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An Audit of EU Soft Power

The Case of Ukraine

By Ivan Bakalov

Introduction

The European Union has forged its enlargement policy mainly relying on the attraction it exerts as a socio-political role model in its vicinity and has therefore earned itself a reputation as the epitome of soft power, leading some authors to laud it as “the embodiment of soft power” (Cooper 2004, 1). Joseph Nye, the author of the concept, also acknowledges the European Union as one of the strongest soft power players in the world (Nye 2004, 75). And indeed, after the end of the Cold War the EU emerged as an exceptional lodestone for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in a remarkable display of the effects of soft power¹. But after the impressive record of success, which led to the accession of 13 countries of the former Eastern bloc between 2004 and 2013, Brussels now appears to have grown overconfident about its soft power potential and less active in its approach. With the growing reluctance of neighbouring countries such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus to follow EU prescriptions and with a significant part of Ukrainian society fiercely rejecting the European integration path, the time is ripe for a critical audit of the EU's soft power.

This paper puts the argument about EU soft power supremacy to the test, offering a rigorous research design, based on an inquiry into the two proxies for soft power in international relations: resources and behaviours. A rigid theoretical framework is used for a thorough investigation into the soft power resource endowment of the EU in the context of its relations to Ukraine, focusing on historical narratives, language, religion and public opinion (in Ukraine) as key indicators. In a second step, the EU's soft power behaviours in Ukraine are theorised through the perspective of broader power debates in IR and categorised as elements of the first, second and third faces of (soft) power, in an attempt at proposing a systematic understanding of the EU soft power strategy in Ukraine. All this serves to shed light on the sources of EU soft power potential and the mechanisms (not) used to exercise it.

¹ Admittedly, soft power behaviours were coupled in the process with generous economic stimuli that pertain to the hard power domain.

The term audit used in the title, albeit ambitious for a study of this kind, points to several considerations that form the backbone of the endeavour. First, it alludes to the rigid operationalisation of the concept offered in the paper, which is meant to provide a tool that allows for objective analysis and lends itself to replication in different settings. Second, it implies that the current paper is ultimately a descriptive study, not a prescriptive one. Questions about what ought and ought not to be, as well as about what is a good (or bad) foreign policy strategy, are entrusted upon further research. On the other hand, the reader should not expect to find a fully exhaustive inventory of the soft power resources and behaviours of the EU in Ukraine, as the term audit might suggest, because this goes well beyond the limitations of this paper. Also, the title might errantly lead one to anticipate a fully positivist quantitative analysis, yet this is not the case, because the empirical investigation draws much insight from an interpretivist qualitative take on the evidence as well.

The empirical research is limited to a specific time frame. Although the dramatic events in Ukraine undoubtedly deserve special attention, the current study does not engage in a related discussion. A conclusive and precise analysis cannot be produced before the situation has settled, which unfortunately did not occur as the paper was being composed. Furthermore, a soft power theoretical framework is more apt for an inquiry into the period that preceded the military escalation of the conflict, and not so much into the conflict itself.

The paper follows a straightforward structure: first, the theoretical framework for the study is set, whereby the two proxies for soft power – resources and behaviours – are presented as the necessary tools for an inquiry into soft power; then follow two separate sections devoted to case study research into each of the two proxies, before the paper concludes with a summary of the main findings.

Theoretical Framework

The focal point of Nye's work on power has mostly been put on the concept of soft power, while hard power has remained in the background, serving only as a contrast point to elucidate the features of the former. Nevertheless, Nye does touch upon the latter and explains that its central features lie in obtaining desired outcomes through military and/or economic sanctions and/or inducements (Nye 2004, 5). Hard power rests on the use of tangible resources, such as military force and economic prowess, which allow agents to command changes (or ensure continuation) in the behaviour of target actors in accordance with pre-set objectives.

In contrast to the detail scarcity of hard power explications, Nye is a lot more elaborate in his discussion of soft power. The short version of the definition, available in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Nye 2004) (hereafter *Soft Power*), reads:

(...) the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. (Nye 2004, x).

The latest and fullest version of the definition, suggested in *The Future of Power* (Nye 2011), is extended to enhance specificity:

(...) soft power is the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes. (Nye 2011, 20-21).

A significant, though subtle, difference between Nye's two works lies in the explanations they suggest with regard to the determining factors of the soft/hard power distinction. In *Soft Power* Nye argues that "[t]he distinction between them [soft and hard power] is one of degree, both in the *nature of the behavior* and in the *tangibility of the resources*." (Nye 2004, 7) (emphasis added). Conversely, the version in *The Future of Power* reads: "[m]any types of *resources* can contribute to soft power, but that does not mean that soft power is any type of *behavior*." (Nye 2011, 17) (emphasis in the original). Essentially, in the second reading Nye shifts the focus away from resources and their (in)tangibility when establishing whether a power capacity is soft or hard. Put differently, according to the latter version it is no longer resources *and* behaviours that determine whether power is soft or hard, but mainly behaviours. What necessitates this adjustment, Nye argues, is the fact that, while soft power tends to be generated by the accumulation of intangible resources, and hard power – of tangibles, "the relationship is not perfect" (Nye 2011, 21). In this paper I will defend the original rendition, arguing that even if not perfect, the relationship between the tangibility of resources producing the capacity to attain one's goals is as important as the nature of the behaviours through which this capacity is manifested.

Nye's typology of power is by no means the first attempt at categorising different manifestations of power. To the contrary, it builds on a long-standing debate about the nature of this 'essentially contested' concept (to quote Gallie), which began in the late 1950s, and which continues to this day. Intensive discussions began with Dahl's (1957) proposition to bring the concept of power to a more positivist turf, so as to enable rigorous scientific investigations into its representations, which provided an impetus for the development of the

'behaviourist' school in the study of power. This strand of study places an exclusive focus on examining the workings of the political decision-making process, where overt conflicts are settled through asymmetries in the distribution of power resources and the submission of one actor to the terms and conditions of another (Lukes 2005, 29). In *The Future of Power* Nye refers to this type of power exercise as 'commanding change' (Nye 2011, 11). This conception, however, proved to be too narrow a view for other scholars, most notably Bachrach and Baratz (1963), who asserted that there exists a second 'face' of power. According to this view, by focusing only on decision-making situations, that is, instances where two or more actors or groups of actors disagree about the choice of policy to be implemented, scholars errantly overlook:

(...) the practice of limiting the scope of actual decision-making to 'safe' issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures. (Bachrach and Baratz 1963, 632).

In this sense, the second face of power refers to instances in which agents obtain their desired outcomes by controlling the political decision-making process itself and limiting the issues that are open for discussion, thereby avoiding sensitive issues.

Next came Lukes (1974), who insisted on bringing yet another 'dimension' to the study of power that enables inquiries not only into the forces that command the behaviour of actors, but also into the forces that shape inherent preferences and interests that condition consent and wilful co-operation (Lukes 2005, 25-29; 108-151). Lukes produced a study of three-dimensional power, which dealt with instances in which an agent achieves his/her goals by subconsciously influencing the preference structure of another actor and aligning the latter's perceived interests with his/her own. During the 1980s the debate was brought even further by the lights of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, both of whom insisted, though in distinct ways, that structures possess constitutive power capacities operational underneath the level of direct intersubjective relations, thus providing theoretical evidence for conclusions that a 'fourth face of power' exists (Digeser 1992).

The debate about power in the broader field of social science did not have its equivalent within international relations (IR) theory for a long period of time, because "the discipline of international relations has tended to treat power as the exclusive province of realism." (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 40). Barnett and Duvall argue that instead of seeking to circumvent the realists' tight grip on power and develop competing conceptualisations, liberals and constructivists alike, mistakenly focused their efforts on building arguments that seek to

negate the relevance of power considerations to the study of IR. In an effort at emancipation from the latter fallacy, they construct a taxonomy of all types of power manifestations in international politics, claiming that there is no justifiable reason not to employ complementing conceptions in the study of power (see Table 1). Joseph Nye to a large extent abides by this prescription and argues that “soft power fits with all three faces or aspects of power behavior” (Nye 2011, 90). But apart from representing a declaration in favour of the progressive approach of conceptual pluralism, the latter statement also carries the assertion that his is a distinct typology from those existent.

Theoretical Foundations		Categorisations of Power			
		Faces (Bachrach/Baratz)	Dimensions (Lukes)	Types (Barnett & Duvall)	Soft/Hard Power Behaviours
Dahl	“A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl 1957: 202-203)	First Face	First Dimension	Command Power	Hard: “A uses force/payment to change B’s existing strategies” (Nye 2011: 91)
					Soft: “A uses attraction/persuasion to change B’s existing preferences” (Nye 2011: 91)
Bachrach /Baratz	“limiting the scope of actual decision-making to ‘safe’ issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures” (Bachrach/Baratz 1963: 632)	Second Face	Second Dimension	Institutional Power	Hard: “A uses force/pay to truncate B’s agenda” (Nye 2011: 91)
					Soft: “A uses attraction or institutions so that B sees the agenda as legitimate” (Nye 2011: 91)
Lukes	“the capacity to secure compliance to domination through the shaping of beliefs and desires, by imposing internal constraints under historically changing circumstances” (Lukes 2005: 143-144)	Third Face ¹	Third Dimension	Structural Power	Hard: “A uses force/pay to shape B’s preferences” (Nye 2011: 91)
					Soft: “A uses attraction and/or institutions to shape B’s initial preferences” (Nye 2011: 91)
Foucault	The “form of power which makes individuals subjects” (Foucault 1982: 781)	Fourth Face (Digeser)	N/A	Productive Power	Hard: N/A
					Soft: N/A

Table 1: Categorisations of power

Revisiting the debates about power is important for the purposes of this study, as the exercise elucidates the features of the classic power typology and defines a reference point for the juxtaposition of Nye’s typology. The distinction between the different approaches to organising power representations into groups lies in the determinant factors that guide the

classification process. As already noted, according to Nye's original understanding (Nye 2004), soft and hard power are differentiated on the basis of both: (1) the type of resources that produce power capacities (tangible vs. intangible); and (2) the type of behaviour that releases the potential accumulated through resources (force and pay vs. persuasion, agenda-setting and exerting attraction). Contrary to this, Barnett and Duvall's typology rests on different determinants: "the kinds of social relations through which power works; and the specificity of social relations through which effects on actors' capacities are produced." (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 42). In other words, according to Barnett and Duvall the power typology rests only on the types of behaviours (referred to as 'social relations') that are engendered by the power potential, while the resources that generate the potential itself is of little relevance to the distinction. Lukes utilises similar indicators of differentiation (i.e. resting exclusively on behaviours) in the development of his multi-dimensional typology: (1) type of social interaction (direct or indirect, but also coercive or constitutive); (2) type of conflict between actors (overt, covert and latent) (Lukes 2005, 29). As a result of the emphasis put on relations and interactions, that is, on *behaviours*, Barnett and Duvall's and Lukes' frameworks overlap to a large extent: the first dimension of power roughly corresponds to compulsory power, the second – to institutional power, and the third – to structural power. Productive power does not correspond to a 'fourth dimension' of power, which is not accounted for by Lukes (2005), due to his decision not to investigate structural representations of power (see Table 1).

Thus far it has become evident that the categorisations offered by Nye on the one hand, and those of Lukes and Barnett and Duvall on the other, are distinct, as the latter two are based only on the types of behaviours that flow from power capacities, while Nye brings resources into the picture as well. The task of making such a delineation between the two approaches becomes a lot more complicated however, if Nye's adjustment to the determining factors for the soft/hard power distinction in *The Future of Power* is taken into account. According to the latter: "[m]any types of *resources* can contribute to soft power" (Nye 2011, 20) (emphasis in the original), including hard power resources, such as military power (Nye 2011, 85) and economic prowess (Nye 2011, 52). A militarily powerful country can, for instance, project an image of invincibility of itself and thus generate appeal in other states. In a similar vein, a powerful economy that substantially increases the well-being of the population might also produce attractiveness abroad. Therefore, Nye concludes, there are instances of economic and

military power resources, i.e. by definition hard power resources, that “enhance a country’s soft power” (Nye 2011, 85).

Contrary to this, I argue that hard power resources cannot possibly contribute to soft power. In my view, the examples that Nye puts forward as empirical confirmations for his argument are instances of capacities, underpinned by hard power resources, that affect (through non-actions) the preference structures of other actors, that is, they shape their interests and desires. According to Lukes, “the shaping of agents’ desires and beliefs by factors external to those agents” (Lukes 2005, 134) pertains to the field of three-dimensional power, therefore the above instances are manifestations of third face hard power behaviours, given that the potential for their exercise is accumulated through hard power resources. In this sense when “[d]ictators (...) cultivate myths of invincibility to structure expectations and attract others to join their bandwagon” (Nye 2011, 85), or when “[t]he soft power of the European Union (EU) at the end of the Cold War and the soft power of China today are enhanced by the success of their economic models” (Nye 2011, 52), we witness examples of hard power resources (a strong military or a powerful economy) generating a power potential that surfaces in the form of third face hard power behaviours (underpinned by force and pay or the prospect thereof).

To be sure, in the abovementioned instances hard power functions in impalpable ways, but this does not constitute a reason enough to equate it to soft power. To say that hard power resources can produce effects on soft power is to obscure the whole essence of the soft/hard categorisation and its distinction from other classifications. Because if only the degree of tangibility of power behaviours are taken into account, to the neglect of power resources, as Nye does in these instances, it would mean that the determinants of Lukes’ and Barnett and Duvall’s classifications are being followed.

There are two approaches to circumventing this conceptual inconsistency. The first is to adhere to Nye’s latest conceptualisation and part with the soft/hard power classification altogether, since it reproduces already existing schemes. The second is to reject the adjustment and resurrect the original approach to the distinction that includes both the type of resources that produce capacities and the sets of behaviours that are utilised in the generation of effects, thus preserving Nye’s conceptual framework from being subsumed into already existing ones. As the former approach would represent an unfortunate dismissal of an otherwise valuable conception that has the potential to help us better understand the developments in world politics and more particularly in Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the latter approach will be employed as a basis for the current paper.

EU Soft Power Resources in Ukraine

A soft power resource is here conceived as a socio-cultural ‘given’ (including customs and habits) in the possession of a social group that generates a positive soft power potential *vis-à-vis* another social group. It should be distinguished from soft power behaviour, which is a (non)action, intentional or not, that unleashes this potential at a specific target, thus representing an actual exercise of soft power. Notably, the socio-cultural ‘givens’, conditioning an agent’s field of action, can be both advantageous for and detrimental to the accumulation of soft power, where in the latter case they constitute a liability. As argued by Nye, soft power resources are highly context-specific, which means that the potential they generate is relative to the target country in question (Nye 2011, 84).

According to Nye, there are three resources of soft power:

(...) its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority). (Nye 2011, 84).

In *The Future of Power* he argues that culture represents “the pattern of social behaviors by which groups transmit knowledge and values, and it exists at multiple levels” (Nye 2011, 84). Oddly, he frames the concept as a ‘pattern of behaviours’, thus failing to discern between the two proxies for power: resources and behaviours. An alternative attempt at grasping the notion’s complexity that avoids the latter conceptual fallacy belongs to Geertz, according to whom culture is:

(...) an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. (Geertz 1973, 89)².

Geertz’ definition provides important clues, as to what lies behind the abstract term ‘culture’. The latter is: (1) “historically transmitted” and (2) “embodied in symbols”. It follows that: (1) historical memory plays a key role in shaping the symbolical content of culture, that is, interpretations of the past (i.e. historical narratives) represent a salient factor in the

² The choice of this definition is by no means a random decision. It is often cited as an authoritative reference point (Prinz 2011), and is in fact mentioned as “a prominent one” by Nye (2011, 84, footnote 12).

accumulation of soft power resources; (2) the systems of symbols prevalent in the consciousness of a particular social group are important worldview determinants that exert significant influence on the attitudes towards other groups. One such system, “by means of which men communicate”, is language. The other key symbolic framework which looms in the background of Geertz’ definition and which perpetuates “the knowledge about and attitudes toward life” is by all means religion. On the basis of these considerations, the following soft power resources can be put forward for consideration: *historical narratives*, *language* and *religion*.

Nye suggests that apart from culture, political values are also to be understood as soft power resources. The author is hinting at a notable trait of soft power, namely the significance of the target’s attitude towards the agent exercising soft power, or more accurately, towards the message that the agent disseminates. If political values are re-framed as the appeal within the target country of the values that an agent upholds (or put simply – *public image*), they could be utilised as an indicator for that agent’s soft power resource endowment³.

The above list is not meant to exhaust all existing soft power resources, but, rather, represents a collection of what have been identified as the most salient resources and the ones that are likely to have the highest potential to generate soft power.

Historical Narratives

In general, there are two historical narratives that dominate public discourse in Ukraine: (1) Ukrainophile; and (2) Eastern Slavic⁴ (Kuzio 2006, 408). The Ukrainophile worldview serves the purpose of consolidating Ukrainian statehood and national identity and as such performs the key task of drawing the necessary lines to maintain a safe distance from groups that could possibly raise challenges to Ukrainian idiosyncrasy. A central tenet for Ukrainophiles is the stylisation of their country as an eastern frontier of Europe, a bastion that serves to protect European-ness from Eurasian encroachments (Kuzio 2001, 353). In this sense, adherents to this view retain no doubts about their geographical and cultural alignment with Europe, while

³ Foreign policies, the third soft power resource according to Nye, are not included in the list of soft power resources here, as they represent actions (i.e. behaviours) by definition, which contradicts the basic understanding for resource.

⁴ This does not mean that Ukrainian historiography can simply be divided into two schools, because there are multiple vectors (Yekelchuk 2011, 567), but rather that there are two publicly dominant narratives (Kuzio 2006, 408).

Russia is conceived as *the* symbolical ‘Other’ and an impediment to Ukraine’s ‘return’ to the West (Kuzio 2006, 416).

Given the clear political trajectory that it sets, the Ukrainophile worldview represents a definitive soft power resource for the EU. There exist, however, more radical versions of the perspective, which radiate animosity towards all possible contestants to Ukrainian national identity. Such a narrative does not discriminate between Russian or Polish (or any other) repression of Ukrainian identity and would therefore be incompatible with close cooperation with Poland in the framework of the EU, given the negative historical record of the *Recz Pospolita* period and especially the interwar years in Ukraine (Yekelchuk 2011, 565). In this sense, the radical renditions of this narrative do not represent a soft power resource for the EU and might even be considered a soft power liability.

The Eastern Slavic historical narrative, on the other hand, assigns primacy on the Slavic origins of the Ukrainian nation to the neglect of a western orientation. Wilson describes this worldview as post-colonialist, because it rejects the Ukrainophile tendency to replace “myths of empire (denigration of local cultures) with hyperbolic myths of their own (the exaggerated claim to an ancient past, the characterization of the entire imperial period as a time of repression and ‘cultural genocide’)” (Wilson 2002, 214). A further distinctive feature of the Eastern Slavic perspective is the geopolitical compass that it utilises. Contrary to the Ukrainophile approach, it does not portray Ukraine as the borderline of Europe, but as a ‘bridge’ between Europe and Russia (Kuzio 2001, 360).

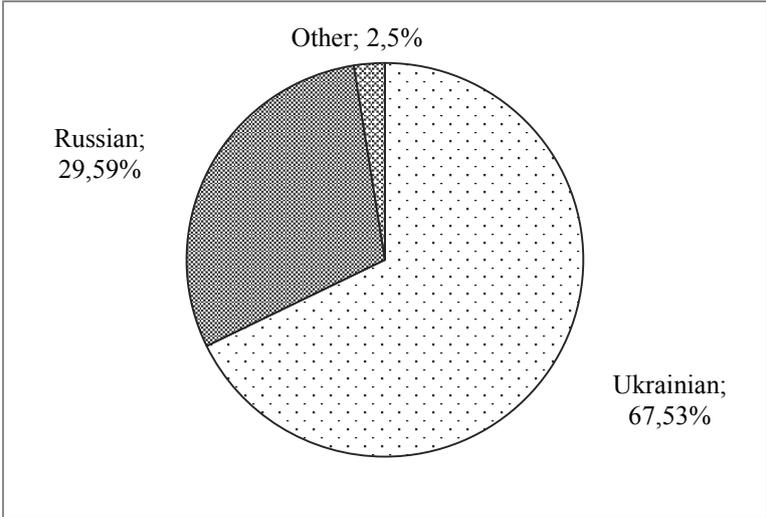
While this approach to the interpretation of history does not necessarily constitute a soft power liability for the EU, it does precondition the prioritisation of the development of friendly, cooperative relations with Moscow, at the expense of the intensification of interactions with the EU, should the two happen to be mutually exclusive. The extreme version of the narrative exacerbates this effect and translates into a soft power liability for the EU, as it advocates a deepening of cooperation with Russia to a level close or corresponding to a political union.

Language

A language is much more than a mere instrument of communication, which is particularly true of the Ukrainian case, where the native language has established itself as the “first and foremost” (Bernsand 2001, 39), “primary” (Helbig et al. 2008, 55), and “most distinctive”

(Stepanenko 2003, 120) marker of Ukrainian national identity. The argumentation underpinning this conclusion is based on the limited Ukrainian experience of statehood, which has bereft this ethnic group of an important homogenising factor (Stepanenko 2003, 110). Inhabiting the territories of different (non-native) countries over a long period of time, Ukrainians required a means to structure their common identity that transcended borders, so as to persist as a cultural group, and found it in their language.

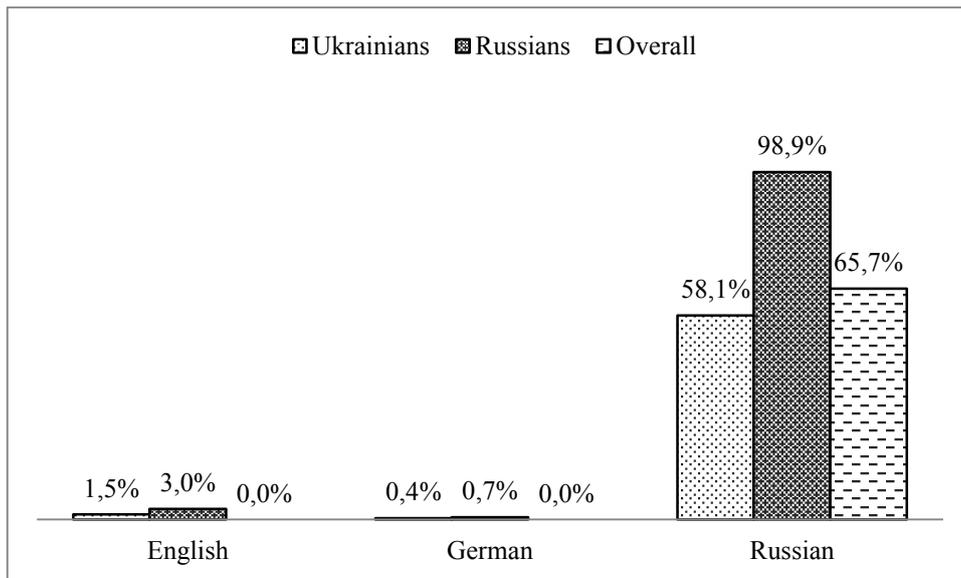
Ukrainian has the status of the sole official state language in Ukraine, as affirmed in the 1996 Constitution. The language field in Ukraine, however, is much more diverse than this legislative prescription would suggest (see Figure 1). Looking at the official results (Kuras and Pirozhkov 2004, 99) from the last nation-wide census in Ukraine, the proportion of people that have an EU language as their native tongue (concealed in the category ‘Other’) is negligible. Conversely, the Russian language possesses a much more prominent social status in Ukraine than any other foreign language, which is evidenced by the fact that close to one third of the population regards Russian as its native language.



Data source: Kuras/Pirozhkov (2004: 99)

Figure 1: Native languages in Ukraine

Another illustration of the language field in Ukraine is provided by the relative share of people that are fluent in different foreign languages. The figure below shows that not more than 2 % and 0.5 % are fluent in the most popular EU languages: English and German respectively. When compared to the share of people with perfect command in Russian (65.7 %), the substantial comparative disadvantage of the EU in the context of the language situation in Ukraine becomes all the more apparent.



Data source: Kuras/Pirozhkov (2004: 99)

Figure 2: Language fluency

As already pointed out, the contextual ‘givens’ that constitute soft power resources could also be detrimental to the soft power potential of a country. The politicisation of language use in Ukraine represents in this sense an important trend that merits attention. As noted by Bernsand, “[t]he individual Ukrainian is seen to be united with his nation through the native Ukrainian language” (Bernsand 2001, 42), therefore its usage becomes a symbolic act of taking a specific political stance, in the sense of fulfilling a duty towards the nation by preserving its foremost signifier. Using Ukrainian instead of Russian thereby becomes a symbolic stance of opposition to the Russian language, one that is aimed at linguistic emancipation, which constitutes a soft power liability for Russia. The EU, on the other hand, while not endowed with any significant linguistic soft power resources, benefits from a lack of soft power liabilities, in the sense of popular opposition to the use of its official languages.

Religion

When trying to comprehend the intricacies of the religious field in Ukraine, it is important to note that decisions pertaining to the choice of denomination are a lot more dependent on political outlooks than on theological considerations (Krindatch 2003, 50; Yelenski 2002, 479). The following sub-section presents the three main religious actors in Ukraine and the social meaning attached to affiliation with them.

The *Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate* is the largest church in Ukraine, both in terms of its share of followers (26.6 %, European Social Survey 2012) and the size of

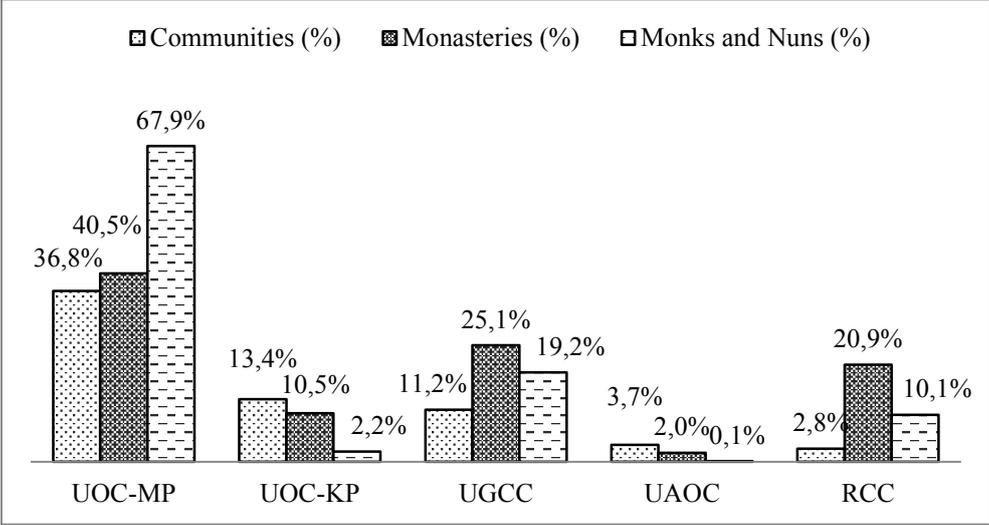
its organisational structure (see Figure 3). It legally succeeded the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in 1990 and is the only church that has a presence in all regions of Ukraine (see Figure 4), which has led some authors to identify it as the one that is “closest to the status of the national Church” (Kazmina and Filipova 2005, 1068). To a large extent this church represents a soft power liability to the EU, as its followers perceive the EU as an agent that is external to the spiritual bond between the Orthodox communities of Russia and Ukraine. This conclusion can be derived from the general overlap between the social portraits of adherents to the church and the EU accession detractors (i.e. mostly Russian native speakers from the South and the East of Ukraine, see European Social Survey [2012] and Razumkov Centre [2013, 111]) and the fact that the latter find the differences in cultures and mentality between the citizens of the EU countries and Ukraine as crucial arguments against EU integration (Razumkov Centre 2013, 117).

While the *Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate* has roughly the same share of followers as the UOC-MP (26.2 %, European Social Survey 2012), it is much weaker in its organisational structure, as Figure 3 reveals. This church also has a country-wide presence and is prevalent in central and southern regions. Affiliation to it carries a distinct political meaning for its followers, because “[b]y declaring that he or she belongs to the Kiev and not to the Moscow Patriarchate, a person declares his or her identity with a Ukrainian vector.” (Yelenski 2002, 472). The adherents of this church are generally negatively disposed towards Russia, which translates into a soft power resource for the EU, seen as a counter-balance to Russian influence in the country (Krindatch 2003, 69)⁵.

The *Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church* is the third largest in terms of the number of followers (6.8 %, European Social Survey 2012) and ranks second in organisational strength. Historically, it has always been a bastion of Ukrainian identity, but in newly independent Ukraine its position is complicated by the difficult relationship with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). On the one hand, the UGCC and the RCC share hierarchical subordination to the Holy See, but on the other, “resentment of former Polish domination [in the interwar period] still fuels hostility towards Roman Catholicism” (Krindatch 2003, 60). The negative image of the RCC generates an unfavourable attitude of UGCC adherents towards Poland, and it being a member state of the EU, this effect cannot but reflect on the overall perceptions

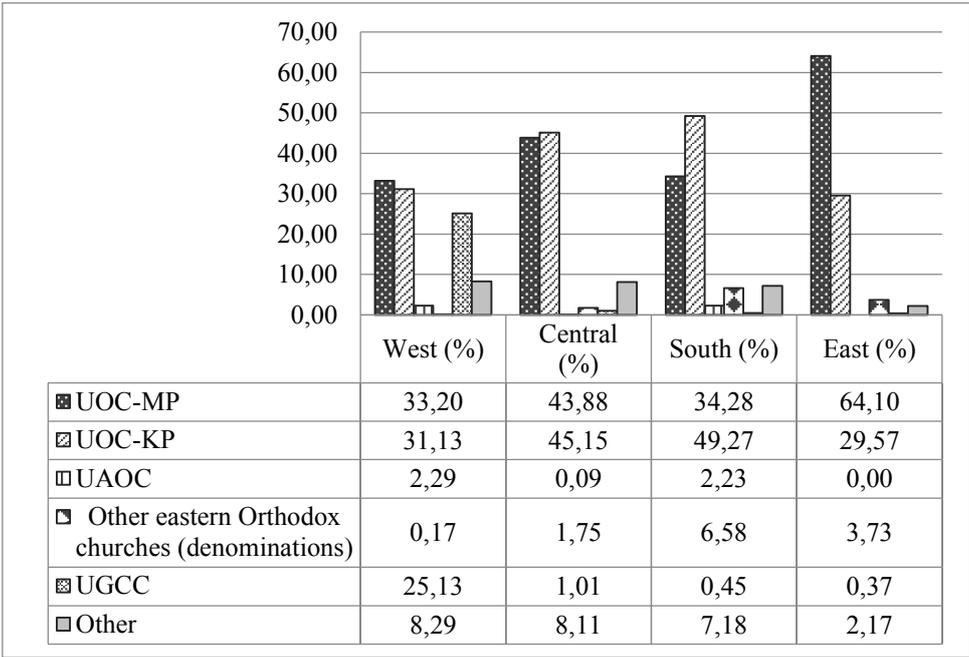
⁵ However, UOC-KP support for a European trajectory of development should not be considered as absolute, because the EU is seen to uphold certain values (e.g. same sex marriages) that are perceived by the adherents of this church as unorthodox and spiritually corrupt. I am grateful to Ivan Sablin for pointing this out to me.

of the EU as well. Therefore, the UGCC constitutes at least a vulnerability for the soft power resource endowment of the EU (if not a liability).



Data source: Religious Information Service of Ukraine (2011)

Figure 3: Organisational strength of Ukrainian churches



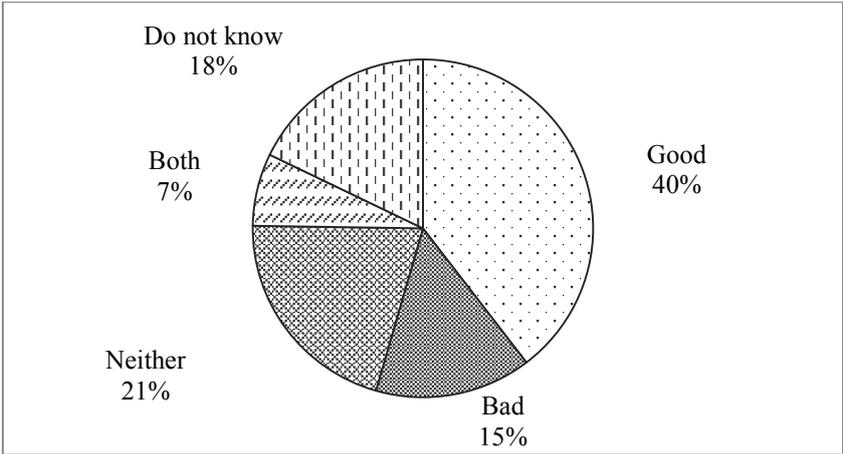
Data source: European Social Survey (2012)

Figure 4: Regional church affiliations

Public Image

A Pew Research Centre (2009) study provides useful estimations of popular attitudes towards EU influence in Ukraine (see Figure 5). There are more than twice as many people sharing the

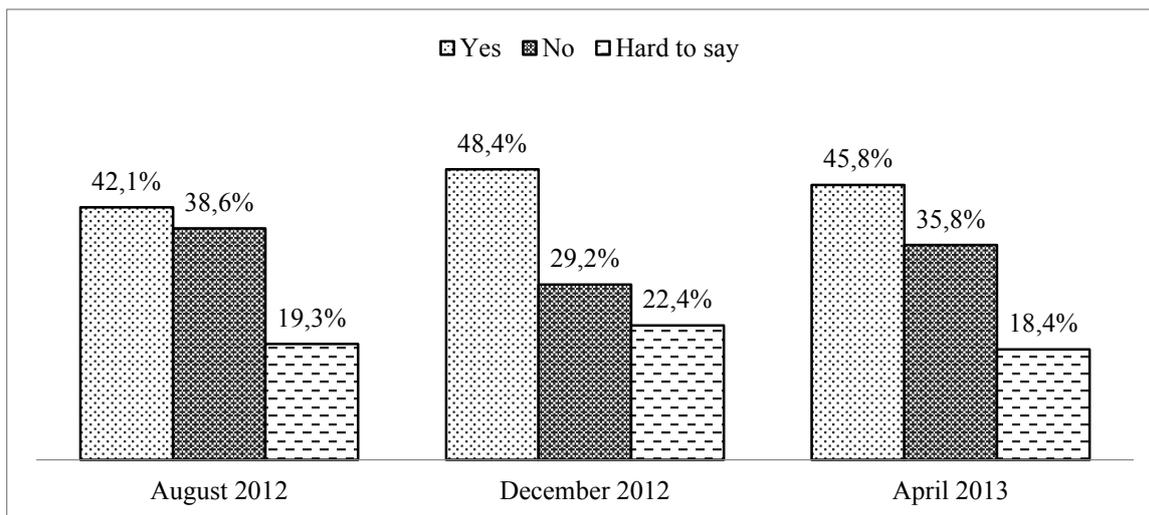
opinion that the EU influence in Ukraine is ‘good’ compared to those that find it to be ‘bad’. Naturally, this is a valuable asset for the EU, but the results point to another finding as well. Close to a fifth of the people have no opinion at all regarding the integration bloc, meaning that it is not as salient an actor as it could be. Serving to reinforce this conclusion is a further 28 % share of people who conceived EU influence in Ukraine to be both good and bad or neither, that is, they lacked a pronounced attitude towards the EU.



Data source: Pew Research Centre (2009: 64)

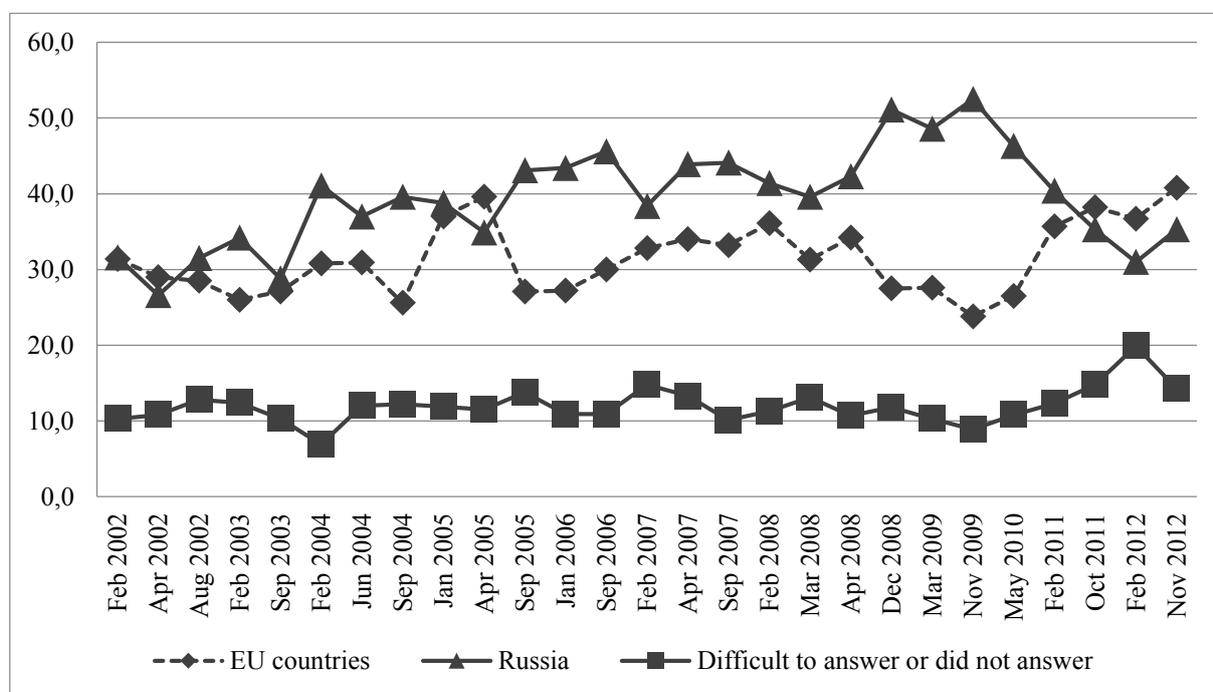
Figure 5: The influence of the EU is...

The figure below shows that the people who support Ukraine’s EU integration generally outnumber those who oppose it, but the advantage of the former is far from rock solid. Notably, the share of people who find it difficult to respond with a definitive answer is persistently larger than the margin between the two camps, suggesting that popular attitudes are volatile and subject to abrupt changes. This is confirmed by the long-term trends in Ukrainian public opinion on foreign policy matters, which demonstrate recurring swings (see Figure 7). Due to the constant fluctuations, it can be misleading to draw sweeping conclusions on snapshot statistics alone. Therefore the more durable preference structures that underlie popular attitudes should also be taken into account.



Data source: Razumkov Centre (2013, 112)

Figure 6: Should Ukraine join the European Union?



Data source: Razumkov Centre (2014)

Figure 7: Which foreign policy direction should be a priority for Ukraine? (% , recurrent, 2002-2012)

According to Razumkov Centre (2013, 117), the main determinants of the Ukrainians’ desire to accede to the EU are of economic nature (higher living standards, economic reforms), that is, they are related to hard power, while the two most salient factors that condition their reluctance to do so are related to culture and identity (not wanted in the EU, not adapted to life in the EU), i.e. soft power. The third most important favourable factor, however, pertains to the belief that the accession would speed up Ukraine’s social development (Razumkov

Centre 2013, 117), and therefore represents a valuable soft power resource for the EU. Overall, it can be concluded that the advantages of the EU are attributable to its resonant public image as a developed political community. According to Ukrainians, the integration bloc offers an attractive socio-political model and a reference point to the future. Therefore the EU finds itself in a good position to utilise its public image for the soft power behaviour of eliciting attraction in the pursuit of particular ends.

EU Soft Power Behaviours in Ukraine

By abstaining from spelling out a definition of what he means by soft power behaviours and, furthermore, by using alternative concepts interchangeably with behaviour (such as ‘conversion strategy’, ‘policy tool’, and ‘quality’ [Nye 2011, 94-100]), Nye leaves his argument vulnerable to charges in inconsistency. In an effort to alleviate this problem, the current study adheres to the term ‘soft power behaviour’ and adopts the understanding that it includes intentional or unintentional (non)actions that discharge the agent’s potential (accumulated as soft power resources) at a target actor. According to Nye there are three alternative mechanisms for transforming resources into behaviours that pertain to the field of soft power: persuasion, agenda-setting and attraction (Nye 2011, 90-94). The first is epitomised by the act of convincing a target in the appropriateness or rightfulness of a position, whereby the beliefs and actions of the former are brought in line with the agent’s interests. The second is seen as the act of determining the policy initiatives that are discussed and implemented in bilateral relations and at international fora, as well as the way these issues are framed. The third represents an ability of an agent to inadvertently inspire others and subconsciously structure their preferences in accordance with the agent’s own interests. All three types of behaviour are underpinned by soft power resources and roughly correspond to the three faces of power (see Table 1, p. 6).

First face soft power behaviours

In practice, the EU has remained somewhat passive in making use of its soft power resources to persuade the Ukrainian public in the benefits of cooperation. A confirmation of the above assertion can be found through an empirical investigation into the EU’s first face soft power behaviours. To this end, three policy fields will be discussed: (1) media policy; (2) visa regime; (3) people-to-people package.

Relevant studies show that the EU's position on the Ukrainian media landscape can be described as marginal at best (cf. Ryabinska 2011, 2012). No EU television channel (let alone the Brussels-sponsored *Euronews*) scores high on Ukrainian broadcasting rankings, neither do EU companies possess sizeable shares in popular Ukrainian TV stations (Ryabinska 2011; 2012). Certainly, the situation should not be attributed exclusively to EU passivity, given that it lacks the crucial resource in this context – language. In this sense, the limitations of the EU's soft power endowment preclude it from properly engaging in directly persuading the Ukrainian public through an active media policy.

With regards to its visa policy to Ukraine, the EU persistently assigns primacy on internal considerations (minimising social and security threats) over the generation of favourable external effects (fostering cross-border contacts) and maintains a tight visa regime. Nevertheless, a visa facilitation scheme was put in place in 2007, which shortens the visa application procedure, simplifies it for certain categories of citizens, and reduces the administrative visa fee. But even with these amendments, the visa procedures remain cumbersome and continue to cost a significant amount of money. This has hardly helped the EU counter the enduring trend of Ukrainians traveling more often east than west (Razumkov Centre 2013, 119).

The other instrument that pertains to the first face of soft power comes under the label of 'people-to-people' links. It includes programmes that provide opportunities for (student) mobility, academic cooperation and youth exchanges. The academic mobility schemes are designed to foster micro-level social links, whereby Ukrainian students, among others, establish personal networks in the EU, which help improve the understanding of the 'European' way of life and increase the imagined proximity to it. A closer look at the implementation statistics (see Table 2) casts a doubt on the popular understanding that Ukraine is "indisputably the key EaP state" (Wiśniewski 2013, 7). Indeed, Ukrainians were nominally the largest group to take part in *Erasmus Mundus* exchanges in 2013 and also had most projects approved in the *Youth in Action* programme, but relative to its sizeable population, Ukraine received by far the least support. In this sense, the intensity of the EU's efforts in the first face soft power behaviour do not seem to be proportional to the sheer magnitude of the country. Russia, for example, assigns much more significance to its presence in Ukraine and its engagement in terms of cultural programmes there exceeds any other it has elsewhere (Fond Russkiy Mir 2014: 9-10). Wilson and Popescu summarise the latter trend

thus: “[w]hile Russia thinks about its neighbours all the time, and plays them with skill, the EU thinks about its neighbours only in times of crisis.” (Wilson and Popescu 2009, 327).

Country	Population (2013)	Erasmus Mundus scholarships (2013)		Youth in Action (2013)	
		Students and Staff	Post-graduate	Projects	Participants
Ukraine	45 453 000	296	87	653	2406
Armenia	3 027 000	196	20	425	1212
Azerbaijan	9 357 000	157	8	222	718
Georgia	4 484 000	264	17	568	1825
Moldova	3 559 000	163	9	315	1048

Data source: European Commission (2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d; 2014e)

Table 2: Number of participants in the Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action programmes per country

Second face soft power behaviours

The second face of soft power represents an important element of the EU approach to its relationship with Ukraine. The exclusion of discussions about full-fledged membership from the agenda in the relations with Kiev best exemplifies Brussels’ capabilities in agenda-setting. If one examines the content of the key strategic document of the EaP programme, the Prague Declaration (Council of the European Union 2009), it becomes clear that the question about accession has been completely dispensed with. Not once does the locution ‘membership in the EU’ appear in the text, instead replaced by more benign expressions, such as ‘political association’, ‘economic integration’, and ‘deeper engagement’. And indeed, the non-accession philosophy seems to be firmly ingrained into the EU approach to Ukraine and the eastern neighbours in general, which is evident in the narratives, which provide the backdrop of the interaction. Brussels’ choice of labels for its policy packages targeted at those countries – European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership – is by no means coincidental. The terms ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘partnership’ epitomise a spatial logic of differentiation, whereby actors are assigned with particular roles: ‘we’, the members of the European Union, enter into relations with ‘them’, the neighbours. ‘Partnership’ reifies the distinction by essentialising the separate subjectivity of the two sides.

What is also important in this context for the purposes of the current study, is the capacity that the EU shows in shaping Ukraine’s agenda, whereby it keeps the question about a possible

accession away from the negotiation table without losing its eastern neighbour as a follower. Enjoying a favourable public image of a political role model and a place of widespread social development, the EU is in a good position to utilise this resource in its soft power behaviour of agenda-setting *vis-à-vis* Ukraine in the pursuit of foreign policy goals. Since the EU is still digesting previous waves of integration and is preoccupied with other internal issues, it is by no means interested in the accession of the eastern neighbours. Therefore, the EU limits the agenda for Ukraine and the other countries in the region to a circumscribed enlargement, characterised by Popescu and Wilson (2009) as “enlargement-lite”.

Third face soft power behaviours

The public image of the EU at the end of the Cold War was so appealing to the citizens of the newly emerged democracies in Central and Eastern Europe that Brussels did not need to pursue too active an approach, so as to persuade these countries to join its bandwagon. At work was soft power in its third face, where the agent (EU) elicited attraction from its targets (Central and Eastern European countries), thereby arranging their preference structures in a manner that fitted its interest. It is what Joseph S. Nye famously refers to as “getting others to want what you want” (Nye 2004, 2). Unlike the first face of soft power, and to a lesser extent the second, the outcome of the third face soft power behaviours is normally not generated through the exercise of a specific activity, such as establishing a student mobility programme or shaping discourse. Put differently, third face soft power behaviours often come in the form of non-actions. In addition to this, intentionality is also difficult to be attributed to the agent projecting attraction, because if the latter is engaged in a deliberate attempt to elicit attraction, it would in any case amount to persuasion, i.e. the first face of soft power.

The EU enjoys a public image that imbues it with the characteristics of a social and political role model. The EU diffuses a perception of itself as a progressive political community that appears to have found the path to the future (Razumkov Centre 2013, 117). But even though Brussels continues to emit an attractive signal, its strength is no longer comparable to the record of the 90s. Contrary to the experience from the first years of the post-Cold War period, nowadays there exist sizeable groups within the EU’s eastern neighbours (including Ukraine) that fervently oppose deeper integration into the union. In addition to that, it cannot be established with a fair degree of certainty that the EU’s current offer will provide Ukraine’s development with the much-needed impetus. Implementing the enlargement-lite type Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU might prove to be a bitter pill to

swallow for Ukraine, which could in the future seriously undermine Brussels' main soft power resource in the country (public image), and therefore hamper its ability to elicit attraction.

Conclusions

In the theoretical discussion that dominated the first part of this paper it was suggested that Nye's original conceptualisation of soft power cannot function as a reliable guide to an empirical study, due to some conceptual inconsistencies and the absence of an operationalisation of the key concept. The view was asserted that the differentiation between the soft and hard archetypes of power should, as a rule, be grounded in both their proxies: resources and behaviours. Following the conclusions from the theoretical discussion, the case study research was split into two parts: the first dealing with the soft power resources of the EU in the context of its relations to Ukraine, and the second – with the EU's soft power behaviours directed at the same country. It was found that the key soft power resources of the EU were related to: the Ukrainophile historical narrative in its milder version, the favourable disposition of UOC-KP adherents, and most importantly to the public image of the integration bloc as a socio-political role model and a reference point to the future. The main soft power liabilities of the EU consist in: the radical renditions of the Eastern Slavic historical narrative, the limited spread and knowledge of EU languages, the more immoderate UGCC followers, and the perceived cultural and lifestyle distance to the EU. The second part of the case study research was devoted to an inquiry into the EU soft power behaviours in Ukraine. The evidence pointed to the conclusions that the EU is not too active in the first face of soft power (persuasion), has a small share in the media market in Ukraine, maintains a discouraging visa policy and underrepresents Ukraine in the people-to-people actions. As regards the second face of soft power the EU has kept the question about membership prospects safe away from the negotiating tables and has shaped discourse about cooperation with Ukraine accordingly. Finally, in terms of third face soft power behaviours the EU continues to radiate attraction, though the signal has somewhat lost its intensity since the 1990s. Overall, it can be concluded that the EU uses its soft power resource endowment (mostly in terms of its public image) more passively, depending more on second and third face soft power behaviours (agenda-setting and eliciting attraction) than on a pro-active soft power approach based on persuasion, in the pursuit of its foreign policy goals in Ukraine.

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