Famine, Memory and Politics in the Post-Soviet Space: Contrasting Echoes of Collectivization in Ukraine and Kazakhstan

By:

James Richter
Professor of Politics
Bates College
Lewiston, ME 04240
jrichter@bates.edu

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PREAMBLE: Before my paper begins, I would like to apologize if the argument is a bit thin and needs some restructuring at this time. This paper represents a new line of research for me, and several of my conclusions are more in the line of working hypotheses than even preliminary conclusions. Therefore, I ask that you not cite anything from the work, and I welcome any and all criticisms.

Introduction

The Soviet collectivization campaigns of the early 1930s brought death to millions throughout the USSR, but Ukrainians and Kazakhs suffered the most. According to best estimates, well over 3.5 three million people in Ukraine died in the years 1930 and 1933, mostly from starvation. In Kazakhstan, the deaths were fewer but proportionately larger: about 1.5 million people died in campaigns to settle the traditional nomadic population, more than a quarter of the Kazakh population at the time. The population loss associated with these deaths, combined with a massive exodus into China to escape the famine, left ethnic Kazakhs a minority in Kazakhstan until after independence.

Given these horrific numbers, it is striking how differently these events are commemorated in the two countries. In Ukraine, collectivization is usually remembered as Holodomor, a deliberate, planned genocidal policy that deliberately targeted ethnic Ukrainians. In Kazakhstan, the famine occupies a far less prominent place in the public sphere, and is far more likely to be described as a tragedy than a

1 Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands: Europe Between Hiter and Stalin (new York: Basic
2 Sarah Cameron, “The Hungry Steppe,: Soviet Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Famine, 1921-1934” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2010), 9
crime.

To some extent, these differences in commemoration reflect real differences in how collectivization was conducted in the two republics. The evidence with regard to Ukraine has persuaded many scholars that Soviet policies during collectivization deliberately targeted Ukrainians more than others. According to this argument, the Kremlin did not trust the Ukrainian population to support Soviet rule, particularly in the event of war, and used mass starvation to destroy all pockets of potential resistance. These authors describe how, by late 1932, Stalin and his circle understood very well that their policies had brought starvation and death to the Ukrainian countryside, yet did nothing to stop it. On the contrary, the regime officially denied that such hunger even existed, escalated demands for even harsher requisition policies, and prevented the starving farmers from escaping either to the cities or to Poland.

In Kazakhstan, too, Stalin understood well the effects of his policies and did nothing to stop them. Yet most historians do not believe Stalin deliberately set out to weaken or crush Kazakhs as an ethnic group. Rather, they maintain Soviet officials pursued many of the same policies in Kazakhstan as they did in other parts of the country, but did not acknowledge or, more likely, did not care about the disproportionate suffering these policies caused among nomadic Kazakhs. As Niccolo Pianciola writes, local officials were responding to party directives that emphasized the need to collect grain for the urban populations and for export.

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3 Snyder presents a forceful version of this argument in *Bloodlands*, 32-53.
Given the harsh environmental conditions of the steppes, however, the Kazakh nomads had developed a way of life that produced livestock and consumed grain. Given that the Bolsheviks already considered nomadism a “backward” way of life, local officials then had every incentive to force the local Kazakhs to abandon their nomadic ways, give up their livestock to more “productive” use on collective farms, and settle down to grow grain themselves, all of which resulted in a collapse in production. As Niccolo Pianciola writes, “the responsibility for the mass deaths that occurred... hovers somewhere on the border between state and society, where minor officials handled the center’s directives for their own ends.”

It is unlikely these historical differences explain the divergence in public memory, however. The nuances of historical interpretation have rarely determined how history is commemorated. The official narrative of the Holodomor in Ukraine has changed several times since independence in 1991. Moreover, the most forceful accusations against Stalin’s policies have originated in the Ukrainian West, which had not been part of the Soviet Union in 1933, whereas elected officials in Kharkiv, one of the regions hardest hit by the famine by collectivization, have tended to play down the Soviet Union’s genocidal designs. Indeed, even today scholars disagree about the goals and intentions of collectivization in Ukraine. While some insist it deliberately targeted ethnic Ukrainians, others point out that other groups suffered from collectivization as well, including Russians. Noting that death rates in the urban areas were much lower than in the countryside, some also suggest the policy

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was aimed at potential resistance among independent farmers, rather than at ethnic Ukrainians.

Clearly, the choice of commemorative strategies reflect the perceived needs of the moment as much if not more than actual historical events. The politics of memory has become a prominent subject of research in such diverse fields as history, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies, but strangely the topic has received relatively little interest in political science. The studies that do exist can generally rely on two very broad kinds of explanations: the instrumentalist strategies of political elites or the historical and cultural forces that constrain and shape such strategies.

These paper examines two relatively recent theories explaining variations in public memory across time and place in Central and Eastern Europe: a model developed by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik in the recent edited volume, Twenty Years after Communism, and a model developed by Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse in their article, “The Great Divide,” published in World Politics in 2007. Both models recognize the presence of contemporary political calculation as well as cultural and historical factors in determining the patterns of public memory in different society. The Bernhard and Kubik model tends to privilege an instrumental explanation, however, whereas Darden and Grzymala-Busse

5 Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, eds., Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2. As Bernard and Kubik further note, most of the literature that does exist focuses on transitional justice.

emphasize more historical factors. The explanations are not mutually exclusive, but tend to overlap. Together, they are quite powerful.

**The Politics of Public Memory.**

This paper focuses on public memory. Public memory, as Bernhard and Kubik define it, “combines most importantly the official memory strategies propagated by holders and competitors of state power, as well as the cultural memory propagated within the public sphere, such as media, movies, memorials.”

Unlike individual memories, public memory requires an active effort to remember something in a particular way: Monuments do not build themselves; museum exhibitions do not collect themselves; and people do not spontaneously appear at national celebrations. Choices are made, and resources expended, to present history in a particular way. Also, unlike memories circulating among families and other social networks outside the public eye, public memories are designed to be available to a broad section of the population, and even, as in the cases of monuments or school textbooks, imposed on a public sphere that cannot easily avoid them.

In short, memory does not just happen; it is work. But what kind of work does it do? Although public memory has been an essential part of human societies for millennia, it arguably became increasingly important in the 18th and 19th centuries with the emergence of a public sphere. As states struggled to expand their legitimacy within a broader polity, public commemorations aimed to provide an overarching narrative upon which individual members of a population could attach

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7 ibid., 8.

their own life story, creating thereby a “memory community” that shared a common notion of where they came from and, implicitly, a sense that they share the same future. Such a narrative provides a community with roots deep in the past and lends it a degree of permanence and stability beyond the vagaries of contemporary politics. It also helps define the boundaries of that community (who is included? who is excluded?) and explains how the community should relate to groups outside those boundaries (who is a friend or ally? who is not?). Finally, such a memory also provides guidelines as to how people should respond to challenges in a way consistent with that identity. Does one confront an opponent even against overwhelming odds? Does one negotiate?

Not surprisingly, the construction of a public narrative is often a highly politicized and contested process. The narrative helps to frame the public debate to make some policies seem more appropriate and desirable, while rendering other policy choices less likely or even unthinkable. The politics of memory, therefore, would seem to be a subject ripe for comparative analysis in political science, but, as mentioned in the introduction, such analyses are few and far between.

An important exception to this absence is found in the volume edited by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, Twenty Years after Communism. In this book, Bernhard and Kubik outline a theoretical model to explain why, in 2009, different countries commemorated the fall of communism in their countries so differently.

Observing these commemorations throughout Central and Eastern Europe, they identify three different types of “memory regimes,” defined as “the dominant pattern of memory politics that exists in a given society at a given moment in
reference to a specific highly consequential event or process.” First, a “fractured” regime occurs when the public memory around a given topic is contested. This occurs when there is at least one “mnemonic warrior” in the public debate. A mnemonic warrior presents an absolutist view where one true version of history exists, and draws a sharp distinction between those within the memory community and those outside. In the warrior narrative, the environment is usually regarded as hostile, and the community itself is often regarded either as the victim of powerful forces outside the community, or victorious over those forces. To the extent that historical evidence suggests events or behaviors that run contrary to the narrative—for example arguments that members of a group had actively cooperated with the NKVD or the Nazis—then the evidence must be refuted or somehow justified—for example, with arguments that collaborators were forced to do it or that they were traitors who did not represent the nation as a whole. Members of the community who offer an alternative narrative are stigmatized as traitors and excluded from the community’s ranks.\(^9\)

Second, a “unified” regime exists where there are no public contests over the historical narrative regarding the event or process in question. A unified regime exists when all relevant actors are “mnemonic abnegators” A mnemonic abnegator is generally a pragmatist who regards the past as largely irrelevant to resolving today’s problems. The choice to play down the past in this way may reflect widespread social consensus about the interpretation of the past, or it may reflect a

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\(^{10}\) A complete explication of Bernhard and Kubik’s model can be found in Bernhard and Kubik, “Theory of the Politics of Memory,” in Bernhard and Kubik, *Twenty Years*, 7-36.
pragmatic decision by those actors not to engage in memory politics because it might disrupt social stability.\textsuperscript{11} An example of the latter might be the decision of Austrian leaders—among many others—throughout much of the postwar period to depict themselves as a victim to the Nazis, simply because to question the narrative would cause disruptions in society.

Finally, a “pillarized” regime describes a situation where competing narratives coexist, but that “toleration of differences of opinion or indifference over memory issues will prevent the partisan politicization of such interpretations.”\textsuperscript{12} A pillarized regime must consist of at least one “mnemonic pluralist.” Pluralists, as the name implies, are willing to tolerate the existence of multiple interpretations of the past within a given community, and are therefore ready to negotiate with the proponents of other narratives about how important events of the past are commemorated.\textsuperscript{13}

Needless to say, this taxonomy of mnemonic actors and memory regimes is composed of ideal types where authentic cases are generally more complicated. As we will see later on, however, the categories are extremely useful in describing public memory in different countries.

To explain why political actors should choose to become mnemonic warriors rather than pluralists, or vice-versa, Bernhard and Kubik present a model based on the instrumentalist assumption that politicians are strategic actors who draw on public memory to enhance their political influence. Based on this assumption, they

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 11-14.
then propose two sets of constraints that politicians must consider in making these choices: the structural constraints and incentives placed on them by the existing political system, its institutions and political parties; and the cultural constraints and opportunities originating from pre-existing discourses of memory found within society.\textsuperscript{14}

The authors offer three structural variables that influence politicians’ strategies: the type of state socialism existing prior to the transition, the mode of transition from state socialism to something else, and the depth of political cleavages that exist at the time of commemoration.\textsuperscript{15} The first two variables address the likelihood that political contestation of national narratives would have occurred prior to independence—with the assumption that a more reformist communist regime or a more contested extrication from communism would be more likely to produce effective challenges to the existing narrative under communism, and so would more likely end up in a pillarized or fractured regime. The third variable, the depth of cleavages at the time of commemoration, largely refers to the ability and the motivation of political actors to produce contesting narratives in the political competition. The greater the divide between the actors, the more likely they will be motivated to adopt a warrior stance.

Perhaps the most interesting hypothesis arising from these structural variables concerns those regimes dominated by a single party of power, such as the countries of Central Asia. According to Bernhard and Kubik, such regimes will choose a statist political strategy that will choose unity over divisiveness, and

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 19-22
abnegation over conflict or pluralism. Indeed, because parties of power generally include a significant population of former members of the nomenklatura, it makes sense such a party would like to down play the repressive elements of the previous regimes and strengthen its accomplishments in economic development. As Bernhard and Kubik argue, “If actors see no political advantage in political competition from politicizing memory issues, then a universal stance of abnegation is possible.”

If structural constraints help explain why political actors decide to contest, tolerate or potentially suppress conflicting narratives, they do not explain what the content of these alternatives might be or what values they hope to project. Nor do they explain why some narratives are successful in mobilizing support while others are easily marginalized. To explain this, Bernhard and Kubik offer a set of cultural constraints on political actors defined “a historically formed repertoire of cultural (mnemnonic) forms and themes.” If the politician goes outside this repertoire of available narratives, they argue, their appeals will seem alien to voting public and likely fail. Cultural constraints, in other words, set the outer limits of what might be available to political entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, however, Bernhard and Kubik do not adequately develop the cultural constraint variable. They do not say what these constraints consist of, where they come from, when they are more or less salient, or how or whether they can change. They do suggest that a fractured regime is more likely to occur with the existence of linguistic, ethnic or religious cleavages.

16 ibid. 27.
17 Ibid. 29.
18 Ibid., 22.
but those categories remain too general to be useful, as the cases below will demonstrate.

In this paper, I argue that an effective public memory must form part of a broader narrative that people recognize as explaining their own current circumstances. Such a narrative must be compatible with embedded cultural and institutional practices that help organize the people’s everyday life, and must provide a reason either to maintain these practices as they already exist, or alternatively to alter them towards a different future. For example, when Russian liberals highlighted the Novgorod veche to make the case for Russian democratic traditions in the 1990s, it was easily drowned out by narratives that emphasized a time of troubles and the need for a strong hand, because those dominant narratives simply made more sense to most people in the turbulent 1990s. Indeed, one may wonder to what extent public memories are simply exploited by contemporary politicians, as the model by Bernhard and Kubik seems to imply, and to what extent the existence of such narratives themselves shape the strategies and the goals these politicians choose to pursue. In other words, to what extent, and under what circumstances, do the cultural constraints simply complement the structural constraints, and to what extent, and under what circumstances, are the cultural constraints define the structural contraints?

One of the most powerful models explaining how cultural and historical constraints help form the structure that politicians must observe can be found in a
study by Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse. These authors begin by examining the widely held argument, roughly similar to the first two structural constraints mentioned in Bernhard and Kubik, that the successful transition from communism to democracy in places like Poland and the Baltic countries was best explained by the presence of an organized liberal opposition before the collapse of the communist regime which then became victorious in the first elections. But if this is true, they ask, where did the opposition come from in the first place? Observing that a common features of these oppositions was the presence of a strong nationalist discourse that somehow identified communist rule as foreign and unacceptable, they then asked what the origins of this type of discourse might be. They answer this question by asking, first, whether mass literacy in the community first occurred prior to the communist regime or under the communist regime, and, second, what was the value content of the nationalist ideology taught to that first literate generation?

The emergence of a literate population, they argue, enabled elites to construct the memory community associated with political nationalism. Only with mass literacy could the elite create more standardized discourses and communicate them to a large portion of the population without face-to-face contact. Mass literacy also “dramatically increased a society’s capacity to record and convey history, literature and myth.” Moreover, they argue the national identity inculcated at the time of this first literate generation was particularly important in that it

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19 Darden and Grzymala-Busse, “The Great Divide.”
20 Darden and Grzymala-Busse, “The Great Divide,” 98.
“immunized” that generation and its followers against subsequent efforts to introduce alternative versions of the national narrative.\textsuperscript{21} And in fact, the authors found a strikingly high correlation between those societies where mass literacy had emerged prior to communist rule and the emergence of an opposition to the communist regime in the late 1980s.

To understand why such an opposition would favor a democratic regime, however, it was not just the timing of mass literacy but also “the content of national values that advance shared understandings of economic and political development.”\textsuperscript{22} This content, they argue, established three criteria with which elites evaluated communist legitimacy:

“First, was communism a domestic development or was it the imposition of an occupying force? Second, was its sponsor, the Soviet Union, a historical enemy or a more friendly power? Third, and most important, did communism represent a political, cultural and economic advancement for the nation or was it an antitmodern step backwards?”\textsuperscript{23}

As we will see, combining these two studies, Bernhard and Kubik and Darden and Gzymala-Bussse, explains a great deal of the variation in the memory regimes in Ukraine and Kazakhstan surrounding the devastating famines of 1931-1933. My own version of the historical and cultural constraints adds only two small qualifications to the arguments presented by Darden and Grzymala-Busse. First, 

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. 100.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 102.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
although they demonstrate that the timing of mass literacy is a variable with powerful predictive value, I would argue that the onset of mass literacy is merely an indicator of a much broader process of nation-building to legitimate the state before an expanded polity. Is it the schooling that gives the boundaries of the community such salience and stability, or is it the civic institutions, the political parties, the urban environments and places of employment? In some cases, mass literacy in a particular language may be the result of mass political mobilization in a given administrative unit, rather than the other way around. Clearly, given the complexity of the processes at work here, it is impossible to say which of these processes might have had a greater impact under which circumstances. Rather than focusing on mass literacy as an isolated causal variable, then, I focus (so far, very impressionistically) on the institutions and discourses in place when the national identity of a given community first became a category of social significance beyond a small elite. In other words, how was the national identity defined, and what institutions supported this definition, when the community first began to think of itself as a distinct nation?

Second, although the initial definition of national identity is often durable, as Darden and Grzymala-Busse contend, it is so because of institutional and discursive practices that reinforce and reenact the symbols and behaviors associated with that identity across generations. This does not always happen. As Fredrik Barth has argued many years ago, the boundaries between groups may stay stable even as the
content them changes significantly. To establish continuity in the discourses of that first literate generation, then, it is necessary to demonstrate how they have been repeatedly reinforced by changing institutions and practices.

**Memory Regimes in Kazakhstan and Ukraine**

In Soviet times, the memory regimes surrounding collectivization in Ukraine and Kazakhstan were nearly identical. Collectivization was seen as a largely progressive process that introduced more advanced property relations into the countryside even as it extracted the resources necessary for rapid industrialization. The issue of mass starvation rarely appeared in public, and when it did, it was usually attributed to the resistance of kulaks, bad weather, or, more rarely, the overexuberance of local officials. Only during the *perestroika* years of the late 1980s did the historians and journalists begin to explore the extremity of the suffering in both these countries. Even then, in keeping with the overall narrative of early *perestroika*, most accounts described the violence of the collectivization drive as a departure from Leninist norms that could be attributed to Stalin’s personal failings rather than from more systemic failings of the regime itself.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, elites in both Ukraine and Kazakhstan faced the task of creating a collective identity around a new state. They needed to find a narrative that rooted the community more deeply in the past than 1991. In both states, the memory of trauma under collectivization played an important, but

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very different role in creating this narrative. In Ukraine, controversy about Soviet intentions during collectivization arose even before the collapse of the communist regime, leading to a fractured regime. In Kazakhstan, by contrast, a more unified regime arose that was more likely to regard the famine as a tragedy and a catastrophe, but less likely to attribute blame.

**Ukraine**

In Ukraine, the loosening of communist control over the public sphere quickly gave rise to a counternarrative to official accounts of collectivization that described the Holodomor as a deliberate, planned effort by Stalin and the Soviet leadership to destroy, or at least severely weaken, the Ukrainian nation. This argument actually had first been published in the literature of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States in 1983, on the occasion of the Holodomor’s 50th anniversary. Then, in 1986, James Mace published a report, commissioned by the US Congress in 1985, that largely supported these accusations. The genocide argument gained even greater credibility after the publication of Robert Conquest’s magisterial book on collectivization, *Harvest of Sorrow*, appeared later that year.

Though academic historians in Ukraine responded to the genocide argument with constraint and some skepticism, the narrative was taken up as early as 1986

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26 Wilfried Jilge, “Holodomor und Nation: Die Hungersnot im ukrainischen Geschichtsbild,” *Osteuropa*, 58:12 (December, 2004), 166. Although Jean-Paul Himka suggests the term Holodomor was older still, citing evidence that a Galician partisan in World War II took on Holodomor as his nom-de-guerre. See Jean-Paul Himka, “Encumbered Memory: The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. 14:2 (Spring, 2013), 420.
among writers and other intellectuals, including the Ukrainian Writers’ Union.\(^{27}\) It then entered into the political sphere at the founding congress of Rukh in September, 1989, where the party’s program spoke of the deaths in 1932-33 as the consequence of an “artificial famine” arranged by the Soviet system.\(^{28}\) By the time elections for parliament and many local elections took place in 1990, the genocide thesis had become commonplace at demonstrations and other campaign events.

At this time, too, the accusations regarding Holodomor became embedded in a broader narrative of Ukrainian history that emphasized its role as victim of Russian and Soviet Imperialism. The most controversial aspect of this narrative, as it turns out, was not the collectivization as genocide thesis, but rather the glorification of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalism (OUN) and particularly the Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA-B), with its leaders Stepan Bandera and Roman Shutskevich. Both these leaders had collaborated with the Nazis against the Red Army at least at the beginning of the war, and had been involved in brutal partisan warfare after the war had ended. They have also been accused of participating in the Holocaust and the massacre of Polish civilians in Volhynia. The nationalist narrative either refuted such allegations (regarding the massacre of civilians) or justified their actions as a defense of or in retaliation for attacks on Ukrainians. In other words, the nationalist narrative, coming mostly out of the Ukrainian West, was a warrior narrative that drew a sharp line between an embattled Ukrainian nation in a hostile political environment, glorified the Ukrainian nation as a heroic victim

\(^{27}\) Jilge, “Holodomor und Nation,” 150-1.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
and attributed all arguments that would diminish this narrative to the work of outside forces.

After independence, the argument that the Holodomor was the result of deliberate Soviet policy became widely accepted both by politicians and historians as part of the national narrative. Even some officials with links to the Soviet regime offered supported the narrative, as it gave them an easy way to explain their conversion from communism to nationalism. In 1992, President Kravchuk told reporters that had he known the truth about the Holodomor while Party Secretary, he might have left his political career.29

The question of how the Holodomor should be placed in a wider narrative of Ukrainian history, however, remained open to debate. Not everyone accepted the nationalists’ warrior narrative. In those areas of the country that had been part of Russian empire prior to the revolution, and particularly in the more Russified, more industrialized southern and eastern provinces of the country, many people resisted efforts to describe the mass starvation as part of an ethnocentric assault by Russians against the Ukrainian people. In 2007, for example, a survey by the Kyiv Institute of Sociology found that only 63% of the population supported the Holodomor as genocide thesis, and only 33% in the mostly Russian-speaking eastern provinces, whereas in Western and Central Ukraine more than 70% of the respondents agreed with the genocide thesis.30

29 ibid., 153.
In the first decade of Ukrainian independence, Presidents Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma favored rhetorical strategies that sought to mitigate the contradictions in national historical memory. While accepting the thesis of the Holodomor as a deliberate assault on the Ukrainian people, for example, Kravchuk did not use the memory as a weapon against Soviet and Russian imperialism, but instead simply stated that the Holodomor demonstrated the importance of openness and democracy in general. President Kuchma was particularly interested in toning down the memory wars in the name of a unified Ukraine. Although his rhetoric calling for unity would seem to identify him as a mnemonic abnegator, his willingness to support elements of both narratives also indicate something towards mnemonic pluralism. While criticizing the Soviet regime for manufacturing a famine that killed millions of Ukrainians, for example, he also adopted the Soviet narrative of the victorious Red Army in the Great Patriotic War. More importantly, he allowed local politicians to commemorate the past according to their own regional preferences.

After the Orange Revolution, the new President Viktor Yushchenko made it a priority to enshrine the nationalist narrative as the dominant narrative throughout the entire country. He established the Institute of National Remembrance in 2006 to be the guardian of historical truth, declared 2008 to be the “Year of Commemoration of the Holodomor Victims” and gave the Institution of National Remembrance, along with the Ukrainian Security Service (USB) the task of coordinating the celebrations.

across the country. He also required every region to create organizational committees to gather information for a regional “Book of Memory,” which books would then be compiled in Kyiv.\textsuperscript{33} More controversial, his administration also recognized Stepan Bandera as a “Hero of Ukraine” in 2010 and pressured local officials to rename streets after him and other partisan “heroes.”

Not surprisingly, Yushchenko’s efforts prompted a strong backlash among local politicians in the South and East. In 2007, for example, when the parliament debated a resolution declaring the Holodomor an act of the genocide perpetrated by Soviet regime against the Ukrainian nation, the Party of Regions (PR), which dominated the South and East, instead proposed “to define the Holodomor as a crime of Stalin’s regime against humanity and as a tragedy of the Ukrainian people, arguing that the “genocide thesis” would split Ukrainian society and alienate Russia.”\textsuperscript{34} Zhurzhenko also documents the political struggle within the Kharkiv region between the region’s governor, Arsen Avakov, an advocate of the nationalist line appointed by Yushchenko, and the Mayor of Kharkiv city, Mikhail Dobkin, an elected official from the Party of Regions. Dobkin took several highly visible steps to oppose Avakov’s commemorative strategy and emphasize his support of the Soviet narrative of the Red Army, including an effort to “expel the UPA memorial to Ivano-Frankivs’k.”\textsuperscript{35} He also criticized the use of Holodomor as a vehicle to attack Russia and the Soviet Union: “We know that the Kharkiv oblast’ suffered more than others. But after this awful famine, what did the people from our region do when the war

\textsuperscript{33} Zhurzhenko, “Capital of Despair,” 611.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 602.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 617.
started? They did not take arms to shoot Soviet soldiers in order to take revenge for the famine of the 1930s.” The backlash against Yushchenko’s memory campaign continued when Viktor Yanukovich assumed the Presidency in 2010, when he quickly took steps to rescind the honors bestowed upon Bandera and Shutskevich under Yushchenko.

Not surprisingly, after the Euromaidan protests and the Russian incursions into the Crimea and Donbass, the nationalist rhetoric again came to dominate the Ukrainian public sphere. At the opening of the Holodomor Monument in Washington, DC in November, 2015, President Poroshenko declared that “Again, as in times of Holodomor, the Kremlin is trying to wipe Ukraine off the map. Death is coming from the East once again.” More notably, the new parliament enacted the law for decommunization of Ukraine, which called for monuments and street names honoring Soviet officials (except for war monuments) to be removed from Ukrainian territories. Finally, as Volodymyr Kulyk has documented, Russia’s actions in Ukraine has caused the nationalist narrative to become more widely accepted throughout unoccupied Ukraine.

36 Ibid.
Kazakhstan

Unlike Ukraine, the memory regime in Kazakhstan has remained consistently unified for the entire period since 1991. As in Ukraine, the famine first became a topic of discussion in the public sphere in the late 1980s and earlier 1990s. Most of these early publications simply described the extent of the catastrophe on the Kazakh people and economy. Both Sarah Cameron and Bhavna Dave state that in the late 1980s and early 1990s there were “wide discussions” in both the scholarly and popular literature about the genocidal nature of sedentarization.39 Until the mid 1990s, most of the literature continued to place the collectivization in a positive light both for its social consequences and its role in industrialization.40 At any rate, talk of a genocide never seems to have entered into the political debate as it had in Ukraine.

Over the years the scholarly literature seems to have gradually distanced itself from the Soviet narrative. By the late 1990s, there was more open discussion of collectivization as a “catastrophe” created by Soviet policies. Most of the blame, however, was put on Filipp Goloshchekin, the first secretary of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic at the time, who was accused of taking a particularly harsh stance in Sovietizing the Kazakh steppe as a means to improve his political standing in Moscow.

39 Cameron, “The Hungry Steppe,” 28; Bhavna Dave, Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language, and Power. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 51,55. Rudolf Mark, on the other hand, suggests such rhetoric, at least in the scholarly literature, was more qualified, suggesting, for example, that the policy “had the appearance of genocide.” See Rudolf A. Mark, “Die Hungersnot in Kazachstan: Historiographische Aufarbeitung im Wandel,” Osteuropa, 58:12 (December, 2004), 127.
40 Mark, ibid., 121.
By the early 2000s, Kazakh historiography of the famine offered a more sophisticated critique: in this view, collectivization was a reflection not only of Stalin’s crimes but of the Soviet system as a whole. Acting on its totalitarian logic, collectivization represented an effort to force the very heterogenous societies on the peripheries of the Soviet regime into a more homogeneous model of social organization, and so make them easier to rule.\(^{41}\) At no time, according to Mark, did the historical literature suggest that Soviet policy met the international legal standards of genocide, as was frequently argued in Ukraine.\(^{42}\) More frequently the famine has been referred to a tragedy of even a catastrophe rather than a genocide. And when the word genocide has been used to describe the famine, it is usually described as “Goloshchekin’s genocide,” rather than Stalin’s.

All the scholars agree that in recent years the famine has received a lower profile in the public sphere than it had previously\(^ {43}\). Sarah Cameron, in a particularly poignant description, tells of having to ask directions in Almaty to find the city’s only monument to the victims of the famine, located in a neglected corner of a city park.\(^ {44}\) Finally, on May 31, 2012, the government opened a significant memorial to the victims of famine in Astana, but even this gesture was diluted by entitlement the monument as a memorial not only to victims of the famine, but to all victim’s of Stalin’s repressions. Also, Nazurbayev made clear in his remarks on this occasion that he did not want public memory to create any fissures in the multiethnic population:

\(^{41}\) Mark, “Die Hungersnot in Kazachstan,” 126.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 127.
\(^{43}\) The one exception is the work of Talas Omarbekov.
\(^{44}\) Cameron, “The Hungry Steppe,” 290-191.
“Nine years ago during the I Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Kazakhstan was referred to as the land of peace and consent. One of the backbones of the consent is our unanimity in perception of timeless values of goods, peace and justice.  

“Not only Kazakh people had suffered from the famine. 7 million people, of whom 1.5 million were in Kazakhstan died of starvation in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. We have gathered to commemorate the peoples’ memory and open the monument to Kazakhstanis fallen from starvation.”

Evaluating the Theoretical Models

In this section I apply the theoretical models by Bernhard and Kubik, and by Darden and Grzymala-Busse to explain why Ukraine and Kazakhstan remember collectivization and famine so differently. I begin with the three structural constraints put forward by Bernhard and Kubik, which, taken together, do a good job predicting the outcomes. Given that both Ukraine and Kazakhstan had been part of the Soviet Union, the first structural constraint discussed in the model, namely the nature of the former communist regime, does not really apply.

The second structural variable, namely the mode of extrication from communism, does have significant explanatory power. In Ukraine, the loosening of

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46 Kazakh President laid flowers to Victims of Famine, Kazinform International, 31 May, 2012; http://www.inform.kz/eng/article/2468314
constraints under *perestroika* enabled nationalists to inject into the political sphere a warrior narrative around collectivization, and indeed about Ukrainian history as a whole. This narrative depicted the Soviet Union—and the Russian empire before that—as a hostile power determined to subordinate, or even more, to swallow up, its Ukrainian neighbors. This narrative entered the political debate around contested elections of 1990 and the referendum for independence in 1991. Thus, by the time of independence, the Soviet narrative had already been severely weakened.

But even though 90% of the electorate voted for independence in 1991, the nationalist narrative never found universal acceptance throughout the country, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Most of the official rhetoric at the national level still accepted the genocide thesis in one form or another, but even at this level people disagreed to the extent the Holodomor was aimed at destroying Ukraine as a nation. At the regional level, the disagreement went deeper. As Jean-Paul Himca has argued: “The great difference between the Centre-West and the east-South of Ukraine is that the former conceives of the famine as a crime and the latter conceives it as a tragedy.”

Over the course of the post-communist period, the political contest over these competing narrative also supports the model’s third hypothesis, namely that a greater rift between contemporary political factions will increase the likelihood of a fractured regime. Both Kravchuk and particularly Kuchma, both of whose ruling coalitions included politicians with close links to the Soviet past, did their best to mollify the differences by appealing to elements of both narratives. The Orange

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Revolution, by contrast, polarized the country to a much greater degree, fracturing the nation’s memory regime beyond repair. Where Kuchma had allowed local politicians to emphasize their own version of the past, Yushchenko tried to make the nationalist narrative the standard official history throughout the country. This effort, in turn, provided new ammunition to his opponents at the local level, and so public memory, to a much greater degree than it had been previously, became an important fault of the political landscape.

In Kazakhstan, by contrast, the communist elite remained loyal to the Soviet Union until the very last moment, and then continued to dominate Kazakh politics throughout the post-communist era. Whatever arguments about the famine as genocide appeared in the scholarly or even the popular press under perestroika never made it the political arena. After independence, as Bernhard and Kubik’s model would suggest, the elites were abnegators who opted for a unified memory regime that would support pleas for social stability and continued to focus on issues of economic development rather than national identity.

But if the model’s structural arguments hold up well, their hypotheses concerning cultural constraints are less satisfying. As noted above, the authors seem to put more weight on the structural hypotheses than the cultural ones, and so leave their discussion of cultural constraints less developed. The main hypothesis coming out of this set of constraints is that, when structural incentives do exist, fractured regimes are more likely if there is a historical cleavage along linguistic, ethnic or religious lines. But the existence of such cleavages need not lead to a fractured regime if the political elites have no incentive to play on alternative
narratives. The Kazakh case seems to bear this argument out. Kazakhstan’s multiethnic population would seem to provide the raw material for a fractured regime between Russians and Kazakhs if the incentives were there to exploit these differences, yet the elites’ commitment to a stable transition with little structural change and continuing good relations with Russia seems to have won the day.

The Ukrainian case, too, seems to support the preference for structural constraints over cultural constraints. Of course, one can find linguistic differences between the more Russian-speaking East and the more Ukrainian-speaking West, and one can even find religious differences between Orthodox and Orthodox Catholic Ukrainians. As Oxana Shevel notes in her article in Bernhard and Kubik’s edited volume, however, even as political elites took up warrior positions that allowed little compromise between the two narratives, polls showed that in central Ukraine, at least, the memory narrative had little salience for the population, who were willing to tolerate either narrative. In short, even as politicians stoked the memory wars, the majority of the population seemed willing to accept a pillarized regime. 48

Yet the question remains, where do these narratives come from, and what determines which narratives become salient and which marginalized? Why did the Ukrainian nationalist narrative and the genocide thesis gain so much currency in the political debates in Western Ukraine, which did not experience the famine, and not in Kharkiv, where the Holodomor was particularly devastating? Similarly, one

wonders why an anti-Soviet nationalist narrative never gained much popular or political currency in Kazakhstan, despite the horrific experience of the famine there and the long-lived impact on the demographics of the country.

Bernhard and Kubik do not attempt to explain the origins of different nationalist narratives nor their potential strength. These questions are better addressed by the arguments of Darden and Grzymala-Busse regarding the timing of mass literacy and its value content at the time of its introduction. In Kazakhstan, for example, the Russian empire before 1917 had not penetrated deeply into Kazakh society and literacy was confined to a very small elite who looked to Russian culture, if not necessarily the Imperial state, as a model of civilized Europe. The beginnings of mass literacy and a broad national consciousness took place only in the 1920s and 1930s, under Soviet rule. Moreover, sedentarization, for all its horrors, did have the effect of making the survivors more accessible to state institutions for such primary education. Needless to say, such schools, and indeed all the public institutions available to newly literate Kazakhs, conformed to and propagated the Soviet historical narrative of progress and economic development. In the urban areas, moreover, the preferred language of instruction was Russian. Whatever students learned about history and literature, too, emphasized the narrative and culture of Moscow rather than the steppes. Where Kazakh language and culture was stigmatized as backward, a knowledge of Russian not only opened the doors to social mobility but also “denoted being ‘cultured’ and belonging to a larger, ‘European’ civilization. Knowledge of Russian was seen as providing a broader
vision and a sense of empowerment.” For those Kazakhs who did acquire a good education and employment, then, the Soviet regime, far from being an occupying power, was an agent for progress and development. For these people, “the vision of a ‘bright future’ promised by Soviet socialism meant that there was no looking back for the Kazakh nomads.”

Given this widespread faith in unilinear economic development, it is perhaps not surprising that the memory of forced sedentarization, despite the enormous suffering it caused, would not mobilize great hostility to Soviet or Russian imperial power. Sedentarization is still regarded as having been a necessary and important step towards building a modern society. The fact that it had been accomplished so brutally was a tragedy, a catastrophe, and even possibly a crime, but it remained an essential episode in the overall narrative towards the overall positive development of Kazakh society today.

The situation in Ukraine was more complicated, and here is where the argument of Darden and Gryzmala-Busse is most useful. Focusing on the East-West divide in Ukrainian politics as a key part to this puzzle, they note that both the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Imperial state had begun to extend its legitimacy to a mass population in the last decades of the 19th Century. In those parts of Ukraine under Russian sovereignty, however, the state attempted to Russify the population to strengthen the Russian national core. In what is now south and east Ukraine, in particular, where with industrialization the state had penetrated more deeply into society, the first efforts to teach reading and writing were in Russian.

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49 Ibid. 48
50 Ibid. 42.
literature emphasized Russian national traditions rather than Ukrainian values. Official business also was conducted in Russian, so that Russia was a prerequisite for social mobility.

In Western Ukraine, however, the introduction of urban mass literacy occurred under Habsburg rule, at a time when the Imperial government provided schooling in people’s “mother tongue” and otherwise tolerated, and even encouraged the rise of differing ethnolinguistic identities. Because such identities often influenced the distribution of resources in these territories, local elites had an incentive to play upon these identities in political competition. Such ethnolinguistic identities then became the organizational principle for political parties, religious groups, gymnastic clubs and an array of other civil society groups in the area. Competition also encouraged nationalist elites to emphasize solidarity within each group and patrol the boundaries between the different groups. As a result, on the eve of the First World War, Lviv’s populations consisted of Poles, Jews and Ukrainians, all of whom “increasingly saw themselves in modern national terms."51

As noted in my earlier discussion, Darden and Grzymala-Busse assert that the identities formed in the first generation of mass literacy were “robust to the enormous upheavals of war, genocide and population transfers that surrounded World War II.”52 But how these identities are passed down one generation after

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another is left underdeveloped. To the extent that one observes continuity in the content of identity over generations, then, one must also explain how that identity was reinforced and re-enacted at critical moments in the trajectory of the identity in question. As it turns out, explaining a fundamental continuity in more pro-Russian sentiments in Kazakhstan and Eastern Ukraine from the inception of national consciousness through 1991 is not very difficult. Throughout that period both populations remained under a centralized political regime where Russian remained the dominant language in the public sphere, where Russian history and Russian literature were taught in the schools and presented in the media as the national norm, and where a knowledge of Russian was hugely important for everyday survival in an urban setting, not to mention a prerequisite for social mobility.

It is far less clear, however, how and why the content of linguistic national identities emergent in the Austro-Hungarian milieu of the late 1800s should persist through the interwar Polish state, through the multiple occupations of World War II and the incorporation into Soviet Ukraine, and remain robust in contemporary Ukraine. Tarik Amar notes, for example, that a watershed in the representation of Galician Ukrainian identity occurred as early as 1920, when the failure of more accommodationist nationalists to win autonomy or independence for Galician Ukraine, combined with the highly ethnicized governing strategies of the new Polish state, gave rise to a more assertive, violent strain of nationalism among a younger generation that ultimately led to the founding of the OUN.\footnote{Amar, The Paradox of Soviet Ukraine, 33-43.}
It is the Soviet period that really raises the question whether or not one can draw a continuous line from the Ukrainian nationalism of the fin de siècle with the warrior narratives of 1990. Using the guidelines for the content of nationalist values laid out by Darden and Grzymala-Busse, it is true that the population of Western Ukraine experienced Sovietization as an imposition from a foreign invader, and that the holders of that identity would clearly see the imposition of rule from Moscow a step backward developmentally. One moderate Ukrainian, Milena Rudnytska, complained during the initial Soviet occupation of 1939-1941 that Soviet rule, “had pulled the country, including Ukraine, two hundred years into the past.”

In most respects, however, the West Ukraine in 1990 differed utterly from Eastern Galicia of 1939. As William Jay Risch notes, Sovietization in Western Ukraine was both thorough and, for the most part, successful: after the devastation of the Second World War, “this region lacked the prewar elites, institutions and practices that blunted the impact of Sovietization in the Baltics. Soviet Lviv did not have the resources of a republic capital like Riga, Tallinn or Vilnius.” Many of the people who populated Lviv before the war had fled, or had been murdered, deported, or expelled by 1946; the majority of the new Lviv residents were newcomers from the nearby countryside, from Eastern Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as other Soviet Republics.

Indeed, Risch and Amar have both argued in recent years that the distinct identity of West Ukraine—and they both agree that such an identity existed—was

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54 Amar, The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv, 77.
related only indirectly to its imperial past. The preservation of this identity through the Soviet years, and its content, was largely an “outcome of Soviet policies.”  

In this argument, after World War II Soviet officials took great pains to Ukrainize what is now Western Ukraine; they wanted to divorce the region completely from its Polish past and root the new identity permanently in Soviet Ukraine. At the same time, however, Soviet officials regarded local Ukrainians as socially backward, as people who had not experienced the revolutionary transformation of the Stalinist 1930s, who had to be instructed in the more advanced Soviet civilization. They also continued to suspect local residents of harboring the nationalist views in opposition to Soviet rule.  

Newcomers from the East often got the best positions, the best apartments and other perks of official life.

There were also much more tangible differences between Western Ukraine and the rest of the Republic that contributed to a sense of difference. Most importantly, the region never became Russified to the extent that other parts of Ukraine were, and the use of Ukrainian was much more common in everyday interactions than elsewhere in the Republic. Second, Lviv continued to have more connections to Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe than other parts of Soviet Ukraine. Even the architecture testifies to Western Ukraine’s distinctive history compared to the rest of the country.  

As a result, even as the regime sought to incorporate the region into Soviet Ukraine, its policies often emphasized the region’s distinct character.

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56 Risch, ibid., 254; Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv.*
57 Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv,* passim.
58 On the use of Ukrainian, see Amar, ibid. 12-3. On connections with Poland and the West, as well as the significance of the architecture, see Risch, *The Ukrainian West.*
Still, as Risch notes, the distinctive identity of the West Ukraine region did not turn “explicitly anti-Soviet” until the *perestroika* era.\(^59\) That anti-Soviet sentiment should arise at that time is no accident. Social ferment against the regime was not unique to Ukraine or even nationalist movements at the time, and the distinct West Ukrainian identity probably made it easier to overcome the difficulties in coordination and trust associated with the rise of social movements. On the other hand, it is interesting that a more or less coherent narrative against the Soviet regime should form so quickly, and that the Holodomor should take such a central place.

At this moment I have not the research to make any conclusions as to why this occurred. My educated guess, however, is that Ukrainian activists, seeking stronger arguments to justify a demand for more autonomy from the center, adopted the genocide narrative from the diaspora community as their own, particularly as that thesis had the authority of an internationally respected scholar behind it, as well as a commission sponsored by the US Congress. Much of the leadership of the Ukrainian diaspora for the postwar period were members of the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia who had left Galicia in front of the Red Army after World War II.\(^60\) Isolated from day-to-day life in West Ukraine, the more radical nationalists in the diaspora were free to construct and preserve a narrative about an imagined nation beset by enemies but embalmed in memory. Because their strong rhetoric for an independent Ukraine would have found a receptive

\(^{59}\) Risch, ibid., 254.

\(^{60}\) Himca, “Encumbered Memory.”
audience among influential circles of Cold War America, the exiles would have the support and incentive to hold on to that memory. Finally, the emergence of the genocide thesis in 1983 is also suggestive. In addition to being the 50th anniversary of the famine, in 1983 President Reagan famously described the Soviet Union as an evil empire, and the administration’s policy seemed fixated on supporting anti-communists wherever they turned up. Moreover, the late 1970s and early 1980s was also a time of increased interest in the Holocaust in US popular culture. Appropriating the rhetoric of a Holocaust for Ukraine at this time seemed calculated to gain the attention of US political circles looking to find new Soviet atrocities to support the administration’s policies. Indeed, Himca notes that “Holocaust distorters in the Ukrainian diaspora have been particularly active in Holodomor promotion”, and suggests these authors may have elevated the Holodomor thesis to downplay the significance of the Holocaust. In short, in the mid-1980s the nationalists of Western Ukraine and those in the diaspora converged on the imagery of the Holocaust even though their agendas were in many ways quite distinct one from the other.

Conclusion

This paper asked why the commemorative practices around collectivization and famine in Ukraine and Kazakhstan are so different, despite the devastation it wreaked upon both nations. In exploring this question, it focused on two different

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kind of explanations: one that emphasized a calculating use of memory by strategic politicians; another looked at the historical and social constructs that influenced which narratives were available and which would be successful. It is important to note that these two explanations are not mutually exclusive but complement each other in a fashion analogous to a nesting doll. In the near term, the political calculations of individual politicians almost always provided a good proximate cause for the memory choices by regimes and individual politicians. But it was the historical and cultural constructs that created the environment in which these decisions were made.

Thus, in Kazakhstan, there had been no sustained opposition to the Soviet regime before it collapsed in 1991. Members of the Soviet elite in the republic inherited a new sovereign state without asking for it and even without wanting it. The leadership’s political task, therefore, was to create a new memory community around the sovereign state to make a case for continuity and discourage calls for radical change. In this situation, the new leadership began to emphasize more use of the Kazakh language—without any serious penalties for the use of Russian—and began to explore the blank spots in the history of the republic, including the famine. But while the state encouraged scholarship about the extent of the destruction brought on by the famine, as well as the catastrophic consequences it had for Kazakh demographics, it never encouraged rhetoric that would be divisive or encourage more far-reaching demands for change. The rhetoric surrounding the famine, therefore, did not single out specific enemies to the Kazakh nation. Instead, it laid the blame on local officials and the now defunct Soviet system, rather than
Russian imperialism. Official rhetoric also took pains that not only Kazakhs, but Russians, Germans, Tatars and other groups also suffered from the regime’s actions at the time. There were charges of genocide circulating within the press, particularly under perestroika and early independence, but such rhetoric never penetrated the Nazurbayev regime to enter into the political discourse.

Yet was it simply Nazurbayev’s control of the debate that such divisive rhetoric was kept out of the political debate? Certainly, the historical constructions of national identity prior to independence ensured the contestation was limited. The notion of Kazakh identity as a socially significant category first came into the consciousness of Kazakh populations beyond a small elite under the tutelage of the Soviet regime; indeed, it is likely many people came to adopt the Kazakh nation as a distinct identity only after the famine had occurred. After the terrible disruption of sedentarization, more Kazaks entered a Soviet-dominated social environment where the language was often Russian, where schools and universities taught Russian history and literature as the norm of civilization, and where institutions of all types were predicated upon and reinforced the larger Soviet narrative of the inevitable march of economic progress. For Kazak elites, such a narrative helped explain how what they were doing, how they got there and what the future held for them, and the accepted a close tie with Russia as a means to attaining that future. For many, then, revisiting Soviet crimes of the famine would have disrupted this narrative and the sense of who they were. It is not surprising, then, that the narrative gained relatively little traction.
Where Kazakhstan elites remained unified, contested memories made for a fractured regime in Ukraine. Here nationalists and other advocates for change distanced themselves from the regime centered in Moscow by adopting a narrative circulating within the Ukrainian diaspora, and granted authority by international scholars and the US Congress, that cast the Soviet regime as a deadly enemy to Ukrainian identity. After independence, both Kravchuk and Kuchma were also willing to adopt the Holodomor rhetoric as a means to distance the Ukrainian state from the old Soviet regime, but interpreted the lessons of that memory in ways that did not require a sharp distinction between Ukrainians and others, and did not imply significant change from existing conditions.

The issue that did cause rifts in the Ukrainian narrative concerned the role of Ukrainian partisans in the UPA-B during the Second World War. Though both Kravchuk and Kuchma were able to contain these divisions, they came to the fore after the Orange Revolution left less room for compromise. Interestingly, as noted above, it was the politicians who insisted on pressing the warrior narratives; most of the population was not divided so sharply. So again, it was politics rather than cultural cleavages that took Ukraine down the path to civil war.

At the same time, there remains the question why the nationalist narrative was so successful in mobilizing support among advocates of change, primarily in the West, and why did it fail to gain support in the country’s south and east? Here, as in the Kazakh, historical forces were at work, but not necessarily in a way one might expect. Western Ukraine under Habsburg provided fertile soil for an essentialist, exclusionary nationalist ideology, which became confrontational to the point of
violence during the interwar period and into the war itself. According to more recent scholarship, however, the identity that defined West Ukraine by the time Gorbachev was made General Secretary differed substantially from the identity that inspired Bandera and Shutskevich. Even so, even under mature socialism West Ukraine remained distinct from the rest of the country, an area where Ukrainian identity was more prominent, where links with the West more accessible, and where the regime in Moscow continued to suspect the emergence of nationalist feelings. Even though the advocates of the genocide myth in the United States may not have been pursuing precisely the same goals as those in West Ukraine, still the narrative of a distinct group of people targeted by Moscow resonated with their day-day experience, and so found a willing audience.