stsenariia: sotsiokulturnyi podkhod," *Obshchestvennyie nauki i sovremennost* 3 (2018): 113.
[64] Most Latvians could speak Russian (65.7%) while only a minority among Russians (21.2%) could speak Latvian (Ryzhakova, *Latyshskii iazyk,* 18).
[65] Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993); Hiden and Samon, *The Baltic Nations*; Purs *Baltic Facades*.
[66] Hiden and Samon, *The Baltic Nations*; Purs *Baltic Facades*.

encouraged by the policy of *glasnost*, began to openly discuss the scope and toll of repressions and deportations of the 1940s. This public discussion almost immediately led to questions about the Soviet regime's overall legitimacy, which naturally arose after the critical evaluation of the Stalinist period and the manner in which Latvia joined the USSR.

1988 the first year when, after Pugo's eventual departure for Moscow, both the position of the first party secretary and the seat of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet were occupied by ethnic Latvians who were born and raised in the republic – Janis Vagris and Anatolijs Gorbunovs.[67] In the same year, all three major forces that would define Latvia's political landscape throughout the rest of *perestroika* and into independence came into being. The Latvian National Independence Movement, (LNNK) founded on the 17 of June and headed by the purged "national communist" Eduards Berklavs, was chronologically first. It was an openly anti-Soviet organization (September it had more than 2000 participants) which considered Latvia's membership in the USSR illegitimate[68], demanded the withdrawal of the occupation troops from its territory, and called for a free election under international supervision.[69] According to the organization's position, any debates about the future status of Latvian and other languages in the Latvian SSR were meaningless, since any law, adopted by its Supreme Soviet, was considered illegitimate.[70] First, the independence of interwar Latvia had to be regained and those, qualifying as its citizens, had to elect their legitimate political representatives, who would then make decisions concerning particular issues. Already in the spring of 1989, the activists of the LNNK began creating the register of 'citizens of Latvian Republic.' A separate organization - Citizens' Committees - was established in order to perform this task. In the first year of its activity, it managed to

[67] Despite Russian surname, Gorbunovs's ancestors were, in his own words, Latvian/Latgalian. Gorbunovs himself speaks Russian with a noticeable Latvian accent.
[68] "Pozitsiia soveta DNNL v voprose o statuse Latviiskoi Respubliki. 8 sentiabria 1988," Elektronnaia biblioteka istoricheskikh dokumentov, http://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/203273-pozitsiya-soveta-dnnl-v-voprose-o-statuse-latviyskoy-respubliki-8-sentyabrya-1988-goda#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4.
[69] "Rezoliutsiia I konferentsii dvizhenii za natsionalnuiu nezavisimost Latvii, Litvy i Estonii ot 20 noiabria 1988 goda," Elektronnaia biblioteka istoricheskikh dokumentov, http://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/203274-rezolyutsiya-i-konferentsii-dvizheniy-za-natsionalnuyu-nezavisimost-latvii-litvy-i-estonii-ot-20-noyabrya-1988-goda-o-neobhodimosti-vyvoda-okkupatsionnyh-voysk-sssr-iz-gosudarstv-baltii-i-predostavlenii-etim-gosudarstvam-vozmozhnosti-svobodno-prinimat-re#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4.
[70] *Rodnik,* August 1, 1989.

collect the registration signatures of more than 700 thousand people, whose votes were then used to elect delegates to the Congress of Citizens.[71]

In contrast, the more numerous (more than 110,000 participants in all associated organizations and branches at the time of the first congress) Latvian Popular Front *(Latvijas Tautas Fronte*, LTF), which held its first congress on the 8th of October,[72] initially had a much more moderate political agenda, focusing on political autonomy, economic reforms and cultural revival. The organization was dominated by humanitarian intelligentsia and also attracted many members of the Latvian Communist Party, as well some Russians and other ethnic minorities. Journalist Dainis Ivans, who had led the 1986 campaign against the hydroelectric plant, was elected as the head of the LTF. The program of the Latvian Popular Front dedicated a lot of attention to the question of nation-building, role of language and desired language policy formula:[73]

> The LTF advocates the protection of and respect for the national customs, culture and language of all citizens of the Latvian SSR, regardless of their nationality. At the same time, the LTF defends the right of the autochthonous titular people of the republic to maintain historically shaped lifestyle and culture on their ethno-geographical territory; protect the existence of their nation, language and national uniqueness. … The LTF believes that the Latvians have the status of the autochthonous titular nation in the Latvian SSR. The republic is the only place in the world where the Latvian nation, language and culture can survive and develop. … The LTF demands the introduction of a clause, defining the state status for Latvian and the status of the language of interethnic communication for Russian, into the text of the constitution.

The third political organization, which was formed at the end of 1988 and held its first congress on the 7th and 8th of January of 1989, was the International Front of the Laborers of the Latvian SSR (commonly referred to as *Interfront*). According to *Interfront's*

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[71] Rasma Karklins, *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy: The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994), 76-77.
[72] "Rezoliutsiia uchreditelnogo siezda Narodnogo Fronta Latvii ot 8 oktiabria 1988," Elektronnaia biblioteka istoricheskikh dokumentov, http://docs.historyrussia.org/ru/nodes/203277-rezolyutsiya-uchreditelnogo-sezda-narodnogo-fronta-latvii-ot-8-oktyabrya-1988-goda-o-sozdanii-nfl#mode/inspect/page/1/zoom/4.
[73] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* September 8, 1988, 1.

leadership, its founding was motivated by the LTF's neglect of concerns of its non-titular fellows and by the overall pro-Latvian national orientation which the Latvian Popular Front embraced at its first congress.[74] From the beginning, it seems to have mostly attracted technical intelligentsia, mid- and low-level managerial personnel from industrial enterprises, which mostly consisted of non-titular groups with very few ethnic Latvians within its ranks. The official position of *Interfront* on the question of state language was official bilingualism, reflecting the established use of both Latvian and Russian in the Latvian SSR.

State-sanctioned discussion about shortcomings in policies on nationalities and language teaching was present on the pages of the republic's newspapers since 1987. The first secretary of LCP Boriss Pugo held a meeting with Latvia's students on the 17th of November 1987, during which he reflected on the questions and concerns of the students on a variety of issues. During the meeting he also addressed situation with languages:

> It is perfectly clear that Russian is and will remain the language of interethnic communication. It very pleasing that almost everyone among the Latvian youth is proficient in Russian. We will stay committed to improving the teaching of Russian. At the same time, more attention must be paid to improving the teaching of Latvian language. For the last 15-20 years we haven't taken sufficient care about this subject.[75]

In December, the LCP created within the section of ideology and propaganda a subdivision, dedicated to interethnic relations and headed by Juris Goldmanis. Goldmanis identified the achievement of effective bilingualism including the observance of the equal legal status of both languages among the main working priority of his subdivision .[76] In the same newspaper interview, published in March, 1988, he also acknowledged the importance of letters to the Central Committee as tool for collecting feedback from the general public and making policy decisions. On the 13 of January 1988, the Central Committee of the LCP organized a meeting with the party youth organization on the issue of improving the international and patriotic upbringing of the population. At the meeting the first secretary

[74] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* December 16, 1988, 1.
[75] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, October 18, 1987, 1.
[76] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, February 4, 1988, 1-2.

Boriss Pugo talked about flaws in the party's ideological work, leading to "the last year's resurfacing of hostile activities, which had a nationalist, anti-Soviet and pro-Western character." The nascent situation with languages was mentioned as one such flaw:

> Not enough attention was paid to the development of bilingualism. The need to learn Latvian would previously be mentioned only in passing. Appropriate conditions for language acquisition were not created. … At the same time, it is necessary to continue improving the teaching of Russian at schools, to clarify more thoroughly its special importance for interethnic communication and for familiarity with the cultures of our country's brotherly peoples.[77]

On the 11th of July 1988, the Supreme Soviet created a working group, tasked with reviewing suggestions and ideas about improving and democratizing the legislation of the Latvian SSR. The recommendations of this group were cited among reasons for the resolution of the Supreme Soviet's Presidium (September 29, 1988), which proclaimed the state status of the Latvian language in the republic and mandated the addition of this provision to the text of the republican constitution. Another reason, provided in the text of the resolution, was taking into account suggestions from "many public organizations, labor collectives, and the citizens of the republic." Most likely this was an implicit reference to the recent public discussion and letter exchanges on the pages of journal *Padomju Jaunatne* (Soviet Youth), which followed publication (on the 30th of August) of an article by Aina Blinkena, inviting the readers for such a discussion.[78] The journal received 9,285 letters with 354,280 signatures, supporting the provision of the status of state language to the Latvian language.[79]

This resolution, while not yet introducing the new official language policy framework, greatly sped up and streamlined its development, as it also established the deadline of January 1, 1989, for the preparation of the language law draft and its submission for public discussion. Because the republican government had already committed itself to the provision of the official status to the Latvian language in its resolution, discussion on the

[77] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* January 19, 1988, 1, 3.
[78] Aleksei Ivanov, "Proshla chetvert veka, kak latyshskii iazyk stal ofitsialnym," *Mixnews,* September 27, 2013, https://mixnews.lv/latviya/2013/09/27/proshla-4etvert-veka-kak-latyshskij-yazyk-stal-oficialnym/.
[79] Ryzhakova, *Latyshskii iazyk*, 20.

official language formula in public media essentially revolved around the desired status for the Russian language. It was either to be provided with an equal co-official status in order to reflect the multiethnic and multilingual character of the Latvian population (as was suggested by *Interfront*), or to be given a subordinate position in the hierarchy of languages in order to protect the symbolic importance of the titular language and ensure its survival, while protecting linguistic freedoms of all inhabitants of Latvia (as was advocated by the LTF).

A similar understanding of Latvia, as the home republic of the titular ethnic group, was apparently shared by the leadership of the LCP. The party's first secretary Janis Vagris, during the opening session of the Forum of Peoples of the Latvian SSR, which was organized in order to discuss and alleviate interethnic tensions in the republic, stated the following: "We have no right to forget that in Latvia, Latvians are in their home. Acting as proper hosts, we must demonstrate our hospitality, show respectful attitude towards other peoples, be balanced and reserved in small interpersonal conflicts." [80] In the course of the same session, the head of the Supreme Soviet Anatolijs Gorbunovs made following remarks about the effect of language-related issues on interethnic relations in the republic:

> Every nation values its native language and culture. If we want to strengthen mutual respect and harmony, we must equally care about opportunities for each national group to develop its language and culture. Such opportunities must be guaranteed regardless of how long the representatives of other peoples have lived and worked in Latvia. … Everyone has to empathize with the just and natural interests of the Latvian nation and of Latvia's national groups [i.e., non-Latvians] in the reality of us living side by side. I would like everyone to ask themselves two following questions. First, do we recognize that Latvia is the only place in the world where the titular Latvian nation can exist and develop (and Livs, as well)? Second, do we admit that the Latvian nation and its language are currently in danger?[81]

The language law was officially adopted on the 5th of May 1989. It included a lengthy preamble, which, similarly to Gorbunovs's earlier rhetorical questions, highlighted the

[80] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* December 13, 1988, 2.
[81] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* December 13, 1988, 2.

central role of titular language for the existence of the Latvian people and a need to grant it official status as a measure of protection:

> Latvia is the only ethnic territory in the world, inhabited by the Latvian people. The Latvian language is one of the main prerequisites for the Latvian people's existence, the maintenance and development of Latvian culture. In recent decades, the use of the Latvian language in government and public life has noticeably declined. This situation necessitates the legal definition of special measures for the protection of the Latvian language. Such protection can be guaranteed only by the state status of the Latvian language. [82]

The preamble also stressed the special position of Russian as the language of interethnic communication. Russian was also mentioned multiple times in the text of the law.[83] For example, an individual could choose either Latvian or Russian for communication with official institutions, while the employees of such institutions were obliged to have sufficient knowledge of the two languages (Article 4). Latvian had to be the primary working language of the government, supplemented by Russian if necessary (Article 7). The state guaranteed the provision of education in both Latvian and Russian at all educational levels, while making the Latvian language a compulsory subject in non-Latvian schools (Article 11).

Together with the adoption of the law on languages, the Supreme Soviet also amended the text of the 1978 constitution by inserting an article about the official status of the Latvian language. It also issued a resolution regarding the implementation of the language law, which stipulated a transitional period of two or three years for the majority of the law's articles, with a possibility of further extension. Lastly, the Supreme Soviet adopted another resolution that mandated measures for "radical improvements" in the acquisition of the

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[82] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh,* May 9, 1989, 4-5.
[83] Latvijas Padomju Socialistiskas Republikas Valodu Likums (1989), http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vidusskolai/VALODA/v9-6.htm/. Interestingly enough, the 1989 law also mentioned "the Latgalian written language" (Article 15) in the context of state support for use of language in cultural activities. The law on the state language, which replaced it in 1999, adds the following clarification: "State shall ensure the maintenance, protection and development of the Latgalian written language as a **historic variant of the Latvian language** [emphasis added]."

Latvian language, such as the development of appropriate teaching programs and materials and the organization of language courses for employees at Latvia's enterprises.

Thus, the law and other pieces of legislation established a bilingual language policy with a clearly defined symbolic and functional hierarchy of languages. While the special status of Russian was recognized, the Latvian language was clearly prioritized both as the "state" language, the primary working language of governmental institutions, and as the crucial component of the titular ethnic group's identity.

6.4 T2: Rapid Transition to Monolingual Language Policy

The 1989 language law survived in its original form for slightly less than three years. However, the political and institutional environment at the end of this short period was nothing like the one in which it was adopted. In the spring of 1989, the republican communist party still maintain political monopoly, although it already seemed to be losing ability to direct the public discourse on issues pertaining to history, culture, language, economic issues, etc., and was alarmed by a possibility of escalation of interethnic tensions. Public organizations on both sides of the ideological spectrum were already vocal and active but had no direct access to decision-making institutions. In the March of 1992, when the language law was amended by a legislature, formed in the result of the first competitive election since 1931, Latvia had already been an independent republic for more than six months.

The election to the Supreme Soviet was held on the 18th of March 1990. Despite lacking official party status, the LTF actively participated in the electoral campaign and endorsed individual candidates in all electoral districts. *Interfront* was pushed into alliance with the Latvian Communist Party, which itself was torn by internal conflicts and increasingly dominated by hardliners. The biggest promise, put forward by the LTF in its revised program (Section II, Article 5 of its text)[84] and reiterated during the campaign,[85] was the one of inclusive citizenship. This promise was part of the ongoing discussion about the way

[84] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, September 23, 1989, 2.
[85] Viktor Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia – obmanutaia strana. Pochemu NFL ne privel k demokratii?* (Riga: Baltiiskii tsentr istoricheskikh i sotsialno-politicheskikh issledovanii, 2013).

the republican citizenship would be introduced.[86] The LTF's overall strategy was to capture as many non-titular votes as possible and present the front as a viable alternative to radical anti-Soviet groups[87] on the one hand, and to the disoriented communist party on the other. A populist ideological platform[88] was one major component in the front's eventual success. Another was the fact that its supporters had already won the majority of local administrations at the 1989 municipal election, thus, providing a more favorable administrative environment for future campaigning.[89] The third element was the growing cooperation between the LTF and predominantly (but not exclusively) ethnic Latvians within the communist party. Besides, the LTF could claim credit for recent success in co-organizing an enormous public demonstration which took place on the 23rd of August 1989 (the 50th anniversary of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) in the Baltic republics. On that day, approximately two million people formed a human chain that connected the three Baltic capitals, forming the so-called Baltic Way.[90]

The election led to the resounding victory of the LTF. Deputies from the endorsement list won in 122 out of 201 electoral districts. Thus, the LTF-supported candidates made up the absolute majority of deputies (60%) in the Supreme Soviet, falling just short of the constitutional one. The detailed results, however, reveal a bit more complex picture and the heterogenous character of the front's list.[91] The head of the previous Supreme Council Anatolijs Gorbunovs ran with the front's official endorsement. He was subsequently re-elected to this position in the new parliament by pro-LTF deputies and became the *de facto* head of the republic. At the same time, six successfully elected candidates, including

[86] One of law proposals developed within the LTF developed as part would division automatic citizenship to all who had it before 1940 and residency requirement for those who moved into the republic after 1940. Despite public commitment to inclusive citizenship the leadership of the LTF (at least according to the claims of its former member) had already been quietly discussing viable constitutional arrangements in case independence happens. They mostly agreed that it should be in the form of legal restoration of interwar Latvia without the automatic provision of citizenship to all residents, perhaps, also with a path for citizenship that would mitigate the effects of mass de-naturalization. (Arnold Klaucen, *Pesennaia revolutsiia. Kak latyshskiie natsionalisty pobedili krasnykh latyshskikh Strelkov* [Saint Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2018]).
[87] Such as Citizens' Committees, which advocated for the creation of the register of the true body of Latvian citizens, based on the continuation of the interwar statehood.
[88] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, September 17, 1990, 3,6.
[89] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia.*
[90] Irina Peters, "Nachalo 'Baltiiskogo puti,'" *Radio Svoboda,* August 23, 2014, https://www.svoboda.org/a/26546600.html.
[91] "Latvijas Republikas Augstaka Padomes velesanas," Latvijas Republikas Saeima, https://www.saeima.lv/lv/par-saeimu/likumdeveju-vesture/latvijas-republikas-augstaka-padome/.

Eduards Berklavs, were, in fact, the members of the LNNK.[92] The LTF-endorsed candidates won 47 seats (38.5% of all mandates, obtained by the LTF) from electoral districts, in which they ran unopposed. This can be a good indicator of the organizational weakness and poor electoral strategy of the Communist Party and its allies, as well as of tacit endorsement of the front by sympathetic groups within the republican and regional communist elites.

The election results can also serve as an illustration of the degree and limits of ethnic polarization in the Latvian SSR. Ten LTF-endorsed deputies, or 8%, belonged to non-titular ethnic groups. In contrast, only twelve ethnic Latvians (15%) were among those candidates, who were not endorsed by the LTF (i.e., Communists Party and *Interfront* candidates, as well as 'independents'). Thus, the victorious faction was predominantly (but not exclusively) Latvian, whereas the communist and communist-adjacent opposition was dominated by non-Latvians, but still had ethnic Latvians within its ranks. Some ethnic Latvians, endorsed by the front, were also elected in majority-minority districts, whereas in some districts the LTF-supported ethnic minority candidates won, while running against ethnic Latvians. Therefore, ideological and political divisions still could cut across ethnic lines, suggesting that the analysis of Latvian politics in that period should not be based on ethnic determinism alone.

Besides the LTF's electoral victory, the constellation of the following factors shaped the character of Latvian politics for the rest of the year. The first factor was a formal split within the Latvian Communist Party, which happened shortly after the electoral defeat. The second was the continuing activity of radical anti-Soviet groups. On the 30th of April, a radically anti-Soviet Congress of Citizens was organized by Citizens' Committees. The congress established a standing Committee of Latvia, meant to be a parallel parliament. Lastly, Latvian deputies were also affected by the ongoing conflict between the leadership of neighboring Lithuania and the Kremlin after the former proclaimed the restoration of its independence in February.

On the 14 of April 1990, a special congress was held by the reformist faction within the LCP. At the congress, the "reformists" declared the establishment of the Independent

[92] Anti-Soviet activists were not homogenous either. Some chose to boycott the election altogether; but some were willing to join the parliament and cooperate with LTF.

Communist Party of Latvia, which rejected the political platform of the CPSU and supported Latvia's movement towards sovereignty and independence. The creation of an alternative communist party had two implications. First, the political alliance between part of the communist elites (who sided with the apparently winning force) and more moderate nationally oriented groups was finalized. Second, the 'old' CPL was left in the hands of ideological 'hardliners' under the leadership of Alfreds Rubiks and effectively transformed into the party of pro-Soviet counter-elites, which still controlled some important institutions, but only a minority of seats in the Supreme Soviet.

On the 4th of May 1990, the newly elected parliament adopted a declaration concerning the restoration of Latvian independence. Parliamentary faction *Equal Rights,* formed by committed communists and *Interfront* deputies, refused to take part in the vote on the document, citing its unconstitutional character, and claiming that such questions should be decided by a referendum.[93] The text of the declaration[94] condemned the Soviet occupation of Latvia and reinstated the 1922 constitution, which, however, was to be revised in order to be brought in accordance with the modern circumstances. The restoration of Latvia's independence was to be implemented gradually. During the transitional period, the Supreme Soviet would remain the sole legal political body in the republic. The norms and provisions of the 1978 constitution and other legal acts of the Soviet period would be in force until the completion of the restoration of independence, except for those going against Articles 1,2,3, and 6 of the 1922 constitution.[95] In fact, this somewhat contradictory[96] document was more a declaration of intention than full-fledged restoration of independence. It demonstrated a cautious approach to the issue, despite pressure for a more radical declaration, coming from the Latvian Committee, as well as from émigré organizations, which were increasingly involved in Latvian politics at that time. The ongoing political conflict between Lithuania and the central government in Moscow, which also involved cutting energy supplies to the republic, also affected the position of the Latvian Supreme Soviet. Upon the adoption of the declaration, the Supreme Soviet also released a flattering address to Gorbachev, containing the following passage:

[93] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, May 8, 1990, 1.
[94] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, May 8, 1990, 1.
[95] These articles pertain to Latvia's independence and form of government.
[96] It simultaneously rejected Soviet institutions and allowed their continuation.

> Mikhail Sergeevich! We understand how difficult and painful this process is for Latvia and for the Union as a whole. We understand that the achievement of real independence, lost in the times of Stalinist expansionism, is not a task which can be completed in one day or even in one year. The declaration of the 4th of May only opens the door into the transitional period – the period of honest dialog and formulation of guarantees of mutual interests.[97]

Throughout the rest of the year, the Supreme Soviet established itself as the main political body in charge of Latvia's progression towards independence. At the same time, anti-Soviet groups and organizations (Citizens' Committees, Congress of Citizens, the LNNK) were increasing their presence within the LTF and pushing it towards more radical ideological positions. The Supreme Soviet cohabitated with Rubiks's pro-Soviet LCP, which continued to influence some governmental institutions, such as police and security forces. The LCP condemned the declaration on the restoration of independence and called for Moscow's help in restoring the constitutional order in the republic. Moscow, however, while not recognizing the decision of the Supreme Soviet, accepted it as the legitimate government of Latvia.[98] Tragic events at the end of 1990 and beginning of 1991, and their interpretation by mass media and the government, de-legitimized local pro-Soviet forces in the eyes of the general public.

Between December 4, 1990, and March 5, 1991, a series of 26 explosions happened on Latvia's territory. Some of them targeted newly erected monuments to 'anti-Soviet heroes.' Others happened near communist monuments, police departments and barracks, and next to the entrance to the headquarters of the communist party. None of the explosions resulted in the loss of human life but contributed to the overall atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.[99]

On the 13th of January 1991, the LTF called its supporters to go outside and show solidarity with Lithuania (where earlier at night armed forced entered Vilnius, surrounded the TV center and the building of the Supreme Soviet, inflicting several casualties among

[97] *Sovietskaiia Molodezh*, May 8, 1990, 1.
[98] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia.*
[99] Klaucen, *Pesennaia revolutsiia.*

protestors) and, if necessary, protect Latvia against a similar violent takeover.[100] The Front's activists of all ethnic backgrounds started erecting makeshift barricades on Riga's streets. On the same day, the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party called for the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet and for an early election. In case the Supreme Soviet did not comply with this call, the LCP was going to initiate the creation of the all-Latvian Public Salvation Committee and request the introduction of direct presidential rule (that is the direct rule by Gorbachev from Moscow, as he already assumed the title of the president of the USSR) in the republic. On the 15th of January LCP organized a mass demonstration in support for the newly conveyed All-Latvian Popular Congress, which was meant to strengthen the LCP's position.[101] The uncertainty continued in the following days when Moscow did not demonstrate an intention to back the LCP. Another outburst of violence happened on the evening of January 20, 1991, when units of special forces attacked the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Riga, killing four and then retreating. Eventually, the members of parliamentary fraction *Equal Rights*, who were initially supporting the LCP, decided to resume their work in the Supreme Council on the 24 of January.[102]

In the spring of 1991, as an alternative to the planned all-Union referendum on the continuation of the USSR, which Latvia decided to boycott, the Supreme Soviet organized an all-Latvian survey about support for Latvia's independence, which was conducted on the 3rd of March. Both participation and voting affirmatively were encouraged by the leadership of the republic and by Gorbunovs himself.[103] All promotional materials and leaflets, concerning the survey were bilingual.[104] 76% percent of participants (or 64% of all eligible voters) cast their vote in favor of independence.[105]

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[100] The events of January 1991 are extensively covered in the one-hour documentary *Narodnaia krepost. Barrikadam 30* (LTV, *Narodnaia krepost. Barrikadam* 30, documentary, Lslm.lv [video with Russian translation], https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/kultura/istorija/film-ltv-narodnaja-krepost-barrikadam-30.a390362/).
[101] Klaucen, *Pesennaia revolutsiia.*
[102] Klaucen, *Pesennaia revolutsiia.*
[103] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, March 1, 1991, 1.
[104] Liba Meller, "Tridtsat let nazad narod Latvii progolosoval za nezavisimost," Lsm.lv, March 3, 2021, https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/kultura/istorija/tridcat-let-nazad-narod-latvii-progolosoval-za-nezavisimost.a395078/.
[105] "Iedzivotaju aptauja par Latvijas Republikas neatkaribu," Centrala velesanu komisija, https://www.cvk.lv/lv/tautas-nobalsosanas/iedzivotaju-aptauja-par-latvijas-republikas-neatkaribu.

Actual independence, however, was acquired in the aftermath of events in Moscow on the 21st of August 1991. The independence was proclaimed in a constitutional law, passed by the Supreme Soviet,[106] which cited the failed coup as the reason to disregard previously announced transitional period. The fact that the coup attempt was welcomed by Rubiks's LCP sealed the party's fate.[107] Rubiks himself was put under arrest on the 23rd of August.[108] The functioning of the party and associated organizations, including *Interfront,* was suspended on the 24th of August and then completely outlawed on the 10th of September.[109] On the 24th of August, Latvia's independence was recognized by the Yeltsin government Arguably, the disappearance of the fear of Moscow's interference and the destruction of the organizational basis for domestic pro-Soviet forces emboldened anti-Soviet groups, which pushed for the most radical citizenship variant, based on *jus sanguinis*. Table 6.1 summarizes these changes.

[106] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, August 22, 1991, 1.
[107] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia,* 115-118.
[108] Krasnikov 1991.
[109] "Par dazu sabiedrisko un sabiedriski politisko organizaciju darbibas izbeigsanu, 1991," Likumi.lv, https://likumi.lv/ta/id/69231-par-dazu-sabiedrisko-un-sabiedriski-politisko-organizaciju-darbibas-izbeigsanu.

Table 6.1: Political elite groups in Latvia in 1990-1991

	Pro-Soviet	**Post-Soviet**	**Anti-Soviet**
Leadership			
	Alfreds Rubiks (LCP) Sergejs Dimanis *(Interfront/Equal Rights)*	*De facto* Anatolijs Gorbunovs (LCP/the LTF)	Eduards Berklavs Visvaldis Lacis[110] (head of the LNNK since 1991)
Access to political power in the first half of 1990			
	At most, 60 MPs who did not support the declaration of the 4th of May 1990.	Parliamentary majority, government	Parallel organisations with mass popular involvement (700 000) and influence on the LTF, such as Citizens' Committees. At least 6 LNNK MPs in the parliament. Control over more radical factions of LTF.
Position before the Autumn of 1991			
	Relevant, but disorganized and disoriented after the failed August coup	Dominant	Relevant
Position after the Autumn of 1991			
	Potentially irrelevant	Relevant	Relevant, potentially dominant

[110] Former officer of the SS Legion.

Public debates about citizenship law remained the constant background of the final years of *perestroika* in Latvia as its drafting and reviewing in the parliament was repeatedly delayed. The law was finally adopted by the Supreme Soviet on the 15th of October 1991.[111] It closely resembled proposals, put forward by the Citizens' Committees, and did not include compromises, promised earlier by the LTF. The citizenship was granted to the former citizens of interwar Latvia and to their direct descendants. All other inhabitants of Latvia could be given citizenship only after preliminary registration beginning in June 1992, provided that they had lived in Latvia and maintained permanent registration (*propiska*) there for the last 16 years and had sufficient knowledge of the Latvian language (the procedures for evaluation were to be defined by separate legislation). Naturalization was not possible for military personal, stationed on Latvia's territory, for retired military officers who settled in Latvia after 1940, for those who had been sent to Latvia as employees in the Communist Party and the Communist Youth Organization, convicted criminals and those without legal income in Latvia.

The voting on the issue took place under a lot of pressure and radical demands coming from the Citizens' Committees,[112] and was accompanied by heated debates inside and outside the parliament.[113] The law collected the votes of only 94 deputies out of 139, present during the parliamentary meeting on that day (the total number of seats in the Supreme Soviet was 198). Notably, some LTF-affiliated MPs either voted against or abstained, including its former leader, Dainis Ivans.[114] According to Imants Geidens (member of parliament, affiliated both with the LTF and LNNK), who was actively involved in the law drafting and debating, the text of the law was the result of a prolonged struggle first within the LTF, and also in the parliament, where he had to fight "false patriots." Geidens also revealed that the law, in fact, had to be voted on again, due to procedural mistakes during the voting on the 15th of October. Its final version was adopted on the 18th of October, when voting on the two submitted variants of the final version took place:

[111] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, October 22, 1991, 1.
[112] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, November 30, 1991, 1.
[113] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, September 25, 1991, 1.
[114] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia,* 152.

> We had to vote twice! It was great that two variants were presented. The first variant received only 65 votes. After a brief organizational and psychological struggle, the second variant received 68 votes. I have to clarify here that 66 votes are the qualified minimum (1/3 of all deputies – 198), necessary for adopting laws in the parliament.[115]

The restrictive version of citizenship law[116] disenfranchised 37% of Latvia's population.[117] It also tilted the balance in favor of more radical anti-Soviet political faction, because it retained most of its supporters and probably gained new ones in the diaspora, which was now eligible for citizenship and voting in elections. The more moderate faction, harboring most of Latvia's post-Soviet elites within its ranks, lost the dominant position in the political system. It remained in the parliament, but any future election would mean much greater uncertainty for its political future. The pro-Soviet faction, which was already suffering from legal restrictions, lost most of its potential electoral support.

The transformation of political landscape due to the acquisition of independence and adoption of the citizenship law provided the monolingual advocacy coalition with sufficient resources to push for the revision of the 1989 language law. The first such revision happened through an amendment, passed by the Supreme Soviet on the 31st of March 1992.[118] The new redaction dropped the last paragraph of the preamble, which used to describe Russian as the language of interethnic communication. Any explicit references to Russian disappeared from its text. Thus, post-Soviet Latvia became an officially monolingual country, albeit with some concessions to minority languages. For example, in the section, concerning education, there existed references to the state-supported opportunity of receiving secondary education in "minority languages."[119] In addition to the revision of the language law, a dedicated controlling institution - the Center of State

[115] *Ielgavas Ziniotais*, October 22, 1991, 2.
[116] Judging by the manner in which it was discussed and voted, the adoption of this version was by no means inevitable.
[117] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia*, 128-129.
[118] Par grozijumiem un papildinajumiem Latvijas Padomju Socialistiskas Republikas Valodu. 1992.
[119] These references, which allowed Russian-language schools to continue functioning in independent Latvia throughout the 1990s, were more of a compromise with reality rather than an implicit recognition of some special status for the Russian language. In 1992, Latvia lacked financial and human resources to quickly dismantle the Russian-language part (40% of all school students (Vladislav Volkov, "Demografiia russkogo naseleniia Latvii v XX-XXI vekakh," in *Etnicheskaia politika v stranakh Baltii*, eds.Vadim Poleshchuk and Valery Stepanov [Moscow: Nauka, 2013], 191) of the Soviet-time system of education.

Language - was established. Its main purpose was to monitor compliance with official language policy, evaluate language proficiency and assign punishment for language law violations.[120]

Changes in language policy were congruent with the emerging public discourse on nation-building, in which an independent Latvian state would serve as the institution, protecting ethnocultural Latvian nation from extinction and re-instating the "natural" order in terms of language use.[121] This discourse has differentiated between ethnic Latvians, to whom the state of Latvia belongs, "good" minorities, who accept the dominant position of the titular nation and embraced linguistic assimilation, and "occupiers/migrants" who should either leave the country or be disciplined and punished in order to become "good" minorities.[122] This interpretation of Latvia's past and present quickly gained hegemonic status, especially after the first parliamentary election to the re-established Saeima, which took place in 1993.[123] Official state-sponsored narrative on Latvia's national history and its Soviet period has maintained its dominant position ever since.[124] 1993 carries additional symbolical significance in this relation as it was also the year in which the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia was founded.[125]

In the 1993 parliamentary election, the LTF, which by that time had already been abandoned by many previously affiliated politicians, failed to get a single seat.[126] The fact that the party was led into the election by Ivars Godmanis, who served as prime minister when Latvia went through a severe economic crisis, most definitely contributed to the

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[120] Ryzhakova, *Latyshskii iazyk*, 22.
[121] Sergei Kruk, "Concept of the Nation in Latvian Parliamentary Discourse," in *Parlamentarais diskurss Latvija. Saeimas plenarsezu stenogrammu datorizeta analize*, ed. Juris Rozenvalds (Riga: LU Akademiskais apgads, 2007).
[122] Dace Dzenovska, *School of Europeanness: Tolerance and Other Lessons in Political Liberalism in Latvia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018, EPUB], 48-50, 61-68.
[123] "5. Saeimas velesanas," Centrala velesanu komisija, https://www.cvk.lv/lv/velesanas/saeimas-velesanas/5-saeimas-velesanas.
[124] Kruk, "Concept of the Nation"; Semen Boikov, "Khorosheie vspominat ne priniato: v Pribaltike boiatsia obiektivno govorit ob istorii SSSR," *Baltnews*, March 19, 2021, https://lv.baltnews.com/Russia_West/20210319/1024668910/V-Pribaltike-boyatsya-govorit-obektivno-pro-istoriyu-SSSR.html; Ilja Nikiforov, "Politika istoricheskoi pamiati v stranakh Baltii. Opyt i sovremennoie sostoianie," in *Etnicheskaia politika v stranakh Baltii*, eds.Vadim Poleshchuk and Valery Stepanov (Moscow: Nauka, 2013), 129-133, 142.
[125] According to the museum's official site, "[a] visit to the museum is part of the diplomatic protocol of Latvia and the museum is visited by many foreign leaders, diplomats and other representatives on official visits" ("About the Museum," Okupacijas Muzejs, https://okupacijasmuzejs.lv/en/about-the-museum).
[126] Nabliudatel (pseud.), "Piatyi seim: quo vadis?" *Daugava* 5 no 181(1993): 136-138.

LTF's electoral collapse.[127] The party of the former head of the Supreme Soviet Anatolijs Gorbunovs - *Latvian Way* (a new center-right party, harboring an eclectic mixture of former party nomenklatura, businessmen and returning emigres)[128] - ended in the first place with 36 (out of 100) seats, and together with the Farmers' Union (12 seats) formed a minority government. Valdis Birkavs (LW) became the new prime minister. Gorbunovs was re-elected as the speaker of the parliament, while Guntis Ulmanis[129] from the Farmers' Union was elected as the 5th president of Latvia.[130] The coalition was considered centrist, but only in relation to the radical parties on the right, such as the LNNK (15 seats) and *Tevzemei un Brivibai* (6 seats). Formerly pro-Soviet (rebranded as pro-minority) faction, which created the party *Equal Rights,* was able to win seven seats.

The outcome of the 1993 parliamentary election outlined Latvia's political template for the rest of the decade (and, to some extent, further into the future), which was defined by party fragmentation and proliferation, name switching, and by migration of candidates across party lines before each new election. The right-leaning center (especially in the matters of nation-building and language policy)[131] remained under pressure from the populist right and far right. All left-wing and left-wing adjacent parties, including parties, dominated by ethnic Russians and Russian speaking minority members, had to scramble for the combined maximum of around 10% of seats in the parliament. Finally, most governments were formed as the result of coalitions between various parties on the right.

In 1999, the Saeima, in which the majority was controlled by a coalition of center-right and radical right-wing parties, passed a new language law.[132] The law was clearly informed by a thesis about the insufficiency of the state language status for the protection of the Latvian language, which was put forward by the advocates of monolingualism around the time of the law's adoption.[133] Equally importantly, It could also be considered a compensatory

[127] Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution,* 297.
[128] Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution,* 301.
[129] Arguably, his single most important political achievement prior to the election was him being the descendent of Karlis Ulmanis; which symbolically linked the new Farmers' Union to the interwar one.
[130] Latvian President is elected by the parliament.
[131] The "centrism" was reflected in advocating for higher naturalization quotas, more gradual replacement of Russian with Latvian in the system of secondary education, etc.
[132] Official Language Law, 1999, Likumi.lv, https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/14740-official-language-law#_ftn1&pd=1.
[133] Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Uldis Ozolins, Meilute Ramoniene and Mart Rannut, *Language Politics and Practices in the Baltic States* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 2009), 56-58.

measure for liberal amendments to the citizenship law, pushed both by Russia and by Western governments, who demanded a solution to the problem of non-citizens as prerequisite for Latvia's integration into the EU and NATO. The amendments were adopted at the referendum in October 1998.[134] Between 1991 and 1995, virtually no naturalization had been allowed. For the four years since 1995, when the process had been established, it envisioned yearly maximum quotas, and in total only 11,431 persons had been naturalized.[135] Following the liberalization of legislation, 12,427 persons were naturalized in 1999 alone.

In a way, the 1998 citizenship law amendments marked an end to the hopes of most radical Latvian nationalists for the emigration of all non-citizens from the country.[136] Instead, non-Latvian population had to be 'integrated',[137] i.e., assimilated as thoroughly as possible – first and foremost linguistically. Arguably, the 1999 language law reflected this new context. The law, which remains in force to date, opens with a list of goals:

> The purpose of this Law is to ensure: 1) the maintenance, protection and development of the Latvian language; 2) the maintenance of the cultural and historic heritage of the Latvian nation; 3) the right to freely use the Latvian language in any sphere of life within the whole territory of Latvia; 4) the integration of members of ethnic minorities into the society of Latvia, while observing their rights to use their native language or other languages; 5) the increased influence of the Latvian language in the cultural environment of Latvia, to promote a more rapid integration of society.

The law not only proclaims Latvian the sole official/state language, but also defines all languages, other than Latvian and Liv,[138] as foreign (Section 5). In general, the six-page document prescribes the use of Latvian virtually in all areas, except for private

[134] Sergei Pavlov, "Naturalizatsiia dlia vsekh. Kak Latviiu pugali novym 1940-m godom," Lsm.lv, October 23, 2018, https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/kultura/istorija/naturalizacija-dlja-vseh-kak-latviyu-pugali-novim-1940-m-godom.a296994/.
[135] "Latvijas pilsoniba uzņemtas 54 personas," Ministru kabinets, May 17, 2022, https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/latvijas-pilsoniba-uznemtas-54-personas-0?utm.
[136] Janis Juzefovics, *Broadcasting and National Imagination in Post-Communist Latvia: Defining the Nation, Defining Public Television* (Bristol, Chicago: Intellect, 2017, EPUB), ch. 1; Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia,* 235-237.
[137] Ilga Apine, "Integratsiia russkikh v stranakh Baltii: subiektivnyi factor," *Daugava* 5 (1998):134-135.
[138] Finno-Ugric Language of the tiny ethnic minority - 163 people in 2022 (Population by ethnicity at the beginning of year 1935 – 2022).

communication and religious ceremonies. Besides, it delegates the regulation of languages in education to a separate law on education. The law on education, adopted in the same year, mandated gradual transition away from teaching in Russian, first to bilingual education (i. e., teaching a portion of school subjects in Latvian) and then to Latvian as the overall medium of instruction.[139] Since then, the nature and degree of this transition has become the main area of contestation and activism by Russian minority organizations.[140]

6.5 Conclusion

A transition to prescriptive official monolingualism, designed with the goal of linguistic assimilation and predicated on the ethnolinguistic essence of the Latvian nation, was completed by the end of the first decade of Latvia's (restored) independence. Changes in this period resemble the interwar Latvia, where mostly ethnic Latvian and anti-socialist/anti-communist groups pushed towards an ethnonational state, based on linguistic unity. At that time, the decisive policy turn happened due to the dismantling of democratic institutions through the 1934 coup. At the beginning of the 1990s, it was the exclusion of population from the political process through disenfranchisement. As the result, the multilingual coalition was deprived of necessary political and symbolic resources[141] for the advocacy of the official Latvian/Russian bilingualism at the national level. Advocates for the Russian language had to resort to the minority rights discourse and turn to new venues, such as the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights, in attempts to influence the Latvian language regime.

Chronologically latest (and likely the final) attempt to introduce official bilingualism in Latvia happened in 2012. In this year, several minority parties and organizations initiated a referendum on the question of providing Russian with the co-official/state status. The proposed change needed to receive at least 50% of all eligible votes in order to be enforced. Some experts considered this goal unrealistic and found the general idea of such a referendum mostly harmful, since it would mobilize nationalist groups without achieving

[139] Hogan-Brun et al., *Language Politics*, 88-89.
[140] Gushchin, *Postsovetskaiia Latviia,* 534-546; Tatyana Bogushevich, "Protestnaia mobilizatsiia russkoiazychnogo menshinstva v Latvii," in *Etnicheskaia politika v stranakh Baltii*, eds. Vadim Poleshchuk and Valery Stepanov (Moscow: Nauka, 2013), 245.
[141] As Soviet times were officially defined as the period of occupation and interpreted accordingly in the official historiography.

any improvements in the status of the Russian language.[142] The proposal was rejected by 74.8% of the voters who showed up at polling stations (or 53% of all eligible voters).[143] Only in Latgalia the support for the proposal won with 56% of the votes (or 33% of all eligible voters in the region).

Language issue has continued to stay on the political agenda of Latvia throughout the 21st century, since underlying cleavages along ethnolinguistic lines, shaped by Latvia's sociolinguistic reality, have also remained in place. It is hard to imagine conditions under which there won't be at least some members of Russian-speaking minority, trying to challenge the state policy of prescriptive official monolingualism and growing limitations on schooling in the Russian language. Likewise, it is unlikely that radical nationalist groups would be satisfied with the continuing use of "the language of occupants" on the streets of Latvia's main cities and would stop advocating for additional measures to "protect" the Latvian language.

In 2014, a long preamble to the Latvian constitution was added.[144] Among others, it includes the following passages:

> The State of Latvia, proclaimed on 18 November 1918, has been established by uniting historical Latvian lands and on the basis of the unwavering will of the Latvian nation to have its own State and its inalienable right of self-determination in order to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture throughout the centuries, to ensure freedom and promote welfare of the people of Latvia and each individual. … Since ancient times, the identity of Latvia in the European cultural space has been shaped by Latvian and Liv traditions, Latvian folk wisdom, the Latvian

[142] Vladlen Dozortsev (interviewed by Natalia Morozova), "Eksliuziv: Aspekt grazhdanstva ostaietsia dlia Vladlena Dozortseva naiboleie tiazhelym," *Lsm.lv*, May 3, 2015, https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/eksklyuziv-aspekt-grazhdanstva-ostaetsja-dlja-vladlena-dozorceva-naibolee-tjazhelim.a127802/; Viktor Gushchin, "Khoteli kak luchshe… O negativnykh posledstviiakh iazykovogo referenduma dlia russkikh Latvii," Fond podderzhki i zashchity prav sootechestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom, April 14, 2017, https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/stati/khoteli_kak_luchshe_o_negativnykh_posledstviyakh_yazykovogo_referenduma_dlya_russkikh_latvii_2126/.

[143] "2012. gada 18. februara tautas nobalsosana par likumprojekta "Grozijumi Latvijas Republikas Satversme" pienemsanu rezultati," Centrala velesanu komisija, http://www.tn2012.cvk.lv/report-results-3.html.

[144] Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, Latvijas Republikas Saeima, https://www.saeima.lv/en/legislative-process/constitution.

> language, universal human and Christian values. Loyalty to Latvia, the Latvian language as the only official language, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, honesty, work ethic and family are the foundations of a cohesive society.

Thus, the ethnolinguistic understanding of the Latvian nation, which was previously not mentioned in the constitution, was finally added to its text. At this stage, any changes to Latvia's current official language policy can happen only in the highly unlikely case of some profound exogenous or endogenous shocks that would radically transform the social, cultural, and political foundations of the country.

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Chapter 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Research Findings and Main Contributions

The relationship between nation-state and language has been of the utmost importance. And it will likely continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future. This relationship is especially salient in the area of language policy choices made by states, since these are almost never informed exclusively by sociolinguistic reality and utilitarian considerations. Instead, such policy choices often consciously ignore or intend to alter a society's ethnolinguistic profile and existing patterns of language use.

The research question, posed at the beginning of this work, is what factors explain cross-national and temporal variation in official language policies, i.e., granting official status to one or many languages, as well as amending previously existing language-related legislation. In order to answer this research question, the dissertation have addressed the empirical puzzle of Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia - three neighboring post-Soviet countries, in which very similar official language policies, introduced shortly before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, sharply diverged already in the first decade of independence. In 1989-1990, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia adopted laws that defined their respective titular languages as "state languages," while officially recognizing Russian as "the language of interethnic communication" and guaranteeing its free use in multiple public domains. A decisive policy turn happened in Belarus, where official bilingualism was introduced through the recognition of Russian as co-official/state language. An equally dramatic policy change, albeit in an opposite direction, happened in Latvia, where Russian was stripped of any official recognition by the state. In Ukraine, the language law, adopted before independence, remained unchanged for more than two decades.

The findings of the research provide evidence for the central role of post-Soviet elites and the patterns of their political cooperation and conflict with counter-elites of different ideological backgrounds and orientations in empowering specific language policy advocacy groups, struggling for introduction or amendment of official language policies there. Changes in official language policy took place when a major realignment of the elite

groups dramatically altered policy-relevant resources of each policy advocacy coalition. The findings also demonstrate the constraining effects of the dominant discourse on nationhood and understanding of nation in this process. In the late Soviet and early post-Soviet contexts, a contradictory relationship between the ethnolinguistic foundations of national identity and the mainstream discourse of internationalism and the blurring of national boundaries defined the character and discursive limits of public debates on language policy. Among other things, such limits precluded the possibility of turning to creole nation building and adopting Russian as the only official language.

The main theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the formulation of a framework suitable for the analysis of causes and directions of changes of official language policies, which addresses and complements lacunae in explanatory power on the issue of language policy's persistence and change, identified in the nascent academic literature. Its empirical applicability is supported by the outcomes of within-case temporal comparison and the cross-national comparative analysis of the three empirical cases, included in this dissertation. The research also introduces and utilizes a novel categorical measurement for language policy outcomes, which separates instances when two or more languages enjoy equal official statuses from instances when multiple languages are officially recognized but assigned different positions within a functional and/or symbolic hierarchy. Such an ordinal qualitative measurement allows to capture variation in official language policies across the globe more adequately while maintaining the overall simplicity and universal applicability.

In addition to theory development, this research provides an empirical contribution to the field of post-communist and Eurasian studies by explaining the puzzle of language policy divergence in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, as well as by presenting a general overview of official language policies in the region. Besides, the research findings demonstrate that particular official language policy outcomes and their subsequent changes, or lack thereof, in these three post-Soviet republics were neither guaranteed nor unavoidable. This fact should discourage post-hoc rationalizations of policy outcomes as being historically pre-determined, when discussing the topic of language policy in the region and beyond.

The empirical sections of the dissertation have followed the general logic of qualitative comparative research. The within-case comparison of different periods, demarcated by

adoption and change of official language policies in each country, approximates the most similar system design and allows for keeping most of the background conditions in each country, such as historical legacy, demographics, etc., constant, and focusing only on changes in those variables which led to corresponding changes in the dependent variable of the research – the official language policy formula. The overall structure of a cross-country comparison between Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia is also based on the principles of most similar system design. These three neighboring republics shared many commonalities in their most recent social, political, economic and cultural development. Most importantly, they introduced very similar official language policies, which only later diverged along different trajectories.

The dissertation has relied on process tracing as the main method of research for each of the three empirical cases. Consequently, the research has included the theoretically guided collection, assessment, and juxtaposition of pieces of evidence that shed light on the manner in which official language policies were discussed, adopted, challenged and amended. The evidence has been collected with the help of several data-gathering technics, including the analysis of secondary sources, such as historical accounts and academic publications; current and obsolete documents and pieces of legislation; teaching materials, such as schoolbooks; speeches, interviews and memoirs by political actors; official publications and websites with relevant statistics, election results and information on members of parliament. Original data was also gathered through the analysis of periodical publications, retrieved in the course of in-person and online archival research. The collected evidence was used to construct casual narratives, reflecting the history of initial language policy formulas' adoption in Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia, and documenting sequences of events that led to successful policy changes, or lack thereof. The remainder of the conclusion first provides a brief comparative summary of casual narratives about divergent language policy changes in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, and then concludes with a discussion of implications for future research.

7.2 Language Policy Changes in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia

The cases of Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia all represent the examples of ethnocultural nationalism, developed throughout the 19th century by native intelligentsia in the absence of

continuous traditions of statehood. In all three cases, nationally oriented intellectuals targeted a predominantly peasant social base. National boundaries were drawn based on the use of local vernaculars, because language was the single most prominent element that differentiated Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Latvians from neighboring nations and from ethnically dissimilar (Polish, German, Russian) administrative, cultural, religious and economic elites.

Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Latvians acquired nation-states only in the aftermath of the First World War and Bolshevik revolution. Belarus and Ukraine obtained their statehood in the *ersatz* form of socialist republics within the Soviet Union, whereas Latvia managed to achieve full independence. However, in all three of them the process of nation-building was still incomplete and continued throughout the following decades. In Belarus and Ukraine, it was directed by the Leninist policies of *korenizatsiia*, which, among other things, promoted the use of titular languages in all spheres of public life. In interwar Latvia, nation-building also relied heavily on the ethnolinguistic understanding of nationhood, especially after the 1934 authoritarian coup.

After Latvia was annexed by the USSR in 1940, all three countries followed similar trajectories of post-war transformation, which included rapid economic development, industrialization, and urbanization. At the same time, major urban centers in these republics had been turning increasingly multiethnic and Russian-speaking, due to a combination of migration and linguistic assimilation. The Russian language became *de facto* official in the USSR and was promoted through the system of secondary education, in official communication and administrative institutions. Proficiency in Russian was encouraged and praised as a sign of social and economic progress and "brotherhood of peoples" in the Soviet Union. Russian speakers' proficiency in titular languages was neither required nor needed, as those languages were confined to a diminishing number of "appropriate" domains, such as the humanities, cultural activities and folklore. Moreover, despite the continuing prevalence of ethnolinguistic understanding of national identity in the Soviet Union and the supposedly ethnonational foundations of Soviet republics as designated "homelands" for their titular nations, the Brezhnev constitutions of Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia did not provide any explicit official status to their titular languages.

The seemingly stable status quo began to change in the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union entered a period of immense change. The policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, aimed to bring about economic, administrative, and political reforms. These reforms were accompanied by a general liberalization of public life, including a relaxation of censorship in the media and more opportunities for establishing civil society organizations. These changes also exposed the deep-rooted contradictions and inconsistencies that plagued the Soviet discourse on nationhood and language. The nature of the Soviet language regime was called into question and demands for the recognition of titular languages grew louder. In response to these demands, dedicated language laws were adopted id in the spring of 1989 in Latvia, in the autumn of 1989 in Ukraine and in the winter of 1989/1990 in Belarus. under the conditions of communist party's continuing monopoly on political institutions but weakening control over public discourse and activities of civil society organizations.

All three language laws reflected a compromise between the demands of emerging monolingual coalitions and the defenders of the continuation of the post-WWII Soviet-style bilingualism.[1] The supporters of monolingual coalitions were concerned with reversing the declining role of titular languages and argued that those languages were integral to the cultural and national identity of their respective republics. Thus, they should be given greater support through their recognition as the sole official languages. In response, the defenders of Soviet-style bilingualism postulated personal freedom in language choices, the widespread use of Russian in the increasingly multiethnic environments of the three republics, and its role as linguistic glue for the socialist "brotherhood of peoples." The compromise, supervised by the ruling communist nomenklatura, took the form of the following official language formula: The laws granted "state language" status to the three titular languages, explicitly referring to their importance for nation building, while also recognizing the role of Russian as "the language of interethnic communication" and allowing its wide use in various public domains, such as official communication, education, and the media.

[1] A summary of conditions under which the three language laws were adopted is provided in Appendix A.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union brough about the beginning of dramatic political and institutional transformations that established conditions for the divergence of official language policies in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia during the first decade of independence.[2] Latvia was chronologically the first country to amend its official language policy already in 1992. The amendment followed the adoption of restrictive citizenship law, which completed the 'neutralization' of previously relevant and quite radical pro-Soviet counter-elites. In addition to a ban on the communist party and *Interfront*, which came after a failed coup attempt in the August of 1991, those elites lost a great share of potential electoral support. In contrast, anti-Soviet counter-elites, having received an additional boost in morale due to the discreditation of the communist faction during the aborted coup and disappearance of external constraints in the result of to the acquisition of independence from the USSR, improved their electoral perspectives significantly. They also were the main beneficiaries of diaspora's greater participation in Latvian politics. A comparison between the outcomes of the 1990 and 1993 parliamentary election illustrates this shift: the share of seats, controlled by political factions, affiliated with pro-Soviet elite groups, fell from 30 to 7%, whereas the share, controlled by most radically anti-Soviet groups, rose from 3%[3] to 21%. The continuing political alliance of post-Soviet and anti-Soviet elite groups and exclusion of pro-Soviet counter-elites defined the general course of Latvia's official language policy in the 1990s, culminating in the adoption of a new, even stricter law on state language in 1999.

In Belarus, a decisive change in official language policy became possible after Alexander Lukashenka, a candidate originating from the pro-Soviet counter-elite background, won the first presidential election in 1994. Amidst ongoing conflict with the parliament, he initiated a referendum, which, among other questions, included the provision of Russian with a was held on May 14, 1995. This referendum remains the region's only example of a successful change of official language policy by the means of a direct public vote. It marked the beginning of a decisive run towards the new language policy of laissez-faire bilingualism, whose character become entranced following a crackdown on the parliament and the marginalization of anti-Soviet elites in 1996. Laissez-faire bilingualism, whose optional

[2] Appendix B summarizes the policy divergence and circumstances, under which it occurred.
[3] The figure is somewhat misleading since the majority of radically anti-Soviet political activists decided to boycott the election and instead were gathering signatures of interwar Latvian citizens.

character was re-affirmed in the new version of the language law, adopted in 1998, implied that either of the two official languages could be used in official communication, depending on the preferences of both individuals and public institutions. This turn was enabled and accompanied by the promotion of the pro-Soviet understanding of Belarusian nationhood and the rhetoric of importance of the Russian language as the language of progress, interethnic communication, and "the second mother tongue" of the Belarusians.

In Ukraine, post-Soviet elites continued to dominate the executive branch of the government, while pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet counter-elites remained relevant in the national parliament, and even more so at the regional level. No major changes in the relative positions of different elite groups in Ukraine's political system happened throughout the 1990s. The byproduct of this development was the lack of official language policy change and the 1989 language law remained in force. The first two Ukrainian presidents came from the nomenklatura background and engaged in situational cooperation with different political elite factions. Both presidents promised revisions to the nascent language policy and some improvement for the status of the Russian language but never acted on such promises. A particularly critical moment emerged when the newly elected president Kuchma and the Supreme Rada engaged in a conflict regarding power-sharing arrangements in the Ukrainian constitution. The conflict resulted in a compromise and cooperation of the president with parties, representing both anti-Soviet and pro-Soviet counter-elites. As the result, there was no major change on the subject of official language policy in exchange for the recognition of greater autonomy for the Crimea. Despite the lack of official policy changes in the 1990s, the issue of languages and the appropriate roles of Ukrainian and Russian in public life continued to be the latent sources of conflict and contention only to return to the forefront of the political agenda in the future.

Language policy developments, which have happened since the beginning of the 21st century, remain outside the primary focus of this research due to the impact of time on elite circulation and the cumulative effect of independent nation-building on discourses on nationhood. This, however, does not mean that official language policies have remained and will remain uncontested. Rather, actors advocating for language policy changes have had to search allies within sections of political elites based on evolving sets of core beliefs. For example, in Latvia, proponents of official recognition for the Russian language largely

embraced the pan-European discourse on minority rights, including legal protection of minority languages and access to minority-language schooling. The unsuccessful referendum on the official status of the Russian language, conducted 2012, most likely was the last major attempts to connect changes in official language policy to the understanding of Latvia as a multiethnic and multilingual state.

In Belarus, many activists and organizations, involved in promotion and protection of the Belarusian language, distanced themselves from the political cleavages of the early 1990s and resorted to situational cooperation with authorities, while employing discursive strategies reminiscent of those used in the early years of *perestroika.* In Ukraine, political and economic elites aligned according to pro-Western or pro-Russian orientations, while the notion of Ukrainian as the only "state language" became mostly accepted across the political spectrum. The 1989 language law was eventually replaced in 2012 under Yanukovych's presidency with Law on Fundamentals of State Language Policy. The new law kept Ukrainian as the state language – the only language with nation-wide official recognition. It also introduced the concept of a regional language. In practice, it meant a clear path for granting Russian official status in predominantly Russian-speaking regions. The flight of the incumbent president to Russia in the aftermath of mass protests in 2014, Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in the same year, and the eruption of a civil conflict in the Donbass region, in which Russia backed the local insurgent groups, all had dramatic implications for electoral politics, elite re-alignment and the future direction of official language policies. The 2012 law was repealed in 2018 by a decision of the Constitutional Court and replaced with a new language law in 2019, which introduced official monolingualism.

7.3 Implications for Future Research on Official Language Policy Choices and Changes

While the theoretical premises and findings of this dissertation provide valuable insights into the study of official language policies, it is important to note that their generalizability is restricted by the specific historical and regional contexts in which the empirical puzzle is set. Therefore, further research is needed to test and refine the argument put forward in this study. One promising avenue for such research is another comparative study of official

language policy continuation and change in the post-Soviet region. Such a study would allow for a deeper exploration of the factors that shape language policy in this context and would provide a more robust foundation for theory refinement. Three Turkic republics – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan – present a particularly interesting case for such a study. Like Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, these countries started with the same official language formula and experienced significant shifts in their official language policies since the collapse of the Soviet Union. By comparing official language policy changes in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, it may be possible to directly test the applicability of the dissertation's argument and potentially shed new light on the factors that contribute to language policy continuation and change in the post-Soviet region.

Despite region-specific limitations, the theoretical framework of this dissertation can also be a basis for research on geographic and temporal variation in official language policies, reflecting the trajectories of post-colonial nation building or nation building in the aftermath of extreme social and political shocks, such as collapse of a territorially contiguous empire or the end of a prolonged military occupation by a foreign power. Under such conditions, differences in domestic elites' attitudes towards colonial experience, shared imperial legacies, periods of common statehood or recent memories of a military occupation will most likely play an important role in shaping nation building discourses and influencing official language policy outcomes. From this perspective, a study of the legacy of history of nation building and the nature of elite divisions can provide valuable insights into the language policy choices and policy changes in the successor states of Yugoslavia, such as North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro. Understanding the contradictory influence of the Yugoslav past seems to be crucial for comprehending the current situation in the region with regards to language policies and practices, since the former Yugoslav republics share a common heritage, stemming from the promotion of the Serbo-Croatian language and an overarching Yugoslav identity against the backdrop of the country's ethno-federal design and support for ethnic particularism.

Official language policy choices and their changes in countries which used to be the colonies of major European empires comprise the largest universe of potential case for this research agenda. The explanation of cross-country and temporal variation in the officially recognized statuses of French and Arabic in France's former colonies of Maghreb –

Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco – may be one such example. Another example may be a study of differences with regards to the recognition of English as official language and the overall directions of official language policies in the former British colonies of South and South-East Asia, such as India, Myanmar, Malaysia, Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. An examination of different approaches taken by Ireland, Malta, and Cyprus towards bilingualism and promotion of native languages of these former British possessions on the European continent also constitute a promising empirical puzzle in this context.

Lastly, a cross-national quantitative study would make a valuable contribution to further testing of the general proposition regarding the impact of elite divisions along prevailing beliefs about national history and nation building on official language policy choices and policy changes in the aftermath of major institutional transformations. Such a study would establish a more comprehensive account of the presence, absence, and relative impact of factors, discussed in the dissertation's section, dedicated to alternative explanations for official language policies' spatial and temporal variation, compared to the impact of the variables, included in main argument of the dissertation.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of the T1 period for the three empirical cases.

	BELARUS	UKRAINE	LATVIA
Date	January 26, 1990	October 28, 1989	May 5, 1989
Official language policy	Hierarchical bilingualism: Belarusian is the 'state' language, Russian is the language of interethnic communication	Hierarchical bilingualism: Ukrainian is the 'state' language, Russian is the language of interethnic communication	Hierarchical bilingualism: Latvian is the 'state' language, Russian is the language of interethnic communication
Dominant discourse on nationhood	Soviet discourse on nationhood: multiethnic "brotherhood of peoples" at the Union level with renewed attention to Leninist nationalities' policies.	Soviet discourse on nationhood: multiethnic "brotherhood of peoples" at the Union level with renewed attention to Leninist nationalities' policies.	Soviet discourse on nationhood: multiethnic "brotherhood of peoples" at the Union level with renewed attention to Leninist nationalities' policies.
Mainstream narrative on national history	Positive view of the Soviet period, the importance of 1939 in national consolidation; but increasingly	Positive view of the Soviet period, the importance of 1939 in national consolidation; but increasingly vocal	Positive view of the Soviet period; liberation of Latvian people from the fascist bourgeoise regime by the Soviet

	vocal criticism of Stalin's rule	criticism of Stalin's rule	Union; but increasingly questioning of the legitimacy of the 1940 Soviet annexation
	Position of political powers, representing different elite groups:		
Status quo/post-Soviet	Monopoly on political institutions	Monopoly on political institutions	Monopoly on political institutions
Anti-Soviet	Potentially relevant (BNF)	Potentially relevant, unevenly split between more numerous and moderate (*Rukh*) and more radical groups	Potentially relevant, but split between more radical (Citizenship Committees, LNNK) and more moderate organizations (LTF)
Pro-Soviet	Latent	Latent	Potentially relevant (*Interfront*)

APPENDIX B

Summary of the T2 period for the three empirical cases.

	BELARUS	UKRAINE	LATVIA
Date	May 14, 1995	No change until July 3, 2012	March 31, 1992
Revised language policy	'Optional' official bilingualism, allowing the use of either official language. Unlike in the Soviet time, taking Belarusian as school subject is mandatory and no opt-outs are provided	No substantial revisions of the 1989 formula of hierarchical bilingualism in the first decade of independence. Inconsistent and uneven implementation of the provisions of the law across regions and years.	Official monolingualism, prescribing the use of Latvian and introducing dedicated monitoring institutions, long-term aims at eliminating Russian-language secondary education
Dominant discourse on nationhood	Hybrid, featuring ethnolinguistic elements, references to ethnic diversity and the concept of two mother tongues, but also civic/assimilationist features.	Hybrid, exhibiting ethnolinguistic and civic elements, but following a general logic that expects eventual congruence between national identity and associated titular language	Monoethnic, defining Latvia as the state of ethnic Latvians
Mainstream narrative on national	Since 1995, overall positive evaluation of the Soviet period, especially since World	Mixed attitude towards the Soviet period, strong criticism of Stalinist years	Negative attitude towards the Soviet period as the period of

history with regards to the Soviet period	War II, with only limited criticism of Stalinist years. Adoption of revamped Soviet-era flag and coat of arms.	and post-war Russification; both criticisms being especially pronounced in academic literature and teaching materials	occupation, which interrupted the existence of Latvian nation-state
	Political position of different elite groups at the time of policy change		
Post-Soviet	Relevant but subordinate to pro-Soviet counter-elites, especially after the constitutional amendments of 1996	Dominant, but with internal regional divisions and competing nepotistic networks	Dominant but in decline due to intensified competition for diminished electoral base, situational alliances with anti-Soviet counter elites
Anti-Soviet	Increasingly marginalized especially after the constitutional amendments of 1996	Relevant	Relevant and on the rise, situational alliances with post-Soviet elites
Pro-Soviet	Dominant since 1994 when captured control of the executive	Relevant	Increasingly marginalized due to diminished electoral base