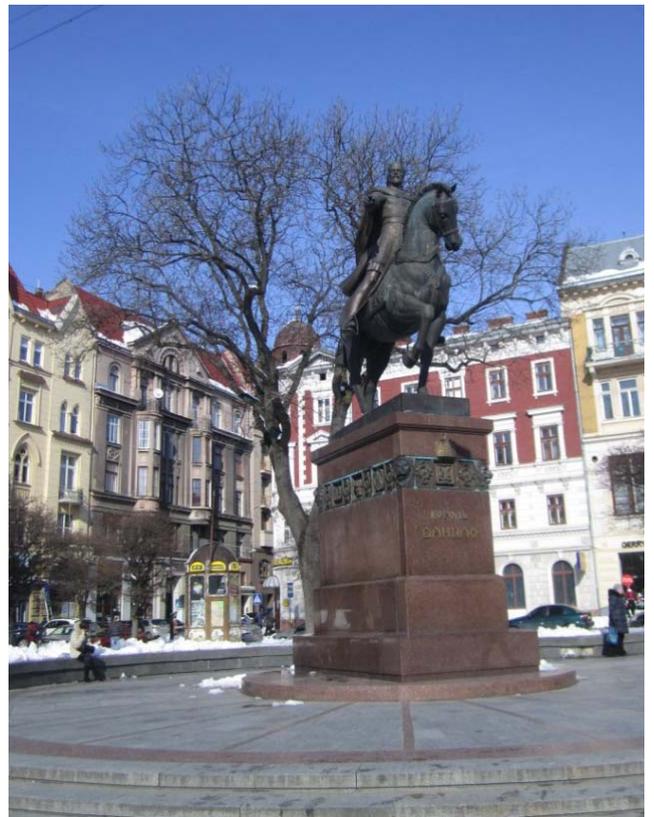# A Comparative Study of Youth Political Behavior in the United States and Ukraine: Findings from Undergraduate Research

POSC3612 Youth and Politics
Department of Political Science
Fordham University, New York, USA
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Foreword

This collection of research papers represents undergraduate research carried out by Fordham University students in spring 2013. Within the framework of the interdisciplinary capstone course POSC3612 Youth and Politics, each student designed a research project and collected original empirical data to compare patterns of political behavior in the United States and Ukraine. Specifically, Fordham students conducted in-depth interviews with American youth in New York and Ukrainian youth in Lviv. The study abroad tour, held during the spring break, enabled Fordham students to interact with students from the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) and learn about politics in a post-communist society. Some of the findings from this research were presented at the Sixth Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium held on the Rose Hill campus on April 17, 2013.

This volume is divided into eight chapters single-authored by a Fordham student. The volume begins with the comparative analysis of voting behavior in the United States and Ukraine. The first chapter examines how such individual-level variables as family and media consumption and such country-level variables as political polarization, the electoral system, and perceived corruption influence voting behavior of young people. Among other things, the results indicate that high levels of perceived corruption provide a motivation for Ukrainian youth to participate in elections. The second chapter analyzes effects of parents, peers, schools, churches, and social media on the individual's decision to vote. This study, for example, finds that peer influence is a strong predictor of youth voting in the United States and Ukraine. The third chapter investigates the impact of national identity and emotions on civic engagement, with the focus on electoral behavior. The fourth chapter explores the origins of partisanship and finds that

parents tend to transmit party identification to children in the United States, while peers have a stronger impact on party identification of the young generation in Ukraine.

The next four chapters compare cross-national trends in political behavior outside the realm of elections. The fifth chapter analyzes determinants of participation in protest activity. The sixth chapter evaluates mass perceptions of the effectiveness of protest tactics in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the United States. The last two chapters focus on the role of social media in shaping public opinion and political participation in the selected states. The seventh chapter finds that social media fails to live up to its potential to bridge a political divide in a polarized society. The findings indicate that young people in both the United States and Ukraine tend to connect on the web with individuals with similar political views. The final chapter demonstrates the importance of the Internet as the main source of political news for contemporary youth.

Overall, this empirical research seeks to contribute to existing literature on political participation in several ways. First, the bulk of extant empirical work has focused on political participation in the United States. Much less is known about determinants of political behavior in transition societies and non-democracies. A comparative study of the United States and Ukraine sheds some light on the importance of social context in explaining individual-level differences in political participation. Second, this empirical research adds to political science literature by illuminating the role of youth in domestic politics. The youth population aged between 15 and 29 constitutes approximately one-fifth of the total population in the United States and Ukraine. Given its size, the young generation can influence political processes and bring about social change in society.

It must also be noted that the study abroad tour to Ukraine was a joint effort of many individuals. On the Fordham side, Jennifer Latham, Assistant Vice President of International Programs, and Ronald Mendez-Clark, Director of International and Study Abroad Program, enthusiastically supported my course proposal and skillfully assisted with various logistical aspects of international travel. On the UCU side, Roman Vaskiv, Director of the School of Ukrainian Language and Culture, and Lydia Mazuryk, a native of California and an intern in the Department of International Academic Relations, extended a warm welcome for the incoming group of students and laid the groundwork for further academic collaboration between the two universities. Ukrainian students displayed immeasurable generosity spending a lot of time with their American buddies and providing their insights into domestic politics. In turn, Fordham students showed a great deal of flexibility and openness to learning about another culture and sharing their own with their Ukrainian peers.

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Youth Voting in Ukraine and the United States

Abstract

With youth voter turnout at a lower level than voter turnout of older age groups, understanding factors that influence a young person's decision to vote is important to strengthen democratic institutions in both democratic states and hybrid regimes. A number of studies argue that such individual-level variables as family and media consumption and such country-level variables as political polarization, electoral systems, and nationwide corruption perception have an impact on voting. This research project seeks to explore how these factors influence youth voting in Ukraine and the United States. The empirical analysis was based on in-depth interviews with university students in two countries in spring 2013. This research finds strong cross-country differences in the explanatory power of each factor. By analyzing voting behavior in a fully democratic state and a state with underdeveloped democratic institutions, this research offers new insights into the determinants of voting.

Voting is a key component of citizen participation in democratic and democratizing countries. For many people, going to the polls on Election Day is the only time they might feel a strong sense of connection to the political system. Nonetheless, not every voting-age citizen exercises the right to vote. Voter turnout level is particularly low among young voters. In light of this alarming trend, a substantial amount of literature seeks to identify factors that influence a young person's decision to vote. Understanding reasons why some youth choose to vote and others refrain from voting can strengthen the explanatory power of political science theories and aid the effectiveness of civic initiatives aimed at boosting youth voter turnout.

This study focuses on five factors that have been identified in the literature as predictors of voting behavior. The country-level factors include political polarization, corruption perceptions, and electoral systems, while the individual-level factors are political discussions in the family and news consumption. It is hypothesized that youth who live in a more polarized country are more likely to vote than those who live in a less polarized one. It is also hypothesized that youth who grew up in households that regularly discuss politics are more likely to vote. Likewise, those who regularly follow current events are more likely to vote. Another hypothesis is that youth who live in a country with higher levels of perceived corruption are less likely to vote than those living in a country with lower levels of perceived corruption. Lastly, it is assumed that American youth are less likely to vote than youth in other countries because the Electoral College discourages voting in most US states. These hypotheses were tested qualitatively through the use of in-depth interviews in Ukraine and the United States.

This paper is organized in the following manner. The next section discusses the extant literature on voting and points out how this paper will contribute to this scholarship. Next, the paper explains the selection of Ukraine and the United States for this cross-country analysis, the

survey methodology, and the sample of the interviewees. The penultimate section analyzes the data from in-depth interviews. This paper concludes with specifying implications of these findings and providing suggestions for further research.

Prior Research

This research will test the applicability of several factors in explaining voting behavior across national borders and regime types. To date, scholars have identified numerous factors that can impact voting behavior, including polarization, corruption perception, electoral system, family, and news consumption, will be addressed in this research. The research pertaining to these five factors will be discussed in this section.

The impact of polarization on voter turnout has received extensive academic attention. The general consensus is that heterogeneous countries with a high likelihood of political competition and disagreement are more likely to have higher levels of voter turnout than homogenous countries with a high degree of agreement on political issues (Kaniovski and Mueller 2006; Pacheco 2008). On a more local level, some research into the polarization of communities suggests that this factor has the greatest impact on the decision to vote during one's youth (Pacheco 2008).

Unlike the research on polarization, where there is wide consensus, the research on corruption perceptions has a large amount of disagreement. There are three perspectives on the effects of corruption on voting. The first perspective claims that higher corruption perception levels make it more unlikely for a citizen to vote, due to the perceived ineffectiveness of the electoral system (Chang and Chu 2006; Krastev 2002; Mason 2003/04). The second perspective posits that higher perception of corruption increases the likelihood of voting (Hasty 2005;

Redlawsk and McCann 2005). Another perspective is that corruption has a negligible effect on an individual's decision to vote (Drury, Krieckhaus and Lusztig 2006; Welch and Hibbing 1997).

The third country-level factor examined in this research is the type of the electoral system. Comparative research that analyzes different political structures and contexts has consistently found that institutional factors have an effect on voter turnout levels (Blais and Karty 1990; Kostadinova and Power 2007; Powell 1986). When these studies examine differences in Western democracies, they usually conclude that lower voter turnout in the United States is a direct result of its voting system (Blais and Karty 1990; Powell, Jr. 1986). While research has been effective in comparing institutional factors between democratic states and between non-democratic states, very little research comparing an overlap of democratic and non-democratic or democratizing states currently exists.

The first individual-level factor examined in this research is the family. To date, research has indicated a strong link between the expressiveness of a family and voting behavior (Laband, Pandit, Sophocleus and Laband, 2009). Further research on the family has stipulated that the presence of a strong, stable family unit also encourages voting (Sandell and Plutzer 2005; Wolfinger and Wolfinger 2008). While the specific reason why family has an impact on voting behavior is debated in the literature, there is agreement that the family does have an impact on an individual's decision to vote.

The last factor considered in this research project is news consumption. A large part of political behavior literature is dedicated to the medium through which voters receive news. Most research agrees that newspaper readership is the best predictor of one's likelihood to vote, because newspapers will, at the very least, contribute to one's understanding of local politics (Mondak 1995). In addition, research suggests that the television has played a large role in the

decline of voter turnout over the years (Althaus and Trautman, 2008; Gentzkow, 2006). However, very little research has been done to address the internet's effectiveness as a media source that promotes voting. Understanding the internet's effect on voting behavior, much like the newspaper and the television before it, is crucial to understanding how news consumption affects voting.

This research draws on and expands upon extant literature on voting behavior. Previous research has been successful in identifying numerous factors that can influence an individual's decision to vote and, regarding certain topics, there is a broad consensus on the type of impact an individual factor will have on voting. However, most research fails to take into account the overlapping effects that factors can have on an individual's decision to vote. This research seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining five factors, instead of just one. Furthermore, there is a lack of voting research done at a cross-country level, at least when compared to the amount of research done at a national level. The international scope of this research provides a distinct, although not entirely new, perspective on voting.

Methodology

For this cross-country analysis of youth voting behavior, Ukraine and the United States of America were chosen due to a variety of factors. Both countries held major elections in the fall of 2012, with Americans electing the President and Ukrainians voting for members of the Verkhovna Rada, or Parliament. These elections would serve as a clear reference point for youth voters, as everyone who was interviewed was legally able to participate in these elections. Nonetheless, significant differences exist between the two, including democratic and economic development. Several indices underscore this disparity: Freedom House's Map of Freedom

(2013) classifies the United States as "free" and Ukraine as "partly free," the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (2013) ranks the United States as a "full democracy" and Ukraine as a "flawed democracy," and the UN Human Development Index (2011) categorizes the United States of America's development as "very high" and Ukraine's as "high." Corruption perception levels differ across the two countries. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (2012), the United States is the 19th least corrupt country and Ukraine is ranked 144th. Lastly, the historical contexts in the two countries are significantly different. The United States has been an independent democratic country for more than 200 years. Ukraine, on the other hand, was part of the Soviet Union for most of the 1900s and has only become an independent country with a democratic constitution in the last twenty years. While Ukraine and the United States both held elections in 2012, the differences between the two countries provide a strong basis for a cross-country analysis.

Methodologically, this research was conducted through in-depth interviews with students in both countries. This qualitative form of research involves one-on-one interactions between the researcher and a respondent. In-depth interviews were determined to be the best method for respondents to address complex motivations in a thorough manner, as prior research utilizing this method have demonstrated (Junn and Masuoka 2008; Jahromi 2011). Interviewees are able to explain thoughts and concepts much better than respondents in a quantitative survey, who are limited to a pre-selected list of answers. Furthermore, the use of in-depth interviews rather than focus groups allows each individual respondent to develop his or her own responses without the influence of other respondents.

Interviewees were chosen based on a non-probability sample in both countries, and therefore respondents cannot be considered part of a national representative sample. In total,

twelve students were interviewed, evenly divided between six Ukrainians and six Americans. All six of the Ukrainian students were studying at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv at the time of the interview. Five of the six Americans were students at Fordham University in New York City, with the other student enrolled at Columbia University, another New York City university. Within both the Ukrainian and American groups of students, there was an even division of three male and three female respondents. Both groups had a range between nineteen and twenty years of age.

Findings

Based on the qualitative data collected during in-depth interviews, this study finds divergent effects of the above-mentioned five variables on voting behavior in each country. Of the twelve interviewed students, all but two Ukrainians and one American voted in their respective elections in 2012. This diversity of political behavior provides a limited opportunity to examine voting behavior on both a cross-country and intra-country level, as differences between those who voted and those who did not within each country should become apparent.

Both Ukrainians and Americans reported that they lived in polarized countries, in which the political system was divided along ideological lines. In both countries, voting was, in some way, related to the polarized political atmosphere, indicating that greater polarization does positively influence an individual's decision to vote. However, the causes of polarization and the reactions of students to this polarized atmosphere differed in each country. For Ukrainians, polarization was a serious problem. A student from Lviv said:

> Yes, there are differences between East and West Ukraine, but only the politicians have
> made us a divided country. East Ukrainians and West Ukrainians share the same

values, but it is the mass media, which is controlled by the politicians, that divides us. This division is fake. (Victoria, 19, Lviv, Ukraine)

Another Ukrainian student echoed this sentiment when he said that the division between a nationalist West and a communist East was "only a stereotype for old people, because young people vote based on individual ideology, not region" (Roman, 20, Lviv, Ukraine). Clearly, Ukrainian youth saw polarization as an artificial construct imposed on them by politicians and, as Roman stated, voting was a way to protest against this polarization.

In the United States, attitudes towards polarization were more divided. Some interviewees spoke positively of the effects polarization had on the country, with one student saying:

> I don't think we're divided geographically, but certainly along political lines, with people being either Democrat or Republican. This isn't a problem because each side has differing opinions, and this is good because it works as a balance. The more diverse opinions there are, the closer we get to the best solution. When we get closer to elections, people rally for a certain side. (Sam L., 19, New York City, USA)

In contrast, other respondents criticized the effects of polarization on American politics, claiming it led to problems in the political system:

> I think [polarization] is definitely a problem, as we see with issues like the fiscal cliff. Congress has become useless; I recently read that the previous session of Congress passed the lowest number of laws in decades. Still, voting, although less effective than

it should be, is one of the best, most realistic recourses the populace has to confront this

division (Sam T., 20, New York City, USA)

Although these students held opposing views on the value of polarization in the United

States, it is worth noting that both sides linked voting to polarization. Regardless of one's

opinions on it, the presence of polarization makes youth more likely to vote.

Corruption was clearly a much bigger issue for Ukrainian students than it was for

Americans, but respondents in both countries did recognize the presence of corruption.

Interestingly, the perceived presence of corruption did not discourage voting but rather, for most

interviewees, led to greater interest in voting. Ukrainians spoke about corruption as a daily part

of their lives and an important, albeit hated, aspect of Ukraine's political culture. Christina, a 19-

year old from Lviv, Ukraine, said that "people in power, the oligarchs, don't want to change the

political system because they profit from it. They don't care about us, they only care about

themselves." Another student voiced a similar complaint when he said "it is not who votes that

matters, but who counts the votes that matters. Still, I feel that I need to vote to make it clear that

my voice can be heard and we can change" (Roman, 20, Lviv, Ukraine). Ukrainian youth

believed that voting was at least a symbolic act in the face of rampant corruption that, according

to them, is nearly impossible to change. While Americans also conceded that there was some

corruption in the political system, there was a positive attitude when compared to other countries.

One respondent accepted that, although there is corruption in the United States, the country is

still "not [corrupt] in the same way that Italy is corrupt. Politicians in corruption scandals here

usually step down" (Grace, 20, New York City, USA). Another student made similar comments

in comparing the United States to India, where "you can bribe police officers for the equivalent

of $0.20. That isn't possible in the United States, and voting is a way to remove corrupt politicians" (Varun, 20, New York City, USA). Clearly, Ukrainian and American youth have differing views of the extent of corruption in each country. Ukrainians see corruption as a ubiquitous part of life and something that's very difficult to change. On the other hand, Americans accept that there is some degree of corruption in most human institutions, but trust that the political system punishes the corrupt and contend that the United States is less corrupt than other countries. Despite these differing views on the prevalence of corruption, youth in both Ukraine and the United States view voting as a positive way to combat corruption, even if it is in a purely symbolic manner.

The electoral system was the single factor that had a more negative impact on Americans than on Ukrainians. Generally, Ukrainians were ambivalent towards their electoral system. One respondent said "I don't know, I don't really think about the way we vote too often. I guess it works fine" (Tanya, 19, Lviv, Ukraine). Criticisms of the electoral system were not directed at its structure, but rather at corruption of this system. Ihor, a 19 year-old from Lviv, Ukraine, contended that "the problem with the electoral system is that independent candidates receive money from parties. Without this, elections would work well." American youth, on the other hand, were hostile to the Electoral College as the method for electing the President. The one American respondent who didn't vote said:

> Voting doesn't matter to me because New York is a Democratic state, and the outcome
> of national elections in New York is predetermined. If the Electoral College would be
> done away with, I'd be more likely to vote. (Miguel, 20, New York City, USA)

These sentiments were echoed by the other respondents who voted in an election. One student presented an alternative to this system called "instant runoff voting, which I learned about when I had to do a project on disenfranchisement in North Carolina. In this system, you list candidates in order of preference on your ballot" (Javed, 20, New York City, USA). Therefore, while American attitudes about the electoral system are noticeably more pessimistic than those of Ukrainian youth, dissatisfaction with the Electoral College does not act as an immediate deterrent to voting.

Differences in the American and Ukrainian experiences with family involvement in politics were stark. Ukrainian youth rarely, if ever, discussed politics with their parents. One student attributed this lack of family talks about politics to the legacy of the Soviet Union:

> Youth in this country have a new way of thinking compared to our parents, who grew up in the USSR with a different mentality. We are more open to new ideas and willing to question the problems in our country. (Ihor, 19, Lviv, Ukraine)

American youth, however, could be divided into two groups: those who grew up discussing politics in a more heterogeneous family, and those who didn't discuss politics due to apathy or homogeneity. As one interviewee described it:

> I discuss politics frequently with my father, because whether or not we agree depends on the issue. For example, I take more of a socialist view on healthcare, while my dad certainly does not. I occasionally discuss politics with my sister, as well, but we're generally in agreement. I think these discussions make me politically aware and active. (Grace, 20, New York City, USA)

Conversely, Americans living in politically homogeneous households didn't discuss politics as frequently. One student explained that "my mom and I have the same opinions about politics, so talking about these opinions is unproductive for us" (Miguel, 20, New York City, USA). Understanding the impact of family on voting at a cross-country level is difficult due to the lack of family interaction in Ukraine. Nonetheless, family does have a positive impact at the national level, as shown by the differing kinds of family politicization in the United States.

Both Ukrainian and American youth followed the news on a regular basis, relying primarily on the internet. This is a departure from more traditional models of news consumption, which focused on newspapers and television as the main sources of information. There was a difference in why Ukrainians and Americans chose the internet, though. Ukrainians favored the internet because most other media in Ukraine are state-owned, and have a reputation as propaganda. Victoria, a 19-year old from Lviv, Ukraine, declared "I hate television news because you have no choice as to what they show you. I prefer the internet for my news." Another respondent expressed a like-minded opinion, stating that "the media is under control of the President, so it does not report what is truly happening. Many independent Ukrainian websites report what is going on in Ukraine" (Roman, 20, Lviv, Ukraine). In the United States, the internet was the preferred medium because of its convenience and breadth of coverage. One American said "I feel like I get a wider array of news and opinions online. Also, I don't like paying for newspapers" (Sam T., 20, New York City, USA). In both countries, interest in the news meant that a person was more likely to vote due to being more knowledgeable on political subjects.

Moreover, the type of news that one regularly followed was a determinant of voting behavior. When the news is not political in nature, there is no positive influence on a person's voting behavior. One Ukrainian student that did not vote described his news consumption habits:

> I read a newspaper usually. Its name translates to High Castle in English, and it does not talk about political issues at all. I am not interested in politics because it is a crime in our country. There is no truth in most news sources. (Sviatoslav, 20, Lviv, Ukraine)

Likewise, the American interviewee that did not vote in the elections watched a local news station for "changes in transportation lines, weather, and local news" (Miguel, 20, New York City, USA). While a regular news reader is more likely to vote, the impact of news consumption is contingent on the type of news that the individual follows.

Conclusion

As these findings demonstrate, it is clear that there are sharp cross-country differences between with respect to how youth decide whether or not to vote. Nonetheless, similarities were also apparent. While heterogeneity, in the form of a polarized nation, was a major factor in both countries, only Americans discussed how political heterogeneity in the family impacted their decision to vote; Ukrainians, as a whole, did not discuss politics within the household. Corruption was identified as a positive influence on voting in both countries, but Americans usually discussed corruption in more abstract, hypothetical terms or presented examples of corruption from other countries. For Ukrainian youth, corruption was a daily reality that heavily influenced their voting behavior. The most striking similarity between the two countries, however, was the prevalence of the internet as a news source. For Ukrainians, the internet

represented the one place to gather independent and trustworthy news; for Americans, the internet was simply the most convenient source of news. The changing role of media was noteworthy, given the literature's focus on newspapers and television and lack of studies about the internet. As a cross-country study of voting, using two distinct countries as cases, this research provided an insight into voting behavior that is missing from single-country studies.

However, this research was limited by several factors. The use of a non-probability sample, with youth in each country studying at universities in one city, prevents this data from being representative of youth across each nation. The language barrier with Ukrainian students was another difficulty, with some students unable to express their ideas as completely as they would have liked and many students simply unable to participate in the interviews, further restricting the sample size. Future research may seek to address these issues by using a nationally representative sample of youth.

In addition to addressing some limitations inherent in this research project, future research may explore some of the newer concepts examined here. While the internet has become a major source of information and means of communication for youth, as this study's examination of news consumption showed, scholarly work has lagged in addressing the implications of the internet, especially concerning how it may impact future voter turnout. Much of the extant literature about the family's role in voting has focused on the structure or makeup of a family, and less on the political realities of a given family. Further research can address this gap by studying how the polarization, or lack thereof, within a family can impact youth voting. Future research may also be conducted on the impact of corruption on voting. While the initial hypothesis regarding the relationship between corruption and voting was deemed inaccurate as a

result of this empirical research, it presents a fertile area for future research, since the literature

pertaining to corruption remains divided over the effects of corruption on political participation.

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Appendix – List of Interview Questions

1. Did you vote in the elections last year?

2. When you were growing up, did you often discuss politics with your family? Why or why not?

3. Do you regularly follow the news? What type of news do you follow?

4. Would you say that your country is divided? Why or why not? Is this division a problem?

5. Do you think that your country is corrupt? If it is, how is it corrupt?

6. If you voted in last year's election, did your vote matter? Why or why not?

Youth's Motivations for Participation in Elections

Abstract

No matter whether a country is fully democratic or semi-democratic, voting is important because it is one of the main ways for people to express their opinions. Youth represents a future generation of political leaders and policy makers so voting is a good and easy way for them to start participating in politics. This research seeks to uncover reasons why young adults vote. The paper compares youth political behavior in the USA and Ukraine to identify common factors conducive to voting in a fully democratic state and a semi-democratic state. The analysis investigates the effects of parents, peers, schools, churches, and social media on the decision to vote. The study utilizes data from in-depth interviews with five American and five Ukrainian students. These findings will enable us to better encourage the youth to vote and demonstrate care for social problems.

No matter whether the country is democratic or semi-democratic, voting is important. Voting is a major vehicle for making people's voices heard. In particular, voting gives young people an opportunity to express their political preferences. John Dewey argues that it is important for people to become accustomed to practicing democracy at a young age. If young people habitually practice democracy, they would become more active in politics throughout the lifetime. Therefore, identifying factors that motivate young adults to vote is critical to fostering high levels of political participation in adulthood.

This paper examines major motives for youth's participation in elections in the United States and Ukraine. It is assumed that parents and schools provide a stimulus for first-time voters to participate in elections. Section 1 summarizes research on voting. Section 2 describes the methodology, including case selection and in-depth interviews as a qualitative method of data collection. Section 3 discusses the findings. The final section points out limitations of this research.

Prior Research

Research suggests that first-time voters are easily influenced by others because young voters lack experience and knowledge to make an informed decision (Chareka 2006; Codon 2013). Studies show that the household has an important impact on first-time voters. When young people socialize in an environment where voting is standard procedure, they will see it as a norm. As a result, they become more likely to vote when they reach eighteen years old (Chareka 2006). However, growing up in an environment where politics is only discussed in a negative tone can discourage youth from voting (Cicognani 2011). In addition to family and friends, neighbors might influence political behavior of youth (Cohen 2013; Fieldhouse 2012). Research shows that

young voters are more likely to vote if they feel more connected to their communities or the people surrounding them.

Moreover, research suggests that mass media, especially online media, is vital to youth participation in politics. By interacting with youth through different media or social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, youth might feel more connected to politics and society (Shabazz 2008). In the 2008 campaign, for example, Obama supplied many opportunities for youth to participate in politics. In general, democracy is not an individual activity. In order to keep democracy running, mass participation in politics is vital; therefore, the more people vote, the more the voting result will reflect the opinion of the majority (Avramenko 2012).

Another major contention in the literature is that religiosity affects political behavior (Avramenko 2012; Grasso 2012). In his book *Democracy in America,* Alexis de Tocqueville states that religion is an important element of democracy in the USA. Tocqueville explains that religion offers a good way to make people more active in politics, pinpointing the similarity between Catholicism and democracy. Like the notion of democracy, Catholicism promotes freedom, equality and human dignity (Grasso 2012). Furthermore, Tocqueville argues that religion can help people overcome individualism because religious activities are usually practiced by a group of people (Grasso 2012). When people go to church weekly and participate in community projects, they feel more connected to society or the community that they live in. This line of reasoning influenced my case selection because both the United States and Ukraine have a big Catholic population, which helps me to understand how religion affects the youth's voting behavior today.

John Dewey links education to democracy and claims that children should be introduced to democracy starting from school. He thinks that school should be a playground for students to

experience democracy, so that they can have plenty of the opportunities to practice it (Nichols 2011). Teachers should not only teach students about the democratic political system, but also provide opportunities for youth to understand that democracy is not something that could be taken for granted, because democracy is a process that people fight for and they come up with decisions together instead of making their own decisions (Johnston 2012). Civic education makes students understand the history behind democracy and how it is supposed to function. The importance of education motivated me to narrow down the scope of my research to university students and examine what motivates the educated youth to vote.

Methodology

I selected the USA and Ukraine as my cases because they are different yet similar at the same time. The USA is democratic and Ukraine is semi-democratic, but both countries offer opportunities for citizens to vote in national elections. These political characteristics allow for a cross-country comparison of factors that make youth vote.

The present study is based on qualitative research methods because it aims to explore the reasons why the youth vote. The data are collected through in-depth interviews with students in Ukraine and the USA. Using in-depth interviews is useful for this research because it provides an opportunity to ask open-ended questions that provide insightful views of the interviewees. Most of the interview questions began with "how" and "why" so that the interviewees could explain their feelings in their own words. Some of the questions were prepared in advance of the interview, but some questions were based on their responses, so the format was semi-structured. Some of the Ukrainian interviewees did not speak fluent English, so follow-up questions helped to clarify their thoughts and gain a fuller understanding of their opinions.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with five Ukrainian college students and five U.S. college students, ranging in age from 18 to 23. The interviewed students came from different family backgrounds and high schools so they had different socialization experiences. Some of them were first-time voters and therefore they had clear memories of their motivation for voting. Nonetheless, this research project does not produce results that can be generalized to the whole youth population in both countries, but it provides insights into thoughts and ideas of the target population.

Most of the interviewees were cooperative and provided extended answers to the interview questions. The interviews conducted in Ukraine were more difficult than those in the USA because of the language barrier. The interviews with the U.S. students were easier because they were all fluent in English, so they were less nervous and more comfortable describing their experiences. However, the U.S. interviewees were quite reluctant to give detailed answers. Therefore, the interview questions had to be more flexible based on the respondents' answers. All the responses from both U.S. students and Ukrainian students were typed, and voice recorder was not used in order to protect the interviewees' privacy.

Findings

The study finds that motivations that lead both Ukrainian and U.S. students to vote in presidential elections are similar in many ways, although young people live in different political regimes. When prompted to describe what influenced their political behavior, the interviewees mentioned parents, school activities, friends, online social networks, religion, and the students' expectations of the government. Both U.S. and Ukrainian students reported that parents were the very first people who talked to them about politics, but family was not cited as the most

influential factor in determining their decision to vote. Many interviewees said that they mostly discussed politics with their parents for the first time when they were watching television together.

This study also confirms the importance of participation in such school activities as clubs, associations or student government. The interviewees who voted in the previous presidential elections reported participation in school activities during high school or college. Specifically, the interviewees recalled that school activities provided opportunities to campaign and lobby for certain issues on campus. Moreover, elections for school clubs gave the students a chance to run for a positions and vote. Active participants in school activities expressed the idea that voting for different issues on campus became a habitual action, so they were used to the idea of voting by the time they turned 18. "It is like a habit, and I just do it whenever I can," one of the U.S. interviewees said. Therefore, school activities are important because they teach youngsters what voting is and why it matters.

In addition, this study finds that peers are influential because they could be the utmost motivation for young adults to come together and vote. Both Ukrainian and American interviewees reported that they seldom had serious political conversations with their friends, but they talked about some big issues. In general, the youths were more prone to do things together because they did not want to feel like an outcast. Some interviewees never voted before and did not know much about the presidential elections because they were not interested in politics. However, they heard their friends talking about the election and as a result became more interested in voting in order to make their own voices heard.

Some of the interviewees did not share their political views with their parents, saying that that they had more in common with their friends. During election period, the youth become more

active in discussion of the candidates and the election becomes one of the most popular topics of conversation at that time. In order to be able to join the discussion with friends, the youth will pay more attention to the news that is related to the election. Some of the interviewees are first-time voters and they said that the motivation for making their first votes came from their friends. "Because my friends do that, so I voted too," one of the Ukrainian students said (Respondent 2, 20 Lviv, Ukraine). In other words, although some young adults did not grow up in a family with prominent political views, they still voted because they wanted to fit into their friends' conversations or they were encouraged to do so by friends.

Social media provides more opportunities for the youth to share ideas with their friends. Online social networking has become popular worldwide, and young people can access different information or expand their social network online. The interviewees said that online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter played an important role in shaping their political outlook. "Some of my friends love sharing political news on Facebook, and I will read about them although I am not into politics, because I want to see what my friends are up to," an American student said (Respondent 3, 21, New York, The U.S.A.). During presidential election period, people tend to talk about politics and what they think about the candidates more often. "I see my friends talking about the candidates on Facebook. It makes me feel interested because sometimes they are funny," one of the American students said (Respondent 4, 21 New York, The U.S.A.). Online social networks allow people to communicate, providing another medium by which they exchange their opinions. This frequent communication stimulates young people's interest in politics and encourages them to take part in politics.

Moreover, online social networks provide a more convenient platform for people to interact with each other because people do not have to be at the same place in order to chat. The

youth might not watch the news on TV or read a newspaper daily, but they regularly socialize online. Some Ukrainian students explained that online social networks made them want to vote because they saw the difference between Ukraine and other countries in their friends' Facebook updates. "I see the pictures of my friends in other countries, and I hope that one day Ukraine will be like this. More opportunities and no more corruption," a Ukrainian student said (Respondent 5, 20 Lviv, Ukraine). By comparing and contrasting Ukraine with other countries, the Ukrainian youth were able to evaluate government performance in their home country. They wanted the Ukrainian government to become less corrupt and more democratic. For them, voting was a means by which they could help make this change. "More people vote, our voice will be louder and I hope the government will hear us one day," a Ukrainian student stated (Respondent 5, 20 Lviv, Ukraine).

Furthermore, online social networks played a role in delivering the news. Both Ukrainian and American students stated that they usually read the news shared on Facebook and Twitter more than watching news or reading newspaper. "I do not even need to go to CNN for news because people always share breaking news or important news on Facebook now," an American student said (Respondent 6, 22 New York, The U.S.A.). The youth nowadays are more attached to social networking, and even if they do not follow traditional news media they will note the things that their friends share on Facebook. "I seldom read the news, but I check Facebook. Because if there is something important, my friends will always post it on Facebook," a Ukrainian student explained (Respondent 7, 19 Lviv, Ukraine).

Religion could be a part of the youth's motivation for voting. The interviewees came from different religion backgrounds, representing Christian Protestants, Catholic, or Pentecostal Christians. Although religion does not directly make them vote, church activities are considered

as social activities. The Ukrainian interviewees generally attended church every week, while the American interviewees attended church occasionally. Some of them went to church because of parental influence and some of them did it because of their respect for the religion. No matter what makes them go to church service, they all agreed that church activities gave them more opportunities to socialize with others.

Both Ukrainian and American students had some expectations of their government, which become their motivations to vote. However, these expectations differed according to country. All of the Ukrainian interviewees thought that their government was corrupt and therefore, the result of the election did not come from the majority because the government did not care. It is because the government sometimes holds the vote and does whatever they want. Voting is like a show, they (the government) don't care," the interviewee expressed (Respondent 8, Lviv, Ukraine). Interestingly, although the Ukrainian students believed that the national government was corrupt, they still voted. Ukrainian students remained hopeful and wanted the government to hear their voice. "I still vote because at least I express my opinion and if I don't vote, the politicians will abuse my vote," (Respondent 5, 20 Lviv, Ukraine).

Ukrainian students voted not because they believed their chosen candidate could win, but because it was a means by which they could express their opinion to the government. "The voting system is good because the government is not, so the system is useless," one of the Ukrainian expressed with frustration (Respondent 9, 23 Lviv, Ukraine). Usually the Ukranian interviewees think that the idea of voting is good but the problem is from the corrupted government, because the government does not respect the result of the election. They vote because they hope that the government will hear them one day and they think that voting is a

duty of being a citizen. "I am Ukrainian and I am part of my country. So I think that I should vote," (Respondent 9, 23 Lviv, Ukraine).

Unlike the Ukrainian interviewees, the American respondents hoped that their chosen candidate would win because they trusted the voting system in the United States. All American interviewees voted in the 2012 presidential elections either because they hoped their preferred candidate would win or they disliked all the candidates and did not want the one they disliked the most to win. "I voted because I do not like all the candidates, and I do not want the worst candidate to win," an American interviewee answered (Respondent 10, 22 New York, The USA). Compared to the Ukrainian students, American students are more optimistic about the US government and are satisfied with the voting system. Their expectation for the government is that it fulfills its promises and it is for the people, by the people and to the people. "I am US citizen and I think it is my duty to vote, since it is a democratic country," the American interviewee explained Respondent 10, 22 New York, The USA). This was a main motivation for the youth from both countries to vote: they felt it was their duty as members of their countries.

Conclusion

The research shows that different factors motivate the youth to vote. Prior research suggests that family, friends, religion, and mass media were the primary influences on young people's voting behavior; however, the results of this project suggest that online social media has begun to replace traditional media as a determinant of voting. Although the two countries differ in the regime type and mass expectations for their government, young people in these countries are driven to vote by similar factors. Empirical evidence shows that family and friends are influential in affecting youth's decision to vote. However, online social networks have recently become

another important factor, to the point that they replace television and newspapers as the main media through which young people get their news.

Even though young voters are heavily influenced by new an advanced social networks, traditional religion practices also indirectly enhance their attachment to society and teach them to care about one another, which can make them more invested in their votes. In the case, it shows that Tocqueville was right to say that religion is important because it teaches people become more active in practicing political activities. Furthermore, a young voter's opinion of the government does not seem to influence their decision to vote; they see it as a means for communicating with their government. Ukrainian and American students who voted in the previous elections have different opinions of their government and experience different political regimes. However, no matter how they feel about the government, they understand that voting is their civic duty.

A limitation of this research was the small number of respondents. All the interviewees were university students, which was not fully representative of the youth population in each country. Moreover, a short-term stay in Ukraine did not permit more in-depth follow-up interviews. Future research should focus on the potential of online social networks because the impact of these networks has become greater in the past decade. It is important to investigate how influential online social networks can be and how they may become instrumental in making youth more active in politics.

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Appendix. Interview Questions

Did you vote in the past presidential election?

Did your family or your friends vote?

How often do you watch the news?

Do you read news paper?

Why do you think that Facebook makes you care more about the society?

How does your religion make you want to vote or care about the society?

What is the major reason that makes your vote?

What does voting mean to you?

Why do you still vote although you think the government is not good enough/good enough ?

What is democracy to you? Why?

What are the similarities between school activities and voting?

How do you relate voting to your school activities?

Why do your parents make you want to vote?

Why do you need friends to encourage you to vote?

How does online social network affect your political views?

What is it that makes social network more attractive than watching news on TV?

Why do you think that reading shared news on Facebook is easier than watching news on TV?

What is your utmost motivation to vote and why?

How important your parents are in leading you to vote?

Comparing to friends to your family, which motivation is stronger and why?

How do you relate friends to online social media and voting?

Will you keep voting and why?

What is it that can be improved in voting?

What is something that you think that could attract more young adults to vote?

How influential do you think online social media is and what is the example?

How often do you check Facebook?

National Identity and Civic (Dis)Engagement

in the United Stated and Ukraine

Abstract

In recent decades, the low level of political participation has become a chronic problem in the United States. Yet, civic engagement is critical to the survival of a genuinely representative democracy. Moreover, in such transition societies as Ukraine, civic engagement is crucial in pressuring the government to uphold democratic principles and combat endemic corruption. This study seeks to explore why young people withdraw from the political arena, even though it directly affects their interests and lifestyle. The empirical analysis will be based on in-depth interviews with college students in the United States and Ukraine. This study seeks to gauge whether national identity issues create a rift in youth civic engagement, and it anticipates that reactionary behavior to negative political events and unfavorable policy change creates temporary bursts of civic engagement. This analysis seeks to contribute to political science literature and inform the development of civic education programs in the United States so that education specialists can design more effective policies to foster high participation rates and combat political apathy in the future.

The United States of America is one of the citadels of democracy in the free world. Every four years citizens from the United States run a free election to choose the next President, arguably one of the most powerful and important persons on Earth. Despite the great weight of this election, the United States has some of the lowest percentages of voter turnout, compared to other democracies. A lack of civic engagement, particularly among young people, has been a growing phenomenon in the United States for several election cycles. While political science literature suggests that those with a high level of education are more likely to be politically engaged and the rates of college attendance are higher than ever, the problem of political apathy and a lack of young people at the polls remains a pressing problem in American society.

To determine why young people are politically engaged at a low rate, this study posed several questions regarding youth's political attitudes. How does an individual's self-evaluation of the country's place in the world affect one's civic engagement? How do emotional events create temporary (or not) spikes in civic engagement? How does a sense of fulfillment from a person's political system affect civic engagement? The first question specifically deals with the notion of national identity. This study defines national identity as "the subjects own identification and evaluation of the perceptions they feel about the country they are born/live in." The study hypothesizes that having a positive national identity would lead to higher participation rates. In contrast, those with a negative perception of the home country, without any opinion on major political events would have lower participation rates.

Understanding why people vote in a certain way (or indeed, at all) is a major area of research in political science and political psychology literature. While there is no agreed-upon classification of voting behavior, some common trends emerge in empirical research. Scholars divide voters into several groups. The first group of voters is made up of the true voter, an

individual who regularly participates in national and local elections. The second group is made up of the peripheral voter, an individual who participates in big elections such as a presidential election but not necessarily others. The third group is made up of the non-voter, an individual who does not participate or has purposely stopped participating in any elections. Research by political scientists tends to focus on *external factors* which may affect voter behavior, such as campaign strategies, or even the weather, whereas research by psychologists tends to focus on *internal factors* that may affect a voter's feelings during a particular election.

This paper will seek to identify themes within those two bodies of literature to find any common ground on which voter behavior stands. This paper will also compare and contrast the national identity of students in a free democracy and a transitional post-communist state according to major political and social events that the student have been alive for. In discovering any patterns of national identity changes or emotional responses to particular events, one can then overlap patterns of voter behavior and other civic engagement to produce a lens through which one can see what drives the politically engaged to participate (or the politically apathetic to not participate). With a proper lens applied to political apathy and civic engagement in both free and partly free states, one can begin to construct possible expansion of literature and future policy implications.

Prior Research

Internal effects on voter behavior are quite varied and require extensive psychological research. Experts in the field of political psychology are emerging to tackle this approach to political thinking, and "Affective Intelligence is a theory about how emotion and reason interact to produce a thoughtful and attentive citizenry" (Marcus 2000:1). Research seems to indicate that

people who are true voters tend to think about, and generate an emotional response, from politics constantly. Peripheral voters may only have an emotional response from politics during what they perceive as times of importance, i.e. the Presidential election. Research is split heavily on the non-voter group, as this group contains individuals who receive emotional responses from politics in a wide range of times, from constant to never (Thomlinson 1975; Miller 2011).

A case from Cyprus in 2004 conveniently places all three of these groups at odds with one another. The 2003 Presidential elections in Cyprus saw current President Tassos Papadopoulos elected on a platform that involved getting a better deal for Cypriots in regards to their reunification referendum while also defeating a 10 year incumbent. While Papadopoulos received 51% of the Presidential electoral vote, the ensuing referendum in 2004 was rejected by 76% of the 89% of Greek Cypriots who participated. If President Papadopoulos' entire platform was based on rejecting this referendum, why did he lose the other 25% of voters who also rejected it? The conclusion is that "there are significant differences in voters' behavior between different types of elections" (Andreadis 2005).

In the Cypriot example, we see that the referendum affected voter turnout from peripheral voters. People overwhelmingly came out to vote for this, but voter turnout was drastically lower in other elections. Likewise, the results were much different from the results of the previous Presidential election that peripheral voters participated in. Most interesting is the fact that 11% of the eligible population still did not participate in a referendum from the United Nations that directly affected the possible reunification of their country. Here several affecting factors can be seen as truly impacting the referendum. An overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots rejected this referendum (this being the fifth revision). "Anger may detract from [informed voting] by promoting less careful processing and reliance on heuristics... Feelings of anger may promote

voting for candidates who are well recognized, regardless of their beliefs on issues" (Parker 2009). This certainly explains how over 25% of the voting population of Greek Cypriots voted against their initial Presidential election decision to follow their President in voting "no" on the referendum. Similarly we can see that if anger leads to party loyalty, and that angered individual has no party as a member of the non-voter group, that individual could be further driven to not participate in elections or referendums.

Hope is another emotion that many Americans felt in the buildup to the 2008 election. President Obama ran an extremely successful campaign that fueled hope to many minorities who never voted before. Suddenly the turnout rates were the highest ever, particularly amongst Obama's target groups (Finn 2010). The "hope" message could potentially have been the factor that boosted voter turnout for 2008 above 70% (IDEA), the highest since the 1960s.

Another emotion experienced is self-preservation, particularly financially (Porceli 2009). When voters feel threatened by political changes to their money supply, i.e. tax increase, they may mobilize to defend a candidate who will prevent such changes.

The most prominent feelings used to describe the non-voter seem to be alienation and indifference. Abstention and non-participation in voting which stems from a disconnect of the election or political system and the potential voter is an example of alienation. Indifference is another matter, but research indicates that alienation "contributes slightly more than indifference to voter abstention" (Adams 2006).

External factors play into voter behavior as well. In the United States there is a well known saying by Republicans to "pray for rain," implying that their core group of voters will turn out to vote even in inclement weather. Gomez (2007) argues that "Bad weather may be the last straw for peripheral voters." The seemingly weak levels of political participation from

peripheral voters can lead us to assume that poor weather can and will discourage voters from participating in minor elections, and sometimes even major elections. In responding to the Florida debacle in the 2000 Presidential election, Democrats complained incessantly about a litany of factors that stood as obstacles to a Gore victory: "butterfly ballots," "hanging chads," the Florida Secretary of State, the newly elected President's brother (the Governor of Florida), and of course, the Republican appointed Justices on the United States Supreme Court. Yet, our results show that the weather may have hurt their cause just as much. In close elections, the weather becomes one of many factors that can be determinative" (Gomez 2007, 659). This is interesting because in times of political turmoil, people will be more likely to vote or protest despite inclement weather (as in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, where people gathered in the hundreds of thousands in freezing weather).

Healy (2010) discusses the effect irrelevant causes may have on politics. The impact of sporting events on voter turnout has been explored to show that political parties or their candidates don't always have control over how a voter will react to non-political stimuli. "Voting decisions are influenced by irrelevant events that have nothing to do with the competence or effectiveness of the incumbent government... Analyzing the effects of sporting outcomes provides a cleaner test that other environments considered in previous research, because no government action is taken or would be expected to be taken in preparation for or in response to game outcomes" (Healy 2010: 3-4). This is important in remembering that in some cases, especially political cases, you must account for a degree of irrational behavior or "randomness."

Finally, research on a major political event in modern Ukraine was necessary to understand the response of young people in Ukraine for this study. After gaining independence in the collapse of the Soviet Union, the next major event in modern Ukrainian history was the

Orange Revolution of 2004. Much like September 11 in the United States, the Orange Revolution came at a time where interviewees were too young to have direct involvement but were still old enough to have experienced the event consciously. The buildup to the 2004 Presidential election sparked massive waves of nationalism and polarization in Western and Eastern Ukraine. Incumbent President Kuchma decided against running for a third term in 2004 midst speculation of his involvement in the murder of a Ukrainian muckraker in 2000. He backed his Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovych against the protests of Ukrainians seeking an end to oligarchic rule and corruption in Ukraine. The lead competitor, Viktor Yuschenko, was heavily favored in the first and second rounds of voting. Exit polls showed Yuschenko as the winner, but official government results gave the Presidency to Yanukovych. The ensuing protest was unprecedented, and hundreds of thousands protested peacefully against what they saw as an illegitimate election wracked with voter fraud. In the end, the election was rerun and President Yuschenko was declared the true winner.

Methodology

The two cases selected for this study are the United States and Ukraine. In selecting the United States, this study hoped to collect research from a "free" state (as described in the Freedom House report) to build a benchmark for national identity. The United States was also a logical choice, as comparing the voter turnout rates and perceived civic engagement numbers to states with different regime types to build a platform for commentary on the current political situation in the United States.

Ukraine is the second case, an interesting one because of its current attempts to transition from a communist state to a free state. Currently Ukraine is listed as "partly free" by the

Freedom House report, with particular mention of "selective prosecution of opposition figures and corruption" (Freedom House). The current iteration of the Ukrainian state has only existed since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, making it an ideal candidate to compare with the much older and consistently democratic case of the United States.

To gather research in these countries, the author conducted several in-depth interviews with college-level students. Qualitative research design seeks to gather an understanding of human behavior and the reasoning behind that behavior. When dealing with political behavior and tendencies, in-depth interviews provide a sustained conversation to build on with proper probing by the researcher. Another consideration in this study was the language barrier that was anticipated in Ukraine. To compensate, in-depth interviews provided a chance for the interviewees to explain their answers as best they could; other methods such as surveys or group discussions could lead to a higher chance of mistranslation or a lack of results.

The interviewees were all between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, attended private universities and lived in either Ukraine or the United States. Subjects all consented to the use of their answers to be quoted in text for this paper under the condition of anonymity. For a list of questions used in these interviews refer to the appendix of this paper, although a ten minute "free talk" session usually followed the interview proper.

Findings

This research finds that American and Ukrainian students differed in their responses to the question about the impact of national identity on civic engagement. In the United States, the majority of the interviewees felt that the country was headed in the wrong direction. While many students felt a sense of pride in the United States as a whole, many voiced opinions of

malcontent with modern politics and policy measures. Even the most fanatic about voicing their opinions felt that protesting was a waste of time; many believed that they were victims of a system they could not influence by their action. From this research, it can be concluded that having a negative sense of national identity damages civic engagement.

Ukrainian students, however, tended to hold different opinions. All the interviewed Ukrainian students reported the same level of national pride as Americans and felt that the current state of affairs in their country was unsatisfactory. Unlike Americans, Ukrainian youth felt that their country was headed in the correct direction and many cited feelings of hope for political and social change in the near future. These students also felt that they could not change the system through protest, but voted in major elections. Their reasons for voting seemed to be less in line with American reasons, and more based on attempts to change the government. In light of this case, the conclusions drawn on national identity need to be amended slightly; a negative national identity is damaging to civic engagement when one projects their country is headed in the wrong direction and encourages civic engagement, at least in voter participation, when one projects their country is headed in a positive direction.

Regarding the effects of emotional events on civic engagement, the study registers cross-country similarities. The study sought to gauge the student's reaction to a key event in life. For Americans, the most recent major event that affects members of the age group in the study is the September 11 attacks. This event created a domino effect of nationalism and unity, policy implications, social unrest, military operations and emotional scarring. When asked about September 11, many Americans cited anger and confusion as their initial reaction. "After 9/11 I wanted the United States to go to war. I wanted justice for the deaths of so many people, but the

lies about [weapons of mass destruction] in Iraq turned the War on Terror into something else. I think that's when people started to hate the United States."

In hindsight, September 11 may have been the catalyst for today's negative national identity among American youth. The wars waged, aggressive new national security measures (PATRIOT Act), and the global backlash against President George W. Bush's administration has helped create the modern American national identity. If you add other recent global events into this fold, such as the 2008 "Great Recession," the massive national debt, the drought in the job market, etc. it becomes easy to see why American students are not content with their country. Government responses to key events of the 21st century, at least in the minds of the Americans in this study, seem to have created a "fall from grace" as the United States struggles to maintain the extreme prosperity it experienced during the Dot Com bubble in the 1990s. A return to times of economic and domestic security appears to be the direction the United States needs to go in order to gain back the support of young Americans.

What has sparked the civic engagement of young Americans is the hope of electing a President who can lead the United States in this direction; this is best highlighted by the 2008 election and the highly successful "change" campaign run by President Obama. All of the students interviewed in this study voted for the first time in the 2008 election, and several cited President Obama as inspiring them to actually go to the polls. If the need for a leader to rise up amongst rumblings for a change of pace in the White House is a direct result of global events, then one can logically assume the election of that leader (with high youth voter turnout) stems from a rise in civic engagement in response to those events. "I voted for Obama in 2008 because he promised change. I voted third party in 2012… it is a throwaway vote but I just could not vote for the candidate who let me down in 2008 or a Republican."

In Ukraine, national identity was similar to that of the United States but created a different reaction to civic engagement. The Orange Revolution was supposed to be the spark for major social change in Ukraine, with a serious blow being dealt to corruption and the disempowerment of old Soviet-era officials. Unfortunately, the Yuschenko Presidency turned out to have more of the same. Nine years later, the Ukrainian students interviewed in this study were still critical of the government (some more openly than others, those less open still implied malcontent though) but believed the legacy of the Orange Revolution was important to their generational identity. The take home message from the protests was that the majority of Ukrainians could stand united against tyranny; they just require a different approach to cleaning house at the governmental level. This is reflected in the interviewee's answers about emotional response to critical events. Many felt that protesting was either the wrong approach or only practiced by radical nationalists. Instead, Ukrainian students found civic engagement through voting as a way to keep the music of change playing in Ukrainian politics. "Protesting is a waste of time. People just go because they get paid or want to protest something, nobody is passionate about the issues like in the Orange Revolution." Like in the United States, emotions can drive people to the polls and sometimes (such as Occupy Wall Street or the Orange Revolution itself) spark greater participation in the political area, but only in times of great stress or turmoil.

In response to the question "How does a sense of fulfillment from a person's political system affect civic engagement?," the answer was much more fragmented than in the previous research questions. All students interviewed for this study have voted before, most of them being peripheral voters. Their incentives for voting were varied. In the United States, some students cited that they voted as part of their "civic duty," all expressed discontent with the Electoral College and a disconnect with Presidential candidates. One student claimed that he

only voted to cancel out his brother's vote, the two tending to lean opposite on the political spectrum. Others claimed that due to the nature of the Electoral College, they felt that their vote did not count as their state would vote "blue" or "red" either way. A few Americans stated that they voted to become a statistic, hoping that a large enough dent in favor of the state's less favored party would send a message. No one interviewed in the study lived in a "swing state," but many of the students expressed that if they did, they feel their vote would count for more. "If I lived in Ohio my vote would actually count, where in New York we all know who is going to take the state before the polls even open" – Anonymous, April 1, 2013.

In Ukraine many students voted as part of their civic duty, but many claimed that they also voted in order to give legitimacy for their discontent. "You must take some responsibility in a democracy," said one Ukrainian student. "If you do not vote, what right do you have to complain about the government?" Unlike American youth, Ukrainians felt that they could eventually change the system with the correct voting pressure, while Americans were more likely to just wait for the right candidate.

Conclusions

The hypothesis presented at the beginning of the paper was partially correct. Political apathy seems to be quite scarce amongst college-level students in both the United States and Ukraine. In the internet age, it seems impossible for people to escape the political arena. The real problem, unanticipated by this study, is the disconnect young people feel with politicians and their political systems. In the United States, all the interviewed students were vocal about their perceived useless votes. In Ukraine, voter fraud and corruption left little confidence in the

student's own votes. In the end, it looks like the failure of the political systems has led to decreased faith in people.

However, national identity did appear to be a major force driving civic engagement. Even in the United States where people tended to have a negative, pessimistic view of their government *all* interviewees voted. Just putting a statistic on the board to challenge the status quo in non-swing states, or in one case cancel out the vote of another, was enough incentive to participate in critical elections. In Ukraine, the optimistic view of young people leads to increased voter participation. Ukrainian students seemed fine with waiting for change while they focused on securing social and economic stability for themselves.

As hypothesized, response to emotional events created more hot air then action. Online forums or social gatherings seemed to be a popular venue for students to discuss politics, but none were interested in doing anything other than voting (and encouraging others to vote) to combat poor policy or in reaction to problems.

This study shows that education at the pre-collegiate level needs to promote civic engagement and create understanding of the local system. In transitional states like Ukraine, there is a push to develop political science as a field and help create their own literature. In the United States, college-level students seem to have a good understanding of politics and their system, but voter turnout numbers are still low. If the whole population can be better informed through middle and high school level education, participation may rise.

Another take-home message from this study is the sense of disconnect and lack of confidence in the Electoral College. It should be encouraging that young, information age candidates will continue to emerge in near-future elections in both Ukraine and the United States. If this is true, there would be less of a need to "change the system," as true democracy

could flourish only with extremely high voter turnout and true representation of voter populations.

   Some limitations to this study include the sample. Not only was it drawn at the convenience of the researcher (due to the language barrier and scheduling conflicts), it was very limited and non-representative of young people in general. If this study were expanded to include less educated young people, it is anticipated that things would change. Apathy seems to stem from ignorance, and those who do not continue beyond high school might not be able to be taught the complexities of politics through media.

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Appendix

Are you old enough to vote?

Do you vote? Do your friends vote?

Do you vote in only Presidential elections or local as well?

If yes, why do you vote? If no, why not?

Are you satisfied with the way your country is being run?

Do you trust your government?

Is there anything you would change about your electoral system?

Are you proud of your country?

Do you think your country is associated with positive or negative connotations?

(Follow up) How does that make you feel?

Do you view your country in a positive or negative light?

Is your country heading in the right direction politically? Socially? Economically?

Do you remember (Ukraine) the fall of the Soviet Union? (US) The Gulf War?

Do you remember (Ukraine) the Orange Revolution? (US) September 11?

Do you remember (both) the Great Recession?

What were/are your reactions to those events?

What were/are the reactions to those events by people around you (family, friends, peers)?

Do you protest? How?

Do you like to discuss politics? How?

Do you feel any emotion from being politically engaged (voting, participation in local government, protesting, etc.)?

Is there anything else you would like to discuss, be it politics or anything in general?

The Origins of Party Identification in Ukraine and the United States

Abstract

In this research project in-depth interviews were conducted in early 2013 in both the United States and Ukraine in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the most important determinants of party identification. Prior literature suggests that parents have the most influence on youth's decision to identify with a certain party. Other research finds that factors such as peers, issues, education, income, personality traits, and political climate have significant effects on party identification. It is initially hypothesized that youth in the United States will be more influenced by the ideas of their peers and youth in Ukraine will hold more traditional values and be influenced mostly by the views of their parents and grandparents. The results of the in-depth interviews prove the complete opposite. American students prove to be more influenced by their parents and education, whereas Ukrainian students have pride in not sharing the ideas of the older generation and hope that parties like UDAR and Svoboda will gain power in order to get rid of the old order of corruption.

There has been a long debate over party identification and its determinants in political science literature. Scholars find it useful to look at the psychological phenomena that direct individuals to support a political party if any at all. Politicians would be smart to look at these recent studies in order to organize a successful campaign and win the youth's vote. Looking at the party affiliation of youth is especially useful because it is indicative of the political climate in the country. If few youth participate in politics, it can mean that issues tackled by political parties are alien to them. A majority of the literature on this subject looks at parental influence on the person's party identification. Is it that simple? Are the parents' political views the strongest factor in determining one's political outlook, or is it more complicated than that? Perhaps other factors such as social class, special issues, education, political climate, and personality traits also play an important role in a person's decision to affiliate with a certain party.

This paper tests two hypotheses in regard to the determinants of party identification in the United States and Ukraine. First, the study hypothesizes that Ukrainian youth will be more influenced by their parents. This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that Ukrainians hold more traditional values and feel compelled to keep the ideas of their parents and grandparents alive. Second, this study hypothesizes that the students from the United States will be influenced by their peers in identifying with a political party. This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that college students tend to deviate from what their parents and other authority figures have told them.

The research for this study was done over the course of one semester for a political science course that included a ten-day study abroad tour to Lviv, Ukraine. Interviews were conducted in both the United States and Ukraine. These two countries were chosen for their distinct political differences to investigate whether voters in a developing democracy like

Ukraine will have different motivations than voters in a long-standing democracy like the United States. Before discussing the findings from these interviews, the paper reviews existing research on party identification.

Literature Review

Many scholars agree that parental influence has the greatest effect on party identification (Achen 2002; Kroh and Selb 2009; Wolak 2009; Fitzgerald 2011). Achen (2002) contends that parents will teach their kids that they can benefit by voting within a certain party. Specifically, Fitzgerald (2011) argues that how politically interested a family is, whether they live together, and whether it is election year affect the level of parental influence on their children. In another study, Kroh and Selb find that parental influence (the traditionalist argument) and the current party performance (the revisionist theory) play a dual role in a person's party affiliation throughout their lives. Wolak (2009) finds that it is ultimately the level of youth's political interest and engagement that will determine the party identification. Yet, scholars differ regarding the importance of other factors that go into one's decision to identify with a political party.

Though much of the literature gives credit to parents, some scholars question the magnitude of parental influence on their children's party identification. Sapiro (2004) finds that the general political attitudes of adolescents within one generation can have a greater impact on their political outlook. In other words, adolescents tend to have a general political personality that is more with accordance with their peers, rather than their parents. Also, the wider political environment can have more impact on adolescent party identification than their parents. These disagreements in the literature suggest that the long-standing idea that parents have the most influence on their children may not be as true as it might seem at first sight.

Some scholars argue that party identification stems from gender differences on policy issues discussed during an election year. Kaufman (2002) finds new issues such as reproductive rights, female equality, and legal protection for homosexuals have caused a split between males and females in the last decade. White males tend to identify with the Republican Party and white females tend to be Democrats. This suggests that further research needs to done to show how the issues that are prevalent at a certain time reflect the party identification of male and females. New issues create splits not only between genders but also within generations and social classes.

Others argue that the image of the politician affects party identification (Belucci and Garzia 2013). A politician's personality traits and media portrayal have a monumental impact on whether people will vote for the person. The television and the internet constantly bombard viewers with advertisements to persuade voters. This poses a question for future research on this topic: What channels and websites are most watched and visited by youth and what political affiliation do these forms of media hold? How much of an effect do these forms of mass media have on the party identification of certain generations?

Another plausible determinant of party identification is socioeconomic status. Income proved to be a determinant of party affiliation. Dorji (2009), for example, showed that people with more income were more likely to affiliate with the Republican Party. Party identification seems to be different for Latinos and Asian immigrants in the United States. The amount of years an immigrant has been in the United States and age proved to have a positive correlation with party identification (Wong 2000). Wong's research shows that immigrants know that democrats are going to support immigration legislation in their favor. In general, the Republican candidates tend to benefit the rich and the Democrats tend to favor the poor. More research could be done to investigate the impact of the growing wealth gap of party identification in the United

States. Also, an interesting question to research would be the growing effect of separation of youth's identification with independent parties.

Finally, some scholars analyze the effects of personality traits of individuals on party identification. Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling (2011) used the Big Five traits to see which traits most strongly correlate to partisanship. They find that Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness are most closely linked to any partisanship at all. Yet, they did not find out which traits are linked to which political parties. It is another area for future research.

In sum, research in this field is undergoing evolution at this time. The revival of scholars' interest in party identification has reawakened some old arguments and gave rise to some new perspectives on partisanship. No longer is it widely accepted that parental influence is the main factor in someone's choice to side with a political party. How a leader is portrayed in the media, how much income a family brings in, the important issues at hand, and one's personality traits all seem to have some significant effect on one's political affiliations. What is most prevalent now would be to look the effect of the media's portrayal of the candidates and the separation of rich and poor in the cases of the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections. What motivates citizens to vote for a certain party speaks to the most fundamental aspects of democracy and the research done about the topic should be ongoing. The results tell us about who we are as a country at this point in history. This research project will contribute qualitative data from two countries. The questions conducted in the interviews will be based on the studies on the thirteen articles of this literature review. By combining the ideas of each scholar, this project will see which of the many determinants are the most significant in each of the countries.

Methodology

This study looked for qualitative data about the determinants of party identification in both the United States and Ukraine. As stated before, these two countries are very different politically and socially. The United States has been considered a democracy for over two centuries, whereas Ukraine has just recently gained its independence from the Soviet Union and is still in the process of building democratic institutions. The United States has a well-defined two-party system, whereas Ukraine has a multiple-party system in which parties must use coalitions or bribery to gain influence in government. Given these differences, determinants of party identification will be telling of the political system in each country.

The data for this research was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with six students in each country. When researching a topic such as the determinants of party identification, sitting face-to-face with someone or in a round-table discussion is more appropriate than any other form of data collection. In-depth interviews allow the interviewer to ask questions that facilitate the interviewee to speak openly about his or her experiences and voting habits. Doing interviews helped gain a general sense of how youth chose their particular parties. Interviews allowed for a discussion about the life and experiences of each interviewee and created a dialogue in which the interviewee could speak about the issues that were most important to them. Another important aspect that the in-depth interviews offered was leading questions. If the interviewer feels that an important topic has arisen in the discussion they could simply ask a question such as "Could you elaborate on that?" or "How does that make you feel" to lead the interviewee to give more details about their experiences.

The convenience sample consisted of 12 university students. Six of which were from the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv and six attended Fordham University in New York City.

Students ranged in age from 18 to 22. Some had voted in the past and some had not. Though the sample size was relatively small, the research questions evoked varying responses that can reveal how the youth choose their political party.

Findings

After conducting the in-depth interviews in both Ukraine and the United States, it is safe to say that youths vary greatly as to what factors they say has had the most significant impact in determining which party they identify with. Influence of parents proved to be the determinant that was mentioned the least in all of the interviews. Of the twelve interviews, only three subjects (all in the United Stated) openly admitted that their parents had some sort of impact on the way they chose their party. No Ukrainian respondent said that their parents had an effect on them. In fact, one 19-year old Ukrainian interviewee remarked to the surprise of this interviewer:

> I do not listen to what my parents and grandparents say. I tell my grandmother to not believe everything she watches on TV. The television is controlled by the government, which is influenced by money. The older generation does not think for themselves and I am not like that. My friends and I speak almost every week about issues like politics and usually are in agreement.

This student openly expressed his alliance with the UDAR and Svoboda parties. He also added that most of his friends on share the same ideas. UDAR stands for the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform and Svoboda is a popular nationalist (some say radical) party in Lviv. During the ten days that was spent in Ukraine, Svoboda had a large-scale rally in the city center. Many came out to show their support for the party that is known for having pride in

being Ukrainian, being anti-communist, and fostering a Ukrainian identity. This proved to be a theme in the Ukrainian interviews and round-table discussions. Ukrainian youth feel as though they are the change that needs to occur in their country. By not blindly following what they hear in the media, they are separating themselves from the older generation. In a round-table discussion with the Ukrainian Brotherhood one member remarked "It is only a matter of time. Once the older generation is gone, their ways of thinking will be gone with them. Only then can true change come with the younger generation." In a way, it seemed that the Ukrainian students felt pride in differing from the older generation. This is new concept for Ukrainians as their freedoms are only now manifesting in a way that they can come together and bring real change to a country that has been under a brutal communist rule for such a long time.

Another determinant that was mentioned in two of the interviews was education. One student saw education as a vital role in choosing a political party. He mentioned that when someone is educated, they understand the history and can form an opinion about the present. He acknowledged that his education at UCU has had an influence on the way he thinks and votes. Another student remarked that learning about Ukrainian poets has helped him understand history but also feel pressure from the poetry to think a certain way about Ukraine. One of the poets he mentioned was Taras Shevchenko. Shevchenko was arguably the most influential poet who was exiled for his inflammatory poetry. He is credited for being the first to spread ideas about Ukrainian national consciousness.

Although most Ukrainian students felt that it was their duty to participate in politics in order to bring about change, others felt that since government has a track record of being corrupt that there was no point in wasting their time with something that does not work properly. One student age 21 said "Everything's so corrupt, why should I put my trust and effort into politicians

and parties. It just doesn't seem worthy. Many politicians pay young people to attend their rallies to make it seem like they have a lot of support. Many people do not have jobs so they just go to that to make some money. Until something is done to stop all the old ways of doing politics I do not see myself taking part in that." In this sense we see the rampant corruption of Ukraine acting as a determinant of not identifying with any party. After this response, a follow question was asked of; "Do you think the new generation can change this?" His response was; "I'm not sure if this is going to change any time soon because even the younger generation has been known to take bribes, it's just the way things are. Until more jobs are created, people will take bribes. Jobs are the main issue and the politicians are not concerned."

Even though the responses varied greatly, there were some running themes in the interviews with Ukrainians. There was a general theme of not identifying with the party of the older generation. Also education plays an important role in forming one's political views. More education means a better understanding of history and can foster hope for the young generation and future generations. This finding goes against Dorji's 2009 study that found that education has no significant impact on people's party affiliation.

As for the findings of the interviews conducted in the United States, three of the interviewees identified as democrats, two as Republicans, and one did not align himself with any particular party. The student that did not affiliate with any party was a twenty year old male that explained toward the end of the interview that, "I don't identify with any party. We can't seem get s*** done the way things are. If there's a party or politician that seems willing enough to put petty politics aside in order to get things done; that's who I'm with." The follow-up question to this response was: Are you politically apathetic? His response to this was: "Absolutely not, I'm just fed up with the gridlock that transpires in Congress anytime something needs to be done.

Like with the sequester, instead of working out a new budget that could help get people jobs, politicians would rather kick the can down the alley until they get exactly what they want. Compromise has to be made sometimes." In this case it is obvious that this person does not like how Congress is so split and cannot get anything done. Much like the 21 year-old Ukrainian student, the way the government fails to do its job acts as the determinant for this student not to identify with any of the parties that are responsible.

Based upon survey research in the United States, it was evident that parents had a bigger impact than was expected on American youth. Half of the interviewees admitted that their parents had some influence on their party affiliation. Although parents had some influence on Fordham students, they were not the only factor that contributed to the students' decision. One twenty-one year old responded, "I don't identify as a Republican simply because of my parents. It's more than that. Sure [my parents] had some influence, but I think that my friends and my own education steered me in that direction." Interviewees in the United States almost all mentioned how their group of friends from both Fordham and back in the hometown share similar political feelings.

When asked about income and its effect on party affiliation, not one of the interviewees admitted that it had any bearing on their decisions. One student said "What my parents make for income definitely effects how they vote, but their income is not my income." The fact that no one said that their income had any effect on their party affiliation speaks to the selection of the sample. This will be addressed in the conclusion. Another interesting finding from the United States was that not one interviewee agree that their government was functioning properly on the day of the interview. Although none agreed that the government was functioning properly, all

but one still identified with a particular party. The general feeling was that this type of government has worked well for over two centuries and will eventually work out its differences.

Conclusion

After conducting in-depth interviews both in Ukraine and in the United States, the two initial hypotheses have been proven wrong. It was hypothesized that Ukrainians would have more traditional values and be aligned with the same political parties as those of their parents and grandparents. In fact, this study finds that the young generation in Ukraine wants to separate themselves from the values of the elders. The parties of their parents have proven to be corrupt and have not done enough in the eyes of the youth to gain their vote. Relatively new parties such as UDAR and Svoboda are gaining many followers among the youth because they call for reform of the old ways and promise to foster a new Ukrainian identity that separates itself from the old ways of the Soviet Union. In one unique case a 19 year-old student was attempting to influence his grandmother's political views by telling her not to believe everything in the media. This was shocking, but it shows that conducting an in-depth interview can reveal very interesting, unexpected findings.

The second hypothesis was also disproven. It was initially hypothesized that youth from the United States would be greatly affected by their peers, rather than their parents. Although many agreed that their friends share similar views, no interviewee said that they were affected by the party affiliations of their friends. Rather, half of the interviewees admitted that their parents' party affiliation had some effect on their identification with a certain political party.

With these results come two important implications for politics. In the case of Ukraine, youth are hopeful for the future and aspire to create and sustain their own identity. They are no

longer going to listen to what the older generation says and feel that their generation will soon have the power to manifest the change that they want. This change might only occur if the new generation stops accepting bribes as a form of supplementary income. The results from the United States imply that parents have more of an impact on one's party affiliation than is generally accepted. Also, some young people feel that the Congress cannot do anything without petty politics getting in the way and this practice needs to change.

These results come from a very small sample size drawn from a very specific age group. If a larger sample of people of different backgrounds was taken in both Ukraine and the United States, then results might have varied. In the United States, not one student thought that their income affected their party identification. Perhaps if more interviews were done with people of an older age who have actually had to pay taxes, these results would have been different. Also, if the Ukrainian sample was drawn from localities outside Lviv, the results might have been different. For example, if people from a city in eastern Ukraine, where there is more traditional Russian influence, were interviewed, then more people might have been aligned with the parties of their parents and grandparents. This is all speculation but it presents some interesting ideas for future research on this topic. If more comprehensive research was going to be done on the determinants of party affiliation in Ukraine and the United States, it would be advisable to have a larger sample size of people from different parts of both countries. Also, it would be interesting to analyze the feelings of Ukrainian youth in about 25-50 years when much of the older generation is no longer around. It will be interesting to see if the old ways of corruption are still around and which political parties have the most power. The findings of this research speak to the feelings of the youth in both Ukraine and United States and hold important implications for the future of politics.

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Appendix

1. Name, Age, Sex, housing situation

2. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

3. Did you vote in the last election?

4. Do you identify with a certain political party?

5. What about your parents? Is it the same

6. Are your friends' political views similar to yours?

7. Do you feel there is a general political attitude among your generation?

8. Would you say your parents influenced you in any way to identify with a party?

9. Are issues/candidate/media important when making a voting decision?

The Determinants of Youth Protests in Democratic and Transition Societies

Abstract

Protest activity is a central medium of youth political expression. Although the literature on youth protest is expansive, there are few comparative studies on the determinants and impediments of youth protest in democratic and transitional states. Moreover, there is little consensus in the literature as to why some nations have a greater protest culture than others. While most scholars agree on the influence of secondary education, socioeconomic status, and life cycle determinants, there is a significant gap in the literature linking the effects of national-level and individual-level determinants of protest. Thus, this research paper seeks to explain the phenomenon of youth protest on both a national and individual level using the case studies of the United States and Ukraine. The findings suggest that the determinants of youth protest are strongly associated with a politically conscious upbringing, government efficacy, and the centralization of national leadership.

Protest coexists with the company of a disenchanted rebellious youth. Youth defined by The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) encompasses the 18 to 29-year-old demographic. While an older demographic is active in protest culture, it remains a very youth-dominated form of civic engagement. Despite this generational trend, there is an enormous discrepancy between the protest cultures of democratic versus transitional states.

In a comparative study of university-level students from Ukraine and the United States, the participation and perception of youth protest reflects key individual and national factors. The presence—or absence—of the following determinants is strongly associated with youth protest mobilization: (1) cross-generational impact, (2) national regime types, and (3) centralization of government. The findings suggest that youth protest is more likely to occur in transitional, "partly free" regimes like Ukraine than in decentralized, "free" republics like the United States (Freedom House). The study of youth protest movements contributes to a broader understanding of the determinants and impediments of youth civic engagement.

To investigate the phenomenon of youth protest, this paper proceeds as follows: (1) an overview of existing literature, (2) a brief methodology, and (3) the discussion of the empirical findings. The first section will outline major determinants of youth protest in the existing literature and address the gaps in the research. Next, the methodology section will discuss the choice of the case studies and justify the use of in-depth interviewing as the research method. Then, the paper will discuss the results of survey research. A final section concludes with a summary of the major findings and identifies areas for future research.

Literature Review

Determinants of participation in protest events can be grouped into two categories: individual-level determinants (Hall, 1986; Jenkins, 1996; Jennings, 2002; McVeigh, 1999; Paulson, 1994; Rodeghier, 1991) and nation-level determinants (Carey, 2006; Ezbawy, 2012; Javeline, 2003; Mashayekhi, 2001; Pommerolle, 2007). According to the literature, individuals are more likely to protest than others because of: (1) secondary education, (2) socioeconomic status, and (3) life cycle determinants. Comparably, these individual-level determinants of participation in protest events are projected to the national level as: (1) government efficacy, (2) national levels of economic development, and (3) government blame attribution. The parallels between individual and national determinants of protest help reinforce a greater consensus amongst academics. Therefore, the existing literature on youth protest is significant because it explains the broader phenomenon of civic disengagement.

A recurrent theme in the literature is the influence of secondary education on the efficacy of youth protest (Hall, 1986; Jenkins, 1996; McVeigh, 1999; Rodeghier, 1991). Albeit a subject of contention amongst scholars, "protest" is tentatively defined as one of three dimensions of collective action: "institutionalized politics" involving conventional political participation such as voting and donations, "direct protest" involving demonstrations, and political inactivity (Jenkins, 1996; McVeigh, 1999). Research confirms the argument that knowledge of social and political issues increases the likelihood of protest potential. More specifically, the level of secondary education is a unanimous indicator of positive protest participation. An individual with a post-graduate degree is "five times as likely" to engage in protest than an individual with only a high school education (McVeigh, 1999). The literature assumes that the educated youth

are more self-motivated to research the issues on their own and have increased "justification" for their cause (McVeigh, 1999; Rodeghier, 1991).

Interestingly, the level of secondary education in the population also creates apathy *within* the subgroup of youth protestors. The literature on political psychology indicates that education plays a factor in self-identification and finding a niche in society (Hall, 1986; Mashayekhi, 2001; Rodeghier, 1991). Although secondary education creates greater tolerance for social movements, in class-related issues, those with higher education will mobilize for white-collar issues over blue-collar issues (Hall, 1986; Jenkins, 1996; Paulson, 1994).

Secondary education on the individual level further correlates to the broader determinant of government efficacy. According to the social trends, higher education contributes to the greater efficacy of youth protests and civil disobedience (Ezbawy, 2012; Hall, 1986; Javeline, 2003; Jenkins, 1996; Rodeghier, 1991). Because "education strongly and consistently decreases support for protest that uses violence," a non-violent protest led by educated youth is more legitimized by the government (Ezbawy, 2012; Mashayekhi, 2001; Pommerolle, 2007; Rodeghier, 1991). Educated protestors are more inclined to demonstrate passive protest "which gives rise to a greater perceived…political efficacy" and consequently a more favorable government compromise (Javeline, 2003; McVeigh, 1999).

The existing literature suggests that another determinant for youth protest is socioeconomic status (Jennings, 2002; McVeigh, 1999; Paulson, 1994). People who are dissatisfied with their existing economic condition seek change through institutionalized politics (i.e. voting, donations, community service, etc.) rather than demonstrative protest (McVeigh, 1999). This implies that youth with less household income spend more time working and less time mobilizing for protest. Socioeconomic status plays a crucial role in the justification of

protest. For example, those whose financial situations remain stagnant are more likely to protest their "lack of upward mobility" (McVeigh, 1999; Paulson, 1994). Findings further suggest that protest participation is consistent with the liberalized viewpoints of a "new class" (Jenkins, 1996; McVeigh, 1999; Paulson, 1994). In addition to economic grievances, "ascriptive identities" such as religion, race, and equality become key factors for mobilization.

The final determinant of youth protest is the influence of family as an aspect of political awareness (Jennings, 2002; Paulson, 1994). The dominant theme in most political psychology journals suggests the influence of household determinants on youth protest. Some scholars argue that parents who participated during the "protest era" of the 70s and 80s were more inclined to raise their children in politically active households. Intergenerational surveys suggest that parents who were involved in protests as adolescents introduced their children to the value of civic engagement during the "formative" years of childhood development (Jennings, 2002). Thus, the children of the "protest era" youth were encouraged to be more politically active at a young age. Others propose that the generational differences in youth mobilization are attributed to historic trends (Rodeghier, 1991). The so-called "protest era" of the 70s and 80s saw an influx of youth protest because of historically defining events such as the Vietnam War, Tiananmen Square, and the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, this argument implies that the lack of mobilization in the Millennials is attributed to the lack of historically significant events that impact youth.

Although the claims of generational circumstances are conflicting, there is a consensus in the literature connecting protest and democratic versus autocratic states (Carey, 2006; Javeline, 2003; Mashayekhi, 2001; Pommerolle, 2007). One popular theory suggests that "the greater the specificity of blame attribution, the greater the probability of protest" (Javeline, 2003). By simplifying blame on a single culprit, more people are likely to mobilize against an authoritative

figure. This "blame attribution theory" develops an "us versus them" mentality where political grievances are simplified (Ezbawy, 2012; Javeline, 2003; Mashayekhi, 2001). Decentralized states have a more convoluted system of government with multiple sources of corruption. Empirical data indicates that although decentralized states are more susceptible to unrest, there is less mobilized protest. However, in centralized states, because there is more accountability for sources of power, there is a higher incident of protest (Javeline, 2003). Although this theory is quite oversimplified, the psychological determinants for protest mobilization are not to be overlooked.

The determinants of youth protest contribute to the literature on civic engagement. Higher education is a key component of youth protest, but interest is inconsistent for blue-collar social issues. Mobilization for protest is largely affected by socioeconomic dissatisfaction. However, individuals with lower income are less inclined to participate in active protest because of life cycle determinants. Thus, there is a gap in the literature regarding the efficacy of non-traditional protestors. Most data is reflective of why people protest but there is limited data on the determinants of inactive protestors (McVeigh, 1999). One of the biggest inconsistencies in the literature is what constitutes as "protest". While most researchers cite the effects of "direct action" protest, there is little consensus on the definition of "institutionalized politics". Furthermore, across all works of literature, the data for measuring contemporary youth protest is held in comparison to the atypical "protest era" of Generation Y. Rather than cross-generational literature, instances of protest and apathy within the same generation would prove to be more insightful.

Methodology

A comparison between the United States and Ukraine offers a very interesting case study on the psychological and political effects of democratization. Previous work in this field has focused only on the comparison of polarized regimes (i.e. the Soviet Union versus the United States). However, Ukraine is a unique case because it is neither a communist nor a democratic state—it is a state in transition. Only two decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine is a relatively "new" country. Identified as a "competitive authoritarian regime", the country is suspended in a post-Soviet stagnation period (Levitsky, 2002). While the remnants of the Soviet era are abundantly present on a bureaucratic level, there is a new generational push for democracy. Today's Ukrainian youth are the first generation to grow up in a post-Soviet state. Thus, their perception of democracy is not inherited from the preceding generation. Instead, Ukrainian youth look for examples elsewhere for political inspiration. It is through a culture of youth protest that Ukrainians in a non-democratic, centralized state seek change. The 2004 Orange Revolution is one of the central events that this research design uses to draw conclusions and comparisons about youth protest.

The case study of the United States serves as a reference point for the political stagnation of Ukraine. The United States is a republic that is often the comparative model for the level of freedom in other nations. With over two centuries of experience as a free state, American youth were born into a longstanding tradition of democracy. This generation and the preceding American generations have never lived in a non-democratic setting. While protest culture has always been present in the history of American youth, there is a growing apathy for youth protest in Generation Y. Although significant cases of 21st century youth protest is limited, anomalies

like the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement can help clarify the phenomenon of protest apathy in the United States.

To evaluate the individual determinants of youth protest in Ukraine and the United States, my research uses in-depth interviews with a sample of 16 university students. Although the time commitment of in-depth interviews greatly minimizes the sample size, it allows for a more comprehensive answer to the phenomenon of youth protest. In Ukraine, interviews were conducted with the students of the Ukrainian Catholic University from the Western oblast of Lviv. The seventh largest city in Ukraine and one of the most Westernized parts of the country, Lviv is internationally recognized as a center for protest culture. From the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), I conducted interviews with six undergraduate students. My respondents claimed ages ranging from 17 to 26 years old. Because UCU is a private, Catholic institution, almost all of the Ukrainian respondents held an academic background in either theology or history.

In the United States, I interviewed 10 undergraduate students from two New York City universities: Fordham University and New York University (NYU). Because of the convenience sampling of an English-speaking student body, I had a larger sample size in the United States than in Ukraine. As in Ukraine, I conducted interviews with six Fordham students (n=6) and distributed an online questionnaire to four NYU students (n=4). Although I did not conduct face-to-face interviews with the NYU students, the online questionnaires prompted an explanation for each response. For my American respondents, ages ranged from 18 to 22 years old. Because both Fordham and NYU are private universities in New York, the respondents held a similar socioeconomic background.

Since the respondents from both Ukraine and the United States were restricted only to private university students, two salient determinants of youth protest were excluded from my findings: secondary education and socioeconomic status. It was assumed that students in both case studies came from predominately well-off socioeconomic backgrounds. For this reason, I chose instead to direct questions regarding family life, generational impacts, opinions on government efficacy, and personal incentives to protest (see the Appendix).

Findings

The study indicates that one of the biggest individual-level determinants of youth protest in both democratic and transitional states is the cross-generational discourse. The phenomenon of *inter*generational protest culture links the factors of civic engagement from one generation to the next (Jennings, 2003). In this study, there is a strong correlation between the youth protest culture of Generation X being passed down to their offspring—Generation Y. In Lviv, a 19-year-old Ukrainian nationalist named Svetlan states: "I was only twelve during the Orange Revolution. My parents went to [protest in] Kiev and they took me with them. I was too young to understand what was happening, but I knew it was important…" Charismatic and cynical, Svetlan explained that his father was a Yushchenko party member during the Orange Revolution. Despite the disappointment of Yushchenko's presidency, his family believes that "true democracy" will exist in Ukraine one day. When asked if his parents still participate in protest rallies, he explains, "No, they're much older now. I go alone [or] sometimes [I go] with my friends. I think there is [a lot of] paranoia [left] from Communist times…I know it's dangerous, but it's *more* dangerous to do nothing." Exposed to the political climate of Ukraine at a formative age, youth are more self-determined to mobilize behind a protest movement.

Furthermore, the impact on youth protest is also evident in the phenomenon of *intra*generational discourse—the influence from members of the same generation (Jennings, 2003). In Ukraine, the influence of siblings is a strong determinant. One respondent from the Ukrainian Catholic University states:

> My parents were in the Communist Party until the fall [of the Soviet Union]; they don't talk about politics…we have nothing to say. They believe in something I can't believe in anymore…I am the youngest child in my family and my older brother was in the Orange Revolution. When nothing happened after the revolution, he became more radical...he joined a nationalist group in Lviv called opir.info. I will maybe join him when I'm older…I think protest is important because when you do *nothing*, you will die...
>
> (Ruslan, 19 years old, Lviv, Ukraine)

Contrary to his classmate, Ruslan claims that there is very little political discourse between Soviet and post-Soviet generations. The remnant of Soviet paranoia in the older generation creates a very unique paradox. It is the *youth* in Ukraine that seeks to influence the *older* generation to be civically engaged. The older generation is still fearful of the government and apprehensive about public opposition. Olena, an 18-year-old history student from UCU explains, "My parents are not very interested in politics. I feel [like] politics is everywhere, but at home, we don't talk about it…they don't want me to protest because they don't understand it. It frustrates me."

The opposite effect takes place in the case of the United States. While the cross-generational determinants of youth protest vary in Ukraine, its influence is almost unanimous in

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the United States. From the sample size of ten American students, three students identify themselves as "active protestors" who have attended at least 2 or 3 protests in the last year. The remaining students identify as "inactive", "passive", or "uninterested" in protest. In all cases, students whose parents were involved in the "protest era" of the 70s and 80s chose to be more active in youth protest (Jennings, 2002; Paulson, 1994). When asked about the influence of parents in their decision to protest, students responded with anticipated results. Rachel, a 21-year-old history student from Fordham University and a participant in Occupy Wall Street states: "…my mom and dad protested when they were teenagers because a lot of their friends got drafted in the [Vietnam] war. I grew up hearing stories about these hippie protests and I guess I wanted that experience too…" The political discourse in her household at a young age strongly influenced her interest in protest culture. Because she grew up in a political environment where protest was the norm, she felt more obligated to follow the example of her parents.

In contrast, some American student chose not to participate in protest events. Patrick, a 20-year-old business student from Fordham University, explains: "my parents didn't want me to get involved in that stuff [Occupy Wall Street]. They said I would get arrested or worse—I'd lose my prospects of getting a good job…I see their point. It's not worth it." When asked if his parents were involved in any protests during the Vietnam War era, he laughs, "No. They went to college." Thus, the research shows that both Ukrainians and Americans are more likely to protest under two conditions of cross-generational determinants: (1) political discourse at a formative age and (2) the political activity of their parents during the "protest era".

The regime type of a country is one of the most important determinants of youth protest on a national-level. An individual-level determinant seeks to explain a phenomenon based on lifestyle decisions, but a national-level determinant generalizes trends for the entire population.

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The findings show that youth in both Ukraine and the United States are unhappy with government efficacy, but American youth have more trust in their political system. In Ukraine, when asked about their political system, respondents used such descriptors as "dishonest," "corrupt," "shameful," and "evil". The Ukrainian regime exists in a precarious limbo where a progressive population is led by a regressive government. One Ukrainian respondent explained this stagnant phenomenon as: "the people change, but the country doesn't change." According to the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index, Ukraine is ranked as the 26th most corrupt nation in the world. 34% of the population reported paying bribes in the past year and 59% of the population stated that the government's efforts to fight corruption are "inefficient". When polled on the institutions perceived as most corrupt, Ukrainians mentioned the judicial branch, the police force, public officials, and the education system (Transparency International).

In this research, the responses to questions regarding trust in government efficacy reflect the national data. Taras, a 26-year-old member of the Ukrainian Brotherhood states simply: "Bureaucracy kills everything." An active participant of the Orange Revolution, Taras explains that although the people are on the right track to seeking democracy, all efforts are halted at the bureaucratic level. There is no negotiation between the government and the people; months of planning and organizing demonstrations die in vain. Despite the perceived inefficiency of youth protests, a female respondent from UCU argues:

> Protest is important to get attention even if you know it's destined to fail…the attention, the chaos…that's important. You need to break the system with chaos to rebuild it again. First, you have to *act* like you're not afraid…and then you won't be afraid [of the government]. If a few people protest, soon others will feel safe enough to join you…

(Iryna, 18 years old, Lviv, Ukraine)

In Ukraine, the distrust in government efficacy motivates Ukrainian youth to protest—even when failure is imminent. Yet, there is a widening gap between the first wave of protestors in the Orange Revolution and the new generation of protestors. While the veterans of the Orange Revolution are more wary and realistic about their goals, first-time protestors are dynamic and hopeful, despite repeated failure.

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index, the United States is ranked the 19th least corrupt nation in the world. Interestingly, 72% of Americans still believe that government efforts to fight corruption are "inefficient", naming political parties as the most corrupt institution (Transparency International). While American students *perceive* themselves as wary of government efficacy, their responses imply a very strong sense of faith in the political system. When asked about his protest inactivity, Patrick, the 20-year-old business student from Fordham University clarifies: "…I don't really care about protesting. That's a waste of time. But I vote. I voted for someone who will fight for me…at least then I have a better chance of having my voice heard." This respondent does not protest because according to him, his vote *was* his protest. The trust in a representative to speak for the people is a condition that the Ukrainian political structure lacks. In most cases, when American respondents were asked why they do not protest, the answer is unanimous: "Because I vote." Despite their criticism of government efficacy, most students trust the American political structure to counterbalance its inefficiencies. However, one NYU student strongly disagrees:

> They say our generation is the smartest…but [I think] it's also the laziest. We're so naïve. I can just type my name into an online petition and be done with it.

That's protest, right? We leave it up to a nameless, faceless entity to do something about it because we only have about 30 seconds to spare. Last week, I signed 3 online petitions…I can't even remember what they were for. See, that's not protest, that's denial…"

(Alan, 23 years old, New York, New York)

He exasperatedly explains that the "point of protest" is lost when people do not care to know what they are protesting for. There is blind trust that the government will acknowledge these online petitions—but there are few who follow up on the outcome of their "protest".

The final determinant of youth protest is the centralization or decentralization of government. Based on the "blame attribution theory", there is a consensus in the literature that connects an influx of protest culture to a centralized state (Javeline, 2003). This psychological trend indicates that there is more active protest in regimes where blame is concentrated around one person or party. In Ukraine, for example, blame is predominately attributed to the political party of the incumbent president. With a single corrupt entity controlling the power of the police, the courts, and public officials, the political system in Ukraine is very much centralized. For this reason, one can argue that Ukrainian youth protest more than American youth because Ukrainians can rally against a single culprit. However, in decentralized states like the United States, protest mobilization is more difficult because blame is dispersed through multiple layers of government. In the rare instances of youth protest in the United States, people protest against an *idea*, but rarely against a person. Alan, the Occupy Wall Street protestor from NYU, explains:

I think the downfall of OWS is that we fought against a ghost...we didn't demand the resignation of anyone. We fought against a system, but we didn't fight the

guys running it…we can't bring down the system, but we could've brought down a CEO or something [sic]. At the end of the day, we had nothing to show for it…

(Alan, 23 years old, New York, New York)

Because the political power of the United States is shared between the State and Federal government, there is little consensus on *who* to target during a protest. In Occupy Wall Street, for example, protestors rallied against everything and everyone from the business sector to the "government". The downfall of Occupy Wall Street was not a lack of purpose—it was the lack of centralized blame.

Conclusion

Youth protest in Ukraine and the United States are determined and defined by several factors. This research indicates that youth in centralized, transition regimes are more likely to protest than youth in decentralized democracies. The analysis shows that the determinants of youth protest on an individual and national level are related to the presence of a strong protest culture. A cross-generational influence creates a tradition of political engagement in the household. When parents and older siblings protest, youth learn by example and are more likely to protest. In the United States, for example, parents who protested during the 70s and 80s had children who were more likely to protest in Occupy Wall Street. The trust in government efficacy was a national-level determinant of youth protest. In Ukraine, given greater distrust in politicians and the political system, youth are more likely to protest their opposition. In the United States, however, there is general trust that the political system will counteract government corruption. Many American youth believe that voting is a more "efficient" way of opposition than protest.

Finally, the determinant of blame attribution in centralized governments plays a psychological role in youth protest. In governments where blame is centralized to a single entity or group, youth are more likely to protest. In the United States, the research implies that the lack of a single "enemy" in the government deters youth protest. Youth are driven by individual grievances and the sense of protest unity dissolves.

The limitations of this research are rooted in the characteristics of the sample size. Because all the respondents for this study were university students in private schools, there was a lack of diversity in socioeconomic and secondary education levels. The literature stresses that these are the salient determinants of youth protest. The sample size considerably limits the scope of this study because it does not represent the entire youth population. Furthermore, the language barrier in Ukraine deterred the possibility of more comprehensive survey research. A larger cross-sectional sample size and the use of a translator would help enhance this study.

Future research should focus on generational effects in Ukraine. While the literature on the history of protest in the United States is extensive, there is very little literature connecting the protest movements of the Soviet era to the Orange Revolution. By comparing and contrasting the protest culture within the history of Ukraine, there will be a more comprehensive understanding of generational perceptions of protest.

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Appendix

Questions to Ukrainian/American Students (with some variation)

Family

1. Do you have any siblings?

2. Were they involved in the Orange Revolution/OWS protests? Were you?

3. Did your parents protest at all during the fall of the Soviet Union/the Vietnam War?

4. Are your parents currently involved in politics?

5. What do you usually discuss with your parents at home?

6. Do you discuss politics with your parents at all? Why?

School/Peers:

1. Are you involved in any school clubs?

2. Do you talk about politics in the classroom or on your free time?

3. Are your friends generally interested in politics?

4. Do your friends protest? Do your friends influence you? Do they influence them?

Trust in Government Efficacy:

1. Are you a part of a political party?

2. Do you watch the news critically?

3. What are some words you would you use to describe your government?

4. In general, do you trust politicians?

5. Do you think the government represents you well?

Centralization/Decentralization:

1. Have you taken part in any recent protests?

2. What did you protest about? What did you want to change?

3. Who were you protesting against? Is there anyone specific? A political party?

4. Did your protest work? If not, what do you think were some of the failures?

5. What would you change about your protest experience?

Mass Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Protest Tactics

Abstract

This paper explores different perceptions of the effectiveness of political protest through the eyes of students in the United States and Ukraine. In particular, the goal of this paper is to describe the culture of protesting in contemporary America and Ukraine, in the light of unyielding political gridlock in the American political system and the post-Orange Revolution events in the former Soviet republic. The paper uses data from in-depth interviews with 14 students from Fordham University and Ukrainian Catholic University. The study finds that most respondents in both countries do not think that the country's problems can be solved through mass protests. This research contributes to the scholarship on youth participation in protests.

Political protests, rallies, and demonstrations are paradigms for a citizen's ability to exercise their right to freedom of speech in a democratic society. In all political systems, mass protests have been an effective manner in which the populace can demand immediate change from their political leaders. The United States of America has a rich history of protest that has delivered social change. The Civil Rights Movement successfully ushered in a new era of equal rights for African Americans. The Anti-Vietnam War movement made tremendous strides in making the public aware of the horrors of the Vietnam War, and ultimately changing public perception enough to dissuade American leaders from continuing the war. In the year 2004, Ukraine experienced protests in its major cities on an enormous scale, which demanded that they fraudulent results of the 2004 election be revised. This movement, driven by the youth and students, had tremendous success in achieving their short-term goals.

This paper investigates the culture and perception of protests, demonstrations, and political rallies in the United States and Ukraine. It aims to describe how the youth in these two countries view the effectiveness of protesting, especially in light of the Orange Revolution's— and similar American protest movements— failure to deliver long-term systematic change. On the American side, though African Americans possess equal Civil Rights under the law today, many argue that systematic racism still exists throughout the country. The same hawkish line of thinking has plunged the country into wars, such as Iraq, that many Americans view as similar to Vietnam. Likewise, despite over-turning the results of the 2004 presidential election, the Ukrainian populace has learned that their young democracy still has many systematic hurdles to overcome; and that not even putting in their preferred presidential candidate would enable them to overcome these cultural, structural and political problems.

Literature Review

Though political activism and participation in both democratic systems and emerging democratic systems comes in all shapes and sizes, forms and manners; perhaps no group can impact the political conversation as strongly, passionately, evocatively, and effectively as youth political movements. Indeed, Arel (2005) argues that students groups should be most credited with the success of the Orange Revolution. Despite having less life experience than their older peer groups, youthful political movements possess a certain passion and energy, that when combined with an advanced understanding of the technological resources at their disposal, can lead to a significantly loud call for changes. Protests provide an excellent opportunity for citizens of a democratic country to exercise their freedom of speech and voice their opinion on the current state of their country.

Throughout much of the United States' history, protesting has been a valuable resource for the populace, and an effective method which can be utilized to bring about great social change. The United States, in 1996, ranked "fourth in the proportion of the number of citizens who reported signing petitions" and ranked "twelfth in the proportion reporting participation in more contentious forms of protest" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998).

Ukraine, a much younger country which has risen from the ashes of the Soviet Union's collapse and reaches forth hoping to grasp a new era fueled by democratic ideals, also utilized the simple method of political protest to reject the falsified results of their presidential election in 2004. This mass protest movement was called the "Orange Revolution." However, some movements are more effective than others. It is important to look into why some are more effective, who chooses to participate in these movements, and why certain citizens do or do not participate in these political protests.

There are several gaps in the current state of literature that make the descriptive study of youth participation in political protests and rallies—specifically in the post-Orange Revolution era in Ukraine—a difficult task. Most of the literature that does exist regarding political protests in Ukraine centers on the time of the Orange Revolution. Not much research exists that looks into the state of youth participation in protests and rallies since that time frame. In other words, not much research exists that explores the political participation of those who were too young to remember or participate in the Orange Revolution. Additionally, studying the causes and determinants of mass political action, such as protests and rallies, is very difficult. This is partly due to the fact that much of the empirical evidence is obtained after rallies and protests take place. When participants are asked about their motivations for participation after the fact, this leaves room for biased responses. Respondents may choose to give more socially acceptable answers rather than their true motivations (Bozzoli and Brück 2011). Not many studies have used panel data in order to analyze the causes of protest. Finkel and Müller (1998) used a panel survey of over 350 participants in West Germany to analyze determinants of protest. However, their survey failed to account for a varying degree of intensity in participation. Bozzoli and Brück's study (2011) did a much better job in accounting for the varying degree of participation.

Bozzili and Brück (2011) found that the rates of participation in proportion to the total population were low, with 6% participating for the "Orange" side and only 1.1% for the "blue" side. Of those who said they did participate, 50% said that they wore symbols and 71% responded that they attended meetings, gatherings, and pickets. Unsurprisingly, the high majority of participants in Kiev and the west of Ukraine were "Orange" supporters—those who supported Viktor Yushchenko. In the East, "Blue supporters," those who favored Viktor Yanukovych, greatly outnumbered the "Orange" supporters (Bozzili and Brück 2011). Tereshchenko (2010)

notes that young people in Eastern Ukraine were far more adverse to political change than their counterparts in Central and West Ukraine. In their study, Bozzili and Brück (2011) asserted that three major factors play the biggest role in affecting protest participation: greed, grievance, and groups.

Greed refers to "material incentives that deter or incentivize participation." For instance, the opportunity to gain wealth through looting can incentivize a participant. Sanctions, however, such as "job loss or expropriation" can discourage someone from participating. Bozzili and Brück (2011) used two sets of variables in order to measure potential benefits or sanctions participants could incur. Firstly, they took into consideration the respondent's employment status. Employment status matters in record to a participant's opportunity cost as well as their chances of being fired as a result of their participation. If they are employed, they may simply not have the time to directly participate in protests or rallies because they already face a time constraint due to their work hours. Additionally, protesting against the *status quo* may be too risky for an employee due to the nature of their work. A public employee may face a greater risk of being fired from their job if they participate in protests against the *status quo* and that movement fails. Additionally, property ownership—argue Bozzili and Brück (2011)— is the second important set of variables in regard to greed. Citizens who own property, especially those who own a significant amount of property, may be less likely to participate due to the risk of expropriation.

The second variable affecting participation, as asserted by Bozzili and Brück (2011), is grievance. A large degree of discontent and frustration among the populace can motivate groups to protest. This discontent and frustration can manifest itself in a variety of aspects in society; such as, political, economic, religious, or ethnic grievances. Bozzili and Bruck mainy examined

economic grievances. Using a detailed retrospective questionnaire, they had respondents answer questions revolving around their unemployment history, their employment difficulties during transition, and other job-related issues. They found that many "Orange" supporters and those in the West favored different market-oriented policies. On the other hand, those in the East who supported the "Blue" side favored a more centrally planned economy that would strongly associate itself with Russia (Bozzili and Brück 2011).

The third and final variable, which Bozzili and Brück (2011) argue determines political protest participation, is group association. They assert that certain individuals identify strongly with a social, ethnic, or religious group and feel the need to conform to these groups by protesting in causes which these groups advocate. Johnston and Kandermans (1995) argue that culture, similar to group association, plays a large role in dictating ones participation in political activism or protest.

Bozzili and Brück (2011) found that "gender, unemployment rates, and food poverty status" was largely similar between those who did not participate in the Orange Revolution, those who supported the "Orange" side, and those who supported the "Blue" side. This indicates that socio-economic status was not a major determining factor in what—if any—side a Ukrainian chose during the revolution. Those who live in more densely populated areas were more likely to support the "Orange" side, as well as those who considered Ukrainian their primary language. They assert that the long-term unemployed are more likely a discouraged group than one motivated to action by grievances. Additionally, public employees were far more likely to support the "Blue" side, as they feared not participating could lead to their occupational termination (Bozzili and Brück 2011).

The United States has a different political situation and different societal norms. Jennings (2002) finds that student protestors in the United States, although they are influenced to some degree by their parents' political opinions, are able to find their own political identity. In studying the United States, Finkel and Müller's (1998) analysis seemed to fall right in line with the findings of Ukraine study conducted by Bozzili and Brück (2011). They found that individuals weighed the potential benefits of their participation versus both the opportunity cost of that participation and the possibility for legal or occupational sanctions. Additionally, Finkel and Müller (1998) found that group mobilization plays a tremendous role in motivating protest participation. J. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans (1995) also subscribe to this belief, arguing that political groups often tap in this feeling of identity and belonging to a group in order to galvanize support for their cause. They also found that an individual's perception of group efficacy is an important determining factor that effects their decision to participate—or not to participate—in future protest movements. (Finkel and Müller 1998)

One contemporary protest movement in the United States that can be contrasted with Ukraine's Orange Revolution protests is the Occupy Wall Street Movement. An academic survey conducted by Costas Panagopoulos (2011) showed that the movement was made up of a fairly diverse group of people, with different educational, racial, and employment backgrounds. The large majority identified as political liberal minded; 39% of respondents answered that they were "very liberal" and 33% answered that they were simply "liberal." In terms of race and ethnicity, the majority (68%) were white, 10% were Hispanic, 10% Black, and only 7% Asian. However, the diverse range of educational and employment backgrounds were particularly interesting. The study shows that movement is largely made up of well-educated people. In terms of their highest degree of education completed, 27% had completed high school, 16% had completed a two-year

college education, 30% had completed a four year college program, and 22% had completed post-graduate studies. Jenkins and Wallace (1996) contend that the level of education contributes greatly to the potential for general legal protests and civil disobedience movements. Milkman, Luce, and Lewis (2013) argue that this data shows a uniquely educated group who possibly are more motivated due to their education level. McVeigh and Smith (1999) agree with the argument that education, especially on political and social issues, plays a big role in stimulating participation in protest. However, they differ from most others in their belief that participation in community events and church attendance are the second and third biggest factors, respectively, in determining participation. Additionally, Maurice E. Stucke argues that unemployment may have be a serious motivating factor (Stucke 2012). This seems to be confirmed by the data which shows that 28% of respondents were unemployed. In keeping with that line of thinking, it is also possible that future unemployment was a determining factor for many of the movement's participants—a whopping 25%— were students (Panagopoulos 2011). Milkman, Luce, and Lewis (2013) found that many of the OWS supporters became disenchanted with the political system as a means of social change following a perception that President Obama failed to deliver the change they wanted after his 2008 Presidential win. Despite this, many in the movement remain active both politically and civically.

The findings presented in this paper will add to the existing literature by providing information regarding the perceptions of young protest participants and young non-protest participants alike. It will give a more in-depth view into young Ukrainians who were too young to participant in the Orange Revolution. It will therefore provide a good evaluation of the youth's perception on how effective those protests were, whether they will choose to follow in their predecessor's footsteps, or have become disenchanted with the protests being an effective

method to bring real social change to their country. On the other hand, in the United States, the findings will contribute to the literature by showing the perceptions of young students towards the efficacy of protests in a different political situation. In both cases, the information will provide an in-depth look at the determinants of protest for the youth: what makes them more or less motivated to protest.

Methodology

The United States and Ukraine were selected due to several unique characteristics. For one, both are relatively young nations. However, Ukraine was founded out of the ashes of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991; whereas America declared independence in 1776 and achieved international recognition in 1783. Both countries have democratic systems in place; although technically the United States is a Federal Republic and Ukraine is considered semi-Democratic. In these short histories, both countries have experienced mass protests as a means of creating social change. The Civil Rights movement in the United States is perhaps the most notable American movement that spurred tremendous social change. In Ukraine, the Orange Revolution was a major protest movement that overturned the fraudulent Presidential election results in 2004.

Another contributing factor in selecting these two cases is that both have a diverse range of political beliefs, principles, values, and ideas. In the United States, the ideological divide in represented by the division between Republican and Democrats (or conservatives and liberals.) Ukraine, on the other hand, has hundreds of political parties. Much of the ideological divide is represented by the differences of Western and Eastern Ukrainians. Essentially, the majority of those who resides in Western Ukraine identify more with Western Europe. They consider

Ukraine to be their native language and believe in market-oriented economic policies, similar to those in Western Europe and the United States. Those who reside in Eastern Ukraine identify more with Russia. They consider Russian to be their native language and prefer a centrally planned economy. This Western-Eastern divide manifested itself tremendously in the Orange Revolution, with Westerns taking the "Orange" side and supporting Viktor Yushchenko, and Easterners taking the "Blue" side and supporting Viktor Yanukovych.

The method used for obtaining most of the data was in-depth interviewing. This research method allowed for more sophisticated answers. It enabled participants to express themselves and be represented in a more diverse manner. Instead of simply answered yes or no to the question of whether or not they participate in protests, respondents were able to explain the complex reasoning behind why they choose to participate or why they choose not to participate. It also adequately allows for them to express their perception of protest culture in the context of their general perception of the state of political affairs in their respective country.

A non-probability sample was used to collect the survey data. Six Ukrainian students who attend the Ukrainian Catholic University were interviewed. There were three male respondents aged between 18 and 19 and three female respondents aged between 18 and 20. Additionally, a group discussion was held with six alumni of the Ukrainian Catholic University who had participated in the Orange Revolution and remained connected through an organization known as the "UCU Student Brotherhood." One of members of that organization, a 26 year old female, agreed to participate in the study and answer additional questions. In the United States, eight students at Fordham University were interviewed. There were four male respondents aged between 20 and 22 and four female respondents aged between19 and 22.

Findings

The survey data from Ukraine shows that most students are not active in politics. Only 33% of those surveyed considered themselves in touch with the domestic political affairs of Ukraine. Only 50% of those surveyed participated in the most recent Presidential elections. However, this number is most likely deflated due to the fact that at least two of those surveyed were not old enough to be eligible to vote in the most recent elections. One questioned about whether he would have voted had he been eligible, one student said "I would have liked to vote…Not because I felt it would create change, but because I think it is the right thing to do." (Ukrainian Student A, male, 18 years old) Another student too young to vote remarked "I don't think I would have voted. I am just not very interested in the politics…I don't know enough about it to vote." (Ukrainian Student E, Male, 18 years old) Student A's belief that voting is an important right to exercise echoes what most Ukrainians seem to believe. Though not all of them consider themselves informed, and several admit to being almost ignorant of domestic political development, most respondents value the importance of voting. Student E's sentiments, however, also seem to echo a somewhat apathetic nature among Ukrainian students in regard to politics. Though they seem to value voting, they don't seem to believe that their vote will be effective. The fact that only 33% consider themselves aware of current political developments in their country is a testament to apathy. Though the majority of those surveyed seem to recognize voting as the "right thing to do," they didn't seem to place any value on it in terms of effectiveness. It is as if they voting simply to exercise their rights, but expecting nothing to come from it and putting the minimal amount of effort into it.

Based upon the data collected at Fordham University, the study finds that 62.5% of respondents voted in the previous election. However, only 37.5% of respondents considered

themselves well-informed and aware of political developments. This data seems to mirror the sentiments felt by Ukrainian students. Fordham Student B replied:

> Voting is an important part of our democracy. If you aren't voting, you're missing a chance to voice your opinion on the direction this country is headed. That being said, the process only allows you to select from two candidates. You are pigeonholed into two sets of beliefs that seem to allow no room for variation or compromise."
>
> (Fordham Student B, male, 22 years old)

The perception of a broken political system, one in dire need of reforms, was reported by both Ukrainian and American students. The overwhelming majority of Ukrainian students, 83.33%, believed their political system was corrupted and mired in political turmoil. In the United States, 50% of respondents believed corruption existed in the American political system. When prompted to report their perceptions of the degree to which their political system was corrupted, 83.33% Ukrainians believed that the entire system of government was corrupt. Only 12.5% of American students believed that corruption was rampant throughout all levels of government. 75% of American respondents agreed that corruption definitely exists at the local level of government.

In identifying corruption as a major theme in both cases, respondents were questioned about whether they think political protests could help alleviate the problem. Only 33.33% of Ukrainian respondents believed that protests were an effective manner in which to bring about social and political change. Ukrainian respondent C replied, "I do not protest…The corrupt system will not be changed through protest, only through time. We have to wait for [the older generation] to die off." This sentiment seemed to be echoed by many of the young Ukrainians,

who believed that the older generations were more influenced by the Soviet socio-economic and political system. They seem to believe that those are subscribe to those ideals are drivers of the corruption Ukraine currently faces. One member of the Ukrainian Brotherhood, an alumni of the Ukrainian University who participated in the Orange Revolutions, seemed to agree with the other sentiments echoed by students in regard to the possibility of protests bringing about further change:

> The Orange Revolution Protests were a great moment, but they were not enough to bring the real change Ukraine needs. It is a cultural change that must occur in the political system, away from corruption. This change cannot be brought about by a single protest, but through time. (Student Brotherhood Member, Female, Age 26)

Ukrainian student D expressed a similar belief in regard to protests: "I want change. I am politically active and aware, but I don't believe protests are effective enough to bring the kind of change we need." Clearly, many in Ukraine believe that protests will not lead to a solution of their long-term problem. Though the Orange Revolution had accomplished its short-term goals in overturning the election results of 2004, it failed to solve the long-term issues which motivated the populace to protest in the first place. The Ukrainians seem to believe that protests can be a good method of spreading awareness, but don't seem to hold much faith in its ability to bring about serious change in the most important aspects of their society.

In the United States, several students felt that the perceived level of corruption was higher than the actual level of corruption. One American student said:

> I know a lot of people out there tend to think corruption runs rampantly through our government—and sometime I get that feeling as well—but I don't think it is as bad as

most people say it is. I think [the perception of corruption] is much more prevalent than corruption itself. Perhaps there should be fundraising reforms enacted that would limit the amount of money that goes into politics. I think that would assuage most people's concerns about corruption. (American Student G)

Of those surveyed, 75% of American respondents believed that the perception of corruption was worse than the actual level of corruption. The American respondents seemed to be divided in their perception of protests. Though many recognized their effectiveness in the past, most viewed contemporary protests such as Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party Movement in a negative light. American student B gave a scathing appraisal of the Occupy Wall Street movement, saying "I think those who participate in Occupy Wall Street would be better served by graduating with something other than a degree in medieval poetry, finding a job, and taking a shower. The movement is a waste of time." American student A acknowledged the effectiveness of past political protests as well as issued his support for those who participate in political rallies, while simultaneously degrading contemporary movements as polarized, ineffective, and misleading:

> Protests, political rallies, and political demonstrations are an important facet of American democracy in action. People should not be afraid to make their voice be heard. The Civil Rights movement showed what great change could come from such movements. That said, a lot of movements today are driven by radical sentiments, misguided views, and misinformed people. (American Student A)

Fordham student F echoed the same sentiment as student B, degrading the effectiveness of protests, though doing so for different reasons. While student F blamed the ineffectiveness of the Occupy Wall Street movement as ineffective due to what he viewed as being flawed beliefs, student F blamed the system for the ineffectiveness of protests: "Protesting will not change anything. Our two-party system enables the populace to elect only one of two candidates, usually forcing you to choose between 'Rich White Man A' and 'Rich White Man B.' The system is so corrupted by nepotism and political fundraising that only the voices of the richest and most powerful people and corporations can be heard." Student F's comments reflect a minority in the American data sample, believing that the American system is too corrupt to allow room for change.

Of those surveyed, only 16.66% of current Ukrainian students had ever participated in a political protest, rally, or demonstration. On the American side, only 25% had participated in a political protest, rally, or demonstration. In regards to protests alone, 16.66% of Ukrainians sampled said they had participated in protest, and only 12.5% of Americans surveyed said they had participated in a protest. When asked whether they viewed protesting in general in a positive or negative light, 33% of Ukrainians said they viewed it in a positive light, and 25% of Americans answered that they viewed protesting in general in a positive light.

Conclusion

In sum, this study demonstrates that most Ukrainians and Americans negatively assess the effectiveness of protest movements in their societies. Most students share the view that the country's problems—corruption in Ukraine and the perception of a broken system in the United States—cannot be solved through mass protests. While respondents in both countries

acknowledge the past success of protest movements in accomplishing short-term goals, they do not feel that protests will alleviate the structural and cultural problems that currently plague their respective political systems. The data reflects a young Ukrainian society that is eager for change, yet disenchanted about the possibility of attaining that change anytime soon. In the United States, the data reflects a society of young students who are becoming disenchanted with the political situation mostly due to a perception of an uncompromising two-party system. Additionally, the massive organization, demonstrations, and support that won President Obama the 2008 elections were rewarded with lackluster results. This political outcome disenchanted many young people who actively demonstrated on his behalf, and for others confirmed their suspicions of a broken system.

This research was limited by several constraints. First, several Ukrainian respondents had difficulty comprehending the English language, making communication difficult. Second, the sample was quite small as only 14 respondents participated in the study. A much larger and more diverse sample would yield better results and a more accurate portrayal of the perceptions towards protests in both societies. Also, there was too much similarity in respondents to gain a good representation of the youth population. Many students from Fordham University came from similar geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, most of the respondents identified with the Republican Party. The data lacked the opinions of those in lower economic classes and those who identified more with Democrats or other political ideologies. In the Ukrainian case, the same issue existed. Most of the respondents were of similar socio-economic backgrounds. The majority of respondents were also deeply religious and therefore conservative in their beliefs and values. All the participants were from Western Ukraine, which leads the data to turn a blind eye to the "Blue" side's perception. Those who identify largely with Eastern

Ukraine, Russia, and a centrally-planned economy were completely ignored in this survey. Future research should incorporate as diverse of a sampling population as possible.

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Appendix

- What is your age, gender, occupation and/or subject of study?

- Do you consider yourself aware of the political developments in your society?

- Do you consider yourself apathetic to the development of the political system? If so, why?

- Did you vote in the most recent election? Please elaborate on why you did or did not vote.

- How would you describe your parents political and religious identity? What do they value? What major principles do they hold? Do you agree with these beliefs? Do you feel that your parents have greatly influenced the beliefs that you hold?

- What is your perception of the political climate in your country? What problems exist?

- Do you feel that protesting has been an effective method in terms of delivering social change in the past? Do you believe it can be an effective method in solving your countries problems today?

- Have you ever participated in a political protest, rally, or demonstration? If so, please specify which one(s) and why you did? If not, please elaborate on why you did not participate.

- Do you view protesting in a positive or negative light? Why?

- Are you aware of any current protest movements? If so, what are your thoughts on them?

Political Polarization in the United States and Ukraine

Abstract

In recent years, the use of social media has become a more prevalent form of political participation, especially among young people. Furthermore, political polarization is an increasingly salient issue in American politics. As the two primary parties in America's bicameral system become more and more at odds with each other, it is necessary to analyze how contemporary technological advancement, specifically social media, either contributes to or lessens polarization. In this paper, I intend to compare youth perceptions of political polarization and investigate the role of social media in influencing the political discourse. I conducted a few in-depth interviews with American students at Fordham University and Ukrainian students at the Ukrainian Catholic University in March-April 2013. Though the two countries are politically and culturally different, I find similarities in youth's political attitudes because both countries have, albeit to a different extent, a politically polarized society. However, in terms of social media use, I find that the social media will be a more influential factor for American youths. Though the existing literature offers various explanations of political polarization, little attention has been paid to the role of social media. This research contributes to the literature by comparing causes of political polarization in the two countries and focusing on youth.

Political polarization is a phenomenon affecting political opinion. In a polarized country, political opinion is split between two uncompromising extremes. Political polarization is becoming increasingly relevant in American politics, and it is also salient in Ukrainian politics. It is important to understand factors that contribute to the phenomenon. This research paper seeks to analyze political polarization through in-depth interviews of youths in the United Stated and Ukraine. Specifically, this study examines the role of social media in influencing polarization.

This research paper focuses on two countries with a similar trend of political polarization. Both countries have experienced the development of strong political attitudes, albeit in different forms, that places two major groups at either end of an uncompromising debate. In Ukraine, this manifests itself in the discrepancies between the eastern and western parts of the country. The geographic location of Ukraine is in part responsible for the cultural and ideological differences that separate the country. In the United States, polarized political attitudes are not geographically defined. The polarization is found more in the social issues that spilt the two major parties. Though the countries differ in terms of government, cultural heterogeneity and geographic reach, this research represents a most similar system design because of the comparable levels in polarization that is evident in both Ukraine and the United States. Case selection is further explored in the methodology section, found later in this research paper.

The issue of polarization is especially pertinent among the youth population because the youth perspective can help to better understand polarization as it currently is and to gain insight into whether the trend toward polarization will continue on with the next generation. Furthermore, as the first generation of young people became exposed to technology from the very young age, it is important to understand whether the new forms of communication ameliorate trends in polarization.

Literature Review: The Determinants of Political Polarization

The intent of this literature review is to analyze primary causes of political polarization. While America is the most extensively covered country, this literature review aims to address multiple instances of political polarization around the world. Furthermore, the research examines two primary determinants: cultural changes and generational differences. This literature review asks two questions regarding political polarization: (1) *Which factors affect the emergence of polarized nation?* and (2) *How does the resulting polarization change the youth's perceptions of politics?* Despite some inconsistencies in empirical findings, there are a few common themes in the existing literature on this topic.

Studies show that social and cultural issues leave little room for compromise and can create polarized societies. A major argument in the literature is that race, and specifically the changing identity of whites, is the primary cause of polarization in American politics (Olson, 2008). In American history, racial equality resulted in the upheaval of white identity, generating resentment, which in turn "transformed the parties' bases, which in turn reshaped the issues party elites stoked to mobilize voters" by focusing on hot-button social issues "which in turn promoted polarization" (Olson, 2008). Political power is constantly struggled over and when social issues endanger the power of political elites it can result in more hostile, uncompromising attitude (Olson, 2008).

Not only is this prevalent in American society, but research on party formation in Zimbabwe shows that the officials, or "political elites" use polarizing "polarizing tactics to draw sharp boundaries between themselves and their opponents" with the intention of mobilizing constituencies within political parties (LeBas, 2006). "Increasing the perception of threat on both sides" helped to strengthen political parties at the expense of political cooperation and

communication (LeBas, 2006). Looking more generally at social issues, it is found that political

polarization is likely to increase with a focus on topics of race, gender and other cultural matters

because the party affiliations have become "strongly linked' with polarizing social issues focused

on the topics listed above (Stoker, 2008). The finding that social issues can increase polarization

is an important indication that religion, which spearheads many social debates, plays a role in

polarization. An essential aspect of the Christian religion is the "vivid affirmation of the realities

of good and evil" (Wood, 1999). When simplified by some religious followers, this can result in

a polarized "us versus them" mentality that can then affect the political cultural (Wood, 1999).

This mentality can then lead to uncompromising support of social issues. However, at the same

time, it is important to note that many religions understand the complexities of this statement and

religion cannot all be generalized as a negative contributor in contemporary government (Wood,

1999). These articles point to the possibility of social issues creating polarization.

Another argument regarding the advancement of pluralism is looking at generational

differences as a cause of polarization. Research done in the 1960s tends to link the cause of

growing polarization in America to the generational gap. Generations are shaped by the

important, definitive events that occur during the development of a generation and generally

affect a whole generation similarly because of the ages at which the generations experience the

event (Cutler, 1974). A study of a new generation of Western Europe looked at the generational

changes that occurred in the late 1970s. In keep with the previous findings of the polarizing

effect of cultural change, it was found that the most notable difference between generations was

when issues were related to "cultural conflicts of advanced industrial societies" (Dalton, 1987).

More revealing, however, was the finding that the younger generation in Western Europe was

causing political polarization between not only the previous generation, but also within their own

generation (Dalton, 1987). The study found a trend toward "intensification of political views" that created across the board polarization among the generation (Dalton, 1987). Similarly, when analyzing America's protest movement based on 1965 data, it is discovered that attitudes between protesters and non-protesters during a "protest era" creates a rift within the generation, effectively separating a generation into units (Jennings, 2002). So, while the period events affected the development of this specific generation, they did so by creating a more divided culture. This finding shows the potential for the trend of generational development towards a more fractured generation in times of conflict. Though the generational gap examined by these scholars is between the 1950s mentality and that of the 1970s, this argument is not an antiquated one, especially when considering how divisive the technological boom was, effectively defining Generation Y.

This issue is increasingly important, as growing polarization in America has the potential to change the political landscape. The recent generations are especially affected, and research has been conducted to understand the implications of polarization. Polarization can result in reduced political participation from political moderates because of the critical environment that, in a vicious cycle, is both the cause of and the result of polarization. Self-censors are imposed in polarized situations because the hostile reception to disagreement make people vulnerable to conflict and a negative public perception (Hayes, 2006). When looking at youth political activity, data predicts the negative political impact of polarization on youth culture. A study of American voters found that "adolescents who resided in politically competitive locales or states have higher turnout years later compared to those who lived in uncompetitive contexts" (Pacheco, 2008). If, as often occurs with polarized countries, there is no grey area, no room for compromise or debate, the political atmosphere can begin to feel uncompetitive in that nothing

changes and neither side is willing to compromise. This can lead to political stagnation and, from that, political apathy. Youth political participation is increasingly important and limiting that through the political climate can be detrimental (Anderson, 2006). This can all indicate the negative reaction to polarization, and the importance to understand the causes of this specific political environment.

To summarize, polarization is a complex issue which is a product of multiple factors. While social and cultural issues and generational differences can be broadly defined as the primary causes of polarization, there are more nuanced causes that aren't so easily identified. Though the literature is voluminous up to 2008, a more updated analysis of this issue is necessary, especially because of the role of social media in recent years. The question of whether social media is a contributor to political polarization merits scholarly attention.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the cases of the United States and Ukraine are relevant when examining the issue of political polarization. Ukraine was effectively split down the middle in the most recent presidential elections, each side affiliating with the opposing presidential candidate. This is not an unusual election result for this country. The presence of cultural differences is a major factor that affects the starkly polarized atmosphere in Ukraine. While the Ukrainian culture is fairly homogenous, there are different factors that define one as either being from the Western or the Eastern part of the country. One of the most notable cultural differences is language, and the decision to speak either Russian or Ukrainian. Cultural characteristics, like language, are a key factor to understanding the political opinion of the country.

In contrast, the United States consists of a much more wide-spread diverse area. A country made up of immigrants from every corner of the world, the United States is one of the most culturally and ethnically heterogeneous countries. The United States and Ukraine couldn't be more different in the population make-up. In addition, the United States is a much larger country than Ukraine, meaning the cultural attitudes of the country should be more differentiated. The concerns of one state are difficult to align with that of another in a complete opposite environment. While all these factors would seemingly shape American political opinion in a way that contrast the Ukrainian opinion, America has also found itself in a position of polarization. It seems that America's bicameral system, to some extent, has effectively split the country between two increasingly opposing political party. With divisive social issues coming to the forefront of politics in recent years, the country has become less inclined to arrive at a compromise. Though not yet as extremely divided as Ukraine, the United States is also facing a divided society.

To understand the polarized atmosphere of both countries, the study employed in-depth interviews as the research method. The use of in-depth interviews is particularly appropriate for the research project, since it is difficult to explain polarization. The best approach to the issue is qualitative because of the comprehensive data provided by the respondents. In a study where the purpose is understanding reasons for polarization, the anecdotal data gathered through in-depth interviews can help to provide the rationale behind the statistical evidence demonstrating the mere existence of polarization. In these interviews, American students and Ukrainian students were questioned about their political stance on different issues and where they believe the other side stands on the issue (see appendix).

The research uses a non-probability sample. The interviewees were chosen on a volunteer basis. The in-depth interviews were conducted at two separate universities, Fordham University and the Ukrainian Catholic University. The interviewed Ukrainian students were all from the Western part of Ukraine; while the respondents' place of origin limited the range of perspectives offered on certain issues, the sample still reflected the polarization in that country. The ages of these participants ranged from seventeen to twenty one. Five students from the Ukrainian Catholic University, three male and two female, and six students from Fordham, three male and three female, were interviewed.

Findings

Ukrainian Findings

The interviews with the students revealed a few key facts about political polarization from the perspective of the younger generation. First, the research confirmed the extent of the polarized sentiments in each region. Second, the results of these interviews can potentially lead to a better understanding of the relationship between social media and political polarization. The findings reflect that social media has not been able to bridge the gap of polarized attitudes felt by those who use social media to communicate. Furthermore, the findings show how the selectivity allowed by these methods of communication can actually enhance the polarized atmosphere.

The interview sessions with the Ukrainian students provided background regarding the split between the Western and Eastern Ukraine. One student reflected on the cultural differences between the western and eastern sides of Ukraine, noting that "Western Ukraine is more like Poland, more democratic. Eastern Ukraine is more Russian. In Russia, if you don't cheat you don't get anything." Another student shared a similar perspective on the divide, stating that

Western Ukraine "want to become more European and are more liberal and democratic" while Eastern Ukraine "want to go to, I don't know, prison." The geographic location of Ukraine and the history of division leads each side to affiliate more with their neighbors, the west with Poland and the east with Russia. More important for the purposes of this study is the characterization of the Russian sentiment felt by Eastern Ukraine. In this regard, these quotes are indicative of the polarized attitudes in Ukraine. These students attribute the corruption found in the Ukrainian government to Eastern Ukraine through the description of Russia as a place where "if you don't cheat you don't get anything." Similarly, another Western Ukrainian student felt that Russian ideology was similar to a prison, a highly negative comparison.

The sensitivity felt towards Russia by Western Ukraine is especially noticeable in the debate over language in the country. The fact that most of people in Eastern Ukraine speak Russian in their personal life is a cause for concern to youth in Western Ukraine. One student worried that, "If [they] had two languages in Ukraine, the Ukrainian language might disappear." It seems that, for these students, the Ukrainian language was representative of a greater Ukrainian identity. Another student articulated the connection by remarking that "In Ukraine [they] must speak Ukrainian because it is important to keep and honor Ukrainian traditions. Western Ukraine keeps traditions, Eastern Ukraine does not." The issue of language is not only related to language but a fear of losing the traditions of Ukraine. The bad feeling between the two sides seems to reflect, on the part of Western Ukraine, the belief that Eastern Ukraine is compromising an important aspect of themselves. Furthermore, these findings suggest that the youth of Western Ukraine still hold great regard for the traditions of their countries.

Because of this animosity, one student made the unsubstantiated claim that "70% of Eastern Ukrainians are less intelligent than Western Ukrainians," and another student who had

limited interactions with Eastern Ukrainians herself admitted that "sometimes Eastern Ukraine seems so terrible." These comments are not unique and were generally an afterthought and not a result of excessive prodding, show the potential good of social media. Allowing students from Western Ukraine to make personal connections to those in the east could help to erase these negative generalizations extended indiscriminately on all Eastern Ukrainians.

However, though technology is used frequently by all students interviewed, the polarized sentiments are too deeply entrenched to change their opinions. As a school project, a student was asked to email a Eastern Ukrainian boy. In reflecting on the experience, she remembers that they "couldn't understand each other's point of view and argued with each other." She couldn't make a connection with this student because she couldn't see past the political differences. This interaction was especially telling because it represents an example where social media was used as a tool to connect with the opposing side. In general, Ukrainian students were excited to make online connections to people from all over the world, but they couldn't see the value in better understanding the people in their own country.

American Findings

American students had a different problem in terms of political engagement. Because of the heterogeneous makeup of America, especially New York City where the interviews were conducted, most interviewed students had many friends on sites like Facebook with contrasting political opinions. Unlike the Western Ukrainian student who only made contact with a Eastern Ukrainian student at the bequest of a teacher, American students have much more immediate access to those of differing political beliefs. However, of those on his Facebook page who disagrees with him, one student characterizes their political activity on Facebook as "ranting"

and complains that "these kids have no idea what they're talking about." Furthermore, another student feels that Facebook and twitter "are not the appropriate venue to discuss politics." Many American students agreed that when a friend on Facebook posts strong political opinions, it reinforces a more negative opinion of those friends and their political opinions as a whole. This can lead to blocking, where a student is able to stop a particularly politicized friend from appearing on their news feed. Similarly, sites like Twitter are created on a follower basis. A Twitter user admits that she only follows people with similar political opinions because "those are the accounts that post truthfully about the issues." In this case, social media only enhances the perceived polarization. As one student affiliated with the Democratic Party articulates, "only those with extreme political opinions post political stuff on Facebook. They end up making their whole party look bad. When my Republican Facebook friends post about something like giving guns to every student or something, I feel like whole party is crazier than they actually probably are."

While the most common response to political activism on Facebook is ignoring or blocking messages, some people enjoy engaging in political debate online. Still, one student admits that her "opinions never change regardless of the argument... that [she] usually just ends up getting mad" at those she debates with. Even those who are politically engaged online have a similar reaction to the Ukrainian student who emailed with a student from the other side of the country. Even if communication across party or geographic lines is attempted, the internet depersonalizes these interactions making is difficult to see those these students communicated with as more than their political opinions. When interviewing American students, the result overwhelmingly pointed to a continued trend in polarization, as evidenced by the student's use of social media sites.

Conclusion

This research does not provide a practical solution to the problem at hand. In fact, polarization seems to be a continuing trend both in America and Ukraine. Even though the young generation has a new opportunity to connect to those with different political opinions with more immediacy than ever before, these connections lose the humanity of a face to face connection, resulting not in open political discourse but in more political disagreement and polarization, just communicated through a new medium. The implication of this study shows the potential for America to fall into a similar situation as Ukraine, where the communication between and about the two sides is limited to pointed jabs.

These results are not comprehensive, however. As noted previously, the sample is quite small and, in the case of Ukraine, only one side is represented in the sample. A wider nationally representative sample for both countries is necessary to provide stronger support for these findings. Alternatively, a panel study of the interviewed students could be a great contribution to the existing literature. In general, more research is necessary to examine the connection between technology and polarization.

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Appendix

Sample In-Depth Interview Questions

Where are you from?

    - Have you met Eastern Ukrainians and if so, how was that experience?

    - Which language do you speak (Ukrainian or Russian)? Why is that important? What do

      Eastern Ukrainians think about this issue?

Do you use social media?

    - What sites?

    - How often?

    - In what capacity/do you participate politically through social media

    - How do you feel about those who do post political opinions online?

Social Media Use and Political Participation of

Ukrainian and American Youth

Abstract

Advancements in communicative technology and increased Internet accessibility have changed the way people consume political news. With the rise of social media websites and subsequent phone applications, many youths live their lives linked into the web, constantly receiving and spreading information. These sites have also changed the political environment with their ability to spread news quickly as well as aid political activities including rallies, protests and forums by creating pages to organize events and bring people together. With the aim of uncovering effects of social media on students' political activity, in-depth interviews were conducted with thirteen university students in Ukraine and the United States. The research found that the Internet is the primary news source and political influence for youths. This study contributes to the extensive literature on political communication by examining the role of a new medium in politics.

Since its creation, the Internet has changed the way people communicate and receive information. Beginning as a database for governmental users, the Internet has grown and evolved into the source of nearly everything today. Its evolution into the vessel of communication began with the creations of email and chat-rooms that facilitated the sharing of information between people with similar interests. When social networking sites were created, sharing information between people expanded outside of pre-set niches and allowed more than simple messages of greetings and salutations to be shared. Now, photos and other types of digital media could be viewed across devices and more companies took to creating detailed websites to better reach the masses. Among the companies taking to the web to spread information, were numerous news sites that helped to streamline political news and otherwise into bite-size pieces much easier for public consumption. Twitter, Facebook and blog sites like Tumblr act as conduits for news sites and help to bridge the gap between the news sphere and the social sphere, facilitating political discussions amongst friends and peers across the web.

This research aims to explain the impact of social media on political activity of youths. The social media effects were assessed through in-depth interviews with university students in Ukraine and the United States. Research on this topic was motivated by the desire to determine whether the Internet has a truly large influence on youth's lives as it is made out to be and to investigate whether people act differently behind a computer screen than they do offline. It was hypothesized that the higher the use of social media, the higher the level of political participation, especially among youths who regularly check or follow news sites.

This paper will begin with an assessment of prior research on social media and its influence on people. Then the methodology will be explained to better understand how research was conducted. The findings of the research will be presented along with quotes from the

interviewed students. The paper will close with the summary of the research, along with an assessment of limitations and areas for improvement. Additionally, ideas for future research will be presented.

Prior Research

With society's advancement into the future, come great improvements to technology. Over the course of history these technological advancements have included the wheel, electricity, automobiles, nuclear weaponry, televisions, computers, the Internet and cellular phones. While some technological advancements of the past seem to have found their place and have become unchanged in their stagnancy, improvements and advancements continue to be made in other areas, especially concerning computers, the Internet and cellular phones. Today, computers are so much more than just tools for typing documents, and cell phones are used for more than just simply making calls. This can be attributed in large part to the Internet, the accessibility of which has increased over time and seems to have permeated nearly every electronic device that has a screen. With this increased accessibility and use of the Internet, have come changes to how it is used and for what it is used.

The creation of social media and networking sites – Twitter, Facebook, blogging sites, news sites – has had a profound impact on the way people use the web as it allowed the web to become more personal and to be used as a platform for personal beliefs and interests. Furthermore, as the world outside of the web becomes more politicized and filled with political unrest, the web has taken on a new role of political opinion platform. While the Internet is available to people of all ages, some of the most active participants in political discussions through social media and networking sites are the youth. Social scientists examined why the

youth are active politically online and how this online activism translates into their actions: both virtually (through the internet) and physically (voting, protesting, civic matters).

Numerous studies have analyzed patterns of the Internet use and its impact on the physical actions of Internet users. Nonetheless, scholars arrived at varying conclusions. Research conducted by Katz, Rice and Aspden between 1995-2000 found that Internet users gained some political awareness and were more interactive socially, but these results dropped when applied to the world outside of the Internet. It seemed that people who may have been active and communicative in Internet forums on politics and on social sites reported lower levels of civic involvement and social interaction when removed from the keyboard (Katz, Rice and Aspden, 2001). Another study by Johnson and Kaye examined the impact the Internet had on users during the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. Johnson and Kaye (2003) administered an online survey of 442 politically interested web users during the 2000 election to gain knowledge on the extent to which users relied upon the web for political information and its effects on their level of political interest and involvement. The results differed from the previous study and showed that the Internet positively impacted the level of political engagement in the physical sense, as voter turnout was high amongst web users. However, this may have to do the way the study was set up as it was designed on the basis that all of its participants are already politically interested, so its results seem to show that Internet use does not create new political interest, rather than just bolster a pre-existing interest and activism.

While the two previous studies uncovered themes that reoccur in more recently conducted research, the timing of research did not allow them to examine the changing pace of the Internet in terms of increased levels of social networking sites. Baumgartner and Morris examined the political uses of social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and YouTube by

18-24 year old youths. Much like Katz, Rice and Aspden (2001), Baumgartner and Morris (2009) found that there lies an enormous potential in increasing youth's political interest amongst this "chronically disengaged cohort" through the social networking sites, but the users of these websites are no more inclined to politically participate than other people.

Other studies have found that social networking sites do in fact live up to their potential. Through the creation of Facebook pages and events, students in Singapore were able to successfully lead a protest against censorship (Skoric, Poor, Tang and Youqing, 2011). In this case, social networking was successfully employed as a platform for political ideas and a way to engage a broader scope of people, something that was also seen on Twitter during the Occupy Wall Street Movement (Chen and Pirolli). Additionally, the impact of social media and websites can be seen in the 2008 US presidential campaign, where Obama was able to reach out to the rather uninvolved and non-participatory youth demographic through an increasingly web-based campaign (Dudash and Harris, 2011).

However, scholars find that increased social media use does not impact civic and political participation in the same way. While social networking sites foster political engagement and discussion, the impact on physical participation is not so significantly related to the impact on increased civic participation (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer and Bichard, 2009). This finding again echoes earlier research, indicating that the internet and social media sites are good at delivering information to people, but they seldom succeed in getting people to physically participate in politics.

Web-based news and information sites, as well as discussions on social networking sites, not only help to provide the general public with information, but they also serve as predictors in how the people will participate (Campbell, 2013;Kim, 2011). Additionally, the increased

volume of web-based news has changed the way news media is viewed and has had some negative effects on how people evaluate their candidates' morality, as it seems people are more likely to delve into a candidate's "dirty laundry" in the dark recesses of a web page than on an all-access, television news broadcast (Kim and Kim, 2012).

Overall, social scientists offered divergent answers as to how the Internet has impacted youth political participation. There is conflicting evidence regarding the impact of the Internet on civic engagement and political participation, which should be further explored, as well as more clearly defined. Additionally, more research should be conducted into the uses of social networking sites and media to uncover their impact on today's youth. This research still does not fully answers questions that have arisen in regard to youth's use of social networking sites and the relationship to their political views and motivations.

Methodology

The main reason for selecting the United States and Ukraine as sites for empirical research is the presence of cross-country differences in political culture. The United States is a more democratic country than Ukraine, and US citizens have more political freedoms. Additionally, the lingering effects of the Soviet period and communism contribute to the interesting and very corrupt political environment in Ukraine. In both countries, some degree of political unrest and unhappiness was expected, but grievances were expected to be more directed toward the form of government and politicians in general in Ukraine, whereas students in the United States were expected to be more upset over specific social issues. Another difference between the United States and Ukraine is the access to the Internet and social networking sites. It is anticipated that

students use social networking sites more frequently in the United States due to the greater availability of Internet access and the proliferation of English-language websites.

The research was conducted through a series of in-depth interviews with several Ukrainian students at Ukrainian Catholic University and several American students at Fordham University, whereupon comparisons between the two were made. In-depth interviews were chosen as the research method because they provided the possibility for the widest breadth of responses and were best for collecting qualitative data. As a more personalized research method, the students interviewed were able to provide their answers unhindered and to the best of their abilities, with the ability to fully express their opinions.

The sample used for this research was a non-probability sample comprised of students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. From the Ukrainian Catholic University, six students were interviewed: two male students and four female students. From Fordham University, seven students were interviewed: three male students and four female students.

Findings

After conducting in-depth interviews with the students at the Ukrainian Catholic University and Fordham University it was found that both groups of students were more alike than was initially expected. This was present in their comparable amounts of Internet access and use of social networking sites. Additionally, students expressed concerns and interest in similar political issues: both were mostly concerned with social issues.

Interviews conducted with both the American students and Ukrainian students showed that the students were all quite interested in politics in their countries. In the sample, there existed both more politically active students and relatively inactive students. For American

students, some of this inactiveness was bred from jadedness with the political system and apathy towards promised policy changes that never come into fruition. In Ukraine, the corruption of the government seemed to deter some students from being more politically active, especially due to certain issues within the education system.

I am concerned about social [issues] because in Ukraine there are a lot of poor people and the government does not provide enough help.

-UCU Student, aged 20 years, male

I read more articles about social issues and discuss social issues like women's reproductive rights and healthcare reform, because I believe social equality and happiness must come first. If people are happier and more satisfied with the social climate of the country, then the fiscal issues are sure to follow.

-Fordham Student, aged 20 years, female

Both groups of students were active on social media sites, although within each group, some students avoided political discussions or posting any political news. For some students, this was due to their use of social media sites for more communicatory things such as reconnecting with old classmates and keeping in touch with relatives. For those who used social media sites to read up on politics, they found such sites effective in facilitating discussions and political activity in their peers. Additionally, both groups of students reported that social media can have an impact on their peers' political involvement and alter opinions about certain issues.

I think social network can [urge] young people to protest the government and social network is very important for politicians and students. With the Internet and social network it is easier to gather people together and spread information.

-UCU Student, aged 18 years, male

I've seen the way social media sites have managed to influence the political opinions of my peers. Many visit common websites, follow the same blogs and Twitter accounts, and as such have used the Internet to really express their political views. Those who are most active on my feeds are also ones I've known to protest and vote – or pursue their political interests outside of the web.

-Fordham Student, aged 20 years, female

Reading online about politics does help to get inspired [politically] and can aid peers in becoming more politically involved. Social media can change opinions, [especially] depending on who writes or posts the articles.

-UCU Student, aged 19 years, female

I think social media can be very influential in not only informing the youth about politics and the different ideologies that exist, but in organizing political-based activities like protest. I saw this happen last year during the Occupy movement and even this year when many students were against Ann Coulter coming to our campus.

-Fordham Student, aged 20 years, male

One discernible difference between interviews in the United States and Ukraine is that American students seemed much more inclined to speak quite candidly of their opinions on specific political issues. Additionally, American students were more open about their thoughts on protesting and their involvement in such political acts.

Conclusion

After conducting in-depth interviews with both American and Ukrainian students, it was affirmed that the Internet is the most common source for news (political and otherwise) among youth. Most interviewed students read and receive news articles from online news sources, including the websites of specific newspapers and news channels, as well as blogs geared to more political discussions. Oftentimes students are linked to such articles through friends' postings on Facebook and through following specific news accounts on Twitter. Other students who showed keener interest in certain issues explained that they would go straight to the source and would check specific news channels as a part of their daily routine. Students from both universities reported interest in specific news (i.e. economic, entertainment, political, social, or sports), and as such, their news consumption was tailored to match their interests.

In both universities, students were more concerned with social issues, rather than economic or fiscal ones, so they were more inclined to read articles, discuss in online threads and join protests in support of such issues as education reform or healthcare reform. Students also indicated that peers' postings of certain opinions or ideologies could influence their own opinions or other peers' opinions. Students expressed a higher rate of interest in politics and political activity during election years, as they felt that public policy issues were more widely discussed and dominated social media feeds during that period.

The empirical data collected in this project documents the pervasiveness of social media in the everyday lives of young people and the near-inescapability of the Internet. With Internet constantly at people's fingertips, quite literally in the case of smart phone technologies, people are always connected to news. American students reported that they used Twitter more on their phone through applications than on a regular desktop or laptop computer because it was good for reading news blasts on the go. Students also reported the importance of social media in organizing political events and communicating with politicians. This is evidenced in the President of the United States Barack Obama being the fourth most popular Twitter personality. President Obama, for example, used the medium to discuss tax reform with the online audience.

This study is limited due to the fact that only thirteen students from two specific universities were interviewed. If students outside of Ukrainian Catholic University and Fordham University participated in the study, different results might have been shown. Additionally, the reported data may be influenced by biases in political and social spheres, especially since students acknowledged being influenced by what their peers thought or posted. Students are only as political online as they wish to be and sometimes that transfers to offline activities. However, it is usually students who are most political offline that become more politically active online. Future research can further explore the influence of certain news sources on students' opinions. Evaluating the political ideologies of certain news sources and comparing them to the ideologies of the students accessing these sources can give us a better indication of the magnitude of social media's impact on political behavior.

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Appendix

Questions presented to both Ukrainian and American students. Due to the semi-structured nature of interviews, additional questions were asked, given the flow of the interview.

1. What social media sites do you use?

2. Which site do you use the most?

3. How often do you use the Internet? Social media sites?

4. What do you use these sites for the most: social, information, dating, work, reconnecting, etc.?

5. Where do you receive most of your news?

6. How active are you politically? (i.e. Did you vote in the last election?)

7. Are you ever inclined to post about politics online?

8. When you receive political news/information online, what do you do with it? (For example, protest, vote, help campaigns, volunteer, etc.)

9. Which issues are you most active in online? Offline?

10. Does what you hear on the news and online inspire you to take on a bigger political role outside of the web?

11. Does social media aid your peers and yourself in becoming politically involved?

12. Does what you read online (friends' status postings, news articles) influence or change your own political opinion?

Note on Universities

Fordham University

Founded in 1841, Fordham University is the Jesuit University of New York, offering exceptional education distinguished by the Jesuit tradition. It was established as St. John's College, the first Catholic institution of higher education in the northeastern United States, and it officially changed its name to Fordham University in 1907. Fordham is committed to the discovery of Wisdom and the transmission of Learning, through research and through undergraduate, graduate and professional education of the highest quality. Today Fordham enrolls approximately 15,000 students and offers more than 50 majors in liberal arts, sciences, and business. The university draws students from across the United States and 62 countries worldwide.

The Office of International Initiatives aims to provide strategic support and guidance for the internationalization of Fordham University. Specifically, the OII assists those who wish to bring the world to Fordham and Fordham to the world by supporting the Institute of American Language and Culture, the Office for International Services, and the International Study Abroad Programs Office. These three offices help students and scholars from other countries who wish to study at Fordham, aid new students who wish to learn English language skills or improve their understanding of American higher education, and provide opportunities for current Fordham students to live and learn outside of the U.S. On international initiatives, see http://www.fordham.edu/academics/office_of_the_provos/office_of_internatio/fordham_in_the_world_73816.asp.

Ukrainian Catholic University

Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) is the only Catholic university on the territory of the former Soviet Union. UCU was established in 2002 on the basis of the Lviv Theological Academy founded in 1928 and re-opened in 1994. The university is an open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally – for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person. Approximately 1,000 students currently study humanities and theology at UCU. In addition, the Lviv Business School founded in 2008 offers a master's program and short courses in business administration.

UCU provides multiple opportunities for international students to combine in-depth study of the Eastern and Central European historical, cultural, and spiritual traditions with the study of the Ukrainian language and immersion in Ukrainian culture. In addition to a semester-long English-language program, UCU annually hosts the Summer Language and Culture Program offering Ukrainian language classes and a rich cultural immersion program. The School of Ukrainian Language and Culture also instituted the Professional Internship Program for young adults, enabling students and recent graduates to gain unique work experience while living abroad. For more information, visit http://www.studyukrainian.org.ua/.