



## Believing Facts in the Fog of War: Identity, Media and Hot Cognition in Ukraine's 2014 Odesa Tragedy

Henry E. Hale<sup>a</sup>, Oxana Shevel<sup>b</sup>, and Olga Onuch<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Political Science, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA; <sup>b</sup>Department of Political Science, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA; <sup>c</sup>School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

5

### ABSTRACT

How do people form beliefs about the factual content of major events when established geopolitical orders are violently challenged? Here, we address the tragic events of 2 May 2014, in Odesa, Ukraine. There, Euromaidan protest movement supporters and opponents clashed following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the onset of the Donbas conflict, culminating in the worst civilian death toll the city had seen since World War II. Shortly after, we surveyed Ukraine's population about who they thought had actually perpetrated the killings and relate people's answers to alternative narratives (frames) that an original content analysis finds were available to Ukrainian citizens through different media. We find evidence, consistent with theories of hot cognition and motivated reasoning, that the Odesa violence triggered emotional responses linked to ethnic, regional, and partisan identity, which then activated attitudes associated with these identities that, in turn, led people to adopt very different (sometimes highly improbable) beliefs about who carried out the killings. Ethnic identity in particular is found to have strongly moderated the effects of television, with Ukrainian television greatly influencing Ukrainians but backfiring among Russians, and Russian television mainly impacting non-Ukrainians. Education and local information are found to reduce susceptibility to televised factual narratives.

10

15

20

25

How do people form beliefs about the factual content of major events when established geopolitical orders are violently challenged? The answer has major theoretical and practical implications because such beliefs can (1) alter levels of support for different sides in the conflict, potentially shaping its outcome and (2) impact the degree to which elements within each side are able to commit atrocities without sanction from within their own communities (Hamilton et al. 2006, 88; Rowling, Sheets and Jones 2015, 311). In this paper, we use original survey evidence to study the case of the tragic events of 2 May 2014 in Odesa, a clash culminating in 48 dead between people we will call "pro-Maidaners" (demonstrators and their supporters pursuing what

30

35

**CONTACT** Henry E. Hale  [hhale@email.gwu.edu](mailto:hhale@email.gwu.edu)  Department of Political Science, George Washington University, 1957 E Street, NW, Suite 412, Washington, DC 20052, USA

Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at [www.tandfonline.com/fgco](http://www.tandfonline.com/fgco).

© 2018 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

they understood to be the agenda of the 2013–2014 “Euromaidan” protest 40  
movement, also referred to as “pro-unity” forces) and “anti-Maidaners”  
(demonstrators and their supporters opposing this agenda, also referred to  
as “pro-federalization” forces). According to official statistics, 42 perished by  
fire in the city’s Trade Union Building at Kulykove Pole and 6 lost their lives  
in earlier clashes in the city centre, with 208 being wounded (International 45  
Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Council of Europe 2015, 15). This represents not  
only the worst civilian death toll the city has seen since World War II, but  
one of three major “shock events” (along with the sniper attacks of 20  
February 2014, and the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17 on 17 July  
2014) that quickly came to punctuate the narratives of both sides regarding 50  
Ukraine’s Euromaidan protests and the emerging conflict in Ukraine’s east-  
ern Donbas region (Toal and O’Loughlin 2017).

Despite the event’s importance, the Odesa tragedy has generally not yet  
been treated in depth in the scholarly literature (Sakwa 2015; Toal 2017;  
Wilson 2014; Yekelchyk 2015; Charap and Colton 2017, 201) and, crucially 55  
for our purposes, it poses an important puzzle. Three aspects of this event are  
largely undisputed in Ukraine. First, the deaths occurred during violent  
clashes between pro- and anti-Euromaidan protesters. Second, of the 48  
fatalities, almost all (46) were anti-Euromaidan protesters and their suppor-  
ters, of which 42 were among the Trade Union building dead and 4 died 60  
from gunshot wounds sustained during clashes downtown earlier in the day  
(OHCHR 2016, 10). Third, these were in fact killings, the intentional taking  
of lives: Survey research that we will discuss extensively below finds that only  
1% of the population in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy considered  
these deaths to be accidental. Given this general agreement that the dead 65  
anti-Maidaners were intentionally killed during clashes with pro-Maidaners,  
one might expect ordinary citizens to have accepted as fact that the anti-  
Maidaners had been killed by pro-Maidaners, with disagreements cantering  
mainly around attitudes to the event, including whether such violence was  
justifiable under the circumstances. This expectation turns out to be incor- 70  
rect. Instead, we find that a clear majority of Ukrainian citizens believed that  
the killings of anti-Maidan activists had been committed by anti-Maidaners  
*themselves*. We thus formulate our study’s central puzzle as follows: What  
caused ordinary Ukrainian citizens to diverge not only in their attitudes to  
the Odesa tragedy, which is less puzzling, but about their beliefs regarding 75  
the facts themselves as to who committed the killings?

While there is a robust theoretical literature explaining why people adopt  
different political attitudes of all kinds, far fewer studies have systematically  
addressed why people come to adopt different versions of the actual facts  
towards which attitudes form, especially facts involved in the occurrence of 80  
political violence. By standard definitions, a *fact* refers to a specific piece of  
information that is true (‘Definition of Fact in English’, n.d.). Thus, for our

purposes in analysing a conflict setting, terms like “belief regarding the facts” refer to acceptance that a given set of specific events actually occurred in the course of a conflict. Beliefs about facts are distinct from attitudes, preferences, opinions, or values, all of which reflect people’s evaluations or normative interpretations of what they regard to be factual material (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, 107). Our focus is thus not on whether people believed the Odesa killings were somehow justified or morally forgivable under the circumstances, or even about who was to “blame”, which also implies a normative evaluation of what occurred and can involve judgements of indirect as well as direct causation (Javeline, 2003; Toal and O’Loughlin, 2017; Tuathail, 2009). Instead, we investigate why people in Ukraine developed different beliefs about the facts of who actually perpetrated the killings, regardless of whether the killers were regarded as somehow justified or blameworthy.

Our approach builds upon existing theory in two ways. Initially, it considers whether theories developed to explain attitudes can be extrapolated also to explain differing beliefs about facts involved in political violence. Secondly, it takes those theories that have been developed to explain differing beliefs about facts, most of which address “settled times” in longstanding democracies or are conducted in laboratory settings, and explores the extent to which they help us understand patterns in an actual conflict setting like that in Ukraine in 2014. These theories are evaluated using original survey research conducted in Ukraine almost immediately after the Odesa tragedy and relating these data to a careful analysis of two dominant narratives that appeared in media widely available in Ukraine at that time.

Most broadly, we find not only that humans regularly fail to be impartial in evaluating events in a conflict setting where the stakes in accuracy would seem to be high, but that what they regard as the basic facts themselves also varies systematically with identifiable predispositions. Perhaps reflecting the heightened role of affect in conflict, we find the most support for theories of hot cognition and motivated reasoning: The Odesa violence appears to have triggered emotional responses linked to ethnic, regional, and partisan identity, which then drove responses to media coverage and activated attitudes associated with these identities, all of which in turn powerfully shaped people’s conclusions about the facts of what happened. One implication is that media’s role is far from straightforward. Ukrainian television had the effect of leading self-identified Ukrainians to believe its version of the facts but also backfired among self-identified Russians viewers, making them less likely to adopt this same narrative. And Russian media were effective in casting doubt on the Ukrainian television line, but only among non-Ukrainians and not in getting them actually to adopt Russia’s own version of the facts. Education and access to local information are found to be the most potent forms of “inoculation” against a dominant narrative, but only

weakly so. All this sheds light on why reconciliation during conflict generally 125  
as well as in Ukraine specifically has proven to be very difficult.

### Explaining beliefs regarding the facts of war

At least since Plato's *Republic*, thinkers have agonised over diverging beliefs 130  
about what is factual (Plato, 2017). Carl von Clausewitz recognised it might  
be particularly difficult to discern basic facts in wartime, comparing this  
uncertainty with a "fog" that "gives to things exaggerated dimensions and an 135  
unnatural appearance" (von Clausewitz, 2013, Chapter 3, Section 24). While  
we now know a great deal about the nature of this fog and its consequences,  
we still have much to learn about why different people might discern  
different things within it as we describe having happened in Odesa. A large 140  
and interdisciplinary body of documents explains the production of alter-  
native conflict narratives that can involve differing portrayals of the facts  
involved, but these tend not to engage in a systematic analysis of what types  
of people tend to form or adopt different beliefs about these facts. In  
addition, their units of analysis are usually the narratives themselves or 145  
their elite spinners rather than the "ordinary" individuals who may or may  
not buy into them (Brass, 1997; Carr, 1961; Hopf, 2012; Kalyvas, 2003;  
Laruelle, 2009; Toal, 2017; Wedeen, 1999).

Other studies do take the individual as the unit of analysis and thus offer 145  
some purchase on our empirical puzzle, employing survey methodology and  
experimental techniques to explore attitude formation in the presence of  
alternative narratives (often called "frames" in this literature). Their focus,  
though, tends to be mostly about attitudes (preferences, opinions, values),  
leaving application to beliefs regarding facts untested (Druckman and Lupia, 150  
2016; Taber and Lodge, 2016; Zaller, 1992). Research that does systematically  
address individual-level variation in beliefs regarding facts appears primarily  
in efforts to understand why people believe rumours, conspiracy theories, or  
other forms of misinformation and to explore what might induce people to  
reject them (Berinsky, 2015; Bordia et al., 2005; Cobb, Nyhan and Reifler, 155  
2013; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Radnitz and Underwood, 2017). And most  
focuses on "peacetime" questions like why people believe false information  
presented in an election campaign or policy debate in the United States  
(Berinsky, 2015; Nyhan and Reifler, 2010; Sides, 2016). While these peace-  
time findings can supply some plausible solutions to our central puzzle, their 160  
portability to violent settings largely remains to be tested.

This peacetime research has generally centred around two broad bodies of 165  
theory that share a common point of departure. What they share is a general  
agreement that people are far from the rational information processors that they  
themselves – and many social science theories – tend to assume they are (Chong  
and Druckman, 2007b; Converse, 2006; Druckman and Lupia, 2016). More

specifically, they concur that people tend not to harbour coherent belief systems but instead a conglomeration of thoughts (“considerations”) that are usually not entirely consistent with one another (Zaller, 1992). The particular attitudes that people happen to formulate at any given moment, as when responding to an interviewer or deciding how to vote, will thus be highly subject to the particular considerations they happen to have in mind (that are cognitively “available”) at that time (Druckman, 2014; Taber and Lodge, 2016; Zaller and Feldman, 1992). Where the two schools diverge is in whether they emphasise influences on availability that are primarily internal (emerging primarily from the person’s own cognitive drives) or external (resulting mainly from influences in the environment). That is, theories of external influences tend to portray individuals as highly responsive to cues available in a given situation itself, such as media accounts or elite efforts to “frame” situations in different ways, with these cues effectively “priming” individuals to have certain considerations (and not others) foremost in mind when formulating an attitude or belief (Chong and Druckman, 2007b). Theories of internal influence, on the other hand, concentrate on impulses people themselves bring to a situation – such as emotional drives or self-interest linked to social identities – that predispose them to form beliefs in particular ways or make them more receptive to some situational cues than others (Taber and Lodge, 2016).

Our study develops two sets of hypotheses that emerge from these two schools, one set (which we together describe as H1) coming from external influence theory and the other set (H2) from internal influence theory. Turning first to external influence theory, perhaps the staple finding supporting it is that repeated exposure to a particular narrative (frame) will make it more familiar and hence influential in belief formation (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Zaller and Feldman, 1992). This is because repetition enhances the availability of the considerations involved and hence the probability that the individual will base conclusions on these considerations (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, 110). A counterintuitive implication is that even the act of debunking false information can *increase* the propensity to believe it simply because the debunking keeps the idea available in memory (Berinsky, 2015; Cobb, Nyhan and Reifler, 2013; Nyhan and Reifler, 2010). Media are particularly powerful shapers of availability through frame repetition, with regular viewership priming individuals to have certain considerations in mind when forming beliefs about important issues (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, 115; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Hence:

*H1a. More frequent consumption of media that consistently convey a particular version of the facts will correlate with a tendency to believe these are the facts.*

Other external stimuli are found to limit the power of a dominant narrative to shape attitude formation, however, the most important being simple access to contradictory accounts or information (Bordia et al., 2005; Sides, 2016). When people face a single narrative about the facts, meaning that only one narrative is strongly available in the environment, the addition of even a single dissenting voice can significantly weaken the ability of the most prevalent narrative to influence belief formation – at least, among certain kinds of people (Asch, 1956; Chong and Druckman, 2010; Sniderman and Theriault, 2004). Relatedly, direct access to credible alternative sources of information about an event, including the kind of first-hand information that people living in close physical proximity to the event might have, has been reported to make people more resistant to a prevalent view, even when this prevalent view dominates the media they consume (Bordia et al., 2005; Di Tella, Galiani and Schargrodsky, 2012). This leads us to anticipate:

*H1b. People who consume media or other sources of information not associated with the most media-prevalent narrative, or who avoid media conveying the dominant narrative altogether, will be less likely to adopt the version of the facts conveyed in a dominant narrative.*

Similarly, since geographic place is widely found to reflect complex local clusters of experiences and shared understandings, and scholarship on Ukraine specifically has repeatedly highlighted the role of regional division, we would expect these aspects of the environment to shape which considerations are most available for individuals when forming beliefs (Linke and O’Loughlin, 2015; Barrington and Herron 2004; Barrington and Faranda, 2009; Sasse, 2010a, 2010b). We thus expect:

*H1c. Patterns of belief formation will be spatially patterned, with regions having related experiences being most likely to interpret the new event in line with interpretations of their own experiences.*

Turning to internal influence theories (H2), we concentrate here on research into *motivated reasoning*, which occurs when a (usually) subconscious, uncontrolled motivation of some kind drives certain considerations to become cognitively available during attitude formation (Festinger, 1957; Kahneman, 2011, 80–81; Leeper and Slothuus, 2014; Taber and Lodge, 2006). By these lights, people are held not to be neutrally responding to external frames or environmentally available stimuli when formulating beliefs, but instead bring certain cognitive drives to the situation that lead them to be selective among or even outright reject what they find in the situation itself. One such motivation has been found to be a drive for cognitive consistency that can be highly impervious to the appearance of

new facts (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, 104; Sniderman and Theriault, 2004). To the extent such a drive is important, we would anticipate: 250

*H2a. People will tend to adopt beliefs about the factual nature of a new event that are consistent with (that justify rather than challenge) older relevant beliefs.*

Other research, however, indicates that the most powerful belief-influencing motives involve affect, supporting theories of “hot cognition” (Taber and Lodge, 2016, 64). Studies have thus found that people spontaneously and unconsciously experience feelings within the first milliseconds of becoming aware of an event, with these feelings then activating cognitive pathways of considerations to produce an initial opinion that is highly resistant to change – all before conscious processing ever has a chance to kick in (Erisen, Lodge and Taber, 2014; Taber and Lodge, 2016). Since social group identities tend to be deeply associated with senses of linked fate and hence powerful feelings when events impacting group life chances occur (Dawson, 1995; Hale, 2004; Petersen, 2002; Tajfel, 1982), we would expect (and research finds) connections linked to identity to be important pathways through which hot cognition occurs. Even more specifically, we would expect this affective cognitive process to predispose people towards beliefs that somehow favour their own social groups (Althaus and Coe, 2011; Druckman and Lupia, 2016). Here we focus on two identity categories that longstanding research has determined to be major influences on attitudes and beliefs: ethnicity (Dawson, 1995; Druckman and Lupia, 2016) and partisanship (Campbell et al., 1980; Druckman, 2014, 475–477; Gerber and Huber, 2009; Lavine, Johnston and Steenbergen, 2012; Rahn, 1993). This yields: 255  
260  
265  
270

*H2b. People will tend to express beliefs about the factual nature of a new event that put their own ethnic categories in a more positive light.* 275

*H2c. People with strong political party identification are more likely than are others to adopt a belief that is advanced by leaders of their party.*

While these hypotheses and the theories they reflect are not mutually exclusive, it remains an open research question exactly when and where internal or external influences can be expected to dominate cognition (Druckman, 2014, 478–479; Taber and Lodge, 2016, 64). Violent settings are a case in point because the roles of emotion and uncertainty are expected to be greater than in the kinds of peacetime contexts that gave rise to these theories (Petersen, 2017). On one hand, some research indicates that higher levels of anxiety (likely to be found in conflict situations (Lambert et al., 2010, 890)) tend to motivate people to prioritise accuracy and seek out new information, which can lead them to rely less on their prior views and 280  
285

heuristics while becoming more susceptible to cues available in the environment (for example, media coverage) (Bolsen, Druckman and Cook, 2014; Devine, 1989; Marcus et al., 2005; Valentino et al., 2009, 2008). This would lead us to expect stronger findings for H1 than for H2 in a setting like Ukraine in May 2014. On the other hand, different studies find that high accuracy motivation can lead people to conduct deeper memory searches that wind up mainly accessing and thus heightening the impact of prior (internal) attitudes on current attitudes (Taber and Lodge, 2016, 70–71). Moreover, since violence can trigger a wide range of strong feelings, not just anxiety, one might expect internal cognitive processes driven by affect to dominate immediate environmental factors in belief formation (Erisen, Lodge and Taber, 2014; Taber and Lodge, 2016). Violent upheaval can also be expected to raise the levels of complexity and uncertainty, which research has linked to a greater role for internal influences like cognitive heuristics (Lau and Redlawsk, 2001, 2006; Radnitz and Underwood, 2017). These considerations would thus lead us to expect to find stronger support for H2 in the immediate aftermath of the Odesa tragedy and the developing conflict. Our study now turns to a discussion of the 2 May 2014 Odesa tragedy as a useful case for testing these hypotheses in a setting of political violence.

### **The Odesa tragedy: competing narratives in media available in Ukraine**

To understand who came to form different beliefs about the facts in our case at hand, it is important to establish what we can about the 2 May events even though we do not attempt to establish “the truth”. Three and a half years after the tragedy, the official investigation remains incomplete and many questions remain unanswered. The investigation itself has been criticised by the Council of Europe for falling short of European standards and the requirements of the European Human Rights Convention (RFE/RL, 2015). Other rights groups, such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group (KHPG), have also criticised the failings of the official investigation (which led to a case against Ukraine filed in the European Court of Human Rights) (Coynash, 2017a), arbitrariness of the courts dealing with the 2 May cases, and delays in judicial proceedings (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017, 17–18). The sensational acquittal on 18 September 2017 by a court in the Odesa region of 20 anti-Maidan defendants charged with involvement in riots on 2 May 2014 is unlikely to put the case to rest, given the presiding judge’s conclusion that the prosecution’s case was so poor that it didn’t even try to prove guilt and the Prosecutor General’s promise to appeal the acquittal (Coynash, 2017b).



Despite the failures of the official investigations, non-partisan civic groups and international agencies have conducted extensive investigative work and have issued reports that document key facts about the tragedy. The International Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Council of Europe – set up to review the investigations into the violent incidents that took place in Ukraine from 30 November 2013 onwards, including the events in Odesa – issued its report on the key facts of the 2 May 2014 tragedy and presented the results of its official investigation (International Advisory Panel, Council of Europe 2015, 14). Other useful sources include the reports of the “2 May Group”, a group of 10 Odesa activists representing a range of political views who have been carrying out their own inquiry in parallel with the official investigation. The 2 May Group published a detailed chronology of the 2 May events, as well as an expert examination of the fire in the Trade Union Building, on its website (Gerasimova, 2016a). This is in addition to early and as-yet unpublished scholarly treatments of the topic and related events (Katchanovski, 2016; Sakwa, 2015; Wilson, 2014). Based on the evidence available to date, the background to what transpired on 2 May can be summarised as follows.

### ***Background to the Events of 2 May***

The fire and resulting deaths in the Trade Union building followed an afternoon of clashes in downtown Odesa between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian activists. The two camps – often referred to as “Euromaidan” (or simply “Maidan”, meaning public square) and “anti-Maidan” – had been publicly active in Odessa since shortly after the Euromaidan protests began in late 2013. The anti-Maidan was physically concentrated around a tent encampment set up on Kulykove Pole, a large public square in front of the Trade Union building. Euromaidan activists did not have a permanent camp but routinely gathered along Prymorsky Boulevard, near a monument to Duke de Richelieu (Kozloff, 2017). The two groups had tense relations and their activists had clashed before, though only on a small scale and without fatalities. This being said, it is possible to trace a history of coordination and non-hostile interaction between the two camps, leading some observers to find it credible that the 2 May violence was instigated not by Odesans themselves but by outsiders (The Voice of Russia, 2014; Ukrainiis’ka Pravda, 2014).

According to the 2 May Group investigation, representatives of local authorities covertly developed a plan together with the leaders of the two conflicting forces to end the standoff. The idea was that after a scheduled pro-Ukrainian unity march that included local Euromaidan activists as well as soccer fans sometimes known as “ultras”, the ultras of the eastern cities of Odesa and Kharkiv (whose teams were slated to play a match in the city on the evening of 2 May) would demolish the Kulykove Pole tents. It was believed by local actors that the liquidation of the anti-Maidan tent city at

the hands of soccer ultras was in the interests of all sides - including the anti-Maidan activists themselves, as the maintenance of their tent city had become too expensive and difficult to maintain. The anti-Maidan forces would thus avoid the embarrassment of having to shut it down themselves and instead be able later to claim that they were victimised (Gerasimova, 2015a). The alleged plan was foiled when the tent-camp leadership split, with one group issuing an appeal to anti-Maidan activists to gather in downtown Odesa to prevent a march of “fascists” (Gerasimova, 2015b). Violent clashes between pro-Maidan and anti-Maidan activists in downtown Odesa resulted in the first six deaths, all by firearm. With the first two being pro-Maidan activists, the other four came from the anti-Maidan camp (Gerasimova, 2015c).

Pro-Maidan activists then marched to Kulykove Pole, where some anti-Maidan activists – up to 400 people, not all party to the protests – barricaded themselves inside the Trade Union building. Numerous videos show the two sides exchanging gunfire and hurling Molotov cocktails at each other, with Pro-Maidan protesters being filmed burning the anti-Maidan tents.

According to subsequent investigations, the deadly fire inside the Trade Union building started in five separate places, with the main source being a barricade blocking the entrance to the building. And while the official government investigation found that fires had started from inside the building in four of these locations, this is disputed by a 2 May Group expert, who finds that these four fires were secondary and occurred as a result of the fire spreading from lower floors (Balinskii, 2014). Investigations concur that the barricade at the entrance caught fire when pro-Maidan forces threw Molotov cocktails and other objects like a burning tire at it. Anti-Maidan activists defending the entrance threw Molotov cocktails in return. Flames quickly engulfed the barricade, which was made out of wooden objects connected to a trail of combustible liquids brought into the building by its defenders. A 2 May Group activist (an expert in biochemistry) explained in a report that given the available evidence, it is not possible to make a definitive determination as to which of these specific simultaneous activities and conditions (e.g. Molotov cocktails being thrown both ways, the spillage of combustible liquids, the explosion of these liquids thereafter) was the main cause of the front entrance fire. The only thing certain is that the fire started “as a result of throwing or preparing combustible mixtures inside the building or in its immediate proximity” (Balinskii, 2015). The front barricade blaze subsequently spread into the lobby and up the central staircase, with temperatures rising sharply and rapidly due to a chimney effect, causing 42 people inside to lose their lives from burns, carbon monoxide poisoning, and jumping out of the burning building.

Investigations by independent groups such as the 2 May group and the International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe have also linked the high number of fire deaths to a fatal delay in the emergency services’ response. The first fire crews took up to 40 minutes to arrive at the scene

even though the closest fire station was less than a five minute drive away, with specific officials directly responsible for fire engines not being ordered immediately into action (International Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Council of Europe, 2015). Five emergency services officials were charged with criminal negligence in the fire's aftermath (Gerasimova, 2016b). Two of them, including Volodymyr Bodelan, then the head of the Odesa region emergency services (who ordered a delay in dispatching the fire engines), have gone into hiding – with allegations made that Bodelan had assistance in escaping justice (Coynash, 2016).

From the very day of the tragedy, dramatically different narratives accounting for the 2 May events emerged in Ukrainian and Russian media that continued to be prominent throughout the period of our study. The difference was particularly stark in television coverage, where two almost diametrically opposed versions of the facts emerged. On social media, in particular on Facebook (headquartered in the United States), more nuanced narratives developed as users of opposing persuasions challenged each other's accounts in public posts. Because television has far greater reach than any other form of media in Ukraine, we focus our study on the main televised framings of events, though we do later explore whether alternative sources of information tended to weaken Ukrainians' adherence to key elements of the televised narratives. The accounts below are based on an original analysis of a randomly selected sample of reports from the most-watched Ukrainian (1+1, Inter, Ukraina, Channel 5, ICTV, and First National) and Russian television channels (First Channel/ORT, NTV, Rossiia 1) during May 2014 by one of the authors.

### ***Ukrainian Television and Its Version of the “Anti-Maidaners Did It (AMDI)” Narrative***

Taken together, Ukrainian television channels reach a far greater audience than any other medium in the country. According to our survey (described below), this amounts to some 92% of the population. Channels have different ownership, and their owners are sometimes political opponents. A summary of the ownership patterns of the main outlets viewable in Ukraine during May 2014 can be found in an online appendix (Table A1) along with survey findings as to the share of the population that had watched news on each channel at least once in the week preceding the survey, also in May 2014. Yet, despite this diversity of ownership, with the exception of some minor nuances in coverage, there was not much diversity in the narratives of the 2 May events advanced by different Ukrainian television channels, so we treat what they conveyed as a single general frame.

The dominant narrative in the coverage of the Odesa events by Ukrainian television can be summarised as follows. On 2 May, Odesa witnessed a

Russia-orchestrated provocation that was meant to be the first step in a large-scale “Russian spring” destabilisation of southeastern Ukrainian regions. The pattern closely resembled what had recently happened in Donetsk, where violent attacks on pro-Maidan marches by anti-Maidan radicals were followed by takeovers of government buildings and the proclamation of “people’s republics” that Russia then propped up militarily. Local anti-Maidan activists and paramilitary groups from the breakaway Transnistria region of Moldova carried out the attack on the pro-Maidan march that started the chain of violence on 2 May, coordinated by subversive groups from Russia and financed by former officials of Yanukovych’s government (Fakty ICTV, 2014; TSN, 2014).

Ukrainian television portrayed Odesa’s police as having either failed to prevent the clashes or colluded with anti-Maidan activists, again drawing parallels with Donetsk, where earlier that same week police had stood by while pro-Maidan activists were violently assaulted (Podrobnosti INTER, 2014). Widely aired video footage supported these claims in Odesa, showing anti-Maidan activists shooting at pro-Maidan demonstrators from behind police lines and police and anti-Maidan attackers sporting the same red arm bands. The 2 May Group investigation later clarified that the police “arm bands” were in fact red tape commandeered from pro-Russian activists so as to attach protective gear to their clothing (Gerasimova, 2016a).

Regarding the Trade Union building fire, this narrative emphasised that pro-Maidaners did not necessarily cause it. Instead, television showed video of anti-Maidan activists inside the building hurling Molotov cocktails from the roof and windows at the pro-Maidan crowd outside, indicating that Anti-Maidaners could have caused the fire themselves. Ukrainian television also showed pro-Maidan activists trying to save their opponents from the burning building once the fire started, and focused neither on shooters from the pro-Maidan side nor on instances of pro-Maidaners attacking anti-Maidaners who tried to escape the burning building.

### ***Russian Television and Its Version of the “Pro-Maidaners Did It (PMDI)” Narrative***

The primary narrative emerging on television that challenged the AMDI narrative dominating Ukrainian television appeared on Russia’s three main, state-controlled television channels. A significant share of Ukrainian citizens could still access these outlets one way or other throughout May 2014 even though the government had initiated efforts to block their broadcast in Ukraine back in March; the full ban came into effect only later in the year (Ennis, 2014).

The Russian channels characterised the Odesa events as “the 21st century’s Khatyn”, drawing parallels with the infamous episode in which Nazis trapped civilians in a building and burned them to death in the Belarusian village of

Khatyn during World War II (Rossiia 1, 2014a). According to this version of the facts, it was Ukrainian radical nationalists who had done the killing, having been brought in from outside the city by Right Sector activists from Kyiv and soccer ultras from Kharkiv. Post-Euromaidan Ukrainian law enforcement agencies (the SBU and Ministry of Interior) were guiding events. Accordingly, it was reported that in mid-April, after the start of the armed conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Euromaidan activists had started blocking roads leading to Odesa and Andriy Parubiy (head of the National Defence and Security Council and former head of the Euromaidan self-defense units) had visited Odesa shortly before the tragedy. Moreover, the events in Odesa coincided with the start of Ukrainian government military action against pro-Russian forces in the Donetsk region (in Sloviansk and Kramatorsk). Overall, Russian television painted a picture of an aggressive post-Maidan Kyiv “junta” trying violently to put down “supporters of federalism” and Russian-speakers more generally.

Russian television also highlighted the inaction and possible collusion of the police with the perpetrators of violence, but characterised the activists with red armbands attacking pro-Maidan march participants from behind police lines as pro-Maidan agents-provocateurs, not anti-Maidan activists. Accordingly, the red “armbands” worn by police were interpreted as evidence that Ukrainian law enforcement had colluded with Ukrainian nationalists to stage a provocation. The provocation would then provide an excuse for pro-Maidan forces to attack the anti-Maidaners in the Trade Union building (Pervyi Kanal, 2014). The Russian coverage neglected instances of pro-Maidan activists aiding those trapped in the burning building to escape and instead emphasised pro-Maidaners attacking those who tried to escape the inferno and preventing fire crews from reaching the burning building. Overall, the narrative was clear that pro-Maidan activists intent on murdering their completely unarmed opponents had set the deadly fire on purpose.

Various conspiratorial and semi-conspiratorial accounts also found their way into Russian news coverage. These ranged from claims that there were many more victims and that the Ukrainian authorities had covered up the real numbers to allegations that pro-Maidaners had used an unknown poisonous gas against the anti-Maidan activists inside the building. One version even attempted a link to the United States, noting that the new head of the Odesa regional police appointed days after the 2 May tragedy, Ivan Katerynychuk, had studied in the FBI European Academy in Budapest in the 1990s (Rossiia 1, 2014b).

### **Method: UCEPS Data and the Odesa Events**

Given the “factual” context as best it can be reconstructed at this point and these two dominant competing frames, how did adult residents of Ukraine

form their beliefs about exactly what happened within the first few weeks after it happened? We exploit the first wave of the Ukrainian Crisis Elections Panel Survey (UCEPS), original data commissioned by two of the authors and carried out by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS).<sup>1</sup> A stratified multistage area probability technique produced (with a respectable overall response rate of 51%) a sample of 2,015 respondents designed to be representative of the whole of Ukraine minus Crimea. The survey thus included full subsamples in Donetsk and Luhansk, though we had to replace certain sampling points with methodologically equivalent ones (including 75 respondents) to avoid violent areas. When percentages of the population with one or other disposition are given in this paper, they are calculated with a KIIS-computed weight designed to bring the sample into line with official population statistics from 2013 on sex, age, and region. Interviews began 16 May 2014, just two weeks after the Odesa events, and ended 24 May 2014, on the eve of Ukraine's post-revolution presidential election. While ideally we would have measures of people's political attitudes that were collected prior to the Odesa events, we are aware of no panel survey that includes the necessary questions while also spanning and asking about the Odesa tragedy. Our survey thus provides an unusually good opportunity to study people's beliefs regarding the facts of a new event while memories were still likely to be fresh but also after people had experienced at least two weeks of exposure to the different narratives discussed above.

Our survey included one question specifically devoted to the Odesa events. This item was designed to be as specific as possible about the facts of the case and thus did not ask generally about who was to "blame" for the tragedy, a formulation that could have led people to finger those they held responsible for unleashing the larger crisis facing Ukraine that made the Odesa tragedy possible, which is not precisely what interests us in this study. Instead, the questionnaire asked people who they thought *actually committed* the majority of the killings that took place:

*A lot has been said and written about the fact that dozens of people were killed in clashes in the city of Odesa in early May. If you have heard about these events, please tell me, in your opinion, who most likely committed the majority of the killings?*

1. *Provocateurs from the Russian Federation*
2. *Local pro-Russian Odesans*
3. *Local pro-Ukrainian Odesans*
4. *Ukrainian nationalists not from Odesa*
5. *Provocateurs from the European Union or USA.*

Responses were also coded for people who volunteered that they did not know about these events, who thought someone or something else was mainly responsible for the killings, who volunteered that no one was to blame (i.e. that it was an accident), who found themselves unable to answer the question,

and who refused to answer. Respondents who answered “other” were asked what they meant, and the answers were hand-coded by two of the coauthors. The estimated distribution of views in the population is given in [Table 1](#). 580

Because the nuances distinguishing only moderately different versions of the facts are not what interest us in this study, we create a variable that collapses the answers to this question into three main categories: people whose responses fit an AMDI version of the facts, those whose responses correspond with the PMDI narrative, and those who for whatever reason did not give a response in line with one of these narratives (a category we treat here as constituting “neutral” responses). These summary categories and statistics are also in [Table 1](#). Importantly, in coding someone’s beliefs about the killings as being in line with “the PMDI (AMDI) narrative”, we do not assume that this individual was buying into any of the other normative or factual claims propagated on Russian (Ukrainian) television. We are concerned only with whether accounts about the factual question of who carried out the killings match. 585 590 595

To test H1 and H2, we undertake a multinomial logit regression analysis designed to identify the correlates of adopting beliefs about the Odesa killings consistent with the primary claims of either the AMDI or PMDI narratives or with a neutral response. Along with basic demographic controls such as age, gender, education, and community size (capturing, in part, urban-rural distinctions), we include in our model a variety of factors that should be correlated with adoption of a given belief if one of the hypotheses is valid. Each measure is described in the discussion that follows, and a full listing of the survey items used to generate these indicators and a frequency distribution of these 600 605

**Table 1.** Distribution of views among adult residents of Ukraine on who committed the 2 May 2014 Odesa killings as of 16–24 May 2014 (sum is not 100% due to rounding).

Belief	% support
<b>“Anti-Maidaners Did It” (AMDI)</b>	
<i>Provocateurs from the Russian Federation</i>	43.6
<i>Local pro-Russian Odesites</i>	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>54.5</b>
<b>“Pro-Maidaners Did It (PMDI)”</b>	
<i>Local pro-Ukrainian Odesans</i>	2.7
<i>Ukrainian nationalists from Odessa</i>	10.3
<i>Provocateurs from the European Union or the United States</i>	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>“Neutral”: responses not clearly aligning with AMDI or PMDI</b>	
<i>Other</i>	2.9
<i>I have not heard about these events</i>	0.8
<i>Nobody is to blame, it was an accident</i>	1.1
<i>Hard to say</i>	21.9
<i>Refuse to answer</i>	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.1</b>

dispositions can be found in an online appendix (Tables A2 and A3), along with information on how these variables are correlated with each other (Table A4). To avoid listwise deletion, for those independent variables that are not binary (distinguishing only between the affirmation of a trait and failing to affirm it for any reason), we substitute means for responses of hard to say or refusals to answer; a discussion of patterns among these can be found in the online appendix's Discussion 1. 610

## Findings

Table 2 presents the main results. They are reported as “full effects”, which is simply an average marginal effect when all independent variables are scaled from 0 to 1, with 0 representing the variable's minimum observed value in the dataset and 1 its maximum observed value. The advantage over reporting average marginal effects is to avoid intractably small coefficients for finely gradated independent variables while also making the coefficients on each variable more readily comparable in that all coefficients (not just those on binary variables) reflect the estimated effect of going from a variable's observed minimum to its observed maximum value. So, in ordinary language, a full effect is our complete model's estimate of the average change it makes in people's likelihood of adopting a particular belief if everyone in the dataset began at the minimum observed value of a factor (for example, having no education) but then everyone was raised to that factor's maximum value (for example, having the highest level of education) with all respondents kept at their actual values on all other independent variables. Accordingly, full effects are an “observed-value” approach of the kind that has become recommended for presenting results like ours (Hanmer and Kalkan, 2013). We deem a finding insignificant if we cannot rule out a zero effect with at least 95% statistical confidence. For convenience of interpretation, factors that are significantly correlated with a belief about the Odesa killers consistent with the Anti-Maidaners Did It (AMDI) narrative are shaded in orange (that is, such factors correlate positively with believing anti-Maidan forces committed the majority of the killings and/or negatively with believing pro-Maidan forces did it). Factors correlated with a view of the Odesa deaths consistent with the Pro-Maidaners Did It (PMDI) narrative are shaded blue (that is, correlated positively with believing pro-Maidan forces perpetrated the killings and/or negatively with believing anti-Maidan forces did it). Readers interested in the full results of the regressions reported in both parts of Tables 2 and 3 can find them in online appendix Tables A5 and A6. 615 620 625 630 635 640

*H1: Environmental Influences (Media and Local Information/Experience)*



**Table 2.** Full effects of factors on probability of adopting beliefs about the Odessa killings.

	Anti-Maidan Did It (AMDI)		Pro-Maidan Did It (PMDI)		Neutral	
<b>H1a.</b> Ukrainian TV news	0.14**	(0.05)	0.05*	(0.02)	-0.19**	(0.04)
<b>H1a.</b> Internet TV news	0.06	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	-0.06	(0.04)
<b>H1b.</b> Russian TV news	-0.04	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.01)	0.04	(0.02)
<b>H1b.</b> Facebook	0.07	(0.04)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.08	(0.05)
<b>H1b.</b> VKontakte	-0.02	(0.03)	0.00	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)
<b>H1b.</b> Oknoklassniki	-0.02	(0.03)	0.02	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)
<b>H1b.</b> No TV	0.10	(0.07)	0.05	(0.03)	-0.15*	(0.07)
<b>H1b.</b> Lives in Odessa	-0.05	(0.04)	0.05**	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.04)
<b>H1c.</b> Donbas	-0.06	(0.08)	0.11**	(0.03)	-0.06	(0.07)
<b>H1c.</b> Galicia	0.03	(0.07)	-0.09	(0.06)	0.06	(0.05)
<b>H2a.</b> Maidan participant	0.11**	(0.04)	-0.05	(0.04)	-0.06	(0.05)
<b>H2a.</b> Anti-Maidan participant	-0.14	(0.07)	0.11	(0.05)	0.03	(0.09)
<b>H2a.</b> Approves Yatseniuk	0.22**	(0.04)	-0.21**	(0.05)	-0.01	(0.06)
<b>H2a.</b> Pro-ATO	0.27**	(0.07)	-0.11**	(0.03)	-0.16**	(0.05)
<b>H2a.</b> Pro-EU	0.12**	(0.04)	-0.09*	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.05)
<b>H2a.</b> Pro-language autonomy	-0.14**	(0.05)	0.08*	(0.03)	0.06	(0.04)
<b>H2b.</b> Russian-speaker	-0.07	(0.03)	0.02	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)
<b>H2b.</b> Russian ethnicity	-0.05	(0.04)	0.07*	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.04)
<b>H2b.</b> Orthodox (Moscow)	-0.05	(0.04)	0.01	(0.02)	0.04	(0.06)
<b>H2b.</b> Orthodox (Kyiv)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)	-0.06*	(0.03)
<b>H2c.</b> Batkivshchyna Party	0.07	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.05)	-0.02	(0.08)
<b>H2c.</b> Party of Regions	-0.06	(0.11)	0.07*	(0.03)	-0.00	(0.09)
<i>Age</i>	-0.07	(0.04)	0.00	(0.03)	0.07	(0.04)
<i>Education</i>	0.06	(0.04)	0.00	(0.03)	-0.06	(0.04)
<i>Female</i>	-0.07**	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.02)
<i>Larger community</i>	-0.04	(0.04)	0.07**	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.04)
<i>N</i>	2015		2015		2015	

Note: As full effects, the reported numbers (calculated from a multinomial logit model) reflect the difference in the probability of adopting a given belief about Odesa (relative to all other responses) that results when a given factor is raised from its minimum value in the dataset to its maximum and all other variables are held at their actual values in the dataset (standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ).

A quick glance might seem to confirm H1a: Consuming Ukrainian television news (a binary variable) is associated with a statistically significant 14% greater chance of believing that anti-Maidan forces carried out the killings (that is, its full effect is 14%). But, the next column reveals something unexpected: Ukrainian television news is also associated with a greater likelihood of believing that the pro-Maidan forces “did it”, with a full effect of 5% points. This is possible because our dependent variable has three outcomes: Effectively, Ukrainian newscasts’ primary effect appears to be making people much less likely (with a full effect of 19%) to give a neutral response. While the net effect is in the expected direction since the magnitude of the pro-AMDI effect is greater than that of the pro-PMDI effect, this dual effect is not what is anticipated by H1a. We suspect based on internal influence theory, however,

650

655

**Table 3.** Full effects of factors on probability of adopting beliefs about Odesa killings.

	Anti-Maidan Did It (AMDI)		Pro-Maidan Did It (PMDI)		Neutral	
<b>H1b.</b> Odesa	-0.08*	(0.04)	0.09**	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.04)
<b>H1c.</b> Donbas	-0.25**	(0.07)	0.23**	(0.04)	0.02	(0.08)
<b>H1c.</b> Galicia	0.22*	(0.09)	-0.19*	(0.07)	-0.03	(0.06)
<b>H2b.</b> Russian-speaker	-0.14**	(0.04)	0.07**	(0.02)	0.07	(0.04)
<b>H2b.</b> Russian ethnicity	-0.15**	(0.04)	0.13**	(0.04)	0.02	(0.05)
<b>H2b.</b> Orthodox (Moscow)	-0.05	(0.05)	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	(0.06)
<b>H2b.</b> Orthodox (Kyiv)	0.07	(0.04)	0.02	(0.03)	-0.09*	(0.03)
<b>H2c.</b> Batkivshchyna Party	0.19**	(0.06)	-0.15*	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.08)
<b>H2c.</b> Party of Regions	-0.18	(0.14)	0.14**	(0.05)	0.03	(0.10)
<i>Age</i>	-0.06	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.03)	0.07	(0.04)
<i>Education</i>	0.12*	(0.05)	-0.02	(0.03)	-0.10	(0.05)
<i>Female</i>	-0.09**	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)	0.10**	(0.03)
<i>Larger community</i>	-0.03	(0.04)	0.07**	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.04)
<i>N</i>	2015		2015		2015	

Note: As full effects, the reported numbers (calculated from a multinomial logit model) reflect the difference in the probability of adopting a given belief about Odesa (relative to all other responses) that results when a given factor is raised from its minimum value in the dataset to its maximum and all other variables are held at their actual values in the dataset (standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ).

that certain cognitive impulses may be interacting with consuming Ukrainian television in ways that can explain these findings, so we return to discussing Ukrainian television's effects later, when evaluating H2. 660

Also surprising is that media conveying alternative narratives or potentially contradictory information neither weaken the propensity to adopt the dominant narrative (AMDI) nor enhance the chances of believing PMDI, thereby failing to support H1b. Remarkably, this concerns not only use of most prominent social media platforms in Ukraine (as captured by binary variables for Facebook, VKontakte, and Odnoklassniki), but also watching Russian television (also a binary variable). It would appear, then, that the potency of Russian media as established in studies of attitude formation and blame attribution (Gerber and Zavisca, 2016; O'Loughlin, Toal and Kolosov, 2016; Peisakhin and Rozenas, 2017; Toal and O'Loughlin, 2015) does not extend unambiguously to belief formation regarding the facts involved in conflict. This null finding does not appear to be the result of too few observations: Not only is 2,015 a relatively large number of respondents for such an analysis, but the signs of the coefficients are negative not only for believing AMDI but also for believing PMDI. If anything, then, Russian television appears to be effective not in fostering belief in its preferred narrative but in promoting scepticism of both narratives. But again, these findings are insignificant. Avoiding television altogether (not just avoiding newscasts) is also not significantly correlated with a tendency to adopt either narrative, though television teetotalers are 15% less likely to be neutral. 665 670 680

The only external influence theories (versions of H1) that find support in Table 2 have to do with local knowledge and experience, as captured in binary variables for living in Odesa, the Donbas (Donetsk or Luhansk regions), and Galicia (Lviv, Ternopil', and Ivano-Frankivsk regions). As expected by H1b, people who live in Odesa and thus are most likely to have more direct access to private information about what actually happened are 5% more likely to believe an alternative to the dominant narrative, fingering pro-Maidaners as the killers. And confirming H1c, residents of the Donbas, which has directly experienced large-scale unpopular violence carried out by pro-Maidan forces as part of the "Anti-Terrorist Operation" that was then getting underway, were 11% more willing to believe pro-Maidan forces could be capable of the Odesa killings. Galicians, without this direct local experience of pro-Maidan violence on this scale, do not stand out one way or other, controlling for everything else. While we cannot rule out that these regional variables are capturing some other feature of these regions that is not controlled for in our study, they are at least consistent with H1c. With only these very modest exceptions, therefore, our findings so far are in line with prior research implying that internal cognitive drivers are likely to dominate environmental framing when individuals form beliefs about the factual content of new events occurring in violent settings.

*H2: Internal Cognitive Drivers (Cognitive Consistency, Ethnicity, Partisanship)*

On the surface, Table 2 appears to strongly support H2a regarding the importance of cognitive consistency but not H2b or H2c regarding the role of ethnic and partisan identities in influencing belief formation about the Odesa tragedy. To test H2a on cognitive consistency, we included two variables that measured other relevant beliefs through self-reported actions (binary variables for participating in either a Euromaidan or an anti-Maidan protest) and four variables capturing positions on distinct major issues of that period that were widely believed to be connected with the conflict between pro- and anti-Maidaners: a six-point scale of job performance approval regarding pro-Maidan Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk (with the lowest value being that he was not actually a legitimate prime minister) and four-point scales on whether people mostly or fully (dis)agreed with the propositions that Ukraine should join the European Union, that "Ukraine's regions should be allowed to make Russian an official language locally", and that "the central government should use force to regain control of any state buildings seized by pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine" (a government initiative that was officially dubbed the Anti-Terrorist Operation and often referred to simply as the ATO).

The confirmation of H2a is robust: people who supported then-Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk, the government's military campaign to reestablish

control of the Donbas, and integrating with the European Union and those who opposed giving regions autonomy on language rights were significantly more likely to believe that people who disagreed with them on these issues (anti-Maidaners) were the killers and to reject the claim that pro-Maidaners did it. Moreover, the full effects were the largest of all the factors tested here, in several cases over 20%. Similarly, self-reported Euromaidan participants were 11% more likely to buy the AMDI version of the facts, though results are insignificant regarding the PMDI narrative. Anti-Maidan participation is also insignificant. Of course, we have no measures of what these individuals' views were prior to 2 May, so we cannot definitively rule out the possibility that Odesa caused a massive shift in beliefs. But we think this unlikely. For one thing, as shown when we set up the puzzle in this study's introduction, the widely agreed-upon factual information available in the situation itself would most likely have led people to conclude that pro-Maidaners were the killers, which if anything should have triggered changes of belief away from rather than towards the pro-Maidan perspective. In addition, if media were forming the initial impressions of Odesa that triggered a massive belief conversion to pro-Maidan sentiment, we should have seen much more pronounced media effects on beliefs about Odesa. Finally, extensive research on public opinion in Ukraine has documented attitudinal cleavages that are deep and enduring and closely associated with the attitudes examined here (D'Anieri, 2007; Darden and Grzymala-Busse, 2006). It is highly likely, then, that for the most part, these attitudes predated 2 May and shaped beliefs about the events of that day more than the other way around. Additional evidence will be presented below.

Beyond this, at first glance, Table 2 would seem broadly to discredit the notion that identities, either partisan or ethnic, matter as predicted by H2b and H2c. In our analysis, we consider basic measures of language use, ethnicity, and religion, all of which have been persistently and robustly linked to political dispositions in Ukraine (Arel, 2005; Barrington, 2012; Darden and Grzymala-Busse, 2006). We capture language through a standard measure: A bilingual interviewer begins with a greeting that is the same in both Ukrainian and Russian, records the language of the response, and uses that language to ask which language the respondent is "more comfortable" speaking, recording Russian, Ukrainian, and different versions of "both". We created a binary variable for people who unequivocally answer "Russian". For ethnic self-identification, we construct a binary variable that codes as "Russian" an individual who, after telling the interviewer "the degree to which" they "belong to the following groups" (Russian, Ukrainian, other), responds "Russian" when then asked "if you had to register as only one nationality, which would you choose?" We also analyse binary variables for the two largest religious denominations in Ukraine, the Orthodox Church headquartered in Kyiv and the one based in Moscow. In addition, we include measures of "transitional partisanship" (a concept developed specifically for

the post-communist context (Colton, 2000)) for the two parties that were the most powerful leading up to 2014: the Party of Regions, formerly led by Viktor Yanukovich, and the Batkivshchyna Party, led by Yulia Tymoshenko, whose associates became both prime minister and acting president after President Yanukovich fled. Of all these measures, we find only two relatively weak significant results in the predicted direction: 7% full effects for Russian nationality and Party of Regions partisanship on adopting the PMDI account. 770

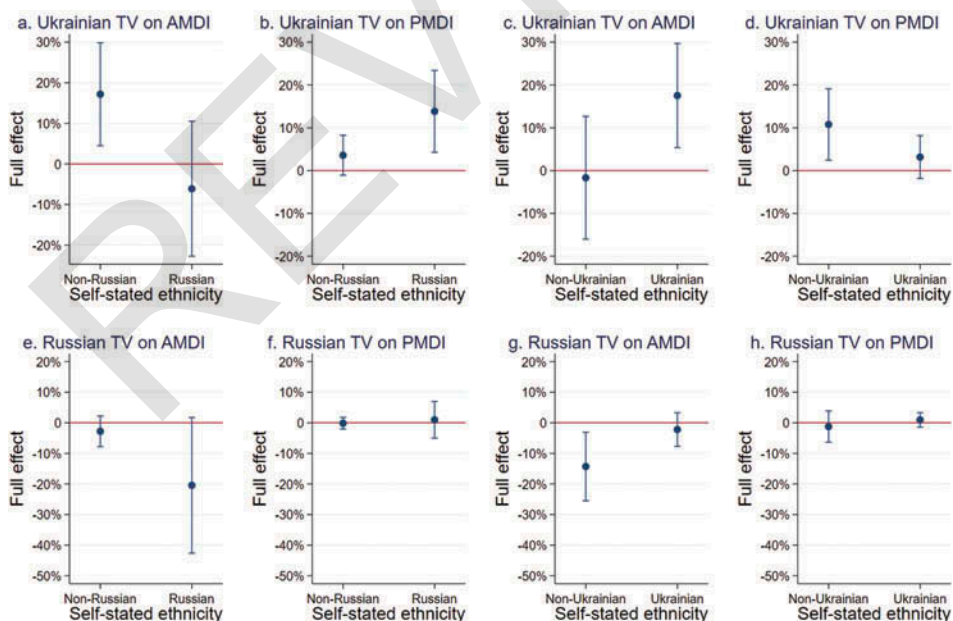
Here, however, we should recall that internal influence theories would place identity at an early point along the cognitive pathway from the initial emotional response triggered by an event to the final formulation of a belief expressed in a survey. In fact, identity is likely to be there right at the beginning, providing the cognitive categories through which the event's relationship to the individual is initially perceived and which in turn determine the nature of the instantaneously occurring affective response (Hale, 2008, 47–50). If this interpretation of hot cognition theory is correct, we might suspect that the belief consistency reported in Table 2 is actually mediated by identity, that identity is in fact the mechanism activating the internally stored attitudes (pro- and anti-Maidan) that are found to influence what people come to think are the facts in a situation of violence. 775 780

Table 3 provides substantial evidence for this interpretation, presenting results from a version of the regression analysis that includes only variables measuring identity (as we have defined it) and geographic place (along with the demographic controls). In combination with Table 2, it reveals that belief formation regarding Odesa is very strongly related to all the identity categories we consider here except for religion, and all in the expected direction, but that these effects virtually “disappear” or shrink considerably once the attitudinal variables are included in the equation. The much higher potency of the spatial variables in Table 3 compared with Table 2 also suggests that influential regional identities are at work that are distinct from the informational and experiential effects discussed above, a possibility that has foundations in other studies of Ukraine (Barrington and Herron 2004). It appears to be the case, then, that the drive for cognitive consistency detected in Table 2 is strongly channelled by identity. 785 790 795

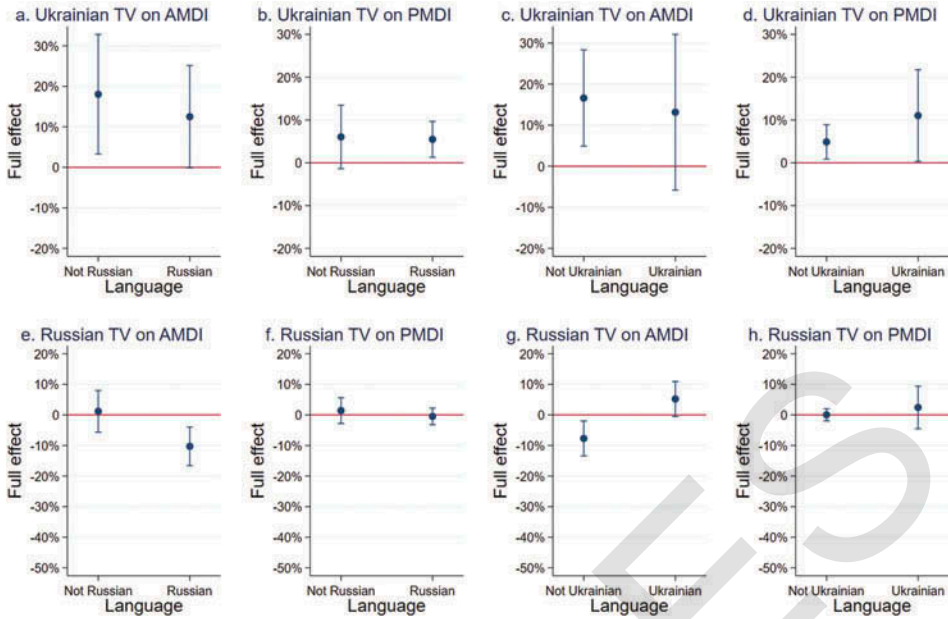
This finding also leads us to wonder whether identity might help us understand the puzzling polarizing effect of Ukrainian television news: Perhaps what is happening is that (in line with hot cognition theories) individuals are bringing strong identity-charged predispositions to the television screen that might moderate their reaction to what they see there. That is, maybe predispositions are not so much driving people to select only programming with which they agree (indeed, about 92% of the population watches Ukrainian television news, so any such self-selection is minimal) as driving polarised reactions to it. Because no single party could claim even as much as 4% of the population as its loyalists in May 2014, partisan identity is 800 805

certainly not capable of driving the effects we find for Ukrainian television. For this reason, we train our attention on ethnic identity as a possible moderator of media effects.

It turns out this is exactly what we find if we add to our full statistical model (the one reported in Table 2, with all variables included) an interaction between identifying as Russian and consuming Ukrainian television news. Figure 1 reports the results graphically, with the dots representing the estimated full effects of Russian and Ukrainian television news among different ethnic populations and the whiskers representing 95% confidence intervals. Most important are Figures 1a and 1b: These show that consuming Ukrainian television makes non-Russians close to 20% more likely to believe the “Anti-Maidaners Did It” version of the facts that predominated on its airwaves, but that it backfires among Russians, who become about 15% more likely to believe the “Pro-Maidaners Did It” account. Figures 1c and 1d show that this finding holds if we replace “Russian” as our ethnic and linguistic category of interest with “Ukrainian”: Ukrainian television’s narrative falls on fertile soil among Ukrainians but backfires among non-Ukrainians. Figures 1e–1h show that Russian news does not produce this same kind of polarisation, instead having no consistent, statistically significant effects. (If anything, Russian television just makes non-Ukrainians more sceptical of the AMDI narrative, though we are on thinner ice ruling out self-selection effects



**Figure 1.** Full effects of TV news on believing AMDI/PMDI by ethnicity. For full results from models estimated to generate this figure, see online appendix Table A8.



**Figure 2.** Full effects of TV news on believing AMDI/PMDI by language. For full results from models estimated to generate this figure, see online appendix Table A9.

here since Russian ethnicity is a predictor of watching Russian television, though not Ukrainian television; see online appendix Table A7 for an analysis of the correlates of consuming different Ukrainian media.)

An analogous analysis, summarised in Figure 2, informs us that an individual language preference for Russian (unlike ethnic self-identification as Russian) is not significantly contributing to the polarizing effect of Ukrainian television. On average, Figures 2a through 2d report that Ukrainian television’s impact is consistently positive for both the AMDI and PMDI narratives across categories of language preference. This indicates that what is primarily driving the polarizing reactions to Ukrainian television is not pragmatic language preference but ethnic self-identification, as the theory of hot ethnic cognition would lead us to expect. As for Russian television, we also find in Figures 2e through 2h that its impact on beliefs about the facts of Odesa does not vary strongly by what language someone prefers to speak, except that it appears to be making non-Ukrainian-speakers more sceptical of the AMDI narrative.

Might individual characteristics other than ethnicity also be driving the polarizing effect of Ukrainian television news? To begin, we test for interactions with education and do find evidence for a limited moderating effect. As Figure 3 shows, Ukrainian television’s backlash effect rises slightly with higher education levels while its positive effect on believing AMDI declines

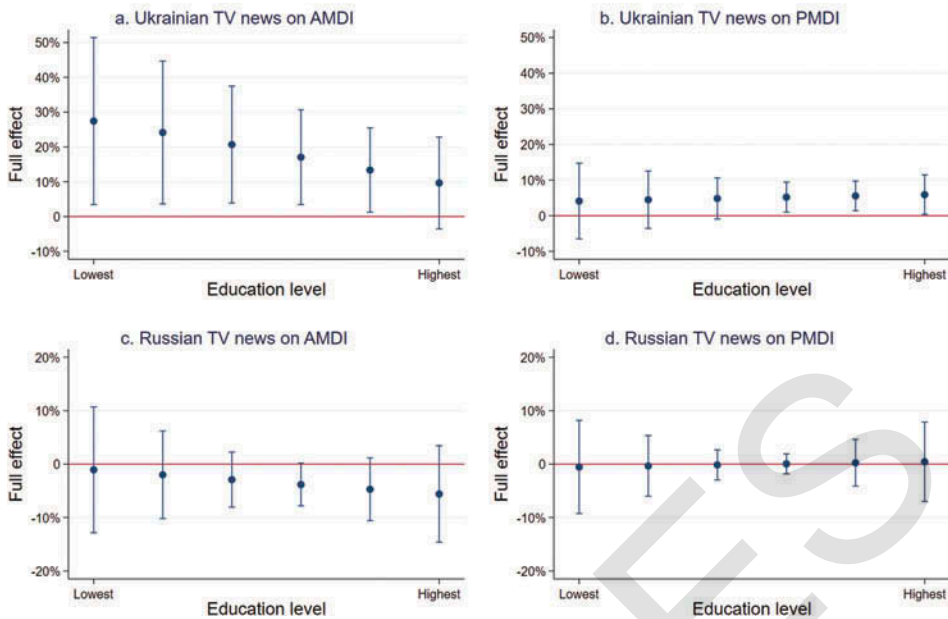
830

835

840

845

850



**Figure 3.** Full effects of TV news on believing AMDI/PMDI by education. For full results from models estimated to generate this figure, see online appendix Table A16.

sharply with education. In analysis not presented here due to space constraints but available in the online appendix (Figure A1), we find that these patterns are consistent among both Russians and non-Russians, indicating that education's moderating effects are separate from those of ethnic self-identification. We also detect very slight interactions between age and television consumption (see summary results in online appendix Figure A2): The effect of Ukrainian television is positive across all age categories, though youth are slightly less susceptible to it and a bit more likely to backlash by becoming more likely to believe PMDI. Youth tend to be more influenced by Russian television than are their older counterparts, but the difference in full effects between the very oldest and very youngest people in the sample is in the low single digits. Age does moderate the effect of television, therefore, but this moderation is too weak to be driving the polarisation reported in Table 2. We find that gender does not significantly moderate the effects of Ukrainian television, though Russian television is more effective in sowing doubts about the AMDI narrative among its female than among its male viewers (see online appendix Figure A3). Overall, then, while ethnic lines appear to be the most pronounced driver of Ukrainian television's polarizing effect, it also appears to depend on education levels and, to a much lesser degree, age, but not gender.

855

860

865

870



## Conclusion

Overall, to the extent that Ukraine in May 2014 is representative of violent settings, our study indicates that internal influence theories are better at explaining how people come to believe different versions of the facts in conflict situation than are external influence theories. In particular, the results of our analysis are consistent with a hot cognition argument that the Odesa violence initially stimulated strong feelings linked to identity (ethnic, partisan, and regional) that then activated associated political attitudes, leading people to adopt versions of the facts that were consistent with these attitudes (Erisen, Lodge and Taber, 2014). Importantly, these internal processes are detected even in an environment in which powerful domestic mass media (which often feature as major drivers of cognitive outcomes in accounts informed by external influence theory) were virtually united in presenting a different version of the facts. In particular, despite presenting a coherent AMDI narrative and having by far the most consumers of any mass media in Ukraine, Ukrainian television was able systematically to persuade only non-Russians and the less educated. Among Russian viewers and the more educated, Ukrainian television actually produced a backlash, making them more likely to believe the alternative PMDI version of the facts. While watching Russian media is not found to have a significant average effect, we do find small effects specifically among non-Ukrainians, women, and youth. These effects, though, primarily involve generating scepticism of the dominant account instead of actually convincing people that the PMDI account favoured by Russian television is correct.

While we do not offer a paired comparison with a peacetime setting, our study at a minimum suggests the following implication for how people form beliefs about facts: In violent settings, people are more likely to follow their own identity-charged predispositions and less likely to have their minds changed by media or other external influences than they are in peacetime. In our study, the only external factor that stands out for influencing beliefs about what happened in the Odesa tragedy is physical proximity to the event in question: People who lived in Odesa and presumably had more private sources of information about what happened were more resistant to the dominant narrative on Ukrainian media. A related implication seems to be that strong state-led efforts to shape media coverage of the facts of a conflict risk polarizing society rather than unifying it around the preferred view: People already predisposed by identity and other beliefs to support the government's version of the facts may be convinced, but such coverage can generate a backlash among others, who can be prompted not only to doubt the official line but actually to regard its opposite as more credible. This constitutes an important limitation to theories of media effects and external

influence theories more generally that would seem to bear further testing in other violent situations.

Drawing implications for Ukraine itself overcoming deep social divisions more generally, our results would seem to justify a good deal of pessimism. If people are quick to interpret events primarily in ways that exonerate their own in-groups and justify their prior beliefs rather than in ways that reflect considered and impartial reasoning – a finding that applies to both “sides” considered here – reconciliation may be difficult and each side may feel rather unconstrained domestically from engaging in bad behaviour. One bright spot, however, could be our finding on education: Education, at least the highest levels of it, does seem to give people tools they need to subject what they see on television to criticism. Local knowledge also indicates that at least this form of environmental stimulus can moderate people’s tendency to reaching self-serving conclusions about the facts involved in violence. But if our case study of the 2 May Odesa tragedy is any indication, despite the progress in national unity that has been noted in some studies (Haran, 2017; Kulyk, 2014, 2016), Ukraine still has ahead of it a long road to reconciliation and full social unity, a road that state leaders could do much more to promote (Zhukov, 2017).

## Note

1. Replication data and an online appendix of additional and supporting analysis (including all online tables and figures mentioned in the text) may be found at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/uceps>.

## Funding

This work was supported by the National Science Foundation [SES-1445194], the Harvard Research Institute, and the Ukraine Studies Fund.

## References

- ‘Definition of Fact in English’. n.d. Oxford dictionaries, English. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fact>.
- Althaus, S. L., and K. Coe. 2011. Priming patriots: Social identity processes and the dynamics of public support for war. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75 (1):65–88. doi:10.1093/poq/nfq071.
- Arel, D. 2005. Ukraina Vybraiet Zapad, No Nie Bez Vostoka. *Pro Et Contra* 9 (1):39–51.
- Asch, S. E. 1956. Studies of independence and conformity: 1. A minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied* 70 (9):1–70. doi:10.1037/h0093718.
- Balinskii, V. 2014. Modelirovaniie Sobytiia Proiskhodiashchikh v DP 2-go Maya v Odesse. Dinamicheskaiia Model’ Pozhara. *Numikosov.livejournal.com*, December 24. <http://numikosov.livejournal.com/5012.html>.

- Balinskii, V. 2015. Lokalizatsiia Ochaga I Prichina Vozgoraniia v Dome Profsoiuzov. *Numikosov.livejournal.com*, April 9. <https://numikosov.livejournal.com/5012.html?thread=67476#t67476>. 950
- Barrington, L., and R. Faranda. 2009. Reexamining region, ethnicity, and language in Ukraine. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25 (3):232–256. doi:10.2747/1060-586X.24.3.232.
- Barrington, L. W. 2012. Fragile snapshot or stable relationships? What the orange and rose revolutions reveal about the stability of cross-sectional survey data. *Comparative Political Studies* 45 (3):312–340. doi:10.1177/0010414011421311. 955
- Barrington, L. W., and E. S. Herron. 2004. One Ukraine or many? Regionalism in Ukraine and its political consequences. *Nationalities Papers* 32. doi:10.1080/0090599042000186179.
- Berinsky, A. J. 2015. Rumors and health care reform: Experiments in political misinformation. *British Journal of Political Science* 47 (2):241–262. doi:10.1017/S0007123415000186. 960
- Bolsen, T., J. N. Druckman, and F. L. Cook. 2014. The influence of partisan motivated reasoning on public opinion. *Political Behavior* 36 (2):235–262. doi:10.1007/s11109-013-9238-0.
- Bordia, P., N. DiFonzo, R. Haines, and E. Chaselng. 2005. Rumors denials as persuasive messages: Effects of personal relevance, source, and message characteristics1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 35 (6):1301–1331. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2005.tb02172.x. 965
- Brass, P. R. 1997. *Theft of an idol: Text and context in the representation of collective violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Campbell, A., P. E. Converse, W. E. Miller, and D. E. Stokes. 1980. *The American voter*. Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press. 970
- Carr, E. H. 1961. *What is history?* London: Macmillan. <http://www.trfa.org.uk/sixthform/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/HISTORY-What-is-history-E.H-Carr.pdf>.
- Charap, S., and T. J. Colton. 2017. *Everyone loses: The Ukraine crisis and the ruinous contest for post-Soviet Eurasia*, New York: Routledge.
- Chong, D., and J. N. Druckman. 2007a. A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *Journal of Communication* 57 (1):99–118. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00331.x. 975
- Chong, D., and J. N. Druckman. 2007b. Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10:103–126. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054.
- Chong, D., and J. N. Druckman. 2010. Dynamic public opinion: Communication effects over time. *The American Political Science Review* 104 (4):663–680. doi:10.1017/S0003055410000493 980
- Cobb, M. D., B. Nyhan, and J. Reifler. 2013. Beliefs don't always persevere: How political figures are punished when positive information about them is discredited. *Political Psychology* 34 (3):307–326. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2012.00935.x. 985
- Colton, T. J. 2000. *Transitional citizens: Voters and what influences them in the New Russia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Converse, P. E. 2006. The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964). *Critical Review* 18 (1–3):1–74. doi:10.1080/08913810608443650.
- Coydash, H. 2016. Sabotage or corruption? Crucial suspect in Odesa May 2 tragedy allowed to escape. *The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group*, April 8. <http://khp.org/index.php?id=1459115877>. 990
- Coydash, H. 2017a. Ukraine faces human rights court hammering over investigation of Odesa 2 May tragedy – Human rights in Ukraine. *The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group*, May 1. <http://khp.org/en/index.php?id=1492438463>. 995
- Coydash, H. 2017b. Dramatic acquittals in trial over Odesa 2 May 2014 riots. *The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group*, September 19. <http://khp.org/en/index.php?id=1505775298&w=odesa>.

- D'Anieri, P. J. 2007. *Understanding Ukrainian politics: Power, politics, and institutional design*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1000
- Darden, K., and A. Grzymala-Busse. 2006. The great divide: Literacy, nationalism, and the communist collapse. *World Politics* 59 (1):83–115. doi:10.1353/wp.2007.0015.
- Dawson, M. C. 1995. *Behind the mule: Race and class in African-American politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Devine, P. G. 1989. Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56 (1):5–18. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.1.5. 1005
- Di Tella, R., S. Galiani, and E. Schargrodsky. 2012. Reality versus propaganda in the formation of beliefs about privatization. *Journal of Public Economics* 96:553–567. doi:10.1016/j.jpubeco.2011.11.006.
- DiFonzo, N., and P. Bordia. 2007. *Rumor psychology: Social and organizational approaches*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 1010
- Druckman, J. N. 2014. Pathologies of studying public opinion, political communication, and democratic responsiveness. *Political Communication* 31 (3):467–492. doi:10.1080/10584609.2013.852643.
- Druckman, J. N., and A. Lupia. 2016. Preference change in competitive political environments. *Annual Review of Political Science* 19:13–31. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-020614-095051. 1015
- Ennis, S. 2014. Ukraine hits back at Russian TV onslaught. *BBC News*, March 12. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26546083>.
- Erisen, C., M. Lodge, and C. S. Taber. 2014. Affective contagion in effortful political thinking. *Political Psychology* 35. doi:10.1111/pops.2014.35.issue-2. 1020
- Fakty ICTV. 2014. Gdie Byla Militsiia, Poka Liudi Sgorali Zazhivo v Odyesskom Domie Profsoiuzov? *Fakty Nedieli*, May 4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEFO2uqFPrE&list=PLHSSC6VzRB5JshTQdVC9xKeryqjGrg-7o>.
- Festinger, L. 1957. *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 1025
- Gerasimova, T. 2015a. Background of Odessa Tragedy on May, 2nd 2014. *The May 2 Group*, December 21. <http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2015/12/background-of-odessa-tragedy-on-may-2nd.html>.
- Gerasimova, T. 2015b. Predystoriia Odesskoi Tragedii 2 Maya 2014 Goda. *The May 2 Group*, December 7. [http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2015/12/2-2014\\_7.html](http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2015/12/2-2014_7.html). 1030
- Gerasimova, T. 2015c. Khronologiia Sobytii 2 Maia 2014 Goda v Odesse (Na Russkom Iazyke). Chast' 1. *The May 2 Group*, December 4. <http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2015/12/2-2014-1.html>.
- Gerasimova, T. 2016a. Chronology of events May 2, 2014 in Odessa (in English). Part 1. *The 2 May Group*, January 11. <http://2maygroup.blogspot.co.uk/2016/01/chronology-of-events-may-2-2014-in.html#more>. 1035
- Gerasimova, T. 2016b. Po Sobyttiim 2 Maia: Delo Sotrudnikov GSChS Peredaiut v Sud, v Rozysk Obiavili Ieshche I Zamestitelia Bodelana. *The May 2 Group*. [http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2016/06/2\\_23.html](http://2maygroup.blogspot.com/2016/06/2_23.html).
- Gerber, A. S., and G. A. Huber. 2009. Partisanship and economic behavior: Do partisan differences in economic forecasts predict real economic behavior? *The American Political Science Review* 103 (3):407–426. doi:10.1017/S0003055409990098. 1040
- Gerber, T. P., and J. Zavisca. 2016. Does Russian propaganda work? *The Washington Quarterly* 39 (2):79–98. doi:10.1080/0163660X.2016.1204398.
- Hale, H. E. 2004. Explaining ethnicity. *Comparative Political Studies* 37 (4):458–485. doi:10.1177/0010414003262906. 1045
- Hale, H. E. 2008. *The foundations of ethnic politics: Separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Hamilton, J. M., R. Coleman, B. Grable, and J. Cole. 2006. An enabling environment. *Journalism Studies* 7:78–93. doi:10.1080/14616700500450368. 1050
- Hanmer, M. J., and K. O. Kalkan. 2013. Behind the curve: Clarifying the best approach to calculating predicted probabilities and marginal effects from limited dependent variable models. *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (1):263–277. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00602.x.
- Haran, O. 2017. The demise of Ukraine’s “Eurasian Vector” and the rise of Pro-NATO Sentiment. *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/demise-ukraines-eurasian-vector-and-rise-pro-nato-sentiment>. 1055
- Hopf, T. 2012. *Reconstructing the cold war: The early years, 1945–1958*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- International Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Council of Europe. 2015. IAP report on Odesa events, November 4. <https://rm.coe.int/168048851b>. 1060
- Iyengar, S., and D. R. Kinder. 1987. *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Javeline, D. L. 2003. *Protest and the politics of blame: The Russian response to unpaid wages*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1065
- Kahneman, D. 2011. *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Kalyvas, S. N. 2003. The ontology of “Political Violence”: Action and identity in civil wars. *Perspectives on Politics* 1. doi:10.1017/S1537592703000355.
- Katchanovski, I. 2016. The far right in Ukraine during the “Euromaidan” and the war in Donbas. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA. [https://www.academia.edu/28203585/The\\_Far\\_Right\\_in\\_Ukraine\\_During\\_the\\_Euromaidan\\_and\\_the\\_War\\_in\\_Donbas](https://www.academia.edu/28203585/The_Far_Right_in_Ukraine_During_the_Euromaidan_and_the_War_in_Donbas). doi:10.2139/ssrn.2832203. 1070
- Kozloff, N. 2017. Ukraine: Reflections on the Maidan revolution, a Voyage to Odessa, Donald Trump, Trans-Atlantic Disarray and Ironies of “Western Modernity”. *Huffington Post*. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nikolas-kozloff/ukraine-reflections-on-th\\_b\\_14424790.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nikolas-kozloff/ukraine-reflections-on-th_b_14424790.html). 1075
- Kulyk, V. 2014. On national unity and the status of the Russian language. *Krytyka*. <https://krytyka.com/en/community/blogs/national-unity-and-status-russian-language>.
- Kulyk, V. 2016. National identity in Ukraine: Impact of Euromaidan and the war. *Europe-Asia Studies* 68 (4):588–608. doi:10.1080/09668136.2016.1174980.
- Lambert, A. J., L. D. Scherer, J. P. Schott, K. R. Olson, R. K. Andrews, T. C. O’Brien, and A. R. Zisser. 2010. Rally effects, threat, and attitude change: An integrative approach to understanding the role of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 98:886–903. doi:10.1037/a0019086. 1080
- Laruelle, M. 2009. *In the name of the nation: Nationalism and politics in contemporary Russia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 1085
- Lau, R. R., and D. P. Redlawsk. 2001. Advantages and disadvantages of cognitive heuristics in political decision making. *American Journal of Political Science* 45. doi:10.2307/2669334.
- Lau, R. R., and D. P. Redlawsk. 2006. *How voters decide: Information processing in election campaigns*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lavine, H. G., C. D. Johnston, and M. R. Steenbergen. 2012. *The ambivalent partisan: How critical loyalty promotes democracy*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 1090
- Leeper, T. J., and R. Slothuus. 2014. Political parties, motivated reasoning, and public opinion formation. *Political Psychology* 35 (S1):129–156. doi:10.1111/pops.12164.
- Linke, A. M., and J. O’Loughlin. 2015. Reconceptualizing, measuring, and evaluating distance and context in the study of conflicts: Using survey data from the North Caucasus of Russia. *International Studies Review* 17 (1):107–125. doi:10.1111/misr.12207. 1095

- Marcus, G. E., J. L. Sullivan, E. Theiss-Morse, and D. Stevens. 2005. The emotional foundation of political cognition: The impact of extrinsic anxiety on the formation of political tolerance judgments. *Political Psychology* 26 (6):949–963. doi:10.1111/pops.2005.26.issue-6.
- Nyhan, B., and J. Reifler. 2010. When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior* 32 (2):303–330. doi:10.1007/s11109-010-9112-2. 1100
- O’Loughlin, J., G. Toal, and V. Kolosov. 2016. Who identifies with the “Russian World”? Geopolitical attitudes in Southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57. doi:10.1080/15387216.2017.1295275.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2017. Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 May to 15 August 2017, September 12, 17–18. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/UAReport19th\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/UAReport19th_EN.pdf). 1105
- OHCHR. 2016. Accountability for killings in Ukraine from January 2014 to May 2016, 10. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/OHCHRThematicReportUkraineJan2014-May2016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/OHCHRThematicReportUkraineJan2014-May2016_EN.pdf). 1110
- Peisakhin, L., and A. Rozenas. 2017. Electoral effects of biased media: Russian television in Ukraine. SSRN Scholarly Paper, Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2937366>.
- Pervyi Kanal. 2014. Odesskaia Tragediia Ostavliaet Mnogo Voprosov, May 4. [https://www.1tv.ru/news/2014-05-04/40906-odesskaya\\_tragediya\\_ostavlyaet\\_mnogo\\_voprosov](https://www.1tv.ru/news/2014-05-04/40906-odesskaya_tragediya_ostavlyaet_mnogo_voprosov). 1115
- Petersen, R. 2017. Emotions as the residue of lived experience. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (4):932–935.
- Petersen, R. D. 2002. *Understanding ethnic violence: Fear, hatred, and resentment in twentieth-century Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Plato. 2017. *The republic*. Amazon Classics. 1120
- Podrobnosti INTER. 2014. Kak Militsiia Odessy I Donetska Prikryvala Separatistov, May 4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbB8OIhmGa4>.
- Radnitz, S., and P. Underwood. 2017. Is belief in conspiracy theories pathological? A survey experiment on the cognitive roots of extreme suspicion. *British Journal of Political Science* 47 (1):113–129. doi:10.1017/S0007123414000556. 1125
- Rahn, W. M. 1993. The role of partisan stereotypes in information processing about political candidates. *American Journal of Political Science* 37. doi:10.2307/2111381.
- RFE/RL. 2015. Council of Europe Blasts Ukraine’s investigations into Odesa violence. *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, November 4. <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-odesa-fire-council-europe-report/27345601.html>. 1130
- Rossia 1. 2014a. Priamoi Efir. Maiskaia Odessa: Khatyn’ XXI Veka. [https://russia.tv/video/show/brand\\_id/5169/episode\\_id/985531/](https://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/5169/episode_id/985531/).
- Rossia 1. 2014b. Odessa – Rassledovanie. Chto Proizoshlo na Samom Dele, May 6. <https://ok.ru/video/43870653035>.
- Rowling, C. M., P. Sheets, and T. M. Jones. 2015. American atrocity revisited: National identity, cascading frames, and the My Lai massacre. *Political Communication* 32:310–30. doi:10.1080/10584609.2014.944323. 1135
- Sakwa, R. 2015. *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the borderlands*. I. B. Tauris.
- Sasse, G. 2010a. The role of regionalism. *Journal of Democracy* 21 (3):99–106.
- Sasse, G. 2010b. The “New” Ukraine: A state of regions. *Regional & Federal Studies* 11. 1140
- Sides, J. 2016. Stories or science? Facts, frames, and policy attitudes. *American Politics Research* 44. doi:10.1177/1532673X15610190.
- Sniderman, P. M., and S. M. Theriault. 2004. The structure of political argument and the logic of issue framing. In *Studies in public opinion: Attitudes, nonattitudes, measurement error, and change*, eds. W. E. Saris and P. M. Sniderman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1145

- Taber, C. S., and M. Lodge. 2006. Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3):755–769. doi:10.1111/ajps.2006.50.issue-3.
- Taber, C. S., and M. Lodge. 2016. The illusion of choice in democratic politics: The unconscious impact of motivated political reasoning. *Political Psychology* 37 (S1):61–85. doi:10.1111/pops.12321. 1150
- Tajfel, H. 1982. Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 (1):1–39. doi:10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245.
- Toal, G. 2017. *Near abroad: Putin, the west and the contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Toal, G., and J. O’Loughlin. 2015. Russian and Ukrainian TV viewers live on different planets. *The Washington Post, The Monkey Cage*. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/26/russian-and-ukrainian-tv-viewers-live-on-different-planets/?utm\\_term=.81d44b0a5fc8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/26/russian-and-ukrainian-tv-viewers-live-on-different-planets/?utm_term=.81d44b0a5fc8). 1155
- Toal, G., and J. O’Loughlin. 2017. Why did MH17 crash? Blame attribution, television news and public opinion in Southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, and De Facto States of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. *Geopolitics*. doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1364238. 1160
- Tuathail, G. Ó. 2009. Placing blame: Making sense of Beslan. *Political Geography* 28 (1):4–15. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2009.01.007.
- Ukraiins’ka Pravda. 2014. Do Odes’koi ODA Rukhaiet’sia Kolona Do 2 Tysiach Liudei. *Ukraiins’ka Pravda*, January 26. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/01/26/7011390>. 1165
- Valentino, N. A., A. J. Banks, V. L. Hutchings, and A. K. Davis. 2009. Selective exposure in the internet age: The interaction between anxiety and information utility. *Political Psychology* 30 (4):591–613. doi:10.1111/pops.2009.30.issue-4.
- Valentino, N. A., V. L. Hutchings, A. J. Banks, and A. K. Davis. 2008. Is a worried citizen a good citizen? Emotions, political information seeking, and learning via the internet. *Political Psychology* 29 (2):247–273. doi:10.1111/pops.2008.29.issue-2. 1170
- The Voice of Russia. 2014. Pro-EU crowd marching towards regional govt HQ in Odessa. *The Voice of Russia*, January 26. [https://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/news/2014\\_01\\_26/Pro-EU-crowd-marching-towards-regional-govt-HQ-in-Odessa-6387/](https://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/news/2014_01_26/Pro-EU-crowd-marching-towards-regional-govt-HQ-in-Odessa-6387/).
- Von Clausewitz, C. 2013. On war. In *eBook Series 1946*, ed. F. N. Maude, trans. J. J. Graham, London: Project Gutenberg. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1946/1946-h/1946-h.htm>. 1175
- Wedeen, L. 1999. *Ambiguities of domination: Politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, A. 2014. *Ukraine crisis: What it means for the west*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Yekelchuk, S. 2015. *The conflict in Ukraine: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1180
- Zaller, J., and S. Feldman. 1992. A simple theory of the survey response: Answering questions versus revealing preferences. *American Journal of Political Science* 36. doi:10.2307/2111583.
- Zaller, J. R. 1992. *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhukov, Y. M. 2017. Warfare in a post-truth world: Lessons from Ukraine. *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/warfare-post-truth-world-lessons-ukraine>. 1185
- TSN. 2014. Vypusk TSN. Spetsvypusk Za 3 Travnia 2014 Roku, May 3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRtRbyE6TlY>.