LUISS

Corso di Laurea in Scienze Politiche

Cattedra *The Politics of Cultural Heritage*

From De-Communisation to De-Russification in Ukraine:

The Fall of Catherine II in Odessa

Ukraine's Identity Politics from 1991 to 2022

Prof. Mark Thatcher (Relatore)

Prof. Anna Pirri Valentini (Correlatore)

Matr. 646872 Vincenzo Maria Tancredi Verde(Candidato)

Anno Accademico 2022/2023

Vincenzo Maria Tancredi Verde

Student Number: 646872

Supervisor: Professor Mark Thatcher

Co-supervisor: Professor Anna Pirri Valentini

Master Thesis

Research Question - *Why has the De-Russification of cultural heritage in Ukraine only begun in 2022?*

21st of September 2023

Word Count: 15313

From De-Communisation to De-Russification in Ukraine:
The Fall of Catherine II in Odessa
Ukraine's Identity Politics from 1991 to 2022

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which is an escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war that began in 2014, has armoured Ukraine with the perfect weapon to finally consolidate a popular consensus, through all part of the country, with regard to its national identity formation and establishment of a clearly defined identity politics. For centuries Ukrainian identity had been repressed, to the extent that when Ukraine achieved its independence on August 24, 1991, a cultural vacuum had been left in the conceptualisation of a modern Ukrainian national identity. Now, after thirty one years of identity restructure Ukrainians are ready to rally behind a common identity marker: their sense of anti-Russianness. As the history of Ukraine will show, the colonial relationship between Russia and Ukraine, first during the Russian Empire and then during the Soviet Union, had served as the foundation for the rise of Ukrainian nationalism. It is for this reason that with the end of over two hundred years of Russian oppression a process of cultural erasure of all Russian and Russian-related cultural heritage and practices began to take place. The first fracture came with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 when Ukraine embarked on a program of cultural De-Sovietization.[1] This principally entailed the need to abandon Soviet cultural, political and ideological practices together with many of their symbols. However, as a newly emerged independent nation in the aftermath of the Cold War Ukraine was a fragile State, especially since the entrenchment of rampant corruption, widespread oligarchy and the remaining affiliation with Russia severely slowed the process of De-Sovietization and the emergence of a consolidated modern Ukrainian identity.[2] The second rift manifested in the wake of the 2013-14 Euromaidan Protests against President Yanukovich. Yanukovich's intention to pursue a partnership with Russia instead of the EU later led to the Russo-Ukrainian War in the regions of Donbas and Luhansk, and to the occupation and annexation of Crimea.[3] The Ukrainian response was swift and one-sided. In 2014 people tore down statues and symbols of Lenin in what would become known as 'Leninopad', while in 2015 the Ukrainian Parliament passed a Decommunisation Bill enforcing the removal and alteration of Communist symbols, monuments and street names.[4] As reported by the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) in 2014 alone 504 Lenin monuments were

---

[1] Arturas Rozenas and Anastasiia Vlasenko, "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 3 (July 2022): 1265,. https://doi.org/10.1086/718210.

[2] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis," *Die Friedens-Warte* 89, no. ½ (2014): 256, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24868495?searchText=zhurzhenko&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dzhurzhenko&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A8c2985476c0f1d8fa7f3f58863993eff.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] "On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the prohibition of propaganda of their symbols," Parliament of Ukraine, signed April 9, 2015, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19#Text.

removed.[5] And from 2015 to 2017 the Decommusiation Bill gave way to the removal of 1.320 statues.[6] Now, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 the situation has further deteriorated. Ukraine's De-Communisation campaign has turned into an all out De-Russification movement of Ukraine's cultural heritage and national identity.

"Russia's war against Ukraine has shown not only how the Kremlin has weaponized history, but also how the victim can fight back by breaking historical ties with the aggressor."[7] In Ukraine, according to Tuft University Associate Professor Oxana Shivel, there are three options of how to remember pre-1991. These are "the wholesale rejection of the Soviet past, its wholesale embrace, and the "centrist" neither-nor position".[8] Between 1991 and 2022 Ukraine had given a try to all three without ever being able to settle on one. Now, with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 attitudes toward cultural heritage have been altered. This leading to a full revision of the legitimacy of both the Soviet and Russian presence in Ukraine's cultural space.[9] Now, "for the first time since 1991, there is widespread agreement [in Ukraine] that monuments that glorify either Russian or Soviet persons and events should be removed from cultural heritage."[10] The impact that this development has had on the conceptualisation of Ukraine's identity politics is one with both negative and positive connotations. The removal of Russian and Soviet cultural heritage from Ukraine's national memory can foster a more 'original' sense of Ukrainianness as well as achieving a cultural consensus in matters of identity politics. On the other hand, the outright removal of everything that is synonymous with Russian culture can further deteriorate the delicate relationship with Ukraine's Russian minority living in the South and East of the country. This can also result in the need to reinvent Ukraine's historical narrative, and therefore the basis for the conceptualisation of its national identity. Thus, most likely resulting in Ukraine's failure to consolidate its national identity. Until now Ukraine's De-Russification campaign has shown no signs of slowing down. The environment of war and its socio-cultural byproducts have amplified Ukrainians' demand and determination for a Russian-free Ukrainian national identity. Yet the consequences might spell tragic for Ukraine's hopes of national and cultural integrity. As it is perceived as a battle for the

---

[5] Andriy Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016): 200, https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/server/api/core/bitstreams/dc209777-0169-49d8-b2fb-3b76887f67d6/content.

[6] "The Center Rules: The Decommunization Laws," Ukrainian Research Institute Harvard University, published in 2017, https://gis.huri.harvard.edu/center-rules.

[7] Olena Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," *Journal of Applied History* 4 (December 2022): 149, https://brill.com/view/journals/joah/4/1-2/article-p149_11.xml.

[8] Oxana Shevel, "Memories of the Past and Visions of the Future: Remembering the Soviet Era and its End in Ukraine," in *Twenty Years After Communism*, ed. Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (New York: Oxford Academic, 2014), 157, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199375134.003.0008.

[9] Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage:: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," 151.

[10] *Ibid.*, 167.

survival of Ukrainian culture and independence from Russia, the rise of nationalism, nationalist groups and cultural discrimination is almost inevitable. Together with that is the very likely possibility that the removal of Russian cultural heritage and symbols altogether from Ukraine's historical memory will generate too wide a vacuum in the country's historical narrative and therefore obstruct the proper conceptualisation of its national identity. Nevertheless, the full extent of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the conceptualisation of Ukraine's national identity is yet to be determined. On the other hand, what can be determined are the reasons and factors for Ukraine's failure and latency in establishing an anti-Russian identity politics before 2022. Guided by the intent to answer the following question: '*Why has the De-Russification of cultural heritage in Ukraine only begun in 2022?*', this Master Thesis aims to bring to light the relevance of Ukraine's historical past and its memory, through the case study of Odessa, in the making of and development of a modern Ukrainian identity politics. Further, this Master Thesis will review the issue of Ukraine's identity politics formulation and conceptualisation between 1991 and 2015. In doing so this research intends to uncover the origin, role and consequences of Ukraine's identity politics of De-Communisation in light of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the bottom-up movements known as 'Leninopad' in 2013, the eruption of the EuroMaidan Protests and of the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2015, as well as the cultural implications of the memory laws of 2015. Finally, this Master Thesis will address these issues in the conceptualisation of an anti-Russian identity politics, in the form of cultural De-Russification of Ukraine's cultural heritage, as result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The results of such analysis will then serve to provide this research with the identification of factors such as political instability, cultural demographic divisions, and proximity to the war as the defining attributes for Ukraine's failure to establish a continuous and shared identity politics until 2022.

Literature Review

In order to comment and analyse the effects of Ukraine's politics of cultural heritage and identity politics between 2013 and 2022 this Master Thesis will make use of a series of primary sources, in the forms of newspaper articles, official presidential statements, and local petitions, centred around the history, legacy and and belonging of the Monument to the Founders of Odessa. In order to provide this Master Thesis with a biassed perspective before engaging in its analysis the selection of primary sources range between both Ukrainian and Russian media outlets and news agencies as well as several other international ones. Namely these sources include *The Kyiv Post*, *Suspilne*, *The Odessa Journal*, *Russia Today*, *Le Monde*, *BBC* and *The Guardian* among others. Additionally, as mentioned this Master Thesis will make use of local level petitions conducted online and reported by the Odessa City Council in matters dealing with the removal of the monument to Catherine II. Their timeline of publication ranges between 2014 and 2023, thus explicitly focusing on the identity politics consequences caused by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. These sources are primarily focused around the debate on the removal of the statue honouring Catherine II, founder of Odessa, which sparked as a consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Others are instead paying attention to the subject of De-Russification in Ukraine as a consequence of the war. While both perspectives of solidarity and disagreement emerged in the debate to remove a cultural trace of the country's past there is yet to be a concrete form of public policy in Ukraine concerned with the preservation and/or removal of Russian-associated cultural heritage. This lack of a direct and concentrated legislative source, which unlike the 2015 De-Communisation Bill which strictly targets Soviet-era cultural heritage and symbols, has thus produced a gap in the current literature which, while relevant in analysing the effects of the removal of Soviet-era cultural heritage in Ukraine, is not equipped with doing so for the removal of all Russian-associated cultural heritage in its living space and national narrative. Furthermore, the existence of primary sources concerning the belonging of Catherine II and her legacy in Odessa and in Ukraine's identity politics do not exist beyond the stories of newspaper articles. This in turn has led me to hypothesise that the issue of Catherine II in Ukraine did not significantly emerge until 2022 and so did not, until then, represent a point of conflict in Ukrainian society. For this reason, this Master Thesis intends to close that gap by providing an in-depth historical account of the founding of Odessa and the unveiling of the Monument to the Founders. By doing so, establishing a direct link between Odessa, Catherine II and Ukraine's cultural legacy in the shaping of their identity politics. This will go on to reflect on the country's attitude towards its Russian cultural legacy and the struggle for the cementation of a nation-wide shared identity politics. The subsequent review of the adoption of the De-Communisation Bill and the analysis of its consequences on the deterioration and/or consolidation of a nation-wide shared identity politics will further reduce the gap. If anything, it will build on the existing literature on Ukraine's identity politics which so far has mostly remained fixed on the consequences of EuroMaidan and the beginning of the Russo-

Ukrainian war in 2014. This is done in order to either consolidate or disprove those theories on Ukraine's identity politics formulated in between 2014 and 2022.

Secondary literature regarding the topics of Post-Communist Nation-building, National identity, and Cultural Memory in Ukraine, as well as in the former Eastern bloc, has been, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, at the helm of Eastern European Transitional Studies debates and research. Nonetheless, the majority of the focus has been paid on exploring the differences and results of the political de-Sovietisation of the Russian Federation and the rest of the Eastern bloc in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, rather than the socio-cultural effects that such 'traumatic' dissolution has had on the identity formation and consolidation of Ukraine. However, there is plenty of secondary literature that has been able to highlight how Russo-Soviet dominated repressiveness, between 1945 and 1991, has acted as the common denominator for the rejection of Soviet, Communist, and Russian tangible and intangible cultural legacies in Ukraine. Therefore, providing this Master Thesis with a theoretical basis for the origins of anti-Russian sentiment in Ukraine which will be based on Tatiana Zhurzhenko's *A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis*. To further consolidate this perspective, additional literature has posed the argument that the origins of such negative sentiments towards Russian-dominated world ideology, at least in the case of Ukraine, can be found even before in the Middle Ages during Russia's Imperial reign under Catherine II. Nevertheless, this source can also serve this Master Thesis as an example of the limits conveyed in analyses published in 2014 and soon after on the materialisation of a new Ukrainian identity politics and its possible outcomes.

To give more concrete details, the secondary literature on which this Master Thesis will base its approach refers to several types of analyses, one of which on nation and State-building in Ukraine as proposed by Ukrainian historian Taras Kuzio. Kuzio methodically highlights the fundamental reasons for the hardship experienced by Ukraine in claiming its independence in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union on the basis of pre-, current and post-Soviet factors, so to give us an idea of where Russia's insistence of acting as ruler of Ukrainians originates from. Furthermore, Kuzio[11] touches upon Russia's inability as a nation-State to detach itself from the legacies of Tsarism and Communism. In doing so the author is able to draw lines between these failures and the recent invasion of Ukraine on the basis of the country's insecurities and inabilities to form a Russian social, political and ideological class that could replace its unhealthy attachment to the repressive and bloody legacies of the past. It's then in these insecurities and inabilities that authors such as Arturas Rozenas and Anastasiia Vlasenko[12] point out the cruciality of 'Symbolic Politics' and the tangible repercussions they can have in a country's

---

[11] Taras Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2022).

[12] Rozenas and Anastasiia Vlasenko, "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 3 (July 2022).

[Ukraine] quest for self-determination. The findings of their research lead us to claim that while Ukraine already began a process of de-Sovietisation in 1991, it was in the wake of the Euromaidan protests and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 that consensus among the Ukrainian public began to form around the policies of De-Sovietisation, De-Communisation and De-Russification of Ukraine. This in turn gives us a sense of when and why Ukraine upped its efforts to counter Russo-Soviet cultural and political hegemony. In this regard, Andriy Liubarets[13] is able to provide corroborating evidence of the reasons why only in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 did Ukraine intensify, if not begin, its efforts to remove Soviet cultural legacy from its streets and squares all the way to its historical memory. The 'politics of memory' as envisaged by Liubarets consists in both the revision, removal and reassertion of the tangible and intangible cultural legacy left or repressed in the Soviet era, as demonstrated by events such as Leninopad[14] between 2013-2014, and the rethinking of May 9th Commemorations[15] together with other World War II Commemorations just to name a few. Ultimately, Liubarets credits the resurface of traumatic events in the lives and psyche of Ukrainians, in the context of the war in the Donbas and Luhansk regions and the annexation of Crimea, as the major catalyst for Ukraine's uptake of a new line of politics of memory in the form of 'systematic De-Sovietisation'. To further focus on the context of the physical and psychological response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Olena Betlii[16] provides insights into the weaponization of history and culture by the Kremlin and the response to such by Ukraine in their attempts to break historical ties with their aggressors. In her study of the 'identity politics of heritage' Betlii explores the processes of De-Sovietisation, De-Colonisation and De-Russification employed by Ukraine, through three specific examples, ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. More precisely, Betlii explores the presidencies of Yushenko, Yanukovych and Poroshenko, and their diverging patterns of identity politics ranging from wholesome rejection of the Soviet past, its wholesome embrace and the centrist 'neither position'. Thus, effectively providing an understanding for the inconsistencies behind Ukraine's policies of De-Sovietisation, De-Communisation and De-Russification, until Zelensky's rise to power in 2019 and the advent of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In addition to the above mentioned literature, other authors such as Oxana Shevele stand out for being able to provide both a broader and more focused understanding on the intricacies of identity politics in Ukraine and its relationship with identity building. By effectively categorising and dividing Ukraine's political history Shevel is able to construct a historical timeline of Ukraine's identity politics formation since 1991. This product in turn has become vital for this Master Thesis as it is able to identify

---

[13] Andriy Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016).

[14] Wide-spread demolition and removal of monuments dedicated to Lenin in Ukraine in the wake of the Euromaidan protests.

[15] Day of national celebrations for the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945.

[16] Olena Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," *Journal of Applied History* 4 (December 2022).

identity politics trends and their degree of both political and popular support, therefore creating a solid base of analysis for the review of De-Communisation and De-Russification between 2015 and 2022. Lastly, through the study of Russia's iconoclasms, one in the aftermath of the October Revolution in 1917 and the other in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Lachmann effectively explores the origin, processes and outcomes of monuments' removal in Soviet Russia and the later Russian Federation. Within the context of nation-building and 'invention of tradition' Lachmann argues that while components of Russo-Soviet legacy might be erased from cultural memory, in the form of monuments removal and redefinition of historical memories, "there is no erasure of cultural memory itself." In claiming such the author suggests that with time memories of the past inexorably resurface. An allusion, which as this Master Thesis will attempt to demonstrate, turns out to be fitting to the case of Odessa's Monument to the Founders, and in Ukraine's quest for the conceptualisation of a nation-wide shared identity politics focused on anti-Russian sentiments.

Methodology

In order to determine and assess whether and why De-Russification in Ukraine only began to seriously take place in Ukraine's identity politics from 2022 onwards this Master Thesis will adopt the following research methodology. Divided in three Chapters, this Master Thesis will make use of qualitative research methods. Primarily focused on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, this Master Thesis will look to first introduce the case study of Odessa and the Monument to the Founders. By recollecting the historical origins and development of what used to be Ukraine's most Russophile city the intent is to establish a basis for the later analysis of Ukraine's identity politics changes occurring in 2014 and 2022. The idea is to showcase the development and affinity of Odessa's cultural heritage legacy with the memory of its Russian past. In this way this Master Thesis will be able to provide a concise historical background of the city's origins and its attachment to Russian cultural heritage in the form of monuments, primarily the Monument to the Founders of Odessa. Such recollection will then be used to assess and determine the changes in identity politics pursued by Ukraine in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Ukraine in 2014 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. These changes in identity politics, which become apparent in 2015 with the adoption of the De-Communisation Bill and in 2022 with the bottom-up driven removal of Russian-associated monuments and symbols, will, in this Master Thesis, be attributed to the development of a long-term project of De-Russification of Ukraine's national identity. In this way the definitive removal of Catherine II's statue from the heart of Odessa on December 29, 2022, will serve as this research's dependent variable. This is because this Master Thesis intends to highlight the differences in scope and application of Ukraine's 2015 De-Communisation Bill and 2022 bottom-up De-Russification campaign with regard to the Monument to the Founders of Odessa. Therefore, turning these two events into this research's independent variables. As this Master Thesis aims to explain why De-Russification in Ukraine only began with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 while anti-Russian and Soviet sentiments already existed before the country's independence in 1991 it then becomes imperative to assess and analyse the events of 2015 and before, as well as those of 2022. This is done in order to bring to light the factors that led to the unofficial movement of De-Russification in 2022 which did not emerge in 2015 despite similar political and socio-cultural conditions. Therefore, a comparison between the origins and effects of De-Communisation in 2015 and De-Russification in 2022 will be provided in the last section of this Master Thesis. To recapitulate, this methodological framework is intended to provide this Master Thesis with 1) a clear and concise historical recollection of the founding of the city of Odessa under Catherine the II and the sequential inauguration, removal, return and final departure of Odessa's Monument to the Founders so as to introduce the topic around which the research will delve as well as the dependent variable in the form of Catherin II statue, 2) an overview of Ukraine's De-Communisation and an analysis of the consequences it has had on the country's formation of a cultural identity politics, with regard to the case study of Odessa and the Monument to the Founders so as to set the stage for the upcoming analysis, and

3) an overview of Ukraine's De-Russification transition in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the highlighting of the factors responsible for the late emergence of anti-Russian sentiments in the form of natio-wide shared identity politics so as to provide a definitive answer to the research question at hand which looks forward to explain why De-Russification, as a form of identity politics, only emerged in 2022 and not already in 2015 or even before in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the achievement of independence in Ukraine. The reason for this choice of methodology is given by the current lack of academic debates regarding not only the issue of identity and nationalism in Ukraine but mainly the issue of cultural and legal legitimation of Ukraine's De-Russification campaign. To end this section of methodology I will now provide a justification of the aforementioned method of analysis. First, the case of Odessa is a relevant and compelling one as the city was founded by Catherine II herself and therefore embodies a great deal of Russian influence, to the extent where before the outbreak of the war in 2022 Odessa was considered the most Russophile city in Ukraine. This predisposition in terms of the identity politics of Odessa, and Ukraine at large, becomes relevant in understanding why De-Russification took thirty one years to emerge in Ukraine. Secondly the purpose of reviewing Ukraine's identity politics building and development since 1991 is justified because of the relevance such an analysis has in the unveiling of the weaknesses of Ukraine's political decision-making bodies, as well as capturing the general state of mind that surrounds Ukraine's ambivalent identity politics from East to West. Lastly, the in depth analysis of Ukraine's De-Russification campaign origin and development finds a place of relevance within the realm of Ukraine's identity formation. The introduction of a debate regarding Ukraine's development of an identity politics concerning the rejection of the Russian past becomes, in my opinion, critical for the development of later research and studies on the full effects that the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has had in the conceptualisation of a modern Ukrainian identity and its reflection in the country's formulation of anti-Russian identity politics.

Chapter I

Case Study: Odessa

The Evolution of Odessa's Cultural Legacy

From Settlement to City

Born as a Greek settlement for commerce in the Black Sea, the first ever mention of the city of Odessa dates back to 1415. By then the fortress carried the name of Kotsyubiev and it was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[17] Its name would again be subject to cultural reinterpretation when in the early 16th century the Ottoman Empire extended its domains over the city and renamed it Hacibey.[18] Approximately 200 years later during the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1768-1774 and 1787-1792 the small Ottoman fortress was captured by the Russian Navy and annexed into Catherine's II reign in 1789.[19] With the end of the conflict and the consolidation of her newly conquered lands, Catherine II decided to make her gains on the Black Sea a turning point in the consolidation of a Russian-led Slavic identity. It was finally in 1794 that by order of the Empress the city of Odessa was founded on the ancient Ottoman and Greek settlement.[20] Ever since its founding the city has experienced tremendous forms of growth. To the point that a myth began to circulate around the idea that Odessa was a city where everyone could make their fortune. This myth, while exaggerated, was not without foundation. By the 19th and 20th century the port-city was the largest exporter of grain in the world, gaining the title of 'golden city'.[21] What more, the city had become known for its multiethnic composition, its liberatory policies and architectural mixture.[22] Presenting herself to the world as an 'Enlightened' guided by the rule of law and welfare of her subjects, Catherine II's plans for Odessa were to mirror these ideals. In reality territorial expansionism, the subjugation of the serfdom and military repressions of protests are but clear signs of the authoritarian style of sovereignty employed by Catherine II during her reign.[23] Furthermore, by renaming the region into Novorossiya (New Russia), today Odessa Oblast, Catherine II asserted her legacy in Odessa through the cultural link fabricated between the city and Russian cultural heritage. Most relevant to the case of Odessa is the unveiling in 1900 of Ekaterininskaya Square with at its centre a statue in honour to the founders of the city. The statue, 10.5 metres tall, is towered

---

[17] Надлер В. К., *Одесса в первыя эпохи ея существования* (тип. В. В. Кихнера, 1893), 3, http://rarebook.onu.edu.ua:8081/handle/store/2305.

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] Brian L. Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768-1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 238.

[20] Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 2.

[21] Herlihy, *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People*, 3.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] Carolyn Harris, "When Catherine the Great Invaded the Crimea and Put the Rest of the World on Edge," *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 4, 2014, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-catherine-great-invaded-crimea-and-put-rest-world-edge-180949969/.

by the figure of Catherin II walking on the Ottoman flag in sign of victory in the wars, and with one hand pointing towards the port so as to highlight the heart of the value and importance of the city. Below her are the other prominent figures appearing in the founding of the city. The first governor-general of the new territory of Novorossiya Grigory Potemkin; The second governor-general of Novorossiya Platon Zubov; The Spanish military General who led the assault and conquest of Hacibey during the Russo-Turkish Wars José de Ribas; The Flemish engineer and planner of Odessa's streets grid Franz de Wollant.[24]

From City to Cultural Port

Upon its founding in 1794 Odessa became a site for the gathering of some of the most talented architects and engineers of Europe. Its construction was charged to Wollant and de Ribas who "planned the street design, having in mind above all the importance of the port for the future city."[25] More culturally fascinating is that in Odessa, which finds its roots as a Greek settlement, it was decided to maintain the urban design which characterised the social cosmopolitanism of its inhabitants. The construction of three market areas, each surrounded by their respective ethnic groups, "lying alongside the transportation arteries imitated the ancient agora and were bordered exclusively by buildings earmarked for trade and decorated with stone arcades and porticos."[26] Above all it was the aspect of functionality which residents benefitted from the most, and which was able to progressively expand into a process of cultural beautification which dominated the city's approach to urban planning. All of which was then able to complement Odessa's demographic, economic and cultural boom.[27] Nonetheless this remarkable revitalisation of the city is going to be the source of what Herlihy describes as 'two mutually exclusive realities.' One attempting to inscribe the city into a new historical context, and the other longing to maintain a grasp with the past.[28] It is then with Catherine II's decree to found Odessa in 1794 and with the realisation of a statue to the founders of the city in 1900 that Ukrainians' yearning for a sense of national identity began. While initially a step towards the emergence of a new cultural consensus, the future that's reserved to the legacy of Catherine II in Odessa from 1794 to 2022 will demonstrate the ambivalence that presides over Ukraine's national identity when facing their country's Russian-shaped past. From the early days of its Imperial foundation to its abrupt Soviet re-invention in the 1920s, to its newly acquired independence in 1991 and its most recent confrontation with Russian cultural influence in the 21st century, Odessa holds the key to a modern Ukrainian national identity. Through the image of Catherine II, envisioned in the statue dedicated to the founders of Odessa, one can draw on the

---

[24] Olivia Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," *Contested Histories Occasional Paper* 177, no. 10 (May 2022): 5, https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/OP-X_Catherine-the-Great_Ukraine.pdf.

[25] Herlihy, *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People*, 7.

[26] *Ibid*., 8.

[27] *Ibid*., 11.

[28] *Ibid*., 12.

cultural past that shaped Ukraine and the forms of identity politics employed throughout the country's history. This is done primarily with the prospects of identifying the origins and motives behind Ukraine's reprisal toward Russian-commemorative cultural heritage in 2022. More specifically, and as a novelty to this area of study, this research intends to assess the development of Ukraine's identity politics between 1991 and 2022 with the intent to lay the foundation for the classification of the reasons why Ukraine's identity politics developed into De-Russification only in 2022.

The Cultural Journey of the Monument to the Founders of Odessa

Unveiling in 1900

The monument to the Founders of Odessa was first erected in Ekaterininskaya Square in 1900. It was the product of Odessa architect Yuri Meletevich Dmitrenko, sculptor Mikhail Petrovich Popov, with the participation of sculptors Boris Vasilevich Eduards and Leopoldo Menzione.[29] "During the Paris World Exhibition of 1901, the square, as a whole, received praise and was recognised as one of the best in Europe."[30] In the unveiling of the monument Odessa had set a mark in the formation of Ukrainian identity, despite it being of Russian origin and influence. Under this perspective one can then look at Catherine II as a consolidating figure in the formulation of a Ukrainian national identity. For as Anderson suggests in his *Imagined Communities,* to be able to understand nationalism and to consolidate it into a national identity one must align it with the large cultural systems that preceded it.[31] It is therefore as the founder of the city of Odessa that Catherine II represents the cultural system which the city will follow and grow into. It is no coincidence that ever since its foundation Odessa had been considered the most Russian city in Ukraine. Demographically speaking in the early 1900s almost 50% of the city was inhabited by ethnic Russians.[32] This in turn influenced the cultural turn that the city would take in the formation of its own cultural identity.

Removal in 1920

Nonetheless, the cultural representation of Imperial Russian influence in Ukraine was short lived for in 1920, three years into the Russian Revolution, the Red Army took control of the Odessa Oblast and declared the monument to be in opposition with the ideals and values of socialism. As a monument glorifying Tsarisms and Russian Orthodox culture, it became obvious that there was no place where it

---

[29] "Ekaterininskaya Square," Streets in the History of Odessa, Odessky, accessed July 1, 2023, http://odesskiy.com/ulitsi-v-istorii-odessi/ekaterinenskaya-ploschad.html.

[30] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 6.

[31] Benedict Anderson, *Imagine Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 12.

[32] "City of Odessa Intercultural Profile," Council of Europe, last modified June 30, 2017, https://rm.coe.int/odessa-intercultural-profile/1680759d6c.

could be exhibited as long as the Soviet Union existed. The monument was thus moved but not entirely destroyed. Through the pleas of the St. Petersburg artistic commission the monument found shelter in the archaeological and local history museums.[33] Although its integrity was soon dissolved. Except for the heads of the founder, the entire monument was melted down to produce shells for the army. In its stead the Soviet cultural authorities installed a statue dedicated to Karl Marx, which had soon to be replaced as the initial one was swept away by a violent storm in 1921.[34] The second installation of Karl Marx fitted the construction of a Soviet cultural narrative for the identity of Odessa up until 1965 when it was once again replaced. This time the Soviet authorities saw fit to erect a monument to the mutineers mariners of the Potemkin battleship.[35] In their attempt at cultural reinterpretation of Imperial Russian past the Soviet re-imagined discourse framed the Potemkin Mariners monument as the idealisation of Soviet men.[36] Previously the Potemkin Mariners monument was placed in Tamozhennaya Square, adjacent to a major entrance to the Port of Odessa.[37] There, it used to constitute a more meaningful sense of belonging within the cultural realms of the city. From 1965 until 2007 the Potemking Mariners monument would become the centre around which the identity politics of Odessa would grow. For every monument transition so followed a name change of the square from Catherine II to Karl Marx and Potemkin. The first signs of renewed change began to emerge in the early 1990s in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For the first time in over a century Ukraine had become independent of Russian rule. With such came the need to establish a cultural foundation to a sense of national identity in the country. In Odessa that was manifested with the attempt undertaken in 1995 by the city's Mayor Edward Gurvits to re-establish the monument to the Founders in its original place. It was only by the decision of the then President Kuchma that the initiative was put on a halt.[38]

Return in 2007

Fears of social unrest and interethnic hostility caused by the Orange Revolution in 2004 put an initial stop to the return of the monument to the Founders of Odessa. Ukraine was experiencing a cultural turmoil. This is because Ukraine's identity politics foundation was essentially a Soviet one. Russified southern-eastern Ukraine experienced the emergence of a Soviet and an ethnic national identity at the same time, with the result that the first absorbed the latter.[39] In this sense the majority of Ukrainians, Odessites in particular, share a Soviet identity. A feature which ever since the country's independence

---

[33] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 7.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*, 7-8.

[36] *Ibid.*, 8.

[37] "History Revisited: Criminalizing Communist Symbols and Sympathies in Ukraine," Balkanist, last modified May 28, 2015,
 https://balkanist.net/history-revisited-criminalizing-communist-symbols-sympathies-ukraine/.

[38] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 9.

[39] Taras Kuzio, "Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010): 292, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609723.

in 1991 Ukrainians had struggled to get rid off or come to terms with it. To add to this mixture of cultural fragilities, the legacy of the Imperial Russian past had also become subject to a cultural rejection.[40] Ukraine's quest for an untainted national identity meant the revalorization of cultural heritage with an attitude towards the removal and/or reinterpretation of Russian cultural heritage. This is the case for the unveiling of the monument to the Founders of Odessa in 2007 where there is no mention of Catherine II in its official name.[41] As reported by the Odessa Journal in 2020 "despite its solid appearance, the position of the empress remains somewhat shaky in the wave of the mounting Ukrainian nationalism."[42] Nonetheless, before 2022 the main antagonist to the conceptualisation of a Ukrainian national identity was the country's Soviet past. This in turn was responsible for shifting the focus from Catherine II and Pushkin to Lenin and Karl Marx. Although not all Soviet heritage was disposed of. The monument to Potemkin's Mariners, symbolising the ideal Soviet man and capturing a pivotal moment in the rise of Communism and of the Soviet Union, was left intact and was not the subject of nationalist debates.[43] In fact, until its replacement with the monument to the Founders of Odessa in 2007, it had adorned the square leading to the famous Potemkin stairs. This is evidence of how Ukraine struggles to establish the basis for the conceptualisation of a modern national identity. This internal conflict in the erasure of one or another cultural legacy is what Kuzio regards as a clash of nationalism and national identities, which per se are not negatively disposed towards democracy.[44] In his view it can be responsible for democratic breakthroughs and consequential identity formations. Yet, if left unchecked nationalism can surge as an instigator of what Hobsbawn describes as invented tradition.

Identity Politics Developments in Modern day Odessa

The Cultural Revolution of 2014
Between 2007 and 2013 cultural and social fractures within Ukraine seemed to have dissipated. Cultural antagonism towards Russian and Soviet cultural heritage began to slowly decay. Within this timeframe Ukraine had directed its efforts first towards an approach to identity politics formulation, which consisted in the reevaluation of the Soviet past, and then later one which to a higher degree was willing to accept both its Russian and Soviet past. That was until November 21, 2013, when mass protests

---

[40] "Destroyer of the Zaporozhian Sich or founder of Odessa: the history of the monument to Catherine II/ Razrushitelʹnitsa Zaporozhskoj Setchi ili osnovatelʹnitsa Odyssey: istoriya pamjatnika Ekateriny II," City of Odessa, last modified June 14, 2021.

[41] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 10.

[42] Alyona Synenko, "Odessa, the city of broken statues," *The Odessa Journal*, September 19, 2020, https://odessa-journal.com/odessa-the-city-of-broken-statues/.

[43] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 8.

[44] Kuzio, "Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution," 294.

erupted throughout Ukraine in response to President Yanukovich's decision, pressured by Russia, to pull out from an Accession Agreement with the EU.[45] By the spring of 2014 the crisis further evolved. Oligarchy and Russian influence began to be denounced; Russia illegally annexed Crimea and subsequently started a conflict in Donbas; A cultural rejection of the Soviet past began to take place under the name of 'Leninopad'; A fire instigated by Euromaidan Protesters at the Trade Union House in Odessa culminated in the death of 48 pro-Russian demonstrators.[46] Cultural division was at an all time high. In Odessa the monument towering Catherine II came under renewed attention. As a symbol of the Tsarist past and propaganda tool of the Kremlin, many in Ukraine "drew parallels between Catherine II's conquest and annexation of Crimea in 1783 and Vladimir Putin's actions in 2014."[47] By doing so the Russian Imperial past characterising Ukrainian national identity began to be scrutinised and put under review, together with the Soviet past that had been under review since 1991. As a result of the Euromaidan Protests, the events of 'Leninopad' were interpreted as a public demand for new memory politics "aimed at overcoming the Communist past and erasing Soviet cultural legacy objects from the Ukrainian cultural landscape."[48] This public outcry was met on April 9, 2015, as the Ukrainian parliament adopted the Law "On Condemnation of the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Prohibition of Their Propaganda and Symbols."[49] In cultural terms this new decree had set Ukraine on a path of complete cultural reevaluation. These changes in cultural perceptions positioned Soviet cultural legacy as a product of Russian oppression throughout Ukraine's history, and therefore needed to be erased. This in turn would give way to the process, oftenly spontaneous, of De-Sovietisation in Ukraine, which would see thousands of statues and monuments removed as well as streets and squares names changed.[50] This form of 'visual' De-Sovietisation in 2014 demonstrated how Ukrainian nationalism acted as a catalyst for the mobilisation of accepted identity markers that would replace the Soviet ones.[51] While still leaving some space to the Imperial Russian cultural heritage present in Ukraine's national history and identity.

The Coming of De-Russification in Ukrainian in 2022

Between 2015 and 2022 Ukraine's De-Communisation process remained in place but never truly mirrored the rejection of Russian influence in the form of Soviet cultural heritage experienced in 2013-14. While statues and monuments kept being removed and streets kept being renamed their number

---

[45] Desmond Dinan, Neill Nugent and William E. Peterson, *The European Union in Crisis* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 3.

[46] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 11.

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," 201.

[49] *Ibid*., 197.

[50] *Ibid*., 202-203.

[51] *Ibid*., 210.

steadily decreased year after year.[52] The wounds imparted by internal conflict and subsequent Russian aggression were coming to heal. Until on February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in what would become a war of attrition that is currently ongoing. By then President Putin promised that 'justice would be done', alluding to the events that took place at the Trade Union House in Odessa eight years before.[53] Although this time pro-Russian support has significantly decreased. "No one here is waiting for the Russian army, which claims to be 'liberating' the country with bread and salt, in the Slavic tradition of welcome."[54] This cultural reidentification of Odessa in its rejection of Moscow's authoritarianism and affirmation of a closer Ukrainian identity has turned the city into a marker of Ukraine's identity politics. The latest recognition by UNESCO of the city centre of Odessa as a cultural site of outstanding value, and in need of protection because of the war, is but a confirmation of the city's importance for the conceptualisation of a Ukrainian national identity and impartation of an identity politics framework.[55] In Odessa the monument to the founders of the city "has fallen victim to radical changes in public opinion as Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion forces Ukrainians to re-evaluate attitudes toward their country's imperial Russian past."[56] This re-evaluation of their identity politics has been for Ukrainians a century long struggle. Many grew up in a Russian-speaking household, and/or have Russian relatives. Yet the cultural reverberation that Russia's invasion has had on Ukraine's identity was that it accelerated the need to reassert one.[57] This reassertion manifested in the form of a cultural campaign of De-Russification.[58] Thus unofficially extending the limitations and bans imposed on Soviet cultural heritage in 2015 to the country's Russian Imperial past. By doing so the names of Pushkin, Gogol, Chekhov and Lermontov are disappearing from Ukraine's historical lexicon. In Odessa Catherine II and her legacy faced the final verdict. After an online vote hosted by the Odessa city council regarding the fate of the monument the decision was taken and on December 29, 2022, the monument to the Russian Empress was dismantled and moved from the square.[59]

The removal of Catherine II from Odessa's cultural public space is, as this Master Thesis will attempt to demonstrate, a significant loss of cultural heritage for the history of the city and of Ukraine as a

---

[52] Rozenas and Vlasenko, "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine," 1266.

[53] Emmanuel Grynszpan, "Odessa, the story behind the myth," *Le Monde*, April 20, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/m-le-mag/article/2022/04/20/odesa-the-story-behind-the-myth_5981080_117.html?random=2119276770.

[54] *Ibid*.

[55] Sylvie Corber and Elaine Ganley, "Ukraine's Odesa city put on UNESCO heritage in danger list," *Associated Press News*, January 25, 2023.

[56] Oleksiy Honcharenko, "OPINION: Odesa Rejects Catherine the Great as Putin's Invasion Makes Russia Toxic," *Kyiv Post*, November 16, 2022, https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/4873.

[57] Jon Lee Anderson, "How do Ukrainians think about Russians now?," *The New Yorker*, February 15, 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/how-do-ukrainians-think-about-russians-now.

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] "Monuments to the Founders of Odessa and Oleksandr Suvorov will be temporarily moved to the Art Museum," Odessa City Council, published November 30, 2022, https://omr-gov-ua.translate.goog/ua/news/230866?_x_tr_sl=uk&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp.

whole. As the war in Ukraine rages on and De-Russification is in full swing, more of the country's Russian historical legacy is bound to disappear. Yet, the question remains, why only in 2022? This Master Thesis intends to review Ukraine's identity politics development since 1991 through the EuroMaidan Protests to the implementation of memory laws in 2015 in order to reveal why and how Ukraine's failure to establish a continuous identity politics prevented De-Russification from manifesting before 2022.

Chapter II

De-Communisation in Odessa

Ukrainian Nationalism and the Soviet Past in the Making of the De-Communisation Laws

The Issue of Ukraine's Identity Politics since 1991

The origins of the issue of national identity in Ukraine can be traced all the way to the 18th century. Until Catherine II's incorporation of Ukraine in her empire "the traditionalist regional identity of the Cossack elite was very far from the future Ukrainian national identity and clearly did not harbor a feeling of 'Ukrainian national solidarity'."[60] It was only in the 19th century that the concept of 'one people' began to actively circulate and was used to indoctrinate the cultural development of a Ukrainian identity, from its history to its language and overall cultural representation.[61] This instance of colonial suppression by Russia, which despite political turmoils will last until 1991, has drawn historians to question Ukraine's historical claim. According to Chernetsky, because of its lengthy foreign domination one could regard Ukraine as a non-historical nation'.[62] Further hypothesised by von Hagen one could even draw the question, 'Does Ukraine have a History?'.[63] These debates regarding the effective constatation of a unified Ukrainian national identity in turn leave us with the uncertainty that a united Ukrainian national identity consensus existed before the founding of Odessa in 1794. Instead, what can be argued is that exertion of Russian cultural influence in the founding, upbringing and development of Ukraine throughout the 18th century, and the Soviet cultural revolution of the 20th century serve as foundational denominators for the conceptualisation of a modern national identity which arguably can't lay its foundations without integrating these Russian legacies. Even after the Russian Revolution when Ukraine became recognised as a separate nation, the nationalities' policy of the early Soviet era directly affected Ukraine's nation building.[64] Russian President Vladimir Putin, went on to reaffirm this notion in a speech, three days before the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, by saying that "Soviet Ukraine is the result of the Bolsheviks' policy and can be rightfully called 'Vladimir Lenin's Ukraine'."[65] During that period the foundations of Ukraine's cultural identity, which laid in the rituals invented in the period

---

[60] Alexei I. Miller, "National Identity in Ukraine: History and Politics," *Russia in Global Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2022): 96, https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/national-identity-in-ukraine/.

[61] Miller, "National Identity in Ukraine: History and Politics." 98.

[62] Vitaly Chernetsky, "Postcolonialism, Russia and Ukraine," *Ulbandus Review* 7 (2003): 37, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25748122.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A017f22095f3095507b14c28e81f83179&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1.

[63] Mark von Hagen, "Does Ukraine Have a History?" *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2501741.

[64] Andreas Kappeler, "Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial past and Competing Memories," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 2014): 110, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1016/j.euras.2014.05.005.

[65] Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," Published February 21, 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828.

from the 1870s to the First World War, were swept away and replaced with new ones.[66] While more drastic and aimed at homogenising a single Russian-led Slavic identity, the Soviet past and what is left of it in the form of cultural heritage represent a period of history which has shaped the identity of Ukrainians. At this stage both the Russian Imperial past and the Soviet one can, be considered core components in the shaping of a Ukrainian identity. Nonetheless, on the eve of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 Ukraine, which has now become for the first time truly independent, found difficulty in establishing its own course of cultural identification. As demonstrated by Oxana Shevel's study on Ukraine's identity politics and reconciliation with the past[67], this struggle of identification is deeply rooted in the country's political and cultural approach to the past.

The Identity Politics of De-Communisation in Ukraine

Identity-building during the Post-communist transition was no easy matter for Ukraine. According to Political Scientist Judy Batt, at that point in time Ukraine was not and could not be a nation-state.[68] The factors that precluded the country from such were the presence of a significant Russian minority with deep historical ties to their lands, and the fact that the majority of Ukrainians used Russian as their first language.[69] This large Russian minority has in turn become the core subject of the country's cultural division. With one group looking to the East for the maintenance and strengthening of their cultural assimilation with Russia, and with the other looking to the West in an attempt to further entice a culture belonging within the European Union. In turn, this absence of a consensus meant that Ukrainians were "far from constituting a coherent and unified nation."[70] This crack in Ukraine's social apparatus remained under control between 1991 and 2013 as Ukraine embarked on a program for "the restoration, expansion, and promotion of the national/nationalist narrative of history and memory, coupled with the marginalisation and removal of the Soviet nostalgic narrative."[71] This came in the forms of renaming streets, rewriting history books, and removing Soviet symbols from the public spaces.[72] Nonetheless, the results of this form of cultural reinvention never produced a majority consensus regarding the removal of Russian cultural heritage in Ukraine. In fact, support for the preservation of Soviet, and in general Russian, cultural heritage remained strong in large parts of the country, particularly in Odessa.

---

[66] David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977," Chapter in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 101-164. *Canto Classics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 162.

[67] Shevel, "Memories of the Past and Visions of the Future: Remembering the Soviet Era and its End in Ukraine," 146-167.

[68] Judy Batt, "National Identity and Regionalism," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), 58.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] Georgiy Kasianov, *Memory crash: The politics of history in and around Ukraine, 1980–2010s* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2022), 390.

[72] Rozenas and Vlasenko, "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine," 1265.

It was only in 2013, with the eruption of the Euromaidan Protests, and in 2014, with the Russian annexation of Crimea and beginning of the war in the Donbass Region, that Ukrainian identity politics began to rally behind a communal cause, a sense of anti-Russiannes. The interpretation of primarily Soviet symbols in the composition of Ukraine's cultural landscape and identity politics was now one of complete exclusion, both tangible and non-. This sentiment received further reinvigoration in 2015 with the entrance in force of a De-Communisation Bill. The concept of De-Communisation, according to Gregory Kasianov, refers to the "political actions aimed to remove the cultural codes of the Soviet past from the symbolic, political and cultural spaces of Ukraine"[73]. De-Sovietisation in turn is the *de facto* physical and visual removal of Soviet symbols, as captured in the events of Leninopad, which gave way to the characterisation of Ukraine's identity politics into one of anti-Russian cultural predisposition. Nevertheless, such was never officially stated nor argued. Ukraine's De-Communisation Bill is in fact specifically entrusted with distancing Ukraine from its Soviet legacy, negatively marking the Soviet past, and building a Ukrainian identity opposite to the Soviet one.[74] Therefore the scope of application of the Bill is limited to Soviet cultural heritage and not Russian at large. Despite that, it became clear how Soviet and Russian cultural legacy in Ukraine were firmly entangled by a single common denominator in Russia. This connection has in fact rendered it easier for Ukrainian nationalist, who saw a window for emergence in 2013, to associate the two cultural legacies and eventually turn it into one single encompassing anti-Russian sentiment, although such would only reach its apex in 2022. "In Ukrainian society today, nationalism is widely seen as an instrument of de-Sovietisation and justified by the foreign aggression of the neighbouring country [Russia]."[75] The turn of events in Ukraine's identity politics in 2013, 2014, and 2015 all served to fuel the country's strive towards the reconceptualisation of its identity politics on the basis of the removal of the country's Soviet legacy. In spite of this cultural erasure Yuri Lotman's memory concept, in regards to identity politics and national identity, argues that "there is no erasure in cultural memory itself; what is forgotten can be culturally reactivated … the complete extinction of facts seems to be impossible: in the long run, hidden layers always turn up being 'excavated'."[76] Thus, alluding to the possibility that despite the implementation and results of the 2015 De-Communisation Bill, Ukraine's identity politics might one day be open to reintegrating its Soviet and Russian cultural legacy.

---

[73] Maksim V. Filev and Anatolii A. Gurkanskii, "Dismantling monuments as the core of the post-2014 'decommunisation' in Ukraine and Poland," *Baltic Region* 14, no. 4 (2022): 147, https://journals.kantiana.ru/upload/iblock/0e3/9_146-161.pdf.

[74] Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," 198.

[75] Zhurzhenko, "A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis," 261.

[76] Renate Lachmann, "Russia's Iconoclasm," *European Review* 30, no. 1 (November 2022): 131, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-review/article/russias-iconoclasms/57574119C69CB788877C1D72AAC23608.

The Developments and Consequences of De-Communisation in Odessa

De-Communisation in and around Odessa

Already in October 2014, 80% of Soviet cultural heritage removals were conducted by government authorities.[77] This in turn emphasises the role played by the state government in the reinterpretation and reevaluation of the country's identity politics. A role which initially saw minimum engagement from the State and which found its foundation in the bottom-up driven cultural revolution of 2013 and 2014. Then, from 2015 onwards Ukraine's De-Communisation Bill dominated the cultural and political retransformation of the country's identity politics. In the eyes of many critics, one of whom is Shevel, these laws "will prohibit open discussion of Ukraine's complex history and may deepen societal divisions."[78] In Odessa however the levels of implementation of the De-Communisation laws never reached the numbers of removals and name changes seen in the Western and Central regions of the country. "The [Odessa] oblast took only the 10th place in the number of decommunized streets."[79] As reported by Shevel in 2016, according to the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance by November 21, 2015, only two cities, four town, and forty nine villages needed to be renamed, compared to the much higher numbers in the Eastern Oblasts of Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv, and in the Southern Oblasts of Crimea and Luhansk.[80] Nevertheless name changes and monument removals still did take place, although with a great striking difference compared to the other regions of Ukraine. In the Odessa Oblast in fact "local authorities and communities gave neutral names to the streets and squares for the most part, avoiding ideological/party bindings."[81] In this way signalling how Ukraine's De-Communisation laws launched in 2015 did not have the same level of support throughout the country. One revealing example of the disparity of support throughout regions can be seen in the case of Odessa's railway station where images of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin adorn the bas-reliefs of the station. Unlike other symbols of the communist regime, in the case of Odessa's railway station the 'Advisory Council on the Cultural Heritage of the Odessa Oblast' had to intervene in the defence of the communist symbols. In February 2016 the Advisory Council concluded that "the elements widely used decoration of the exteriors and interiors of the railway station are an integral part of the building, and,

---

[77] Rozenas and Vlasenko, "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine," 1273.

[78] Oxana Shevel, "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," *PONARS Eurasia*, (2016): 1, https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/attachments/Pepm411_Shevel_Jan2016-1.pdf.

[79] Mykola Mykhailutsa, "Decommunization/renaming in Odessa region: Historical comparison, methods and results," *Danubius* XXXV, (2017): 112, https://www.revistadanubius.ro/pdf/rezumate/en/XXXVs/11_mykola_mykhailutsa.pdf.

[80] Shevel, "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," 2. (Donetsk with 10 cities, 27 towns, and 62 villages; Dnipropetrovsk—3 cities, 10 towns, 71 villages; and Kharkiv—27 towns and 70 villages. Next on the list are eastern and southern regions: Crimea—1 city, 11 towns, 54 villages; Odessa—2 cities, 4 towns, 49 villages; and Luhansk – 6 cities, 25 towns, 23 villages.)

[81] Mykhailutsa, "Decommunization/renaming in Odessa region: Historical comparison, methods and results," 113.

therefore, cannot be removed according to the Law on De-Communisation."[82] This is because, as reported by Ukrainian Historian Mykola Mykhailutsa, according to Paragraph 3 of Article 4 on the Laws of De-Communisation "the prohibition of symbols of the communist regime does not apply to cases of use in works of art created prior to the entry into force of the current law, state awards, jubilee medals and other honours awarded to persons until 1991."[83] A fate which did not incur in many other cases which fitted the description of the De-Communisation laws, as can be seen in the case of the People's Friendship Arch in Kyiv which had been ongoing since 2016 until its final dismantling in 2022. The differences in approach and 'sentencing' between the cases of Odessa and Kyiv demonstrate not only the difference in attitudes between the West and the South of Ukraine but also how, according to Betlii, after 2015 the De-Communisation of Soviet cultural heritage "does not elicit protests from any social group, but rather deepens debated about monuments as artistic works that should be preserved and Ukrainians as a civilised nation that does not vandalise unwanted heritage."[84] In fact, it has been demonstrated, or at least suggested, by polls conducted in 2015 that the majority of Ukrainians had negative feelings towards De-Communisation[85], mostly because these laws "were strongly criticised for the expense involved, for curtailing discussion about Ukraine's history, and for deepening societal divisions and prompting violence."[86] In this way, it begins to become clear how the instrumentalisation of the De-Communisation laws by the Ukrainian State not only serves as a continuation of the bottom-up processes initiated in 2013 and 2014, but also how sentiments of anti-Russianness remained limited to the legacy of the Soviet past and thus never developed into a full out De-Russification campaign until 2022.

The Results of De-Communisation in and around Odessa
Nevertheless, the problem with laws aimed at shifting blame is that "they give legal protection to typically populist self-congratulatory national narratives,"[87] which emerge in contrast to the previous ones. As has been the case in Odessa with the revival and growth of nationalist and anti-Russian groups such as 'Decolonization of Ukraine', 'The Foundation of the Future Odessa', 'Youth Nationalist Congress', 'Black Sea Cossack Army', 'Odessa 600 Years', and 'The Association of Cossack Societies'

---

[82] *Ibid*., 114.

[83] *Ibid*.

[84] Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," 168.

[85] "Більшість українців упереджені до влади, декомунізації та ЗМІ - дослідження," Detector MediaSapiens, last modified October 9, 2015, https://ms.detector.media/mediadoslidzhennya/post/14371/2015-10-09-bilshist-ukraintsiv-uperedzheni-do-vlady-dekomunizatsii-ta-zmi-doslidzhennya/.

[86] Shevel, "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," 4.

[87] Nikolay Koposov, "Populism and Memory: Legislation of the Past in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 36, no. 1 (February 2022): 280, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0888325420950806.

know as 'Sich' and more.[88] Thus, while on the one hand the De-Communisation laws in Ukraine risked to alienate cultural groups and provoke violent actions, on the other it seems to have unified and strengthened what for some time had been a growing movement of nationalist groups seeking the purging of all Soviet and Russian cultural heritage in Ukraine. Once again, it has to be noted that this growth, if not revival, of nationalist sentiments was only relative and did not represent the majority of Ukrainians and therefore the state of the country's identity politics, especially in Odessa which remained attached to its Soviet and Russian-era cultural heritage. In the end, Shevel reports that Ukraine's De-Communisation Laws did not fuel domestic instability nor did they lead to protests against the measures or street actions taken when monuments are removed.[89] "Even though the laws did not increase pro-Ukrainian feelings and reduce support for separatism, as supporters of the laws expected, they did give citizens and activists a say in the process."[90] On the other hand, Mykola argues that De-Communisation is not just the simple removal of monuments and change of street names, but rather a direct change of consciousness, in relation to the country's reevaluation of its Soviet past.[91] Therefore, while not instrumental in completely redefining Ukraine's identity politics it did establish a base for the growth of nationalism and nationalist groups. These will eventually emerge in 2022 as the leading activists in what will become a more systematic process of De-Russification. Furthermore, others such as Marples argue that the real goal of the De-Communisation Laws and their impact on the country's Soviet past is to make "Ukraine's democratic development irreversible."[92] A sentiment expressed directly by Volodymir Vyatrovich, the head of Ukraine's Institute of National Remembrance, which in practice remains to be proved. Once again, the multi-ethnic and multi-layered society of Ukraine provides in the case of Odessa a different story. While in the rest of the country the purging of Soviet, and at times Russian, cultural heritage finds relatively high degrees of popular support and public participation in Odessa, and in the rest of the Southern region, De-Communisation did not translate as expected. There are four examples that support this view. First, is the case of Odessa's monument to the Potemkin Mariners. As reported by American journalist Lily Lynch in one of her travels to Odessa "despite the passage of Ukraine's controversial decommunisation law banning Soviet symbols in April of last year, the monument to the mariners of the Battleship Potemkin still gets a thorough and regular power-

---

[88] Dmytro Zhuravel, " 'Blood of Ukraine on Kateryna's hands'. In Odessa, a rally was held against the monument to the Russian empress," *Suspilne Media*, November 8, 2020, https://suspilne-media.translate.goog/78038-krov-ukraini-na-rukah-katerini-v-odesi-mitinguvali-za-demontaz-pamatnika-rosijskij-imperatrici/?_x_tr_sl=ru&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp&_x_tr_hist=true.

[89] Shevel, "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," 2.

[90] *Ibid*., 4.

[91] Mykhailutsa, "Decommunization/renaming in Odessa region: Historical comparison, methods and results," 109.

[92] David Marples, "Decommunisation in Ukraine. Implementation, pros and cons," *New Eastern Europe*, September 16, 2016, https://neweasterneurope.eu/2016/09/16/decommunisation-in-ukraine/.

washing."[93] No debates ever emerged regarding the removal of the monument representing the 'ideal Soviet men'. In another instance, while a Lenin statue in the grounds of a factory in Odessa "had been earmarked for removal under the country's De-Communisation law"[94] a different path was taken. The statue has been reinterpreted and transformed into the Star Wars villain Darth Vader. Nevertheless, as pointed out before Odessa remains a bit of an oddity. In fact, while on the outside the monument presents Darth Vader, on the inside the bronze sculpture of Lenin was left intact. This is because according to sculptor Alexander Milov in the future "the grateful or not-so-grateful descendants could exhume him, if needed".[95] Thus, leaving the possibility in the future for an equally 'controversial' return of a Soviet-related identity politics, and therefore placing Odessa at odds with Kyiv and the rest of Western Ukraine. The third case is the one of another Lenin statue, this time in the outskirts of Odessa, which again did not face physician removal but rather ideological and cultural reinterpretation. Vladimir Lenin had been turned into a Bulgarian immigrant. Similarly, to the case of Darth Vader in Odessa the Lenin statue retains the physical characteristics of the father of Communism. A factor which in the future might lead, as in the case of Darth Vader, to an easier return of Soviet nostalgia and therefore find again a place in the identity politics of Ukraine. Lastly, and probably most relevant to this research is the case of the statue of Catherine II in Odessa. Years after the implementation of the De-Communisation Laws the statue sitting in the heart of the city barely received any attention until 2018. Once again reaffirming the extreme cultural vacillation surrounding Ukraine's identity politics in response to acts of cultural heritage removal. In the case of Catherine II in Odessa in 2018 a petition to remove the statue and replace it with a monument to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) was submitted but only received 43 votes and was therefore dismissed on the grounds that rewriting history and destroying cultural heritage is unacceptable.[96] Both the proposal to include Russian cultural heritage in the process of De-Communisation and the low voter turnout in the 2018 petition manifest the clear absence of a concrete, united and generally approved reevaluation of the country's identity politics. These examples in turn help uncover and demonstrate the reasons for why the all-out De-Russification of Ukraine's cultural heritage did not begin between 2013 and 2015, as well as why it did not develop between 2015 and 2022. All in all, it can be said that the dynamism of Ukraine's identity politics revision dissipated before it even reached legitimate legal status, and in the specific case of Odessa it never really took place as in the rest of the country.

---

[93] Lily Lynch, "Letter from Odessa: I partied with politicians and pick-up artists in Europe's most permissive city," *New Easr Digital Archive*, June 22, 2016, https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/6259/letter-from-odessa-ukraine-saakishvili-roosh-v.

[94] News From Elsewhere, "Ukraine: Lenin statue given Darth Vader makeover," *BBC* October 23, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-34594262.

[95] *Ibid*.

[96] "Памятник Екатерине II в Одессе мешает жить всего 43 подписавшим петицию к президенту," Slovo / The Word, July 9, 2018, https://slovo.odessa.ua/main/28510-pamyatnik-ekaterine-ii-v-odesse-meshaet-zhit-vsego-43-podpisavshim-peticiyu-k-prezidentu.html

Chapter III

De-Russification in Odessa

De-Communisation and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in the Development of an Anti-Russian Identity Politics

The Issue of Ukraine's Identity Politics between 2015 and 2022

As discussed in Chapter II Ukraine's conceptualisation of a concrete and unified identity politics has always been a point of conflict in the cultural representation and belonging of the country's historical Soviet and Russian past. Then in 2015 with the implementation of four memory laws, which comprise Ukraine's De-Communisation Bill, a top-down trajectory towards the removal, reevaluation and reinterpretation of the country's historical Soviet past became common practice. The institutionalisation of memory politics in Ukraine has had several outcomes when looked at with regard to the country's identity politics formulation. As shown before, support in favour of the De-Communisation Laws has been ambivalent, and more often than not it did not seem to be a priority on Ukrainian's agendas. In fact, as reported by the Economist, according to one study "as recently as the summer of 2021, 41% of Ukrainians [still] agreed with the notion that Ukraine and Russia were one people."[97] Thus drawing on the efforts of Ukraine's memory laws of 2015 and their affiliation with the rise of anti-Russian sentiments in the country, and ultimately discarding them as not complimentary. What can be observed between the entrance in force of the De-Communisation Laws in 2015 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with regard to Ukraine's identity politics, is the return, after a concentrated period of monument removals and name changes, to a period of relative identity politics bluredness. As the wounds of 2014 have come to heal, so have Ukraine's memory laws lost their initial appeal and ability to reinvigorate the country's predisposition toward a negative conceptualisation of its Soviet past. However De-Communisation never left the country's political spectrum. According to "a historian at the Ukrainian National Remembrance Institute, 95% of symbols of the totalitarian regime were removed from public display."[98] In terms of physical monument, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance has registered the removal of over 2,400 Soviet monuments between 2015 and 2020.[99] On one hand, while the results of De-Communisation have materialised in the physical disappearance from public space of the country's Soviet past, on the other they have eventually failed in assimilating such a process with a clear-cut identity politics resonating with the wider Ukrainian population. For many, especially the older generations, the legacy of the Soviet Union was a memory of which they

---

[97] Europe | Recycling Russia, "A campaign to "de-Russify" Ukraine is under way," *The Economist*, January 29th, 2023, https://www.economist.com/europe/2023/01/29/a-campaign-to-de-russify-ukraine-is-under-way.

[98] Veronika Melkozerova, "What the West can learn from Ukraine's treatment of Soviet monuments," *POLITICO*, July 28, 2020, https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-soviet-monuments-what-the-west-can-learn/.

[99] *Ibid*.

were proud to be a part of, one that has shaped their sense of identity and belonging in Ukraine. Nonetheless, the effects of De-Communisation, according to opinion editor Jamie Dattmer, are synonymous with the rise of De-Russifaction in the conceptualisation of Ukraine's identity politics. In fact, according to Dattmer, "De-Russification pre dates the February invasion [of 2022]"[100]. Already in 2016, the Russian language, which was the language of choice of Ukrainians, faced 'censorship' and other forms of marginalisation from the country's identity politics. Moreover in 2018 "authorities in Lviv introduced a ban on the public use of the Russian-language movies, books and songs until Russian forces had withdrawn from Crimea and the Donbass."[101] In this way it can be argued that while De-Russification in its full might did not emerge in 2013 during the events of Leninopad, in 2014 in the wake of the EuroMaidan Protests and in 2015 in the aftermath of the De-Communisation Laws, it did nonetheless begin to emerge as an affiliated movement of De-Communisation which until 2022 remained in its shadow.

The Identity Politics of De-Russification in Ukraine

Inevitably with the implementation of the De-Communisation Laws Ukraine did embark, although only partially, on a journey of self-reidentification and reconstruction of its identity politics in order to tackle the ongoing crisis in Crimea and the Donbass region. The decision to tackle the country's Soviet past was not an unmotivated one. According to freelance journalist Veronika Melkozerova the "statues of communist leaders had a clear political purpose: They were reminders of a shared Soviet history, which Russia continued to use to wield influence and preserve its dominance over its former satellite state well after independence."[102] And for this reason became subject of both civic and governmental action. As a consequence, whether intentionally or not, to this distinct approach to memory reconceptualisation and identity politics formation a new cultural movement emerged in the De-Russification of the country's cultural heritage, and therefore of its national identity. The conflict that emerged in 2014 with the Russian-led war in Donbass has given reason for political scientists to worry about the identity polarisation in Ukraine which might result from it.[103] Nonetheless, according to Ukrainian political scientist Volodymyr Kulyk, a clear 'shedding' of the country's 'Russianness' took place in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, and not only in regard to the country's Soviet past.[104] Kulyk goes further in his identification of a De-Russification movement by elaborating on those ethnic Russians living in Ukraine and how they themselves have also begun to feel a closer attachment to a Ukrainian rather than Russian

---

[100] Jamie Dettmer, "The cost of Ukraine's De-Russification," *POLITICO*, August 26, 2022, https://www.politico.eu/article/the-cost-of-ukraines-de-russification/.

[101] *Ibid*.

[102] Melkozerova, "What the West can learn from Ukraine's treatment of Soviet monuments."

[103] Olga Onuch, Henry E. Hale and Gwendolyn Sasse, "Studying identity in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, (2018): 80, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1451241?needAccess=true&role=button.

[104] Onuch, Hale and Sasse, Studying identity in Ukraine," 81.

identity. "Overall, he reports far-reaching changes in ethno-national identification and language practice that can be understood as a popular shift away from Russianness, a trend that he describes as a bottom-up de-Russification."[105] While in check, and mostly under the shadow of De-Communisation, the De-Russification of Ukraine's identity politics has slowly grown until its full outburst in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While in 2014 Russian President Vladimir Putin marked the annexation of Crimea by stating that Russians and Ukrainians are 'one people', that Kiev is 'the mother of all Russian cities' and that Ancient Rus is their common source and it would therefore be impossible for them to live without each other[106], the outbreak of war in 2022 "has only demonstrated the opposite, and has made it much more difficult for them to live with each other."[107] The results, with regard to Ukraine's identity politics shift, have been those of a forging of a much stronger Ukrainian identity under the conception of an anti-Russian identity. A set of feelings which already in the months preceding the war had been institutionalised in a newly released legal provision requiring Ukrainian media outlets to publish their contents solely in Ukrainian, with some minor exceptions for English and other European Union languages, and entirely discarding Russian from its daily vocabulary.[108] In spite of that, the rejection of all Russian 'things' can provide a backdrop to the country's identity politics formation, both in terms of the country's future relationship with Russia and with regard to the inclusiveness of other cultures in the country's identity formation. In more concrete terms, with the outbreak of war in 2022 a common understanding had developed among Ukrainians for which "tangible cultural heritage authorises the creation of identities and that material culture is a physical manifestation of an identity."[109] In this case referring to those monuments and symbols commemorating the country's Soviet and Russian past. "As a result, accelerated delegitimization of the Soviet and Russian presence in Ukrainian cultural space became a core of new identity building in post-February Ukraine."[110] A primary example of this escalation of identity politics reshuffle can be observed in Odessa through the case of the statue commemorating Catherine II and the other historical figures which helped her found Odessa in 1794. As reported on France 24 by journalist David Gormezano "since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the necessity of dismantling the Empress's statue became obvious to both previously pro- and anti-Russian Odessites, because the conflict managed to unite almost all Ukrainians against the new imperial war led by Moscow."[111] A factor which crucially did not emerge already in 2013, 2014 or 2015.

---

[105] *Ibid*., 82.

[106] Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation."

[107] Dettmer, "The cost of Ukraine's De-Russification."

[108] Rachel Denber, "New Language Requirement Raises Concerns in Ukraine," *Human Rights Watch*, January 19, 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/19/new-language-requirement-raises-concerns-ukraine.

[109] Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," 151.

[110] *Ibid*.

[111] David Gormezano, "War in Ukraine: 'De-Russification' on the rise in Odesa," *France 24*, February 22, 2023, https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230222-war-in-ukraine-de-russification-on-the-rise-in-odesa.

The Developments and Consequences of and Reasons for De-Russification in Odessa

De-Russification in and around Odessa

Regarding De-Russification Ukrainian historian Volodymyr Kravchenko points out that "Ukraine was tied to its recent past by not one but two threads, the 'Soviet' one and the 'Russian' one, and rejecting one of these components meant having to reject the other."[112] Therefore the events of Leninopad in 2013 and 2014 see the beginning of the cultural backlash against Russia, further reinvigorated by the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of the Donbass. Although, it is with Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 that Ukraine began to systematically alter its attitude toward Russian cultural heritage and therefore, as reported by Betlii, "triggering a process of its full revision and further deconstruction."[113] This time, unlike in 2013 and 2014 where memory laws had to be formulated for the first time, the authorities in Kyiv made their decision regarding the removal of Russian cultural heritage on the basis of the existing De-Communisation laws. Meaning that unlike in 2013-14 when local authorities needed to catch up with the bottom-up led movements, in 2022 the State not only led the process of removals and deconstructions of public space, but also democratised it by allowing people to have a say in the changes that would take place.[114] This turn of events not only demonstrates how for the first time since 1991 there is widespread agreement regarding the removal of monuments glorifying Russian culture, but also how the question of historical cultural heritage represents the most controversial issue in Russo-Ukrainian cultural relations.[115] Having reviewed Ukraine's anti-Russian identity politics 'transition' at a national level we can now delve into the physical De-Russification of Ukraine's identity politics at a more local level through the experience of Odessa. Unlike in 2013, 2014 and 2015, Odessa today rejects Moscow's authoritarianism in more ways than just political opposition, and for this it is now in danger of being targeted by the wrath of war.[116] Even before the wave of destruction that hit Odessa in July 2023, the rejection of Russian influence in the city was manifested time and time again, and more often than not by nationalist groups which rallied under the slogan 'Decolonisation of Ukraine'.[117] Much in line with the new identity politics of the country, these nationalist groups in Odessa envisage a future Ukraine that is for all intents and purposes separate from

---

[112] Volodymyr Kravchenko, "Fighting Soviet Myths: The Ukrainian Experience," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 34, no. 1/4 (2015): 470, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44364503.

[113] Betlii, "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," 151.

[114] *Ibid.*, 164.

[115] Kappeler, "Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial past and Competing Memories," 112.

[116] Grynszpan, "Odessa, the story behind the myth."

[117] Zhuravel, " 'Blood of Ukraine on Kateryna's hands'. In Odessa, a rally was held against the monument to the Russian empress."

Russian cultural influence.[118] This phenomenon, which managed to engulf and find support even in Ukraine's most Russophile city, can be detected in several instances from language reevaluation and restrictions to physical removals of Odessa's historic monuments. In the first case relating to language Iryna Biriukova, director of the Odessa National Scientific Library, tells us that "in the libraries of Odessa, the war has also led to an accelerated De-Russification of the bookshelves. No one is going to ban reading Tolstoy, Lermontov, Pushkin or Dostoyevsky. It is Russia that discourages Ukrainians from reading these authors because they represent the culture of the aggressor".[119] Thus providing us with an insight into one of the reasons why only now De-Russification manifested itself and is received with overwhelming support from all corners of the Ukrainian population. Successively we can look at the physical removals of Russian cultural heritage monuments in Odessa, primarily the case of the statue of Catherine II. Prior to its removal in December 2022, the monument to the Founders of Odessa had been the subject of nationalist and anti-Russian protests for the past fifteen years, although with little effect.[120] It was then in November 2022, at a regular session of the Odessa City Council, that the decision was taken to dismantle and relocate the monument towering Catherine II from the city's historic centre.[121] It is clear that Catherine II, together with the rest of Russian historical figures present in Ukraine, "has fallen victim to radical changes in public opinion as Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion forces Ukrainians to re-evaluate attitudes toward their country's imperial Russian past."[122] And yet, Odessa's decision to remove the monument was not a given one. The historical and cultural attachment to its Russian roots have often placed Odessa in an ambivalent position in the country's identity politics reconfiguration. The unveiling of the monument in 2007 for example, in the aftermath of the 2004 Orange Revolution, became a defiant and deliberate demonstration of the city's pride in its imperial past.[123] However, in the wake of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Odessa's ambiguous sense of belonging to Ukraine was put to rest, for the city "had long chosen Ukraine, a country of political freedom and freedom of expression … over Moscow's oppressive regime."[124] It is in fact because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that the acceptance of Russian identity as a natural part of Ukrainian identity ultimately shattered.[125] This in turn can lead us to theorise that while the De-Russification of Ukraine has become a systematic tool for the conceptualisation of a new Ukrainian identity politics, such would have probably never reached the heights it has without the outbreak of the war.

---

[118] *Ibid*.

[119] Gomerzano, "War in Ukraine: 'De-Russification on the rise in Odesa."

[120] Durand, "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders," 23.

[121] "Monuments to the Founders of Odessa and Oleksandr Suvorov will be temporarily moved to the Art Museum," Odessa City Council.

[122] Honcharenko, "OPINION: Odesa Rejects Catherine the Great as Putin's Invasion Makes Russia Toxic."

[123] *Ibid*.

[124] Ugo Poletti, "OPINION: A Year of War in Odesa," *Kyiv Post*, January 14, 2023, https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/11128.

[125] Evgien Afanasiev, Brian Mann, Alina Selyukh and Elissa Nadworny, "Ukraine agonizes over Russian culture and language in its social fabric," *National Public Radio*, June 2, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/06/02/1101712731/russia-invasion-ukraine-russian-language-culture-identity.

How and Why De-Communisation developed into De-Russification only in 2022

At this point the question that prevails above all is why has De-Russification in Ukraine taken thirty one years, since the country's independence in 1991, to manifest as a cultural reevaluation of the country's identity politics? More importantly, why has De-Russification not emerged already in 2013 on the eve of the EuroMaidan protests and the unfolding of Leninopad? Or why then did the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war in Donbass in 2014 not serve as stimuli for the eruption of anti-Russian sentiments and their further politicisation in Ukraine's identity politics? As well as why did the choice to embark on a De-Communisation campaign in 2015 prevail that of launching a nation-wide De-Russification effort? The answer to these questions can be divided into four main points on the basis of the analysis conducted on the origins, development and consequences of De-Communisation and De-Russification in Ukraine. Starting in 1991, it should be remembered that Ukraine's entrance in the world as an independent nation came after over two hundred years of Russian and Soviet occupation. As the Soviet occupation was the most recent in the country's history as well as the most painful in the country's memory, and it is directly associated with the country's independence it became almost impossible for Ukraine not to tackle it as soon as 1991. Nevertheless, the initial De-Sovietisation campaign, led by Ukraine's first democratically elected president Leonid Kravchuk, 'organised' Ukraine's identity politics into one that had to primarily deal with its Soviet past. This undertaking has thus had the consequence of temporarily separating Russia from the Soviet Union. This separation in turn promoted the country's quest toward an initial reevaluation of its Soviet past and legacy by effectively distancing Russia from the Soviet and therefore regarding them as almost two separate entities. This political and cultural interpretation of the past has consequently set Ukraine on the path of preliminary De-Communisation of its identity politics. One which in turn did not achieve the results seen in the rest of Eastern Europe's ex-Soviet Bloc. Large numbers of monuments and symbols had in fact remained intact and still adorned the cultural centres of numerous Ukrainian cities, both in the East as in the West. These results lead us to establish as a second motive for the non-emergence of De-Russification between 1991 and 2015, and that is the failure of Ukraine's governmentship to effectively tackle the issue of Soviet legacy early in Ukraine's modern history. Such a factor is constructively tackled by Shevel and integrated in Betlii's study of *The Identity Politics of Heritage* in Ukraine. According to Shevel between 1991 and 2014 Ukraine approached the issue of reevaluating and reinterpreting its Soviet past through three different methods of identity politics: "the wholesale rejection of the Soviet past, its wholesale embrace, and the 'centrist' neither-nor position".[126] This political and cultural narrative discrepancy, which began in 1991 under president Kravchuk and his rejection of the Soviet past, and ended in 2014 under president Yanukovich and his pro-Russian and

---

[126] Shevel, "Memories of the Past and Visions of the Future: Remembering the Soviet Era and its End in Ukraine," 156.

Soviet stance, is fundamentally the reason for Ukraine's failure to both correctly and effectively establish a clear-cut identity politics. In this manner, without having been able to successfully tackle the issue of the country's Soviet legacy, in the form of cultural heritage removal and/or reinterpretation, Ukraine's identity politics never fully established itself as anti-Soviet and therefore was not able to develop into an anti-Russian one. This is to show that without a firm base on which to conceptualise its identity Ukraine was neither able to make a transition in its identity politics nor it reached the levels in both popular and political consensus to begin assessing its Russian past as the next stage of cultural De-Communisation. Thirdly, one must return to the issue of Ukraine's ethnic and geographic division between East and West. As highlighted in the research so far, especially through the case of Odessa, Ukraine's demographic composition is a pivotal factor in the country's lateness to establish an anti-Russian identity politics. Even after Russia's annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war in Donbass in 2014, Ukrainian sentiments towards its Soviet past and its current relationship with Russia showed regional variation by being stronger in West and the Centre and weaker in the South and the East.[127] This reality is the fruit of Ukraine's demographic division between a majorly ethnic Ukrainian population in the West and the Centre and a Russian one in the South and the East of the country. The fact is that in the aftermath of the 2014 crisis and the implementation in 2015 of memory laws the majority of Ukraine's Russian minority was not under direct Russian political and cultural influence. This turn of events has then be responsible for the development of an ideological division, and thus lack of a consensus, between those ethnic Russians living in the South and the East who maintained a close relationship with Russia and those ethnic Ukrainians living in the West and the Centre who experienced a revival of nationalist ideology and formulated a more direct anti-Russian identity politics. Lastly, and of greatest relevance to this research, is the issue of war. While in 2014 the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war in Donbass assumed the form of a regional conflict, further expressed by the presence of a large Russian minority which favoured Moscow's authoritarianism to Kyiv's democracy, in 2022 the Russian invasion of Ukraine assumed the form of an international conflict by drawing the entirety of the Ukrainian population in the midst of the fighting. With particular attention paid to the city of Odessa and the rise of De-Russification throughout Ukraine we can see how the difference in the type of conflict has affected the stance of every Ukrainian. Journalist Shawn Walker expresses this view with regard to Odessites by saying that "the removal of Catherine, unthinkable before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, is a reflection of the mood in a city that is rapidly losing all sentimentality about the Russian-linked pages of its past as it comes under sustained fire from Russian missiles."[128] Remaining on the case of Catherine II in Odessa Ukrainian historian Oleksandr Babich further explains how "before the war, few people thought it was a good idea

---

[127] Shevel, "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," 3.

[128] Shaun Walker, "Removing statues and renaming streets: Odesa cuts out Russia," *The Guardian*, July 28, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/28/removing-statues-and-renaming-streets-odesa-cuts-out-russia.

to pull down Catherine. But with every Russian missile that falls, the number of people who want to get rid of all this heritage gets higher and higher".[129] This reevaluation of the country's past, which now has transcended in an identity politics based on the total De-Russification of the country's historic and cultural past, is therefore a complementary result of the extension of Russian aggression toward the entire Ukrainian population, including Ukraine's most Russophile city. As a result, Ukrainians, of both Ukrainian and Russian ethnicity, are now for the first time united on the same front, that of establishing a clear rupture between their national identity and the country's Soviet and Russian past alike with the establishment of an anti-Russian identity politics.

---

[129] Walker, "Removing statues and renaming streets: Odesa cuts out Russia."

Conclusions

Chapter Conclusions

Let's recapitulate the main takeaways from this Master Thesis research on Ukraine's identity politics foundation and development since 1991, and on the importance of Odessa in the establishment of De-Russification as the country's cultural identity politics point of reference. Beginning with the latter point, the history of Odessa has shown us how much the city's cultural development since its establishment in 1794 by decree of Catherine II is closely attached to a sense of Russian cultural belonging and reciprocal influence. What this Master Thesis hopes to have demonstrated is how Odessa's rejection of its Russian legacy in 2022, through the removal of the statue honouring Catherine II, represents a pivotal moment in Ukraine's conceptualisation of majority-based consensus identity politics. For so long the jewel of the Black Sea had been detached from Kyiv's identity politics formulation and identity building. Its rejection, in the aftermath of Leninopad, the EuroMaidan Protests and the implementation of memory laws, to actively participate in the cultural remotion, reevaluation and reinterpretation of its Soviet and Russian cultural heritage is representative of the country's failure to consolidate a nation-wide identity politics before 2022. In this respect, Odessa has become an object of great historical and cultural value to the unity of Ukrainians and to the consolidation of a Ukrainian-based identity politics. Nevertheless, the removal of Catherine II from Odessa's cultural public space is, as this Master Thesis has hoped to demonstrate, a significant loss of cultural heritage for the history of the city and for Ukraine as a whole. One that while on one hand it has seemed to unite Ukrainians from across the country, on the other it can be reason for growing concern regarding both the fate of Russian cultural heritage in Ukraine as well as the impact that this memory vacuum will have on the conceptualisation of a modern Ukrainian identity.

Moving onto the revelations that arose from the analyses conducted in Chapter II and Chapter III these takeaways are directly involved in the answering of this Master Thesis' Research Question: *Why has the De-Russification of cultural heritage in Ukraine only begun in 2022?* The review of Ukraine's identity politics development between 1991 and 2015 conducted in Chapter II has brought to light the foundations of Ukraine's identity politics consolidation failures between those years. These can be observed in Ukraine's political instability with regard to the formulation of a consistent and actively implemented identity politics targeting the country's Soviet past. Principally, the work of Oxana Shevel has been able to provide this Master Thesis with the necessary background and understanding to Ukraine's struggle in asserting an identity politics that sticks. These findings are in turn a great source of relevance when attempting to disclose the reasons for the late coming of a full-scale De-Russificatin campaign only in 2022. The history of Ukraine's identity politics development, as this Master Thesis has hoped to demonstrate, becomes an essential component in the understanding of the failures that Ukraine's memory laws have had on the conceptualisation of national identity politics with regard to Soviet-era cultural heritage. De-Communisation in turn assumes a particularly pivotal role in framing

both the struggle and progress of Ukraine's cultural identity politics formulation. In synthesis, Chapter II provides this Master Thesis with the foundational understanding of Ukraine's identity struggle in the face of Russian aggression in 2014. This struggle is thus effectively identified as the source for Ukraine's domestic cultural instability and latency in finding a consensus with regard to the country's Soviet and Russian past. A consensus which, had it not been for the reasons explained in Chapter III, would and should have been found already between 2014 and 2015.

Lastly, and of most direct relevance to the answering of this Master Thesis' Research Questions, are the findings of Chapter III. Quite clearly Chapter III builds on the analysis of Ukraine's identity politics development and the consequences of De-Communisation in the building of anti-Russian sentiments. In its tackling of the issue of identity politics in Ukraine between 2015 and 2022 this research has been able to affirm four main reasons for the country's transition from De-Communisation to De-Russification in its identity politics. The four takeaways are constituted by 1) The disparity in number of removals and solidarity with the 2015 memory laws across Ukraine; 2) The political discontinuity and fragility of Ukraine's identity politics which ranged between the wholesale rejection of the Soviet past, its wholesale embrace, and the 'centrist' neither-nor position between 1991 and 2022; 3) Ukraine's demographic diversity in ethnicity, language and cultural representation across North, South, East and West, particularly the case of Odessa and its large ethnic Russian minority; and 4) The proximity of war to the entire Ukrainian population which only manifested in 2022 with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The takeaways in the end should serve as the basis for the understanding of Ukraine's identity politics shift in 2022 from De-Communisation to De-Russification of its cultural heritage, as well as laying out the reasons why why such a transition was not able from taking place in 1991 with the emergence of an independent Ukraine, between 2013 and 2014 after Leninopad and Russia's annexation of Crimea, or in 2015 with the implementation of memory laws banning Soviet-era monuments and symbols. The ultimate outcome in turn has been to apply and analysis Ukraine's identity politics of De-Russification on the case study of Odessa so as to create a link between Ukraine's strive towards the conceptualisation of a modern national identity and the city's role in being a centre of gravity for the development of a Ukrainian identity politics.

Bibliography

1) Afanasiev, Evgien, Brian Mann, Alina Selyukh and Elissa Nadworny. "Ukraine agonizes over Russian culture and language in its social fabric." *National Public Radio*, June 2, 2022. https://www.npr.org/2022/06/02/1101712731/russia-invasion-ukraine-russian-language-culture-identity.

2) Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

3) Anderson, Jon Lee. "How do Ukrainians think about Russians now?" *The New Yorker*, February 15, 2023. https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/how-do-ukrainians-think-about-russians-now.

4) Balkanist. "History Revisited: Criminalizing Communist Symbols and Sympathies in Ukraine." Last modified May 28, 2015. https://balkanist.net/history-revisited-criminalizing-communist-symbols-sympathies-ukraine/.

5) Betlii, Olena. "The Identity Politics of Heritage: Decommunization, Decolonization, and Derussification of Kyiv Monuments after Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine." *Journal of Applied History* 4 (December 2022): 149-169. https://brill.com/view/journals/joah/4/1-2/article-p149_11.xml.

6) Cannadine, David . "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977." Chapter in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 101-164. *Canto Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

7) Chernetsky, Vitaly. "Postcolonialism, Russia and Ukraine." *Ulbandus Review* 7 (2003): 32–62.https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25748122.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A017f22095f3095507b14c28e81f83179&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1.

8) City of Odessa. "Destroyer of the Zaporozhian Sich or founder of Odessa: the history of the monument to Catherine II/ Razrushitelʹnitsa Zaporozhskoj Setchi ili osnovatelʹnitsa Odyssey: istoriya pamjatnika Ekateriny II." Last modified June 14, 2021.

9) Corber, Sylvie and Elaine Ganley. "Ukraine's Odesa city put on UNESCO heritage in danger list." *Associated Press News*, January 25, 2023.

10) Council of Europe. "City of Odessa Intercultural Profile." Last modified June 30, 2017. https://rm.coe.int/odessa-intercultural-profile/1680759d6c.

11) Davies, Brian L. *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768-1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.

12) Denber, Rachel. "New Language Requirement Raises Concerns in Ukraine." *Human Rights Watch*, January 19, 2022. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/19/new-language-requirement-raises-concerns-ukraine.

13) Detector MediaSapiens. "Більшість українців упереджені до влади, декомунізації та ЗМІ - дослідження." Last modified October 9, 2015.
https://ms.detector.media/mediadoslidzhennya/post/14371/2015-10-09-bilshist-ukraintsiv-uperedzheni-do-vlady-dekomunizatsii-ta-zmi-doslidzhennya/.

14) Dettmer, Jamie. "The cost of Ukraine's De-Russification." *POLITICO*, August 26, 2022. https://www.politico.eu/article/the-cost-of-ukraines-de-russification/.

15) Durand, Olivia. "The Statue of Catherine II 'the Great' or the Monument to the Odessa Founders." *Contested Histories Occasional Paper* 177, no. 10 (May 2022): 1-30. https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/OP-X_Catherine-the-Great_Ukraine.pdf.

16) Europe | Recycling Russia. "A campaign to "de-Russify" Ukraine is under way." *The Economist*, January 29th, 2023. https://www.economist.com/europe/2023/01/29/a-campaign-to-de-russify-ukraine-is-under-way.

17) Filev, Maksim V. and Anatolii A. Gurkanskii. "Dismantling monuments as the core of the post-2014 'decommunisation' in Ukraine and Poland." *Baltic Region* 14, no. 4 (2022): 146-161. https://journals.kantiana.ru/upload/iblock/0e3/9_146-161.pdf.

18) Gormezano, David. "War in Ukraine: 'De-Russification' on the rise in Odesa." *France 24*, February 22, 2023. https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230222-war-in-ukraine-de-russification-on-the-rise-in-odesa.

19) Grynszpan, Emmanuel. "Odessa, the story behind the myth." *Le Monde*, April 20, 2022. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/m-le-mag/article/2022/04/20/odesa-the-story-behind-the-myth_5981080_117.html?random=2119276770.

20) Hagen, Mark von. "Does Ukraine Have a History?" *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658–73. https://doi.org/10.2307/2501741.

21) Harris, Carolyn. "When Catherine the Great Invaded the Crimea and Put the Rest of the World on Edge." *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 4, 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-catherine-great-invaded-crimea-and-put-rest-world-edge-180949969/.

22) Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018. https://gateway.ipfs.io/ipfs/bafykbzaceabepuiyay3tczfyprhvcgsb3rzsqo7lhrstjt2pccl2tns5wy7pa?filename=Patricia%20Herlihy%20-%20Odessa%20Recollected_%20The%20Port%20and%20the%20People-Ukrainian%20Research%20Institute%20%282019%29.pdf. (6)

23) Honcharenko, Oleksiy. "OPINION: Odesa Rejects Catherine the Great as Putin's Invasion Makes Russia Toxic." *Kyiv Post*, November 16, 2022. https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/4873.

24) Kappeler, Andreas. "Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial past and Competing Memories." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 2013): 107-115. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1016/j.euras.2014.05.005.

25) Kasianov, Georgiy. *Memory crash: The politics of history in and around Ukraine, 1980–2010s*. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2022. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/94012.

26) Kravchenko, Volodymyr. "Fighting Soviet Myths: The Ukrainian Experience." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 34, no. 1/4 (2015): 447–84. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44364503.

27) Koposov, Nikolay. "Populism and Memory: Legislation of the Past in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia." *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 36, no. 1 (February 2022): 272-297. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0888325420950806.

28) Kuzio, Taras, ed. *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1998.

29) Kuzio, Taras. "Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010): 285–96. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609723.

30) Kuzio, Taras. *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War*. Milton Park: Routledge, 2022.

31) Lachmann, Renate. "Russia's Iconoclasm." *European Review* 30, no. 1 (November 2022): 126-132. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-review/article/russias-iconoclasms/57574119C69CB788877C1D72AAC23608.

32) Liubarets, Andriy. "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations." *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016): 197-214. https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/server/api/core/bitstreams/dc209777-0169-49d8-b2fb-3b76887f67d6/content.

33) Lynch, Lily. "Letter from Odessa: I partied with politicians and pick-up artists in Europe's most permissive city." *New East Digital Archive*, June 22, 2016. https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/6259/letter-from-odessa-ukraine-saakishvili-roosh-v.

34) Marples, David."Decommunisation in Ukraine. Implementation, pros and cons." *New Eastern Europe*, September 16, 2016. https://neweasterneurope.eu/2016/09/16/decommunisation-in-ukraine/.

35) Melkozerova, Veronika. "What the West can learn from Ukraine's treatment of Soviet monuments." *POLITICO*, July 28, 2020. https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-soviet-monuments-what-the-west-can-learn/.

36) Miller, Alexei I. "National Identity in Ukraine: History and Politics." *Russia in Global Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2022): 94-114. https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/national-identity-in-ukraine/.

37) Mykhailutsa, Mykola. "Decommunization/renaming in Odessa region: Historical comparison, methods and results." *Danubius* XXXV, (2017): 109-116. https://www.revistadanubius.ro/pdf/rezumate/en/XXXVs/11_mykola_mykhailutsa.pdf.

38) Надлер В. К.. *Одесса в первыя эпохи ея существования*. Тип. В. В. Кихнера, 1893. http://rarebook.onu.edu.ua:8081/handle/store/2305.

39) News From Elsewhere. "Ukraine: Lenin statue given Darth Vader makeover." *BBC* October 23, 2015. https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-34594262

40) Odessa City Council. "Monuments to the Founders of Odessa and Oleksandr Suvorov will be temporarily moved to the Art Museum." Published November 30, 2022. https://omr-gov-ua.translate.goog/ua/news/230866?_x_tr_sl=uk&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp.

41) Odessky. "Ekaterininskaya Square." Streets in the History of Odessa. Accessed July 1, 2023. http://odesskiy.com/ulitsi-v-istorii-odessi/ekaterinenskaya-ploschad.html.

42) Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation." Published February 21, 2022. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828.

43) Onuch, Olga, Henry E. Hale and Gwendolyn Sasse. "Studying identity in Ukraine." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, (2018): 79-83. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1451241?needAccess=true&role=button.

44) Parliament of Ukraine. "On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the prohibition of propaganda of their symbols" Signed April 9, 2015. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19#Text.

45) Poletti, Ugo. "OPINION: A Year of War in Odesa." *Kyiv Post*, January 14, 2023. https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/11128.

46) Rozenas, Arturas and Anastasiia Vlasenko. "The Real Consequences of Symbolic Politics: Breaking the Soviet Past in Ukraine." *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 3 (July 2022): 1263-1277. https://doi.org/10.1086/718210.

47) Shevel, Oxana. "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine." *PONARS Eurasia* (2016): 1-5. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/attachments/Pepm411_Shevel_Jan2016-1.pdf.

48) Shevel, Oxana. "Memories of the Past and Visions of the Future: Remembering the Soviet Era and its End in Ukraine." In *Twenty Years After Communism*, edited by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, 146-167. New York: Oxford Academic, 21 Aug. 2014. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199375134.003.0008.

49) Slovo / The Word. "Памятник Екатерине II в Одессе мешает жить всего 43 подписавшим петицию к президенту." July 9, 2018. https://slovo.odessa.ua/main/28510-pamyatnik-ekaterine-ii-v-odesse-meshaet-zhit-vsego-43-podpisavshim-peticiyu-k-prezidentu.html.

50) Synenko, Alyona. "Odessa, the city of broken statues." *The Odessa Journal*, September 19, 2020. https://odessa-journal.com/odessa-the-city-of-broken-statues/.

51) Ukrainian Research Institute Harvard University. "The Center Rules: The Decommunization Laws." Published in 2017. https://gis.huri.harvard.edu/center-rules.

52) Walker, Shaun. "Removing statues and renaming streets: Odesa cuts out Russia." *The Guardian*, July 28, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/28/removing-statues-and-renaming-streets-odesa-cuts-out-russia.

53) Zhuravel, Dmytro. " 'Blood of Ukraine on Kateryna's hands'. In Odessa, a rally was held against the monument to the Russian empress." *Suspilne Media*, November 8, 2020.

https://suspilne-media.translate.goog/78038-krov-ukraini-na-rukah-katerini-v-odesi-mitinguvali-za-demontaz-pamatnika-rosijskij-imperatrici/?_x_tr_sl=ru&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp&_x_tr_hist=true.

54) Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. "A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis." *Die Friedens-Warte* 89, no. ½ (2014): 249-267. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24868495?searchText=zhurzhenko&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dzhurzhenko&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A8c2985476c0f1d8fa7f3f58863993eff.