Language and identity in Ukraine: Was it Really nation-building?

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Summary/Abstract: After the collapse of three socialist federations in Eastern Europe, the expression 'nation-building' returned to the heart of academic debates. Like other former socialist republics, Ukraine has started its nation-building project trying to balance between a limitation of centrifugal forces and the 'nationalisation' (Brubaker 1994) of the state. This article examines the main features of language policies within the Ukrainian nation-building project and adopts a dual approach. It first surveys the
political will that has been incarnated in language policies since 1991, and how national identity has been affected by those policies. However, it counterpoises this approach with an analysis of bottom actors and their attitude towards language policies. The framework constructed is intended to question the idea that nation-building is mainly an elite driven process and to suggest that common people can participate in a political project by renegotiating its features at the local level.
The importance of language to nation building 167 Ukrainian as the state language 170 A problem of definition 179 Bi-ethnic states and bilingualism 185 Official and unofficial policies 188 Conclusions 196.

But what of nation building? Ukraine inherited in 1991 an even more robust west Ukrainian ethnic nation than had existed in 1917–1920, which had been followed by three decades of armed conflict by west Ukrainians with Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Germans and Soviets. The experimentation with indigenisation in the 1920s, if left to run its course, would have also led to the evolution from ethnos to nation in eastern Ukraine. Finally, those with a pre-modern identity in Ukraine cannot skip the modern stage and arrive at 'post-modern' consciousness.

Language, Nation-Building and Identity Formation in a Multi-Ethnic Society. Abstract This chapter defines the terms nation, nationality and nationalism particularly in the context of a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic developing country such as Malaysia. It is the survival of a culture or religious community that is very pertinent in the Malaysian context since many of the cultural and religious identities of the ethnic groups are communal based and communally protected. The change of one's ethnic identity is relatively difficult, if not near impossible, for most individuals because it involves changing one's race, religion and culture, which are deeply embedded in the psyche of many ethnic individuals.