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Book Review: Ivan Katchanovski, Cleft Countries. Regional Political Divisions and Cultures in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006. 286pp. ISBN 38982558X; ISSN 1614 3515

Taras Kuzio

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find too much to go on. The split between the 'narrative' of the first two chapters and the 'analysis' in the rest of the book works well to a degree, but it does mean that the same event or 'stage' in integration crops up in several different places throughout the book, making it somewhat repetitious in places as the author reminds us of the thrust of each move forward.

In charting the broad church of Conservative attitudes towards Europe, Crowson corroborates a lot of research on British European policy which shows that 'Europe' inflames impassioned debate both inside and outside of parliament. However, it is also an area in which pragmatism often wins out over principle and Europe, therefore, becomes something of a domestic party political plaything. General elections, Crowson affirms, are won and lost not on the Europe question but on domestic issues such as health, education and welfare. This does not bode well for those who would like to see more opportunities for genuine public discussions of the merits or otherwise of Britain's continuing involvement in the EU. This book will be of use to students, historians and political scientists interested in finding out about Conservative attitudes to European integration in and outside Westminster, as well as to those interested in Britain's world role and the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in Britain.

Oliver Daddow
Loughborough University

Ivan Katchanovski, *Cleft Countries. Regional Political Divisions and Cultures in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006. 286pp. ISBN 38982558X; ISSN 1614–3515

Ivan Katchanovski's book is divided into four chapters sandwiched between an Introduction and Conclusion. The Introduction spells out the main themes running through the book where Katchanovski argues that Ukraine and Moldova are 'cleft' countries severely divided along regional lines. In the case of Ukraine this 'cleft' is defined as that between support for 'nationalist, pro-independence and pro-Western parties' and 'Eastern regions of Ukraine' who 'have backed pro-Communist and pro-Russian parties and politicians' (p. 19). Katchanovski argues that a similar 'cleft' exists between nationalist, pro-reform and pro-Western right-bank Moldova and pro-Russian, anti-reform, left-bank Moldova. These 'clefts' are then discussed with the use of theories and comparative frameworks in the fields of economics, ethnicity, religion and political culture. Katchanovski emphasizes the predominance of political culture over other explanations for the enduring influence of 'clefts'.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 provide the main focus of the book, dealing with: regional divisions, separatism, the evolution of political cultures, culture, ethnicity, economy and elites. Some of these chapters are history, rather than political science, as Katchanovski undoubtedly felt he needed to provide the background to the

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major 'clefts' in both countries. The discussion focuses, 'on one dimension of political culture in regions of Ukraine and Moldova: pro-Communist/pro-Russian orientation versus pro-nationalist/pro-Western orientation' (p. 25). Such a framework draws on earlier well known studies by Andrew Wilson (1997). Wilson's framework for Ukraine, developed in his 1997 study, a framework which Katchanovski closely follows, was, though, severely mauled in most scholarly reviews and challenged by this reviewer in the journal *Politics* (Kuzio, 2000).

Katchanovski displays a wide knowledge of opinion polls in Ukraine and Moldova to buttress his arguments in support of 'clefts' influencing the domestic politics of both countries. These surveys will be useful information for scholars and students alike when studying both countries. Nevertheless, reading becomes sometimes difficult as one becomes bogged down in statistical data that is extensively presented but, at the same time, insufficiently analysed by Katchanovski through political science tools.

Both countries certainly contain major cleavages, or 'clefts', and regionalism plays an important role in the domestic politics of Ukraine and Moldova. To what degree these are 'clefts' in the manner in which Katchanovski argues of pro-Western/pro-reform/nationalist versus pro-Russian/anti-reform/pro-communist is a moot point that oversimplifies a very complicated issue. The use of this framework is based on a misuse of the term 'nationalist' that was already apparent under Wilson, that became commonplace in political science studies of Ukraine during the 1990s. Wilson (2005) himself published the first Western study of the 2004 Orange Revolution that, I would argue, was an outgrowth of a victory of Ukrainian civic nationalism. 'Nationalism' is a loaded term that is often misused by specialists and non-specialists alike. When used it usually correlates with the extreme right and yet nationalist groups can exist throughout the political spectrum. Nationalism can also influence domestic politics, as in the case of the US, where it became, in Michael Billig's (1995) phrase, 'banal nationalism'.

The pitfalls of overly using such a framework to explain 'clefts' are twofold. First, they often blind the scholar to other factors at work that contradict the framework. Katchanovski's misuse of 'nationalism' can be readily seen in both Ukraine and Moldova. The extreme right has no popular support in Western Ukraine while protectionist economic nationalism is highly popular in Eastern Ukraine. In Moldova, nationalism in support of unification with Romania has little public support. Political support also changes over time as seen in Eastern Ukraine where the Communist Party has been replaced by the Party of Regions as the dominant political force. Meanwhile, the Transdniestr separatists can be more readily designated as Soviet (rather than ethnic Russian) nationalists while separatists are also usually nationalists.

Second, they lead to exaggerated conclusions. Katchanovski writes that, 'were it not for the Western regions of Ukraine, this post-Soviet Ukraine would most likely have continued to follow Russia's authoritarian path, and pursue a pro-Russian orientation as did the Transdniestrian Republic and Belarus' (p. 208). To reach such a conclusion is to over-exaggerate the 'clefts' in Ukraine while under-evaluating both the strengths of Ukrainian national identity and the common ties that bind the country. Popular and political support of Ukraine's territorial integrity is as strong in Eastern as it is in Western Ukraine. Viktor Yushchenko was elected Ukraine's president not only with the support of

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Western but, more importantly, of Central Ukraine. The Orange Revolution was occupied Kyiv, not Lviv.

Katchanovski's conclusion is pessimistic as he believes that political culture inherited from the past has a long-term and great effect on voting and political beliefs. 'The effect of culture is consistent and its influence, with few exceptions, is stronger than the influence of economic, ethnic, and political leadership factors' (p. 233). A similar effect of political culture exists in Moldova. This 'enduring influence on political attitudes and behaviour' (p. 236) is, Katchanovski argues, difficult to break. As seen in the case of Italy's North–South divide, 'clefts' can remain in place for long periods. Countries with 'clefts' continue to exist in the modern world (Canada, Italy, Spain, Belgium to name just a few in Europe) and more countries have regional divisions than the archetypal homogenized nation-state that is common to only a few, such as France. While true, political culture and national identity are never set in stone; both are constantly under debate, challenged domestically and through a globalized world and change over time. It is unlikely that everything inherited from the past can be erased and changed but this is not the same as saying that some of it is at the same time under fluctuation. The 2004 Orange Revolution would have been impossible in 1994 but was successful a decade later.

Notwithstanding these critical observations, Katchanovski has produced a valuable study of the impact of regional divisions on the domestic politics of Ukraine and Moldova that will be of value to scholars and students alike.

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Taras Kuzio
Carleton University, Ottawa

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