

Provincialism in the diaspora and Ukraine

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A small minority of Ukrainian elites speaks English, take an interest in or understands the outside world. Ukrainian Catholic University's Yaroslav Hrytsak believes provincialism is the hallmark of independent Ukraine's leaders because, "practically none of the current or former presidents, prime ministers and even ministers of education speak any foreign languages except Russian (Istorychna Pravda, July 27, 2011).

President Viktor Yanukovich was the only world leader who could not speak English during the April 2010 Washington nuclear summit. Kyiv Mohyla Academy rector Serhiy Kvit said: "Today, English is perceived by the authorities to be a destructive factor that could undermine the so-called 'progressive' Ukrainian (post-Soviet) system of higher education and research. Poor knowledge of English, or lack of it, is a problem of all post-Soviet states, a fact that is completely ignored by the Ukrainian government."

The Yanukovich administration became the first in two decades to prohibit "the requirement of English from applicants to the university." In Ukraine the provincialism of elites explains why Hrytsak believes "they could not offer Ukraine anything new. This to a great extent explains the failure of the Orange Revolution and the failure of current reforms."

Yushchenko received a diploma in bookkeeping in 1975 from the Ternopil Institute of Finance and Economics and he began his working life as a deputy to the chief accountant in a collective farm. His limited Soviet education and low ranking career could never have prepared him for the positions of National Bank of Ukraine chairperson, prime minister and president.

Yushchenko, although married to a Ukrainian-American, still speaks no English. Ukrainian party political programs are intellectually weak and ideologically amorphous, there is little to differentiate the Party of Regions from "orange" political forces in their populist economic and social policies and all of their programs cover foreign policies in an abstract manner.

Political science as the scholarly discipline taught in Europe and North America is largely non-existent in the Ukrainian education system and what does exist, political studies (politolohiya), is not political science. Politolohiya is isolated from European and North American political science and politolohy (political experts) come from a wide range of academic and non-academic backgrounds, very few of them speak English and most do not have political science training.

Only a handful of Ukrainian universities subscribe to European and North American political science journals. Serhiy Kudelia pointed out in his "Is political science possible in Ukraine?"

(Krytyka, nos.1-2, 2012) that “practically none” of the thousands of Ukrainian Ph.D. students in Ukrainian politolohiya have published their research in Western academic journals or as books in Europe and North America. Western M.A.’s and Ph.D.’s, such as the M.A. from Stanford and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins universities received by Kudelia are not recognized by Ukrainian universities – as he found out at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy and moved back to the USA where he found an academic position.

Ukraine does not publish political science journals or books. A visit to Kyiv’s bookstores and the capital city’s Petrivka book market will find very few books on Ukrainian politics except translations of Western authors. In the 1990s, there were far more books published about Ukrainian politics and the journal PolitychnaDumka (Political Thought) was published. A country that lacks political science as a discipline taught in higher education, such as Ukraine, cannot produce political elites. This is clearly evident in the poor quality and provincialism of Ukraine’s elites from both the Party of Regions and the national democratic opposition. Indeed, the Party of Regions website has an English page – unlike that of Batkivshchyna or Front for Change (<http://byut.com.ua/>, <http://frontzmin.ua/>, <http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/en>). Meanwhile, the Party of Regions has a better record of listening to Western political consultants and elections advisers.

The Ukrainian diaspora has provided very small volumes of investment into Ukrainian-language publications in Ukraine and no investment into political science (aside from party publications, such as OUNm’s RozbudovaNatsiia published in the 1990s). PolitychnaDumka ceased publication a decade ago. Jewish-Ukrainian emigres from New York’s NovoeRusskoeSlovo, the oldest Russian emigre newspaper, launched the influential ZerkaloNedeli (Russian edition) and later DzerkaloTyzhnya (Ukrainian edition) weekly newspaper. UkrayinskyTyzhden (The Ukrainian Week), the only Ukrainian-language political magazine published in Ukraine, has Austrian-Dutch financing from ECEM Media. Two other Ukrainian-language political weeklies Novynar magazine, published by American businessperson Jed Sunden, and Glavred magazine, published by Jewish-Ukrainian oligarch Igor Kolomoyskyy and Our Ukraine businessperson Oleksandr Tretiakov, closed in 2008 and 2010, respectfully, for financial reasons.

The Ukrainian diaspora, which includes many millionaires in North America, has not initiated and supported anything comparable to that launched by Jewish and Russian oligarchs in Ukraine. In 2008, two Russian oligarchs Vladimir Gusinsky, who owned Russia's largest independent media empire Media-Most until his forced exile in 2001, and Konstantin Kagalovskiy, a business partner of imprisoned oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, launched TVi independent television channel in Ukraine. TVi is headed by well-known Ukrainian journalist Mykola Kniazhytskyy. JN1 television channel, the world’s first Jewish “CNN” 24-hour news program, was launched in Kyiv by Jewish-Ukrainian oligarchs Kolomoyskyy and Vadym Rabinovich in 2010 with an initial investment of \$5 million.

Ukrainian-American and Ukrainian-Canadian businesspersons have donated similar amounts to non-Ukrainian causes in North America, such as Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum, and therefore it is not a question of a lack of resources but a lack of vision and provincialism

found within the Ukrainian diaspora towards Ukraine. The Ukrainian diaspora's contribution to Ukraine's media market is very weak and it is surprising that it has not invested in political science and to assist Ukraine's elites escape from provincialism. Suchasnist magazine, which was published in Munich from 1960-1991 and from 1992 in Ukraine, had only 100 subscribers in the Ukrainian diaspora and closed for financial reasons in 2010. Diaspora funding goes to non-political science subjects. Krytyka magazine receives indirect support through joint programmes between the InstytutKrytyky NGO and Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University and has a small 1,000 circulation. The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies supports the publication by the Institute of Ukrainian History at Lviv University of UkrainaModerna and by the Kowalsky Institute at Kharkiv University of Skhid-Zakhid journals. Unfortunately, these three publications have limited intellectual readerships, preach to the already converted and, with two of them published by and for historians, do not contribute to political science in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian diaspora's weak support for political science in Ukraine is a reflection of two factors. First, the largest Ukrainian emigre political organization OUNb has always opposed funding for Western academic centers on Ukraine.

At the same time, OUNb and its community organizations has never invested in alternative academic and political science institutions and publications. Second, political science is either non-existent or a very low priority in Harvard University's Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI), whose three Chairs are devoted to History, Language and Literature, Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS)Columbia University (where Ukrainian studies was established in the 1990s but again not in political science). HURI turned the author's political science proposals down on three occasions for Eugene and Daymel Shklar Research Fellowships in Ukrainian Studies, including a proposal to write a Contemporary History of Ukraine (the book, completed this year, was written with Austrian and Japanese fellowships). CIUS turned down proposals to teach on contemporary Ukraine at the University of Toronto in favor of teaching at York University on Ukrainian art. HURI and the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, were disinterested in jointly publishing Ukraine Analyst, a bi-monthly publication on current politics in Ukraine.

Georgia's reforms and integration into Europe are ahead of Ukraine because they escaped from their post-Soviet, Eurasian provincialism. Whereas Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU is frozen, Georgia and Moldova are likely to sign their Agreements by next year. Georgia's younger generation trained in Western Universities, speak and read English, and returned to Georgia where they launched the 2003 Rose Revolution and became the country's ruling elites. The average age of the Georgian government is 30 and each have Western law degrees (such as President MikheilSaakashvili), MBA's or other qualifications (Georgia – unlike Ukraine – recognizes Western degrees). In Ukraine the average age of the Mykola Azarov government is 60 and the officials and Yanukovych is a product of the Leonid Brezhnev “era of stagnation.”

Timothy Garten Ash wrote in *The Guardian* (May 30): “To hear Yanukovych justifying the imprisonment (of Tymoshenko) in terms of an independent judiciary and the rule of law, as I did at a meeting earlier this year, was to listen to a homo sovieticus who was not even good at lying.’

Ukrainian-North American academic institutions provide no support for political science in the USA and Canada and not surprisingly, they also provide no support for political science in Ukraine. The Ukrainian diaspora in North America has been unable to find the resources and vision to match the investments of Jewish oligarchs in Ukraine, such as Kolomoisky, emigre Jewish Russians Gusinsky and Kagalovsky, and Jewish Ukrainians who have launched independent television channels and newspapers. Austrian-Dutch money finances Ukraine’s only Ukrainian-language magazine. The only conclusion we can reach is that the diaspora’s provincialism is matched by the provincialism that permeates Ukraine’s elites.

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