According to many theoretical perspectives, Alyaksandr Lukashenka in Belarus should have suffered from the most recent wave of “transitions from post-Communism” (McFaul 2005) that toppled Kuchma in Ukraine. The Belarusian economy is relatively developed; the population is supportive of democracy; the country is close to Europe; and the opposition has followed virtually every tactical measure that proved successful in other countries – including presenting a united front and relying on non-violent measures. Yet, Lukashenka has faced only moderate opposition throughout his rule and remains securely in power while Kuchma faced many challenges and fell in 2004 in the face of millions of protestors across the country. While both countries were widely considered to have weak civil societies, they witnessed profoundly different levels of opposition mobilization. How do we explain these strikingly different outcomes in the two countries? Why has autocracy been so robust in Belarus and so weak in Ukraine despite very similar institutional legacies, similarly semi-Presidential systems in the mid 1990s, and greater economic development in Belarus?  

In this paper, I show that the different outcomes have resulted not from greater support for democracy, or opposition tactics, but from the very different interaction 

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1. I refer here to the original 1994 Belarusian constitution; not the hyper-Presidentialist constitution forced through after dissolution of parliament in 1996.
between national identity and incumbent power in the two countries. In Ukraine, divisions over national identity have made it possible for the opposition to use national identity as a mobilizational weapon against successive incumbents. Thus, even in the absence of an especially strong civil society, the opposition was able to bring up to a million people onto the streets. By contrast, the opposition in Belarus has faced relative unanimity over issues of national identity. As a result, it has mostly failed to mobilize large numbers of committed activists or popular support. As a result, Lukashenka has faced a much more weakly mobilized opposition.

By focusing on the problems of centralizing autocratic control rather than building a democracy, this paper uncovers causal mechanisms that have mostly been ignored by a literature that is overwhelmingly focused on democracy (Way 2005a). Thus, divisions over national identity certainly do nothing to promote democratic consolidation (Linz and Stepan 1996; Dahl 1971; Lijpart 1977) but may simultaneously promote competition by hindering the consolidation of autocratic rule.

This comparison of Belarus and Ukraine reveals a very different type of interaction between identity and autocracy than that presented in previous accounts. While most approaches have focused on the ideational content embodied in different conceptions of identity (i.e. civic vs. ethnic), I focus on contextual factors – i.e. the particular interaction between identity, incumbent power, and popular attitudes. An identity shared by the majority of elite and population that can be framed in anti-incumbent terms (“anti-incumbent majority identity”) benefits the opposition by facilitating popular mobilization even in the absence of a strong civil society. By contrast, a pro-incumbent majority identity benefits the incumbent by providing it access popular mobilization and full access to state resources to suppress political opposition.

Below, I lay out some hypotheses about when identity is likely to promote greater political competition and when it is likely to promote greater regime closure. Then, I explore the impact of identity on autocratic consolidation in Belarus and Ukraine.

Identity and autocracy

Scholars have presented a contradictory picture of the relationship between identity mobilization and autocracy. First, a number of scholars have pointed to the ways in which identity has been mobilized in favor of autocratic rule. Thus, scholars have noted how autocrats in countries such as Croatia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia have used

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2. Most investigation into the relationship between identity mobilization and regimes has focused on the tensions between ethnic differences and democracy. Ethnic differences are said to promote ethnic violence, and hinder efforts to create consensual rules of the game that is essential to democracy (Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1977; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Welsh 1993). A different set of questions is raised in an examination of identity and autocracy. Discussions of nationalism and autocracy focus on the impact of identity on the ability of any single group (rather than rules) to concentrate power.
supposed threats to national identity in order to legitimize autocratic rule (Cohen 2000; Janjic 1997). Autocrats have also used nationalist fear of secession to “justify authoritarian measures against perceived insurrections” (Katz 1994: 329). Finally, ethnic differences have often been used to divide opposition to autocratic rule (Rabushka 1970).

By contrast, others have stressed the ways in which nationalist/ethnic mobilization has been a powerful force undermining autocracy (Slater 2005; Kuzio 2001: 172). Thus nationalism in Armenia, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland in the late 1980s provided a powerful force against Soviet rule (Aves 1992; Kubik 1995; Masih and Kervorkian 1999; Beissinger 2002). Similarly, Dan Slater (2005) argues that mobilization around identity has been a powerful force for democratic revolt in South East Asia. In other cases, the impact of nationalist mobilization has been seemingly contradictory. For example, in the mid 1990s Ukrainian nationalism was a force behind the strengthening of an autocratic presidency but in the early 2000s was a mobilizational resource backing the overthrow of autocratic rule.

The predominant approach to understanding the different impacts of nationalism/ethnicity has been to focus on the content of national ideas. Thus, an enormous amount of ink has been spilled delineating different types of nationalism: civic and ethnic, “Western” and “Eastern”, or “homeostatic,” “transactionalist,” and “ethno-symbolist” (cf. Plamanets 1975; Greenfeld 1992; Dogan 1997). This approach is powerful but does not exhaust the ways in which identity may affect regime outcomes.

I argue instead that the context of the identity determines its impact on political contestation. Nationalism and identity mobilization more broadly can be force for and against autocracy depending on its relationship to the dominant power and the size of the identity’s support base. Whether identity becomes more of a tool for the autocrat or opposition hinges on (a) whether an identity can be framed in anti-incumbent terms or pro-incumbent terms; and (b) whether that identity is held by a majority or minority of a country’s elite/population. An identity shared by the majority of elite/population that can be framed in anti-incumbent terms (“anti-incumbent majority identity”) benefits the opposition by facilitating popular mobilization even in the absence of a strong civil society. By contrast, a pro-incumbent majority identity benefits the incumbent by providing it access popular mobilization and full access to state resources to suppress political opposition (Table 1). This set of hypotheses helps us to understand why oppositions in non-democracies with relatively similar levels of economic and political development may face very different challenges in their efforts to unseat autocratic incumbents. This approach also explains why identity is sometimes a force for autocratic consolidation but in other cases a force for greater contestation.
Table 1: Identity and autocratic versus opposition power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of support from elite/population</th>
<th>Relation to incumbent autocrat</th>
<th>Anti-incumbent</th>
<th>Pro-incumbent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Strong challenges to autocracy</td>
<td>(Baltics, Armenia late 1980s)</td>
<td>Weak challenges to autocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Russia under Putin, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine late 1990s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>Weak challenges to autocracy</td>
<td>(Russia under Putin, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine late 1990s)</td>
<td>High challenges to autocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Baltics, Armenia late 1980s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first question relates to whether or not the opposition can plausibly argue that the incumbent power is a threat to a particular identity – be it ideological, class, ethnic or national. The salience of such an identity is likely to threaten autocratic rule by stimulating opposition mobilization and weakening state control in parts of the country where that identity is strong. First, emotive appeals to identity have arguably made it easier stimulate the sustained personal sacrifice and cross-class coalitions necessary to carry out successful mobilization – even in cases where civil society is relatively weak. Thus, “natural’ or inherited identities are often the basis of aggregation in social movements” (Tarrow 1998: 119). Such identities help to stimulate commitment and solidarity or what Charles Tilly calls “lineaments of durable connection among core participants” (Tilly 1997: 133). By raising the stakes of what is involved in regime opposition, such identities help to stimulate more sustained and broad-based mobilization. The opposition’s ability to build “a movement around strong ties of collective identity whether inherited or constructed does much of the work that would normally fall to organization” (Tarrow 1998: 119). Thus, appeals to collective identities may facilitate mass protest even where civil societies are weak. In particular, alternative national conceptions have offered ready-made viable alternatives to authoritarianism, alternatives that Adam Przeworski (1986) argues are critical for undermining incumbent support. Thus, Mark Beissinger, in his study of protest behavior in the Soviet Union 1987-1992, shows that many times more participants took part in demonstrations supporting ethno-national than economic or liberalizing demands (Beissinger 2002: 76-79; Slater 2005).

Second, a salient national identity that can be framed in anti-incumbent terms may also undermine central state control. Emotive appeals that bring citizens onto the streets are also likely to convince regional or other state officials to disobey central state orders—making it more difficult for incumbents to manipulate elections or impose force in parts of the country where anti-incumbent national identity is salient. Thus, as we see below, in 1994 eastern state officials in Ukraine defected from President Kravchuk who
was perceived as anti-Russian; and in 2004 some western Ukrainian officials resisted central efforts to manipulate the vote in response to Kuchma’s pro-Russian stance.

Yet, such anti-incumbent nationalism does not of course exist in isolation. Political battles that are viewed by one side in identity terms are very likely to be viewed in similar terms by the other side as well. Any anti-incumbent identity is therefore likely to be met by a pro-incumbent identity. In such cases, the incumbent may draw on the same mobilizational power of identity in support of greater central control. Incumbents have of course often sought to mobilize national identity against a perceived threat. The salience of such a threat is likely to provide a powerful rationale for the centralization of power and reduction of dissent. Some of the clearest examples of such nationalism come from southeastern Europe where autocrats in Serbia, Croatia, and Romania have used “threats” by minority ethnic populations to mobilize support for centralized rule (cf. Katz 1994, 329; Janjic 1997).

Thus, nationalism and identity more broadly can be a powerful tool for both the opposition as well as the incumbent. The net impact of identity on autocratic consolidation is likely to hinge on whether the anti-incumbent identity is supported by a majority of the elite and population or a minority. An anti-incumbent majority identity generates serious obstacles to autocratic control; whereas a pro-incumbent majority identity facilitates autocratic consolidation. The dynamics of anti-incumbent and pro-incumbent majority identities are very different.

The dynamics of anti-incumbent majority identity are most evident in opposition struggles against colonial powers. In Central Europe, the Baltic republics and Georgia in the late 1980s, opposition was able to stimulate mass protest and undermine autocratic state control by framing opposition to incumbent autocrats in terms of national liberation. In such cases, the entire weight of nationalism has been directed against the incumbent party and state. Such regimes can be unstable even when incumbents have otherwise strong coercive capacity.

By contrast, a situation of pro-incumbent majority identity (anti-incumbent minority identity) favors autocratic rule. Here, the mobilizing tools of identity become a weapon against the opposition. In the absence of strong western democratizing pressure and/or other domestic democratic push, such identity is likely to promote authoritarian consolidation. First and almost by definition, the opposition will have a much harder time mobilizing large support if the anti-incumbent identity is only supported by a minority of the population. Second, and more importantly, such identity is likely to generate a counter-reaction by the incumbent and his/her supporters. The salience of minority identity may strengthen the case of the autocrat to concentrate political power and suppress dissent. In fact, the incumbent may even seek to promote minority anti-incumbent national activity in order to legitimize autocratic rule.

Activists supporting a minority identity thus face a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, minority identity often provides an essential mobilizational resource in contexts where opposition has little access to organizational or other resources (including
a strong civil society). As Dan Slater notes, most “opposition groups are neither armed to the teeth nor bankrolled to the hilt, so they must try to get as much political mileage as possible out of whatever symbolic advantages they might enjoy” (Slater 2005). Such mobilization may often be strong enough to at least temporarily destabilize the regime in certain areas. Yet, such activism is often self-defeating because it stimulates the counter identity – shared by a majority elite/population – that can be used to by the incumbent to suppress the opposition further. Because the incumbent controls much greater administrative resources as well as majority support, it is likely to overwhelm opposition challenges and strengthen autocratic rule.

The precise dynamics of minority anti-incumbent identity hinge on the relative size of support for that identity. In cases of extreme minority (such as the Chechens in Russia), identity politics serves only to strengthen autocracy. In other cases where a minority identity has substantial support (such as Communists in Russia and Ukraine in the mid 1990s), the impact of identity politics is likely to be more contradictory. Thus, appeals to majority anti-communist identity in Russia and Ukraine in the mid to late 1990s helped otherwise unpopular Presidents win elections and establish strongly Presidential constitutions. At the same time, support for Communism in these cases was strong enough to generate a powerful pro-Communist plurality in the legislature that was able to block certain presidential initiatives.

In sum, the incumbent’s ability to consolidate autocratic rule is shaped by national identity and party/state organizational capacity (see Figure 1). As we see, challenges to autocratic control increase as the size of support for anti-incumbent identity grows larger.

Figure 1: Identity and Contestation in Non-Democracies
Below, I show how identity helps to explain the striking differences in the strength of challenges to autocratic control in Belarus and Ukraine. Overall, the relative weakness of anti-incumbent identity in Belarus—a product of the dominance of a single national idea—has facilitated the centralization of power. In Ukraine, where anti-incumbent identity has been stronger due to splits in national identity, political contestation has been more robust.

The Puzzle of Regime Development in Belarus and Ukraine

Belarus, and Ukraine are extremely similar on a range of variables thought to affect regime outcomes. Neither of these countries had experience with democratic rule prior to 1991. Both were widely considered to have to have weak civil societies. Both were dominated in the 1990s by former high-level Soviet officials who demonstrated a willingness to use antidemocratic measures to stay in power. In addition, relative to Central Europe on one side and Central Asia on the other, the two have similar densities of ties to Western Europe and were never considered for membership in the European Union (Kopstein and Reilly 2000). Further, the strength of the opposition at the beginning of the 1990s—as measured by the share of oppositionist democrats elected to parliament in 1990—was about the same in all three cases. Thus, democrats controlled about a third of parliamentary seats in 1990 in each case (Gerasiuk 1991: 49; Wilson 1997: 120). Finally, in an area where important differences exist—economic development—the outcomes run counter to theory. Thus, economic development measured by GDP per capita was significantly lower in the more competitive country (Ukraine: $1,133 per capita) than in the more autocratic one (Belarus: $2,248 per capita).

Despite these important similarities, opposition challenge to autocratic rule was generally stronger in Ukraine than in Belarus. First, leaders in Ukraine generally faced greater difficulty manipulating electoral outcomes. Thus, in contrast to Belarus, Ukraine witnessed strong regionally based challenges to pro-incumbent electoral control both in 1994 as well as 2004. Thus, Kravchuk face pro-opposition electoral manipulation in eastern Ukraine in 1994 (Way 2006: 178) while Kuchma apparently confronted pro opposition manipulation in the West in 2004 (see below). While Kebich in Belarus faced some problems in 1994 (although not as overt as in Ukraine; Way 2006: 175), Lukashenka has faced no serious regional challenges during his tenure. Next, there have been striking differences in the degree of de facto executive control over parliament. In Belarus after 1996, the President was able to manipulate the legislature at will to the extent that the body provides virtually no source of opposition. By contrast, in Ukraine in 1995–2004, Kuchma generally dominated parliament but strong and vocal anti-incumbent parties presented persistent and sometimes effective sources of opposition. Finally, the opposi-

3. Add cites.

4. There are 2003 figures in constant 1995 dollars (World Development Indicators Online).
tion was overall more mobilized in Ukraine than in Belarus (Figure 2). While available secondary sources suggest that the April 1996 demonstrations in Minsk may have been slightly larger than demonstrations in Ukraine, strike actions against the government in Ukraine in 1993 were far better organized, widespread and damaging than the demonstrations in Belarus in 1996 – in part because these actions had the support of local governments and industrial ministries (Kubicek 2000: 77-78). And of course the differences in mobilization became particularly striking in the early 2000s. Thus in response to a fraudulent election in 2004, the Ukrainian opposition brought out close to one million protestors; while the Belarusian was able to muster at most 20,000 in response to a fraudulent election in 2006.

**Figure 2: Opposition Mobilization in Belarus and Ukraine (1992-2006)**

Note: Comments on this table are especially welcome – particularly if you think I have missed an important demonstration or provided a wrong high estimate.

I argue that the vastly different strength of anti-incumbent challenges in the two countries can partially be explained by differences in the degree of consensus over the national idea. Anti-incumbent national identity was strongest in Ukraine, where the split character of national identity has meant that successive incumbents on both sides have faced relatively serious threats from mobilized anti-incumbent identity. In contrast to Belarus (and most of the rest of the former Soviet Union), Ukraine included significant territories where the populations had gained a strong non-Russian/Soviet national identity prior to their incorporation into the USSR—a difference that Keith Darden links to the extent of popular literacy at the time of incorporation into the USSR. As a result, populations in these areas actively mobilized against Soviet rule in the late 1980s, when Soviet central control began to weaken (Darden 2002; Dallin 1957). At the same time, Ukraine also contained areas where Soviet identity was highly legitimate at the time of the Soviet dissolution. As a consequence of this contestation, both sides (the pro- and the anti-Russian/Soviet groups) were able to mobilize national identities in opposition to incumbent power. This facilitated mass mobilization even in the absence of a well-institutionalized civil society. Anti-incumbent identity also deprived incumbents of central control necessary to rig electoral outcomes. By contrast, relatively weak support for anti-Soviet Belarusian identity left the opposition there without this important mobilizational tool. Below, I show how identity affected regime dynamics in each case.

Belarus

In many ways, the prospects for autocratic breakdown and democracy would seem as propitious in Belarus as in any other non-Baltic post-Soviet state. As noted above, Belarus is highly economically developed. In addition, popular support for democracy and democrats in Belarus has been equal if not greater than in Ukraine. Surveys conducted in the 1990s show that popular support for democratic institutions was greater than in Ukraine or Russia and at about the same level as in the Baltic countries (Haerpfer 2003). In addition, self-proclaimed democrats in Belarus won about a third of the parliamentary seats in the founding 1990 parliamentary elections – just as in Ukraine.

Further, Belarus by all accounts should have benefited from the apparent pro-democratic contagion coming from Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine that has captivated major scholars in the field (Beissinger 2005; Bunce and Wolchik 2006). As Bunce and Wolchik (2006) cogently note, the post-Communist region is “unusually ‘regional.’” Thus, Belarus became a focus of attention for Serb and Slovak activists in 2001 and 2006 (get cite on Serbia).6 In addition, large numbers of Ukrainian activists after 2004 traveled to nearby Minsk and other cities to provide moral and tactical support to the Belarusian

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6. For example, the Pontis foundation in Bratislava that was founded in 1997 has offered assistance to the Belarusian opposition. See http://www.pontisfoundation.sk/en/11019.
Next, opposition tactics – particularly in 2006 – reflected this support. They seemed to do everything that recent scholars have suggested is key to opposition success. In line with Howard and Roessler (2006), the opposition unified behind a single major candidate, Milinkevich. Milinkevich himself was moderate and mainstream. He was openly supported by the European powers. Further, in line with Bunce and Wolchik (2006), opposition leaders focused their efforts on elections and were stridently non-violent. Indeed, the opposition seemed to borrow virtually every tactic possible from its successful neighbors in Ukraine. Thus, after the fraudulent March 2006 elections, the opposition organized peaceful demonstrations in the center of the capital, built tents and even had its own color. As in Ukraine in 2004 (and in Serbia and Georgia), youth created an organization – Zubr – that has benefited from Serb support and that relied extensively on anti-regime humor as part of its appeal. The anti-regime rallies in March 2006 had much the same feeling as the rallies in Ukraine in 2006. Both had a celebratory atmosphere, waving flags, constant music, and honking cars waving opposition flags. It was even freezing cold – just as in Kyiv in 2004.

The only difference was that the Minsk rallies had about a million fewer participants than their Ukrainian counterparts. The outcome of efforts in Belarus could not be more different from that in Ukraine. By even the most optimistic estimates, Milinkevich did not win more than about a quarter of the actual votes in March 2006. And the post-election mobilization drew at most 20,000-30,000 participants (RFE/RL Newsline 20 March 2006). Differences in the dynamics of national identity are key to understanding the failure of the anti-incumbent efforts in Belarus and their success in Ukraine. While both countries were widely considered to have weak civil societies (cites), only Ukraine has a strongly divided national identity that has provided a key mobilizational weapon to opposition throughout the post-Soviet era.

Belarus has frequently been referred to as a “denationalized nation” (Marple 1999a) because of the weakness of a particular anti-Soviet national identity rooted in the Belarusian language. Thus, while activists in Belarus in 1989-1990 sought to mimic their Baltic counterparts by creating a “popular front” rooted in a similarly anti-Soviet national identity, they met with far less success. Indeed, in stark contrast to Ukraine (not to mention Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), these nationalists managed to gain just 5-8% of seats in 1990 and no seats in 1995 – although support for democrats was about the same in 1990. Further, an overwhelming share of voters supported a return to Soviet-

7. Author interviews with Ukrainian student activists in Minsk on October square following the fraudulent March 19 Presidential elections, 20-21 March 2006.
9. Based on the author’s visits to anti-regime demonstrations in October square 20-21 March 2006.
10. At the same time, as stressed above, explicitly oppositionist democrats did about as well in Belarus in 1990 as in Russia or Ukraine – gaining about a third of the legislative seats. In Ukraine, by contrast, the anti-Soviet nationalists dominated the “democratic” opposition. Thus, the difference between Belarus and Ukraine was support for anti-Soviet nationalists not democrats per se.
era symbols and Russian language in a referendum in May 1995.\textsuperscript{11} While this identity – represented by the white-red-white flag – has a number of adherents in Minsk, it is extremely weak in the country as a whole.\textsuperscript{12}

Yet, the discussion of Belarus’s supposed lack of national identity wrongly implies that Belarusian identity must necessarily be anti-Soviet. In fact, available evidence suggests that the Belarusian population is united around national symbols – just Soviet ones. As has often been noted, “Belarus entered modernity as a Soviet state” (Leshchenko 2004: 337). In the 1950s-1970s, Belarus was transformed from an overwhelmingly peasant society into an advanced industrial society (Mihalisko 1997: 235; Leshchenko 2004: 337). Belarus was also considered to have the highest standard of living of any Soviet republic (Novyk and Tsyapleva 1996). In addition, the Soviet period gave Belarus a series of heroic national myths surrounding resistance to Nazi rule in 1942-44 that have broad popular resonance. Ex-partisans dominated the Belarusian Communist elite and had an aura of genuine popular legitimacy lacking in other Soviet republics (Urban 1989). The popular resonance of the “Partisans” – promoted by the popular novels of Vasil’ Bykau – is in many ways no different from the reverberation of “Cossacks” in Ukraine or “Patriots” in the United States. Further, these symbols’ ties to the Soviet Union/Russia make them no less “national” than do Polish symbols’ ties to Europe. In fact, while myths around W.W. II remain salient, a majority of the Belarusian population now opposes full integration into Russia (Leshchenko 2004: 345).

The wide popularity of the Soviet-Belarusian national identity has undermined efforts to overthrow Lukashenka by depriving the opposition of a key mobilizational resource. Those opposition leaders who supported anti-Soviet Belarusian national identity lacked a sufficiently large base of support to gain positions in parliament after 1995 and thus had fewer resources to create a serious regime crisis. Those opposition leaders not tied to this nationalism were able to enter parliament but lacked both the support base and commitment to seriously threaten the regime.

In 1996, Lukashenka, after failing to prevent the successful election of a parliamentary quorum in 1995, sought to shut down parliament and strengthen the Presidency via referendum. In turn, parliament attempted to impeach Lukashenka. Yet, the legislature remained highly divided and uncommitted in its response to Lukashenka’s overt assault on its power. First, between a third and a half of deputies were willing to openly back Lukashenka despite the fact that his reforms would seriously weaken their positions. Next, in stark contrast to Russia or Ukraine around the same period, Communists were not united in opposition to Lukashenka. According to one leader of the parliamentary

\textsuperscript{11} According to official results, 83.3% voted for giving Russian language the same official status as Belarusian language; 75% voted for a return of Soviet era Belarusian national symbols. While, some have noted that the media overwhelmingly backed this referendum at the time, there is no evidence of especially greater support for anti-Soviet symbols than indicated in the official results.

\textsuperscript{12} Thus, in stark contrast to Ukraine, there are really no serious regional divisions along identity lines in Belarus. The nationalists are simply weak everywhere but Minsk.
opposition, the Communists felt that the ideological proximity of Lukashenka and the Communists was a “very strong factor limiting” the willingness of Communist deputies to oppose the regime.\textsuperscript{13} This deprived parliament of a powerful organizational force that bolstered opposition in Russia and Ukraine. Next, those deputies willing initially to oppose the regime were easily swayed into submission. Thus, Semyon Sharetskii, the head of parliament who had probably the most to lose from reforms, gave into Lukashenka demands after meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and called off several thousand pro-parliamentary demonstrators who had gathered around parliament.\textsuperscript{14} In stark contrast to the parliamentary opposition to Yeltsin in 1993, leaders did not try to occupy the parliamentary building and left parliament without a fight – never forcing Lukashenka to risk relying on large or even medium-scale coercive measures. At least one reason for this lack of vigilance was the absence of a clear consensus about what they were fighting for. Thus, oppositionist parliamentarians reported that they felt isolated and bereft of popular support because “at the time it was less clear what [they] were fighting for … there was no obvious deep basis of conflict.”\textsuperscript{15}

In 2006, in stark contrast to 1996, the opposition was led by those with greater commitment to anti-Soviet Belarusian national identity. Thus, in his opposition Presidential bid Milinkevich relied on a stridently pro European message, the anti-Soviet white-red-white flag and support from members the Belarusian National Front. Such messages and symbols drew significant support from many in Minsk. Thus, as many as 20,000 demonstrated on October square against the regime for several days. The size and length of the demonstrations – while modest by most standards – surprised many observers given the opposition’s total lack of access to media. Yet, such tools of mobilization are inherently self limiting. The opposition in Belarus faces the classic dilemma faced by other oppositions relying on anti-incumbent minority identity. The white-red-white flag that is able to mobilize thousands of Minsk intelligentsia onto the streets is the same symbol that seems likely to alienate a majority of the population.\textsuperscript{16}

**Ukraine**

In stark contrast to Belarus, splits in Ukrainian national identity have generated powerful anti-incumbent identities throughout the post Cold War period – a fact that has consistently undermined efforts to establish autocratic rule. At the same time, shifts in the precise balance of power between pro and anti-incumbent identity have altered the chal-

\textsuperscript{13} Author interview with Pavel Daneiko, member of Belarusian parliament, 1995-1997, Minsk, July 6, 2004.

\textsuperscript{14} Author interview with Vincuk Viacorka, leader of Belarusian National Front, Minsk, June 29, 2004; Author interview with Andrei Sannikov, former official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minsk, July 3, 2004, Author interview with Mikhail Pastukhov, former member of Constitutional Court, Minsk, July 6, 2004.

\textsuperscript{15} Author interview with Vladimir Novsiad, parliamentary deputy, 1995–96, Minsk, July 8, 2004.

\textsuperscript{16} At the same time, the level of repression in Belarus makes it difficult to accurately determine real public opinion. Thus, these assessments are necessarily somewhat tentative.
lenges faced by autocrats over time. While support for Ukrainian cultural nationalism has remained relatively constant over the post Cold War period, support for Ukrainian sovereignty and the perceived threat of Ukrainian cultural nationalism has changed dramatically over time. These shifts have affected the number of those in other parts of the country willing to ally with Western Ukrainian nationalists and thus their relative power over time.

The first period, 1992-1994, was characterized by an anti-incumbent majority identity centered around opposition to Ukrainian sovereignty. President Kravchuk’s perceived adherence to a form of Ukrainian national identity that was opposed by a rough majority of the population as well as a large portion of the economic and political elite in the early 1990s helped to stimulate popular rebellion and loss of central control over key regions. As a result, Kravchuk lost power to his former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma in 1994. The second period, 1996-2001, was characterized by a pro-incumbent majority identity. While support for Ukrainian cultural nationalism remained relatively constant in this period, the willingness of other non-nationalist elites to ally with nationalists increased in the mid 1990s – at the same time that the perceived threat for Ukrainian cultural nationalism decreased and overall support for Ukrainian sovereignty increased. While in the early 1990s in the midst of economic collapse, Ukrainian sovereignty was perceived as a direct threat to the economy, by the late 1990s it had become accepted by the majority of the population as well as the eastern industrial elite. Increased elite and popular support for Ukrainian sovereignty facilitated the creation of a pro-incumbent majority Ukrainian identity against the minority pro-Soviet Communists. Kuchma utilized fear of anti-sovereignty Communism to convince Ukrainian nationalists to back stronger Presidential rule and support his reelection in 1999. At the same time, the relatively large (but minority) support for the Communists allowed the opposition to block the President at key moments. The third period, 2002-2004, was characterized again by an anti-incumbent majority identity. The release of damaging tapes alienated Kuchma from Western governments and forced Kuchma into a close alliance with Russia’s Putin. This stimulated nationalist opposition to Kuchma at the same time that high support for Ukrainian sovereignty made it easier for nationalists to ally with non-nationalists. The result was majority anti-incumbent coalition that provided a potent source of mobilization against Kuchma. I examine each of these periods below.

Anti-Incumbent Majority Identity and Weak Autocracy under Kravchuk

While a majority of Ukraine is ethnic Ukrainian, support for Ukrainian cultural nationalism is centered regionally in Western Ukraine that was under Austro-Hungarian rule and that now accounts for roughly a quarter of the country’s population. The share of the population that gives priority to Ukrainian cultural and political independence is about 20%-25% and has remained relatively constant throughout the post-Soviet era. However, the number of those in other parts of the country willing to ally with the West has shifted dramatically over time and has been the basis for changing balances of power between pro- and anti-incumbent identities.
First in 1991, the failed Soviet coup of August 1991 thoroughly discredited Soviet rule and generated a rapid increase in support for Ukrainian sovereignty. As a result, support for independence rose from 63% in September 1991 to 71% at the end of October to 90% in the actual vote in the referendum of December 1, 1991. Ukraine's first President, Leonid Kravchuk rode this wave by promoting Ukrainian independence and was elected President on the same day that the country voted overwhelmingly for independence. However, the severe collapse of the Ukrainian economy that resulted from the dismemberment of the Soviet Union led to a significant drop in support for Ukrainian independence in 1993-1994. Support for Ukrainian sovereignty, built to a large extent on economic expectations, collapsed among both the population and regional elite in the midst of Ukraine's economic collapse. “[A]s the promised economic benefits of independence failed to materialize, popular support for independence plummeted” (Pirie 1996: 1097). Further, eastern industrial elites grew increasingly hostile towards Kravchuk and began calling for greater autonomy and stronger links to Russia (UPI 16 December 1993; Kuzio 2000: 207-209). A large majority of the population in 1994 favored closer ties to the CIS and Russia (Molchanov 2000) and support for independence plummeted to close to 50% (Khmelko and Paniotto 2002: 2).

Thus, in the early 1990s, Kravchuk who had built his post-Soviet political career by supporting Ukrainian independence, faced a pro-Russian, anti-sovereignty anti-incumbent majority identity that severely undermined efforts to centralize political control. First, anti-incumbent majority national identity contributed to popular mobilization against the regime in 1993. While economic crisis affected Ukraine almost uniformly across different regions, such crisis in the East combined with pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian sentiment to generate significant anti-governmental mobilization. Eastern industrial elites grew increasingly hostile towards Kravchuk and began calling for greater autonomy and stronger links to Russia (UPI 16 December 1993; Kuzio 2000: 207-209). Backed by regional leaders, coal miners in the eastern region of Donetsk struck for higher wages, greater regional autonomy and early Presidential and Parliamentary elections in the spring of 1993 (Wilson 1993: 286; Solchanyk 1994: 59-61; Kubicek 2000: 77-78; FBIS-SOV 93-115, 53). Miners directly linked their situation to Kravchuk’s decision to break ties with Russia and threatened to seek help from Yeltsin if demands were

18. Surveys suggested that this support was mostly driven by expectations of economic benefits from independence (Wilson 1997: 128 fn. 58).
19. Due in part to severed economic ties with Russia and increased Russian energy prices, the Ukrainian economy went into severe tailspin in the early 1990s. In 1993, inflation reached a peak of 5,371% - a level higher than any other post-Communist country except for war-torn Serbia. By the end of 1993, Ukrainian official GDP had dropped by almost 40% relative to its level in 1989.
20. Eastern ties to Russia remained strong because industrial firms remained linked to their traditional Soviet era partners in Russia (Puglisi 2003, 829).
The strikes, which affected 80% of mines in the east, terrified the government, which agreed to early parliamentary and Presidential elections.

Subsequently, identity polarization played a key role in the 1994 Presidential elections that pitted former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma against Kravchuk. In the election, Kravchuk emphasized his role as the founder of Ukrainian independent statehood and warned against threats to Ukrainian independence (FBIS-SOV 27 June 1994, 46). In response, Kuchma took a relatively strong pro-Russian stance and called for an end to “the reign of Galician (Western Ukrainian) nationalism” (Wolczuk 2001: 139). In the end, “ethnolinguistic and geopolitical factors not economic issues decided the presidential contest” (Wilson 2000: 193; Arel and Khmelko 1996).

Simultaneously, the antagonism of the pro-Russian elite in the east severely undermined the ability to Kravchuk to control the electoral process in this part of Ukraine. Local officials and even his own appointees often directly undermined the president during the election. Election Commission workers in eastern and southern regions openly supported Kuchma and influenced the voting process in his favor. Weak control over local governments also reduced Kravchuk’s capacity to monopolize the media. Kravchuk’s inability to control his own officials contributed to the relative weakness of pro-incumbent manipulation in 1994.

The 1994 election highlighted the dilemma faced by groups supporting minority identities. By emphasizing his role in creating an independent Ukraine, Kravchuk could tap into intense political support in Western Ukraine. Yet the size of this support was severely limited. “The big advantage of the nationalist camp is that voters in Galicia and in parts of central Ukraine will back it come what may. Its big disadvantage is that this guaranteed support represents a maximum of only 20-25% of the vote” (Wilson 2000: 172).

21. Miners had earlier complained that Kravchuk was too close to the nationalist Rukh movement (FBIS-SOV 93-112, 60; Nezavisimost’ 8 July 1992, 3)
22. For example, local officials in Odesa and other cities prevented Kravchuk supporters from monitoring the vote (Kuzio 1996, 132-133). An observer reported that Kravchuk appointed government officials frequently campaigned actively against the incumbent (FBIS-SOV 3 August 1994 p. 38). Another election observation report noted that pro-Kravchuk fliers sent to Kravchuk-appointed representatives in eastern Ukraine went unused while “anti-Kravchuk materials were distributed widely by local officials” (Democratic Elections in Ukraine, 1994, 14; Kravchuk 2002, 230).
23. Thus, while central state TV was heavily biased in favor of Kravchuk, local media controlled by governments in the south and east was often biased in favor of Kuchma (European Institute for the Media 1994).
24. At the same time, there is some evidence of electoral fraud in western and central parts of Ukraine where Kravchuk had greater support (Nezavisimost’ 29 June 1994, p. 1; FBIS-SOV 94-132, 57; FBIS-SOV 12 July 1994, p. 37).
Pro-Incumbent Majority Identity and Authoritarian State Building Under Kuchma

The next period, 1996-2002, witnessed a shift in elite and popular support for Ukrainian sovereignty that created the basis for a pro-incumbent majority identity and facilitated greater autocratic control. First, popular support for Ukrainian sovereignty increased. By 1995, popular support for Ukrainian sovereignty climbed above 60% (Khmelko and Paniotto 2002) and by the early 2000s, polls consistently showed support for independence at around 75% (Kuzio 2003). Simultaneously, there is some evidence that support for integration with Russia declined. While most of the population supports friendly relations with Russia, a strong majority also backs the maintenance of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Second, and more importantly, the Eastern industrial elite that had opposed Ukrainian sovereignty in the early 1990s began to back Ukrainian independence. Many domestic interests began to fear that Russians, with their much greater access to wealth and much more developed businesses, would grab valuable properties and out-compete Ukrainians in such vulnerable sectors as banking and finance. Thus, the President and government actively resisted Russian intervention and privatization in order to protect Ukrainian sources of wealth for a group of domestic loyalists. Kuchma, who had earlier supported integration with Russia, now backed Ukrainian independence and allied himself with Ukrainian nationalists.

Kuchma’s success in bringing the bulk of eastern Ukrainian “centrists” over to the side of Ukrainian sovereignty created the basis for an autocratic coalition between the nationalists and centrists and meant that those opposed to Ukrainian statehood became isolated among minority Communists. The highly organized nature of the Communist Party helped to block the President at key moments, but simultaneously legitimated Kuchma’s efforts to centralize power. Partly as a result, he was able to pass a constitution with a strong presidency and ultimately create a relatively institutionalized autocratic state by the late 1990s.

In Ukraine as in Russia, the mid 1990s witnessed the emergence of an organizationally strong Communist movement. The Communists benefited from the widely held view that Ukraine’s severe economic situation resulted from the country’s break with

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25. A lot of this increased support is traceable to improvements in the Ukrainian economy (Khmelko and Paniotto 2002)
26. According to one set of surveys, Ukrainian support for integration into the Russian dominated multilateral structures (CIS, the Russian-Belarusian union) declined from 58% in 1994 to 45% in 1998 (Molchanov 2000, 282).
27. As Andrew Wilson wryly notes, the eastern industrial elite began “to realize the new Ukrainian state could make them very rich indeed” (Wilson 2000, 195).
Russia and initially obtained up to 43% of parliamentary seats in 1994. While the left was never able to gain a majority of seats in the legislature, they were significantly more organized and cohesive than other “centrist” and nationalist parties. As a result, they were able to block key Presidential initiatives (Wilson 1997b).

But the left in the mid 1990s faced a fundamental dilemma that was very similar to the one faced by the nationalists in the early 1990s (as well as the Communists in Russia) – namely that the very ideas that helped to mobilize their base ultimately alienated them from a majority of the elite and population. First, Communist support for the revival of Soviet power pushed the nationalist right to support a strong Presidency and centralized control over regional governments. While in 1992 the nationalists supported a parliamentary system, “by 1994 parliamentarism was deemed unsuitable to Ukraine... [because] the largest political party by 1994, the Communist Party of Ukraine, could not even be trusted to guard Ukraine’s independence” (Wolczuk 2001: 144). Partly as a result, Kuchma was able to push a pro-Presidential constitution through parliament in 1996. In addition, just like Yeltsin in 1996, Kuchma was able to utilize anti-Communism to facilitate reelection in 1999. Thus, despite relatively weak popular support, Kuchma was able to gain majority support in a run-off against the head of the Communist Party, Petro Symonenko.

Anti-Incumbent Majority Identity and the Orange Revolution

The final period, 2002-2004, was shaped by a shift in the government’s relations to Russia on the one hand and continued majority popular support for Ukrainian sovereignty on the other hand. This created the basis for an anti-incumbent majority coalition that ultimately toppled the Kuchma regime. The release of tapes of Kuchma suggesting the President’s participation in large scale corruption and the murder of a journalist severely damaged Kuchma’s reputation in the West and forced him to make closer ties to Russia. Putin increasingly became Kuchma’s most solid international ally – meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart 18 times between 2000 and 2002. The government’s shift towards Russia occurred at the same time that support for Ukrainian sovereignty remained high. While supporters of Ukrainian cultural nationalism were still very much in the minority, relatively strong support for Ukrainian sovereignty made it possible to create a majority coalition that would have been impossible in 1994 when Ukrainian independence was intimately associated with economic collapse. The general acceptance of Ukrainian sovereignty in 2004 meant that a pro-Ukrainian candidate could win a popular election in the early 2000s while tapping into the mobilizational power of Western Ukrainian nationalism.

29. This share was later reduced to roughly 30% after a lengthy series of repeat elections – which occurred in many districts because the law required a turnout of at least 50% in a district for elections to be valid.
30. “Weakening domestic support and a fading international reputation prompted Kuchma to turn to Moscow for help, restoring credibility to the idea of closer relations between the two neighboring countries.” (Puglisi 2003: 840).
Facing a serious challenge to his rule in 2004 from Viktor Yushchenko, Kuchma decided to use his old playbook from 1994. Thus as in 1994, Kuchma painted his opponent as an isolated Galician nationalist. The state controlled media constantly depicted Yushchenko as an ardent supporter of hard core cultural nationalism. In 1994, this strategy had worked well because Ukrainian independence was intimately tied in most people’s minds to the economic crisis and collapse of the early 1990s. But the situation in 2004 could not have been more different. By this point, Ukrainian sovereignty was well established and the Ukrainian economy was quite healthy. As a result, large majority of the population supported Ukrainian sovereignty and nationalism no longer seemed so threatening. This made it possible for someone tied to the nationalists to win majority support.

As a result, the opposition was able to take advantage of the mobilizational power of Ukrainian national identity without suffering the costs of a minority identity. Identity helped to undermine the Kuchma government in several ways. First, identity reduced Kuchma’s control over nationalist Western provinces in the same way that it had decreased Kravchuk’s control over eastern provinces in 1994 (see above). Thus, an examination of vote fraud by Myagkov et al. (2005: 93, 117-119) suggests that there was some fraud in favor of Yushchenko in the second round in Western Ukraine – although significantly less than that for Yanukovich in other parts of the country. Further, strong pro-Ukrainian identity explains the greater support for the opposition in rural areas (Clem and Craumer 2005, 382) – despite the fact that almost everywhere else in the world government control tends to be stronger in rural areas (cf. Myagkov et al. 2005: 99).

But most importantly, identity helps to account for participation in massive pro Yushchenko demonstrations from late November until early December 2004 that were key to unseating the Kuchma regime. The results of a nationally representative survey conducted about three weeks after the second round, suggests that about 13% of individuals above the age of 17 took part in pro-Yushchenko demonstrations – a figure that translates into roughly 4-5 million Ukrainian adults.

31. Khmelko and Paniotta (2002) present convincing evidence that support for Ukrainian sovereignty is strongly related to the health of the Ukrainian economy.
32. According to the analysis of Clem and Craumer (2005, 382), there was a very strong (.67-.69) and statistically significant negative correlation among oblasts between level of urbanization and support for Yushchenko in each of the three rounds.
33. The nationally representative survey was conducted December 10-17, 2004. The survey had 2,044 respondents and included the question “Did you participate in demonstrations since the 2nd round of elections.” Of these, 77% said that they voted for Yushchenko. To separate out those who demonstrated for Yushchenko, I included in the dependent variable only those who said they demonstrated and who said that they voted for Yushchenko (on the assumption that those demonstrators who voted for Yushchenko also demonstrated for him.) 13.6% (279) of those interviewed reported that they both voted for Yushchenko and participated in demonstrations since the fraudulent second round. I am extremely grateful to Vladimir Paniotto for giving me access to this data.
The most common explanation for participation in the 2004 demonstrations is support for democracy (cf. Kuzio 2005). Indeed, the protests were aimed against fraudulent elections and activists called for the democratization of Ukraine. Yet, I argue that support for democracy per se does little to help us understand why these Ukrainians went onto the streets against the incumbent autocratic regime while others (both within Ukraine and in other countries) have not. There is simply very little evidence that protesters supported democracy to a much greater extent than those who did not protest. First, as noted above, the available evidence suggests that Ukrainians as a whole have supported democracy less than people in Belarus where there has been very little protest. In addition, some have argued that Western Ukrainians are more democratic than their Eastern Ukrainian counterparts (cf. Solchanyk 1999; Riabchuk 2002). Yet, polling results on relative support for democracy among Western and Eastern Ukrainians is quite mixed. While some studies find that Western Ukrainians are more supportive of democracy (Dowley and Silver 2002; Khmelko and Wilson 1998), others do not (Miller, Klocubar, and Reisinger 2000: 225, 227; Miller White and Heywood 1998: 279-280). While Stephen Shulman argues that “Ukrainian identity” is associated with greater support for democracy, his own evidence also shows that “Russian-speakers are the least authoritarian” of language groups in Ukraine – suggesting that Shulman’s results are not terribly robust (Shulman 2005: page??). Finally, analysis of the KMIS data on participation in the 2004 demonstrations discussed below shows no apparent relationship between support for democracy and protest. In sum, while demonstrators were likely genuine in their support of democracy, there is little evidence that levels of support for democracy help explain why some protested while others did not.

But on the face of it, identity would also seem to provide little leverage. Indeed, the protests involved virtually no ethnic or nationalist slogans or demands. Even the Ukrainian national colors were largely hidden from view. Yet there is strong evidence that participation in protest was driven to an important extent by support for a pro-European vision of Ukrainian national identity. Slogans at the demonstration suggested that the battle was viewed by most participants in “civilizational” terms – i.e. as a battle for a “European” as opposed to a “Russian” Ukraine. Thus, numerous activists spoke with anger at Putin’s perceived crude intervention into domestic Ukrainian politics. One large sign along the central avenue read, “Putin: Kyiv is not Moscow!” “Europe” provided a constant theme throughout the protests. As one activist told me, “for me this is all about bringing Ukraine into Europe.”34

Indeed, the best available survey evidence suggests that support for Ukrainian identity is a strong predictor of participation in the November-December 2004 protests. First, Table 2, below, shows the regional distribution of pro Yushchenko protest participation in late November/early 2004 according to the results of the KMIS survey. As we see, a vast share of the population in many Western oblasts – 50% in L’viv and 68% in

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Ivano Frankiivsk\textsuperscript{35} – took part in pro-Yushchenko demonstrations.\textsuperscript{36} We also see from this table that the regional distribution of participation in demonstrations was not simply a function of the regional distribution of the vote for Yushchenko. Thus, the regional share of all pro-Yushchenko demonstrators in Kyiv city, L’viv, and Ivano Frankiivsk was substantially greater (4\% or more) than these region’s share of the pro-Yushchenko vote. For example, Ivano Frankiivsk contributed 6\% of the pro-Yushchenko vote in Ukraine; but 13\% of the pro-Yushchenko demonstrators. This suggests that support for Yushchenko by itself is insufficient to explain protest activity. The strong representation of many Western oblasts suggests that identity was a powerful motivator for participation in protest.

\textsuperscript{35} It should be noted however that the N in Ivano Frankiivsk is relatively small.
\textsuperscript{36} These results provide striking evidence for Keith Darden’s hypothesis that educational policy in the Austro-Hungarian empire shaped contemporary national identity.
Table 2: Oblast-level protest for Yushchenko November 22- December 10 (as reported in KMIS survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblast</th>
<th>Share of oblast population protesting for Yushchenko</th>
<th>Oblast protesters as share of all pro Yushchenko protesters</th>
<th>Oblast vote for Yushchenko as share of total Yushchenko vote Nov. 21 (as reported in survey)</th>
<th>Oblast share of Yush protest - Oblast share of Yush vote</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crimea</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyiv city</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyiv obl</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinnitsia</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volyn</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnipro</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donetsk</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhitomir</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakarp</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaporizh</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iván Frank</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirovohrad</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhansk</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lviv</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mykolaiv</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odessa</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>Poltava</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivne</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumy</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ternopil</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kherson</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmelnytsky</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherkassy</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernov</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ternopil</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to directly assess the role of identity, I controlled for a range of non-identity demographic variables – including age, urban residence, and education.\(^{37}\) I also included several attitudinal variables – such as concern over crime, support for democ-

\(^{37}\) Obviously the elderly will face greater physical obstacles to participation in demonstrations. In addition, those living in small villages will also have a harder time attending demonstrations. Residence in Kyiv would seem to promote participation because the biggest demonstrations were in that city among other reasons. Finally, education is typically thought to be an important resource predicting political participation.
racy, as well as concern over living conditions – that might account for participation in opposition demonstrations. Finally, I included a number of different measures of Ukrainian identity that have been developed by Dominique Arel among others: spoken Ukrainian language during the interview, concern over Ukrainian national rebirth, residence in Western Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian ethnicity.

Table 3 below reports the results of a binary logistic regression. First and not surprisingly, demographic opportunity is an important predictor of participation. Thus, those who live in small villages or who are above 60 are less likely to participate (largely one would assume because such characteristics make it harder to physically get to a demonstration). Similarly, individuals with at least partial higher education and who live in Kyiv (where the largest demonstrations took place) were more likely to participate. More surprisingly, certain attitudinal variables – including concern over the standard of living and crime and support for democracy – do not seem to be related to participation. The lack of correlation between support for democracy and participation is surprising given that the main slogans during the demonstrations reflected demands for freer elections.

Rather than attitudes towards democracy, participation in demonstrations was driven by the relative strength of national identity – even though the demonstrations included no explicitly nationalist demands. Thus, spoken Ukrainian, concern over Ukrainian national rebirth, and residence in Western Ukraine are all powerful predictors of greater participation. In stark contrast to their counterparts in Moscow or Minsk, liberals in Kyiv could count on strong regional support against a regime that was perceived by many as anti-Ukrainian. Ukrainian nationalists provided the opposition with its most ardent and committed activists willing to withstand almost three weeks of sub-freezing temperatures on the streets of the capital. In 1994, pro-Ukrainian mobilization would have generated a backlash by a majority anti-Ukrainian population and elite. However, shifts in support for Ukrainian independence made the creation of a pro-Ukrainian coalition possible.

38. This question asks about support for a strong leader vs. support for laws. Admittedly, this one question provides only a very limited test of this relationship.
39. Many of those who identity themselves as being of Ukrainian ethnic descent speak Russian on a regular basis. Thus, Dominique Arel has advocated using the language actually spoken by individuals as a better indicator of Ukrainian identity (See Arel and Khmelko 2005). The Kyiv International Institute for Sociology thus asks its interviewees to report whether the respondent spoke pure Ukrainian, pure Russian, or a mix of the two during the interview. In this survey, 45% of self-reported ethnic Ukrainians spoke pure Ukrainian.
40. At the same time, the question in the survey is imperfect and it is very possible that other measures of democratic commitment would show a correlation with participation in demonstrations.
41. At the same time, Ukrainian ethnicity by itself is only significant at a 0.1 level. This is due to the fact that many ethnic Ukrainians identify more closely with Russia.
Table 3: Demonstrate for Yshchenko After November 22, 2004?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics/Opportunity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher educ.</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyiv residenc</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ukrainian Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrain ethnicity</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.297</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National rebirth</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Ukraine</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Ukrain</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong leader more</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.174</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>important than laws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime a problem</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living condition a prob</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.25</td>
<td>0.456</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1624

Nagelkerke R Square 0.35
Cox & Snell R Square 0.203

**Conclusion**

This paper makes two arguments about the relationship between identity and autocratic consolidation. First, I argue that the availability of a strong identity that can be framed in anti-incumbent terms has a powerful impact on the capacity of opposition to mount serious challenges to autocratic rule – at election time, in parliament and on the streets. Thus, the availability of strong anti-incumbent identities in Ukraine – both pro-Ukrainian on one side and pro-Russian/Soviet on the other – facilitated serious electoral and mobilizational challenges to Kravchuk in 1994 and the Kuchma regime in 2004. In each case, anti-incumbent identity undermined efforts to manipulate the vote in certain regions, promoted greater parliamentary opposition, and facilitated mass mobilization against the regime even in the absence of a strong civil society. By contrast, the opposition in Belarus has lacked access to a strong anti-incumbent identity and has thus faced far greater difficulties mounting serious challenges to the Lukashenka regime.
Second, this paper makes a broader argument about when identity is likely to undermine or promote autocratic rule. While most scholars have focused on the content of national identity, I focus on its context relative incumbent power and popular attitudes. A majority identity that is framed in anti-incumbent terms is likely to provide a powerful weapon against incumbent autocratic control. By contrast, a majority identity that supports an autocratic incumbent is likely to promote greater centralization of power. This explains why the same Ukrainian national identity was a force for autocratic consolidation in 1996-2000 when Kuchma brought together a majority pro-sovereignty coalition against the Communists; but a force for autocratic breakdown in 2002-2004 after Kuchma turned towards Russia. The content of Ukrainian national identity did not change, but its relation to existing power structures did.

Finally, this paper suggests the utility of a focus on the problems of creating and maintaining autocratic rule rather than transitioning to democracy. The vast majority of studies of the relationship between identity and regime type focus on problems of democratic consolidation and have come to the conclusion that divisions in national/ethnic identity undermine democratic consolidation (Dahl 1971: 108; Gurr 1993: 94; Putnam 1993:168). Such diversity undermines cooperation necessary for democratic consolidation and generates the basis for violent conflict. However, a focus on the problems of autocratic control also shows that such diversity may promote competition by hindering efforts to strengthen autocratic rule. Divisions over national identity certainly do not promote democratic consolidation, but they may under certain circumstances outlined in this paper thwart autocratic consolidation.

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