Mythscaping Novorossiya: Nationalism in the Donbass, 2014-15

By
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Abstract

In 2014, Russia-backed rebels in the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) declared independence from Ukraine. In addition to establishing control over large swaths of territory in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, separatists took over media outlets and began to disseminate propaganda that heavily focused on war-related themes and new national symbols. This dissertation explores this media in order to theorize how political entities that form as a result of secession deploy symbolic repertoires in conflict environments, particularly for the purposes of legitimization and national group mobilization.

Scholarship on nationalism indicates that regimes create new symbolic repertoires whenever existing symbolic regimes become discredited. Recent work on nationalism tends to view national communities as constructs which are shaped through symbols and discursively, among other things, in order to create actual national communities of like-minded individuals. However, gaps remain in this literature—namely, the literature on nationalism and national symbols is under-theorized with respect to the different roles that symbols play during wartime, and, empirically, there are no rigorous case studies that examine symbols with respect to nation- and identity-formation and the development of nationalism(s). This work aims to fill these gaps by studying across time how different war-related themes, rhetoric, and symbols change over the course of a conflict, and how these changes may be affected by conflict-related events, hardship, and annual holidays.

To accomplish this, I catalogued the symbols and historical materials deployed in the separatist-controlled media throughout 2014 and 2015 into an original dataset. I also employed Social Identity Theory (SIT) in order to hypothesize about why separatists chose particular

symbols and what affected the use of different symbols. SIT provided two possible strategies that motivated separatists, both of which were centered on the idea that the primary goal of deploying symbols and themes was to achieve positive distinctiveness for a new national group that was culturally and ideologically distinct from Ukraine. One strategy focused on situations where perceived intergroup similarity induces an identity threat that motivates in-group members to increase intergroup differentiation via out-group degradation. The other strategy focused on social competition between in-groups and out-groups which motivates in-group members to favor value dimensions that are shared between in-groups and out-groups.

I argue that across the media produced in the DPR and LPR, there are three main themes in national symbols, which pertain to Ukraine and its western allies, Russian-Soviet civilization, and rebel organizations. I explain the choices of the DPR's and LPR's symbols as being based on their abilities to fit into the Russian-Soviet political-military symbolic repertoire, particularly symbolism that is associated with the USSR's experience in World War II / the Great Patriotic War (GPW). In my analysis of the symbols and themes deployed in this media, I find evidence that some conflict-related events, weather and some holidays/anniversaries seem to affect the use of different symbols. I also find evidence that separatists tend to follow an intergroup differentiation via out-group degradation logic. This effect is significant even after controlling for newspaper- and time-fixed effects. Finally, I find that certain symbols and historical materials were deployed as part of mythscapes to legitimize the DPR and LPR and connect the contemporary conflict in eastern Ukraine to the USSR's GPW experience—particularly the USSR's liberation of the Donbass region from Nazi Germany. Symbols and themes both ostensibly function to affect readers of the separatist media on an emotional level.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Introduction

In 2014, two new entities joined the list of *de facto* states seeking international recognition as *de jure* sovereign states. The Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR), both located in the Donbass region of Ukraine, were established following independence referendums in May 2014.[1] Russia was a major factor in all of the processes and decisions involved in these events and the subsequent conflict between Russia-backed separatists in DPR and LPR and the Ukrainian Armed Forces.[2] Russia-backed separatist governments established control over large swaths of territory in the Donbass region. They also took over the independent and formerly government-run media sources and created new media outlets in order to influence the information that the residents of these territories receive. The separatist takeover of media outlets resulted in a narrowed focus on war-related themes and an increase in the (re)production of new national symbols across separatist-controlled publications.

The developments in the Donbass region since 2014 have had important political implications and illustrate some of the complexities associated with state-formation in the twenty-first century. While all new states engage in nation-building and developing a symbolic repertoire to represent the nation, for states that result from secession such actions are paramount. In such cases, rebel leaders (elites) interact with local civilian populations through a system of governance whose legitimacy is tenuous at best. In order to bolster their authority, symbol entrepreneurs deploy national symbols and history to entrench their rule. They also seek external recognition in order to legitimize their claims to leadership.

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[1] I note that the veracity of these referendums was questionable: there were no international observers present and there is evidence that the results were falsified.

[2] This is something I explore in greater detail in later parts of the dissertation.

Although the number of sovereign states has more than tripled since the end of World War II, the act of secession has rarely been without complications, not least of which is whether the act itself or its proponents are considered legitimate to internal and external audiences. For every East Timor or South Sudan (i.e., nation-states that were born by seceding from larger states and which successfully gained broad international recognition), there are states like Kosovo, Transnistria, and South Ossetia—political entities that gain very limited international recognition. In such cases, the deficit of external legitimacy can have consequences for political actors' internal legitimacy. This includes economic contraction (stemming from an inability to trade and export surplus products) and legal-administrative issues (such as lack of recognition of official documents like birth certificates, passports and diplomas). Such issues can negatively impact civilians' freedom of movement and limit their access to post-secondary educational opportunities, which can complicate symbol entrepreneurs' attempts to gain consent from the civilian population under their control.

This dissertation uses the cases of the DPR and LPR to theorize how political entities that form as a result of secession deploy symbolic repertoires in conflict environments for the purposes of legitimization and national group mobilization. This is to understand how history and symbols function as sources of legitimacy, particularly for entities that lack external recognition, and contribute to positive national group distinctiveness in contested political spaces. Accordingly, my work is motivated by three core questions:

1. What symbols and historical materials do newly-independent political entities that form as a result of secession deploy?

2. Why do symbol entrepreneurs choose particular symbols and discard others that are available to them, and what roles do symbols seemingly play?

3. What affects symbol entrepreneurs' ability to use different symbols?

With regard to the first question, I argue that across separatist-controlled publications in the DPR and LPR, there are three main themes in national symbols, which pertain to Ukraine and its western allies, Russian-Soviet civilization, and rebel organizations. Separatists alternatively deploy the varied symbolic representations alongside stories about groups and individuals.

Second, I explain the choices of the DPR's and LPR's symbols as being based on their abilities to fit into the Russian-Soviet political-military symbolic repertoire, particularly symbolism that is associated with the USSR's experience in World War II (WWII).[3] Symbol entrepreneurs performatively invoke the memory of the Great Patriotic War (GPW) for legitimizing purposes (i.e., to present themselves as the rightful heirs of the victory over Nazi Germany and to get people to see the contemporary conflict as an extension of the GPW (and, thus, as a fight against Ukrainian fascism rather than an out-growth of geo-political tensions between Russia and 'the West')). While the Great Patriotic War (GPW) experience is salient for people throughout Russia and many former Soviet republics, in the context of the conflict in the Donbass region GPW symbolism plays four key roles:

1. The GPW experience connects current generations of fighters with members of other generations who served in support of the Soviet Union (and who can still remember that experience via collective memory).[4] This enables media outlets to disseminate personal testimonials which can be used to frame the 2014-present rebellion against the Ukrainian government and armed forces as an extension of 1941-45 GPW struggle against fascism. Since the GPW was both a local-regional and national experience, the memory of the GPW

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[3] In Russia and parts of the former USSR, the Great Patriotic War (GPW) is the name for the Soviet-German War between 1941-45.

[4] To a lesser degree, the Soviet war experience in Afghanistan (1979-89) is also used to connect current generations of fighters with prior generations of Soviet soldiers.

transcends personal and group boundaries for the people of the Donbass region, thus for many individuals the meaning of the GPW is intricately connected to personal and family histories. This is evident in the frequent references to sacrifices made by 'fathers' and 'grandfathers' when referring to soldiers and veterans.

2. The GPW experience is used to define and accentuate in-group boundaries by binding the Russian Federation, the most powerful actor in the Ukrainian conflict, with the territories controlled by the DPR and LPR via the historical fact that the Soviet Union liberated these Ukrainian territories during the GPW. This relationship is visually evident in some of the DPR's, LPR's, and Novorossiya's national symbols—see, for example, the DPR's and Novorossiya's medals for military merit which are modeled after medals the USSR awarded to participants of the GPW; indeed, it is also discursively evident in Soviet military-related symbolism, including Hero Cities, Heroes of the USSR, Days of Military Glory and other important holidays and anniversaries, which are frequently invoked in the media. This relationship creates different opportunities for the DPR, LPR, and Novorossiya nationalist projects to bind themselves with the Russian Federation (the successor to the Soviet Union) as members of the same civilizational space. Moreover, the celebration of annual holidays and public memorial events (particularly at war-related sites) creates recurring opportunities for DPR and LPR leaders to performatively invoke the memory of the GPW in order to present themselves as the rightful heirs of the victory over Nazi Germany (and, therefore, the proper guardians of the legacy of the GPW) and promote social learning via ritualistic practices.

3. The GPW experience is used to define and accentuate out-group boundaries by associating Ukrainian symbolism (i.e., flag, coat of arms, national figures) with Nazi Germany—the

preeminent enemy of the Russian-Soviet civilizational space. This is accomplished by highlighting the legacies of certain Ukrainian national heroes and organizations (such as Stepan Bandera and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)), which are portrayed as Nazi collaborators and, thus, traitors to the USSR and, by extension, the Russian Federation. Such linkages ostensibly get people to view the contemporary conflict as an extension of the GPW (i.e., as a fight against Ukrainian fascism rather than an out-growth of geo-political tensions between Russia and 'the West'), which justifies the breaking of allegiance to Ukrainian national identity and movement towards a new national identity.

4. Finally, the GPW experience is used to reify the idea that the Donbass has a distinct culture[5] from Ukraine-proper, particularly in terms of language and interpretations about (and responsibility for) major events in twentieth-century Ukrainian and Soviet history (e.g., the Holodomor, Ukrainian nationalist collaboration with Nazis during WWII, etc.). This enables symbol entrepreneurs to form a 'usable past' for the DPR project.

In addition to these legitimizing functions, symbol entrepreneurs deploy symbols to de-legitimize post-Maidan Ukraine and its western allies by symbolically presenting them as 'enemies' through negative displays of Ukrainian national symbols, Right Sector (a Ukrainian right-wing nationalist group) symbolism, Ukraine's western allies and via social exclusion appeals. This presentation helps to sustain the myth that a (foreign) fascist Ukrainian threat exists and is intent on invading the Donbass and punishing its people. Normatively, the identification of

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[5] Local Donbass culture includes numerous inputs, including nostalgia for the Soviet era (i.e., cultural and political figures, respect for the Russian language and Russian military history, etc.) and local-regional aspects (i.e., history of coal mining, survival of Nazi occupation and liberation by Soviet Army, and various sports traditions (particularly football and martial arts). In terms of history, the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War is the preeminent event in the Donbass' 20th century history. This theme often manifests in calls to support veterans and pensioners through the theme of personal honor (i.e., veterans are humanized through deliberate linguistic choices, such as being referred to as 'grandfathers' and 'fathers').

Ukraine and its western allies as an enemy helps separatists organize and manage information to inform nationalist ideologies and provides an emotional link between the present and a 'useable past' (thereby helping to create a foundation for a contemporary DPR/LPR national identity, i.e., a DPR and LPR national 'self'). In contrast to the treatment of Ukrainian symbols, Russian, Soviet and rebel organizations' symbols are symbolically presented as positive and non-threatening. The DPR and LPR's national symbols, in particular, are overwhelmingly derived from different periods of Russian history and represent a unique case of symbol-retrofitting.

Finally, weather and GPW anniversaries seem to affect elites' ability to use different symbols. That is, on average, symbols of Ukraine and its western allies tend to be displayed when temperatures are falling; symbols of Russian-Soviet civilization tend to be displayed when temperatures are rising; and symbols of rebel organizations tend to be seen during weeks with GPW anniversaries. In addition, the location of publication of newspapers and the Donbass People's Militia sponsorship of some newspapers seems to affect elites' ability to use symbols.

The overarching theme of these symbolic presentations is that state- and nation-building projects cannot exist without symbolically representing and rhetorically narrating the nation. Such processes are fundamental to forming and sustaining socially-shared representations about societal arrangements and inter-group (i.e., self-other) relations. However, representations are never static and must be repeatedly remade, (re)defined and (re)negotiated. In this way, the separatist-controlled media is a tool that empowers symbol entrepreneurs to narrate the conflict on terms of their choosing, to organize residents to attend public state-building events, and to showcase how separatist leaders are meeting the needs of the people.

There is also a significant geo-political component to the conflict in terms of Russia's role as an external actor. The conflict in Ukraine is a hybrid war in which a non-kinetic domain of

warfare runs parallel to the war's kinetic domain. In addition to Russia's material support for the insurrection against the Ukrainian government over a portion of territory of the State of Ukraine, since 2013-14 (and arguably since Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" in late 2004) Russia has waged an information war against Ukraine over salient historical events, Ukraine's tilt towards a 'Western'-leaning geo-political orientation and even people's perceptions of the contemporary conflict. In this way, the separatist takeover of media outlets in 2014 and the introduction of an alternative symbolic repertoire were important developments in the conflict in Ukraine because they allow separatists to widely disseminate Russia-approved narratives and perspectives about the conflict in Ukraine to counter Western narratives that paint Russia as an invading and occupying power.

Importantly, the cases of the DPR's and LPR's 'nationalisms' represent a particular war-time variant whose war-related themes are evident in both the new national symbols and the nationalist narratives deployed in the media. However, the existence of ongoing conflict constrains separatist leaders' abilities to use different symbols because, as leaders, they must address infrastructure problems and financial issues brought about by the war. Thus, the dissertation analyzes how separatist leaders navigate war-time conditions and periods of increased hardship while seeking to avoid tarnishing their nascent symbolic universe. I argue that separatists manage these complexities by increasing negative messaging and appeals for external legitimacy when the kinetic domain of the conflict slows down in the fall and winter. As hardship increases during wintertime, separatists use the slowdown in fighting to demean Ukraine for having caused difficult living conditions in the Donbass as well as to argue that Ukraine is not fulfilling the terms of the Minsk agreements (while the DPR and LPR are meetings its terms). This allows separatists to continue the information war even when seasonal weather changes impede kinetic action.

While the introduction of new symbols in political conflicts has been studied in various academic disciplines since the early 20th century (and arguably earlier), there are two lacunas in this literature that the dissertation seeks to clarify. Despite increased attention to the ways in which national identities are forged and reproduced, the role of symbols—especially those used in media during armed conflicts—remains under-theorized in the literature. In addition, empirically, there has been a lack of rigorous case studies examining the deployment of symbols and the roles they play in nation- and identity-formation, and the development of nationalism(s). In the DPR and LPR, the choice of symbols and other narrative content featured in the separatist media appears to be influenced by how well they perform two related functions: 1) a political function whereby symbols and political messaging legitimize separatist leaders and state- and nation-building processes[6]; and 2) a social function whereby symbols and political messaging are ostensibly structured to create a common framework for citizens to conceptualize, discuss and (re)produce the DPR and LPR 'nations'.

This research lies at an intersection of multiple academic fields, including nationalism, memory studies[7] and social psychology[8], studies of political identities (particularly the relationship

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[6] On nationalism and political legitimacy, see Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994 [1983].

[7] For recent contributions to this field, see Natasha Danilova. *The Politics of War Commemoration in the UK and Russia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko (eds.), *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; and Jade McGlynn, "Historical framing of the Ukraine Crisis through the Great Patriotic War: Performativity, cultural consciousness and shared remembering," *Memory Studies* (2018), pp. 1-23.

[8] For an introduction to some of this literature, see Daniel Bar-Tal, "The necessity of observing real life situations: Palestinian-Israeli violence as a laboratory for learning about social behavior," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 34 (2004), pp. 677-701; Wilco van Dijk, Jaap Ouwerkerk, Richard Smith, and Mina Cikara, "The role of self-evaluation and envy in schadenfreude," *European Review of Social Psychology* 26(1) (2015), pp. 247-282; Ronald Fischer, Rohan Callander, Paul Reddish, and Joseph Bulbulia, "How Do Rituals Affect Cooperation? An Experimental Field Study Comparing Nine Ritual Types," *Human Nature* 24 (2013), pp. 115-125; Nick Hopkins, Stephen Reicher, Sammyh Khan, Shruti Tewari, Narayanan Srinivasan, and Clifford Stevenson, "Explaining effervescence: Investigating the relationship between shared social identity and positive experience in crowds," *Cognition and Emotion* 30(1) (2016), pp. 20-32; Yechiel Klar and Hadas Baram, "In DeFENCE of the In-Group Historical Narrative in an Intractable Intergroup Conflict: An Individual-Difference Perspective," *Political Psychology* 37 (1) (February 2016), pp. 37-53; Yechiel Klar and Nyla Branscombe, "Intergroup Reconciliation: Emotions Are Not Enough," *Psychological Inquiry* 27(2) (2016), pp. 106-112; Oded Leshem, Yechiel Klar, and

between political conflicts and in-group/out-group boundary delineation), and international relations. It uses aspects from psychological approaches to study political symbols, particularly the use of symbols in state-and nation-building processes. What sets this work apart from the existing literature is the focus on the war-related themes, rhetoric, and symbols supplied en masse by the DPR and LPR regimes.[9] Through the case studies of the DPR and LPR, my research generates a dialogue between the literatures on nationalism, international relations and psychology, which is arguably critical to understanding how symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals can contribute to legitimizing state- and nation-building processes or to defining a framework for a citizenry to think about its nation.

The dissertation's quantitative analysis of media content empirically demonstrates how the frequency of some symbols and narrative themes remain stable while others change over time. Theoretically, the dissertation theorizes why symbolic and discursive constructions take specific forms in particular locations at particular times. Empirically, the dissertation explores how and why the symbols used in eastern Ukraine merge aspects of two distinct (and often opposed) eras of Russian history: that of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. In this regard, the dissertation also

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Thomas Edward Flores, "Instilling Hope for Peace During Intractable Conflicts," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 7(4) (2016), pp. 303-311; Laurent Licata and Aurélie Mercy, "Social Psychology of Collective Memory," in James Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition*, Vol. 4. Oxford: Elsevier, 2015, pp. 194-199; Dario Páez, Agustin Espinosa, and Magdalena Bobowik, "Emotional Climate: How is it shaped, fostered, and changed?," in Dirk Hermans, Bernard Rimé, and Batja Mesquita (eds.), *Changing Emotions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2013, pp. 113-119; Dario Páez, Bernard Rimé, Nekane Basabe, Anna Wlodarczyk and Larraitz Zumeta, "Psychosocial Effects of Perceived Emotional Synchrony in Collective Gatherings," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 108(5) (2015), pp. 711-729; Steve Reicher and John Drury, "Explaining enduring empowerment: A comparative study of collective action and psychological outcomes," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 35 (2005), pp. 35-58; Joseph Rivera and Dario Paez, "Emotional Climate, Human Security, and Cultures of Peace," *Journal of Social Issues* 63(2) (2007), pp. 233-255; and Vincent Yzerbyt and Toon Kuppens, "From group-based appraisals to group-based emotions The role of communication and social sharing," in Dirk Hermans, Bernard Rimé, and Batja Mesquita (eds.), *Changing Emotions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2013, pp. 97-104.

[9] Indeed, many of the new symbols that appeared in eastern Ukraine fused elements that, in their original contexts, represented opposing ideologies. The most prominent examples merge features from both Tsarist Russia and USSR periods, which is interesting because in the early Soviet period, Russian Tsarism played a villainous role in Soviet historiography. Igor Torbakov, "History, Memory and National Identity: Understanding the Politics of History and Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Lands," *Demokratizatsiya* 19(3) (Summer 2011), pp. 209-232, at p. 214.

theorizes how symbolic and discursive constructions could affect social relations between people that reside in the separatist controlled territories and those living in Ukraine proper.

Questions about nationalist symbolic and discursive constructions are not easily answered nor analyzed. Thus, chapter one begins by discussing how the dissertation fits into the study of nationalism. The chapter introduces key conceptual definitions and examines existing literature on nationalism and symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals. The chapter then attempts to generate a synthesis between various disciplines' approaches to the study of nationalism in order to produce an operational understanding of how symbolic constructions and discursive representations of historical events help separatist leaders justify the existence of nationalist projects, define ideological content for projects, and legitimize their leadership roles.

Chapter two builds on this understanding by elaborating a theory on how symbols and collective memories can be used to influence national identity. The chapter discusses social identity theory and how elites can use symbols and collective memories as tools of nation-building. The chapter closes by elucidating hypotheses about how the aspects of the conflict environment (including hardships, separatist achievements and setbacks, and holidays) may impact the (re)production of national symbols, representations of historical events and narrations of past events across the separatist media.

Chapter three discusses the methods and research design of the dissertation. To conduct a qualitative and systematic content analysis of the separatist media (in order to make sense of the choices of symbols, collective and personal memories, myths, rituals and other ideological content that featured in this media), I developed a coding scheme to examine symbolic and discursive content across eight thematic dimensions. I also traced chronologically the frequency of symbols and themes and placed them against the backdrop of events occurring in the DPR and LPR

regions.[10] Chapter three also introduces the quantitative methods used to determine how aspects of the conflict environment impact the (re)production of national symbols, representations of historical events and narrations of past events.

Chapter four presents the results of the quantitative analysis of the separatist media—171 issues of seven newspapers that were produced by pro-Russian separatists between 2014 and 2015. This media constitutes a symbolic universe of displays of national and nationalist symbols and representations of historical and contemporary events.[11] In this chapter, I also assess how well the cases of the DPR and LPR fit the conceptual models developed in chapter two.

Chapters five and six each present long case studies—chapter five on the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and chapter six on the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR). These chapters introduce the separatist newspapers published in the occupied territories as well as the symbols and collective memories that feature prominently in this media. The chapters examine how the separatist newspapers weave symbols and national narratives together to provide an emotional link between the present and 'useable pasts.' Historical and content analysis are used to investigate how symbols and narratives provide information to inform current nationalist ideologies. The chapters also assess the pragmatic value of the symbols and narratives, including why particular symbols may have been chosen over others. In this regard, omitted symbols and negative symbols are discussed.

The conclusion summarizes the major findings of the dissertation and assesses the implications of analyzing wartime media in the context of separatist proto-states seeking

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[10] My goal here is to uncover some of the dynamics of the content being broadcast in the media (i.e., are some symbol displays and themes stable in frequency? Are some more associated with holidays, anniversaries, and conflict achievements and setbacks than others?).

[11] The titles of these newspapers are as follows (titles in translation appear in parentheses): Боевое знамя Донбасса (Boevoe Znamia Donbassa), Боевой листок Новороссии (Boevoi Listok Novorossii), Донецк вечерний (Donetsk Vechernii), Новороссия (Novorossiia), Единство (Edinstvo), Заря Донбасса (Zaria Donbassa), and Восточный Донбасс (Vostochnyi Donbass).

international recognition as *de jure* sovereign states. The chapter also evaluates the research design, including what studies of separatist media can and cannot accomplish, what questions remain unsatisfactorily answered, and the major limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the possible avenues for future research into the study of propaganda in the Nationalism and International Relations academic literatures.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

The existence of new political entities formed as a result of succession has grown in recent years, and in each instance the new rulers adopted a new symbolic regime to represent new national projects. Such practices have long been studied across different academic disciplines as part of the phenomenon known as nationalism. However, this has led to a proliferation of definitions of the concept of 'nationalism' as well as debate about which aspects of nationalism are worthy of study. This chapter draws upon literatures on nationalism, symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals to situate the dissertation in the broader literature on nationalism and introduce key conceptual definitions of the study. The goal of this chapter is to generate a synthesis between various disciplines' approaches to the study of nationalism in order to build an operational understanding of how symbolic constructions and discursive representations of historical events can be used to define ideological content for nationalist projects and legitimize the leaders of such projects. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the limitations of existing scholarship in order to identify how theory can help us understand why nationalist media—specifically, the symbolic and discursive constructions displayed within such media—may change seasonally throughout the year.

Situating the Study within the Field of Nationalism

The academic literature on nationalism has produced several definitions of what is meant by 'nationalism'. Two of the most frequently invoked conceptualizations consider nationalism to be a political project and an ideology. Both are accurate depictions: nationalism is an actionable goal to achieve statehood; at the same time, it is a belief of "collective commonality" among different people.[12] According to Stephen Van Evera (1994), 'nationalism as project' refers to a

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[12] Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(2) (March 1998), pp. 242-269, at p. 247.

political struggle or movement for independence in which individuals 1) hold their primary loyalty to their own ethnic or national group, and 2) desire their own state.[13] In contrast, 'nationalism as ideology' refers to the political expression of national identity[14] and cultural specificity. It can include doctrines, cultural practices, symbolic constructions and narratives, and even the perceived interests of the 'nation'. According to Pablo San Martín (2008: 25) 'nationalism as ideology' includes any messaging that centers on a "nodal communitarian point" which becomes the ideational manifestation of the nation.[15] Manifestations of nation can occur in critical situations when the absence of the nation becomes apparent, which allows the nodal point to bind together different discursive elements whose meaning (in part) becomes fixed through the process of articulating them.[16] Along a similar line, Stuart Hall (1977) and Umut Özkırımlı (2005) conceptualize nationalism as made up of different constructs that denote "experiencings" and

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[13] Thus, 'nationalism as project' includes irredentist and secessionist movements. Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18(4) (Spring, 1994), pp. 5-39, at p. 6. Van Evera suggests there are three types of nationalism—"diaspora-accepting," "immigrationist," and "diaspora-annexing." This last type has been associated with Pan-Russian nationalism, which seeks to incorporate the Russian diaspora that were left outside the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR. Ibid, p. 12.

[14] National identity is a component of social identity. According to Henri Tajfel (1972), social identity is a person's "knowledge that he[/she] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [/her] of this group membership." Henri Tajfel, "Social categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison," in Tom Postmes and Nyla Branscombe (eds.), *Rediscovering Social Identity: Key Readings*. New York: Routledge, 2010[1978], pp. 119-128, at p. 122.

[15] In this view, symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals serve as materials that can be tethered to the nation to form a framework of shared meanings and ideologies that allow communities to operate, conceptualize, discuss and (re)produce the nation across time and space. For example, in the former Soviet Union, such materials were particularly valued for their ability to transmit ideological content. According to Graeme Gill (2013: 3), "ideological values, assumptions and ways of thinking permeated all aspects of public and private life. … every part of the society was closely linked in to the ideology." Ideology was the "basic philosophical foundation of the regime, its formal intellectual basis and the core of its legitimation. It provided the basic rationale for the Soviet project, and underpinned the dominant conceptions of social reality in the society." However, because of the complex nature of Soviet ideology (and the fact that it was ill-suited for daily communication between Soviet authorities and the Soviet people), Soviet authorities instead relied on the Soviet metanarrative, "a body of discourse which simplified the ideology and acted as a means of mediation between regime and people." The metanarrative "provided a symbolic construction of the society and an explanation for why it was the way it was and where it was going. In this way, it provided the basic definition of the community and its future." Graeme Gill, *Symbolism and Regime Change in Russia*. New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 3.

[16] Pablo San Martin, "Is Nationalism an Ideology? A critical exploration from the Asturian case," *Dissidences. Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism* 3(5) (2009), pp. 1-30, at p. 25. Nationalism as ideology can exist in different forms, including 'full' and 'thin-centered' perspectives. See Michael Freeden, "Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?" *Political Studies* XLVI (1998), pp. 748-765, at p. 750.

which are brought to life through language (Hall 1977: 322, cited in Özkırımlı 2005: 29).[17]

According to Özkırımlı (2005: 30), nationalism can be thought of as "a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us."[18] In other words, this understanding of nationalism is based not on exclusivity for ethnic groups but rather on exclusivity for communities of like-minded individuals.

There is yet another way one can define nationalism. According to Goode (2012: 8), nationalism can be thought of as "a contextually specific variety of practice aimed at producing regime legitimacy."[19] In this view, nationalist political messaging is a strategy for legitimacy insofar as it seeks to provide a foundation of links between a regime and its clients as well as with a regime's rivals. Indeed, all regimes must create and sustain a belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate for society.[20] One way to accomplish this is for a regime to discursively justify its actions. However, to a large degree this depends on the receptivity of a given society. For example, according to Beetham (1991: 17), justifications of power depend upon the beliefs of society with regard to

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[17] Özkırımlı (2005) suggests that the discourse of the nation exists across four overlapping dimensions: 'spatial', 'temporal', 'symbolic' and 'everyday'. He argues that what differentiates nationalist discourse from other discourses is its unique 'combination' of all four dimensions. Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 179.

[18] Ibid., pp. 29-30. Özkırımlı notes that this conceptualization of nationalism overlaps with certain conceptions of ideology, but his definition explicitly works via categories and category-based knowledge that, via rhetoric, have broad impacts, including shaping the ways in which newspapers are structured, literature is classified, and even how people compete in sports competitions.

[19] J. Paul Goode, "Nationalism in Quiet Times: Ideational Power and Post-Soviet Hybrid Regimes," *Problems of Post-Communism* 59(3) (May–June 2012), pp. 6-16, at p. 8. For the purposes of the dissertation, I follow Bartmann's (2004) definition of legitimacy as "the conviction that a particular territorial community has a right to be constituted as a state and to enjoy the privileges of sovereignty and membership in the international system." Barry Bartmann, "Political realities and legal anomalies: Revisiting the politics of international recognition," in Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (eds.), *De Facto States The Quest for Sovereignty*. New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 15.

[20] Seymour Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960, p. 77. I note that Lipset was referring to democracies in this particular discussion, however this perspective also applies to other types of regimes.

what is the rightful source of authority; about what qualities are appropriate to the exercise

of power and how individuals come to possess them; and some conception of a common

interest, reciprocal benefit, or societal need that the system of power satisfies.[21]

Further complicating matters is the fact that legitimacy can be conceptualized in different ways.[22]

Suffice it to say that notions about what is and is not legitimate behavior are contingent on societal

understandings.

For the purposes of the dissertation, I define nationalism as a political messaging strategy

for building national identity. The utility of this definition is that it consolidates other definitions

into a single one that focuses on how the building of national identity is carried out (through

messaging). As a messaging strategy, nationalism communicates the idea that a 'nation' is distinct

from others or that a regime is fulfilling its responsibility of serving the nation.[23] Nationalism also

functions as a way of organizing the means (i.e., symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals)

that help to construct national identity, which is necessary for unity, governance and legitimacy,

among other things.[24] National identities are composed of interrelated ethnic, cultural, territorial,

economic and legal-political components that signify bonds of solidarity among members of

communities who are united by shared memories, myths, and traditions. Like personal identities,

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[21] David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991, p. 17.

[22] For example, legitimacy can refer to someone or something being in compliance with some sort of standard that is relevant to a population, or it can also refer to something or someone being perceived by a population as rightfully possessing authority. I note that in authoritarian states, the latter conception is difficult to assess. James Mellon, "Myth, Legitimacy and Nationalism in Central Asia," *Ethnopolitics* 9(2) (June 2010), pp. 137-150, at p. 139.

[23] I note that Anthony Smith (1991a: 14) defines 'nation' as a community that shares "territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members." Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, New York: Penguin Books, 1991a, p. 14. However, as Benedict Anderson (2006[1983]:6) reminds us, nations are constructed (i.e., 'imagined') communities. Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006[1983], p. 6. Thus, as a messaging strategy, nationalism refers to a category rather than an actual group of human beings. On the distinction between category and group, see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 12-13.

[24] Indeed, since the DPR and LPR 'nation' stands at the center of different ideas and understandings, nationalism helps to simplify and make coherent the disparate identity materials that together constitute the DPR and LPR 'national identity'.

national identities derive from and vary with social context[25], and as such they are able to be institutionalized in cultural sites (i.e., sacred religious texts, folk tales, poetry and collective rituals to name only a few).[26] This is one reason why public celebrations and gatherings are useful to nationalists—because they offer opportunities to promote national identity by associating national symbols with personal experiences and by helping to create collective memories among participants. Since collective memories are shared among members of groups, they can be used to fulfill identity needs and create a sense of cohesion among group members.[27]

The literature on nationalism indicates that in situations where regime change, state- and nation-building coincide, the past often becomes contested and conflicts can erupt over claims to (and against) historical materials.[28] Indeed, unique to instances of nationalism in recent decades have been tendencies to evoke a mythical past, politicize languages, and harness modern methods of communication, including the internet, automated bots, and television.[29] All have been major facets of the nationalisms that arose in the post-communist era in eastern, Central and Southern Europe. Post-communist nationalisms emerged in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and the breakup of multi-national states. In many of the newly independent states, the processes of state disintegration created new minorities just as these states were beginning to democratize their political systems. This resulted in an increase in nationalism in many of these states as a result of a perfect storm of processes related to these states' attempts to democratize. In the states where ethnicity was already highly salient, the combination of democratization and increasing

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[25] Reicher and Drury (2005), p. 51.

[26] John Hutchinson, "Warfare and the Sacralisation of Nations: The Meanings, Rituals and Politics of National Remembrance," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38(2) (2009) pp. 401-417, at p. 405.

[27] Licata and Mercy, 2015, pp. 196-198.

[28] Indeed, this was the situation that newly independent states faced as they emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Torbakov (2011), pp. 211-212.

[29] Ericka Harris, *Nationalism: Theories and Cases*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp. 181-182, 196.

nationalism exacerbated feelings of insecurity for the 'new' minorities and encouraged the mobilization of ethnic kin who were based in 'homelands' across state borders.[30]

A dominant approach to nationalism today is one that views national communities as constructed. These constructs are shaped through symbols and discursively, among other things, and their overarching purpose is to assist in the in the formation and maintenance of actual national communities. Often the materials that inform these constructs are a mix of real history and fictionalized or exaggerated myths. History-writing and myth-making have long been explored by scholars of different disciplines who study nationalism, national identity and nation-building. The key premise behind many of these works has been that (re)writing history and (re)making myths is simply what nation-states do. For example, according to Bell (2003), all approaches to theorizing nationalism are united around the fundamental, formative roles that historical representation and narration of past events play in their explanatory schemas—all nationalists seek to tell a particular kind of story that resonates with a given population on an emotional level.[31] To put it another way, *all* approaches to the study of nationalism have, to varying degrees, tended to focus on the creation of stories about identity, origins, history and community. As Bell (2003: 67) notes, this is because "representation and recognition – of us and them – act as the mutually supporting scaffolds upon which national identity is constructed."[32]

The central role that representational practices play in nationalism has been addressed in the scholarship on nations and nation-building. For example, Anthony Cohen (1985) discusses how symbols help to construct communities of like-minded individuals.[33] Benedict Anderson's

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[30] Ibid., pp. 107-114.
[31] Duncan Bell, "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54(1) (March 2003) pp. 63–81, at p. 66.
[32] Bell (2003), p. 67.
[33] According to Cohen, "the symbolic repertoire of a community aggregates the individualities and other differences found within the community and provides the means for their expression, interpretation and containment. … It

[2006](1983) notion of "imagined communities" suggests that the accomplishments of a 'nation' are often deliberately represented by specific symbols, flags, coats of arms, monuments, and heroes in order to create artificial social bonds that are capable of instilling a sense of national purpose and unity.[34] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) also discuss nationhood in terms of the invention of 'new' traditions, i.e., ritualistic or symbolic practices which are created in novel situations in order to represent particular values, construct norms of behavior and, whenever possible, establish continuity with a useable past.[35] What these works demonstrate is that symbols and traditions are signifiers, i.e., objects, constructs, and language that carries representations or meanings which are meant to evoke an idea or emotion in human beings.[36] Meanings emerge from the relationships between different signifiers when they are used as part of discourse. For example, according to Ferdinand de Saussure (2011[1959]), the relationship between word and object (i.e., signifier and signified) is arbitrary because the meanings of words are contingent—words, by themselves, are devoid of meaning; their meanings must be (re)made through discourse or through contrasts with other words (e.g., the meaning of the word 'up' can be inferred by contrasting it with the word 'down')). The same logic applies to national symbols. In political conflicts, new national symbols often emerge and replace status-quo symbols, and new meanings of symbols take

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thereby constitutes, and gives reality to, the community's boundaries." Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. New York City: Routledge, 2001[1985], p. 21.

[34] Anderson, 2006[1983]. See also Sandina Begić and Boriša Mraović, "Forsaken Monuments and Social Change: The Function of Socialist Monuments in the Post-Yugoslav Space" in Scott Moeschberger and Rebekah Phillips DeZalia (eds.). *Symbols that Bind, Symbols that Divide: The Semiotics of Peace and Conflict*. New York: Springer, 2015.

[35] Indeed, the establishment of 'new' traditions primarily occurs during periods of rapid social change when there is an urgent need for creating and maintaining order and unity, such as at times of increasing nationalism and the creation of new nations. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds.). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[36] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. New York City: Columbia University Press, 2011[1959], p. 67.

shape in different ways—including through contrasts between new symbols and (rejected) status-quo symbols or by juxtaposing unrelated concepts (i.e., 'war' and 'terror,' 'poverty' or 'drugs').

In sum, nationalism is a political messaging strategy for building national identity, and symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals are the means of implementing it. In the next section, I define what counts as symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals, and I discuss why these materials are important to nationalists.

Symbols and National Symbols

Symbols are signifiers that carry layers of meanings, thus they often mean different things to different people at different times, and meanings can change in different contexts. They exist in a sort-of feedback loop whereby symbols shape cultural narratives, but narratives also shape the representation of symbols (thus, the meaning of symbols are never static).[37] National symbols are a particular type of symbol that evoke emotionally resonant representations of membership in a nation. They can include visual representations (i.e., national flags, coats of arms, crests, monuments, and images of events and heroes) that can be displayed; they can also include songs (i.e., national anthems, patriotic songs) that can be sung or experienced by members of a nation. Some scholars—e.g., Smith (1991a) and Geisler (2005)—argue that national symbols also include national currencies, capital cities, passports, museums, oaths, ceremonies, recreational activities (including sports), styles of architecture and town planning, and even national achievements (such as the United States' transcontinental railroad and Germany's "Autobahn").[38] In short, national symbols are any symbols that condense knowledge, values, history, and memories associated with

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[37] Rebekah Phillips DeZalia and Scott Moeschberger, "The Function of Symbols that Bind and Divide," in Moeschberger and Phillips DeZalia, 2015, p. 5.

[38] Michael Geisler, "Introduction: What are national symbols and what do they do to us?" in Michael Geisler (ed.), *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative*. Middlebury: Middlebury College Press, 2005, pp. xx-xxi.

the nation.[39] The preeminent national symbol is the national flag, arguably because flags contain an element of power relations that is largely absent or less pronounced in other national symbols.[40]

For the purposes of the dissertation, I follow Smith (1991a) and Geisler (2005) in terms of what counts as important national symbols: they include symbols that are likely to be contested sites of power relations (i.e., national flags, coats of arms, holidays and anthems) as well as symbols that are unlikely to elicit the same level of contestation over power (i.e., museums, memorials, monuments, currency, passports, capital cities, maps, recreational activities, historical figures, educational practices, military customs, literature, and elements of the environment (i.e., national flora and fauna)). [41] I also include nationally-experienced events [42] and language preference as important national symbols. This is because national events often become associated with collective memories (which may include notions of national strength, resilience, trauma or victimhood), and also because language preference is a salient issue in the Donbass region of Ukraine. While the dissertation is primarily concerned with symbols that are likely to be contested sites of power relations (such as national flags, holidays and heroes), this does not imply that other national symbols matter less than national flags.

National symbols often emerge in situations of political change. In such cases, new national symbols may include existing symbols that have been altered to rewrite the past[43] or they may be created from scratch to offer alternative (and selective) representations of the past. [44] Symbol

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[39] Raymond Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973.
[40] Geisler, 2005, p. xxii.
[41] See Smith, 1991a, p. 77 and Geisler, 2005, pp. xx-xxi.
[42] By this, I mean major wars (for example, WWII and the war in Vietnam for the United States; the GPW and the war in Afghanistan for Russia) and national tragedies (such as the 1932-33 Holodomor for Ukraine, the 1990-91 dissolution of the USSR for Russia, and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks for the United States).
[43] David Kertzer, *Politics and Symbols: The Italian Communist Party and the Fall of Communism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 7.
[44] For example, when the Bolsheviks took power, they created and deployed a new symbolic universe, in part, to build identity around their social base. The former national seal, flag, and anthem were all replaced by new symbols that signified the different classes that won the revolution: the sickle represented the peasantry; the industrial

entrepreneurs deploy national symbols to give people a way to identify and articulate different values associated with the nation (which is, itself, an abstract notion)[45], legitimize entrepreneurs' authority and communicate state authority to the public.[46] When people encounter a national symbol, they are prompted to remember concepts and emotions associated with the nation as well as their own psychological attachment to the nation.[47] The emotional responses that such symbols elicit can be conscious as well as unconscious.[48] Conscious responses to national symbols include instances of moral condemnation for misusing[49] or desecrating[50] (i.e., burning) the national flag, or "murdering" the national anthem via botched public performance.[51] Unconscious responses include things like physiological responses and cognitive associations.[52]

Discourse and Discursive Representations

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hammer represented the proletariat; and the short sword represented the army. In the aftermath of the revolution, Tsarist statues were torn down and replaced by statues of European and Russian radicals. Richard Stites, "The Role of Ritual and Symbols," in Richard Stites, *Passion and Perception: Essays on Russian Culture*. Washington DC: New Academic Publishing, 2010, pp. 185-194, at pp. 189-191. Similarly, when Soviet and Marxist-Leninist symbols and the ideology of proletarian internationalism came to be seen as illegitimate throughout much of Ukraine between 1989-91, the creation of a new symbolic regime became necessary for Ukraine's newly empowered political and cultural elites. Ukrainian nationalism, including its symbols and myths, filled the void. However, this nationalism came with cultural and linguistic demands, some of which exacerbated divisions within the country—especially between western and eastern Ukraine. Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and nation building*. New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 29.

[45] I note that this understanding is based, in part, off Durkheim's (1912) work on religious rituals. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1912.

[46] Geisler, 2005, p. xix.

[47] See, for example, Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE Publications, 1992; and Robert Schatz and Howard Lavine, "Waving the Flag: National Symbolism, Social Identity, and Political Engagement," *Political Psychology* 28(3) (June 2007), pp. 329-355.

[48] David Butz, "National Symbols as Agents of Psychological and Social Change," *Political Psychology* 30(5) (October 2009), pp. 779-804.

[49] Jonathan Haidt, Silvia Helena Roller, and Maria Dias, "Affect, Culture, and Morality, or Is It Wrong to Eat Your Dog?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65(4) (1993), pp. 613-628.

[50] Charles Helwig and Angela Prencipe, "Children's Judgments of Flags and Flag-Burning," *Child Development* 70(1) (January/February 1999), pp. 132-143.

[51] Geisler, 2005, p. xxii.

[52] For example, Markus Kemmelmeier and David Winter (2008) found that mere exposure to national symbols can heighten levels of nationalist feelings in certain contexts due to the role that symbols play in summarizing the nation's past, and Gilboa and Bodner (2009) found that national anthems can evoke more national associations than other types of songs. See Markus Kemmelmeier and David Winter, "Sowing Patriotism, but Reaping Nationalism? Consequences of Exposure to the American Flag," *Political Psychology* 29(6) (Dec., 2008), pp. 859-879 and Avi Gilboa and Ehud Bodner, "What are your thoughts when the National Anthem is playing? An empirical exploration. *Psychology of Music*, 37(4) (2009), pp. 459-484.

Like national symbols, political events commonly carry multiple meanings and represent different things to different people.[53] A key way political events take on significance is through political discourse and discursive representations (that is, the language used to describe political events). Political actors deploy political discourse and discursive representations (usually) purposefully to express political aspirations in a cogent fashion and gain support for their actions. Expectations about future benefits or anticipated peril are both vital to and implicit in such discourse.[54] However, the attribution of meaning to any given event involves building upon different historical and social linkages, some of which may be in tension with one another. In practice, this means that political actors must focus on certain aspects of events in their political messaging while disregarding other aspects.[55] Indeed, since political discourse contains pragmatic and symbolic dimensions that can become tangled when deployed[56], political actors form and project narratives[57] to shape the political order and structure expectations about behavior.[58]

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[53] Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985[1964], p. 12.

[54] Ibid., pp. 205-206. Edelman goes on to argue that "The words employed every day to characterize the social world are especially common, unobtrusive, and ambiguous entities; it is not surprising that they are the key building blocks from which political worlds are constructed. … The connotations people project into such ambiguous verbal symbols become "realities" that shape and inhibit the actions and thought of their creators while erasing recognition that they *are* constructions." Ibid, p. 212. Emphasis in original.

[55] For example, Edelman (1985: 196) argues that "subjective complexities and contradictions, mirroring similar complexities and contradictions in the environment, encourage public officials and advocates of causes to indulge in rhetoric that simplifies the complexity by focusing upon some one facet in order to win public support." Ibid., p. 196. Edelman stipulates that "beliefs, perceptions, interpretations, and anticipations about political events change with the economic and social situation, the focus of attention, the historical perspective, and the physical perspective. Because these influences are shaped in their turn by the language that depicts them, variations in vocabulary, metaphors, and syntax reflect and reinforce changes in meaning. Ibid, p. 197.

[56] For example, Thomas Sherlock (2007) argues that by focusing on "normative perceptions of the social order," the symbolic dimension of political discourse "seeks to elaborate and impose representations of the social world that create, maintain, or dissolve political identities." Thomas Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future*. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 3.

[57] Narratives are accounts of events that are constructed to allow individuals to connect (ostensibly) unconnected phenomena so that they have causal or temporal coherence. Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 196; see also Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle. *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*. New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 1-5.

[58] Indeed, in numerous East European countries narratives have been used to justify certain political moves. Igor Torbakov, "The Past as Present: Foreign Relations and Russia's Politics of History," in Sven Eliaeson, Lyudmila Harutyunyan, and Larissa Titarenko (eds.), *After the Soviet Empire: Legacies and Pathways*. Lieden: Brill, 2016, pp. 358-380, at pp. 365-366.

Narratives can organize discourse and discursive representations to encompass a nation's history, language and culture.[59] One way to achieve narrative coherence is through the creation of a 'mythscape,' a 'discursive realm' where the means of national identity can be combined and politicized.[60] Mythscapes function as the ways in which the messaging strategy is carried out.

Media is a means to disseminate discourse, narratives and mythscapes.[61] The content of media includes news accounts, which are important to nationalists because they allow discourse to be promulgated. According to Edelman (1985: 197), news accounts play a paramount role in disseminating language about political events, including reconstructions of "the benign or malevolent character of the environment, of other people's political importance, and therefore of self-conceptions."[62] News accounts are social constructions that are built "through gestures and discourse that evoke similar perceptions in people who are important to one another" in order to "focus public attention and feeling and give form to the political scene" by "highlight[ing] the dimensions of the spectacle of politics that attract audiences: leaders, enemies, problems, and crises." News accounts "*make the political spectacle resonate with moral passions and with expectations of danger or amelioration.*"[63] In this way, news accounts are a preeminent form of political symbol because they can elicit emotions (both positive and negative) about the political world.[64] Nationalists use news accounts as part of their political messaging efforts in order to

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[59] Harris, 2009, pp. 39-40.

[60] Bell (2003) p. 63. Indeed, according to Bell (2003: 69), "[T]o mould a national identity – a sense of unity with others belonging to the same nation – it is necessary to have an understanding of oneself as located in a temporally extended narrative, and in order to be able to locate one as such, nationalist discourse must be able to represent the unfolding of time in such a way that the nation assumes a privileged and valorized role." Ibid, p. 69.

[61] Indeed, according to Alister Miskimmon et al. (2013), narratives embedded in media structure state identities and larger visions about the global order. Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle. *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*. New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 1-5.

[62] Edelman, 1985, p. 197.

[63] Ibid., p. 202. Emphasis added.

[64] Indeed, according to Edelman (1985: 202), all political worlds contain "specified or implied histories, heroes, villains, issues, threats, desirable and undesirable courses of action, and prospects for the future. The construction of the self is intimately involved as well, for the political spectacle and the roles the subjects create for themselves (loyal citizen, follower, reformer, rebel, maverick, detached observe, and so on) are obverse sides of the same

politicize past events, historical memories and collective traumas ostensibly to resurface the past and create new meanings in the context of the current social climate. Because news accounts are often believed to be objective rather than subjective, they are able to transform interpretations of events and memories into "facts" and reduce viewers and readers to unthinking, uncritical objects.[65] Through the use of framing and narrative construction, versions of events can be constructed in order to shape how they can be interpreted by the public[66]—particularly what is to be remembered and what is to be forgotten.[67] In short, the content of national identity is contingent—it is ultimately determined by which identities and narrative representations gain prominence over others.[68] In this way, whomever controls the media has considerable sway over what the content of national identity will ultimately include.

Collective Memory

Collective memory has been studied in numerous disciplines, including history, anthropology, sociology, political science, philosophy, psychology and literature. Indeed, it is increasingly being seen as a stand-alone area (i.e., memory studies).[69] The interdisciplinary origins

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construction: each belief evokes and reinforces the other one. … The lesson is that the spectacle as interpreted, rather than the immediate material situation alone, is the critical influence upon ideology." Ibid, pp. 202-203. Emphasis added.

[65] According to Edelman, "Both the writer of news and the consumer of news are encouraged to relinquish their analytical faculties … People as subjects are destroyed; both they and news accounts become objects, separated from self-conscious thought, feeling, and evaluation." Ibid., p. 204.

[66] According to Jill Edy (2006), theories of media framing argue that framing functions to convey particular perspectives on events and issues and to imbue them with meaning, especially when stories carry multiple meanings at once. Jill Edy. *Troubled Pasts: News and the Collective Memory of Social Unrest*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006, p. 8. However, this is not to imply there is no contestation over narratives. They can be debated and contested in the public sphere, and multiple narratives of the same event can exist and compete for dominance or to become 'official' memory. Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 196.

[67] I note here Ernest Renan's quote from his 1882 "What is a Nation?" address: "Forgetting, I would even go so far to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation…." Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" in Geoff Eley and Ronald Suny (eds.) *Becoming National: A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 45.

[68] Eerika Finell and Karmela Liebkind, "National Symbols and Distinctiveness: Rhetorical Strategies in Creating Distinct National Identities," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 49(2) (June 2010), pp. 321-341, at p. 324.

[69] Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, "Introduction," in Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York City: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 10.

of the study of collective memory have led to a diversity of approaches to its study; consequently, there is no uniform approach to studying the phenomenon across the various academic fields.[70] For the purposes of the dissertation, I follow Fentress and Wickam's (1992) definition of collective memory as a special type of 'social fact' where the distinction between personal and shared memories blurs.[71] To be sure, all remembering—at both the individual and collective levels—is social in nature.[72] That is, all memories are made through the interactions that individuals (as members of groups) have with social artifacts in their social environment.[73] According to Fentress and Wickam (1992: 7), collective memories are simultaneously subjective and "structured by language, by teaching and observing, by collectively held ideas, and by experiences shared with others."[74] They are, thus, a unique type of 'social fact' that cannot be categorized as either personal or shared—they are a hybrid of both.

Myths

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[70] This is problematic. According to Confino (1997: 1387), "The history of memory … lacks critical reflection on method and theory, as well as a systematic evaluation of the field's problems, approaches, and objects of study. It is largely defined now in terms of topics of inquiry. Repressed memory. Monuments. Films. Museums. Mickey Mouse. Memory of the American South. Of the Holocaust. The French Revolution. … It runs the danger of becoming an assemblage of distinct topics that describe in a predictable way how people construct the past." Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102(5) (Dec., 1997), pp. 1386-1403, at p. 1387.

[71] Fentress and Wickam define 'social facts' as collectively-held ideas that result from social and historical forces. The authors note that this idea actually originated with Durkheim. James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992, p. 7.

[72] For example, according to Licata and Mercy (2015: 194), remembering is not a simple recollection of previously learned information but is instead a socially-continent process that "implies an active reconstruction of memory traces as a function of the present situation. More precisely, it is the interaction between schemata inherited from our cultural background or from our personal experiences and the situational context that determines this reconstruction. This reconstruction is therefore influenced by the social context in which remembering takes place, which implies that representations of the past can be distorted, both at the individual and at the collective levels." Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 194. Even language itself is a social act. James Pennebaker and Becky Banasik, "On the creation and maintenance of collective memories: history as social psychology," in James Pennebaker, Dario Páez, Bernard Rimé (eds.). *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997, pp. 3-20, at p. 7.

[73] Alin Coman, Adam Brown, Jonathan Koppel, and William Hirst, "Collective Memory from a Psychological Perspective," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22 (2009), pp. 125-141, at p. 129. In this way, society (re)structures the world and how people (as members of groups) remember events. For example, Licata and Mercy (2015) cite the Lincoln Memorial as being purposefully designed to encourage people to remember Abraham Lincoln as godlike figure. Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 195.

[74] Fentress and Wickham, 1992, p. 7.

For the purposes of the dissertation, I define myths as socially-constructed narratives of the past that become politicized by elites and imbued with values that are contingent on events from the present.[75] While all political regimes rely on mythmaking to varying degrees, authoritarian regimes, in particular, depend on mythmaking for the purposes of legitimization more than other types of regimes.[76] Myths are important to political actors because they can serve multiple purposes. They can be used to give substance to reality and structure/coherence to history[77], create and support political identities[78], define enemies and heroes of the political and social orders[79], and they can be manipulated to encourage national solidarity (by using images of the past to imbue meaning into current affairs).[80] According to Sherlock (2007), they can also be used to strengthen political cohesion[81], combined with ideologies, used as a foundation for an ideology or to provide reference points for abstract ideas, and they can also generate emotional attachments that ideologies may be unable to sustain on their own.[82] Chauvinistic myths, in particular, can be used

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[75] I note that this definition is inspired by Thomas Sherlock's (2007: 3) definition of myth as politicized history in the form of "a narrative of past events that gives them special significance for the present and the future" as well as Gill's (2013: 4) definition of myth as "essentially a socially constructed story about the community and its origins." See Sherlock, 2007, p. 3 and Gill, 2013, p. 4 However, one key difference between politicized myth and collective memory is that the latter more specifically refers to the memory of people who actually experienced a given event.

[76] Indeed, in authoritarian regimes, myths and historical materials can be woven into narratives that are designed to generate acceptance of and compliance with government policies. In contrast, in liberal democracies political legitimacy relies less on unifying historical narratives because there is generally more tolerance for competing interpretations of history and dissent. To enforce compliance, authoritarian regimes rely on coercion and propaganda to mobilize their societies to support political projects. Sherlock, 2007, p. 11. Both democratic elites and authoritarian elites use myths to complement the normative foundations of their power. However, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes are more likely than democratic regimes to rely on historical myths when facing perceived military threats. Ibid, pp. 9-10.

[77] Ibid., 2007, p. 3; Kertzer, 1996, p. 16.

[78] Sherlock, 2007, p. 3.

[79] Indeed, in the creation of 'heroes,' important regime leaders can be built up into resolute (mythical) figures despite the fact that, in reality, they are subject to the same political interests, forces, and factions as any other politicians. Murray Edelman, *Politics As Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence*. New York: Academic Press, 1971, p. 15.

[80] Sherlock, 2007, p. 5; Gill, 2013, p. 4.

[81] Sherlock, 2007, p. 5.

[82] I note that ideologies can also give rise to myths. Ibid., p. 4.

to glorify nationalist movements and leaders, whitewash past crimes or wrongdoings by in-groups, and malign or denigrate out-groups.[83]

Rituals

Rituals[84] are also important to political actors because they can help with the propagation of myths (by providing frameworks for myths to take shape). Participation in rituals and collective gatherings helps produce and build shared memories and emotions that link individuals to political groups.[85] According to Kertzer (1996), rituals and rites inundate individuals with memories of prior occasions when rites were performed.[86] Rituals thus prompt people to recall their own individual memories (which, for ritual participants, are also collective memories) while, at the same time, they provide avenues to create and maintain new (and old) collective memories.[87] Rituals contribute to the group socialization process by coordinating the values, motivations, and judgments of ritual participants.[88] They can even help to endow spaces with political significance.

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[83] Van Evera (1994), pp. 27-29.

[84] I follow Stites' definition of rituals as "the use of created forms of symbolic behavior for devotional and celebratory moments in life." Richard Stites, "Bolshevik Ritual Building in the 1920s," in Richard Stites, *Passion and Perception: Essays on Russian Culture*. Washington DC: New Academic Publishing, 2010, pp. 165-184, at p. 165.

[85] This is not a new idea. Durkheim (1912: 407) saw the link between collective gatherings and the creation of a sense of union and the sharing of emotions among people when he argued that as misfortunes present an imminent threat to a given group, that group "unites, as in the case of mourning, and it is naturally an impression of uneasiness and perplexity which dominates the assembled body. *Now, as always, the pooling of these sentiments results in intensifying them.* By affirming themselves, they exalt and impassion themselves and attain a degree of violence which is translated by the corresponding violence of the gestures which express them. Just as at the death of a relative, they utter terrible cries, fly into a passion and feel that they must tear and destroy; it is to satisfy this need that they beat themselves, wound themselves, and make *their* blood flow. When emotions have this vivacity, they may well be painful, but they are not depressing; on the contrary, they denote a state of effervescence which implies a mobilization of all our active forces, and even a supply of external energies." Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1912, p. 407. Emphasis added.

[86] Kertzer, 1996, pp. 159-160.

[87] Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 196.

[88] This is because in collective gatherings, people often make the same gestures and postures and sing many of the same songs, thus a conforming of behavior and a social sharing of emotions takes place. For example, according to Durkheim (1912: 5-6), "The group has an intellectual and moral conformity … *[m]ovements are stereotyped*; everybody performs the same ones in the same circumstances, and this conformity of conduct only translates the conformity of thought. *Every mind being drawn into the same eddy, the individual type nearly confounds itself with that of the race.*" Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1912, pp. 5-6. Emphasis added. I note that rituals can also accomplish this at the individual level. For example, in the early years of the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks used rituals to associate private life milestones (births,

This has actually been demonstrated in empirical studies. For example, in an investigation of nine unique rituals, Fischer et al. (2013) found that rituals socialized behavioral synchrony and sacred values, which, in turn, increased pro-social behaviors among participants[89]; Páez et al. (2015) found that participation in collective gatherings strengthened collective identity, identity fusion, and social integration, and enhanced positive affect and emotions, including individual and collective self-esteem, among attendees.[90] Perhaps most important of all, rituals provide political actors with tools to structure society. For example, in the former Soviet Union, a number of myths[91] and rituals were woven together into what Graeme Gill (2013) terms the 'Soviet metanarrative'.[92]

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marriages, and deaths) with revolutionary symbolism. One of the most widespread was the practice of Octobering, which involved dedicating newborns with new names that were associated with revolutionary heroes and heroines, revolutionary concepts, industrial scientific and technical imagery, or cultural items like myths, nature, and particular places. This practice had many virtues for helping to disassemble the existing symbolic universe and replace it with a revolutionary one. According to Stites (2010), "By allowing the couple to choose the baby's name, it rejected the custom of many villages for the male head of household to make that choice. By providing the parents with a suggested list of revolutionary names, it reduced the number of people bearing names of saints (among whom had been very few workers, peasants, intellectuals, or radicals), and also eliminated another excuse for holiday observance: the traditional name day of the saint. By holding the naming in a club or factory or village reading room and allowing the local Bolshevik or manager to officiate with the aid of a Pioneer detachment, it excluded the clergy. By skilling the watery immersion in a damp church building and substituting a red banner for the white baby shawl, it promoted both good health and Bolshevik symbolism." Stites, 2010, pp. 170-173. The Bolsheviks also built and sustained rituals through public practices. For example, in October 1923, the party issued a circular that recommended the establishment of communist public festivals and private rituals. "Revolutionary countercelebrations," processions with revolutionary songs and music, lectures and reports, and even games were all promoted and organized around the seasonal calendar and timed to compete with church holidays. In this way, "a whole new counterfestival calendar emerged made up of "parallel" days, opposing Electric Day to Elijah Day, Forest Day to Trinity Sunday, Harvest Day to the Fest of the Intercession, and the Day of Industry to the Feat of Transfiguration … The result was a shift in the realm of invented traditions from public display to the more intimate spheres of community and family." Ibid, pp. 168-169.

[89] Fischer et al. (2013), pp. 116, 121-123.

[90] The authors argue that the main driver behind these effects were socially-shared emotions that were intensified and strengthened by the perceived similarity and unity between attendees, which reinforced positive social beliefs and social integration. In other words, collective gatherings appear to intensify socially-shared emotions and increase perceived similarity and unity among participants. Páez et al. (2015), pp. 712, 726-727.

[91] Indeed, two of the most important myths incorporated into the metanarrative were the myths that surrounded the October Revolution and the Great Patriotic War. Gill, 2013, p. 4.

[92] According to Gill, the Soviet metanarrative was propagated through four different avenues: 1) in the language and rhetoric of political discussion; 2) in the visual arts; 3) in the physical / architectural environment; and 4) through regime-sponsored rituals. "[I]n all four areas, the discourse was through symbolic representation whereby particular terms, images, structures and actions embodied the basic principles and categories of the metanarrative. Through its domination of the public sphere in this way, the metanarrative was clearly central to the continued existence of the Soviet regime." Ibid., pp. 4-5.

According to Gill (2013: 5), over time all aspects of Soviet society became linked to this metanarrative:

> This organic linkage was reflected in the integration into the metanarrative of symbols from all parts of society. It was the case not only that all policy had to be consistent with, or at least rationalised in terms of, the metanarrative, but also that all aspects of life were to be understood in terms of that metanarrative. … This wholistic, all-encompassing nature of the metanarrative, allied to the role it played in regime legitimation, meant that it dominated Soviet society.[93]

In sum, the scholarship on nationalism, national symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals transcends several academic areas. Together, these literatures inform us that regimes create new symbolic repertoires when an existing symbolic regime becomes discredited. National symbols can include anything that simplifies reality and concentrates ideas, feelings, and sentiments about a nation.[94] They encapsulate both objects/ideas and language/words, and they communicate different meanings to different people due to their subjective nature.[95] The most preeminent national symbol is the national flag, and flags contain an element of power relations that other national symbols do not possess. Control of symbols, collective memories and myths empowers nationalists with the ability to create and sustain ideas and understandings about the nation, while rituals give nationalists opportunities to integrate ideas and understandings into society. Control of the media empowers nationalists with the ability to determine which ideas and understandings can become amplified by political messaging.

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[93] Ibid., p. 5.
[94] Edelman, 1985, p. 198; Gill, 2013, p. 1.
[95] This subjective nature also allows individuals to have some agency in defining different meanings that can be associated with symbols. Cohen, 2001, pp. 14, 16, 21.

Before moving forward, a word should be said about the state. The nation-state is among the most powerful, if not the most powerful, political entities in the international system. Weber (1946[1918]: 77) defines a state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[96] According to Tilly (1975), a state exists once a governmental organization (i.e., a political entity) monopolizes coercive power over and routinizes relations with a population.[97] Thus, there is an important difference between nations and states: while nations are groupings of people that, ostensibly, have one or more things in common, states are groupings of people that have achieved a degree of sovereignty. Sovereignty is the recognition by internal and external actors that a state or regime has exclusive authority to intervene coercively in activities within a territory. Thus, as an institution, sovereignty allows states to decide what is and is not considered part of the political realm.[98] However, to be recognized as sovereign, states must possess capabilities that can defend against internal and external (i.e., domestic and international) problems.[99] Thus, in addition to monopolizing coercive power, states provide members of society (i.e., people) with tangible benefits (i.e., security from internal and external threats; prosperity through wealth generation) as well as intangible benefits (i.e., national identity). As a trade-off, people give up some of their own sovereignty (e.g., by adhering to a state's laws and norms) when they live in a state.

Limitations of existing scholarship on nationalism and national symbols

There are two limitations of the existing scholarship on nationalism and national symbols that the dissertation seeks to clarify. The first limitation is that this scholarship is under-theorized,

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[96] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946[1918], p. 77.

[97] Charles Tilly (ed.). *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p. 32.

[98] Janice Thomson, "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Empirical Research," *International Studies Quarterly* 39(2) (June 1995), pp. 213-233, at p. 214.

[99] Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979, p. 96.

especially with regard to the following questions: What are the different roles that symbols play in armed conflicts and how do these differ from the roles that symbols play during peacetime? Why do nations choose particular symbols and discard others that are available to them? Answers to such questions can vary depending on the perspective one takes (i.e., sociological, cultural, psychological, political, etc.). For our purposes, psychological and cultural perspectives offer some advantages for analyzing national symbols. For example, Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger (2015) approach questions about the functions of national symbols during wartime from a psychological perspective and identify four key functions, including connecting people to previous generations, eliciting a strong emotional reaction in individuals, expressing and maintaining cultural narratives, and acting as a perceptual filter for people to understand themselves in relation to society. [100] Geisler (2005) approaches questions about national symbols from a cultural perspective and identifies five key functions, including disseminating the 'image' of the nation on the international stage (in order to secure external recognition), legitimating nationalist leaders and nationalist projects, stabilizing the image of the nation in times of peace (and shoring up loyalty in times of disruption), contributing to the formation and maintenance of collective identity, and fusing the concepts of 'nation' and 'state' together.[101] These are summarized in Table 1.1.

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[100] Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger, 2015, pp. 2-5.
[101] Geisler, 2005, pp. xvii-xviii.

Table 1.1: Psychological and cultural approaches to understanding the roles of symbols

Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger (2015) psychological approach
1. connecting people to past generations
2. eliciting a strong emotional reaction
3. expressing and maintaining cultural narratives
4. acting as a perceptual filter to understand the self

Geisler (2005) cultural approach
1. disseminating the 'image' of the nation on the international stage
2. legitimating nationalist leaders and projects
3. stabilizing the image of the nation and shoring up loyalty
4. contributing to the formation and maintenance of collective identity
5. fusing nation and state

Both approaches (Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger explicitly and Geisler implicitly [102]) highlight how symbols elicit emotional reactions in people and represent 'images' of the nation. Both approaches also locate the personal-group boundary nexus (where connections to past generations and collective identities are (re)made) as being important in terms of linking the past with the present. In view of the two questions raised above, these perspectives offer a starting point for identifying what it is that successful national symbols accomplish and why some national symbols seem to be better than others in terms of representing the nation, particularly in times of war. It could be that certain symbols (such as ethnic symbols) are especially useful for antagonizing particular groups in order to provoke and sustain conflict[103]; it could also be that certain symbols recall important historical battles or tragic episodes (such as the March 1943 Khatyn massacre) that buttress particular narratives or provide justification for treating particular groups as

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[102] For example, in a discussion on a key symbol of the 9/11 attacks, Geisler (2005: xxiii) notes that in the aftermath of the attacks, the Twin Towers became a symbol whose primary function was to "facilitate the work of mourning by displacing the individual pain as well as the widespread anxiety caused by the sudden and unexpected tear in the fabric of collective identity into the imaginary realm of the national narrative." Geisler, 2005, p. xxiii.

[103] For example, Pål Kolstø (2006: 697) notes that "when national symbols are employed as a weapon in a political struggle ... symbolic strife is triggered by groups who unfurl an alternative flag". Pål Kolstø, "National symbols as signs of unity and division," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29(4) (2006), pp. 676-701, at p. 697.

longstanding enemies. [104] Thus, the first contribution the dissertation makes to the study of nationalism and national symbols is to show how different perspectives can work synergistically when placed in dialogue with one another.

The Donbass' media environment is unique insofar as the symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals broadcast in the separatist media represent an official, albeit contested, political memory of the DPR and LPR. Our theory of national symbols must therefore account for this political context when answering why symbolic and discursive constructions take specific forms. After all, when political entities form by seceding from an existing state, they have two interrelated tasks—they must justify separation from the existing state, and they must also create and maintain structures (i.e., legal, institutional, and ideational) for the separated state. Thus, symbols (as well as collective memories, myths and rituals) become potentially useful materials to convey differences between groups (or highlight threats to groups, thereby providing a rationale for separation[105]) and to organize conflicting cultural, political and historical information to inform nationalist ideologies, thereby helping to maintain the existence of new political entities.[106] Such materials can also link new political entities to existing symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals, thereby addressing a dual problem of artificialness that the DPR and LPR entities face: that is, the DPR and LPR never previously existed as 'nations' or 'states'; and many separatist 'leaders' were not significant local politicians or community leaders prior to the outbreak of the conflict.

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[104] Indeed, symbols that recall Russia's experience in World War II have been used to honor war veterans, hail Russia's military power and, in the case of the St. George Ribbon, even market products to consumers. In the conflict in eastern Ukraine, these symbols have also been used to justify belligerence towards Ukraine and its Western allies. Vitaly Shevchenko, "Russia awash with symbols of WW2 victory," *BBC* (May 8, 2015) (accessed February 14, 2020) < https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32650024 >.

[105] Van Evera (1994), pp. 28, 30.

[106] For example, according to Van Evera (1994), elites can use self-glorifying and whitewashing myths to make positive (and potentially false) claims about special virtues, competencies, beneficence toward certain groups, and even deny past crimes and wrong-doings towards other groups. Ibid., p. 27.

A second limitation of the scholarship on nationalism and national symbols is that, empirically, there has been a lack of rigorous case studies examining the deployment of symbols and the roles they play in nation- and identity-formation and the development of nationalism(s). The conflict in Ukraine, and particularly the availability of separatist newspapers from the conflict zone, presents an opportunity to address this limitation by studying across time how different war-related themes, rhetoric, and symbols (all of which are supplied en masse by the DPR and LPR regimes) change over the course of the conflict, and how these changes may be related to annual events (like holidays and war-related anniversaries), conflict-related events (such as the July 17, 2014 downing of MH-17 over separatist-held territory), and hardships that are experienced in the Donbass region. In other words, the cases of the DPR and LPR presents a chance to better understand how symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals contribute to legitimizing state- and nation-building processes and defining how people should think about the DPR and LPR 'nation'.

To be sure, this limitation has recently begun to be addressed in scholarship on memory in eastern Europe. For example, Danilova (2015)[107] and Feder et al. (2017)[108] both focus on Russia and Ukraine as areas where government-sanctioned political representations of history—in particular, the USSR's role in the GPW, represented in both the media and memorial spaces—have been used to shape and contextualize political events in the present. Both of these works point toward the GPW being the preeminent event that links the past to the present (via government-disseminated narratives and government-sponsored commemorations and holidays), but neither analyze how government efforts at propagating media narratives change across time, nor do they

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[107] Danilova, 2015.
[108] Fedor et al., 2017.

focus exclusively or primarily on the Donbass region.[109] McGlynn's (2018)[110] recent study of historical framing of the conflict in the Donbass region through a GPW lens focuses on political representations of history, however she looks at Russian mainstream media and only covers a small period (i.e. February-May 2014) early in the beginning of the conflict. Indeed, neither of these works focus much attention on the way collective memories are used to bolster national identity as a means of maintaining state power. Thus, despite some promising steps forward, there remains room in the literature for rigorous case studies that can shine light on the different roles symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals play in political messaging, nation- and identity-formation and nationalism.

With the preceding discussion in mind, in the next chapter I attempt to elaborate a theory on how symbols and collective memories can be used to influence national identity.

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[109] I note that Fedor et al. (2017: 20) briefly address the Donbass region when they argue that "Alternative nation-building projects are underway in the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" (DNR) and the "Luhansk People's Republic" (LNR) with their own collective mythologies, heroes, and martyrs, and even a new national mission, waged under the banner of "anti-fascism." The myth of the Great Patriotic War serves as glue holding together heterogeneous symbols, such as the Russian Cossackry, the figure of the heroic working-class miner, and the Orthodox Church. In the rhetoric of the self-proclaimed leaders of the DNR and LNR, the survival of the "young republics" is celebrated as "victory" reminiscent of the Great Victory of 1945." Ibid., p. 20.
[110] McGlynn (2018).

Chapter 2 – Theorizing Nationalism as a Political Messaging Strategy

Overview

Separatist movements are led by elites who seek power, sovereignty and legitimacy. Elites exercise power by seeking to control structures of civil administration, institutions, and the symbolic processes that governments deploy to give meaning to their actions. Symbolic processes are important to elites because they are a low-cost option to foster greater identification between a movement and targeted constituencies in order to make it more likely that elites are viewed as legitimate. To this end, separatist movements pursue nation-building, including the promotion of national identity. To create and maintain national identity, elites use nationalism as a messaging strategy. Nationalism is useful for creating narratives about the nation as well as organizing the means of national identity.

Elites promote symbolic processes to manipulate emotions in order to mobilize individuals into a national community. National symbols stimulate emotional responses via the attachments that people form to the meanings of such symbols as well as by reminding people about the past. National and ethnic symbols remind people about the past via associations with collective memories. However, because some national symbols may be more effective than others, elites must choose which ones to promote and which ones to discard.

Symbolic processes can be classified in different ways. Condensation symbols are important to elites because they evoke an image of an object, phrase or phenomena and possess a capacity to elicit an emotional response. Symbolic processes can also be classified by the types of emotional responses they evoke. National symbols may be classified as unifying (positive) or divisive (negative). Elites use positive images of condensation symbols to promote national identities and negative images of condensation symbols to disrupt support for national identities.

To transmit positive and negative images of national symbols and disseminate mythscapes, elites seek to control media. Control of media allows elites to promote national identity for the purposes of entrenching their rule, imbuing legitimacy into rebel entities and fostering social bonds between members of the population under elites' control. However, the existence of conflicts affects social and political environments by imposing material and psychological costs, which affect elites' ability to use different symbols and political messaging strategies. Thus, during periods of fighting, elites can use symbols to rally support behind the separatist cause. When faced with material costs (i.e., hardships and disruptions to services), elites can use symbols to communicate that out-groups are to blame for difficult situations. Elites can also use the existence of conflicts to fragment the public into subgroups so that each group can be addressed in terms of their own interests. However, because conflict environments are dynamic (i.e., they are subject to seasonal variation and are punctuated by events and holidays), different types of symbols may be more or less effective during different periods of the conflict.

Elites in Search of Sovereignty, Power and Legitimacy

Recall from the previous chapter that the nation-state is among the most powerful political entities in the international system and that nation-states are governed by elites. When it comes to governance, separatist movements mimic nation-states in different ways. For example, both are led by elites who seek sovereignty, power[111] and legitimacy[112]; once in possession of power, elite leaders of nation-states and separatist movements seek to promote a new vision that represents the goals and values of the new regime[113] and bolster their authority by setting up governments that

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[111] Power can include control of territory and institutions (i.e., laws, armed forces, trade and inter-state commerce, media, etc.), authority to pursue political preferences and goals (e.g., territorial autonomy, the creation of a separate state, or integration with an already-existing state, etc.) and the ability to promote symbolic repertoires.
[112] I note that the social identity tradition considers power and legitimacy to be analytically separate dimensions that determine collective action in intergroup contexts. Reicher and Drury (2005), p. 49.
[113] Gill, 2013, p. 27.

mimic the practices of other political authorities (even those that they depose[114]); and in both nation-states and separatist movements, elites exercise power by controlling structures of civil administration, formal and informal institutions, and symbolic processes (i.e., symbolic displays, discourses and other practices) that give meaning to their actions, help to construct sovereignty and legitimize elite authority.[115] Separatist movements do these things because they seek to have a level of legitimacy (both internal and external) that is comparable to that which sovereign governments of nation-states possess. Internal legitimacy exists when a political entity is believed by its constituencies to be the proper or most appropriate representation of society and provides avenues for members of society to organize a separate and unique political existence.[116] External legitimacy exists when a political entity is deemed by other (legitimate) states to credibly and authentically possess the right to exist and there is confidence that that entity can survive for the foreseeable future.[117] In short, to be seen as legitimate, a political entity (including both separatist movements and nation-states) must act like a state, including by developing institutions (by formulating guiding principles and codes of contact for the movement) and maintaining

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[114] Zachariah Mampilly, "Performing the Nation-State: Rebel Governance and Symbolic Processes," in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir and Zachariah Mampilly (eds.), *Rebel Governance in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 74-97, at p. 82.

[115] Ibid., pp. 75-78.

[116] John Herz, "The Territorial State Revisited: Reflections on the Future of the Nation-State," in James Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy. Revised Edition*. New York: The Free Press, 1969, p. 82.

[117] Bartmann (2004), p. 16. I note that 'state viability' as a criteria for statehood has been challenged by developments in the international system since 1945. For example, the existence of micro-states (e.g., Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, and the Federated States of Micronesia) and some trans-national political threats (i.e., climate change, which threatens the territorial existence of Maldives) challenge the notion that material viability is a condition for statehood. In any case, the concept of viability remains an essential goal for political entities that seek external recognition and allies. I note also that the choice of external allies can complicate a political entity's quest to be seen as externally legitimate. For example, Bartmann (2004) suggests that when there is a clear asymmetry between the capabilities of domestic and external forces, the cause of independence (which ostensibly motivates a political entity to seek legitimacy) may be seen as externally manipulated and therefore illegitimate. Ibid., p. 17.

institutional links with society.[118] Governments that are viewed as legitimate can effectively cultivate power to such an extent that it becomes taken for granted.[119]

In short, the most important political function of symbolic processes and political messaging is to contribute to the legitimization of a political entity's claim of sovereignty. Elite leaders of separatist movements thus deploy nationalism as a messaging strategy and promote a symbolic repertoire, i.e., a set of symbolic processes that includes national myths, memories and symbols, in order to influence the behavior of different social and political actors.[120] Deploying nationalism and a symbolic repertoire are ways to 'performatively' legitimize a political entity's claim of sovereignty by giving meaning to the entity's actions[121] and providing society with a 'template' for future action.[122] A repertoire functions as a form of communication that can be transmitted through media as part of news reports, remembrances of fallen fighters, stories on community activities (such as rallies, parades, and museum openings) and in other ways. It enables elites to foster greater identification between a movement and targeted constituencies at low cost. Greater identification can increase awareness of the movement, including key figures and political goals, as well as awareness of its military capabilities, which ostensibly reduces the need for elites to rely on coercive power to ensure a population remains compliant. Greater identification can also contribute to the enactment of normative behaviors that help to construct and reinforce sovereignty.[123]

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[118] Mehran Kamrava, *Understanding Comparative Politics: A Framework for Analysis*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 46.

[119] Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 12.

[120] Jonathan Githens-Mazer, "Locating agency in collective political behaviour: Nationalism, social movements and individual mobilisation," *Politics* 28(1) (2008), pp. 41-49, at p. 43.

[121] Mampilly, 2015, pp. 83-84.

[122] Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 46.

[123] Mampilly, 2015, pp. 76-81.

Elites also deploy symbolic repertoires to pursue nation-building, including the promotion of national identity and mythscapes, to mobilize individuals into a national community. Politically, national identity underpins a nation-state's (or separatist movement's) operations, including the selection of political personnel, the regulation of political behavior, and even the elections of governments. National identity also legitimizes common legal rights and the duties of legal institutions, both of which ostensibly take into account the values and customs of society.[124] In the next section, I describe how symbolic repertoires and nationalism function to create and maintain national identity.

Symbols as Tools for Nation-Building

Humans belong to many social groups. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), a person's meaningful group memberships (particularly membership in a national community) constitute key aspects of their social identity.[125] When individuals categorize themselves as a members of a group, they become motivated to seek a positive social identity by favoring the in-group (i.e., social identification) and maintaining positive distinctiveness by differentiating the in-group from out-groups along salient dimensions (i.e., social comparison).[126] This is because

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[124] Smith, 1991, p. 40.

[125] Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in Tom Postmes and Nyla Branscombe (eds.), *Rediscovering Social Identity: Key Readings*. New York: Routledge, 2010[1979], pp. 173-190, at pp. 178-181. Tajfel and Turner define social identity as "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which [he/she/they] perceive [themselves] as belonging." Ibid, p. 180. Cognitive psychologists have long argued that people seek to impose organization on their social environments to manage its complexities, including by classifying themselves into groups. Group memberships (particularly national, ethnic and religious community memberships) fulfill a number of important psychological functions, including giving people a sense of belonging to the world. As part of this process, people also acquire personally- and socially-constructed cognitive categories that bracket together and simplify general knowledge about the world (a process that is similar to stereotyping). These categories are influenced by culture and the dominant values and are shared throughout society and across generations via the socialization process. Martha Cottam and Richard Cottam, *Nationalism & Politics: The Political Behavior of Nation States*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001, p. 88. According to Cottam and Cottam (2001), "once groups are formed, in-group/out-group distinctions are made and there is a strong drive for differentiation between groups. Differences between groups are emphasized and perpetually augmented. Frequently, this results in ethnocentrism. These patterns can be expected among nationalistic people since, by definition, the nation as a group receives primary and terminal loyalty. Nationalistic people will perceive themselves in a positive light and as quite distinct from other nations or political groups." Ibid, p. 93.

[126] Tajfel and Turner, 2010, pp. 180-181.

membership in social in-groups fulfills a number of important psychological functions, including providing meaning, belonging and purpose for individuals and contributing to positive self-esteem.[127]

SIT makes different predictions with respect to the various strategies that in-groups can invoke to achieve positive distinctiveness. For example, one way an in-group can achieve positive distinctiveness occurs in situations where there is high intergroup similarity. In such situations, SIT predicts that in- and out-groups will have increased motivation to differentiate themselves from each other (because the perception of intergroup similarity induces an identity threat that motivates group members to increase intergroup differentiation via out-group degradation (i.e., by increasing prejudice and discrimination towards the out-group)).[128] In the remainder of the dissertation, I refer to this as the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' explanation. Another way that SIT predicts an in-group can achieve positive distinctiveness is through social competition, i.e., an in-group seeks a positive social identity by favoring their group on value dimensions that are considered important and shared by all relevant social groups, including out-groups.[129] In this way, elites may favor deploying symbols that promote the in-group's "greatness"; in the case of Russia, this could include highlighting Russia's territorial size and cultural contributions, the

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[127] Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 93. Indeed, in some instances group members may even agree with negative stereotypes about their group if such stereotypes maintain group distinctiveness. Pawel Mlicki and Naomi Ellemers, "Being Different or Being Better? National Stereotypes and Identifications of Polish and Dutch Students," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 26 (1996), pp. 97-114.

[128] Nyla Branscombe, Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears and Bertjan Doosje, "The Context and Content of Social Identity Threat," in Nyla Branscombe and Russell Spears (eds.), *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*. Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1999, pp. 35-58; Jolanda Jetten and Russell Spears, "The divisive potential of differences and similarities: The role of intergroup distinctiveness in intergroup differentiation," *European Review of Social Psychology* 14(1) (2003), pp. 203-241; Fabrice Gabarrot, Juan Falomir-Pichastor and Gabriel Mugny, "Being similar versus being equal: Intergroup similarity moderates the influence of in-group norms on discrimination and prejudice," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 48 (2009), pp. 253-273; Rui Costa-Lopes, Jorge Vala and Charles Judd, "Similarity and Dissimilarity in Intergroup Relations: Different Dimensions, Different Processes," *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale / International Review of Social Psychology* 25(1) (2012), pp. 31-65.

[129] Tajfel and Turner, 2010, p. 181.

accomplishments of key Russian civilizational figures (such as Alexsei Stakhanov, Fyodor Sergeyev or the numerous recipients of the USSR's Hero of the USSR award), and important military achievements (such as the Russian Empire's victories in the Battle of Poltava and the Battle of Borodino and the USSR's victories in the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk during the GPW). Particularly in a political conflict, we expect to see social competition since conflicts clarify group boundaries (by making them rigid and destabilizing status relations between groups (which can affect inter-group status relations both positively or negatively).[130] In the remainder of the dissertation, I refer to this as the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation. I note that these positive distinctiveness strategies are not mutually exclusive (i.e., elites could ostensibly deploy national symbols with both strategies in mind).

It follows from this discussion of SIT that an important social function of symbolic processes and political messaging is to contribute to the mobilization of individuals into a national community. A national community ostensibly has a unique social identity which can provide community members with positive self-esteem. To mobilize a national community, elites seek to create a common framework for citizens to conceptualize, discuss and (re)produce the nation. It is to this end that elites pursue nation-building and (re)define national identity. Nation-building provides repertoires of shared values, traditions and symbols that can remind people of a common heritage and strengthen people's sense of common identity.[131] National identity provides people

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[130] For example, Branscombe and Wann (1994) found that people that highly identify with the nation and who feel a reduction of collective self-esteem due to a threat to their national identity can derogate a relevant out-group to feel better. The authors found that higher amounts of derogation of the threatening out-group elevated collective self-esteem, while derogation of non-threatening out-groups did not have such a positive esteem effect (in fact, it was found to reduce collective self-esteem). Nyla Branscombe and Daniel Wann, "Collective Self-esteem Consequences of Outgroup Derogation when a Valued Social Identity is on Trial," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 24(6) (1994), pp. 641-657, at pp. 653-655. See also Jeff Spinner-Halev and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "National Identity and Self-Esteem," *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3) (Sept., 2003), pp. 515-532, at pp. 521-522.
[131] Smith, 1991, pp. 16-17.

with the means to define and locate themselves within the world.[132] It can be made to accommodate existing materials (such as myths and rituals)[133], and it can encompass multiple perceptions of a nation, each of which may be anchored in different representations of history, emblems, cultural icons, and physical environments.[134] In short, national identity provides elites with a potent tool to mobilize groups.

However, mobilizing a group like a national community requires the manipulation of emotions, including the promotion of solidarity and social cohesion[135] or the creation of a threat to make people more likely to view an out-group with prejudice and hostility.[136] It is to these ends that elites use nationalism as a messaging strategy. Nationalism is useful for identifying and creating narratives about the nation (which can be used in the construction of mythscapes) as well as organizing the means of national identity (i.e., symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals). [137] Organization of the means of national identity is important because achieving legitimacy requires a political authority to deploy symbolic processes in a coherent way, one that simultaneously provides meaning to the political authority's actions while also resonating with the authority's targeted constituency. National symbols, myths and collective memories are therefore

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[132] I elaborate on this process in the next section.

[133] Sherlock, 2007, p. 3.

[134] However, I note that national identities must still be congruent with existing historical myths, symbols and collective memories. This is because people actively participate in defining what can be considered authentic national values. For example, in the former Soviet Union, the Soviet populace did not passively receive the Soviet metanarrative but actively participated in its (re)formation through people's decisions about what to accept and reject from the regime's narrative. Gill, 2013, pp. 6-8, 26-27. See also Smith, 1991, p. 40.

[135] Mampilly, 2015, p. 78. To this end, symbols that represent ethnic and political communities are useful for helping to create social bonds among members of groups because they signify meanings that summarize group members' understanding of the world, including where their ethnic group fits into it. John Armstrong, "Myth and History in the Evolution of Ukrainian Consciousness," in Peter Potichnyj, Marc Raeff, Jaroslaw Pelenski, and Gleb Zekulin (eds.), *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992, p. 127

[136] Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ethica: Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 12.

[137] Nationalism can also provide an ideological template that elites can rely on to mobilize political action. Githens-Mazer (2008), pp. 42-43.

useful because they operate as powerful markers of cultural uniqueness.[138] Since national and ethnic symbols strengthen "us/them" distinctions between members of in- and out-groups, accentuate and illuminate group boundaries and raise awareness of group membership[139], elites deploy them to try to get significant numbers of people to see themselves as belonging to a distinct community.[140]

National symbols stimulate emotional responses via the attachments that people form to the meanings of such symbols. According to Geisler (2005: xxviii), attachment is produced by constantly and repeatedly displaying or referencing national symbols

> in the media, in speeches by politicians and local dignitaries, in textbooks and (in the case of the flag) on billboards, car bumpers, and as an adornment on articles of clothing. It is reinforced through public ceremonies and, in some countries, (such as the United States) rehearsed through daily rituals.[141]

This is why national symbols are seen throughout everyday life on widely-seen objects[142] and particularly after significant national events.[143]

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[138] Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 191.

[139] Tobias Theiler, *Political Symbolism and European Integration*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, p. 25; Gabriella Elgenius, *Symbols of Nations and Nationalism: Celebrating Nationhood*. Palgrave Macmillan UK: London, 2011, p. 3; Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger, 2015, p. 5.

[140] Kertzer, 1996, p. 153. The same holds true for the use of history: according to Kertzer, "elites are not free to come up with any new formulation they like but, rather, must abide by a set of cultural norms that limits the plasticity of history." Ibid, p. 158.

[141] Geisler, 2005, p. xxviii. Indeed, in a broader sense all invented traditions must be repetitive and be capable of conveying ideas in a way that can be comprehended by an audience. Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 3.

[142] Torbakov (2011), p. 213; Theiler, 2005, pp. 32-33. National symbols can also be part of the background environment, or what Billig (1992: 39-40) refers to as "unsaluted and unwaved" symbols. Billig, 1992, pp. 39-40.

[143] Elgenius, 2011, p. 90. Indeed, according to McClintock (1996: 274), the only way representations of nationalism become tangible is via "the visible, ritual organization of fetish objects - flags, uniforms, airplane logos, maps, anthems, national flowers, national cuisines and architectures as well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle - in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular culture and so on." Anne McClintock, ""No Longer in a Future Heaven": Nationalism, Gender and Race," in Geoff Eley and Ronald Suny (eds.), *Becoming National*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 260-284, at p. 274, cited in Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 187-188.

National (and ethnic) symbols stimulate emotions by reminding people about the past. Like all social communities, national communities experience events and have histories, and reminders of the past can elicit emotional responses among community members when their personal identity is categorized in terms of their shared group membership.[144] National and ethnic symbols, collective memories and myths can all signpost the importance of past events and remind individuals about their connections to political and historical processes.[145] Indeed, it is by situating the nation within broader historical processes that collective memories remind people about the past. For example, according to Renan (1996[1882]: 52):

> The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. … A heroic past, great men, glory … this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more—*these are the essential conditions for being a people*.[146]

In this way, national symbols and collective memories foster continuity between the present and the past[147] by connecting people to national communities. Since collective memories are also instrumental in defining, maintaining and mobilizing social identities[148], elites can promote them to create and reinforce social bonds among community members. For example, everyone that experiences and remembers a national event will share a memory that is simultaneously unique

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[144] Nyla Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje, "International Perspectives on the Experience of Collective Guilt," in Nyla Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje (eds.) *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*. New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 3-15, at p. 3.

[145] Indeed, as Maurice Halbwachs (1980[1950]: 48-49) reminds us, "The succession of our remembrances, of even our most personal ones, is always explained by changes occurring in our relationships to various collective milieus—in short, by the transformations these milieus undergo separately and as a whole." Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. New York City: Harper Colophon Books, 1980[1950], pp. 48-49.

[146] Renan, 1996, p. 52. Emphasis added.

[147] I note that in new nations, elites deploy new values and ideologies to achieve these same ends. Anthony Smith, "The New Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?" *Millennium* 20(3) (March 1991), pp. 353-368, at p. 356.

[148] Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 194.

but, to some degree, is also common because the experience was socially experienced.[149] Thus, strategic-minded elites can use collective memories to prompt groups to remember (and reconstruct) particular interpretations of history[150] that bind individuals to the group. This is one of the reasons elites seek to control media resources[151]—since dominant groups often have control over official memory[152], they can wield great influence over what kinds of inputs contribute to nationalist narratives and, more broadly, national identity.[153] This includes the ability to recast historical myths to create modern inter-group divisions for the purpose of fighting political conflicts.

To recap thus far, the most important political function of symbolic processes and political messaging is to contribute to the legitimization of a political entity's claim of sovereignty. To legitimize a claim to sovereignty, elites strategically deploy national symbols and use nationalism to give meaning to the political entity's actions, provide society with a 'template' for future action, foster greater identification between a movement and targeted constituencies and increase awareness of military capabilities. The most important social function of symbolic processes is to contribute to the mobilization of groups. To mobilize groups, elites strategically deploy national symbols and use nationalism and mythscapes to manipulate emotions. However, not all symbols, collective memories, myths or rituals may be useful toward these ends.[154] Thus, elites must choose

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[149] For example, even Americans that were not directly affected by the 9/11 terrorist attacks felt victimized by the attacks in New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania.

[150] Phillips DeZalia and Moeschberger, 2015, p. 3.

[151] Indeed, according to Pennebaker and Banasik (1997), collective events are likely to lead to collective memories if those events bring about social change, are emotionally salient, are associated with rituals and commemorations, and are covered by the media. Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997, p. 17.

[152] Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 198.

[153] This is not to say that collective memories are without limitations; indeed, they are subject to the same social constraints that affect personal memories and they can also be influenced by emotions. See, for example, Halbwachs, 1980, p. 48; see also Licata and Mercy, 2015, p. 196.

[154] For example, negative collective memories, such as memories of past misdeeds that were committed by a group, can be difficult to integrate into narratives about a group's history. This is not to say that traumatic events cannot be useful to a group, but that victim and perpetrator statuses can be used to positively *and* negatively affect social dynamics within and between groups. Licata and Mercy, 2015, pp. 196-198.

which ones to promote and which ones to discard. In the next section, I describe how elites can differentiate symbols into types for the purposes of group mobilization. This is necessary to understand why elites may gravitate toward particular symbols or types at different stages in a political conflict.

Classifying Symbol Types: Condensation/Referential and Positive/Negative

Symbolic processes can be classified in different ways. For example, Sapir (1937: 493, cited in Edelman 1985: 6-7 and O'Neill 1999: 3) distinguishes between referential and condensation symbols.[155] Referential symbols are those symbols which have denotative meanings that link the symbol to its referent (e.g., the word dog stands for canine, a type of mammal; the phrase Morse Code stands for the character encoding scheme that encodes text characters as sequences of two different signal durations (known as dots and dashes); the words town hall refers to type a meeting between politicians and their constituents). Condensation symbols are symbols that evoke an image of an object, phrase, phenomena or situation *and* possess a capacity to elicit an emotional response about it (e.g., a national(ist) flag, anthem, or even a motto (such as the political slogan "Fifty-four forty or fight!," which referred to the northern boundary of Oregon Country (namely, its latitude line of 54 degrees, 40 minutes) and became popular with supporters of James Polk's candidacy for President of the United States in 1844)).[156] While both referential and condensation symbols are disseminated and reinforced through media, condensation symbols are particularly important to elites that want to stir nationalist emotions.

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[155] Edelman, 1985, pp. 6-7; Barry O'Neil, *Honor, Symbols, and War*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999, p. 3.

[156] I note that political parades and rallies (both of which could be considered referential symbols) can symbolize political domination by communicating the latent coercive power of a political authority, which would make them function like condensation symbols.

Symbolic processes can also be classified by the types of emotional responses they evoke. For example, national symbols that are unifying (i.e., they remind people of their membership in a nation or make them aware of what constitutes grounds for group membership[157]) may be classified as positive symbols (because such symbols generate a positive emotional response such as feelings of pride). National symbols that are divisive (i.e., they remind people that they do not belong to a nation[158]) may be classified as negative symbols (because such symbols generate a negative emotional response such as feelings of guilt and shame).

Why might elites choose a particular symbol or symbol type over others that may be available to them? Our discussion of SIT suggests a few possible logics. One possible answer— one that is particularly relevant for political entities that have seceded from a state—is that elites may prefer symbols that unambiguously differentiate the (new) in-group from the group that they formerly belonged to. For example, elites who are concerned about high intergroup similarity (which can be a threat inasmuch as it undercuts a key rationale for independence (i.e., the protection of a *distinct* national group)) may prefer symbols that unambiguously identify the in-group as being distinct from the out-group. Another possible answer is that elites prefer symbols that can provide an in-group with a positive social identity through comparisons on value dimensions that are shared with an out-group. For example, if an in-group and out-group share civilizational attributes (such as history, language, or religion), elites may prefer symbols that allow the in-group to present themselves as respecting the civilization's greatness, including protecting its language, being more devout to its major religion, or even backing the 'right' side in a major war (which, implicitly or explicitly, may also associate the out-group with the 'wrong'

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[157] Debra Merskin, "Flagging patriotism: The myth of old glory," *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 1(4) (2007), pp. 11-16, at p. 11.

[158] Julia Becker, Anne Enders-Comberg, Ulrich Wagner, Oliver Christ, and David Butz, "Beware of National Symbols: How Flags Can Threaten Intergroup Relations," *Social Psychology* 43(1) (2012), pp. 3-6, at p. 6.

side in that war). Another possible answer could be that elites prefer symbols that can be manipulated to shape contemporary social conditions (such as repurposing symbolism from historically important periods (i.e., a revolution; a major war (including heroic figures and wartime leaders)). Still another possibility could be that elites are self-interested actors that prefer symbols that can project their political projects to their constituencies for the purpose of propagating a political authority and legitimization.[159]

From this discussion, we can elucidate some general assumptions about the kinds of national symbols that elites prefer. Generally speaking, we can assume that elites desire national symbols that possess a capacity to spur emotional responses (thus we can assume that elites prefer condensation symbols over referential symbols). We can assume that elites prefer unambiguous condensation symbols (which allow elites to portray in-groups in a positive light and out-groups in a negative light). We can assume that elites prefer to deploy positive images of condensation symbols to promote national identities. [160] Forms of national identity promotion include

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[159] In this case, we would focus on condensation symbols because successfully accomplishing the propagation of political authority requires a symbol to possess a capacity to elicit an emotional response among members of a national community. I note that successfully accomplishing legitimizing functions hinges on two interrelated concepts that relate to the relationship between elites (i.e., governments) and the national community (i.e., publics): compliance and legitimacy. While achieving normative compliance among a governed population may imply that a political authority is legitimate, legitimacy goes beyond compliance to imply the existence of increased identification with and support for a political authority. Thus, according to Mampilly, achieving legitimacy "requires a political authority to deploy symbolic processes that provide a collective understanding of the meaning of its actions" to a governed population in a way that resonates with them. However, for a symbol to contribute to legitimizing elites, it must bridge the gulf between coercive and normative compliance in such a way that the symbol appears willingly (as opposed to unwillingly) accepted by a population. Mampilly, 2015, pp. 79-81. I note that there are different types of compliance that can be difficult to distinguish from one another. For example, symbolic displays that increase coercive compliance do so by impacting the psyche of a governed population (that is, a given symbol demonstrates that there is no alternative to the governing authority, thus the only realistic option for the population is to comply); on the other hand, symbolic displays that increase normative compliance do so through the willing consent of the population. See James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, pp.66-67, cited in Mampilly, 2015, p. 80.

[160] Examples of the promotion of new national symbols and identities are plentiful since the dawn of states, but for the purposes of the dissertation the most relevant is the case of the DPR, whose flag colors were adapted from the flag of the International Movement for Donbas (which was created in October 1991). This blue-red-black tri-color flag took on new meaning based on the events of spring 2014, including the declaration of independence of the DPR that April. Since that event, the flag and its associated symbolism have come to positively represent a new political entity (the DPR nationalist project). Maxim Edwards, "Symbolism of the Donetsk People's Republic," *Russia and*

emphasizing in-group superiority, glorifying in-group achievements, white-washing in-group actions, and gendering in-groups as masculine. Finally, we can assume that elites prefer to deploy negative images of condensation symbols to disrupt support for national identities. Negative images of national symbols ostensibly help to persuade people to reject a national identity (because individuals seek to avoid symbolic reminders that challenge their self-esteem). [161] Indeed, as

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Beyond (June 9, 2014) (accessed February 14, 2020) < https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/maxim-edwards/symbolism-of-donetsk-people%E2%80%99s-republic-flag-novorossiya >. Another example of the promotion of new national symbols and identities occurred with the dissolution of the USSR. Following the USSR's collapse, the new authorities in Russia faced the problem of crafting a new symbolic repertoire that could justify the regime's existence and help it gain legitimacy by explaining why the USSR collapsed as well as why the Russian Federation deserved to succeed it. Rather than adopt the USSR's flag, the Russian Federation adopted the national flag and symbols that was previously used by the Russian Empire (despite the fact that the Russian Federation legally designated itself the successor of the USSR rather than the Russian Empire). The Russian Federation also established a new narrative to explain the institutional weaknesses that contributed to the USSR's collapse, offer a new vision for Russia's future, and justify the fact that the new elite were insiders from the previous regime. Gill, 2013.

[161] There are numerous examples of national identity symbols being rejected. One can be seen in the Third Reich's experience with the swastika flag: originally adopted in 1935, the swastika flag and its associated symbolism took on new meaning based upon the actions of Nazi Germany in World War II and the carnage of the Holocaust. Whereas in the ancient world the swastika held various meanings, since World War II it has been primarily associated with Nazi Germany and the carnage unleashed by the Hitler regime and its allies. Following the war, Nazi symbolism was rejected by the German people and the public display of Nazi symbols was outlawed in Germany as well as in other countries. Another example of a national identity rejection can be seen in the fall of communism beginning in 1989. As communist regimes (and their symbols) became discredited in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, new political parties took power from the communists for the first time since the end of World War II. In Italy, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) rebranded and transformed into the new Democratic Party of the Left, complete with new rituals and political symbols. In these cases, the fall of communism changed the meanings of communist symbolism to mean something new and negative— notably, a meaning that did not exist prior to the events of 1989. Still another example of national identity rejection can be seen in the Texas Revolution in the nineteenth century. Between 1821-36, while Texas was still officially a Mexican territory, key Texians sought autonomy from Mexico, with some (among them, Sam Houston) going as far as lobbying the United States to 'acquire' (annex) Texas. During the Texas Revolution (1835-36), Texians revolted against Mexico's government and won independence. During the rebellion and in the years that followed, Texians adopted a number of different flags, including a version of the Mexican flag with '1824' written on it (which signified the 1824 Constitution of Mexico that Texians fought to restore during the rebellion's early days), followed by a blue flag with a large golden star in the center (1836-39) and finally the Lone Star flag (1839-45), which derived from the flag used by American rebels during the 1810 Baton Rouge rebellion against Spanish West Florida. The Lone Star flag flew until the United States annexed Texas in 1845. Each successive Texas flag design became less similar to Mexico's flag and more similar to the United States flag, which suggests that Mexico's flag lost value once the political environment changed and an alternative flag (i.e., the United States' flag) became available. All three of these examples (i.e., the Nazi flag, Italian Communist Party flag and Texas flag) could be stated as a rudimentary typology of rejection of national identity and symbols, whereby type 1 (Nazi Germany) saw national identity rejected due to guilt (i.e., Nazi crimes), type 2 (fall of communist regimes) saw national identity rejected due to shame (i.e., the fall of communism), and type 3 (Texas) saw national identity rejected due to availability of an alternative identity (i.e., secession).

Murray (1985: 203) reminds us, the construction of "problematic enemies" is a tool used by elites to catalyze conflict escalation.[162]

To create a negative (or enemy) image of a national symbol, elites rely on 'othering'[163] to emphasize in- / out-group differences. Elites can denigrate out-groups though the use of gendered language and by emphasizing the supposed threat(s) that out-groups pose. Denigrating out-groups ostensibly helps to generate negative emotions (i.e., anger, guilt, shame and fear), which can pose a threat to national identity by inducing feelings of distress.[164] The psychological threat posed by negative emotions reinforces the boundaries between in-groups and out-groups and can lead people to develop explanations and justifications for behavior (whereby the in-group's guilt or responsibility for a given action is denied, diffused (i.e., blamed on external factors out of the in-group's control), or accepted (i.e., the in-group takes responsibility for its actions and apologizes)).

To recap thus far, emotions connect people to national identity, and it is through those connections that national symbols (particularly condensation symbols) can persuade people to support or reject a national identity. To persuade people to accept and retain a national identity, a

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[162] Edelman, 1985, p. 203. I note that some types of threats (such as war and natural disasters) can also be used to promote national identity and increase national identification. See, for example, Gary Johnson, "The evolutionary roots of patriotism," in Daniel Bar-Tal and Ervin Staub (eds.), *Patriotism in the lives of individuals and nations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1997, pp. 45-90; and Janusz Reykowski, "Patriotism and the collective system of meanings," in Ibid., pp. 108-128.

[163] Othering is the classification of individuals, groups, and symbolic repertoires into out-group status and the articulation of the negative aspects of being a member of the out-group.

[164] For example, there is empirical evidence that suggests the act of confronting (unavoidable) information about unjust or immoral acts that were committed by members of a social in-group is highly unpleasant and can pose a threat to a person's social and national identity. See Sonia Roccas, Yechiel Klar, and Ido Liviatan, "Exonerating Cognitions, Group Identification, and Personal Values as Predictors of Collective Guilt among Jewish-Israelis," in Nyla Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje (eds.), *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*. New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 130-147, at p. 145. Other empirical evidence suggests that foreign threats lead to higher levels of national identification than domestic threats. See Paul Davies, Claude Steele and Hazel Markus, "A Nation Challenged: The Impact of Foreign Threat on America's Tolerance for Diversity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95(2) (2008), pp. 308-318, at p. 316. Even mere exposure to discourse which focuses on aggressive national events can lead people to unconsciously pair the concept of 'nation' with the concept of 'aggression' and behave aggressively when are exposed to a symbol of their nation. See, for example, Melissa Ferguson and Ran Hassin, "On the Automatic Association Between America and Aggression for News Watchers," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33(12) (December 2007), pp. 1632-1647, at. 1642.

positive image must be cultivated. To persuade people to reject a national identity, a negative image must be cultivated. However, generating such effects among members of the population requires elite leaders of nation-states and separatist movements to secure pathways to get their messaging out. In the next section, I explain how media can be used to support and disrupt national identities.

The Media and Symbols

Elites seek to control media to transmit the means of national identity, including positive and negative images of national symbols and collective memories. Media—particularly news accounts—is used to communicate information about political events, including the benign or malevolent character of the political environment as well as the importance of particular actors (Edelman, 1985). Disseminating the means of national identity alongside news accounts ostensibly functions to blur the lines between reality and mythology. To this end, elites create and disseminate mythscapes. Mythscapes can be used to prop up support for a new state or regime or disrupt support for an existing state or regime. Control of media thus allows elites to promote national identity for the purposes of entrenching their rule, imbuing legitimacy into rebel entities and fostering social bonds between members of the population that are under elites' control.

There are different types of media available to elites. Broadly speaking, media outlets can be classified into private and government-owned (i.e., state-sponsored).[165] Private media is commonly found in consolidated democracies, where freedom of expression is considered essential to the protection of the rights of individuals from government encroachment.[166] In contrast, state-sponsored media is commonly found in consolidated autocracies, where nationalist

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[165] Simeon Djankov, Caralee McLiesh, Tatiana Nenova, and Adrei Shleifer, "Who Owns the Media?" *Journal of Law and Economics* XLVI (October 2003), pp. 341-381.
[166] John Keane, *The Media and Democracy.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.

propaganda is often used to mobilize populations[167], to signal and demonstrate elites' strength[168], or to distract the public from controversial issues.[169] Mediums for both private and state-sponsored media include print (e.g., political posters, books, newspapers, journals and films), radio, and television. All media entails material costs (i.e., at minimum, budgetary resources are required for organizing the gathering of information as well as distribution), however different types of media entail different kinds of operational costs.

State-sponsored media is important for understanding how symbols are used to disrupt national identities. In democratizing countries, nationalist elites rely on mass media to disseminate nationalist ideas as a way of building mass support.[170] For example, in the 1790s in the early United States, newspapers were linked to political factions.[171] In autocratic countries, state-sponsored media is particularly important. For example, in the Soviet Union in the months following the October Revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks used state-sponsored media to introduce new symbols, rituals, and visual imagery in an effort to control public discourse and cultivate pro-Bolshevik attitudes and beliefs. The Bolsheviks relied heavily on visual propaganda (i.e., political posters, monuments, books, newspapers, journals and films) to disseminate their ideas as widely as possible. Visual propaganda appealed to Bolshevik elites because of the strong visual traditions

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[167] Bonnell, 1997, p. 6.

[168] Haifeng Huang, "Propaganda as Signaling," *Comparative Politics* 47(4) (July 2015), pp.419-444, at p. 420.

[169] Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret Roberts, "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument," *American Political Science Review* 111(3) (August 2017), pp. 484-501, at p. 485.

[170] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York City: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.

[171] Indeed, the "official" paper of the Federalists was *The Gazette of the United States*, while the Democratic-Republicans had multiple allied newspapers, including *The New-York Journal* and the *Patriotic Register* and others. Mary Beth Norton, Jane Kamensky, Carol Sheriff, David Blight, Howard Chudacoff, Fredrik Logevall, Beth Bailey, and Debra Michals, *A People & A Nation: A History of The United States. Volume 1: To 1877, Brief Tenth Edition*. Cengage Learning: Stamford, 2015, p. 181.

among the Russian people and also as a way to get around the low level of literacy in the country at that time.[172]

We observe national symbols in the separatist-controlled media in eastern Ukraine. This media covers a period of military hostilities between the unrecognized DPR and LPR states and the government of Ukraine. This media includes four Donetsk-based newspapers—Боевое знамя Донбасса (Boevoe Znamia Donbassa), Боевой листок Новороссии (Boevoi Listok Novorossii), Донецк вечерний (Donetsk Vechernii), and Новороссия (Novorossiya)—and three newspapers published in the Lugansk region (Единство (Edinstvo), published in Lugansk), Заря Донбасса (Zaria Donbassa) and Восточный Донбасс (Vostochnyi Donbass), both which are published in Sverdlovsk).

We also observe variation in the symbols displayed in the separatist media. However, there are not enough rebel media outlets in this conflict to make large-scale / systematic cross-sectional comparisons. In order to analyze the display of symbols, we have to look at issues of newspapers across time. This allows us to consider how messaging and displays of symbols change over the course of the conflict, including whether changes occur in relation to hardship, conflict-related achievements and setbacks, or the occurrence of holidays or conflict-related anniversaries.

Nation-building in a Conflict Environment

The existence of conflicts affects social and political environments by inducing material and psychological costs to national communities. Material costs include disruptions in services (e.g., heating fuel during wintertime), damaged infrastructure or other hardships. Particularly during periods of heavy fighting, agricultural and livestock industries located close to conflict zones can be negatively impacted (because shelling takes fields offline, which lowers crop

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[172] Bonnell, 1997, p. 3.

production; shelling can also disrupt power supplies to industries (which reduces output)). Psychological costs include emotional and behavioral changes among people and the reification of supposed differences between in-groups and out-groups, which can manifest in hatred or fear of out-groups among members of national communities. The material and psychological costs of conflicts ostensibly affect elites' ability to use different symbols.

The material and psychological costs of conflicts can serve to legitimize elites by creating messaging opportunities to demonstrate that the new authorities and governance system are here to stay.[173] For example, recall that conflicts can politicize collective identities (Reicher and Drury, 2005). Also recall that during wars, symbols can function as perceptual filters and cognitive schemas that help individuals make sense of their lived experiences (DeZalia and Moeschberger, 2015). In other words, the mere existence of a conflict can incentivize elites to use symbols to demarcate group boundaries[174] and seek to re-write history[175], ostensibly, to aid the creation of a national community.[176] This suggests that during periods of fighting, elites will seek to increase displays of the in-group national flag (i.e., the new national identity) in order to rally support behind the separatist cause. Also recall that during periods of hardship or disruptions to services, elites can find opportunities to demonstrate that the new authorities and governance system are here to stay, such as by stirring up ethnic prejudice and hostility or by attributing blame for economic woes to the out-group.[177] This suggests that during periods of hardship, elites will seek to increase displays of negative images of the discarded national flag (i.e., the rejected national

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[173] Scott, 1990, pp. 66-67, cited in Mampilly, 2015, p. 80.
[174] Elgenius, 2011, p. 19.
[175] For example, legends of wars of liberation can be used as foundation myths for new states. Hutchinson (2009), p. 416.
[176] This is possible because national symbols function like a brand. For example, O'Shaughnessy (2009: 63) reminds us that in the case of Nazi Germany, "[the] swastika functioned as a brand, and their propaganda functioned in the classic sense of advertising as 'pouring meaning into the brand'." Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, "Selling Hitler: Propaganda and the Nazi Brand," *Journal of Public Affairs* 9 (2009), pp. 55-76, at p. 63.
[177] Kaufman, 2001, p. 12.

identity) to communicate that out-groups are to blame for the difficult situation (rather than separatists accept responsibly for it).[178]

However, conflict-related hardships impact the public unevenly (i.e., some citizens or areas are affected by service disruptions more than others, and the acuteness of hardship can change based on seasonal factors). This creates different incentives for messaging with national symbols. For example, to build awareness of a new national identity, elites can use the existence of conflict to fragment the public (i.e., the 'market') into subgroups that can be addressed in terms of their own interests. Thus, during fall, elites may appeal to pensioners in order to prepare them for wintertime temperatures that will be more harshly experienced due to infrastructure damage. In doing so, elites may deploy new national symbols as part of their appeals to communicate to pensioners that governmental services are available to needy populations. Likewise, around military-related holidays, elites may appeal to veterans in order to shore up support for the contemporary conflict. In doing so, elites may deploy new national symbols as part of stories that positively depict military glory (e.g., images of veterans, medals, past conflicts, etc.) to communicate to veterans they are firmly in charge of governmental operations, including those related to the defense of the state.

Conflict environments are punctuated by events. Different kinds of events provide opportunities for symbols to be more or less effective. For prospective elites, conflict-related events can be positive or negative. Positive events include achievements (i.e., battlefield victories, military ceremonies, and the signing of important agreements between belligerent parties and

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[178] To the same end, elites could use other-maligning myths to promulgate claims about an out-group's cultural inferiority, blame out-groups for past crimes and tragedies, or claim that an out-group harbors malevolent intent towards the national community. Van Evera (1994), pp. 27-30.

third-party interventions in support of opposition groups[179]) and conflict-related anniversaries. Positive events should lead elites to feel empowered as an outcome of collective action (because battlefield victories, third-party interventions and conflict-related anniversaries ostensibly serve to help realize national community members' social identities. Thus, as a consequence we would expect them to deploy more in-group national symbols.[180] Negative events include setbacks (i.e., battlefield losses, certain inflection points in the conflict (such as the July 17, 2014 downing of MH-17), and occasions when the United States imposed sanctions on Russia). Negative events should lead elites to feel disempowered. Thus, as a consequence we would expect them to deploy fewer in-group national symbols. In short, both positive and negative events should influence the sensitivity of the population to messaging. Thus,

H1: Expressions of nationalism will increase during weeks with conflict-related events or anniversaries of events.

Conflict environments are also dynamic—that is, they are subject to seasonal variations that can impact the acuteness of a conflict via increases in food prices[181] and fluctuations in daily

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[179] See, for example, Russia's intervention in the Donbass in August 2014 to support rebels fighting the Ukrainian Armed Forces; see also the United States' intervention in Kobanî, Syria in September 2014 to support Syrian Kurdish rebels fighting the Islamic State. Third-party intervention in a conflict to support an opposition group can influence the behavior of the opposition group by facilitating the group's ability to impose costs on a government. Opposition groups that have third-party support are more likely to resist governments with military activities because third-party support provides resources to and externally legitimizes the opposition. Third-party support may also help the opposition build internal legitimacy by providing a rival source of goods, services, and security that opposition leaders can then deliver to their populations. Dylan Balch-Lindsay, Andrew Enterline, and Kyle Joyce, "Third-Party Intervention and the Civil War Process," *Journal of Peace Research* 45(3) (2008), pp. 345-363, at p. 349.

[180] Reicher and Drury (2005), p. 51.

[181] Conflicts can affect food prices in different ways. For example, according to Raliegh et al. (2015), a complex interrelationship exists between food price and violence—higher food prices increase conflict rates within markets and conflict increases food prices; at the same time, unusually dry conditions are associated with increased frequencies of conflict, and decreased rainfall affects conflicts indirectly by impacting food prices (which increases conflict rates). Clionadh Raleigh, Hyun Jin Choi, and Dominic Kniveton, "The devil is in the details: An

temperatures. For example, according to literature on environmental-conflict linkages, temperature has a direct effect on human aggression—that is, hot temperatures produce increases in aggressive tendencies in human beings.[182] Indeed, Landis (2014) found that prolonged periods of stable, warm weather were associated with an increased risk of civil war onset and non-state conflict, which he argued was due to numerous reasons (i.e., periods of warmer weather allows actors to resolve collective action problems (compared to periods of colder weather); warmer weather increases strategic incentives for individuals to engage in violent conflict; and warmer weather generates more resources that can be claimed or looted by rebels).[183] However, there is also evidence to suggest that cold temperatures are associated with increased crime—in particular, robberies.[184]

investigation of the relationships between conflict, food price and climate across Africa," *Global Environmental Change* 32 (2015), pp. 187-199, at pp. 196-198. See also Halvard Buhaug, Tor Benjaminsen, Espen Sjaastad, and Ole Theisen, "Climate variability, food production shocks, and violent conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Environmental Research Letters* 10 (2015), pp. 1-11.

[182] Indeed, according to Anderson (1989: 93), "Hotter years, quarters of years, seasons, months, and days all yield relatively more aggressive behaviors such as murders, rapes, assaults, riots, and wife beatings, among others." Craig Anderson, "Temperature and Aggression: Ubiquitous Effects of Heat on Occurrence of Human Violence," *Psychological Bulletin* 106(1) (1989), pp. 74-96, at p. 93. Hsiang, Burke, and Miguel's (2013) meta-analysis of literature on climate and human conflict found that for every 1° increase in temperatures (or more extreme rainfall) there were increases in the frequency of interpersonal violence (4%) as well as intergroup conflict (14%). Solomon Hsiang, Marshall Burke, and Edward Miguel, "Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict," S*cience* 341(6151) (Sept., 13, 2013), pp. 1-14, at p. 12. O'Loughlin, Linke, Witmer (2014) also found that in the aggregate, high temperature extremes were associated with more conflict. John O'Loughlin, Andrew Linke, and Frank Witmer, "Effects of temperature and precipitation variability on the risk of violence in sub-Saharan Africa, 1980–2012," *PNAS* 111(47) (November 25, 2014), pp. 16712-16717, at p. 16716.

[183] Steven Landis, "Temperature seasonality and violent conflict: The inconsistencies of a warming planet," *Journal of Peace Research* 51(5) (2014), pp. 603-618, at pp.614-615. I note that individual-level arguments on heat and aggression have generally been ignored in the literature on political violence. See Ole Theisen, "Climate Change and Violence: Insights from Political Science," *Current Climate Change Reports* 3 (2017) , pp. 210-221, at p. 211. One reason for this may be that incorporating individual-level arguments on heat and aggression must account for human physiology, particularly how temperature changes, acting through a physiological response mechanism, give rise to collective aggression. For recent studies along these lines, see Paul Van Lange, Maria Rinderu, and Brad Bushman, "Aggression and Violence Around the World: A Model of Climate, Aggression, and Self-control in Humans (CLASH)," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 40(E75) (2017), pp. 1-58; and Jari Tiihonen, Pirjo Halonen, Laura Tiihonen, Hannu Kautiainen, Markus Storvik, and James Callaway, "The Association of Ambient Temperature and Violent Crime," *Nature Scientific Reports* 7(6543) (2017), pp. 1-7. I note that other scholars have recently called for more research into the non-agricultural mechanisms at work in the temperature-political violence linkage. See Alexander Bollfrass and Andrew Shaver, "The Effects of Temperature on Political Violence: Global Evidence at the Subnational Level," *PLoS One* 10(5) (May 2015), pp. 1-9, at p. 4.

[184] See, for example, Simon Field, "The Effect of Temperature on Crime," *The British Journal of Criminology* 32(3) (Summer 1992), pp. 340-351, at p. 347; Peter J. Van Koppen and Robert W. J. Jansen, "The Time to Rob: Variations in Time of Number of Commercial Robberies," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 36(1) (February 1999), pp. 7-29, at p. 19; and Simha Landau and Daniel Fridman, "The Seasonality of Violent Crime: The

The mechanism hypothesized to be at work is that demand for resources, such as heating fuel and clothing, leads disadvantaged groups to commit situational violence (like robberies) in order to meet basic needs.[185]

Because conflict environments are dynamic, different types of symbols may be more or less effective during different periods of the conflict. If the acuteness of hardship influences the sensitivity of the population to messaging, then the incentives that elites have to engage in messaging with different images of symbols (i.e., positive and negative) changes over the duration of the conflict. Thus,

H2: Expressions of nationalism will increase during periods of hardship (hardship increases expressions of nationalism).

Conflict environments are also punctuated by holidays. Almost all nation-states celebrate holidays.[186] They can be national (Independence Day in the US; Unity Day in Russia), cultural (Defender of the Fatherland Day and Victory Day in Russia), and religious (Orthodox Christmas Day in Russia). National holidays are often associated with public celebrations, thus they are useful for transmitting the past and externalizing shared history as part of nationalist narratives.[187] Like national holidays, anniversaries are also associated with public celebrations (such as the 70th

Case of Robbery and Homicide in Israel," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 30(2) (May 1993), pp. 163-191.

[185] See Alexander Cohen, *Climate, Weather, and Political Behavior*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2011, p. 34.

[186] Spinner-Halev and Theiss-Morse (2003), p. 524.

[187] Mariya Omelicheva, "A New Russian Holiday Has More Behind It Than National Unity: the Political Functions of Historical Commemorations," *Australian Journal of Politics and History Special Issue: Centenary (Inter)national, 1914–1924: The Politics of Commemoration and Historical Memory in International Relations*," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63(3) (September 2017), pp. 430-442; Elgenius, 2011, p. 23; Bell (2003), p. 63; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, p. 1.

anniversary of Victory Day and the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) (both held in 2015). Anniversaries mark events of the past that are purposely remembered in the present. Generally, holidays and anniversaries are positive and unifying events. As such, both are used by elites to legitimize their right to govern and represent their preferred national identity inputs (thereby fusing the state with the 'nation').[188] However, some holidays and anniversaries can be negative—particularly if they carry meanings associated with guilt or shame. For example, Ukraine's Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holodomor (decreed by Ukraine's President Kuchma from 1998 and celebrated on the last Saturday of every November) is associated with Ukrainian victimhood and Soviet culpability.[189] Thus, like conflict-related events, holidays and anniversaries should influence the sensitivity of the population to messaging.

In addition to providing occasions and sites for the display of national symbols, societal-wide celebrations also provide occasions and sites for the propagation of rituals. Recall that rituals are useful to prospective elites because they can help propagate myths (by providing frameworks for myths to take shape) and provide structure to society. Thus,

H3: Expressions of nationalism will increase during weeks with holidays.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methods and research design of the dissertation. This includes a discussion of the theme-based coding scheme to I used to examine displays of nationalistic themes in the separatist media. I also discuss the quantitative analysis I used to

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[188] Omelicheva (2017); see also Olga Malinova, "Political Uses of the Great Patriotic War in Post-Soviet Russia from Yeltsin to Putin," in Fedor et al., 2017, pp. 57-58.

[189] However, in the separatist media the Holodomor is considered to be purposely exaggerated to designate Russia (the successor to the USSR) as an external enemy that changed the fate of Ukraine by organizing a famine for the purpose of destroying the Ukrainian 'ethnos' (*Novorossiya* #64, p. 5).

investigate how weather-related hardship, conflict events and national holidays are related to the (re)production of symbols and themes in the media.

Chapter 3 – Data and Methods

This chapter discusses the research design and methods of the dissertation. In the first section of the chapter, I discuss the research design, including why I chose a combination of case-studies and quantitative analysis and how the research design addresses each of the research questions. I also discuss the methods and techniques I used to assess the evidence. In the second section of the chapter, I describe the dataset that was created using primary and secondary sources. I also discuss the quantitative analysis I used to investigate how weather-related hardship, holidays and anniversaries were related to the (re)production of symbols and themes in the media. In the third section of the chapter, I describe the theme-based coding scheme I developed to statistically examine displays of national symbols and messaging strategies in the separatist media, including the operationalization of the dependent, independent and control variables and how they connect to the concepts and theoretical expectations that were elaborated in chapter two.

Research Design

The research objective of the dissertation was to understand how political entities that form as a result of secession deploy symbolic repertoires, including for legitimization and group mobilization. I explored different *de facto* sovereign political entities that have been formed in the post-Soviet space, particularly state-seeking rebel movements that have received military support from the Russian Federation. After considering for study a number of possible cases, I chose to examine two cases that emerged during conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014—the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Lugansk People's Republic (LPR). Separatist factions in the DPR and LPR have controlled and disseminated information on the conflict via newspapers since 2014.[190] One

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[190] Indeed, 10 newspapers from 2014-15 were smuggled out of this environment and made available to researchers, which offered an invaluable source of information on the different messaging strategies that different newspapers and factions employed as part of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. For the purposes of the dissertation, I chose seven newspapers and proceeded to catalogue symbol displays and instances of messaging strategies as well as other data

reason I selected the cases of the DPR and LPR was that they presented variation. For example, in terms of weather-related hardship, most issues of the DPR's and LPR's newspapers featured weather forecast information that specifically related to each newspaper's place and week of publication. Since publication dates and locations varied among the seven newspapers, there was variation among the newspapers with respect to forecasted low temperatures. There was also variation in the conflict-related events covered by the newspapers; while the DPR and LPR celebrated many of the same achievements (such as the Treaty on Accession of the Republic of Crimea to Russia (signed on March 18, 2014), the DPR and LPR independence referendums (held on May 11, 2014), Russian intervention into the conflict in Ukraine (in August 2014) and the signing of the Minsk Protocol in September 2014)), other achievements (or anniversaries of achievements) were unique to each region.[191] The same was true for conflict-related setbacks.[192] Finally, although newspapers in both the DPR and LPR marked many of the same official holidays (e.g., Christmas, Defender of the Fatherland Day and Victory Day), the marking of other unofficial holidays varied substantially between the newspapers within each region and particularly between the DPR and LPR entities.

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from the newspapers. The systematic cataloguing of symbol displays and messaging strategies generated a significant amount of quantitative data (or "data-set observations" (DSOs) in the terminology of Brady, Collier and Seawright (2006)) which allowed me to do both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Henry Brady, David Collier, and Jason Seawright, "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference" Manuscript, August 17, 2007, cited in James Mahoney, "After KKV: the New Methodology of Qualitative research," *World Politics* 62 (1) (January 2010), pp. 120-147.

[191] See, for example, the proclamations of the DPR and LPR (as well as the anniversaries of the proclamations), anniversaries of important battles and the founding of different DPR- and LPR-based militias.
 as well as anniversaries of important battles and the founding of militias within the DPR and LPR.

[192] For example, while the DPR and LPR both mourned the fire that engulfed the Trade Unions building in Odessa, Ukraine on May 2, 2014 and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 on July 17, 2014, other setbacks were unique to each region (such as the one-year anniversary of start of hostilities in Chervonopartizansk in the LPR (marked in July 2015) and the one-year anniversary of the shelling of the Donetsk Regional Museum building (marked in August 2015). I note that there was no variation with respect to weeks in which US sanctions on people and entities involved in the conflict in Ukraine (including the Russian Federation) were announced due to the fact that sanctions were instituted with regard to the overall conflict in Ukraine.

The research design combines qualitative case-studies[193] with quantitative statistical analysis. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies share a similar logic of inquiry (i.e., both seek empirical validation for making causal inferences; both seek research designs that can be replicated; both include estimates of uncertainty; both acknowledge that validity depends on rules of inference[194]; and both offer observational evidence rather than experimental evidence[195]). However, one important difference between qualitative and quantitative methodologies is that qualitative methodologies stress descriptive contextualization and small samples over large samples, which makes them ideally-suited for exploring causal mechanisms and having internal validity.[196] Case studies, in particular, are ideal for establishing general theoretical propositions, testing hypotheses[197], and uncovering different causal mechanisms that may be at work.[198] In light of the dissertation's research questions (i.e., what symbols were deployed in the nationalist media? Why did elites chose particular symbols (and did elites follow a 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' or 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' logic?) What factors affected elites' ability to use different symbols / themes of symbols), a combination of case studies and statistical analysis seemed to be the most appropriate way forward.[199]

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[193] I follow Gerring's (2011: 1138) definition of a case study as "the intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of cases (a population)." John Gerring, "The Case Study and What It Does," in Robert Goodin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 1138.

[194] Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

[195] Sharon Crasnow, "The Role of Case Study Research in Political Science: Evidence for Causal Claims," *Philosophy of Science* 79 (December 2012), pp. 655-666, at p. 656.

[196] Gerring, 2011.

[197] Indeed, case studies can contribute to the generation of new hypotheses (i.e., the logic of discovery) as well as testing hypotheses (i.e., the logic of confirmation). Andrew Bennett, "Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages," in Detlef Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (eds.), *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 21.

[198] Ibid., p. 19; see also Arend Lijphart, "Comparative politics and the comparative method," *American Political Science Review* 65(3) (September, 1971), pp. 652-693.

[199] In this way, the quantitative analysis not only added leverage to the qualitative analysis but was necessary to answer what, on average, impacted elites' deployment of symbol displays and messaging strategies.

One source of inspiration for the research design was Richard Fenno's "soaking and poking" approach.[200] While it was not possible to observe political actors directly (namely, because eastern Ukraine is an active war-zone and the timeframe under study was in the past), following seven separatist-controlled newspapers across time allowed me to observe actors indirectly via reporting on separatists' actions and their (at that time) future projects. I operated from the working assumption that in each of the seven newspapers under study, political actors' messaging strategies were ostensibly designed to foster a bond with their constituencies (i.e., readers of the seven newspapers). Understanding what this bond was designed to achieve was thus a major goal of the study.

I began by following a "most-similar" method as outlined in Gerring (2007).[201] I looked for cases that differed on the outcome of theoretical interest (i.e., the display of national symbols) but were similar in terms of factors that might have contributed to that outcome. Out of the post-Soviet space, there were different de facto states available to study, including Gagauzia and Transnistria (both in Moldova), Abkhazia, Ajaria, and South Ossetia (all in Georgia), Nagorno-Karabakh (in Azerbaijan) and the DPR and LPR (both in in eastern Ukraine). The cases of the DPR and LPR differed from one another on the dependent variable.[202] For example, I discovered through the cataloguing process that the DPR newspapers featured more overall displays of symbols (particularly national symbols) but fewer displays of Orthodox symbols than the LPR newspapers (thus, the LPR had a higher proportion of Orthodox symbol displays than the DPR). This provided interesting variation among the two cases as well as two anomalies that I hoped to understand through intensive study of both cases (i.e., what factors contributed to the newspapers

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[200] Richard Fenno, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978.

[201] John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[202] Since I was interested in the display of national symbols, I made a rule that symbols had to be visually displayed on a page of newspaper in order to count as a DSO symbol display.

in the DPR displaying more national symbols than the newspapers in the LPR? What factors contributed to the newspapers in the LPR displaying more Orthodox religion-related imagery than the DPR?)

The most-similar cross-case method was useful for testing expectations of the theory.[203] I identified several control variables that remained constant across the two cases over the period of study. In terms of similarities between the DPR and LPR, both originated from the conflict in eastern Ukraine that began in 2014; both took over and created media outlets to disseminate their messaging strategies; both are led by elites who are dependent on Russia for support; both lack external legitimacy (i.e., international recognition); and all newspaper publication environments were subject to wintertime environmental constraints (i.e., freezing temperatures).[204] In terms of differences between the DPR and LPR, there were a handful of background characteristics that could affect the outcome of interest (i.e., symbol displays). For example, only the DPR's newspapers featured the influence of the Donbass People's militia (which sponsored three out of four newspapers); in addition, while all of the DPR's newspapers were published within 30 km of the line of contact, only one of the LPR's newspapers were published within 30 km of the line of contact.[205] I also identified independent variables on which the two entities were similar and different from one other. Recall from the previous chapter that conflict environments are punctuated by events and holidays, which create opportunities and occasions to display symbols. Newspapers in both the DPR and LPR marked conflict-related achievements and setbacks (as well

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[203] Gerring, 2007, p. 131.

[204] I note that these control variables were not codified as variables in the data set. According to Gerring (2007), in a most-similar design it is not necessary to measure control variables with a high degree of precision in order to control for them; it is sufficient to acknowledge that the control variables remained constant across the two cases. Ibid., pp. 133-134.

[205] I note that although Sverdlovsk saw fighting during the summer of 2014, the two newspapers that were published in the city were published in 2015 (after fighting had largely concluded). Thus, I coded those two papers as being published beyond 30 km from the line of contact.

as anniversaries of achievements and setbacks). While some of these were seen in both entities, some were only seen in either the DPR or LPR.[206] Likewise, while the DPR and LPR celebrated many of the same 'official' holidays, each entity celebrated a number of unofficial holidays that the other did not mark. These differences between the DPR and LPR allowed us to assess how various factors affect the display of symbols in the DPR differently than in the LPR.[207]

Data Sources and Quantitative Analysis

Newspaper data was accessed from the East View Online database, while casualty information was collected from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. All data was saved into a spreadsheet. All seven newspapers were published between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2015. I focused on this timeframe because it included major developments in the conflict.[208] While the papers

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[206] For example, the DPR celebrated April 7 (2015) as the anniversary of the Day of Proclamation of DPR (a conflict-related achievement) (see *Novorossiiya* #30 p. 5) and marked the anniversary of the shelling of a bus in Donetsk that resulted in 11 deaths (a conflict-related setback) (see *Donetsk Vechernii* #13 p. 5), while the LPR did not; similarly, the LPR marked June 19 (2015) as the anniversary of start of hostilities in Sverdlovsk region and July 10 (2015) as the anniversary of start of hostilities in Chervonopartizansk (conflict-related setbacks) (see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #26 p. 1 and #29 p. 2, respectively) , while the DPR did not. I note also that since newspapers in both the DPR and LPR published in different locations on different dates, there was variation in publication weeks which resulted in the DPR reporting conflict-related developments and featuring holidays that the LPR did not (and vice versa).

[207] For example, perhaps the higher number of symbols in the DPR newspapers was related to the fact that the DPR celebrated more 'official' holidays and/or different holidays from the LPR, or perhaps the higher number of symbols in the DPR was influenced by the close proximity of Donetsk (the city of publication for all DPR newspaper outlets) to the line of contact (compared to only one paper in the LPR being published in close proximity to the line of contact during the period of study). Or perhaps the higher number of symbols in the DPR was related to the fact that three of the four DPR newspapers were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia. Likewise, perhaps the higher number of Orthodox symbols in the two newspapers published in Sverdlovsk was related to Sverdlovsk's further distance from the conflict zone or some other factor (such as the fact that Sverdlovsk's population skewed more toward people of pension age) than the population of Donetsk.

[208] These include the proclamations of the DPR and LPR in April 2014, the 'votes' for independence for the DPR and LPR in May 2014, major outbreaks of hostilities in summer 2014, the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in July 2014, Russian intervention in August 2014, the signing of Minsk I in September 2014, elections in November 2014, the capture of Debaltseve, Ukraine in January-February 2015, the signing of Minsk II in February 2015. The early period of the conflict (February and May 2014) was deemed especially critical because that was when media frames about the conflict became set. See Jade McGlynn, "Historical framing of the Ukraine Crisis through the Great Patriotic War: Performativity, cultural consciousness and shared remembering," *Memory Studies* (2018), pp. 1-23, at p. 3. This was also the same approximate time that the DPR's, LPR's, and Novorossiya's new national symbols emerged in public use.

varied in terms of total page count and number of articles, the lengths of most issues were typically consistent across dates of publication.[209] The papers represent different geographic regions (in terms of place of publication and local focus) within the DPR and LPR. Six of the seven newspapers were published after their takeover by separatists (the exception was *Edinstvo*, a weekly newspaper of the Federation of Trade Unions of the Lugansk People's Republic that was published both before and after the rebel takeover). The papers were typically published weekly with a few exceptions.[210]

The dependent variables are aggregates of displays (event counts) of negative and positive symbols and themes. I aggregated displays of symbols and themes into three distinct explanations (i.e., 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization'). Displays of the symbols and themes that constitute these explanations ranged from as few as 0 to as many as 45 per issue of newspaper. Independent variables include both continuous and dichotomous dummy variables. Continuous variables include forecasted daily minimum temperatures. Minimum temperature was used as a proxy for hardship because the climate-conflict literature suggests that low minimum temperatures (especially in winter) are associated with more robberies.[211] Since most newspaper issues included weather forecast information for the day-of-publication as well as successive days, I recorded both minimum and maximum temperature values for the days of publication as well as the day after publication when this data was available.[212]

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[209] That said, some newspapers increased in length and others decreased over the duration of publication. These instances were noted in chapters five and six, respectively.

[210] I note that there were some instances where two issues of a particular newspaper were published in the same one week period (these are noted in chapters five and six, respectively). In addition, some newspapers were published bi-weekly and monthly (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* and *Boevoi Listok Novorossii*, respectively). This is also noted in chapter five.

[211] I note that, unlike the link between heat and aggression, this association tends to be unrelated to geography—that is, robberies tend to be more frequent as temperatures fall during winter in places as varied as Northern Europe and the Middle East.

[212] The analysis in chapter four used minimum temperatures from the day after publication because there was significantly more of this data available in the newspapers from the Lugansk region.

Daily minimum temperature varied substantially across the seasons. The lowest minimum temperature recorded was –26.0 C (recorded in winter 2014) and the highest was 23.0 C (recorded in summer 2015). This data is summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Summary of next-day minimum temperature (C)

	Mean	*Min*	*Max*
Daily minimum temperature (*N*= 156)			
DPR region	4.6	–14	23
LPR region	6.4	–26	22

I also tabulated continuous conflict-related casualty data for the entire period of analysis.[213] I operationalized the number of monthly casualties as a proxy for hardship, whereby months with higher conflict-related casualties was considered reflective of increased human suffering. Figure 3.1 graphs this data.

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[213] This data came from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Unfortunately, the data was only available at the monthly level (rather than weekly), which limited the kinds of inferences I was able to make with respect to casualties being a proxy for hardship.

Figure 3.1: Monthly conflict-related casualties in the Donbass region (January 2014 – December 2015)
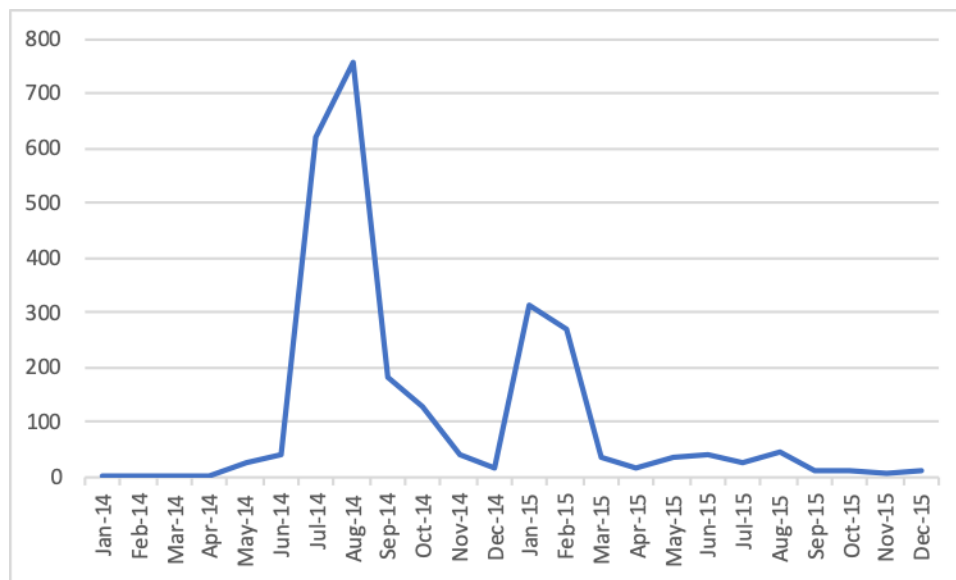
Source: United Nations Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine (August 16 – November 15, 2017)

I created dichotomous dummy variables to denote the presence or absence of the control variables, other independent variables[214] that occurred during publication weeks, and to denote whether a given paper was published in the DPR or LPR. To be considered a conflict-related event or holiday, events and holidays had to be mentioned in the separatist media. This produced three varieties of conflict-related events (i.e., rebel achievements, rebel setbacks, and conflict anniversaries). In addition, I also coded announcements of U.S. sanctions on Russia over the Ukrainian conflict. I coded five varieties of annual holidays (i.e., Ukrainian holidays, rebel (DPR and LPR) holidays, Russian holidays, Orthodox holidays, and international holidays). I also tabulated Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries because such events were frequently mentioned across all seven newspapers. Dichotomous dummy variables were also logged to indicate whether a given newspaper was sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia and whether the city of publication for

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[214] I note that I avoided coding continuous variables (like temperature) in a dichotomous manner because that is threatening to a most-similar analysis.

a given newspaper was within 30 km of the line of contact. Since much of the dataset[215] consisted of event count data, Poisson regression models were used to generate associations between the variables of interest. Poisson regression is a type of generalized linear model. The Poisson regression captures the relationship between the display of national symbols, negative and positive themes, and control and independent variables. It also explores the possibility that symbol and theme frequency and temperature form a non-linear relationship.

Coding Scheme and Operationalization of Variables

National symbols were operationalized as displays of symbols that represent *de jure* states (e.g., Ukraine; Russia), *de facto* states (e.g., DPR and LPR) and political factions (e.g., Right Sector and Novorossiya). These symbols were represented by flags, coats of arms, crests, flag pins, ribbons, and medals. In addition, there was other nationalist symbolism displayed in the separatist media.[216] Displays of all symbols (i.e., national and nationalist) were operationalized as a binary variable—that is, each page included (or did not include) visual displays of different national and nationalist symbol(s) as part of the newspaper design, and each picture included (or did not include) displays of different national and nationalist symbols.[217] Displays of national and

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[215] I note that the dataset consists of panel data and combines elements of cross-sectional data and time series data.

[216] By nationalist symbolism, I mean symbolism that brings to mind group identities. These included Russian and Soviet civilizational identity (as depicted by images of military and political figures, Orthodox Christianity, the Great Patriotic War, and the Ribbon of St. George) and Donbass regional identity (as depicted by images of coalmining, industry and Donbass cultural institutions). The media also displayed symbols associated with public movements within the DPR and LPR as well as images of multilateral institutions (i.e., European Union; OSCE) and Ukraine's western allies. I note that images of multilateral institutions and Ukraine's western allies were often derogatory in nature, such as Ukrainian symbols being associated with Nazi symbolism (i.e., flag, salutes, and leaders), multilateral institutions being portrayed as inept (e.g., the OSCE as the Three Blind Mice), and American symbolism being portrayed in various negative ways (i.e., burning U.S. currency; highlighting the Statue of Liberty's supposed indirect relationship to Nazi symbolism and the U.S. government's treatment of Native Americans in the nineteenth century). Images and depictions of US and EU leaders also featured in the media.

[217] Displays of symbols thus entailed the use of a symbol as part of pictures, advertisements and cartoons.

nationalist symbols were tabulated as counts per issue. I tabulated symbols displayed both via the newspapers' design motif and in pictures.[218] These are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Summary of national and nationalist symbols featured in the separatist media	
Positive	Donbass imagery
	Donetsk Republic public movement imagery
	DPR*
	Free Donbass public movement imagery
	Great Patriotic War imagery
	LPR*
	Novorossiya*
	Orthodox Christianity imagery
	Ribbon of St. George
	Russian Federation flag
	Russian-Soviet Civilization imagery
	World Lugansk public movement imagery
Negative	Right Sector
	Ukraine*+
	West (EU, USA)

* includes displays of flags, coats of arms, crests, flag pins, ribbons, and medals.
+ includes neutral (i.e., not negative) displays of flags, coats of arms, crests, currency and images
  of governmental buildings.

Stories were operationalized as groupings of words that include a headline and one or more paragraphs of text (i.e., articles). Wherever possible, borders and line breaks were used to differentiate the end of one story from the beginning of another.[219] While such a broad definition resulted in stories differing in length both within and across newspapers, this allowed every newspaper article to be analyzed in the same way. Each newspaper page typically included between one and six stories. My approach to analyzing newspaper articles went as follows:

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[218] Thus, if a symbol type appeared in a picture, it was counted as one unique depiction; if two or more unique symbol types appeared in a picture, each one was counted as one unique depiction of each type; and if two or more of the same symbol type appeared in a picture, that symbol was counted as one unique depiction for that type. I counted symbols like this because many pictures included multiple displays of the same symbol (e.g., multiple militia fighters wearing the Ribbon of St. George; numerous DPR flags being waved at a public rally), making counts of total displays of national symbols impractical.

[219] In this way, borders and page breaks functioned as visual barriers between stories. In practice, however, this introduced variation in terms of the lengths of newspaper articles. For example, on some occasions, the separatist newspapers included full pages of conflict-related developments without borders and page breaks (thus, they were counted as one story); on other occasions, the newspapers included full pages of separate (but thematically-related) short stories that were delineated by borders and page breaks (thus, they were counted as multiple stories).

- I downloaded separatist newspapers from the University of Kansas Libraries collection.

- I translated every story (article) published in each of the seven newspapers during the period surveyed using ABBYY Lingvo and Google Translate.

- I read every story that was translated.

- I coded each story in terms of whether it contained at least one discursive reference to eight discursive themes.

Themes were operationalized as messaging strategies that appeared in stories. This resulted in six positive themes, including claim-setting (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects irredentist-like territorial claim-making for territories that are argued to belong to the DPR, LPR, and/or Novorossiya projects), collaboration (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects togetherness, community, patriotism, loyalty and sense of duty towards the in-group), external legitimacy (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects DPR, LPR and Novorossiya leaders' attempts to present the DPR, LPR, and/or Novorossiya projects as sovereign entities that are capable of securing international recognition), internal legitimacy (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects elites attempts to present themselves as capable leaders that deserve to hold power), in-group culture (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects positive feeling and favoritism towards in-group culture, history and contemporary events), and personal honor (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects personal and/or familial connections between individuals and salient national historical events), and two negative themes, including fascism (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects out-group exclusion and demonization ('othering')) and gendering (i.e., a measure of rhetoric that reflects masculine gendering of in-groups and feminine gendering of out-groups). These are summarized with examples in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Summary of themes featured in the separatist media

Positive themes

Claimsetting
Example:
References to lands and cities said to be part of DPR, LPR and Novorossiya political projects (including lands occupied by Ukrainian government); references to impending victories over Ukrainian armed forces over disputed lands

Collaboration
Example:
Appeals to citizens to make sacrifices; requests for citizens to volunteer to help the community.

External Legitimacy
Example:
References to DPR, LPR, Novorossiya being capable of existing independently of Ukraine; references to growing state-to-state relations (as demonstrated by official visits by authorities, distinguished guests, and athletes from friendly states (i.e., Russian Federation, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Armenia, etc.)); evidence that the DPR and LPR adhere to internationally-brokered agreements (including Minsk I and II)

Internal Legitimacy
Example:
References to political and economic development and recovery (and elite leaders' roles in recovery); references to separatist leaders demonstrating responsiveness to citizens, effective governance, and leadership (including acknowledging problems like price increases and disruptions to pension payments, evidence of work towards solutions, and separatist leaders making appearances at state-sponsored ceremonies); references to development of state and legal institutional structures

In-group Culture
Example:
References to Russian and Soviet memories, myths, holidays, commemorations, historical figures, events of historical significance and traditions (i.e., cities named after heroes; military units named after cities being defended by militia); references to Russian ethnicity and language, 'motherland', 'fatherland', 'homeland', and Orthodox Christianity; references to contemporary public cultural events, public celebrations, and news on developments in the contemporary conflict

Personal Honor
Example:
References to achievements, heroism, and honor of fathers and grandfathers of DPR and LPR citizens; appeals to create an appropriate climate for future generations (i.e., the children and grandchildren of DPR and LPR citizens); personal profiles of veterans of Soviet wars, militia fighters and citizens working to support the separatist movement

Negative themes

Fascism
Example:
Negative descriptions of out-group and its actions (i.e., demonizing the Ukrainian government and armed forces as fascists, Nazis, and 'punishers')

Gendering
Example:
Associating DPR, LPR, and Novorossiya projects with masculinity; associating Ukrainian government and armed forces with femininity and/or homosexuality

Like counts of national symbols, I used a binary rating system to denote whether themes were present (1) or not present (0) in each story.[220] I then totaled the number of references to each thematic category for each newspaper issue. In this way, both national symbols and nationalist narratives were considered varieties of propaganda because both were used to promote political causes in the media. Thus, by tracing chronologically the frequency of the different symbols and themes and placing them against the backdrop of events occurring in the DPR and LPR regions in 2014 and 2015, I was able to:

- Identify discursive representations of collective memories and myths

- Identify how collective memories and myths fit into broader 'mythscapes'

- Determine how discursive representations can empower elites to 1) exploit environmental conditions that are conducive to nation-building, 2) construct a frame of reference that expresses national identity and cultural specificity, and 3) construct a veneer of legitimacy for themselves.

For possible explanations of the patterns of symbol deployments and messaging strategies in the separatist-controlled media in eastern Ukraine, I referred to social identity theory as well theories and arguments of experts who have conducted research on post-communist transitions and rebel entities in civil wars. The explanations that interested me the most were that elites deployed symbols and messaging strategies that could achieve positive distinctiveness for the in-group in an environment where there was high inter-group similarity and/or social competition. Explanations based on high inter-group similarity—particularly in the context of secession— would suggest that elites prefer 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes that can

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[220] The binary aspect of the system allowed each story to be analyzed in the same way. In this way, shorter stories and stories with only one reference to a particular thematic category could be compared to longer stories and stories that contained many references to a particular thematic category.

unambiguously differentiate the (new) in-group from the group that they formerly belonged to (and which is now considered an out-group). This goal would be paramount in an environment such as eastern Ukraine where there were no serious movements calling for secession in the years prior to the conflict breaking out in 2014. In this way, symbols and thematic messaging strategies ostensibly communicate that the in-group is distinct from the out-group in terms of ethnicity, language or culture.[221] On the other hand, explanations based on social competition would suggest that elites prefer 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and messaging strategies that allow the in-group to present themselves as being more protective of salient values (i.e., civilization, language and religion) than peer competitors and out-groups. In this way, symbols and thematic messaging strategies ostensibly communicate that in-group protects those values, supports the 'right' pan-national movement or ideology, or has a special claim to historical events (such as that the in-group fought on the 'right' side of a major war).[222] Another explanation of the patterns of symbol deployments and messaging strategies suggests that elites prefer national symbols and messaging strategies that can project their political projects to their constituencies for the purpose of propagating a political authority and legitimization.[223] In this way, symbols and messaging strategies ostensibly communicate that a political entity is believed by its constituencies to be the proper or most appropriate representation of society, that the entity provides avenues for members of society to organize a unique political existence, and/or that the public can have confidence that

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[221] Thus, in this explanation, pertinent symbols include Right Sector (a Ukrainian faction), Ukraine and the West (EU, USA), and pertinent thematic messaging strategies include Fascism and Gendering.

[222] Thus, in this explanation, pertinent symbols include Donbass imagery, Great Patriotic War imagery, Orthodox Christianity imagery, Ribbon of St. George (a symbol of pan-Russian nationalism), Russian Federation flag and Russian-Soviet civilization imagery, and pertinent thematic messaging strategies include Claimsetting, Collaboration, In-group Culture and Personal Honor.

[223] Mampilly, 2015, p. 79.

that entity will survive for the foreseeable future.[224] Relevant symbols and messaging strategies in these explanations are summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations

'Demean Nationalist Ukraine'	'Celebrate Russian Greatness'	'Legitimization'
Symbols	*Symbols*	*Symbols*
Right Sector	Donbass region imagery	Donetsk Republic imagery
Ukraine*	Great Patriotic War imagery	DPR*
West (EU, USA)	Orthodox Christianity imagery	Free Donbass imagery
	Ribbon of St. George	LPR*
Themes	Russian Federation flag	Novorossiya*
Fascism	Russian-Soviet civ. imagery	World Lugansk imagery
Gendering		
	Themes	*Themes*
Symbol example	Claimsetting	External Legitimization
	Collaboration	Internal Legitimization
	In-group Culture	
	Personal Honor	*Symbol example*
	Symbol example	

* includes displays of flags, coats of arms, crests, flag pins, ribbons, and medals.

With respect to the dissertation's third research question (i.e., what affects elites' ability to use different symbols?), the symbols and themes that constitute the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations were expected to be associated with the independent variables that constitute hypotheses 1-3 as follows: 'Demean Nationalist

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[224] Thus, in this explanation, pertinent symbols include rebel *de facto* states (i.e., DPR and LPR), Novorossiya (a rebel faction and brand that claimed to encompass both the DPR and LPR in addition to other Ukrainian territories), two Donetsk-based public movements (Donetsk Republic and Free Donbass), and one Lugansk-based public movement (World Lugansk), and pertinent thematic messaging strategies include External and Internal Legitimization.

Ukraine' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with conflict-related setbacks and sanctions (because such occasions ostensibly risk reminding readers that separation from Ukraine is failing, thus elites ostensibly want to double down on reminding readers that Ukraine is bad). 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, negatively associated with minimum temperature (because when temperature is decreasing, there is more hardship, thus elites ostensibly want to message about that Ukraine is bad (via symbols of Ukraine, Ukrainian political factions, Ukraine's international allies and negative themes) to remind readers of the separatist media that remaining part of the Ukrainian nation-state is undesirable. 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with Ukrainian holidays (because such holidays are no longer considered valuable to the in-group, thus elites ostensibly want to associate those occasions with negative emotions. 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with conflict-related achievements and anniversaries (because such occasions offer opportunities to remind readers that separation from Ukraine is succeeding). 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with minimum temperature (because when temperature is increasing, there is less hardship, thus elites ostensibly want to message about Russian greatness (via symbols of Russian civilization and culture, the Donbass region and positive themes) to remind readers of the separatist media that separation from Ukraine is desirable. 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with Russian and DPR/LPR holidays and Orthodox Christianity and GPW anniversaries (because such holidays and anniversaries are ostensibly salient to the in-group, thus they offer elites opportunities to mobilize the public and disseminate nationalist narratives, myths and rituals at public celebratory events and via news

reports about those celebrations). Finally, 'Legitimization' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with conflict-related achievements and anniversaries (because, like the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation, such occasions offer opportunities to remind readers that separation from Ukraine is succeeding). 'Legitimization' symbols and themes were expected to be, on average, positively associated with minimum temperature (because when temperature is increasing, there is less hardship, thus elites ostensibly want to message about their efforts to rebuild damaged and dilapidated infrastructure so readers consider them to be responsive and effective (and, thus legitimate) as rebel leaders). 'Legitimization' symbols and themes were also expected to be, on average, positively associated with Russian, DPR/LPR and international holidays and Orthodox Christianity and GPW anniversaries (because such holidays and anniversaries are ostensibly salient to the in-group, and particularly with respect to DPR/LPR holidays and GPW anniversaries, typically are accompanied by public celebrations that offer elites opportunities to mobilize the public to support new national holidays and disseminate the nationalist narrative that the people of the Donbass are engaged in an existential fight with fascist invaders). Expectations of these relationships are summarized in Table 3.5:

Table 3.5: Expectations for 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations

	'Demean Nationalist Ukraine'	'Celebrate Russian Greatness'	'Legitimization'
Conflict Events			
Achievements	–	+	+
Anniversaries	–	+	+
Setbacks	+	–	–
Sanctions	+	–	–
Hardship			
Minimum temperature	–	+	+
Holidays			
Russian holidays	–	+	+
DPR/LPR holidays	–	+	+
Ukraine holidays	+	–	–
Orthodox anniversaries	–	+	+
International holidays	–	–	+
GPW anniversaries	–	+	+

In the next chapter, I present the results of the quantitative analysis of the 171 issues of seven newspapers. I also assess how the cases of the DPR and LPR fit the conceptual models and hypotheses developed in chapter two.

Chapter 4 – Quantitative Analysis of Separatist Media

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis of 171 issues of seven newspapers that were produced by pro-Russian separatists in the DPR and LPR in 2014 and 2015. In the first section of the chapter, I summarize the data on symbols and themes. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the results of multiple Poisson regressions that investigated how weather-related hardship, conflict-related events and national days were related to the (re)production of symbols and themes in the media. Section three presents a discussion of the broader implications of the results presented in section one. I also assess how well the cases of the DPR and LPR fit the conceptual models developed in chapter two.

Data

The data on symbols and themes were collected from seven separatist-published newspapers from the Donbass region of Ukraine. The dataset includes data from 171 issues of the newspapers, including four newspapers (79 issues) from the DPR and three newspapers (92 issues) from the LPR, that were published in the Donbass region of Ukraine in 2014-15. All data were saved into a spreadsheet. Newspaper data were accessed from the East View Online database while casualty information was collected from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. The four newspapers from the Donetsk region were published in the city of Donetsk; of the three newspapers published in the Lugansk region, one was published in the city of Lugansk and two were published in the city of Sverdlovsk. These seven newspapers were the source of all tabulated displays of national symbols and themes.

Different varieties of national and nationalist symbols featured across the separatist media. Broadly speaking, there were three distinct national identity categories, including one out-group

(i.e., Ukraine, a.k.a. the status quo identity) and two in-groups (i.e., Donbass region, a.k.a. the intermediate identity, and Russia, a.k.a. the prospective identity). These are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Summary of national and nationalist symbols featured in the separatist media

	Status quo identity condensation symbols (Ukraine out-group)	Intermediate identity condensation symbols (Donbass region in-group)	Prospective identity condensation symbols (Russia in-group)
Positive	Ukraine+	Donbass Region imagery Donetsk Republic imagery DPR* Free Donbass imagery LPR* Novorossiya* World Lugansk imagery	Russian Federation flag Ribbon of St. George Orthodox Christianity imagery Great Patriotic War imagery Russian-Soviet Civ. imagery
Negative	Right Sector Ukraine* West (EU, USA)	(null)	(null)

* includes displays of flags, coats of arms, crests, flag pins, ribbons, and medals.
+ includes neutral (i.e., not negative) displays of flags, coats of arms, crests, currency and images of governmental buildings

Across the seven newspapers, there were 1,623 total displays of national symbols, including 242 displays of status quo identity symbols, 1,189 displays of intermediate identity symbols, and 492 displays of prospective identity symbols. The total number of displays of symbols varied across newspapers and by region, however it is worth noting that the number of displays of symbols was significantly higher in the DPR than in the LPR.[225] Displays of each of the different identity symbol varieties varied across the seven newspapers. For example, while all of the papers had more intermediate and prospective identity symbols than status quo identity symbols, the papers within 30 kilometers (km) of the line of contact (i.e., all papers published in

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[225] This was, in part, due to the prevalence of national symbols being incorporated into the designs of all four Donetsk-based newspapers.

the city of Donetsk and one paper (*Edinstvo*) that was published in the city of Lugansk) had more intermediate identity symbols than prospective identity symbols.[226] The papers published in the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk (i.e., within 30 kilometers (km) of the line of contact) featured more total displays of symbols than the newspapers published in Sverdlovsk (which is more than 30 km away from the contact line). In the DPR, the newspapers that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia had, on average, at least one display of intermediate identity symbols per page. The newspapers that were not sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia had zero displays of status quo identity symbols. There were no newspapers in the LPR that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia. In sum, in-group symbols—including both intermediate (i.e., Donbass region) and prospective (i.e., Russia) identity symbols—featured more prominently than out-group status quo (i.e., Ukraine) identity symbols across all seven newspapers of the separatist media.

Like the display of national and nationalist symbols, the display of themes across the seven newspapers varied. In total, there were 649 stories that featured the theme of a fascist threat to the Donbass (as evidenced by language that labeled the Ukrainian government and/or armed forces as posing a fascist threat to the region). The number of stories that featured the theme of a fascist threat was significantly higher in the DPR than in the LPR. The papers within 30 km of the line of contact (i.e., all newspapers published in Donetsk and Lugansk) were more likely to display negative themes than the newspapers that were published more than 30 km from the contact line. In the DPR, the newspapers that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia were, on average, more likely to display the theme of a fascist threat to the Donbass region than the newspaper that was not sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia.[227] In the LPR, newspapers were, on average,

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[226] I note that *Vostochnyi Donbass* contained roughly an equal amount of intermediate and prospective symbols. I also note that the papers outside of 30 km of the line of contact also happened to be the papers whose publication locations were closest to Russia.

[227] It is worth noting that one negative theme (gendering) featured exclusively in one newspaper (*Novorossiya*).

more likely to display the internal legitimacy theme than newspapers in the DPR. Finally, there were 491 stories that featured personal honor theme and 2,156 stories that featured in-group culture theme. The use of personal honor and in-group culture themes did not differ significantly between the DPR and LPR. Statistics on these symbols and themes are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Summary statistics of displays of symbols and themes

	Donetsk newspapers				Lugansk newspapers		
	Боевое знамя Донбасса (Boevoe Znamia Donbassa)	*Боевой листок Новороссии* (Boevoi Listok Novorossii)	*Донецк вечерний* (Donetsk Vechernii)	*Новороссия* (Novorossiya)	*Единство* (Edinstvo)	*Заря Донбасса* (Zaria Donbassa)	*Восточный Донбасс* (Vostochnyi Donbass)
Symbols							
Status quo identity (Ukraine and allies)	1 (0.25) [4]	-- [0]	-- [0]	2.9 (0.25) [176]	1.4 (0.18) [54]	-- [0]	0.2 (0.01) [8]
Intermediate identity (Donbass in-group)	4.3 (1.06) [17]	3 (1.50) [6]	5.8 (0.37) [70]	14.6 (1.32) [890]	2.9 (0.41) [116]	0.5 (0.06) [7]	2.2 (0.14) [83]
Prospective identity (Russia in-group)	6.3 (1.56) [25]	2.5 (1.25) [5]	2.2 (0.13) [26]	4.6 (0.40) [279]	1.6 (0.22) [61]	1 (0.11) [15]	2.1 (0.16) [81]
Themes							
Claimsetting	0.8 (0.18) [3]	-- [0]	0.3 (0.02) [4]	0.8 (0.08) [48]	0.08 (0.01) [3]	-- [0]	-- [0]
Collaboration	2.8 (0.68) [11]	1.5 (0.75) [3]	4.3 (0.27) [51]	2.3 (0.23) [143]	1 (0.90) [25]	1.3 (0.18) [20]	0.97 (0.06) [37]
External Legitimacy	0.3 (0.06) [1]	-- [0]	4.8 (0.30) [58]	1.3 (0.14) [82]	0.03 (0.01) [1]	0.3 (0.04) [5]	0.3 (0.02) [13]
Fascism	3.3 (0.81) [13]	2 (1) [4]	3.4 (0.21) [41]	8.5 (0.81) [519]	0.4 (0.06) [14]	0.5 (0.08) [8]	1.3 (0.09) [50]
Gendering	-- [0]	-- [0]	-- [0]	0.3 (0.03) [20]	-- [0]	-- [0]	-- [0]
In-group Culture	4.5 (1.13) [18]	3.5 (1.75) [7]	8 (0.51) [96]	13.8 (1.40) [844]	11.2 (1.60) [435]	10.3 (1.40) [155]	15.8 (1) [601]
Internal Legitimacy	1.8 (0.43) [7]	2.5 (1.25) [5]	11.3 (0.70) [136]	8 (0.71) [488]	6.9 (1.01) [271]	8.5 (1.13) [128]	16.1 (1) [611]
Personal Honor	2.5 (0.63) [10]	1.5 (0.75) [3]	3.4 (0.22) [41]	3.6 (0.35) [221]	2.1 (0.30) [82]	2.1 (0.27) [31]	2.7 (0.18) [103]

Note: number = average number of displays of symbols and themes per issue; (number) = average number of displays of symbols and themes per page; [number] = total number of displays of symbols and themes.

Analysis

Conflict-related Events

The first hypothesis was a set of hypotheses about the relationship between conflict-related events and displays of the national symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist

Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations (i.e., whether expressions of nationalism increase during weeks with conflict-related events or anniversaries of events). I was interested in determining whether events like battlefield achievements, anniversaries and setbacks, or the United States introducing sanctions against Russia, influences the sensitivity of the population to nationalistic political messaging or changes the incentives that separatists have to engage in messaging with different types of national symbols and themes. If events and anniversaries incentivize separatists to use different symbols and themes, then the symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations should be utilized more or less in weeks with conflict-related events and anniversaries. In other words, there should be a difference in the direction of the coefficients for the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations with respect to each of the events included in the conflict-events hypotheses.

I created three dummy variables to represent weeks in which conflict-related achievements, anniversaries and setbacks occurred. I also created a dummy variable to represent weeks in which the United States instituted sanctions on Russia in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Hardships

The second hypothesis dealt with the relationship between hardships and displays of the national symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations (i.e., whether expressions of nationalism increase during periods of hardship). I was interested in determining whether the acuteness of the conflict influences the sensitivity of the population to nationalistic political messaging or changes the incentives that separatists have to engage in messaging with different varieties of national symbols and themes. If hardship incentivizes separatists to use different symbols and themes, then the

symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations should be utilized more or less in weeks with more hardship. In other words, there should be a difference in the direction of the coefficients for the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations with respect to the hardship hypothesis.

As proxies for hardship, I logged two varieties of measurements—monthly conflict casualty numbers[228] and minimum temperatures[229] for the day of and day-after the date of publication of the newspapers. Recall that of the two temperature measurements, I ended up using next-day low temperature because more of this data was available than for the day-of publication.

Holidays

The third hypothesis was another set of hypotheses about the relationship between national holidays (and other days of significance) and displays of the national symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations (i.e., whether expressions of nationalism increase during weeks with holidays). I was interested in determining whether different national holidays (namely, those of Ukraine, the DPR and LPR, and Russia) and other important commemorative days (such as Orthodox religious days, internationally-celebrated holidays, and GPW anniversaries) influences the sensitivity of the population to nationalistic political messaging or changes the incentives that separatists have to

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[228] Monthly data on conflict-related casualties was collected by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. Since the casualty data and newspaper data had different time frequencies, rather than average the monthly casualty data (which would have introduced biases), I logged the monthly casualty figures for each newspaper-week that corresponded to that calendar month. I also created three dummy variables to represent three levels of casualties (i.e., 0-20; 21-100; 101+).

[229] Daily low temperature was a measure of hardship insofar as winter temperatures in eastern Ukraine consistently dip below freezing, which necessitates increased use of heating fuel by citizens as well as an increase use of municipal funds by city authorities for maintenance (i.e., to clear roads of ice and snow, fix potholes and ensure residents (particularly elderly and home-confined individuals) have access to food, hygiene items and heating fuel. In other words, wintertime constrains the budgets of *both* residents and authorities in the DPR and LPR.

engage in messaging with different types of national symbols. If holidays incentivize separatists to use different symbols and themes, then the symbols and themes included in the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations should be utilized more or less in weeks with particular types of national holidays or days of significance. In other words, there should be a difference in the direction of the coefficients for the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine,' 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' and 'Legitimization' explanations with respect to each of the holidays and days of significance included in the holidays hypotheses.

I created six dummy variables to represent weeks in which national holidays (i.e., Ukraine, the DPR and LPR, and Russia) and annual commemorative days (i.e., Orthodox religious days, internationally-celebrated holidays, and GPW anniversaries) occurred. Poisson regression analyses were performed to formally test the three hypotheses. I included control variables to account for conflict-related attributes that remained static across the 2014-15 period (i.e., a newspapers' place of publication (DPR or LPR); proximity to fighting (i.e., whether a paper's publication site was within 30 km of the line of contact); and militia sponsorship (i.e., whether a paper was sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia)). I also included dummy quarter (i.e., Q1-Q4) and dummy year (i.e., 2014-2015) control variables (i.e., 2014-2015) to account for time fixed effects.

I ran both fixed effects and random effects regression models. The results for the fixed effects models are presented in Tables 4.3-4.5. The tables display the results for the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' explanation (Table 4.3), the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation (Table 4.4), and the 'Legitimization' explanation (Table 4.5). The conflict-related events, hardship, holidays/commemorative days and control variables are arrayed along the vertical dimension of the tables. Horizontally, the first column in each table presents the results of the full model (i.e.,

conflict-related events, hardship and holidays/commemorative days) with newspaper fixed effects. The second column presents the results of the full model plus conflict-related attributes control variables with newspaper fixed effects. The third column presents the results of the full model plus quarter control variables with newspaper fixed effects. The fourth column presents the results of the full model plus conflict-related attributes and quarter control variables with newspaper fixed effects. The fifth column presents the results of the full model plus the year control variable with newspaper fixed effects. Finally, the sixth column presents the results of the full model plus conflict-related attributes and year control variables with newspaper fixed effects.

Table 4.3: Demean Nationalist Ukraine

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Achievements	-0.143	-0.143	-0.066	-0.066	-0.150	-0.150
	(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.152)	(0.152)	(0.143)	(0.143)
Anniversaries	0.105	0.105	0.098	0.098	0.175	0.175
	(0.147)	(0.147)	(0.155)	(0.155)	(0.150)	(0.150)
Setbacks	0.522**	0.522**	0.518*	0.518*	0.445*	0.445*
	(0.255)	(0.255)	(0.265)	(0.265)	(0.257)	(0.257)
Sanctions	-0.400**	-0.400**	-0.441**	-0.441**	-0.443**	-0.443**
	(0.173)	(0.173)	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.175)
Temperature	-0.015***	-0.015***	-0.013	-0.013	-0.015***	-0.015***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Russian holidays	0.144*	0.144*	0.129	0.129	0.154**	0.154**
	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.078)
DPR and LPR holidays	-0.135	-0.135	-0.172**	-0.172**	-0.106	-0.106
	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Ukraine holidays	-0.029	-0.029	-0.040	-0.040	0.024	0.024
	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Orthodox holidays	-0.097	-0.097	-0.134	-0.134	-0.086	-0.086
	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.097)	(0.097)
International holidays	-0.031	-0.031	-0.054	-0.054	-0.052	-0.052
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.081)
GPW anniversaries	0.099	0.099	0.150	0.150	0.068	0.068
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.100)
30 KM LOC		-1.186***		-1.140***		-1.400***
		(0.294)		(0.294)		(0.306)
Place of Publication		-2.067***		-1.945***		-2.296***
		(0.290)		(0.295)		(0.304)
Sponsored by Militia		0.150		0.156		-0.083
		(0.293)		(0.295)		(0.307)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE					✓	✓
Constant	1.457***	2.494***	1.511***	2.495***	1.196***	2.679***
	(0.250)	(0.346)	(0.254)	(0.346)	(0.271)	(0.354)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	559.018	559.018	559.200	559.200	554.828	554.828
BIC	613.916	613.916	623.247	623.247	612.775	612.775

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < :1$, ** $p < :05$, *** $p < :01$

Table 4.4: Celebrate Russian Greatness

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Achievements	0.205***	0.205***	0.163**	0.163**	0.208***	0.208***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Anniversaries	0.027	0.027	0.024	0.024	0.013	0.013
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Setbacks	-0.024	-0.024	-0.014	-0.014	-0.013	-0.013
	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Sanctions	-0.106	-0.106	-0.103	-0.103	-0.102	-0.102
	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.068)
Temperature	-0.002	-0.002	-0.007*	-0.007*	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Russian holidays	0.001	0.001	0.027	0.027	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)
DPR and LPR holidays	0.063*	0.063*	0.082**	0.082**	0.058	0.058
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Ukraine holidays	0.010	0.010	0.030	0.030	0.006	0.006
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Orthodox holidays	0.025	0.025	0.029	0.029	0.024	0.024
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.042)
International holidays	0.046	0.046	0.058	0.058	0.048	0.048
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.038)
GPW anniversaries	0.011	0.011	-0.009	-0.009	0.015	0.015
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.048)
30 KM LOC		-0.256***		-0.275***		-0.189**
		(0.060)		(0.061)		(0.086)
Place of Publication		-0.075		-0.176**		-0.006
		(0.079)		(0.085)		(0.101)
Sponsored by Militia		-0.335**		-0.346**		-0.265
		(0.156)		(0.156)		(0.169)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE						
Constant	2.504***	3.095***	2.461***	3.083***	2.579***	3.033***
	(0.142)	(0.100)	(0.143)	(0.101)	(0.158)	(0.115)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	1063.969	1063.969	1056.914	1056.914	1064.759	1064.759
BIC	1118.867	1118.867	1120.961	1120.961	1122.707	1122.707

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 4.5: Legitimization

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Achievements	0.069	0.069	0.125	0.125	0.067	0.067
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.093)	(0.093)
Anniversaries	-0.031	-0.031	-0.036	-0.036	-0.019	-0.019
	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Setbacks	-0.129	-0.129	-0.203*	-0.203*	-0.139	-0.139
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.119)	(0.118)	(0.118)
Sanctions	0.109	0.109	0.121	0.121	0.106	0.106
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.082)
Temperature	-0.001	-0.001	0.005	0.005	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Russian holidays	-0.017	-0.017	-0.078	-0.078	-0.016	-0.016
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.049)	(0.049)
DPR and LPR holidays	-0.056	-0.056	-0.052	-0.052	-0.052	-0.052
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Ukraine holidays	-0.070	-0.070	-0.085	-0.085	-0.066	-0.066
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Orthodox holidays	-0.002	-0.002	0.004	0.004	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.055)
International holidays	-0.033	-0.033	-0.012	-0.012	-0.034	-0.034
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.050)
GPW anniversaries	0.161**	0.161**	0.174***	0.174***	0.158**	0.158**
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.064)
30 KM LOC		-0.949***		-0.918***		-1.009***
		(0.080)		(0.082)		(0.115)
Place of Publication		-1.003***		-0.893***		-1.064***
		(0.091)		(0.098)		(0.124)
Sponsored by Militia		-1.173***		-1.161***		-1.235***
		(0.217)		(0.217)		(0.233)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE						
Constant	1.840***	3.962***	1.866***	3.945***	1.774***	4.018***
	(0.208)	(0.120)	(0.209)	(0.121)	(0.227)	(0.143)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	881.570	881.570	866.316	866.316	883.045	883.045
BIC	936.468	936.468	930.362	930.362	940.993	940.993

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The results of the fixed effects conflict-related events regression models were mixed. In terms of positive conflict events, for the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' explanation, there was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and conflict-related achievements and anniversaries as was expected. For the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation, there was a significant positive relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and conflict-related achievements (i.e., more 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes were displayed during weeks with achievements, ostensibly, to remind readers of the separatist media that separation from Ukraine was succeeding). This finding was consistent with expectations. However, there was no significant relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and conflict-related anniversaries. For the 'Legitimization' explanation, there was no significant positive relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and conflict-related achievements and anniversaries as was expected. In terms of negative conflict events, there was a significant positive relationship between 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and conflict-related setbacks (i.e., more 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were displayed during weeks with setbacks, ostensibly, to remind readers of the separatist media that Ukraine was bad and that separation from Ukraine was worth pursuing.) This finding was consistent with expectations. However, there was a significant negative relationship between 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and conflict-related sanctions (i.e., fewer 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were displayed during weeks in which the United States announced sanctions on Russia due to the conflict in Ukraine). This finding was inconsistent with expectations. One explanation for this inconsistent finding could be that symbol entrepreneurs sought to distance their messaging strategies from developments that resulted in

costs to their chief benefactor (Russia), ostensibly, to downplay links between the rebellion and Russia. For the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation, there was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and conflict-related setbacks and sanctions as was expected. For the 'Legitimization' explanation, there was a significant negative relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and conflict-related setbacks in the two models that included quarterly control variables. This was consistent with expectations. Interestingly, Q2 was the time of year that both the DPR and LPR declared independence from Ukraine in 2014. However, this relationship lost significance in the models that omitted all time fixed effects and in the models that included the year control variable. There was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and conflict-related sanctions as was expected. In short, there was some evidence that positive and negative conflict-related events were associated with the three theoretical explanations outlined in chapter two, but this evidence was far from overwhelming.

The results of the fixed effects conflict-related hardship regression models were somewhat mixed. For the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' explanation, there was a significant negative relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and minimum temperature (i.e., more 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were displayed as minimum temperature decreased and there was more hardship, ostensibly, to remind readers of the separatist media that remaining part of the Ukrainian nation-state was less desirable than separating from Ukraine. This relationship was especially pronounced in 2015. This finding was consistent with expectations. However, I note that the relationship lost significance in the models that included the quarterly control variables. For the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation, there was a significant negative relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols

and themes and minimum temperature in the models that included the quarterly control variables (i.e., more 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes were displayed as minimum temperature decreased and there was more hardship during Q1 and Q2). However, this relationship lost significance in the models that omitted all time fixed effects and in the models that included the year control variable. This finding was inconsistent with expectations. One explanation for this inconsistent finding could be that symbol entrepreneurs sought to continue messaging with 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes during the uptick in fighting in January-February 2015 that resulted in the rebels capturing the city of Debaltseve from Ukrainian forces (indeed, the direction of the relationship in the model that included the year control variable would suggest this, but the relationship was not significant). There was no significant positive relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and conflict-related hardship as was expected. In short, there was evidence that conflict-related hardship was associated with the two positive distinctiveness theoretical explanations outlined in chapter two, but there was no evidence that hardship was associated with displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes.

Finally, the results of the fixed effects holidays regression models were mixed. For the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' explanation, there was a significant positive relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and weeks with Russian holidays. This relationship lost significance in the models that included quarterly control variables but regained significance in the models that included the year control variable (meaning that the effect was especially pronounced in 2014). This finding was inconsistent with expectations. One explanation for this inconsistent finding could be that messaging with 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes during weeks with Russian holidays in 2014 (i.e., the first year of the conflict in Ukraine) was a way of showing fealty to Russia. There was also a significant

negative relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and weeks with DPR/LPR holidays (i.e., fewer 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes were displayed during weeks with DPR/LPR holidays. This was consistent with expectations. There was no significant positive relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and weeks with Ukrainian holidays as was expected. Likewise, there was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes and weeks with Orthodox and international holidays or Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries as was expected. For the 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanation, there was a significant positive relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and weeks with DPR/LPR holidays, which was consistent with expectations. There was no significant positive relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and weeks with Russian and Orthodox holidays as was expected. Likewise, there was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes and weeks with Ukraine and international holidays and Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries as was expected. For the 'Legitimization' explanation, there was no significant positive relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and weeks with Russian, DPR/LPR, Orthodox and international holidays as was expected. Likewise, there was no significant negative relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and weeks with Ukraine holidays as was expected. However, there was a significant positive relationship between displays of 'Legitimization' symbols and themes and weeks with Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries (i.e., more 'Legitimization' symbols and themes were displayed during weeks with Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries). This was consistent with

expectations. In short, there was some evidence that holidays were associated with the three theoretical explanations outlined in chapter two, but this evidence was far from overwhelming.

Discussion

This chapter's quantitative analysis are first steps toward understanding how newly-independent political entities that form as a result of secession deploy symbolic repertoires in conflict environments for the purposes of legitimization and national group mobilization. The results of the quantitative analysis suggest that in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, symbol entrepreneurs use control of media outlets to deliberately display nationalist symbols and themes as daily minimum temperatures decrease across the year. Separatist media outlets in the DPR and LPR tended to display both 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' and Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes as temperatures fell and hardship increased. To put it another way, separatists tended to display combinations of nationalist symbols and themes more outside of the 'fighting season' than within it.

Why might separatists deploy symbolic repertoires outside of the 'fighting season'? There could be several reasons related to the fact that, although it may become too cold to continue fighting during winter, control of media outlets allows separatists to propagandize year-round. For example, during fall 2014, following the signing of the Minsk I Protocol on September 5, 2014 (which was designed to end the conflict in the Donbass region), a ceasefire went into effect that temporarily reduced hostilities between the Ukrainian government and rebels. The DPR and LPR interpreted the Minsk Protocol to allow for parliamentary elections, which were held in early November and gave separatists an opportunity to hold elections as a way of constructing the veneer of legitimacy for the DPR and LPR political projects.[230] The election campaign gave separatists

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[230] This explanation is supported by an auxiliary regression analysis in which I ran the External Legitimacy theme as a dependent variable. I expected a negative correlation between stories that contain External Legitimacy theme and

time and political space to argue that they were acting like legitimate leaders by following the Minsk protocol (and that Ukraine is failing to follow the agreement). The campaign also allowed separatists to disseminate other-maligning myths about Ukraine, including the myth that quality of life in Ukraine has declined so much that the country is no longer a viable option for the people of the Donbass region.[231] However, this is not to imply that separatists cease their propagandizing efforts during the 'fighting season'; indeed, auxiliary regression analyses of other themes suggest that, on average, as minimum temperatures rise and kinetic action increases (either because rebels are attacking Ukraine or Ukraine is attacking the rebels), messaging strategies change to insinuate that separatists are making efforts to repair damaged infrastructure and shore up support for the separatist cause in other ways.[232] As one might expect, on average, separatists also tended to display positive in-group symbols more often during the 'fighting season' than outside of it.[233]

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minimum temperature (because as fighting lessens during winter, separatists can use media to argue that they are acting like a *de jure* state by adhering to the Minsk protocol. The result was consistent with expectations, i.e., the number of stories that displayed the External Legitimacy theme increased as minimum temperatures decreased in 2014 and 2015. In other words, on average, separatists referenced the Minsk agreements more outside of the 'fighting season' than during the 'fighting season.'

[231] This explanation is also supported by an auxiliary regression analysis in which I ran the fascism theme as a dependent variable. I expected a negative correlation between stories that contain the Fascism theme and minimum temperature (because as conditions worsen, there is more hardship and separatists ostensibly rely on negative messaging to denigrate the out-group). The result was consistent with expectations, i.e., the number of stories that displayed the Fascism theme increased as minimum temperatures decreased in 2014 and 2015. To put it another way, on average, separatists 'othered' Ukraine more outside of the 'fighting season' than during the 'fighting season.'

[232] For example, I also ran auxiliary regression analyses with the Internal Legitimacy and Personal Honor themes as dependent variables. I expected a positive correlation between stories that contain Internal Legitimacy theme and minimum temperature (because as conditions improve, separatists can implement repairs that ameliorate hardship and message about other positive developments that concern the in-group). I expected a positive correlation between stories that contain Personal Honor theme and weeks with GPW holidays (because GPW holidays offer messaging opportunities to remind people about patriotism, honor and the sacrifices made by Soviet soldiers and veterans). For both models, the results were consistent with expectations, i.e., the number of stories that displayed the Internal Legitimacy theme increased as minimum temperatures increased in 2014 and 2015, and the number of stories that displayed the Personal Honor theme increased during weeks with GPW anniversaries in 2014 and 2015.

[233] This is suggested by supplementary analyses for disaggregated prospective identity symbols (in particular, the Ribbon of St. George and GPW-related imagery). However, I note that the results of supplementary analyses for disaggregated intermediate identity symbols were less clear.

Interestingly, the results of the quantitative analysis suggest that, on average, separatists displayed 'Legitimization' symbols and themes more often during weeks with Great Patriotic War-related anniversaries. [234] This finding makes sense given the centrality of the GPW in representations of the contemporary conflict in eastern Ukraine, particularly its inclusion in the mythscape that the contemporary conflict is an extension of the Soviet Union's struggle against fascist Germany (which will be discussed in the next chapter). This finding also suggests that the choices of the DPR's and LPR's symbols are based, at least in part, on their abilities to fit into the Russian-Soviet political-military symbolic repertoire. Supplemental auxiliary regression analyses with different groupings of national symbols (i.e., status quo, intermediate and prospective identity symbols) as dependent variables also lend credence to this idea.[235]

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[234] These included February 2 (which commemorates the liberation of Stalingrad from Nazi Germany (2/2/43)), February 15 (which commemorates the liberation of Sverdlovsk from Nazi Germany (2/15/43)), February 16 (which commemorates the liberation of Lugansk from Nazi Germany (2/16/43)), April 11 (International Day of liberation of Nazi concentration camps), June 22 (Day of Memory and Sorrow, which commemorates the day when Great Patriotic War broke out (6/22/41)), August 23 (which commemorates the liberation of Kursk on 8/23/43), September 8 (Day of Liberation of Donbass, which commemorates the liberation of Stalino (Donetsk) on 9/8/43), October 28 (which commemorates the liberation of Ukraine from Nazi Germany 10/28/44), November 7 (2015, which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the historical 1941 parade on Red Square) and November 19 (Day of Missile Forces and Artillery, which marks the day the Red Army began their successful counter-attack (Operation Uranus) in the battle of Stalingrad 11/19/42). I note that I purposely omitted Victory Day (May 9) from the dummy GPW variable because Victory Day is widely celebrated in the Donbass region (thus we expected it to disproportionately skew the results of the regression analyses). I note that when Victory Day was included in the dummy GPW variable in the auxiliary regression analyses with different groupings of national symbols, the results remained the same for the display of intermediate identity symbols (i.e., there was a positive relationship). However, the result for prospective identity symbols, while still in the same direction (i.e., a negative relationship), lost significance.

[235] For example, I ran an auxiliary Poisson regression analysis for a full model with symbols as the dependent variable, control variables and the hardship, conflict-related events, national holidays independent variables. The results of these models indicated the following: displays of status quo identity symbols was negatively correlated with minimum temperature while weeks with conflict-related achievements, setbacks and Russian holidays were all positively correlated with minimum temperature; displays of intermediate identity symbols was positively correlated with weeks with GPW anniversaries; and displays of prospective identity symbols was positively correlated with minimum temperature and weeks with DPR, Ukraine, and Orthodox holidays, and negatively correlated with weeks with GPW anniversaries. In these models, all of the control variables (i.e., newspaper publication within 30 km of the line of contact; publication in the DPR; and sponsorship by the Donbass People's Militia) were correlated with displays of intermediate identity symbols, however only publication within 30 km of the line of contact was correlated with displays of status quo symbols and only sponsorship by the Donbass People's Militia was correlated with displays of prospective identity symbols. The results of these auxiliary analyses suggest that different factors affect elites' ability to use different national symbols. For example, while the separatist media outlets in the DPR and LPR tended to display status quo identity symbols when temperatures were falling and prospective identity symbols when temperatures were rising (the results for intermediate symbols were insignificant), the newspapers that were published in the DPR tended to display national symbols of all types much more often than the papers

In sum, these results suggest a qualification to the environmental-conflict literature. Although physical fighting tends to slow down during wintertime, separatist political entities face a deficit of legitimacy that does not vary seasonally (because separatist political entities are inherently less legitimate than *de jure* nation-states). Barred from *de jure* recognition, separatist newspapers in the DPR and LPR rely on propaganda to legitimate DPR and LPR elites as well as the DPR and LPR political projects. The results of the regression analyses suggest that as it gets colder outside, there tends to be more displays of national symbols and thematic messaging strategies—particularly those associated with the 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' and 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' explanations elaborated in chapter two. In other words, there seems to be evidence that although conflict-related fighting slows down during winter, opportunities for messaging with national symbols and themes still abound and may in fact increase.

With respect to the conceptual models developed in chapter two, there is some evidence that the separatist media in the DPR and LPR transmits national symbols and themes to cultivate emotional connections. As the case study chapters that follow this chapter will demonstrate, prospective elites in the DPR and LPR in 2014 and 2015 relied on negative displays of Ukrainian national symbols and other-maligning myths to generate negative national images of Ukraine and its western allies (see appendix for visual examples). These chapters will show that, particularly

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published in the LPR. This could be due to a number of reasons, including endogenous factors related to the four papers that were published in the DPR, the fact that the city of Donetsk is a major focal point of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, or the fact that Donetsk has longer experience with separatist movements in comparison to the LPR. The results of these auxiliary regression analyses also suggest that, on average, proximity to the line of contact and militia sponsorship increase the likelihood that a newspaper displays national symbols (i.e., there were more displays of intermediate and prospective identity symbols in the papers that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia, and there were more displays of status quo and intermediate identity symbols in the papers published in the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk (which are both located within 30 km of the line of contact). Finally, the results of these auxiliary regression analyses indicated there was a negative relationship between prospective identity symbols and weeks with GPW anniversaries. This result was curious, as I expected symbols of the prospective identity to be seen during weeks with GPW anniversaries since the USSR was a participant in the GPW conflict. That the opposite trend occurred with respect to prospective symbols suggests a deliberate attempt to build associations between the DPR and LPR and the GPW (i.e., brand awareness) at the expense of already-established associations between Russia/USSR and the GPW.

in the newspapers that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia, a majority of displays of symbols of Ukraine and its allies were disrespectful in nature, and many stories hyped a 'fascist' threat that supposedly emanated from Ukraine. This was ostensibly meant to generate negative emotional responses towards the Ukrainian national identity.[236] Prospective elites in the DPR and LPR also relied on positive symbols to generate positive national images of Russia. Unlike displays of symbols of Ukraine and its allies, displays of Russian in-group symbols were respectful (i.e., positive) and devoid of threatening imagery.

Finally, the following chapters will show evidence that separatists used symbols and themes to fragment the public into subgroups. Across the seven separatist newspapers, the most commonly addressed unitary subgroup was pensioners. Indeed, chapter six will demonstrate that the newspapers published in Sverdlovsk tended to focus on pension-related issues to a much greater extent than all other newspapers (especially the Donetsk-based newspapers that were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia). That said, most of the separatist newspapers that featured stories about pension-related matters discussed practical matters, i.e., changes to pension amounts, information on pension distribution sites, and updates about delays in payments. The frequency of pension-focused stories ostensibly allows separatists to argue that they can capably address conflict-related disruptions and are cognizant of issues that negatively affect quality of life for elderly people in the Donbass region

The next chapters present case studies on the separatist media published in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR).

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[236] Indeed, Ukraine's national flag and coat of arms were frequently visually and discursively associated with Nazi imagery and depicted as menacing the people of the Donbass region. See appendix for examples. The Ukrainian national identity was also discursively 'othered' in other ways. For example, Ukrainian cultural memories (such as the Holodomor) were argued to have exaggerated the suffering of Ukrainians as well as the fault of Soviet authorities for the famine, and Ukrainian nationalist figures (like Stepan Bandera) were routinely criticized for their collaboration with Nazi Germany during World War II.

Chapter 5 – Propaganda in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)

This chapter presents a case study on the separatist media of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). In the first section of the chapter, I introduce the four separatist newspapers published in the Donetsk region in the city of Donetsk. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the content of these newspapers, including the national symbols and themes featured prominently across the papers. In section three, I discuss how symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals are used to construct 'mythscapes' that are ostensibly designed to inspire an emotional link between the contemporary conflict in Ukraine and a 'useable past' (as articulated by DPR and Donetsk municipal leaders). Section four concludes the chapter.

Introduction

The city of Donetsk is the administrative center of Ukraine's Donetsk Oblast. From the late 1860s to 1924, the city was known as Iuzovka (or Yuzovka), named after John Hughes, a Welsh entrepreneur who founded the region's first coal mines. In 1924, the city was renamed Stalino and maintained that name until 1961 when, at the height of destalinization, the city took its current name. Donetsk is the center of the Donbass coal-producing region[237] and coal mining (and other industries) have been central to the development of the city.[238] Between September 1941 and September 1943, Stalino/Donetsk was occupied by Nazi Germany. It was during this time that most of the mines in and around the city were flooded, much of the city's housing was destroyed, and the city's population dwindled to 175,000 (down from over 500,000 in 1940). After the war,

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[237] Lewis Siegelbaum and Daniel Walkowitz, *Workers of the Donbass Speak: Survival and Identity in the New Ukraine, 1989-1992*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 2. This was particularly true in the late 1930s. Ibid, p. 11.

[238] For example, during the Soviet period, the Donbass contained the USSR's oldest and largest coal fields. Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, 1995, p. xv. I note also that it was in the Donetsk region that Soviet propagandists found the miner Alexsei Stakhanov (and where the word "stakhanovite", a byword for one who performs hard work, originates). Alastair Macdonald, "City on the edge holds key to Ukraine future," *Chicago Tribune*, March 28, 2014.

the city and its industrial infrastructure were rebuilt as part of a massive all-Union effort.[239] However, economic growth in the region stalled and contracted in intervening decades, particularly after Ukraine gained its independence from the USSR in 1991.[240]

Following the collapse of the Yanukovych government and the occupation of Crimea in February 2014, a number of political activists took to the streets of Donetsk in March 2014.[241] The DPR was declared on April 7, 2014 and roughly one month later, on May 11, 2014, the DPR held a referendum on its declaration of independence. The result of the referendum was reported as over 90% in favor of independence. The DPR claims all of Donetsk Oblast (including Slavyansk, a city that separatists withdrew from in July 2014), however it only controls about one third of Donetsk Oblast's territory. As for Novorossiya, in 2014 the project claimed all of the territories of southeast Ukraine, including Donetsk, Lugansk, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odessa and part of Kirovohrad Oblast.[242] By late 2015, the DPR celebrated a growing number days as 'official' holidays, including New Year (January 1), Christmas (January 6 – 8), Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23), International Women's Day (March 8), International Workers' Day / May Day (May 1), Victory Day (May 9) and Day of the Donetsk People's Republic (May 11), as well as many unofficial holidays.

According to scholarship on the Donbass region, the population of the Donetsk region has a strong regional identity that revolves around respect for the Donbass' industrial roots, certain

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[239] Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, 1995, p. 11.
[240] Indeed, empirical data from various polls indicate that a large percentage of Donbas citizens were unhappy with the performance of Ukraine's central government in the years leading up to the Euromaidan. These polls also showed support for greater political autonomy from Ukraine. See Mariya Omelicheva, Paul Aldaya, Alina Bashirova, John C. Stanko, Alyssa Wood, Garrett Farlow, Anna Jensen, Kaitlyn Johnson, Ylham Jorayev, Cody Smith, Adam Steinhilber, Kellor Yde and Blake Weiter. *Democracy in Donetsk?: Findings of the Diplomacy Lab Project*. Unpublished Class Project, University of Kansas, 2016.
[241] See *Novorossiya* #48 p. 7.
[242] See *Novorossiya* #3 p. 2, #4 p. 4 and #7 p. 8. So-called 'Greater Novorossiya' claimed even more Ukrainian Oblasts and territories. See *Novorossiya* #10 p. 8.

aspects of Russian culture, and the Russian language.[243] Indeed, the Donbass' history of coal mining provides a foundation for the myth that the Donbass is the most developed region in Ukraine as well as the belief that the rest of Ukraine is economically reliant on the Donbass' industries.[244] The Donbass' regional identity was consolidated during the twentieth century, particularly during the "socialist industrialization" of the 1930s. It was during this era that the image of the Donbass as a leading industrial / proletarian region became central in official Soviet propaganda.[245] For much of the century, the region remained closed to Western influence.[246] Following the collapse of the USSR, the Donbass' identity grew increasingly localized.[247]

The city of Donetsk is an important symbol in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The city's main thoroughfare is Artem Street, named after Fyodor Sergeyev, a Russian revolutionary who is considered by many to be the founding father of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog (DKR) Soviet Republic.[248] The DKR Republic was a self-declared political entity that briefly existed in 1918. Despite its short existence and total lack of recognition among *de jure* states, the history of the DKR Republic was revived as part of the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 in order to help legitimize the DPR. Indeed, the legacy of the DKR Republic is so important that on February 5, 2015, the

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[243] For example, according to Osipian (2015), this identity is based on "a sense of belonging to a community forged through the industrialization and urbanization of the Donets coal basin from the 1860s onwards" rather than on ethnic factors or an idealization of traditional culture. Alexandr Osipian, "Historical Myths, Enemy Images, and Regional Identity in the Donbass Insurgency (Spring 2014)," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1(1) (2015), pp. 109-140, at p. 128. According to Wilson (2016), the region's identity is ideologically distinct from both Soviet socialism and Ukrainian nationalism. See Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68(4) (2016), pp. 631-652, at p. 637.

[244] This manifested in the myth that "the Donbass feeds the whole country."

[245] Osipian (2015), p. 128.

[246] Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, 1995, p. 1.

[247] For example, between 1994 and 2004 the number of people in the city of Donetsk who identified most strongly with a Donbas regional identity (as compared to a Soviet, Ukrainian, or other social identity) rose to nearly 70%. Wilson (2016), p. 638.

[248] Siegelbaum and Walkowitz, 1995, p. 3.

DPR legislature adopted a Memorandum that declared the DPR to be the legal successor to the DKR Republic and Fyodor Sergeyev to be the DPR's founding father.[249]

The separatist media of the DPR included four newspapers that were published in the city of Donetsk in 2014-15. Donetsk is within 30 km of the line of contact with Ukrainian armed forces, thus all four Donetsk-based newspapers were published near conflict-related fighting. According to the East View database, three of these newspapers were sponsored by entities affiliated with the Donbass People's Militia. *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* (which translates to *The Combat Flyer of New Russia*) was a limited-distribution publication founded by the Political Division of the Headquarters of the Donbass People's Militia. The final analysis included two issues published monthly in summer 2014. *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* (which translates to *The Combat Banner of Donbass*) was a limited-distribution publication founded by the First Army Corps of the Donbass People's Militia and was intended to boost the morale of combat participants. It had a print-run of 2,550 copies. The final analysis included four issues published bi-weekly between November and December 2014.[250] *Novorossiya* (which translates to *New Russia*) began publication in May 2014. It is the newspaper of the New Russia political party and covers local, regional, and political matters of interest to Donetsk residents. The final analysis included a total of 61 issues published weekly between May 21, 2014 and December 30, 2015.[251] Finally, *Donetsk Vechernii* (which translates to *Evening Donetsk*) was a rebel-produced, weekly version of a daily newspaper that originally began publication in Donetsk in 1973. It had a print-run of 8,000 copies. The final analysis included 12 issues that were published from late fall to early winter 2015. All four

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[249] See *Novorossiya* #21 p. 8.
[250] The Editor-in-Chief of *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* was Danil Koretsky.
[251] The Editor-in-Chief of *Novorossiya* was Dmitry Dezortsev.

newspapers featured news and information about political developments in the Donetsk region, and two of the papers included listings for regional Russian-language television programs.[252]

Content of Separatist Media: National Symbols

The four newspapers from the DPR region feature a variety of national and nationalist symbols that were widely displayed across the media. For example, the Ribbon of St. George featured as the main component of the design motif of every page of *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* and *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*; the coat of arms of the city of Donetsk featured as part of the design motif on the cover page of *Donetsk Vechernii*; and the Novorossiya flag featured as the main component of the design motif of every page of *Novorossiya*.[253] National symbols were displayed as component parts of stories and in advertisements.

Across the four papers, the most widely seen national symbol was the flag and coat of arms of the DPR with nearly 150 displays, followed by the flag and coat of arms of Ukraine with over 100 displays. There were also approximately 75 displays each of the Novorossiya flag, different symbols of Russian-Soviet civilization, and images which featured the Ribbon of St. George in various ways, and there were around 30 displays each of symbols of Donbass civilization and the flag of the Russian Federation.

Recall from chapter two that the DPR national flag originally came into being more than 20 years before the declaration of the DPR on April 7, 2014. The 'Donbass (blue-red-black) tricolor' flag was created by the International Movement for Donbass and first displayed on October 8, 1991, at a meeting in which attendees demanded self-government and economic independence for the Donbass region and legal protections for the Russian language.[254] This flag

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[252] I note that one issue of *Donetsk Vechernii* had two missing pages.
[253] Thus, when accounting for all displays of national symbols (including those displayed as part of newspaper design motifs), the most widely displayed symbol across the separatist media of the DPR was the Novorossiya flag.
[254] See *Novorossiya* # 48 p. 3.

was supposedly based off of the flag of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1950-91) but with

an addition of a black stripe on the bottom section of the flag.[255] In 2014, this flag became the basis

for the DPR flag. However, the order of the colors proved problematic. For example, the colors of

black and red were purposely separated by the color blue so as not to have any associations with

the 'Bandera flag' of Ukraine's Right Sector faction. The flag was supposedly displayed in public

in 1997[256], however, it was not until late 2013-14 that displays of the DPR flag began to circulate

widely. Throughout 2014-15, the DPR flag was altered to switch the order of the colors (with the

black color moved from the bottom to the top) and to include a coat of arms inspired by Russia's

coat of arms and featuring an illustration of the Archangel Michael in the center.[257] Over time,

multiple versions of the DPR flag came to exist—some with Cyrillic text on the bottom portion of

the flag that says "Donetsk People's Republic" or "Donetsk Republic, and some without any

text.[258]

The origin of the Novorossiya flag is no less complicated than the origin of the flag of the

DPR. Novorossiya is a concept that refers to numerous things, including: a historical region of the

Russian Empire located in present-day southeast Ukraine; a proposed confederation of mostly

stillborn or non-existent separatist republics with DPR and LPR); a proposed confederation

between DPR and LPR; a political party that was sanctioned by the U.S. Department of the

Treasury in December 2014); a separatist-produced newspaper; and, perhaps most importantly, a

brand that emerged as part of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.[259] Indeed, the Novorossiya brand

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[255] See *Novorossiya* # 1 p. 7.
[256] See *Novorossiya* # 48 p. 3.
[257] The choice of Russia's coat of arms as a source of inspiration was because it was a recognizable symbol. See *Novorossiya* # 48 p. 3.
[258] I note that in recent years, the flag has changed yet again with the deletion of the coat of arms in the center and text at the bottom. In other words, the current iteration of the flag of the DPR now looks more like the original International Movement for Donbass flag with the order of the colors altered.
[259] Indeed, according to Ieva Bērziņa, Russia has wielded the concept of "Novorossiya" similarly to how it has used the concepts of "Russian Spring," Russian Mir (Russian World), and Russian civilization (particularly Russian

accomplishes two things: it helps to define an ideology to motivate separatists; and it helps to create and maintain an enemy/adversary image in the state of Ukraine.[260] For Russia, the brand also helps to imbue legitimacy into proposed territorial claims against the state of Ukraine because it has a double meaning (i.e., it represents, on the one hand, the historical Novorossiya region of the Russian Empire and, on the other hand, the contemporary Novorossiya political project (which, in reality, does not correspond to the territories of historical Novorossiya).[261] The Novorossiya flag and coat of arms emerged from an online contest in May 2014 during the early days of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.[262] The winning flag design was based off the flag of the Russian Navy, however, like the flag of the DPR, the Novorossiya flag has undergone revisions and there are multiple versions of the flag in existence, including some that are red with a blue cross running from corner to corner, and others that also include the Novorossiya coat of arms in the center.

Within the media of the DPR, all three varieties of national symbols were widely displayed. However, there was substantial variation in the display of some varieties of symbols among the newspapers. For example, symbols of status quo identity (Ukraine out-group) were published frequently in *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* and *Novorossiya* (the newspaper) but did not appear at all in *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* and *Donetsk Vechernii*. This variety of symbols typically included the flag and coat of arms of Ukraine, the flag of Ukraine's Right Sector faction, and cartoon depictions of Ukrainian politicians and Ukraine's western allies. The vast majority of displays of status quo

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culture and language) as part of various information warfare efforts. Thus, as a brand, Novorossiya communicates different things: it helps to mobilize allies; it antagonizes adversaries; and it implies a territorial claim against the state of Ukraine. See Ieva Bērziņa, "Branding Novorossiya," *Strategic Review* 10 (October 2014), pp. 1-15, at p. 4.

[260] Bērziņa (2014), p. 5.

[261] Bērziņa (2014), p. 7. I note that since 2016 the brand has withered and the political party has lost all but disappeared.

[262] Bērziņa (2014), p. 10.

identity symbols were overtly negative[263] and typically accompanied stories that were negative in tone towards Ukraine and its allies.

Symbols of intermediate identity (Donbass region in-group) were the most commonly displayed variety of national symbol across the four newspapers published in the DPR. Indeed, in three of the four newspapers published in Donetsk, intermediate identity symbols were more widely displayed than the combination of status quo and prospective symbols. As previously mentioned, the most commonly displayed intermediate identity symbols were associated with the DPR (i.e. the national flag and coat of arms)—indeed, there were almost twice as many displays of this DPR symbolism as there were displays of the Novorossiya flag and coat of arms. Other symbols of the Donbass region also featured prominently in *Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii*. These included images of the clock at the Main Post Office (a symbol of Donetsk which was originally completed in 1962 and restored in late 2015[264]), coal and coal miners, images of Fyodor Sergeyev (the founding father of the DKR[265]), crests and coats of arms of local towns from the Donbass region, local schools and industries, and other regionally-significant imagery (i.e., International Movement for Donbass (IDA), Mertsalov Palm, significant figures with ties to the Donbass region). Interestingly, among the least common national symbols displayed in the four Donetsk-based newspapers was the LPR flag and coat of arms.[266]

Symbols of the prospective identity (Russia in-group) were also commonly displayed in all four newspapers. Particularly in the limited-distribution militia publications (*Boevoi Listok Novorossii* and *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*), prospective identity symbols were as common or more

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[263] See appendix for visual examples.
[264] See *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 7.
[265] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #9 p. 3 and #22 p. 12.
[266] Indeed, displays of the flag and coat of arms of the LPR were so uncommon that there were more than twice as many displays of memorials to the 2014 conflict in the Donbass region (22) than there were displays of LPR symbolism (10).

common than intermediate identity symbols. Although they were less common in *Novorossiya* and

Donetsk Vechernii, they still featured prominently. The most frequently displayed symbols within

this variety of symbols included GPW-related symbols, symbols of Russian and Soviet civilization

and the Ribbon of St. George. GPW-related symbolism appeared most frequently in three of the

four newspapers (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*, *Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii*), particularly

around the GPW-related holiday Victory Day (May 9) and around Russia's Unity Day holiday

(November 4). Displays typically included images of veterans wearing medals, important GPW-

related figures[267], monuments (such as the destroyed Savur-Mohyla monument complex as well

as commemorative symbols like the Victory Bell), museums, and other symbols from the war era

(i.e., portraits of veterans in their youth). Displays of symbols of Russian and Soviet civilization[268]

and the Ribbon of St. George also featured prominently. Indeed, in the two militia publications,

the most commonly displayed symbol was the Ribbon of St. George. Beyond featuring in the

design motif at the top of each page of these papers, the Ribbon appeared in nearly every image

that depicted militia fighters, who typically wore it on clothing. The Ribbon was even

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[267] These included Yuri Levitan (announcer for the Soviet Information Bureau during the GPW); Sergey Biryuzov (Marshal of the Soviet Union / Hero of the Soviet Union); Nikolai Vatutin (Army General / Hero of the Soviet Union); Nikolai Kuznetsov (NKVD agent / Hero of the Soviet Union); Peter Zverkov (pilot / Hero of the Soviet Union); Ivan Chernyakhovsky (Army General / Hero of the Soviet Union); Fyodor Tolbukhin (Marshal of the Soviet Union / Hero of the Soviet Union); Anton Vladychansky (Major General); and Alexander Matrosov (Private / Hero of the Soviet Union). I note that, in addition, there were numerous discursive (i.e., non-visual) references to other GPW-related figures. These are discussed in the third section of the chapter.

[268] These included symbols from the era of Kievan Rus (e.g., Battle of Kulikovo); symbols from the era of the Russian Empire (e.g., Times of Troubles, Russian bathhouses, Alexander Suvorov (military leader), Fyodor Ushakov (Russian naval commander), Alexander Pushkin (poet), Sergei Yesenin (poet), Anton Denikan (Russian Lieutenant General), Far East Republic crest and various medals); symbols from the era of the Soviet Union (e.g., USSR flags, medals, and hammer and sickle, Miner's Day (celebrated in Russia and Ukraine), the Stakhanov movement, Vladimir Lenin (including statues of Lenin), Aleksandr Khanzhonkov monument (the founder of Russian cinematography), the Motherland Calls monument (which commemorates the heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad), Vyacheslav Tikhonov (actor), the Soviet war in Afghanistan war (i.e. veterans, medals, tanks and memorials), the Soviet bear, the Soviet version of Santa Claus (in celebration of the New Year's holiday), and May Day flags (an international holiday celebrated in the Soviet Union); and symbols of the Russian Federation, it allies and other symbols from the contemporary era (e.g., Russian Federation flag, Russian Ruble, Vladimir Putin (Russian Federation president), Sergey Glazyev (politician), 2008 Georgia War memorial, imagery related to the Day of Defender (February 23) holiday, the Russian Spring, and the flags for Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Russian-protected de facto breakaway states).

superimposed onto one image, ostensibly, to make focal point of the image (an illustration of an attractive female in possession of an AK-47) appear more patriotic.[269] In the other newspapers (*Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii*), the Ribbon was also shown painted on walls, displayed on flags, and even incorporated into remembrances of fallen fighters, holiday-related symbolism (e.g., Victory Day) and some displays of the Novorossiya flag. These newspapers also featured over two dozen displays of the Russian Federation flag (as well as one display of the imperial era-flag of the Russian Empire), and over a dozen displays of symbols of Orthodox Christianity (i.e., images of the Orthodox bible, churches, statutes and clergy).

Compared to the newspapers published in the LPR, the DPR newspapers were unique in several ways. First, national symbols of all varieties were displayed much more frequently in the newspapers in the DPR than in the LPR. National symbols were regularly incorporated into design motifs, shown at public rallies in support of the DPR and at DPR government functions, and some symbols were even treated like marketable brands to sell books, advertise radio, and encourage people to support the militia. The DPR papers were also more likely than the LPR papers to visually depict Ukraine and its allies negatively. Indeed, numerous displays of the flags of Ukraine and the Right Sector faction were visually associated with Nazi symbolism and accompanied stories which argued that Ukraine had succumbed to fascism. Ukraine's western allies were also portrayed in this way.[270]

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[269] See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #4 p. 3. I note that this was discovered by accident. Recall that the separatist newspapers were sourced from the East View Online database. The newspapers were saved in PDF format. In the course of going through the PDFs to log displays of symbols and save the images in a separate file, I discovered that one image copied with the Ribbon absent. Further investigation revealed that an image of the Ribbon of St. George had been pasted onto the image (thus, there were two images where there appeared to be one). See the conclusion for a visual example of this.

[270] For example, multiple stories discussed Bulgaria, a NATO member, and its troubled relationship with the Russian Empire and the USSR in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These stories highlighted how the Bulgarian Army turned on the Russian Empire during World War I (WWI) and gave material support to Nazi Germany during WWII. See *Novorossiya* #29 p. 3, #42 p. 5 and #60 p. 5, respectively. The United States, a founding member of NATO, was also criticized in various ways, including through the myth that President

Another difference between the papers published in the DPR and LPR is that the meanings of certain symbols were contested. For example, Taras Shevchenko, a nineteenth century Ukrainian writer and poet, was argued to be a controversial symbol in multiple stories in *Novorossiya*. These stories argued that Shevchenko could not be considered a nationalist Ukrainian symbol due to one of several reasons—because he wrote in the Russian language (instead of the Ukrainian language) in his personal diary[271]; because he only lived in Ukraine-proper for 15 years of his life and supposedly preferred to live in St. Petersburg, Russia[272]; or because some of Shevchenko's works included calls to violence.[273] The demoting of Shevchenko from Ukrainian hero to Russian writer ostensibly helps to buttress the notion that Ukraine is not truly independent from Russia. Interestingly, however, Shevchenko remained a highly regarded figure in the newspapers published in the LPR.

The meaning of the DPR flag was also highly contested. For example, one story showcased Alexander Zakharchenko, the leader of the DPR between 2014-18, defining the flag colors as representing specific things—that is, the black color represented the coal of the Donbass region; the blue color symbolized the spiritual unity of the people; and the red color symbolized the valor and blood spilled by the 'heroes' that fought in support of the DPR.[274] However, another story argued that the black color could additionally symbolize Orthodox religion or fertile soil[275], while a different story argued that the blue color could symbolize the Azov and Black Seas or the skyline

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Roosevelt knew the Japanese Armed Forces would attack Pearl Harbor and allowed it to happen in order to get the US into the war (*Novorossiya* #30 p. 4). The United States was also criticized for its treatment of Native Americans throughout its history (*Donetsk Vechernii* #10 p. 1). Indeed, one story compared US policy towards Native Americans to Adolf Hitler's actions during WWII (*Novorossiya* #56 pp. 4-5).

[271] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #17 p. 3.

[272] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #18 p. 4.

[273] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #27 p. 5.

[274] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 1.

[275] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 8; see also *Novorossiya* #65 p. 6.

of the Donbass when it is lit by the lights of factories operating at nighttime.[276] In short, multiple meanings for the DPR flag's colors abounded throughout the media and even among some DPR leaders, which suggests that the DPR flag, in fact, has no meaning at all. In addition, acclaim for the flag's design (particularly, the inclusion of the color black) was far from universal among the population surveyed by the DPR newspapers.[277]

Similarly, the meaning of the Novorossiya flag was far from clear.[278] The flag ultimately chosen to represent the Novorossiya political project depicted the St. Andrew's Cross with a red background. The flag was said to represent different things—a connection between the red banner of the Great Victory in the GPW and the flag of the Russian Navy (a blue cross on white cloth that was designed by Peter the Great); Andrew the Apostle, who supposedly symbolizes the spiritual unity among all the people of the lands of the historic Russian Empire (i.e., all the lands between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea) as well as the civilizational choice of Eastern Slavs. The St. Andrews Cross was said to be a reference to multiple things, including separatist or 'federalist' movements that have used the Cross as part of their symbolism (such as the Confederate States of America (1861-65)) as well instances when the flag was flown during historical battles.[279]

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[276] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #12 p. 4 and #48 p. 3. I note that the DPR flag's colors are also similar to the flag of both the Russian Empire and the Russian Federation. Similarly, the DPR coat of arms—a two-headed eagle with a shield with a picture of the archangel Michael—is similar to the Russian Federation's coat of arms (i.e., a two-headed eagle with a shield). See *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 8. I note this story also discussed the evolving nature of national symbols over time. The author of the story justified the evolution of the DPR's coat of arms by comparing it to Russia's coat of arms, which was periodically altered over a dozen times across its history.

[277] Indeed, one story highlighted how a Donbass citizen begged DPR authorities to remove the black color from the top of the flag because, according to her, the color symbolizes mourning. She also pointedly remarked that coal did not fall from the sky. Interestingly, Denis Pushilin, the speaker of the DPR parliament, agreed with the resident and stated his own reservations with the black color (to him, the color black symbolized bowels). Pushilin suggested that the black color should be at the bottom, with red in the middle and blue on top. See *Donetsk Vechernii* #12 p. 4.

[278] This may be related to the flag's origins. For example, one story showed the flag existing as little more than an idea among a small group of politically-motivated Ukrainian citizens with separatist sentiments until Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation breathed legitimacy into the concept of historical Novorossiya when he invoked it as part of a call-in television show on April 17, 2014. However, at that point the concept was still supposedly devoid of an agreed-upon symbolism. According to Pavel Gubarev, the Novorossiya flag was, first and foremost, intended to be a widely recognizable symbol. See *Novorossiya* #5 p. 4.

[279] Indeed, the red background is said to be part of a long tradition of battle flags. According to Gubarev, the red color represented the flags that warriors of Kievan Rus' carried into battle as well as the flags of the Teutonic

Finally, some of the newspapers published in the DPR highlighted supposed connections between the short-lived DKR Republic and the DPR, ostensibly, to legitimize the separatist movement. For example, one story that was published in *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* (and republished in *Novorossiya*) excerpted a story that was originally published in 1918. In the contemporary re-publication of the original story, cleverly entitled "Echo of History," parallels were drawn between the original story's content (which discussed the Ukrainian central government's attempt to "invade" the Donbass region during the turmoil that followed the Russian Revolution in 1917) and events from the contemporary Ukraine-Russia conflict.[280] However, in the LPR-based newspapers the DKR Republic was not mentioned at all.

In sum, the DPR newspapers tended to display all varieties of national symbols—especially negative visual depictions of Ukrainian national symbolism—much more frequently than the papers published in the LPR. The DPR newspapers tended to show more symbols of the intermediate (Donbass) identity than the papers published in the LPR, but the meanings of some of these symbols were contested.

Content of Separatist Media: Themes

Another set of differences between the newspapers published in the DPR and LPR related to story content (i.e., featured themes, collective memories, myths, and rituals). In terms of negative themes, the DPR newspapers featured many more stories with references to fascism theme than the LPR papers—nearly one reference per page of media compared to less than one

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Knights carried into the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. The color red was also supposedly intended to reference the Zaporozhian Cossacks as well as courage and bloodshed during battle. See *Novorossiya* #5 p. 4.

[280] Indeed, one parallel noted similarities between the Ukrainian government's collaboration with Entente powers in 1918 and the Ukrainian government's alignment with Western powers (i.e., the EU and US) in the contemporary conflict (which insinuates that on both occasions Ukraine had invaded the Donbass region to satisfy the desires of "foreign" (Western European) powers). See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #2 p. 2 and *Novorossiya* #15 p. 5.

reference for every 10 pages of media.[281] However, gendering theme only showed up one newspaper (*Novorossiya*) in the DPR and in no newspapers published in the LPR. In terms of positive themes, three of the four papers (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*, *Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii*) featured references to claimsetting theme (in contrast, this theme rarely appeared in the newspapers published in the LPR). The DPR newspapers were similar to the newspapers published in the LPR in that they featured more stories with in-group culture theme than stories with personal honor theme. The two short militia publications had the highest per-page average of stories with personal honor theme of all the newspapers in the DPR and the LPR. This may have been due to the fact that, as militia publications, the papers frequently articulated what separatists were fighting for, and for many this revolved around family and 'homeland.' All four DPR newspapers featured nostalgia for the USSR and the Russian Empire's military achievements.

The four papers offered varying accounts of the early functions of the DPR 'state' apparatus. Three of the four DPR newspapers were sponsored by the Donbass People's Militia, and this influence shows up in these papers' overwhelming focus on the contemporary conflict. For example, regular updates on developments along the front lines were included in all three militia-sponsored papers (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*, *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* and *Novorossiya*). These papers featured interviews with militia members and rebel leaders who discussed their personal reasons for participating in the conflict. However, there were also important differences among the papers.

The two limited-distribution militia publications (*Boevoi Listok Novorossii* and *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa*) unsurprisingly tended to spotlight militia-related matters and conflict-related

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[281] For example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* featured numerous stories which 'othered' Ukraine, including by describing Ukraine in the past tense as a 'former' country now on the verge of civil war, as overrun by fascists and by labeling Ukraine as a historical enemy of the people of the Donbass region. There were even letters from local schoolchildren (and published in the papers) that urged fighters to not allow fascism to trample Orthodox Rus.

developments. The overall focus of these papers centered on the conflict, including the transformation of motley bands of separatists into organized armed forces[282] and the efforts made to restore law and order in the Donetsk region.[283] Some military-related Russian holidays were also publicized.[284] Both papers offered windows into the DPR project by spotlighting how militias were evolving to become an army in all but name[285] and concentrating on the kinetic dimension of the rebellion. These included updates from the front line and coverage of oath-taking ceremonies, claims made on cities and regions that were under control of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, interviews with militia members and discussions about the ideologies that motivated separatist fighters (such as the protection of the Orthodox religion[286]). Many stories featured ample amounts of morale-building rhetoric or displayed support for the DPR nationalist project in different ways.[287] One such display was the publication of important military-related dates and holidays from the Russian Empire, USSR and Russian Federation.[288]

Of the seven newspapers analyzed for the dissertation, none was more anti-Ukraine than *Novorossiya*. Like the two limited-distribution militia publications, *Novorossiya* was sponsored by

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[282] See, for example, *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #2 p. 2. Some stories also described the militias' preparations for onset of cold weather (i.e., stockpiling warm clothes, heating elements and fuel). See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 1 and #4 p. 1.

[283] See, for example, *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #1 p. 2 and *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 4, #3 p. 1 and #4 p. 2.

[284] These included Day of Lifting the Siege of Leningrad in 1944 (January 27), Day of the Military Intelligence Officer (November 5) and Day of Missile Forces and Artillery (which marks the day the Red Army began their successful counter-attack (Operation Uranus) in the battle of Stalingrad in 1942 (November 19).

[285] By (non)army, I am referring to the fact that the Minsk I agreements banned rebels from having an army. However, separatists maintained armed forces under the guise of those forces not technically constituting an army. Separatists justified this action by claiming that Ukraine only carries out the end of the agreements conditionally. See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 1.

[286] See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 3.

[287] For example, stories in *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* discussed how the symbols of the Novorossiya Army were inspired by the Armed Forces of the Russian Empire and the USSR (*Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #2 p. 2); stories in *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* highlighted public events geared around Russian and Soviet holidays— namely, the Day of the Military Intelligence Officer (November 5) and the Day of Missile Forces and Artillery (November 19) (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 pp. 2-3). Still others explained the creation of medals for military merit (*Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #1 p. 1 and #2 p. 2) or covered oath-taking ceremonies (which were typically held near monuments and/or in the presence of intermediate identity flags).

[288] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 1.

the Donbass People's Militia.[289] However, *Novorossiya* differed from the other militia-sponsored papers in several ways. For example, the length of the newspaper was longer (and even increased in length over the course of its publication); the paper discussed the history of the Donbass region and GPW more than all the other papers; the paper displayed national symbols of all varieties far more often the other papers; and the paper displayed the fascism theme more frequently than all of the other papers. One of the main individuals behind the *Novorossiya* newspaper is Pavel Gubarev, a separatist arrested on March 6, 2014 and released as part of a prisoner swap two months later on May 7. It was mere weeks after Gubarev's release from Ukrainian custody (and the DPR's and LPR's establishment following independence referendums) that the *Novorossiya* newspaper began publication.[290]

The *Novorossiya* newspaper focused extensively on conflict-related developments, particularly those concerning the now-abandoned Novorossiya political project.[291] The paper prominently featured Gubarev's faction of separatists and provided a platform for their voices to be heard.[292] The newspaper sought counteract 'Ukrainian propaganda' and disseminate the goals and ideology of the Novorossiya project.[293] The paper highlighted numerous Russian and Soviet

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[289] Indeed, all three militia-sponsored papers occasionally shared source materials for stories. See, for example, *Novorossiya* #62. p. 12. In other instances, some of the papers reprinted materials that had already been published by another paper.

[290] I note that approximately one year after these referendums, the project was put on hold in order to be compliant with the Minsk agreements. Gerard Toal and John O'Loughlin, "What people in southeast Ukraine really think of Novorossiya" *Washington Post* (May 25, 2015) (accessed February 14, 2020) < https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/25/what-people-in-southeast-ukraine-really-think-of-novorossiya/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.09ecf6ed981b >

[291] I note that the Novorossiya 'party' worked towards the creation of an independent, federal state of Novorossiya that was intended to include the DPR, LPR and other 'People's Republics'.

[292] Indeed, numerous stories focused on interviews with Gubarev which, ostensibly, were designed to legitimize him and the Novorossiya political party. I note that this is similar to stories in *Donetsk Vechernii* which appeared to be designed to legitimize other DPR leaders.

[293] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #36 pp. 1 and 3-4 as well as #57 p. 6. One of the main goals of the project was preparing the Donbass for future integration with Russia.

holidays, including many Days of Military Glory [294], and several DPR, Ukrainian and internationally-celebrated holidays, and even a few GPW-related anniversaries.[295] The paper also heavily promoted select aspects of Russian and Ukrainian history, particularly events that involved military achievements, influential battles and political leaders.[296]

Novorossiya's window into the trials of building and maintaining the DPR centered on showcasing leaders as legitimate as well as defining the DPR's[297] and Novorossiya 'confederative state' project's[298] ideological foundations. Indeed, the DPR's supposed adherence to the Minsk I and II agreements and the holding of elections were seen as key ways of imbuing legitimacy into the state.[299] Numerous stories portrayed Alexander Zakharchenko[300] and Pavel Gubarev[301] as important separatist leaders, who, along with other DPR leaders, kept in communication with the

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[294] Days of Military Glory are official Russian holidays that commemorate important victories by Russian troops in the Russian Empire's and Soviet Union's histories. Several were mentioned across various issues of *Novorossiya*, including Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23), Victory Day over the Teutonic Knights in the Battle on the Ice (April 18), the anniversary of the victory of the Teutonic Knights in the Battle on the Ice (1242) (April 18), Victory Day (May 9), the anniversary of victory of the Russian army over the Swedes in the Battle of Poltava (July 10, 1709), the anniversary of the victory of the Soviet army over Germany in the Battle of Kursk (August 23, 1943), the Day of the Battle of Borodino (September 8), the anniversary of victory of the Russian regiments, led by Grand Duke Dmitry Donskoy, over the Mongol-Tatar troops in the Battle of Kulikovo (September 8, 1380) (September 21) and the Day of the capture of the Turkish fortress Izmail by Russian troops (who were under the command of Alexander Suvorov (December 11 (22), 1790) (December 23).

[295] These included the International Day of liberation of Nazi concentration camps (April 11), the Day of Memory and Sorrow (the day when Great Patriotic War broke out in 1941) (June 22), the Day of Liberation of Stalino (September 8) and Liberation Day (liberation of Ukraine from Nazi Germany in 1944) (October 28).

[296] These included discussions of historical states (i.e., the Zaporozhian Sich (*Novorossiya* #9 p. 3, #41 p. 3, #61 p. 3 and #62 p. 4) and the Russian Empire (#60 p. 7)); historical battles and wars (i.e., the Battle of Kulikovo (#53 p. 7), the Battle of Poltava (#21 p. 5), the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) (#60 p. 5), World War I (#30 p. 4) and World War II (dozens of stories); historical leaders (i.e., Tsar Peter the Great (particularly his promotion of western influences) (#13 p. 3), Tsar Catherine the Great (#41 p. 3 and #64 p. 6) and Alexander Suvorov (#63 p. 6); and historical events (i.e., the Times of Troubles (#62 p. 4) and the Decembrist revolt (#65 p. 3)). One story even discussed the history of Russian *banyas* (i.e., bathhouses that date back 1,000 years) (#58 p. 7).

[297] See, for example, a story that discussed how the Orthodox Church was a key ideological ally in the DPR's state-building efforts (*Novorossiya* #41 p. 1).

[298] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #15 p. 3, #16 p. 5, #28 p. 1, #38 p. 3 and #66 p. 7.

[299] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #10 p. 1 and #11 p. 8.

[300] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #8 p. 6, #17 p. 7, #18 p. 3, #22 p. 1, #53 p. 2 and #63 p. 2.

[301] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #18 p. 7, #27 p. 3, #30 p. 3 and #64 p. 3. Some stories also showcased Gubarev explaining how the Party of Regions betrayed the people of the Donbass region (#3 p. 4 and #5 p. 7) or why he was blocked from joining the DPR government (#5 p. 8).

population about problems and the actions taken to address them.[302] Many stories dealt with the

restoration of services and steps being taken to stabilize the economy.[303] Others covered the more

mundane aspects of running the DPR state administration[304], including the creation of laws[305] and

special programs meant to ameliorate hardship for the people of the region.[306] Still others discussed

the hoped-for return of trade unions to the region[307] or acted as platforms to speak against other

factions[308] and Ukraine's oligarchy[309], including particular ire for specific Ukrainian politicians[310]

and the oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov[311] and Igor Kolomoyskyi.[312]

The re-launched *Donetsk Vechernii* focused on developments concerning Donetsk (the city

in which the newspaper was published). The paper prominently featured DPR leaders and

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[302] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #13 p. 1, #14 p. 5, #15 p. 1, #19 pp. 4-5, #25 p. 2, #27 p. 6, #33 pp. 2-3, #34 p. 3, #36 pp. 4 and 8, #37 p. 2, #38 p. 2, #42 p. 6, #49 p. 6, #50 pp. 2 and 6, #56 p. 12, #57 p. 8, #67 p. 2 and #68 p. 1.

[303] See, for example, stories about access to natural gas (*Novorossiya* #12 p. 5, #31 p. 2 and #59 p. 2); restoration of water and electricity (#26 p. 1 and #60 p. 2), social facilities (#35 p. 1), educational facilities (#38 p. 12) and armored vehicles (#33 p. 6); the nationalization of businesses (#16 p. 2, #34 p. 3 and #58 p. 3); the establishment of temporary housing (#12 p. 7); and efforts to get trains online (#20 p. 8), mail delivery resumed (#29 p. 5) and the coal mining industry operational (#14 p. 1, #16 p. 4, #52 p. 8 and #58 p. 8). Stories also discussed the financial issues the DPR faced with respect to agriculture and exports. For example, one story discussed how unexploded ordinance negatively affected agriculture (#52 p. 2). Another story discussed how the Donbass was locked out of the SWIFT international payment system, thus it was only possible to export products via third countries as a workaround to sanctions (#64 p. 1).

[304] See, for example, stories about fire safety (*Novorossiya* #19 p. 11, #30 p. 8, #33 p. 8, #34 p. 8, #48 p. 8, #50 p. 8), health and disease prevention (#32 p. 8), help with employment (#33 p. 10), gun registration (#37 p. 4) and procedures for obtaining driver's licenses (#49 p. 6) and diplomas (#20 p. 7).

[305] See, for example, stories about laws that announced militia orders (*Novorossiya* #6 p. 1, #7 p. 4, #35 p. 5, #60 p. 7); DPR laws (#11 p. 1, #28 p. 3, #41 p. 1, #49 p. 9, #65 p. 8), including laws on new DPR holidays (#48 p. 7) and 'laws' of Novorossiya (#15 p. 4); and a story about the LPR ratifying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (#24 p. 7). There were also numerous stories about safety around mines (#11 p. 5, #37 p. 6 and #48 p. 8), how to pay utilities (#13 p. 2), pensions (#16 p. 1, #30 p. 2, #41 p. 5, #48 p. 8 and #51 p. 7) and licenses being issued for oil and gas facilities (#26 p. 2).

[306] See, for example, stories on the Republican Bread assistance program (*Novorossiya* #35 pp. 2 and 8), humanitarian aid from Russia (#15 p. 5, #27 p. 2, #31 p. 6 and #56 p. 3), Russian diplomas for graduates from Donbass schools (#30 p. 2), new textbooks for students (#17 p. 5, #51 p. 5 and #56 p. 3) and reduced cost of medicines for veterans and pensioners (#63 p. 4). However, I note that there were implicit limits on the amount of aid Russian could give the Donbass. For example, one story described Russia supporting the Donbass while maintaining the reservations of a step-mother. See *Novorossiya* #18 p. 5.

[307] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #15 p. 9 and #37 p. 3.

[308] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #52 p. 3 and #64 pp. 1 and 3.

[309] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #7 p. 2, #10 p. 2, #56 p. 2 and #58 pp. 1 and 3.

[310] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #3 p. 7.

[311] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #3 p. 7, #10 p. 2 and #26 p. 6.

[312] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #1 p. 4 and #2 p. 1.

promoted the DPR in different ways, including games about knowledge of the history of the Donetsk region[313], public events geared around celebrating Donetsk's history and familiarizing people with the DPR[314], and celebrations of 'new' official (and unofficial) DPR holidays which often were revivals of holidays originally celebrated during the Soviet era.[315] Russian, Orthodox and internationally-celebrated holidays were also mentioned across various issues of the newspaper.[316] Like *Novorossiya*, *Donetsk Vechernii* demonstrated the importance of sports to the Donetsk region and covered important developments in the contemporary conflict.[317] Information on the conflict typically came from Donetsk municipal and DPR national leaders.

Donetsk Vechernii's window into the trials of building and maintaining the DPR state centered on the functions of running the Donetsk city and the DPR 'national' administrations as well as lawmaking.[318] By the time the newspaper relaunched in October 2015, the DPR was

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[313] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 5.

[314] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 3, #2 pp. 1 and 8 and #5 pp. 5, 8-9, and 15, #9 pp. 8 and 14, and #14 p. 6.

[315] These included New Year's Day (January 1), Orthodox Christmas Day (January 7), International Women's Day (March 8), International Workers' Day (May Day) (May 1), Day of the Donetsk People's Republic (May 11), Day of Liberation of Donbass (September 8), World Teacher's Day (October 5), Flag Day of the DPR (October 25), Day of the Motorist (last Sunday in October), Police and Internal Affairs Servicemen's Day (November 10), Day of Taxation and Customs (November 20), Day of the Ribbon of St. George (December 6), the Day of Miracles (December 19) and Energy Day (December 22).

[316] These included several Russian Days of Military Glory (i.e., Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23), Victory Day over the Teutonic Knights in the Battle on the Ice (April 18), Victory Day (May 9) and the anniversary of the Day of the military parade on Red Square in Moscow in 1941 (which commemorated the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 (November 7)); numerous Orthodox anniversaries and international holidays (i.e., International Women's Day (March 8), International Workers' Day (May Day) (May 1), Day of Peace (September 21), World Heart Day (September 29), World Teacher's Day (October 5), International Black Sea Day (October 31), International Day of the Blind (November 13), International Day Without Smoking (the third Thursday in November), World AIDS Day (December 1), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), and Human Rights Day (December 10)), and important historical dates for the Donbass region.

[317] For example, one story advertised then-upcoming elections as a means to legitimize DPR leaders (*Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 2); one story advertised the first international sports competition to be held in the DPR (*Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 15); one story discussed a bill to create DPR 'state awards' for DPR citizens that help build the state (*Donetsk Vechernii* #8 p. 3); and one story discussed the creation of new traditions (like Flag Day of the DPR (October 25) and Day of the Ribbon of St. George (December 6) (*Donetsk Vechernii* #12 p. 3).

[318] For example, one story discussed the creation of a family code based on the Family Code of the Russian Federation (*Donetsk Vechernii* #2 p. 3); a couple of stories discussed sanctions that DPR leaders applied to Ukrainian leaders and businessmen (#3 p. 3 and #56 p. 2); one story discussed laws related to television and advertising (#6 p. 3); one story discussed the procedures for leasing land (#11 p. 7); and numerous stories discussed

nearing the one-year anniversary of its November 2014 parliamentary elections. Multiple DPR leaders were profiled by the paper, including then-head of state of the DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko[319], and then-mayor of Donetsk, Igor Martynov[320], and numerous stories noted measures that DPR leaders had taken (or were taking) to stabilize the situation in Donetsk and surrounding regions. These included repairing infrastructure; clearing unexploded ordinance[321]; preparing the city for the onset of cold weather[322]; taking steps to stabilize the economy[323], such as switching the region's currency to the Russian Ruble, opening a national bank, creating a tax system and securing sources for raw materials for industry; assistance with unemployment[324]; stabilizing gas supplies[325], food supplies and/or the price of food[326]; ensuring the timely payment of pensions[327] and mail delivery[328]; and making general improvements to the city and region.[329] In addition, multiple stories thanked Russia for the humanitarian aid it provided to the DPR region, and several stories noted how separatists were adhering to the Minsk II agreement.

'Mythscapes' in the DPR: Reifying the Donbass' Separateness and Russia's Greatness

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the restoration of the clock at Donetsk's main post office. Some stories also showed legal changes could be instituted by the head of state by decree. See, for example, #13 p. 2.

[319] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #6 pp. 1-2. There were also several stories that showcased Zakharchenko giving speeches to citizens of the DPR imploring them to have faith in the future of the DPR and eventual integration with Russia.

[320] Indeed, multiple stories featured interviews with Martynov speaking about his meetings with citizens to assist in repairing homes (*Donetsk Vechernii* #1 pp. 4 and 12, #2 p. 4, #6 p. 4 and #10 p. 4) and infrastructure (#1 pp. 11-12, #6 pp. 5-6, #8 p. 4, #10 p. 3, #11 p. 4 and #12 p. 5). Other DPR leaders also held regular meetings with citizens to address problems. See, for example, #13 p. 5.

[321] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #2 p. 6.

[322] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 11, #2 p. 4 and #5 p. 2.

[323] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 4, #6 p. 2, #7 p. 5, #8 p. 7, #9 p. 2, #11 p. 3, #13 p. 3 and #14 p. 3.

[324] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #2 p. 7 and #13 p. 6.

[325] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 11, #5 p. 4 and #8 p. 1.

[326] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 6, #2 p. 1, #6 p. 7, #12 p. 2 and #13 p. 4.

[327] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #2 p. 5, #7 p. 2 and #12 p. 1.

[328] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #12 p. 8.

[329] For example, cultural improvements (such as the establishment of an ice rink) were promoted (*Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 10), as were transportation-related improvements (including taxis resuming work (#7 p. 6) and a railway corridor being opened between Donetsk and Russia (#7 p. 7)).

The separatist newspapers published in the DPR deploy symbols and historical materials as part of mythscapes for legitimizing purposes. The key symbolic event in the Donbass region's 20th century history is the GPW experience, particularly the region's liberation by Soviet forces in 1943, and the memory of this event was leveraged by elites, ostensibly, to legitimize the contemporary separatist cause and help form a 'usable past' for the DPR project. Elites performatively invoked the memory of the GPW, including the 'Great Victory' myth and other historical materials, in different ways to present themselves as the rightful heirs of the victory over Nazi Germany (and, therefore, the proper guardians of the legacy of the 'Great Victory'). The memory was also performatively used by elites for nation-building purposes (i.e., to mobilize people by fostering patriotism toward the DPR and personalizing the contemporary conflict in Ukraine in terms of personal and family honor.[330] Such performances imbue meaning into the past (and the present) by redefining the boundaries of in-group and out-group identities and serving to construct 'enemy' images. Invoking the GPW in this way can thus get people to see the contemporary conflict as an extension of the GPW (i.e., as a fight against Ukrainian fascism rather than an out-growth of geo-political tensions between Russia and 'the West'), thus increasing the likelihood that people will take up arms to support the DPR. In short, the memory of the GPW gave DPR elites a potent instrument to manipulate the public's memories and stimulate mass emotions by combining history with an elite-sponsored political spectacle.

The preservation of the GPW memory occurred by being frequently recalled in the DPR media, celebrated at public events that were timed to coincide with existing and new holidays, and through the collective memories of veterans and pensioners who survived the war. The most public way the memory was preserved was through celebrations of important GPW-related anniversaries.

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[330] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #2 p. 1, *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #1 p. 1, *Novorossiya* #3 p. 5 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 7.

For example, three of the four papers publicized GPW-related holidays and anniversaries, including the International Day of liberation of Nazi concentration camps (April 11)[331], Victory Day (May 9), the Day of Memory and Sorrow (i.e., the day when Great Patriotic War broke out in 1941) (June 22)[332], the anniversary of the victory of the Soviet army over Germany in the Battle of Kursk (August 23)[333], the Day of Liberation of Donbass (September 8)[334], Liberation Day (for Ukraine) (October 28)[335] and the Day of Missile Forces and Artillery (November 19).[336] Numerous stories covered different types of commemorative events dedicated to the GPW.[337] At many of these celebrations, concerts and rituals were often incorporated into the festivities.[338] Three of the four papers also spotlighted Russian holidays, ostensibly, to help bind the Donbass with Russia.

The importance of the GPW was also reinforced through stories that invited citizens to visit local sites of significance. For example, dozens of stories discussed or referenced the Savur-Mohyla monument, a site located on important high ground that Soviet troops retook from German troops during the GPW.[339] As a symbol of collective identity, the destruction of this monument became an example of architectural scarring, a phenomenon that is argued to be capable of presenting a threat to a person's ontological security.[340] Indeed, the erection of monuments and

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[331] See *Novorossiya* #30 p. 7.
[332] See *Novorossiya* #41 p. 2.
[333] See *Novorossiya* #51 p. 6.
[334] See *Novorossiya* #9 p. 1 and #52 p. 1.
[335] See *Novorossiya* #59 p. 2.
[336] This Soviet holiday became the basis for a new DPR holiday. See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 3.
[337] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #35 p. 2, #36 p. 6, #37 p. 7, #53 p. 12, #59 pp. 2 and 6, #67 p. 6 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #11 p. 1. There were also numerous sporting events dedicated to Victory Day. See, for example, *Novorossiya* #31 p. 12, #32 p. 2 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #8 p. 15.
[338] For example, one story discussed how celebrations of the Day of the Military Intelligence Officer (November 5) included militiamen singing military and patriotic songs together. See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 2.
[339] These included discussions of Savur-Mohyla's significance during the GPW (*Novorossiya* #4 p. 3), the construction of the monument on the site after the war, the destruction of that monument during summer 2014, and even plans for new memorials at the site (*Novorossiya* #22 p. 2 and #31 p. 5).
[340] See Brent Steele, *Alternative Accountabilities in Global Politics: The Scars of Violence*. New York City: Routledge, 2013, pp. 131-132, 136-137.

memorials was a salient topic that was covered in multiple stories[341], as were advertisements for

museum exhibits dedicated to the GPW, GPW veterans and the Donbass region during the

GPW.[342] Often these types of stories included parallels between the suffering occurring in the

contemporary conflict and the suffering that occurred during the Nazi occupation of the

Donbass.[343]

The most common way the memory of the GPW was preserved was through the myth that

the current conflict was a continuation of the GPW struggle against fascism. While this myth

showed up across all four of the newspapers published in the Donetsk region, it was most often

seen in the militia-affiliated papers and was typically evoked through analogies to GPW-related

events, symbols and figures. For example, numerous stories recalled the March 1943 Khatyn

massacre when describing the events surrounding the trade-union building fire in Odessa, Ukraine

on May 2, 2014.[344] As was typical with other public events, celebrations of the one-year

anniversary of this event included rituals.[345] Another analogy involved the symbolism of 'Hero

Cities,' the honorary name awarded to twelve Soviet cities during the GPW and which included

the Ukrainian cities of Odessa and Sevastopol.[346] Hero Cities were referenced frequently in the

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[341] This includes memorials constructed in the LPR. See, for example, *Novorossiya* #35 p. 2 and #36 p. 7.

[342] See *Novorossiya* #15 p. 2, #16 p. 12, #17 p. 9, #24 p. 7, #25 p. 12, #28 p. 6, #34 pp. 4 and 12, #35 p. 3, #36 pp. 2 and 7, #41 p. 6, #50 pp. 3 and 8, #52 p. 7, #53 p. 12, #58 p. 2, #67 p. 6 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #10 p. 9 and #11 p. 5.

[343] See, for example a story that discussed an exhibition entitled "War Then, War Now," which focused on the liberation of Donetsk (Stalino) and featured a diorama about a day in the life of Donetsk during the GPW (*Donetsk Vechernii* #7 p. 8); see also stories about an exhibition "War in Miniature: Connections Between the Past and Present" (*Novorossiya* #20 p. 1, #21 p. 2, #22 p. 2 and #23 p. 2.

[344] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #16 p. 7, #18 p. 4, #29 p. 3, #31 p. 4, #32 p. 5, #33 pp. 6 and 12, #34 p. 7, #36 p. 5, #37 pp. 3-4 and #42 p. 5. Indeed, for many militia members, the trade-union building fire (in which dozens of anti-Maidan demonstrators burned alive) was the preeminent event that led them to take up arms against Ukraine during the spring and summer 2014.

[345] For example, one story described how a memorial rally was planned to include a concert as well as the laying of flowers and the lighting of candles in memory of the dead (*Novorossiya* #33 p. 6). Another story described different memorial events held across the world in 2015, including a street exhibition in Moscow that included a wall of pictures from the site of the fire and a bell that was struck 48 times in memory of those that perished in the fire and a rally in Toronto in which participants released dozens of black balloons into the air to memorialize the victims of the fire (*Novorossiya* #34 p. 7).

[346] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* # 3 p. 2 and *Novorossiya* #4 p. 5, #5 p. 8, #15 p. 10, #16 p. 7, #33 pp. 3 and 6, #34 p. 7, #35 pp. 3 and 6, #42 p. 12, #50 p. 6, #58 p. 9 and #62 p. 12.

separatist media and were even visually incorporated into the repainting of bus stops.[347] The most interesting examples of the use of this symbolism involved Ukrainian cities that were never designated as hero cities, including the cities of Debaltseve, Donetsk, Kherson, Kharkov, Slavyansk, and even the town of Ilovaisk.[348] Yet another analogy involved the creation of DPR and Novorossiya medals for military merit that were based on Soviet medals from the GPW era.[349] The DPR newspapers also featured stories that drew analogies to important individuals from the GPW era[350] and the role that miners played in resisting the Nazis and their collaborators.[351] Finally, parallels between particular years (e.g., 1941 and 2014[352], 1942 and 2015[353] and 1943 and 2015[354]) and other comparisons were also made.[355]

The memory of the GPW was also preserved through stories that focused on encouraging patriotism among young people.[356] Indeed, in all four newspapers published in the DPR the importance of reaching Donbass youth was evident in stories that attempt to teach children the importance of remembering the GPW in the context of resistance and defense of 'Motherland' and

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[347] The purpose of this project was to remind residents of their history. See *Novorossiya* #62 p. 12.

[348] I note that the battle for the town of Ilovaisk in 2014 was propagandized as a major victory by the Russian military. Shevchenko (2015).

[349] See *Boevoi Listok Novorossii* #2 p. 1, #2 p. 2 and *Novorossiya* #64 p. 6.

[350] See, for example, stories in *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* about militia fighters finding inspiration in Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Biryuzov's memoirs (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 pp. 2) and Yuri Levitan's GPW-era news broadcasts which inspired separatists to create their own radio broadcasts to disseminate information about the contemporary conflict (*Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #3 p. 4). See also a story in *Novorossiya* about Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a fighter in the GPW who was executed at age 18 and whose name was memorialized as the name of a street in Debaltseve (*Novorossiya* #42 p. 3).

[351] For example, one story described how mines had flooded during the contemporary conflict (similar to how mines were flooded during and after the GPW (*Novorossiya* #34 p. 1). Another story noted that miners in the Donbass in 2014 had to stop mining and take up arms to fight 'fascists' just as their ancestors did during the GPW (*Novorossiya* #52 p. 7).

[352] See *Novorossiya* #49 p. 4.

[353] See *Novorossiya* #25 p. 7 and #36 p. 3.

[354] See *Novorossiya* #24 p. 3.

[355] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #21 p. 3 and #34 p. 12, #35 p. 3, #36 p. 6, #38 p. 5 and #67 p. 5. See also a story about a public event in which GPW veterans met veterans from the contemporary conflict (*Novorossiya* # 35 p. 12).

[356] Indeed, as Fedor notes (2017: 30), this is a trend that has been seen among pro-Kremlin youth organizations in recent decades. One such organization—Nashi—used a sacralized memory of the GPW to legitimize the use of violence (or the threat of violence) in the aftermath of the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Julie Fedor, "Introduction: War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus," in Fedor et al., 2017, p. 30.

'Fatherland.'[357] It was also evident in the creation of military-patriotic education for youth, including the publicizing of library events[358] and museums dedicated to the GPW (particularly the Donbass' contribution to the war effort[359]), children's visits to Moscow[360] and other programs.[361] Some events even seemed to deliberately link the GPW experience with remembrances of the contemporary conflict.[362]

A second mythscape found in the DPR newspapers was built around defining a useful or appropriate history for the DPR (i.e. the in-group), ostensibly, for the purposes of legitimizing the DPR and constructing a DPR national community. In the process of defining such a history, elites selected certain materials while omitting others. Materials that were useful to the separatist project often involved events from the Russian Empire's and USSR's histories, particularly events that were associated with military achievements[363] and Russian civilizational figures[364], selective use of historical facts[365] and symbols that tied the Donbass region to Russia.[366]

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[357] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #2 p. 1. See also *Novorossiya* #51 p. 6.

[358] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #36 p. 6. Indeed, this event featured songs as well as a minute of silence in memory the dead. See also #53 p. 3

[359] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #34 p. 4. See also a story about an event where children identified 223 GPW-related names on a map of Donetsk (*Novorossiya* #35 p. 3). See also *Donetsk Vechernii* #10 p. 1 and #14 p. 3.

[360] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #51 p. 6. Indeed, this trip coincided with a Day of Military Glory (the defeat of the Nazis in the Battle of Kursk (August 23) as well as an event where children planted seedlings in honor of the 'heroes' of the DPR and LPR.

[361] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #64 p. 6.

[362] See, for example, story in *Novorossiya* that linked the GPW experience with commemorations of the dead militia fighters (whose deaths occurred at the Savur-Mohyla monument complex in summer 2014 (*Novorossiya* #41 p. 5).

[363] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #8 pp. 1-2.

[364] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #17 p. 3, #34 p. 5, #55 pp. 3-4, #57 p. 4 and #66 p. 5.

[365] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #1 p. 5, #16 p. 3, #25 p. 12, #35 p. 6 and #42 pp. 1 and 3.

[366] See, for example, a story about the Mertsalov "Palm," an important symbol of the Donbass region that was commissioned by John Hughes in 1895. The "Palm" was made by Alexei Mertsalov out of a railroad rail for the All-Russian Industrial and Art Exhibition (*Novorossiya* #58 p. 5). See also a story that discusses the Donbass' contribution to the development of the USSR and republishes a 1921 Soviet propaganda poster with the text "Donbass is the heart of Russia." (*Novorossiya* #65 p. 6).

This mythscape was constructed in different of ways. One way centered on reviving the history of the short-lived DKR.[367] Indeed, numerous stories discussed the DKR[368], including the myth that the DPR flag was based on the DKR Republic flag (I note that this is untrue).[369] Although the DKR Republic's existence was brief, unrecognized and essentially forgotten to history, its mythology helped to reify the idea that the Donbass region is different from Ukraine. It also helped to simplify the complexities of the contemporary conflict by propagating the myth that Ukraine has attacked the Donbass before when the reality is more complex. In this way, the symbolism of the DKR forms a foundation myth for the DPR that allows its leaders to argue that the region has been under threat for 100 years—first from Ukrainian nationalists, then from Nazis, and now from nationalist Ukrainian Nazis.[370]

Another way this mythscape was constructed was by defining the DPR's national values as being based around respect for Orthodox religion, Slavic ancestry[371] and Russian and Soviet military history.[372] Indeed, the symbolism of the USSR's Heroes of the USSR award was particularly important. Nearly two dozen Heroes of the USSR were referenced or profiled in the

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[367] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #21 p. 8.

[368] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* # 2 p. 2 and *Novorossiya* #1 pp. 5-6, #3 p. 4, # 9 p. 3, #12 p. 4, #15 p. 5, #16 p. 3, #21 p. 8, #22 pp. 1, 5 and 12, #30 p. 1, #33 p. 5, #34 p. 5, #35 p. 1, #61 p. 3 and #63 p. 3.

[369] I note that in a similar fashion, elites sought to link the contemporary Novorossiya political project with the historical region of Novorossiya (which existed during the Russian Empire) as well as Orthodox religion. For the former, see *Novorossiya* #9 p. 3 and #41 p. 3; for the latter, see *Novorossiya* #59 p. 3.

[370] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #36 p. 6.

[371] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #37 p. 7.

[372] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #13 p. 3, #24 p. 5, #31 p. 1, #50 p. 1, #58 p. 4 and #61 p. 3. I note that these symbols were nearly always treated with respect (with one exception being the contestation over Taras Shevchenko as an in-group symbol), and when they were seen to be under threat the tone of stories often expressed alarm or discontent. See, for example, unease expressed over Ukraine choosing to no longer celebrate Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23) (*Novorossiya* #25 p. 5); see also stories about the destruction of other in-group symbols (i.e., a museum to Hero of the USSR Nikolai Kuznetsov (*Novorossiya* #32 p. 4); a monument to Hero of the USSR Ivan Chernyakhovsky (#54 p. 7); and a monument to Vladimir Lenin (*Donetsk Vechernii* #6 p. 9). I note that this latter story was interesting in that it acknowledged communism as a debunked ideology and argued that while this made the Lenin statue lose significance as a Soviet symbol, it helped it gain significance as a symbol as "the heart of Donetsk."

newspapers published in the DPR, including a few that had schools named after them.[373] Multiple

stories also discussed how many of Donetsk's streets were named after Heroes of the USSR.[374]

The DPR's national values also included other symbolism from the Russian civilizational space,

including the Order of St. George[375] and national flags. Indeed, the presence of the national flag

of the in-group at important sites was seen to be meaningful and a symbol of independence and

sovereignty[376]; conversely, the loss or capture of the national flag of the out-group was viewed as

a disgrace[377] while its destruction was viewed as the symbolic destruction of an enemy.[378]

Yet another aspect of this mythscape involved invoking the existence of an existential

Ukrainian threat to the DPR. This was accomplished by visually and discursively maligning[379] and

delegitimizing Ukrainian symbols (such as by arguing they were truly Russian symbols[380]).

Indeed, several stories stated that Ukraine had no national heroes of its own[381] (and thus no history

of its own to celebrate) or claimed that Ukraine celebrated national heroes that were villains (i.e.,

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[373] These included Vladimir Antonov, George Beregovoi, Sergei Biryuzov, Ivan Chernyakhovsky, Ion Degen, Viktor Gorbatko, Dmitry Karbyshev, Joseph Kobzon, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Ivan Kozhedub, Nikolai Kuznetsov, Alexander Matrosov, Stepan Mikoyan, Pavel Rybalko, Ivan Tkachenko, Fyodor Tolbukhin, Nikolai Vatutin, Andrei Voloshin, Nikolai Zherdev and Pyotr Zverkov.

[374] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #35 p. 3, #57 p. 5 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #6 p. 2. Indeed, the latter story discussed how state classes were held for children in grades 1-11 in conjunction with the anniversary of DPR elections in November 2014. The purpose of these classes was to give children a patriotic education that builds respect for the Russian fatherland, and the children learned about the history of Donetsk, including the Heroes of the USSR that many of its streets are named after, as well as the history of the formation of the DPR.

[375] See *Novorossiya* #64 p. 6. The Order of St. George was established by Catherine II in 1769 for exceptional military feats, bloodshed and courage.

[376] See, for example, a story in which the DPR flag was unfurled atop Mount Athos (a site in Greece that is significant in Orthodox religion) (*Novorossiya* #31 p. 6), a story in which the battle flag of the Republican Guard of the DPR was presented at an oath-taking ceremony for militia members (#54 p. 12) and a story in which the DPR flag was celebrated at a public event in honor of the day of the flag of the DPR (*Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 1).

[377] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 2 and #2 p. 3.

[378] See, for example, a story in *Novorossiya* that recalled the 'final act' of the GPW—the Victory Parade held on June 24, 1945 which culminated in 200 USSR soldiers throwing 200 Nazi flags into the basement of Lenin's mausoleum (*Novorossiya* #34 p. 3).

[379] See, for example, a story in which Ukrainians were argued to have been traitors to Russians since the Times of Troubles (*Novorossiya* #62 p. 4).

[380] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #27 p. 4 and #58 p. 4. This occurred with Taras Shevchenko, who was argued to be a Russian symbol rather than a Ukrainian symbol. See *Novorossiya* #17 p. 3.

[381] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #18 p. 4 and #63 p. 5.

Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian national hero and Nazi collaborator; the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), a Ukrainian organization that was important during and after the GPW).[382]

Other stories argued that the Ukrainian language was not separate from the Russian language[383] or delegitimized historical events (such as the Holodomor) by arguing that Ukrainian educators brainwash children when they teach about the history of the event[384] or unfairly place responsibly for the immense loss of life on the USSR.[385] A couple of stories even argued that Ukraine was opposed to the Russian Orthodox civilization at large.[386] Finally, the Euromaidan was seen as another Western-sponsored "color revolution"[387], while post-Maidan Ukraine was discredited as representing a Western Ukrainian nationalism that was hostile to Russians[388], lacking legitimacy due to the way in which the previous government was overthrown[389], and even responsible for war crimes.[390] In short, Ukraine was routinely defined as an out-group symbol by being presented as an 'enemy,' ostensibly, to help sustain the myth that a (foreign) fascist Ukrainian threat exists and is intent on invading the Donbass and punishing its people. Similarly, the DPR newspapers defined Western symbols as out-group symbols, both visually and discursively (i.e., by comparing

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[382] I note that the OUN was founded in 1929 by radical Ukrainian nationalists. The OUN agitated for Ukrainian independence by committing acts of violence and terrorism before splitting into two factions, one composed of moderates (OUN-M) and one of militant nationalists led by Stepan Bandera (OUN-B). After the conclusion of the GPW, the OUN / UPA resisted the Soviet regime in western Ukraine until the 1950s. Yuliya Yurchuk, "Reclaiming the Past, Confronting the Past: OUN–UPA Memory Politics and Nation Building in Ukraine (1991–2016)," in Fedor et al., 2017, p. 131.

[383] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #60 p. 3 and #67 p. 3.

[384] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #55 pp. 6-7.

[385] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #64 p. 5.

[386] See, for example, *Boevoi Listok* #1 p. 1 and *Novorossiya* #54 p. 12.

[387] See, for example, *Boevoe Znamia Donbas* #2 p. 4.

[388] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #32 p. 3. Indeed, one story argued that Maidan was the manifestation of two decades of Russiophobia and hatred (#34 p. 5), while other stories argued that Ukrainians did not respect Russian writers and scientists (#35 p. 4) and other symbols like birch trees (which are considered a national symbol in Russia) (see #37 p. 3). Russiophobia was even argued to permeate throughout Ukraine's educational system (#55 p. 6).

[389] For example, there were more than 50 references to the 'former Ukraine', which was another way of saying it used to be a legitimate country but, as presently constituted, was illegitimate.

[390] See, for example, stories about the "Do Not Forgive, Do Not Forget" that sought to document supposed Ukrainian war crimes committed in the Donbass region in 2014 (*Novorossiya* #33 p. 2, #34 p. 7 and #56 p. 8).

Westernism in Russia since the time of Peter the Great to being like the herpes simplex virus[391] or arguing that the West has hated Russia for centuries[392]). These messaging appeals helped reinforce the notion that at stake in the contemporary conflict was a civilizational choice (European or Russian), with the Donbass making a definite choice in favor of the latter.[393]

Finally, despite the difficult environment the DPR faced in 2014-15, elites also presented the DPR as renewing and rebuilding the Donetsk region. This work was carried out in several ways. For example, numerous stories in *Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii* depicted national and municipal leaders working to rebuild infrastructure damaged by the conflict (including the repair of public facilities, apartment buildings, houses, businesses, monuments, temples, bridges, roads and communication lines).[394] DPR leaders also presented themselves as attempting to fight the influence of oligarchs[395] and helping to renew the Donetsk region's culture.[396] Indeed, numerous stories discussed the repair of the main clock of the city of Donetsk, which was viewed by DPR leaders as signifying the rebirth of the city and the beginning of a peaceful life.[397] The city's rebirth was also evident in the resumption of theatre performances[398] and sports competitions[399], the opening of museums and exhibitions dedicated to the remembering the contemporary conflict[400],

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[391] See *Novorossiya* #13 p. 3.
[392] See *Novorossiya* #34 p. 5. Even the Western media was argued to be anti-Russian and anti-separatist. See *Novorossiya* #8 p. 2.
[393] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #42 p. 6, #57 p. 1 and #68 p. 2.
[394] This was also represented in Igor Martynov's fall 2015 election slogan "Recovery, Development, Prosperity."
[395] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 2.
[396] See, for example the introduction of new holidays, such as the Day of St. George Ribbon (December 6) (*Donetsk Vechernii* #11 p. 1).
[397] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #60 p. 2, #62 p. 5 and #68 p. 5; see also *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 p. 7, #6 p. 4, #8 p. 9, #9 p. 9, #11 p. 4, #14 p. 1 and 6.
[398] See, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #6 p. 14.
[399] Indeed, sporting events were considered an important part of the development of the DPR state and regularly featured in *Novorossiya* and *Donetsk Vechernii*. Many of these stories featured Novorossiya, DPR and St. George flags near sports teams and trophies. See, for example, *Novorossiya* #33 pp. 7 and 12, #41 p. 12, #61 p. 12 and #68 p. 2 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 15, #2 p. 15, #5 p. 15, #6 p. 15, #7 p. 15, #8 p. 15 and #14 p. 14. Some competitions were even attended by DPR leaders. See, for example, *Novorossiya* #53 p. 12 and *Donetsk Vechernii* #1 p. 10 and #6 p. 15.
[400] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #17 p. 7, #18 p. 3, #21 p. 6, #25 p. 12, #36 p. 6 and #66 p. 2.

developments with education[401] and lawmaking[402], and public events.[403] When viewed together, the two mythscapes imply that the DPR's *de facto* independence is more or less permanent until the Donbass region can integrate with Russia.[404]

Conclusion

The papers published in the DPR featured numerous displays of national symbols of all varieties, negative themes (i.e., fascism and gendering), and references to Ukrainian oligarchs. There were numerous invocations of Soviet symbolism—particularly Heroes of the USSR, Hero Cities and important political, military and cultural figures from Russian and Soviet civilization.[405] There was also evidence of tension between the DPR and LPR.[406]

The next chapter presents a case study on the separatist media published in the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR).

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[401] See, for example, more attention being paid to physical education in school (*Novorossiya* #56 p. 3).

[402] These included the adoption of the Russian Ruble as the Donbass' main currency, new textbooks from Russia and new laws to protect the Russian language. For examples of the latter, see *Novorossiya* #60 p. 3 and #66 p. 5.

[403] These included commemorations of the DPR's half birthday (*Novorossiya* #11 p. 4) and the Day of the flag of the DPR (#12 p. 4 and #58 p. 8; *Donetsk Vechernii* #5 pp. 1 and 8); the opening of monuments, museum and library exhibits dedicated to history of the DKR (#22 pp. 1, 5 and 12 and #25 p. 12); and even an event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the International Movement for Donbass (#61 p. 3 and #63 p. 3). Many events included rituals, like the mass release of balloons in the colors of the St. George Ribbon at a rally timed to coincide with the Day of the St. George Ribbon (see, for example, *Donetsk Vechernii* #11 p. 1), or flag-waving and anthem-singing.

[404] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #68 p. 3.

[405] Interestingly, the symbolism of Hero Cities was mentioned frequently in the DPR papers but only mentioned twice in the papers published in the LPR (i.e., *Edinstvo* #19 p. 2 and *Zaria Donbassa* #9 p. 8). Similarly, there were at least 20 references to the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky in the papers published in the DPR. In contrast, Dostoevsky was only mentioned once in the papers published in the LPR (*Zaria Donbassa* #11 p. 6).

[406] For example, one story in *Novorossiya* discussed why the DPR and LPR had not unified by late 2015, and one of the reasons was that Lugansk elites were supposedly jealous of people from Donetsk. In the same article, a sense of betrayal and the feeling that the Donbass had been abandoned was also evident. See *Novorossiya* #59 p. 3.

Chapter 6 – Propaganda in the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR)

This chapter presents a case study on the separatist media of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR). In the first section of the chapter, I introduce the three separatist newspapers published in the Lugansk region in the cities of Lugansk and Sverdlovsk. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the content of these newspapers, including the national symbols and themes featured prominently across the papers. In section three, I discuss how symbols, collective memories, myths and rituals are used to construct 'mythscapes' that are ostensibly designed to inspire an emotional link between the contemporary conflict in Ukraine and a 'useable past' (as articulated by LPR, Lugansk and Sverdlovsk municipal leaders). Section four concludes the chapter.

Introduction

Situated along Ukraine's southeastern border with Russia, Lugansk Oblast is the easternmost region of Ukraine. The city of Lugansk is the administrative center of Ukraine's Lugansk Oblast. Like Donetsk, the city's growth was directly related to the growth of factories and industry over the late nineteenth century. The city was known as Voroshilovgrad between 1935-58 and again from 1970-90. Between July 1942 and February 1943, Lugansk was occupied by Nazi Germany. Like Donetsk, economic growth in the Lugansk region stalled after Ukraine gained its independence from the USSR in 1991.

Prior to spring 2014, there was no significant separatist movement that advocated for secession or autonomy from Ukraine in Lugansk Oblast. However, on April 27, 2014 (20 days after the proclamation of the DPR), the LPR declared independence from Ukraine, and on May 11, the LPR held a referendum on the declaration of independence. The result of this referendum was reported as over 96% in favor of independence. The next day, the LPR announced that in the short-term it would unite with the DPR as a confederative state (Novorossiya), however its long-

term goal was to join the Russian Federation. Although the LPR claims all of Lugansk Oblast, it controls only approximately half of the territory. Within this occupied territory, the LPR controls the administrative and security operations as well as the economy. The LPR also celebrates a number of 'official' holidays, including New Year (December 31 – January 2), Christmas Day (January 7), Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23)[407], International Women's Day (March 8), International Workers' Day / May Day (May 1), Victory Day (May 9), Day of the Lugansk People's Republic (May 12) and Unity Day (November 4). In addition, there are many unofficial holidays which are celebrated throughout the region.

The separatist media of the LPR included three newspapers that were published in Lugansk Oblast in 2014-15.[408] One newspaper (*Edinstvo*, published between January 9 and December 24, 2014 in the city of Lugansk) was within 30 km of the line of contact with Ukrainian armed forces, while the other two papers (*Zaria Donbassa* and *Vostochnyi Donbass*, published between January 1 and December 30, 2015 in the city of Sverdlovsk) were more than 30 km away from the line of contact, in the southeast portion of Lugansk Oblast close to the border with the Russian Federation. *Edinstvo* (which translates to *Unity*) was first published in 1999 as the regional weekly newspaper of the Federation of Trade Unions of Lugansk (and after May 2014, of the LPR). According to the East View database, the paper had a print-run of 2,000 copies. The final analysis included a total of 39 issues published in 2014. *Zaria Donbassa* (which translates to *The Dawn of Donbass*) was first published in 1938 as a weekly newspaper of Sverdlovsk. It had a print-run of 5,100 copies.[409] The final analysis included a total of 15 issues published between January 1 and April 8, 2015.

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[407] Defender of the Fatherland Day is one of Russia's a Days of Military Glory. The LPR celebrates other Days of Military Glory, including Victory Day and the Day of the military parade on Red Square.
[408] I note that publication dates for some of this media begins prior to the fall of the Yanukovych government and the breakout of hostilities in the Donbass in spring 2014.
[409] During its final run of publication, the Editor-in-Chief of *Zaria Donbassa* was Liudmila Savenkova.

This newspaper ceased publication in April 2015 and was merged with *Vostochnyi Donbass*. *Vostochnyi Donbass* (which translates to *The Eastern Donbass*) was published as a weekly newspaper of Sverdlovsk. The name of the newspaper changed several times throughout 2015, from *Zaria Vostochnogo Donbassa* to the shortened *Zaria Donbassa* and then to its final name. It had a print-run of 5,400 copies in 2014 and 7,600 copies in 2015.[410] The final analysis included a total of 38 issues published between April 15 and December 30, 2015. All three of the newspapers featured news and information about political developments in the Lugansk region, and many (but not all) issues of the papers also included listings for regional Russian-language television programs.[411]

Content of Separatist Media: National Symbols

Like the four newspapers of the DPR, the three separatist newspapers analyzed from the LPR region featured a variety of national and nationalist symbols. The most widely seen individual national symbol was the flag LPR—there was over three dozen displays of it compared to less than ten displays each of the flags of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, five displays of the Novorossiya flag and only one display of the flag of the DPR. However, despite a variety of national symbols displayed in the separatist media, the combined total display of national flags was less than displays of GPW-related symbols (over 60). There were also approximately 35 displays each of different symbols of Russian-Soviet civilization and images which featured the Ribbon of St. George in various ways. Finally, there were around 20 displays of symbols of Orthodox Christianity.

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[410] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #50 p. 7. After *Zaria Donbassa* merged with *Vostochnyi Donbass*, the newspaper sheet size increased and the page count lengthened from eight to 20+ pages.
[411] I note that all three newspapers had missing pages.

Underscoring the haphazard and rushed construction of the LPR, the national flag of the LPR underwent a number of revisions during its first year of existence.[412] Throughout spring 2014, two distinct versions of the LPR flag competed for dominance. The first design was similar to the DPR tricolor flag (with the color black symbolizing coal) but with the words 'Lugansk Republic' in place of 'Donetsk Republic' as well as different emblems.[413] The second flag design became the basis for the official LPR flag, however it also underwent a number of revisions between spring and November 2014. Like the first version of the LPR flag, the second design featured different variations that were created by supporters of secession from Ukraine. The second version of the flag (and its different iterations) tended to borrow heavily from the DPR flag with certain aspects altered (namely, the top color and the main emblem).[414] Thus, the LPR flag (as well as the proto-flags of the other sputtered breakaway republics) have a more cobbled-together character than the DPR flag.

Within the media of the LPR, symbols of the status quo identity (Ukraine out-group) were published infrequently in comparison to other national symbols. For example, in *Edinstvo* symbols of Ukraine's government (i.e., flag and coat of arms, and to a lesser extent Ukraine's currency (hryvnia), parliament (Verkhovna Rada) and Cabinet of Ministers buildings, and other governmental entities (e.g., Kyiv City Council of Trade Unions)) featured somewhat steadily from issues #1-26 but then mostly disappeared. Symbols of Ukraine's government did not feature at all

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[412] For example, prior to the LPR's proclamation on April 27, 2014, a number of competing designs for the LPR flag appeared on the internet, all of which were created by supporters of secession from Ukraine. This contrasts with the flag of the DPR (which had a comparatively more stable existence between spring 2014 and December 2015).

[413] I note that this flag design did not appear in any of the separatist newspapers in the LPR or the DPR.

[414] For example, the top color of the flags of other proposed 'People's Republics' often matched the colors of those regions' administrative centers—green for Kharkiv, blue for Kherson, yellow for Odessa, and pink for Zaporizhzhya.

in *Zaria Donbassa* and only sporadically in *Vostochnyi Donbass*. Compared to the newspapers published in the DPR, the majority of displays of Ukrainian symbols were neutral.[415]

Symbols of the intermediate identity (Donbass region in-group) were more common across the three newspapers published in the LPR. For example, *Edinstvo* (a trade union paper) consistently featured displays of Lugansk's trade union logo symbol across issues #1-29.[416] Other symbols of the Donbass region that featured in this newspaper included Lugansk Oblast's and Milove Raion's coats of arms and images of Lugansk museums, schools, theaters, and stadiums. Similarly, in *Vostochnyi Donbass* symbols of the Donbass included Sverdlovsk's coat of arms, images of Sverdlovsk's factories, schools, city landmarks, and coal mining. While all three newspapers from the LPR displayed images of coal mining[417] and rebel national symbols (i.e., DPR, LPR, and Novorossiya flags and coats of arms), displays of rebel symbols were few in number across the three newspapers.[418] An exception was *Vostochnyi Donbass*: it featured over two dozen displays of the LPR flag, although the DPR flag appeared only once and the Novorossiya flag only three times.

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[415] I note that there were some exceptions. For example, in *Edinstvo*, Ukrainian symbols reappeared in issues #51 and #52; the latter featured a cartoon image in which Ukraine's coat of arms was stamped on a boot that was depicted as kicking a pensioner into poverty. In addition, some issues of *Vostochnyi Donbass* (namely, #16 and #33) featured imagery of Ukrainian leaders holding guns and GPW-era Ukrainian women giving a Nazi salute. See appendix for an example of the latter.

[416] Lugansk's trade union logo was also included as part of the newspaper design for issues #1-29. I note that issue #29 was published on July 17, 2014 (the day of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17). No issues of *Edinstvo* were available between July 17 and October 3, 2014.

[417] Indeed, coal mining and its associated holiday (Miner's Day) are especially salient in Sverdlovsk and the surrounding region. For example, one story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* highlighted how Miner's Day celebrations in 2014 had to be postponed due to fighting in the area (although the celebrations planned for 2015 were meant to make up for this). According to the author of the story, the Miner's Day holiday is important because the history of Sverdlovsk is intimately linked to the development of the mining industry. Indeed, the symbolism of miners (particularly, the toughness required to be a miner) was cited in discussions about the hardships experienced by the local population to encourage locals to be strong and preserve through the difficult conditions. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #36 p. 5.

[418] For example, rebel symbols featured in only five issues of *Edinstvo*, all of which were published between October and December 2014. These included 12 displays of the LPR flag, none of the DPR flag and only one of Novorossiia flag. The LPR flag appeared a total of four times and LPR medals appeared two times in *Zaria Donbassa* (the DPR flag did not appear and the Novorossiia flag appeared only once), while in *Vostochnyi Donbass* the DPR flag appeared once and the Novorossiia flag appeared three times.

Symbols of the prospective identity (Russia in-group) appeared in all three newspapers but were most common in the two newspapers published in Sverdlovsk. All three newspapers featured numerous displays of GPW symbolism (i.e., veterans wearing medals, monuments and statues that commemorate the GPW and veterans of the war, images of GPW battles, etc.) and symbols of Orthodox Christianity (i.e., Maslenitsa (an Orthodox holiday), images of churches, statutes, clergy, and books on the religion, and traditions (like the ice dive)), flags, and depictions of icons and historical figures (i.e., Theotokos of Tikhvin and Vladimir the Great). All three newspapers also featured numerous displays of symbols of Russian and Soviet civilization[419], including the Ribbon of St. George, which was displayed in different ways, including as flags and ribbons worn by veterans and militiamen, and as part of the design for memorials and photograph frames.

Compared to newspapers published in the DPR, the symbols displayed in the LPR newspapers differed in several ways. For example, the LPR flag appeared widely in the three newspapers published in Lugansk and Sverdlovsk (indeed, the flag was displayed more than the DPR and Novorossiya flags combined). In contrast, the LPR flag hardly appeared in the newspapers published in Donetsk. Likewise, displays of the symbols of the LPR non-governmental organization World of Lugansk region (which ran as a political party in the November 2014 elections) featured in all three newspapers published in the LPR.[420] This symbol did not appear in the DPR newspapers.

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[419] These included symbols from the era of the Russian Empire (e.g., Alexander Pushkin, Pyotr Stolypin, Mikhail Svetlov); symbols from the era of the Soviet Union (e.g., USSR flags and hammer and sickle, medals, Miner's Day (a holiday celebrated in Russia and Ukraine), Nikolai Goryushkin (a veteran who was twice awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union), Sergei Parajanov (a Soviet film director), the 1973 Soviet film "Ivan Vasilievich: Back to the Future," the Soviet war in Afghanistan (including veterans, medals, tanks and memorials), the Soviet bear, the Soviet version of Santa Claus (in celebration of the New Year's holiday), and May Day flags (an international holiday celebrated in the Soviet Union); and symbols of the Russian Federation from the contemporary era (e.g., Russian Federation flag, Russian Ruble, 2014 Sochi Olympics).

[420] "World of Lugansk region" defined itself as standing for the protection of Lugansk citizens against discrimination in ethnicity, language, religion and social characteristics. This manifested in support for traditional social values and respect for Orthodox religion. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 4.

Another way the LPR newspapers differed from the DPR newspapers is that the LPR newspapers featured fewer total displays of all categories of national symbols than the papers of the DPR.[421] In particular, negative displays of Ukrainian symbols were much less likely to appear in LPR newspapers than in the papers published in the DPR. However, Ukraine was still depicted negatively via the content of stories. For example, numerous stories in *Zaria Donbassa* decried how Ukraine embarked on a campaign to change the meanings of symbols.[422] Multiple stories in *Vostochnyi Donbass* made insinuations about the meanings of Ukrainian symbols or expressed alarm at the supposed actions of Ukraine's government against non-Ukrainian symbols.[423] Like the newspapers in the DPR, a story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* lamented Ukraine's decision to rid itself of Soviet symbols, including replacing of Santa Claus (New Year) symbol with the more Western Saint Nicholas symbol. This story especially decried the treatment of the Santa Claus (New Year) symbol (effigies of which were lynched from a bridge overpass).[424] Ukraine's post-Maidan 'European' direction was also depicted negatively via the content of stories.[425]

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[421] This is unsurprising, as all four DPR newspapers incorporated national symbols into their design motifs (thus those symbols featured on nearly every page of every issue). In contrast, only one LPR newspaper incorporated national symbols into its design motif.

[422] For example, one story in *Zaria Donbassa* lamented how Ukraine renamed historical events (such as the GPW being renamed to World War II, and Victory Day being renamed to Remembrance and Reconciliation Day). See *Zaria Donbassa* #6 p. 6. Another story discussed how the meanings of certain symbols changed over the course of 2014. For example, one story discussed how traditional Ukrainian clothing and embroidery came to represent darkness, while the Ribbon of St. George came to be derided by the Ukrainian government as the "Colorado Ribbon" for looking similar to the Colorado potato beetle. See *Zaria Donbassa* #4 p. 6. Within a broader discussion about the shifting meanings of symbols, the author pointed out how a comparison to an unpleasant bug involves a certain level of dehumanization, which ostensibly makes it easier to think that something should be eliminated.

[423] For example, a story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* decried Ukraine's celebration of Dignity and Freedom Day, a holiday that commemorates the events of the Orange Revolution. In ridiculing the holiday, the author of the story argued that Ukraine was corrupt and could not claim to respect democratic values when the Ukrainian government killed Ukrainian citizens during the events of the Maidan revolution that preceded the conflict in the Donbass. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 p. 3. Indeed, another story stated that residents of the LPR (as opposed to residents of Ukrainian-controlled territories) honored real heroes on Victory Day (as opposed to Ukraine honoring "fake" heroes) (see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #52 p. 34).

[424] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #1 p. 7. The mistreatment of the Santa Claus (New Year) symbol was also discussed in chapter 4—see, for example, stories in *Novorossiya* #15 p. 8, #67 p. 4 and #68 p. 7.

[425] For example, a story in *Edinstvo* described Ukraine as stifled by European demands while European loans were said to be inadequate for Ukraine's challenges. The story lamented the (European-demanded) raising of the retirement age, the closing of rural schools, the increasing of teaching loads, the reduction of pensions, and the

Another difference between the DPR and LPR newspapers was the ways in which some symbols were defined. For example, in the LPR papers there were numerous stories that depicted Taras Shevchenko as an important in-group symbol (indeed, his name adorns Lugansk's University, and his 200th birthday was celebrated as a public event in Lugansk in March 2014).[426] In contrast, Shevchenko was treated with less warmth and at times even bordered on being construed as an out-group symbol in one of the newspapers in the DPR. Similarly, the newspapers of the LPR made practically no effort to ground the LPR flag in any previous historical eras, nor did there appear to be much thought given to what the colors in the LPR represented. Indeed, only one story made an attempt to define the flag's meaning; its author argued that the LPR flag represented unity, change, and hope for a brighter future.[427] In contrast, much more effort was put into organizing the color scheme and defining the meanings of the colors of the flag of the DPR.

Finally, the newspapers published in the LPR (particularly the two that are closest to Russia in terms of place of publication) featured more displays of prospective identity symbols than the other two categories of symbols combined (recall that this was not the case in any newspaper from the DPR). The papers in the LPR featured numerous stories that highlighted the region's affection and respect for symbols of Russian and Soviet culture and civilization. This was particularly true of *Vostochnyi Donbass*.[428] For example, one story discussed Soviet sacrifices in the Far East to

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cancelation of free education, free travel for schoolchildren in rural areas and free public transport for veterans. Ukraine was also ridiculed as being (for the first time) poorer than Moldova. See *Edinstvo* #52 p. 2. Ukrainian symbols were also ritually destroyed. For example, multiple stories in *Vostochnyi Donbass* highlighted how Ukrainian symbols were being erased (i.e. painted over) in the LPR (despite the fact that the LPR budget was extremely tight). See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #31 p. 6; see also a story about a project by the Youth Association of the Lugansk region whose goal was to paint 16 bus stops along the Lugansk-Izvarino highway in the 'patriotic' colors of the flag of Novorossiia. This route was the site of fierce fighting in summer 2014 (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 8).

[426] See, for example. *Edinstvo* #5 p. 4 and #42 p. 2.

[427] See *Zaria Donbassa* #5 p. 1.

[428] For example, one story discussed triumphs of Russian history, the beauty of Russian landscapes, and the joy of knowing that the Russian language would no longer be taught in the LPR as a 'foreign' language. The story also discussed how reviewers of new Russian textbooks for the LPR region were impressed with the textbooks' colorful illustrations of "Russian" birch trees and meadows as well as the inclusion of poems by Russian poets (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #43 p. 5). I note that the introduction of Russian textbooks into the LPR region was covered in all three of

defeat the Japanese Empire in WWII. According to the author of the story, over 12,000 people were killed, including almost 1,300 from the USSR's Pacific Fleet, before Soviet forces captured an estimated 300,000 surrendering Japanese troops.[429] Another story discussed the origins of Unity Day, including how Russia was invaded in 1612 by Western states. According to the author of this story, the people of the Donbass were connected to Russia through a common history and shared cultural and spiritual values.[430] Another story discussed how widely admired Soviet educational standards were in the Donbass region.[431] There were also symbols of more recent origin.[432]

In sum, the LPR newspapers tended to be much more focused on symbols of Russian identity (and nostalgia for the Soviet Union) than the papers in the DPR (which were most focused on symbols of Donbass identity). Perhaps one explanation for this is that the population of the LPR is heavily skewed toward pensioners[433] and Russia is (symbolically) very familiar to the people of the Lugansk region.

Content of Separatist Media: Themes

The newspapers in the LPR also differed from DPR papers in terms of story content. For example, in comparison to the newspapers of the DPR, the papers in the LPR featured far fewer stories with references to fascism, external legitimacy and claimsetting themes (indeed,

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the separatist newspapers as a positive development for the region. See, for example, *Edinstvo* #43 p. 3, *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 3 and #15 p. 8, and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #16 p. 4, #28 p. 5, #34 p. 2, #36 p. 4, #39 p. 2, #41 pp. 5-6 and 17, #43 p. 5 and #48 p. 9.

[429] Indeed, the story mentioned how Soviet forces were a symbol of liberation for American and British generals who had languished in Japanese-run prisons as prisoners of war for over three years. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #36 p. 13.

[430] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #45 p. 2.

[431] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #43 p. 5.

[432] For example, one story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* highlighted how Russian humanitarian conveys (typically transported in white trucks) were seen by the people of the region as a symbol of hope. These convoys began in August 2014 and continued into 2015 (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 3). Another story showed that the road in which many of the Russian conveys traveled on their way to the Donbass (the Lugansk-Izvarino highway) held symbolic significance as a reminder of hope (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 8).

[433] For example, in Sverdlovsk pensioners make up on third of the population of the city and the surrounding region. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 5.

claimsetting did not even appear in the papers published closest to Russia). However, on average, the papers featured at least one story that referenced internal legitimacy theme per page, a higher rate than was found in three of the four DPR papers.[434] Like the DPR newspapers, the papers from the LPR featured more stories with in-group culture theme than stories with personal honor theme. Across the three LPR newspapers, the in-group identity was a unique Ukrainian group identity[435] that is quite different from the nationalist identity more commonly associated with Western Ukraine.[436]

All three newspapers offered unique views into the difficulties associated with building and maintaining a state. As a trade-union focused paper, *Edinstvo* focused heavily on industries[437] (including mining, metallurgy, chemicals, construction and agriculture) as well as the importance of unions. The paper highlighted the history of the Lugansk region[438], publicized public events[439], and brought attention to local traditions[440] and holidays (including Orthodox[441], regional-national

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[434] Indeed, the only paper that featured a higher rate of this theme was *Boevoilistok Novorossii*, a short Donbass People's Militia-sponsored paper for which only two issues were available.

[435] This is evident in the region's participation (via the State of Ukraine) in the 2014 Winter Olympics (see *Edinstvo* #5 p. 8) or in congratulations being extended to the newly-elected president of Ukraine (see *Edinstvo* #22 p. 2). It is perhaps most evident in respect demonstrated towards Ukrainian culture. For example, one story showed Kiev as a cultural destination for Lugansk children (*Edinstvo* #7 p. 7); another highlighted Zaporizhia and its important contribution to Ukrainian history (particularly via the contribution of the Zaporozhian Cossacks) (*Edinstvo* #17 p. 8).

[436] For example, the author of one story in *Zaria Donbassa* argued that there were up to a million Russians and Ukrainians living in Crimea that, due to the Ukrainian blockade on Crimea, now viewed Ukraine as an 'other' (i.e., no longer a brother or compatriot to Russia). See *Zaria Donbassa* #2 p. 3.

[437] See, for example, *Edinstvo* #21 p. 5, which highlighted Krasnodon's history of mining; see also #22 p. 5, which highlighted the history of Lugansk's Inter-District Water Management Department.

[438] See, for example, *Edinstvo* #51 p. 8. Stories also discussed the histories of local schools, industries, museums (see, for example, *Edinstvo* #23 p. 8).

[439] These included events geared around anniversaries (such as the 100th anniversary of the founding of Lugansk, the 75th anniversary of the Lugansk trade union's founding and the 80th anniversary of the founding of Severodonetsk) as well as sporting events for miners, workers and youth (see, for example, *Edinstvo* #50 p. 7). Indeed, sporting events were considered to be important for the development of the LPR state.

[440] These included Teacher of the Year, Pride of Lugansk Region (2013 Entrepreneur of the Year), Industrial Sports Day, Geologist Day, Chemist Day, Day of Water Industry Workers, Day of Publishing Industry Workers, Day of Journalists, Teachers' Day, Vocational Education Day, Day of Health, Tourism Day, Physical Education Day in Russia, Day of Pre-School Education Workers, Day of Tourism, Machine Builder Day, Day of workers in the food and processing industry, Day of agricultural workers, and Energy Day.

[441] These included Tatiana's Day, Maslenitsa, and Red Hill.

(e.g., Victory Day and Miner's Day), and international holidays[442]). The paper also memorialized important historical events of the 20th century (e.g., the GPW experience and the Soviet liberation of Lugansk, the Chernobyl meltdown and its cleanup, and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan) and promoted educational and cultural development of the region.[443] Perhaps most importantly, the paper highlighted its advocacy on behalf of veterans.[444]

Edinstvo's window into the trials of building and maintaining the LPR state centered on the transformation of governance structures in Lugansk and its surrounding regions over the course of 2014. For example, in January (prior to the collapse of the Yanukovych government), *Edinstvo* featured a number of stories about the Trade Union of Lugansk's achievements and the actions the Trade Union undertook to serve the city of Lugansk and surrounding regions, including developing Lugansk's infrastructure, conducting seminars and trainings and addressing issues with the payment of pensions.[445] The trade union's budget was limited[446] and most of it was spent on helping the city prepare for national and professional public holiday celebrations, honoring labor and military veterans in various ways, and organizing and financing sports activities and competitions.[447] According to the paper, one of the most important functions of the Trade Union

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[442] These included World Social Justice Day, International Women's Day, International Theatre Day, World Day for Safety and Health at Work, World Health Day, Earth Day, May Day, International Museum Day, World Environment Day, International Day of Cooperation, International Student Day, International Day of Older Persons and Veterans Day, Day of Social Worker, and the International Day of Disabled Persons.

[443] This is accomplished with the help of the student trade union. See *Edinstvo* #28 p. 4.

[444] In this regard, the paper also shows the difficulty of trade unions having to operate on insufficient budgetary funds, (even prior to the breakout of hostilities in spring 2014) and chart a middle ground between, on the one hand, not participating directly in politics while, on the other hand, advocating for the social and economic interests of workers.

[445] See, for example, multiple stories in *Edinstvo* #1-2, #3 and #4.

[446] See, for example, *Edinstvo* #7.

[447] See *Edinstvo* #3 p. 4.

of Lugansk prior to the outbreak of hostilities was helping to negotiate collective agreements for guarantees on basic social standards for workers.[448]

As the conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out in 2014, the paper followed developments in the conflict, including major events like the trade-union building fire in the 'hero city' of Odessa on May 2, 2014[449], hardships experienced by the population[450], and general political issues associated with the Maidan. Early in the conflict, the Trade Union of Lugansk expressed interest in bridging the east-west divide that had engulfed Ukraine.[451] The Trade Union even attempted to work with the post-Yanukovych Ukrainian authorities for a time.[452] However, by July 3, 2014, the Trade Union of Lugansk transformed into the Trade Union of the LPR[453] and by late 2014 the trade union had acquired a number of important new government-related responsibilities.[454] For example, by November 2014 they included providing or assisting with the provision of lost government services by working with the LPR Ministries of Fuel, Energy and Coal Industries, particularly on efforts to change and amend laws within the LPR.[455] The trade unions also

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[448] For example, one story in *Edinstvo* described how the improvement in the quality of life for the people of the Lugansk region depended on interactions between executive (national) authorities, local governmental authorities, trade unions and employers. See *Edinstvo* #8 p. 3.

[449] See *Edinstvo* #19 p. 2. Like the newspapers in the DPR, this event was seen as a tragic development in the conflict (indeed, the paper called on all trade union organizations to show solidarity with and provide financial assistance to the Federation of Trade Unions of the Odessa region). This event was also the catalyst for some militia fighters and supporters to get involved in resisting the actions of the Ukrainian armed forces. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #50 p. 5.

[450] See *Edinstvo* #25 p. 3.

[451] Indeed, the Federation of Trade Unions' saw a role for itself in helping to mediate societal conflicts. See, for example, multiple stories in *Edinstvo* #5 and #10.

[452] For example, the Trade Union took a lukewarm attitude towards (rather than reject outright) the prospect of Ukraine taking International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans. One story sought to caution authorities by pointing out the ramifications that such an action might entail. See *Edinstvo* #11 p. 1.

[453] See *Edinstvo* #27.

[454] This was, ostensibly, a response to the lingering general dissatisfaction that was evident in Lugansk in March 2014 as well as a willingness among citizens to work through trade unions (as representatives of industries and pensioners) in order to address issues. See, for example, *Edinstvo* #16 p. 6 and #25 p. 2, respectively.

[455] See, for example, *Edinstvo* #44 p. 3 and #51 p. 2.

participated in protests against actions taken by the Ukrainian government (such as cuts to social benefits).[456]

Like *Donetsk Vechernii* (discussed in the previous chapter), *Zaria Donbassa* focused extensively on the city in which it was published (Sverdlovsk). The paper highlighted the city's long experience with mining, the region's dominant religion (Orthodoxy), and information about local schools, industries and museums. The paper also brought attention to various holidays and anniversaries, including GPW[457] and other military-related commemorative events[458], regional-national holidays[459], Orthodox holidays[460], and international holidays.[461] Like *Edinstvo*, *Zaria Donbassa* demonstrated the importance of sports to the Lugansk region.[462] Many of the paper's stories focused on developments related to the contemporary conflict.[463] Information on conflict-related developments typically came from interviews with militia members[464], civilians and other sources.[465]

Zaria Donbassa's window into the trials of building and maintaining the LPR state centered on the functions associated with running the city and 'national' administrations. The city

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[456] See *Edinstvo* #52 p. 2.

[457] These included the Day of Liberation of Sverdlovsk (February 15) and Victory Day (May 9). Indeed, Victory Day and Easter were said to be the most important two holidays celebrated in Sverdlovsk. See *Zaria Donbassa* #13 p. 8.

[458] These included events to commemorate the Battle of Stalingrad and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

[459] These included the Day of the Worker of Culture of Russia (March 25), the Day of Trade, Consumer Services and Housing (celebrated on the fourth Sunday of July), and Geologist Day (celebrated on the first Sunday of April).

[460] These included the holiday of Baptism (Epiphany), Maslenitsa and Holiday of the Resurrection of Christ (Resurrection Sunday).

[461] These included International Women's (March 8) and May Day (May 1).

[462] See, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #1 p. 6. Indeed, the resumption of sports and sporting competitions was often taken as a sign that life was returning to normal. See, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #2 p. 9.

[463] For example, *Zaria Donbassa* #1 recapped the major developments that occurred in the region in 2014 (i.e., increases in prices for gas and gasoline and protests in April ; hostilities between Ukrainian armed forces and rebels in May and June; hostilities reaching Sverdlovsk in July; and the conflict settling into a stalemate in fall 2014. Other developments discussed in other issues included the signing of the Minsk II agreement (#8 p. 1), the creation of the social movement / proto-political party "Mir Lugansk" (#7 p. 3 and #9 p. 3), and the creation of militias (#13 p. 1).

[464] See, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #3 p. 3. I note that this particular interview described a militia headquarters as having a Don Cossack flag and a portrait of Vladimir Putin hanging on one of the walls).

[465] This included advertisements. For example, one story featured appeals and advertisements that solicited aid to give to citizens whose houses were in areas affected by combat operations. See *Zaria Donbassa* #6 p. 3.

administration's responsibilities included disseminating information about fire safety and ensuring pharmacies were operating with valid permits, while the national LPR government was responsible for a variety of functions that affected people's everyday lives, including setting educational standards[466] and creating legislation.[467] Some of these functions appeared to be managed with ease[468] while others were clearly exacerbated (or caused outright) by the military conflict.[469] The papers also showed that there were significant obstacles to good governance in the Lugansk region—namely, the oligarchic system[470]—but also ongoing societal problems like alcohol consumption[471] and pervasive corruption.[472]

Budgetary shortfalls clearly affected the scope of services that could be provided by both the city and 'national' administrations.[473] For example, one story discussed the problem of stray dogs in the LPR (the number of strays increased beginning in summer 2014, which created a danger to public health over time). Due to a lack of budget funds to relocate the animals, the Sverdlovsk City Council ultimately decided to have the animals shot.[474] Indeed, budgetary shortfalls also affected the payment of pensions. For example, there were numerous stories that

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[466] For example, numerous stories in *Zaria Donbassa* and *Vostochnyi Donbass* that discussed merging the Donbass' educational standards to fit Russia's educational standards. See *Zaria Donbassa* #2 p. 4; also see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #42 p. 2, #43 p. 5, and #51 p. 4.

[467] See, for example, social legislation introduced in September 2014 to aid families with three or more children (*Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 8); legislation that banned Ukrainian media in Sverdlovsk (#12 p. 2); legislation that forbid alcohol and cigarettes to be sold at night (#12 p. 2); legislation to align the DPR and LPR time zone with Moscow's time zone (#13 p. 4); and legislation to make the Russian Ruble the official currency of the Sverdlovsk region (#15 p. 3).

[468] See *Zaria Donbassa* #9 p. 10.

[469] See, for example, stories about the demining of fields (*Zaria Donbassa* #14 p. 6) and getting militias that are outside of the People's Militia to surrender their weapons to LPR authorities (#15 p. 4).

[470] Indeed, this problem was not only acknowledged; solutions were proposed by the new authorities. For example, one story discussed how the DPR set up a commission to create proposals to revive the economy of Novorossiia, including development of the financial system. See *Zaria Donbassa* #2 p. 8.

[471] For example, one story discussed an order to forbid the sale of alcohol to men in uniform. See *Zaria Donbassa* #4 p. 3.

[472] For example, one story in *Zaria Donbassa* demonstrated that the Lugansk region suffered from corruption and mismanagement prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Indeed, Sverdlovsk residents were already dealing with high gas and gasoline prices since April 2014 by the time major fighting broke out that summer. See *Zaria Donbassa* #1 p. 2.

[473] See *Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 5.

[474] See *Zaria Donbassa* #2 p. 5.

showed LPR and Sverdlovsk authorities struggling to pay pensions on time[475] or address rising prices of fuel and foodstuffs.[476] Often, the difficulties that city and national administration officials faced appeared to be exacerbated by the lack of international recognition of the DPR and LPR. For example, while problems with agricultural exports were addressed by selling sunflower to Russia in exchange for ammonium nitrate to use as fertilizer for future crops[477], problems associated with recognition of technical certificates, diplomas and driver's licenses could only be addressed via temporary measures.[478] Some problems, such as obtaining valid automobile insurance, seemed to persist without adequate solutions.[479]

As previously mentioned, *Zaria Donbassa* became *Vostochnyi Donbass* in April 2015. Despite multiple name changes, *Vostochnyi Donbass* considered itself to be the latest iteration of the weekly newspaper of Sverdlovsk that has been around since 1938.[480] Unsurprisingly, there is much continuity with *Zaria Donbassa* in terms of general focus on Sverdlovsk and the surrounding region. This typically manifested in attention to the region's history of mining[481], the Orthodox Church[482] and information on local schools, industries and museums.[483] As was the case with

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[475] See *Zaria Donbassa* #4 p. 2, #12 p. 3 and #13 p. 3. One novel solution for dealing with delays in pension payments included offering free haircuts to pensioners as a way of saving them money.

[476] For example, multiple issues discussed the effects of Ukraine's economic blockade, including Ukraine ceasing to supply the Donbass with natural gas (see *Zaria Donbassa* # 9 p. 3), how the DPR and LPR coped with this development (#10 p. 3) and ultimately how Russia stepped in to provide the Donbass with natural gas (#15 p. 4). Not surprisingly, the issue of increasing prices of goods was discussed in multiple issues (#10 p. 2 and #12 pp. 4-5), as was the issue of ongoing shortages of medicines (#10 p. 6 and #11 p. 1). Ultimately, the DPR and LPR looked to Russia to export coal and agricultural products (#10 p. 6) and import badly needed medicines (#11 p. 1).

[477] See *Zaria Donbassa* #15 p. 2.

[478] See, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #10 p. 3 and #15 p. 8. One solution to the problem of recognition of certificates and diplomas involved training students of the Donbass in accordance with Russian educational standards.

[479] For example, people that wanted to drive to Russia in their own cars could not do so without proper insurance. Unfortunately, all of the insurance providers that could provide the necessary insurance closed their branches in the Donbass. See *Zaria Donbassa* #10 p. 3.

[480] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 pp. 1-2.

[481] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #36 p. 5. The history of Sverdlovsk was said to be inextricably linked with the development of the coal industry (indeed, Sverdlovsk was created by the unification of mining communities). See also *Vostochnyi Donbass* #51 p. 8.

[482] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 4.

[483] For example, see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #19 p. 2, #38 p. 4, #42 p. 2, #47 p. 5 and #50 p. 24.

Zaria Donbassa, *Vostochnyi Donbass* highlighted various holidays and anniversaries, many of which were dedicated to the GPW or the Russian Armed Forces.[484] Like the other papers from the LPR-controlled region and two of the papers published in Donetsk, *Vostochnyi Donbass* also demonstrated the importance of sports[485] and Russian-Soviet culture to the Donbass region.[486]

Like *Zaria Donbassa*, *Vostochnyi Donbass* featured information and updates on the conflict that came from militia members, civilians and news dispatches.[487] Likewise, *Vostochnyi Donbass'* window into the trials of building and maintaining the LPR state focused on the functions of running the Sverdlovsk city and the LPR 'national' administrations as well as lawmaking.[488] For example, numerous stories discussed the different problems that plagued the Sverdlovsk and LPR administrations.[489] Many of these stories showcased city and national authorities addressing various issues.[490] Numerous stories also covered positive developments for the LPR, including the

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[484] These included Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23), Unity Day (November 4), Military Intelligence Day (November 5), the anniversary of the historical 1941 parade on Red Square (November 7), and the anniversary of the beginning of 1941 Soviet counteroffensive near Moscow (which was the first major success of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War) (December 5).

[485] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 12.

[486] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #36 p. 13, #43 p. 5, #45 p. 2.

[487] Indeed, the Ukrainian armed forces' response to the rebellion during summer 2014 was captured in all three of the newspapers published in the Lugansk region. See, for example, *Edinstvo* #48 p. 7, *Zaria Donbassa* #1 p. 7 and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #30 p. 5.

[488] Indeed, numerous stories discussed lawmaking, including the issuing of decrees (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #18 p. 2 and #25 p. 9); the creation of legislation on social security benefits (#21 p. 2) and traffic fines / procedures to follow for auto accidents (#23 p. 5); information on prosecutions of corrupt business dealings (#27 p. 3); and the 2015 budget (#28 p. 4 and #29 p. 3). However, some problems persisted because corresponding legislation had not been created. See, for example, #23 p. 3 and #29 p. 3.

[489] These included the ongoing shortages of medicines, inadequate funding for road repair, and problems with the supply of water and electricity (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 3 and #34 p. 5). Indeed, problems with water included the need to dig new wells (#21 p. 2), sanitation issues (#22 pp. 3 and 12, #23 pp. 1-2, 4, #26 p. 2, and #31 p. 3) and even the use of water as a weapon. For example, one story compared Ukraine's control of water to the Islamic State's control of water supply in Syria (#24 p. 2). Other problems included ongoing budgetary shortfalls (#27 p. 5), continuing hardships faced by the Donbass population due to war Ukraine's economic blockade (#30 p. 5), outbreaks of illness (such as Hepatitis A) (#47 p. 3), and problems with public transit (#16 pp. 2 and 5, #17 p. 3 and #28 p. 3). There were also numerous stories that discussed the problems associated with non-recognition of the LPR (#23 p. 3, #33 pp. 5-6, #34 p. 5, #51 p. 4 and #1 p. 4).

[490] See, for example, stories that showed Sverdlovsk and LPR officials meeting with citizens of villages and cities to address problems with wages, stagnating industries and plants, high prices for fuels and lubricants, and feeding schoolchildren (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #26 p. 3, #27 p. 5, #34 p. 5, #36 pp. 4-6, #38 p. 3 and #1 pp. 3-4), developing a state program for re-equipping labs and schools and attempting to get pensions paid on time (#38 p. 4), attending

opening of supermarkets[491] and actions taken by LPR authorities to control the prices of goods[492], distribute humanitarian aid and household fuel to needy individuals [493], revitalize regional agriculture[494] and introduce a new mobile phone carrier into the region. [495] There were also numerous stories that depicted Sverdlovsk and LPR authorities making various arrangements for trade.[496]

'Mythscapes' in the LPR: Never Forget and Never Forgive

Like the separatist newspapers published in the DPR region, the papers in the LPR deploy symbols and historical materials as part of mythscapes for legitimizing purposes. The region's experience during the GPW is paramount in this effort—as was the case in the DPR, the GPW experience was frequently mentioned in the LPR media, celebrated as part of holiday commemorations, and maintained via collective memory.[497] The memory of the GPW and the 'Great Victory' myth were performatively invoked by elites for nation-building purposes (i.e., to mobilize people by fostering patriotism toward the LPR (and DPR)[498] and personalizing the contemporary conflict in Ukraine in terms of personal honor[499]), ostensibly, to help construct a

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parades (#18 pp. 1-2) and round tables (#43 p. 18), obtaining building materials (#50 p. 4) and recapping achievements of the year (2015) (#52 p. 6).

[491] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 p. 2.

[492] See, for example, numerous stories about price controls that were established to stabilize the cost of food staples (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #18 pp. 3 and 5, #25 p. 1, #37 p. 4, #39 pp. 5 and 15, #45 p. 7, and #50 p. 4).

[493] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #21 p. 3, #38 p. 3 and #40 p. 2, and #1 p. 3.

[494] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #23 p. 3 and #41 p. 3.

[495] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 3 and #28 p. 2.

[496] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #23 p. 3. Indeed, numerous stories demonstrated the importance of Rostov-on-Don for the import and export of goods into and out of the LPR. See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #30 p. 5 and #51 p. 4.

[497] To be sure, the GPW is not the only war-related collective memory celebrated in the Donbass. For example, one story in *Zaria Donbassa* discussed the laying of flowers at a monument that commemorates local wars; also discussed was a local museum expedition that was titled "We will not Forget Afghanistan." See *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 3.

[498] For example, one story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* described the DPR and LPR as awaiting their own 'Great Victory.' See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 6. I note that this is similar to how the memory of the war and the 'Great Victory' myth are used to foster pride and promote patriotism in Russia. See Omelicheva (2017).

[499] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #26 p. 3 and #45 p. 5. The contemporary conflict is also personalized in terms of family honor. For example, a story in *Zaria Donbassa* urged readers to remember Victory Day as well as their parents and siblings who were now at war (*Zaria Donbassa* #13 p. 8). Other stories personalized the

'usable past' for the LPR project. The memory of the war contributes to the legitimization of elites' claim of sovereignty via public performances of memory. Such performances appear to be aimed at imbuing meaning into the present by redefining the boundaries of in-group and out-group identities, serving to construct 'enemy' images, and getting people to see the contemporary conflict as an extension of the GPW. In short, reconstructing and invoking the GPW through public events gives elites a potent instrument to manipulate the public's memories and stimulate mass emotions by combining entertainment with an elite-sponsored political spectacle.

As was the case in the DPR, in the LPR the preservation of the memory of the GPW occurred in different ways. One was through public events that accompanied GPW anniversary celebrations[500], including the Day of Liberation of Stalingrad (February 2)[501], the Day of Liberation of Sverdlovsk (February 15)[502], the Day of Liberation of Lugansk (February 16)[503], Victory Day (May 9), the Day of Memory and Sorrow (June 22)[504], the Day of Liberation of Ukraine from Nazi Germany (October 28)[505] and the 75th anniversary of the 1941 parade on Red Square (November 7).[506] Indeed, all three LPR newspapers featured numerous stories about GPW-related commemorative events and memorials, and most of these events involved various types of rituals.[507] For example, *Edinstvo* featured numerous stories about memorials, including one about

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contemporary conflict by showcasing militia fighters as they defined their reasons for fighting. For example, some stories demonstrated that some fighters were motivated by local causes (i.e., fighting for the Donbass' national identity and to avenge the destruction of Donbass cities since 2014 (see *Zaria Donbassa* #9 p. 5 and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #50 p. 5, respectively). Yet another story showcased miners-turned-fighters (who also happened to be veterans of the Soviet war in Afghanistan) who believed they had to defend their homelands from "fascists" (see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 4).

[500] I note that many of these dates were Days of Military Glory.

[501] See *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 9.

[502] See *Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 9 and #11 p. 6.

[503] See *Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 1.

[504] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #25 p. 10, #26 p. 3 and #43 p. 18.

[505] See *Edinstvo* #44 p. 1.

[506] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 p. 18.

[507] For example, one story in *Edinstvo* discussed a public festival that featured performances by individuals from the Lugansk region. These included a vocal competition that was held on the 200th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's birthday and performances dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the

the opening of a GPW memorial paid for by the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) and constructed by miners[508] and another about a Soviet T-34 tank being temporarily removed from its memorial platform to participate in Victory Day celebrations in Lugansk.[509] *Vostochnyi Donbass* also featured numerous stories about memorials.[510] One such story described how the head of Sverdlovsk, Andrew Sukachev, laid flowers at a GPW memorial to honor the memory of soldiers that died in battle. The story noted that while he was there, Sukachev also memorialized individuals who had lost their lives during the contemporary conflict in 2014.[511] Rituals were also evident in commemorative sporting events[512] as well as in mourning traditions.[513]

Like the DPR, the importance of the GPW was also reinforced is through stories that invited citizens to visit local sites of significance. For example, like some of the newspapers in the DPR, *Zaria Donbassa* discussed the history of the Savur-Mohyla monument and its destruction in

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70th anniversary of the liberation of the Lugansk region from "fascists" See *Edinstvo* #16 p. 7. Other stories documented public events which featured ritualistic sing-alongs to songs about soldiers' sacrifices (*Edinstvo* #44 p. 4), love for the motherland (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #19 p. 12), and Victory Day (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 12). Another type of ritual consisted of a tradition borrowed from Russia ostensibly to link generations (i.e., youth and veterans) together to preserve the memory of the GPW. For example, one story in *Edinstvo* documented preparations for the Immortal Regiment, a tradition that originated in Russia in 2012 and involves a parade on Victory Day (May 9) in which people march with portraits of their relatives that fought or otherwise participated in the GPW. This is another manifestation of the public 'performance' of memory, ostensibly, to erase the boundaries between the past and present. See *Edinstvo* #13 p. 1; see also *Vostochnyi Donbass* #20 p. 1

[508] See *Edinstvo* #20 p. 1. Indeed, both *Edinstvo* #20 and #21 featured several stories about GPW monuments and the importance of keeping the GPW collective memory alive.

[509] See *Edinstvo* #20 p. 3. I note that the memorial tank is a key symbol of the Soviet Victory myth. Indeed, according to Fedor (2015: 30), "Soviet tanks … were among the first improvised celebratory war memorials to spring up over Eastern Europe." The tanks "served as a material reminder of sacrifice, but also of power; as a memorial to the dead of the past, but also a warning for the future to the populations living in the landscapes dotted by these tanks." Julie Fedor, "Introduction: War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus," in Fedor et al., 2017, p. 30.

[510] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #19 p. 12, #26 p. 3, and #27 p. 5.

[511] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 5. I note that war memorials can also remind people of the past in subtle ways. For example, the memorial featured in *Edinstvo* (which was paid for by the FTU) was associated with a public park. Parks tend to be sites where positive emotions are experienced (and where positive memories are made), thus the association of war memorials and parks ostensibly increases the likelihood that future visitors of the park will consciously or unconsciously come into contact with a national memorializing space (and, perhaps, even soldiers or relatives of soldiers, too).

[512] See, for example, tournaments dedicated to Victory Day (*Edinstvo* #21 p. 8) and marathons dedicated to the victims of the hostilities in 2014-15 (*Edinstvo* #47 p. 7).

[513] For example, a story in *Zaria Donbassa* highlighted a local Donbass tradition in which people visit the graves of loved ones on certain days in order to keep their memories alive. See *Zaria Donbassa* #11 p. 6.

summer 2014. As was often the case with the papers in the DPR, the destruction of this monument was described as history repeating itself.[514] Also like the newspapers of the DPR, there were numerous stories about museum exhibits dedicated to GPW veterans and major battles of the war (such as the Battle of Stalingrad).[515] Exhibits often drew explicit connections between the GPW and the contemporary conflict (see, for example, a story in *Zaria Donbassa* that noted a parallel between the years 1943 and 2014 in how 'peaceful people' had perished in their own homes, cars and yards[516]; see also stories in *Vostochnyi Donbass* that note parallels between the onset of war in 1941 and 2014 [517] and between August 3 (2014, the day militia fighters 'liberated' Chervonopartyzansk from Ukrainian armed forces) and May 9 (Victory Day)). [518] Some connections between the GPW and the contemporary conflict even appear to have arisen organically.[519]

The most important way in which the centrality of the GPW was reinforced is through the myth that the current conflict is a continuation of the GPW struggle against fascism.[520] Like the

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[514] For example, the author of one story noted that seventy years after the fight against Nazi Germany, the Savur-Mohyla area once again became a site of death for thousands of people (*Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 9). The theme of history repeating itself was also evident at public events. For example, one story about an event dedicated to the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of Sverdlovsk from German troops documented how city officials, including the mayor of Sverdlovsk, implored Donbass youth to know their history, while the Chairman of the City Council of Veterans noted that history had repeated itself in the contemporary conflict in the Donbass. See *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 2.

[515] See, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 9 and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #50 p. 24. Indeed, group trips to museums in Russia were also promoted. For example, one story showed how Sverdlovsk city leaders and LPR leaders coordinated to sponsor a trip for children to visit a museum in Moscow as well as the State Duma and Red Square. The trip included a moment of silence for victims of an airstrike in Lugansk. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 3. Another story showcased a trip for Sverdlovsk schoolchildren to go to Moscow that was organized to help children who witnessed the conflict in the Donbass. The author of the story remarked that the trip resulted in a lot of positive emotions for the children. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #45 p. 4.

[516] See *Zaria Donbassa* #1 p. 3.

[517] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 4.

[518] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #32 p. 5.

[519] For example, a story in *Edinstvo* discussed how a school was renamed in honor of a local historian and educator that perished in an air raid by the Ukrainian government on June 2, 2014. One of the reasons this man was well known in Lugansk was because over the course of his career, he helped with the identification of more than 200 previously unidentified GPW dead. See *Edinstvo* #42 p. 4.

[520] See, for example, *Edinstvo* #29 p. 1 and #42 p. 1; *Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 1; and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #26 p. 3 and #49 p. 2.

four papers published in the DPR, this myth showed up across all three of the newspapers published in the Lugansk region.[521] Indeed, after the November 2014 elections in the LPR, Igor Plotnitsky (the leader of the LPR) promoted it when he listed the major events that occurred that year, including the overthrow of the Yanukovych government and the coming to power of a "Nazi regime" in Kiev; the referendum on independence in Lugansk; and the armed rebellion against Ukrainian armed forces (stated in terms of Donbass citizens being forced—like their grandfathers and great-grandfathers—to take up arms to defend their region from a Nazi onslaught).[522] Plotnitsky's narrative presents fighters as defending the region from an existential fascist threat, which turns Donbass citizens into victims of 'Nazi aggression' while masking the reality that the insurrection is being covertly directed and financed by an outside government. Propagating the myth that the contemporary conflict is a continuation of the GPW struggle against fascism helps to (re)shape the conflict into having a broader, more heroic ideological meaning[523] from which elites can derive legitimacy.

Like the DPR, the memory of the GPW was also preserved through stories that focus on encouraging patriotism among young people. Indeed, all three of the newspapers published in the Lugansk region featured numerous stories that depicted separatist leaders were focused on providing a patriotic and military-focused education to the children of the Donbass.[524] In some

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[521] See, for example, a story in *Zaria Donbassa* that drew parallels between the contemporary conflict and the GPW by invoking the GPW slogan "Let's help the front!" to urge Sverdlovsk citizens to give support to militia fighters (*Zaria Donbassa* #7 p. 1); see also a story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* that drew parallels via references to "Nazi fanatics" coming to power in Ukraine in 2014 (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #52 p. 4). Like the newspapers in the DPR, the myth of fascism in the Donbass is buttressed with references to Ukraine's Right Sector nationalist political party/movement (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 4 and #52 p. 4).

[522] See *Edinstvo* #45 pp. 1-2.

[523] This is most clearly demonstrated by the "Do not forget, do not forgive" project. Numerous stories discussed this project—see, for example, *Zaria Donbassa* #9 pp. 3 and 9 and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #29 p. 2, #33 p. 5, #36 p. 4, #37 p. 4, #41 p. 2 and #50 p. 24.

[524] For example, one story highlighted how students and teachers were required (as part of the implementation of the patriotic educational program) to discuss the events of 1943 as part of an event dedicated to Defender of the Fatherland Day and the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of Sverdlovsk. Part of their discussions centered on the meanings of concepts like honor, heroism, courage, patriotism, and Motherland. See *Zaria Donbassa* #11 p. 6. The

instances, this centered on celebrations of the GPW (such as public concerts that were geared around the memory of Victory Day)[525]; in others, it centered on admonishing Ukraine for attempting to rewrite the history of the GPW in its school curriculums.[526] At other times, separatists' agenda seemed to be aimed at linking patriotic values to public service and Orthodox family values[527] as well as perpetuating the myth that the contemporary conflict was an extension of the GPW.[528]

A second mythscape found in the LPR newspapers focused on defining the unfolding history of the LPR. The LPR essentially claims Lugansk's history for itself, thus, locally-salient holidays become opportunities to mobilize different segments of the LPR national community.[529] Since the key event in the LPR's existence is the contemporary conflict in the Donbass region, the memory of the conflict looms large in the media where it is painted as an organic domestic uprising that resulted in the LPR winning 'independence.' As part of this narrative, the conflict is

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patriotic and military-focused education was also evident in a story about children that performed a song and were judged on their formation and how well they followed the commands of their 'commanders'. At the end of the competition, children posed for a picture while holding a real firearm. See *Zaria Donbassa* #8 p. 2.

[525] For example, one story discussed a rally in which students laid flowers at a common grave of Soviet soldiers and gave performances to honor their memory as well as the memory of all who perished during the GPW (*Edinstvo* #20 p. 3). Another story discussed a Victory Day concert that was attended by students of Krasnoluchsky's mining college. This event (which featured the singing of wartime songs and performance of dances) was designed to pass on the memory of the GPW to a new generation of students (*Edinstvo* #21 p. 6). See also a story in *Zaria Donbassa* that highlighted a concert timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the GPW victory (*Zaria Donbassa* #13 p. 8).

[526] For example, one story in *Zaria Donbassa* lamented how Ukraine's Ministry of Education recommended revising the interpretations of events of the GPW. This included deleting the word 'liberated' from understandings of how Nazi troops were removed from Ukraine in 1944 (because Ukraine was occupied by the USSR until 1991), clarifying that the role of the USSR's struggle against Germany (to raise the profile of the Britain and the US's contribution to the war effort), and white-washing the actions of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). See *Zaria Donbassa* #6 p. 6.

[527] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #26 p. 2.

[528] See, for example, a story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* about a public event that accompanied the one-year anniversary of Chervonopartyzansk's 'liberation'. At this event, the head of the city administration stated that graves for fallen militia fighters were purposely placed in the same cemetery where GPW soldiers were buried so that children would know what was happening in their country (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #32 p. 5).

[529] For example, one story featured Igor Plotnitsky commending Lugansk postal workers on World Post Day (October 9) for their role in helping to build the LPR state and develop state infrastructure (*Edinstvo* #41 p. 1). Another story showcased Plotnitsky commending workers of the food processing on their holiday (October 19, 2014) for their help with building the LPR state (*Edinstvo* #42 p. 2).

exaggerated as a civil war begun by Ukraine rather than as a Russian-directed and financed invasion. Indeed, the "Do not forget, do not forgive" project[530], which is sponsored by the "World Lugansk" social movement[531], propagates this view by "documenting" instances where Ukrainian armed forces supposedly committed human rights abuses. Yet at the same time, the conflict is seen as resulting in some positive developments for the region despite the creation of hardships.[532] This allows separatist leaders to have it both ways—on the one hand, they can argue that the conflict is a 'Nazi' invasion that has resulted in massacres of innocent civilians; on the other hand, they can argue that the conflict has freed the people of the region and unlocked new possibilities for their future. In this way, separatists can justify the sacrifices that people were forced to make as ultimately being worthwhile.[533]

As was the case with the first mythscape, the preservation of the second mythscape occurred in different ways. For example, some stories focused on the contemporary conflict and

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[530] The "Do not forget, do not forgive" project is partly a historical documentary (to remember the contemporary conflict and to document supposed abuses against the people of the Donbass region and evidence that could be used in a future international tribunal), and partly a political project to formulate an ideology for the LPR.

[531] The "World Lugansk" social movement is the LPR's main political movement (in the DPR there are two active political movements—the public organization "Donetsk Republic" and public movement "Free Donbass"). After the May 11, 2014 referendum on independence, former political parties that were active in the Lugansk region (most notably, the Party of Regions) essentially disbanded and "World Lugansk" took their place. "World Lugansk" defines itself as being committed to protecting the Lugansk region from discrimination (on the basis of national, linguistic, religious and social characteristics); restoring dilapidated industries; advocating for free education and healthcare; adhering to "traditional" moral values and equal rights for all religions while acknowledging the significant historical role of the Russian Orthodox Church; and strengthening ties with Russia. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 4. Numerous stories covered the activities of the "World Lugansk". For example, one story discussed a meeting which was attended by the heads of Sverdlovsk municipal departments as well as leaders of the LPR. The story discussed how attendees reacted with emotion to a film about the formation of the LPR and "World Lugansk" movement. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 3.

[532] These include changes in educational standards and the introduction of new laws (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #42 p. 2) as well as the election of a government in November 2014 that was arguably more responsive to the people of the Donbass region than the previous Ukrainian government (see *Vostochnyi Donbass* #45 p. 4).

[533] This message is reinforced through stories that remind readers that Ukraine blockaded the Donbass in order to cripple the economy (and people) of the region (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #51 p. 4) as well as through stories that remind readers about how bad life is in Ukraine (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 p. 3).

highlighted days of remembrance (designated as 'days of mourning'[534]); others showcased the construction of monuments to remember residents and militia fighters that perished in the conflict[535]; still others depicted public festivals that commemorated fighters.[536] Stories also covered different types of public events, including celebrations of regional history (e.g., Sverdlovsk's 77th birthday[537]), developments with the LPR state (i.e., the one-year anniversary of the LPR's 2014 elections[538]), and commemorations of Russian historical movements, figures and holidays.[539] Many of these events provided opportunities for flags to be displayed[540], waved or worn[541] and for the national anthem to be sung.[542] Many also provided a platform for LPR leaders to make ideological appeals.[543]

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[534] See, for example, a story in *Edinstvo* that discussed armed clashes in Lugansk which resulted in the deaths of 17 civilians. In memory of these people, the Federation of Trade Unions declared July 15, 16, and 17 days of mourning in Lugansk. *Edinstvo* #29 p. 2.

[535] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #29 p. 2, #33 p. 4 and #38 p. 2.

[536] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 6 and #38 p. 3.

[537] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #44 p. 10. Indeed, this event included songs, dances and a concert dedicated to the anniversary.

[538] See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #45 p. 4.

[539] See, for example, numerous stories on Alexei Stakhanov and the 80th anniversary of the Stakhanov movement (*Vostochnyi Donbass* # 9 p. 8, #15 p. 5, #34 p. 3, #35 pp. 3-4 and 16, #36 p. 5, #37 p. 7, #39 p. 6, #44 p. 12, #47 p. 1, #51 pp. 8 and 22); see also stories on a basketball tournament dedicated to Vladimir Kravtsov, a Soviet handball player and Olympic champion (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #52 p. 22) and on Russia's Unity Day holiday (which was celebrated in Sverdlovsk for the first time in 2015) (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #46 p. 10).

[540] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #34 p. 6.

[541] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #42 p. 2 and # 46 p. 10. In the latter example, the story discussed how people lined up in three columns to represent the colors of the Russian Federation tri-color flag and then marched toward Sverdlovsk's Miner's Square. Flags of both the Russian Federation and the LPR were also painted on the faces of Sverdlovsk citizens.

[542] See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #42 p. 2 and #49 p. 2. The latter example also featured a singalong of Den' Pobedy, a uplifting popular song about Victory Day that was written three decades after the end of the war, as well as well as a moment of silence for the 'Defenders of the Donbass', the name given to militia fighters that participated in the contemporary conflict in the Donbass region.

[543] For example, one story in *Vostochnyi Donbass* discussed a public forum held by the "World Lugansk" public movement. At the event, a video about the history of the war in the Donbass region was broadcast to remind people about what the war was about. At the forum, Igor Plotnitsky thanked the Russian people for their fraternal support and Lugansk citizens for fighting for their land. He also used the opportunity to speak about the restoration of industries (including factories, plants and mines), roads and houses taking place as well as advancements made in education, law, and pensions since the conflict broke out. According to Plotnitsky, all of these things were indicators of statehood. See *Vostochnyi Donbass* #42 p. 2.

When combined, the two mythscapes implied that the LPR has a shared past with the DPR—like the Donetsk region, the Lugansk region originated as a settlement around the metals and mining industries and later served an important role in the Soviet Union's industrial development; likewise, both the Donetsk and Lugansk regions were invaded by Nazi Germany and later liberated by the Soviet Union, and both fell into mismanagement after Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union.[544] Finally, both the LPR and DPR desire protection for the Russian language[545] and a common future with Russia.[546] However, as the previous chapter showed, there were also important differences between the DPR's and LPR's 'usable pasts.'

Conclusion

The separatist newspapers published in the LPR differed from the papers published in the DPR in several ways, particularly in terms of the distribution of the three main groups of national symbols, the frequencies of the fascism and legitimacy themes, and even mentions of certain Ukrainian oligarchs.[547] Indeed, compared to the DPR and Novorossiya flags, the LPR national flag appeared to be little more than an afterthought: the LPR flag was hardly shown in the DPR media; and although the LPR flag appeared more frequently in the LPR newspapers, World Lugansk (an LPR political faction) symbolism appeared nearly as frequently.

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[544] Indeed, the theme of mismanagement being a pervasive feature of life since Ukraine's independence was evident in all three newspapers published in the LPR. See, for example, *Edinstvo* #9 p. 2, *Zaria Donbassa* #1 p. 2, #2 p. 4 and #11 p. 3, and *Vostochnyi Donbass* #27 p. 5 and #40 p. 2.

[545] In the LPR, this manifested in calls to respect bilingualism. For example, one story in *Edinstvo* discussed how both Russian and Ukrainian theaters would operate in Lugansk. In an interview with the head of one theater, it was remarked that the Lugansk region had always had bilingualism and adherents of two cultures. See *Edinstvo* #50 p. 8.

[546] However, this does not necessarily mean that the LPR's long term goal was to formally join the Russian Federation. While this sentiment was expressed (see, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #47 p. 4), there were multiple stories that demonstrated a desire for the LPR to maintain its 'independence' while seeking to restore 'fraternal' cultural and economic ties with Russia. See, for example, *Vostochnyi Donbass* #41 p. 6, #42 p. 2 and #44 p. 2.

[547] For example, the Ukrainian oligarch Igor Kolomoyskyi was not mentioned in the LPR media. In contrast, Kolomoyskyi was discursively mentioned more than 50 times and visually depicted a handful of times in the DPR media.

The next chapter summarizes the major findings of the dissertation, evaluates the research design and discusses possible avenues for future research into the study of propaganda in the Nationalism and International Relations academic literatures.

Conclusion: Back to a Future USSR?

What symbols and historical materials do newly-independent political entities that form as a result of secession deploy? Why do symbol entrepreneurs choose particular symbols and discard others that are available to them, and what roles do symbols seemingly play? Finally, what affects symbol entrepreneurs' ability to use different symbols? In the DPR and LPR, these questions have complex answers.

Symbol entrepreneurs in the DPR and LPR use propaganda to legitimize the DPR, LPR and Novorossiya political projects (and themselves) by linking new nationalist symbols with existing GPW-related symbolism. Control of media outlets gives separatists a platform to use nationalism to make political messaging appeals that can disrupt existing national identities and generate affinity for new identities. These appeals appear to be designed to accentuate and illuminate group boundary lines between Ukraine and the separatist entities, with Ukraine taking on a clear enemy ('Nazi') image, and to help people make positive and negative emotional connections to symbols.

The GPW is a preeminent symbol in this propaganda, one with multiple meanings and symbolic, normative and pragmatic values. The war was perhaps the most significant event in the Donbass region's 20th century history, and its myth became the centerpiece for the mythscapes in the DPR and LPR media. The war positively represents the Russian/Soviet civilization and national heroes as well as a particular form of Soviet and regional patriotism (recall the symbolism of miners ditching their pickaxes and shovels for guns and military fatigues). At the same time, the war negatively represents Ukrainian civilization and national heroes as well as a particular (Western) form of Ukrainian nationalism; it connects current generations of fighters with GPW veterans; and it portrays the Donbass region as culturally distinct from Ukraine-proper. Finally,

the war connects to numerous myths and rituals, which gives separatists a seemingly endless amount of legitimizing materials to draw upon.

Symbol entrepreneurs seem to have chosen the three key intermediate identity symbols (i.e., the flags and coats of arms of the DPR, LPR and Novorossiya) due to their connections to the Russian/Soviet civilizational space and, in the case of the DPR flag, due to the availability of a prototype flag (i.e., the flag of the International Movement for Donbass). The similarity between the flags of the Russian Federation, DPR and LPR implies a shared civilizational space between the Russian Federation and the Donbass region, while the similarity between the flag of Novorossiya and the eighteenth century Russian naval jack implies respect for Russian and Soviet military naval traditions. The pervasive and repetitive display of new national symbols alongside symbolism that was originally associated with the GPW (such as Hero Cities, Heroes of the USSR and the Ribbon of St. George) helps to associate the contemporary conflict with the GPW and maintain these connections through time. For example, recall the discovery of a prospective identity symbol (the Ribbon of St. George) superimposed onto an illustration of a female with an AK-47, ostensibly, to make the image appear more patriotic.[548] Below is a screenshot of the original issue (left), followed by the raw images from the PDF file that were layered on top of each other, including the uncropped illustration of a female (center) and the raw image of the Ribbon that was superimposed on the illustration of a female (right):

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[548] See *Boevoe Znamia Donbassa* #4 p. 3.

Figure 7.1: Ribbon of St. George superimposed on illustration

Associating the contemporary conflict with the GPW helps elites in different ways: it alters the meaning of the contemporary conflict to be a war for the existence of the Donbass's people rather than a reactionary, resentment-inspired rebellion; it creates environmental conditions that are conducive to state-building by inspiring people that the rebellion is *for* the creation of a state rather than *against* the government and armed forces of Ukraine; and it constructs a frame of reference that expresses the Donbass' cultural uniqueness from Ukraine-proper (by equating Ukraine with its most extreme nationalist factions (like Right Sector)).

It is worth noting that the evolution of one intermediate identity symbol—the DPR flag—bears some similarities to the Mexican-American War example of symbol and identity rejection that was discussed in chapter two. In the DPR, a Russian-inspired alternative symbol (the IMD

flag) was available and became the basis for the DPR flag. It then evolved over time to drop the coat of arms, becoming a plain tri-color in the style of the Russian Federation flag. Indeed, the contemporary conflict features other parallels with the Mexican-American War, such as a large power (in this case, Russia) encouraging an insurrection in a neighboring state's territory (and essentially breaking a chunk off), as well as the events transpiring so rapidly that it nessecitated a quick, pragmatic choice of a flag that strangely endures over time.[549]

It is also worth noting that symbol entrepreneurs discarded certain symbols that were available to them. The most obvious example of this was the DPR newspapers' treatment of Ukrainian symbols—indeed, there were far more negative uses of the Ukrainian flag and coat of arms than there were positive uses (see appendix for examples).[550] Symbolism associated with the Ukrainian faction Right Sector was also depicted negatively. However, the most interesting examples of discarded symbols were those that could have been treated as in-group symbols: Taras Shevchenko[551] and certain symbols of Donetsk.[552]

Finally, conflict-related achievements and setbacks seemed to affect the calculus of separatists. Recall that weeks with conflict-related achievements were associated with more displays of 'Celebrate Russian Greatness' symbols and themes, and conflict-related setbacks were associated with more displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes. Also recall

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[549] For example, in 1846, after having learned about the United States' annexation of Texas, American settlers in Northern California created an army and took over the town of Sonoma, declaring the creation of the 'California Republic.' However, once these forces learned of a state of war between the US and Mexico, the settlers gave up their independence movement to assist the US. Although the California Republic existed for less than one month, its flag continued to be used as the battle flag of the armed forces and later became the basis for the flag of the State of California.

[550] I note that this is similar to the treatment of the swastika flag after 1945, except with Ukrainian symbolism playing the role of the former (threatening) identity and the new Russian- and Soviet-inspired intermediate identity symbolism playing the alternative.

[551] For example, recall how the *Novorossiya* newspaper was critical of Taras Shevchenko, while the LPR papers showed respect for him.

[552] For example, the Donetsk city coat of arms was incorporated into the design of *Donetsk Vechernii* newspaper, however the Donetsk Oblast flag was discarded. I note that at least one story displayed Mertsalov's Palm, a key part of the symbol of the Donetsk Oblast flag. See *Novorossiya* #58 p. 5.

that weather seemed to affect the calculus of separatists, i.e., on average, as the daily low temperature got colder, there were more displays of 'Demean Nationalist Ukraine' symbols and themes. These results suggest that opportunities for negative messaging not only continue to exist when fighting slows down around winter—they may even increase.

I now turn to assessing the implications of analyzing wartime media in the context of separatist proto-states that seek international recognition as *de jure* sovereign states. Rather than draw a line between wartime reporting and wartime propaganda, this study approached the separatist-produced publications as containing an interconnected mix of both. This choice was deliberate and necessary to determine what counts as a national symbol, what are the roles that symbols play in armed conflicts, and when are symbols more or less useful to nationalists. The media displayed a variety of both national symbols and nationalistic themes, both of which functioned to communicate similar propagandistic ideas. Although some were communicated visually and others discursively, the goal of displaying symbols and themes was, ostensibly, to affect readers of the separatist media on an emotional level.

The research design did not allow us to answer how the separatist media was received by readers in the Donbass region, particularly the many representations of Ukraine as a fascist enemy. However, the combination of case studies and quantitative analysis revealed several important findings about the conflict in the Donbass region, including that the separatist projects (particularly the Novorossiya project) used aspects of Russian and Soviet history to fulfil contemporary ideological needs; that the DPR used local Donbass and GPW-related history to legitimize the DPR and LPR projects and their leaders; and that the Soviet era was viewed to be a glorious bygone era. That said, at least one newspaper (*Novorossiya*) willingly criticized Soviet and Russian leaders

on occasion [553] and admitted a preference for capitalism to Soviet-style socialism. [554] The quantitative analysis allowed patterns to be uncovered, such as the finding that 'Legitimization' symbols and themes clustered around GPW-related anniversaries. The qualitative analysis allowed us to see important differences between the DPR and LPR, including the different ways the GPW was referenced in the DPR and LPR and the different ways Taras Shevchenko was treated (i.e., as both an in-group and out-group symbol).

This last point raises an important question: does the DPR's and LPR's symbol-retrofitting imply a nation or 'ethos' at the center of the DPR and LPR nationalist projects? The answer appears to be mostly no. To be sure, there were some occasions when separatists explicitly claimed there was an ethos at the center of their project.[555] However, the major themes published in the media (i.e., the image of Ukraine as a bloodthirsty enemy; nostalgia for the Soviet Union; respect for Orthodox Christianity and the Russian language) do not together or on their own constitute a DPR or LPR 'nation.' Moreover, the nationalism seen in the separatist newspapers was neither 'ethnic' nor 'civic': the Donbass is multicultural and not exclusive to any one ethnic group, and all so-called elections that have been held in the region since 2014 have all been carefully scripted and stage-managed.

Future research into nationalism in media and its relation to weather-related phenomena can build off these findings, particularly the finding that, on average, the display of out-group symbols and themes increased when daily minimum temperatures decreased. One could begin by investigating *how* cold weather affects the display of different varieties of national symbols in

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[553] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #21 p. 1, which was critical of Boris Yeltsin, and #53 p. 5, which was critical of Mikhail Gorbachev.
[554] See *Novorossiya* #48 p. 1.
[555] See, for example, *Novorossiya* #42 pp. 1 and 3.

media during political conflicts, particularly since we can be confident that the display of national symbols does not drive changes in weather.

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Appendix Table 1: Positive symbols featured in the separatist media

	Status quo identity (Ukraine out-group)	Intermediate identity (Donbass region in-group)	Prospective identity (Russia in-group)
Positive	*Specific Symbols:* **Ukraine** *(Jan. – April 2014—before proclamation of DPR and LPR)* flags, coat of arms, crests, medals	*Specific Symbols:* **DPR** flags, coat of arms, crests, flag pins, ribbons, medals **LPR** flags, coat of arms, crests, flag pins **Novorossiia** flags, coat of arms, crests, flag pins, medals, maps, advertisements (e.g., Donbass People's Militia logo) **Donbass Identity** imagery of coal - coal, mining, miners, celebrations of Miner's Day, mining figures (Alexsei Stakhanov; Vladimir Novikov) Donets-Krivoy Rog (DKR) Soviet Republic imagery of Donetsk-Lugansk region - 'Donbas is the Heart of Russia' (Soviet-era propaganda) - Donetsk clock - "Donetskgormash" (largest machine-building plant in Donbass) - GPW museum - Lugansk Oblast Coat of Arms - Lugansk Regional Academic Puppet Theater (founded March 29, 1939) - Lugansk trade union flag - Mertsalov Palm Donetsk and Lugansk figures - Vladimir Degtyarev (local historical figure) imagery of Donetsk and Lugansk figures - Militia figures (alive and deceased) - Government figures (alive and deceased) - Rinat Akhmetov (Ukrainian oligarch) - Mykola Levchenko (oligarch associate) - Leonid Reshetnikov (of the Russia Institute for Strategic Studies; from Kharkiv) - Y.A. Rokachev (local trade union figure that died in 1988) International Movement of Donbass (IDA) Non-governmental public organizations - Public Movement Donetsk Republic* - Public Movement Free Donbass* - Public Organization Young Republic - Public Movement World Luhansk * participated in Nov. 2014 elections	*Specific Symbols:* **Russia** flags (Russia flag and flag colors; Russian Airborne Forces flag) **Ribbon of St. George** flags ribbon - worn on clothing - painted on buildings - incorporated into remembrances of fighters, newspaper designs, art, holiday symbolism (e.g., Victory Day; Soviet New Year) **Orthodox Christianity** flags, crests imagery of Orthodox figures - Theotokos of Tikhvin imagery of Orthodox symbols - images of bibles, churches, statutes, clergy, books and paintings - public events (flashmob; ice dive tradition) **Great Patriotic War (GPW)** GPW figures - important military heroes, figures, citizens (e.g., Yuri Levitan) - veterans (including depictions of veterans in their youth; medals worn by veterans; veterans' reunions and commemorations) GPW general symbols - Savur Mohyla - monuments and museums honoring GPW - Victory Bell **Russian-Soviet Civilization** Russian-Soviet civilizational figures - Anton Denikan (Russian Civil War) - Yuri Garigin (cosmonaut) - Sergey Glazyev (Russian politician) - Nikolai Goryushkin - Aleksandr Khanzhonkov (founder of Russian cinematography) - Vladimir Lenin (including statues) - Sergei Prokofiev (composer) - Alexander Pushkin (poet) - Vladimir Putin - Alexander Suvorov (military leader) - Vyacheslav Tikhonov (actor) - Sergei Yesenin (poet) - Fyodor Ushakov (Russian naval commander) Russian-Soviet civilizational flags and crests - Abkhazia flag - Far East Republic crest - Komsomolsk crest - Shcheglovsky (Leningrad region) coat of arms - South Ossetia flag - Transnistria flag - USSR flag Russian-Soviet history and holiday symbols - Battle of Kulikovo - Day of Defender (Feb 23 holiday) - Day of Miner (8/26) - Kieven Rus' - May Day (holiday and flags) - Stakhanov movement - Times of Troubles Russian-Soviet general symbols - currency (ruble) - Leningrad statue - medals (Russian Empire and USSR) - memorials to past wars and major events (GPW; Chernobyl; USSR withdrawal from Afghanistan, 2008 Georgia War) - Motherland statue - Russian bathhouses - "Russian Spring" - USSR Santa Claus (New Year's) Russian Federation allies - Xi Jinping (China) - Alexander Lukashenko (Belarus)

Appendix Table 2: Negative symbols featured in the separatist media

Status quo identity (Ukraine out-group)	Intermediate identity symbols (Donbass region in-group)	Prospective identity symbols (Russia in-group)

Specific Symbols:
Ukraine
(April 2014 – Dec. 2015—after proclamation of DPR and LPR)
  flags, national and regional (e.g., Galicia) coats of arms, crests, flag pins
  figures (oligarchs, Petro Poroshenko, Mikheil Saakashvili, Taras Shevchenko)
  general negative symbols (e.g., cannibals)
 	
Right Sector
  flags, coat of arms, crests
 	
West
  imagery of Europe (EU, Bulgaria, 2008 Russia-Georgia war, Angela Merkel, OSCE)
  imagery of Nazi Germany (flag, salute, Adolf Hitler)
  imagery of USA (U.S. dollar), Barack Obama, Statue of Liberty, historical pictures
  (e.g., US govt. treatment of Native Americans)
 	
2014 conflict memorials
  memorials sites to destroyed Donetsk airport, May 2014 Odessa trade union fire,
  general sites of shelling and destruction
	Specific Symbols:
	(null)
		Specific Symbols:
		(null)

Appendix Table 3: Demean Nationalist Ukraine Fixed Effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Achievements	-0.148	-0.148	-0.066	-0.066	-0.150	-0.150
	(0.148)	(0.148)	(0.152)	(0.152)	(0.143)	(0.143)
Anniversaries	0.105	0.105	0.098	0.098	0.175	0.175
	(0.147)	(0.147)	(0.155)	(0.155)	(0.150)	(0.150)
Setbacks	0.522**	0.522**	0.518*	0.518*	0.445*	0.445*
	(0.255)	(0.255)	(0.265)	(0.265)	(0.257)	(0.257)
Sanctions	-0.400**	-0.400**	-0.441**	-0.441**	-0.443**	-0.443**
	(0.173)	(0.173)	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.175)
Temperature	-0.015***	-0.015***	-0.013	-0.013	-0.015***	-0.015***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Russian holidays	0.144*	0.144*	0.129	0.129	0.154**	0.154**
	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.078)
DPR and LPR holidays	-0.135	-0.135	-0.172**	-0.172**	-0.106	-0.106
	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Ukraine holidays	-0.029	-0.029	-0.040	-0.040	0.024	0.024
	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Orthodox holidays	-0.097	-0.097	-0.184	-0.184	-0.086	-0.086
	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.097)	(0.097)
International holidays	-0.031	-0.031	-0.054	-0.054	-0.052	-0.052
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.081)
GPW anniversaries	0.099	0.099	0.150	0.150	0.068	0.068
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.100)
Boevoe Znamia Donbassa	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Boevoi Listok Novorossii	0.062	0.062	0.122	0.122	0.048	0.048
	(0.642)	(0.642)	(0.647)	(0.647)	(0.642)	(0.642)
Donetsk Vechernii	-0.150	0.000	-0.156	0.000	0.083	0.000
	(0.298)	(.)	(0.295)	(.)	(0.307)	(.)
Novorossia	1.070***	1.070***	1.181***	1.181***	1.247***	1.247***
	(0.258)	(0.258)	(0.255)	(0.255)	(0.262)	(0.262)
Edinstvo	-2.217***	0.000	-2.100***	0.000	-2.212***	0.000
	(0.847)	(.)	(0.350)	(.)	(0.347)	(.)
Zaria Donbassa	-2.636***	-1.605***	-2.420***	-1.469***	-2.384***	-1.571***
	(0.629)	(0.605)	(0.637)	(0.609)	(0.637)	(0.605)
Vostochnyi Donbass	-1.031***	0.000	-0.980***	0.000	-0.812***	0.000
	(0.801)	(.)	(0.302)	(.)	(0.313)	(.)
30 KM LOC		-1.186***		-1.140***		-1.400***
		(0.294)		(0.294)		(0.806)
Place of Publication		-2.067***		-1.945***		-2.296***
		(0.290)		(0.296)		(0.804)
Sponsored by Militia		0.150		0.156		-0.083
		(0.293)		(0.296)		(0.807)
Q1			-0.273**	-0.273**		
			(0.125)	(0.125)		
Q2			-0.184	-0.184		
			(0.150)	(0.150)		
Q3			-0.116	-0.116		
			(0.198)	(0.198)		
Q4			0.000	0.000		
			(.)	(.)		
2014					0.243**	0.243**
					(0.097)	(0.097)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE					✓	✓
Constant	1.457***	2.494***	1.511***	2.495***	1.198***	2.679***
	(0.250)	(0.346)	(0.254)	(0.346)	(0.271)	(0.854)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	559.018	559.018	559.200	559.200	554.828	554.828
BIC	618.916	618.916	623.247	623.247	612.775	612.775

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Appendix Table 4: Celebrate Russian Greatness Fixed Effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Achievements	0.205***	0.205***	0.163**	0.163**	0.208***	0.208***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Anniversaries	0.027	0.027	0.024	0.024	0.013	0.013
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Setbacks	-0.024	-0.024	-0.014	-0.014	-0.013	-0.013
	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Sanctions	-0.106	-0.106	-0.103	-0.103	-0.102	-0.102
	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.068)
Temperature	-0.002	-0.002	-0.007*	-0.007*	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Russian holidays	0.001	0.001	0.027	0.027	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)
DPR and LPR holidays	0.068*	0.068*	0.082**	0.082**	0.058	0.058
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Ukraine holidays	0.010	0.010	0.030	0.030	0.006	0.006
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Orthodox holidays	0.025	0.025	0.029	0.029	0.024	0.024
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.042)
International holidays	0.046	0.046	0.058	0.058	0.048	0.048
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.038)
GPW anniversaries	0.011	0.011	-0.009	-0.009	0.015	0.015
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Boevoe Znamia Donbassa	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Boevoi Listok Novorossii	-0.587	-0.587	-0.628	-0.628	-0.585	-0.585
	(0.408)	(0.408)	(0.410)	(0.410)	(0.408)	(0.408)
Donetsk Vechernii	0.335**	0.000	0.346**	0.000	0.265	0.000
	(0.156)	(.)	(0.156)	(.)	(0.169)	(.)
Novorossiia	0.660***	0.660***	0.609***	0.609***	0.606***	0.606***
	(0.144)	(0.144)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.153)	(0.153)
Ediustvo	0.260*	0.000	0.170	0.000	0.259*	0.000
	(0.147)	(.)	(0.150)	(.)	(0.147)	(.)
Zaria Donbassa	0.091	-0.425***	-0.047	-0.492***	0.020	-0.425***
	(0.168)	(0.098)	(0.171)	(0.102)	(0.176)	(0.098)
Vostochnyi Donbass	0.516***	0.000	0.445***	0.000	0.448***	0.000
	(0.149)	(.)	(0.151)	(.)	(0.182)	(.)
30 KM LOC		-0.266***		-0.275***		-0.189**
		(0.060)		(0.061)		(0.088)
Place of Publication		-0.075		-0.176**		-0.006
		(0.079)		(0.085)		(0.101)
Sponsored by Militia		-0.335**		-0.346**		-0.265
		(0.156)		(0.156)		(0.169)
Q1			0.152**	0.152**		
			(0.062)	(0.062)		
Q2			0.209***	0.209***		
			(0.066)	(0.066)		
Q3			0.162*	0.162*		
			(0.086)	(0.086)		
Q4			0.000	0.000		
			(.)	(.)		
2014					-0.072	-0.072
					(0.066)	(0.066)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE						
Constant	2.504***	3.095***	2.461***	3.083***	2.579***	3.083***
	(0.142)	(0.100)	(0.148)	(0.101)	(0.158)	(0.115)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	1063.969	1063.969	1056.914	1056.914	1064.759	1064.759
BIC	1118.867	1118.867	1120.961	1120.961	1122.707	1122.707

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Appendix Table 5: Legitimization Fixed Effects

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Achievements	0.069	0.069	0.125	0.125	0.067	0.067
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Anniversaries	-0.031	-0.031	-0.086	-0.086	-0.019	-0.019
	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Setbacks	-0.129	-0.129	-0.203*	-0.203*	-0.189	-0.189
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.119)	(0.118)	(0.118)
Sanctions	0.109	0.109	0.121	0.121	0.106	0.106
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.082)
Temperature	-0.001	-0.001	0.005	0.005	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Russian holidays	-0.017	-0.017	-0.078	-0.078	-0.016	-0.016
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.049)	(0.049)
DPR and LPR holidays	-0.056	-0.056	-0.052	-0.052	-0.052	-0.052
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Ukraine holidays	-0.070	-0.070	-0.085	-0.085	-0.066	-0.066
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Orthodox holidays	-0.002	-0.002	0.004	0.004	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.055)
International holidays	-0.038	-0.038	-0.012	-0.012	-0.034	-0.034
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.050)
GPW anniversaries	0.161**	0.161**	0.174***	0.174***	0.158**	0.158**
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Boevoe Znamia Donbassa	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Boevoi Listok Novorossii	0.033	0.033	-0.047	-0.047	0.031	0.031
	(0.465)	(0.465)	(0.467)	(0.467)	(0.465)	(0.465)
Donetsk Vechernii	1.173***	0.000	1.161***	0.000	1.235***	0.000
	(0.217)	(.)	(0.217)	(.)	(0.283)	(.)
Novorossiia	0.712***	0.712***	0.759***	0.759***	0.759***	0.759***
	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.213)	(0.213)	(0.221)	(0.221)
Edinstvo	0.170	0.000	0.267	0.000	0.171	0.000
	(0.215)	(.)	(0.219)	(.)	(0.215)	(.)
Zaria Donbassa	0.399*	-0.720***	0.501**	-0.885***	0.468*	-0.717***
	(0.231)	(0.123)	(0.242)	(0.182)	(0.248)	(0.123)
Vostochnyi Donbass	1.119***	0.000	1.185***	0.000	1.180***	0.000
	(0.216)	(.)	(0.217)	(.)	(0.281)	(.)
80 KM LOC		-0.949***		-0.918***		-1.009***
		(0.080)		(0.082)		(0.115)
Place of Publication		-1.003***		-0.893***		-1.064***
		(0.091)		(0.098)		(0.124)
Sponsored by Militia		-1.173***		-1.161***		-1.235***
		(0.217)		(0.217)		(0.283)
Q1			-0.078	-0.078		
			(0.088)	(0.088)		
Q2			-0.383***	-0.383***		
			(0.090)	(0.090)		
Q3			-0.072	-0.072		
			(0.111)	(0.111)		
Q4			0.000	0.000		
			(.)	(.)		
2014					0.064	0.064
					(0.088)	(0.088)
Paper FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarter FE			✓	✓		
Year FE						
Constant	1.840***	3.982***	1.886***	3.945***	1.774***	4.018***
	(0.208)	(0.120)	(0.209)	(0.121)	(0.227)	(0.143)
N	156	156	156	156	156	156
AIC	881.570	881.570	866.816	866.816	883.045	883.045
BIC	936.468	936.468	930.362	930.362	940.993	940.993

Notes: The models are Poisson (log-linear) regression models. The top panel shows the Poisson regression coefficients and standard errors for the count equations. The bottom panels show the probit coefficients and standard errors from the transition equations. The bottom panel shows the sample sizes and t criteria. * $p < :1$, ** $p < :05$, *** $p < :01$

Appendix Table 6: Examples of negative uses of Ukrainian national symbols

Example: Captured flag of Ukraine 101st Brigade (*Boevoe znamia Donbassa* #1 p. 2)

Example: Chaos and destruction in close proximity to flag of Ukraine (*Novorossiia* #3 p. 8)

Example: propaganda imploring people to reject Ukraine national identity and accept Novorossiia identity (*Novorossiia* #5 p. 8)

Example: Cartoon involving the flags of Ukraine and Right Sector (flag colors form nationalist salutes and Nazi swastikas) (*Novorossiia* #8 p. 4)

Example: cartoon of monkeys pulling down Darwin statue that accompanies story about Ukraine's elections (*Novorossiia* #11 p. 4)

Example: image of lynched effigies of Soviet Santa symbol that accompanies story about radicalism in Ukraine (*Novorossiia* #15 p. 8)

Example: Captured flags of Ukraine and Right Sector (*Novorossiia* #21 p. 7)

Example: Cartoon that derides Ukrainian support for same-sex relationships (*Novorossiia* #22 p. 4)

Example: Chaos and destruction formed to look like the flag of Ukraine (*Novorossiia* #23 p. 1)

Example: Cartoon involving the flag and coat of arms of Ukraine (disrespectful treatment of flag and coat of arms) (*Novorossiia* #23p. 3)

Example: Cartoon of Ukrainian Armed Forces pleading with Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko after being shelled by DPR rebels (*Novorossiia* #24 p. 6)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (*Novorossiia* #24 p. 6)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon ("country not found") (*Novorossiia* #27 p. 4)

Example: Cartoon involving Ukrainian oligarch Igor Kolomoyskyi (Kolomoyskyi holds a gun and offers bribes) (*Novorossiia* #28 p. 6)

Example: Cartoon involving Ukrainian politicians and United States President Barack Obama (*Novorossiia* #41 p. 7)

Example: Cartoon involving the flag of Ukraine (Ukraine is a sick patient) (*Novorossiia* #42 p. 7)

Example: Historical image of WWII era that accompanies story about Ukrainian-Nazi collaboration (*Novorossiia* #42 p. 7)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (*Novorossiia* #49 p. 1)

Example: Historical image of WWII era that shows similarity between Ukrainian nationalist and Nazi symbolism (*Novorossiia* #49 p. 5)

Example: Chaos and destruction in close proximity to flag of Ukraine (*Novorossiia* #51 p. 1)

Example: Cartoon involving the flags of Ukraine and the DPR (Ukrainian national identity is shifting to DPR national identity) (*Novorossiia* #58 p. 1)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (*Novorossiia* #59 p. 7)

Example: Image of drawings of guns on Ukrainian electoral ballots (*Novorossiia* #59 p. 7)
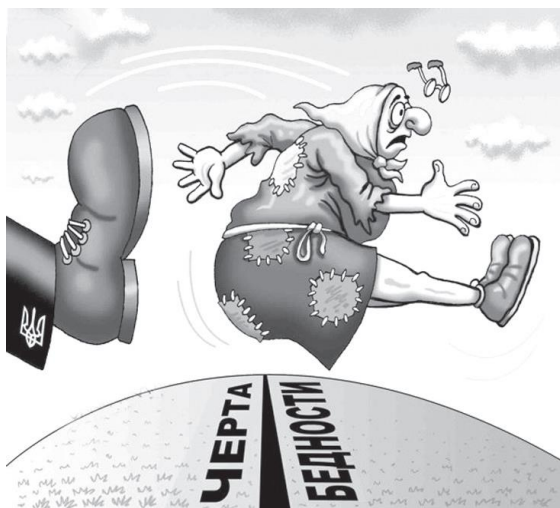

Example: Gendered depiction of Ukraine and EU politicians (cartoon derides Ukrainian support for same-sex relationships) (*Novorossiia* #65 p. 1)
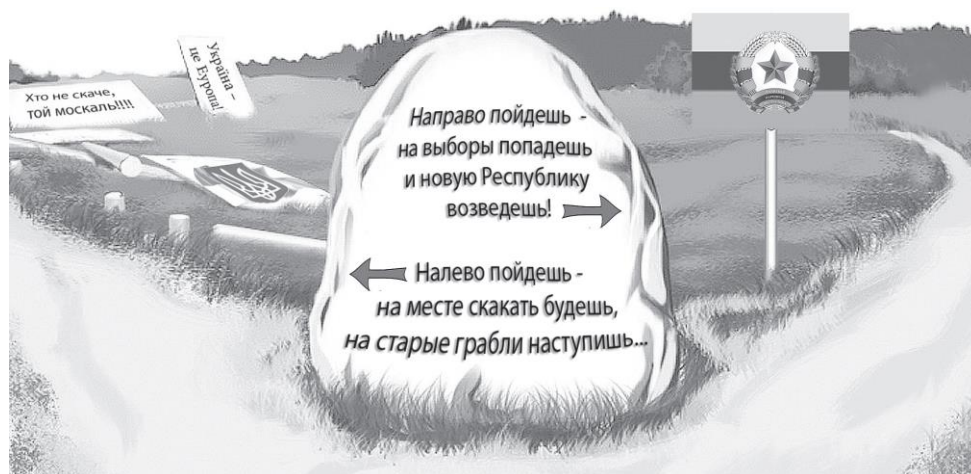
Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (*Novorossiia* #59 p. 7)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (Ukrainian government kicks pensioner over the poverty line) (*Edinstvo* #52 p. 2)

Example: Historical image of WWII era that shows Ukrainian women during GPW, one of whom is giving a Nazi salute (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #25 p. 10)

Example: Anti-Ukraine cartoon (*Vostochnyi Donbass* #39 p. 1)