

Postwar Ukraine, Democracy, Kurt Lewin, and the Reconstruction of Germany

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Abstract

Ukraine will face unique challenges if and when the Russian invasion has ended. The transition from wartime to peacetime can result in many social and political outcomes. The possibility of a persistent threat adds to the complexity. The transition from the more autocratic needs of wartime society to a non-militaristic democracy is by no means guaranteed. Lessons can be learned from past experiences, such as post WWI and WWII Germany, and the failed reconstruction of the Civil War in the United States. Social scientist Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947) provides a theoretical basis for contrasting democracy and autocracy. Lewin applied his theories to understanding the failure of democracy in post WWI Germany and the reconstruction of Germany after WWII. Using Lewin's work as a foundation, this article considers lessons learned in hopes of being a guide for the eventual cultural reconstruction needed in post war Ukraine.

Keywords

action-research, democracy, Ukraine

Introduction¹

The war in Ukraine has prompted studies across various scientific fields (Lunov et al., 2023; Gavrilenko, 2023; Verbytska, 2024; Havrylyshyn et al., 2024), many of which focus on the war’s impact on global stability (AL-Rousan et al., 2024; Soliman & Le Saout, 2024; Boun-gou & Yatié, 2022; Coupe & Obrizan, 2016; Afunts et al., 2024; Andrada-Félix et al., 2024). A growing number of scholars are examining Ukraine’s future, particularly concerning the restoration of ecosystems, urban infrastructure, and the country’s comprehensive recon-struction (Udovyk & M-Domènech, 2024; Lacan et al., 2024; Cifuentes-Faura, 2023). This paper looks at Ukraine’s future through the lens of social science.

Although an independent postwar Ukraine is by no means guaranteed at the time of this writing, it can be argued that both Europe and the US are dependent on Ukrainian success to secure the future of their own fragile democracies. Thinking ahead to the opportunities and perils of Ukrainian “reconstruction” is not only worthwhile, but vitally important.

We need not reinvent the wheel. Social scientist Kurt Lewin applied his theories and methods to a different yet similar historical challenge, the reconstruction of Germany following WWII. Lewin was a passionate advocate that the lessons of post WWI Germany be learned and learned well before attempting reconstruction of the German culture after WWII. With that in mind, Lewin pondered the enormous, planned culture change effort that lay ahead for both Germany and Japan. Although the circumstances facing Ukraine before and after the war are different, some of the dynamics are the same. How do you shift from a wartime culture, necessarily more autocratic, to a peacetime culture which is more democratic *and* sustain it? How do you disarm and assimilate the warriors? How do you help regions find their own path forward while fitting into the larger nation state yet not being constrained by it needlessly? Those are the issues explored in this paper.

Methods

The article employs two fundamental research methods to explore pivotal historical and so-ciological dynamics. The first is historical analysis, which introduces readers to the complex realities of post-World War I Germany as well as the post-Civil War United States, analyzing the strategic missteps made during reconstruction and their long-term consequences.

The second is the case study approach, which investigates how Kurt Lewin’s sociologi-cal theories were pragmatically applied following World War II, offering insights into their transformative impact on the establishment of strong and enduring democratic systems in Germany and Japan, which remain prominent examples of successful postwar reconstruction. This approach provides a framework for understanding how Lewin’s theories can inform the reconstruction and sociopolitical stability of contemporary states in transition.

Kurt Lewin’s primary goal throughout his work was to use social science to prevent au-tocracy. He believed this was best done through fundamentally sound democracy. His vision for humanity was to utilize processes grounded in rational thinking and scientific knowledge, emphasizing the empowerment of individuals to influence their governments, while ensuring that these governments retain the capacity to act effectively.

Lewin’s sociological method emphasizes the importance of local participation in shaping government structures, especially in post-conflict societies. He argued that imposing exter-nal structures leads to resistance, while allowing local populations to influence their own governance leads to more sustainable and effective systems. In post-World War II Germany

¹ Many portions of this article were based on Chapter 7, “Social Science and Politics,” from Crosby, G. (2021). *Planned Change*.

and Japan, Lewin's approach encouraged the U.S. State Department to engage with local communities, letting the people shape their own form of democracy.

Lewin's method, informed by Germany's post-WWI failure, highlights the danger of excessive freedom allowing anti-democratic groups like the Nazis to rise. He argued that democracies must limit such groups to protect democratic values, a principle also relevant in the U.S. today with extremist groups like the Nazis, the KKK, or any form of white supremacy.

Consequently, the establishment of standards is crucial—without them, chaos is inevitable. This weakness was evident in post-World War I Germany. Following World War II, however, Germany, guided by Lewin's sociological principles, became more aware of this danger and made a conscious effort to learn from their previous errors.

Results

A major outcome of applying Lewin's methods to post-war reconstruction was the successful establishment of stable democratic systems in both Germany and Japan. Central to this success were the educational reforms in both countries. Germany, in particular, has made a concerted effort to educate its citizens about the Nazi period, ensuring that the past is not forgotten. Japan, while less forthcoming about its wartime actions, has nonetheless included some aspects of this history in its educational curriculum.

In addition to education, the growth of democracy in both nations has been marked by significant strides in women's rights, and the rights of ethnic groups. Efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination have played a vital role in their post-war transformations. Although prejudice persists to some extent in both societies, it has been greatly reduced compared to the pre-World War II period. The three key results of this process are: a strong focus on developing an educated citizenry, including accuracy about history, a commitment to addressing prejudice, and the stability of democratic systems in both countries.

Discussion

In his 1943 article *Cultural Reconstruction* Lewin wrote, "Building a world of peace which will be worth at least the name 'better than before' includes many problems: political, economic, and cultural. Each of them is loaded with difficulties. Yet all of them have to be considered together and attacked together as interdependent aspects of one dynamic field if any successful step forward is to be achieved" (Lewin, 1997, p35).

Lewin was a regular consultant to the US state department and the war department, had the ear of the president and Mrs. Roosevelt, and the people who crafted the Marshall Plan were in his orbit of relationships. The plan, perhaps the most ambitious and successful cultural change effort in human history, was drafted and implemented after his death in 1947. He was thus unable to be directly involved, but his thought leadership on the subject is well documented.

Lewin, a Jewish man who grew up in the Kaiser's Germany, served in the German Army during WWI, taught at the University of Berlin, and witnessed firsthand the rise of the Nazi's until fleeing to the US in 1933, includes in his writings on reconstruction a thoughtful analysis of the social dynamics of Germany before the second world war (Marrow, 1969).

Ukraine would be wise to encourage their own social scientists to do the same. While Ukraine is in no way responsible for Putin's aggression, this is still an opportunity to look at what was working and what was not working in pre-war Ukraine. It is rare for a country to have a moment of reflection. Ukraine should seize it, so as to create an even stronger Ukrain-

ian democracy moving forward.

Democracy is not a given. Not in the United States, and certainly not after years of war, in postwar Ukraine. Russia will almost certainly remain an external threat, and the Ukrainian military will hold a new, necessary, well-funded, and widely admired position within Ukrainian society. The right autocratic leader may have an opportunity to win the hearts of the people. In another 1943 article, *The Process of Group Living*, Lewin wrote, "Throughout history, political geniuses have arisen who have been masters in group management, such as Napoleon or Hitler. The only hope, however, for a permanent foundation of successful social management, and particularly for a permanent democratic society of the common man, is a social management based to a high degree on a scientific insight which is accessible to many" (Lewin, 1999, p334).

If postwar Ukraine is to achieve a better future based on democratic principles, it will only happen through clear eyed and determined effort: "It is a fallacy to assume that people, if left alone, follow a democratic pattern in their group life. Such an assumption would not even hold for people living in a democratic society" (Lewin, 1997, p37). Lewin points out that, based on his study of post-world war I Germany, it's perhaps more likely that a democratic country, by appeasing the "intolerant," will allow its democracy to erode. Lewin's research on leadership styles indicated that people adapt to authoritarianism fast, while democracy must be learned anew by each generation. As Lewin put it, "In democracy, as in any culture, the individual acquires the cultural pattern by some type of 'learning.' Normally, such learning occurs by way of growing up in that culture. In regard to changing from one cultural pattern to another, experiments indicate that autocracy can be 'imposed upon a person.' That means the individual might 'learn' autocracy by adapting himself to a situation forced upon him from outside. Democracy cannot be imposed upon a person; it has to be learned by a process of voluntary and responsible participation" (Lewin, 1997, p. 37).

In another 1943 article, "*The Special Case of Germany*," he continues

"After the last war the reactionary forces in Germany, although driven under cover, were permitted to 'get away with it.' Being a socially well-knit group, they soon started to come back step by step and to take their revenge in the extreme form of Hitlerism. I cannot see any hope of more than superficial change after the present war if the German people are prevented from getting rid in a very thorough fashion of a large group which has developed to perfection the most ruthless methods of suppression..."

The German move towards democracy after the last war did not fail because the so-called German Revolution of 1918 was too chaotic, but because the overthrow of the Kaiser was bloodless and did not reach deep enough. It did not reach deep enough socially to remove certain sections of the population from power, and it did not reach deep enough culturally to remove the idea of democracy from its identification with individualistic freedom of the laissez-faire type."

(Lewin, 1997, p. 42)

This is not unlike the failed reconstruction of the South following the civil war in the US. The southern army was allowed to take their weapons and go home. Under martial law, a brief period of democracy ensued, during which blacks were elected to office in large numbers. Once the northern troops were withdrawn, the former confederate soldiers formed the Ku Kux Klan and used terror to re-establish control. President Ulysses S. Grant sent troops back in to occupy the south, but the political will to maintain the occupation eroded, and a racist form of totalitarianism was re-established in the southern states. That failure haunts the US today, and even threatens US support of Ukraine.

There are obvious differences between that history in the US and contemporary Ukraine, but the arming of the country and the assimilation of armed former soldiers are similar pieces of the reconstruction puzzle. Fear of future invasions may complicate disarming the civilian population, but it would be wise to do so. Gun buy-back policies used to deal with gun violence in the US might be applicable, with the added advantage that Ukraine does not have the US dynamic of local mass production of new weapons. To reassure the population, perhaps in some way weapons could be stored for redistribution in case the external threat continues or re-emerges.

Fortunately, Lewinian social science paves the way once again. Experts need not come up with all the possible solutions and are indeed wise *not* to attempt to do so.

Lewin's action research clearly indicates that allowing the people facing the problem to come up with solutions greatly increase the likelihood of successful and sustained implementation. The problem is not what solutions to try, but rather how to organize community conversations about how best to deal with postwar challenges. The act of doing so by engaging the citizens, simultaneously reinforces democratic principles in the culture. The US engaged a broad swath of the Germany population in defining the mechanisms of their post-WWII democracy, and it would be wise for Ukraine to do engage their own citizens in a similar manner.

In a 1946 article, *Action Research and Minority Problems*, Lewin called his approach "...action, research, and training as a triangle" (Lewin, 1997, p149). In other words, he always included basic training in social science and behavioral skills, such as communication and how to manage conflict, in his interventions. Furthermore, the training happened as people were *actually doing the action research*. This was learning by doing with guidance. Lewin would humbly join college students, mothers, farmers, gang members, executives, industrial employees, the US state department, etc., and help whoever was in need think out loud about what they were facing and come up with their own solutions. As Lewin put it: the change agent should provide and transfer social science expertise, but for successful change, "The laws (of social science) don't do the job of diagnosis which has to be done locally. Neither do laws prescribe the strategy for change" (Lewin, 1997, p150). An expert can teach and facilitate methods such as group dialogue and decision, but the people facing the challenges must still be the ones who have the dialogue and come up with the solutions. In his 1945 article, *Conduct, Knowledge, and Acceptance of New Values*, he asserts, "It can be surmised that the extent to which social research is translated into social action depends on the degree to which those who carry out this action are made a part of the fact-finding on which the action is to be based" (Lewin, 1997, p. 55).

This is not an "expert model." It is a humble model. The expert/leader doesn't do the thinking and propose solutions. The people come up with their own solutions.

Lewin's research (he did controlled experiments *while* he helped people do their own action research) established time and again that locally generated solutions were more likely to be implemented than expert or imposed solutions. Within reason, people would rather think for themselves than be told what to do. That's the essence of action research and of democracy. Furthermore, this method is fast and efficient. There is no long study, or a planning team that has lots of meetings. People, whether a group of workers, a group of local citizens, etc., actually do the thinking, come up with the solutions, implement the change, monitor their own progress, and know how to repeat the cycle into the future. The identification of actions can happen in the very first meeting, and implementation can begin the same day.

Lewin applied the same thinking to the reconstruction of Germany. He warned that if the US forced American-style democracy on post World War II Germany, it would be folly. He instead offered sound advice, such as working with and engaging the people of Germany and of Europe in a massive cultural action research project instead of simply imposing solutions on them.

Even so, Lewin was only guardedly optimistic, and concludes his article, *Cultural Reconstruction*, this way

"We will have to avoid the naive belief that people 'left alone' will choose democracy. We have to avoid building our plans on 'hatred of the enemy', but we have to also avoid building our plans on wishful thinking and blindness against reality. We should know, for instance, that we have to deal in Germany with a set-up where month after month, day after day, six to seven thousand unwanted women and children are killed in central slaughter houses in occupied territories, and where thousands of people must have grown accustomed to doing such jobs. American newspapers seem to play down such unpleasant truths probably because they wish to prevent a peace based on hatred. Actually, this procedure defies its purpose because in politics as in education a successful action has to be based on a full knowledge of reality"

(Lewin, 1997, p. 39).

Lewin was a firm believer that objective discussion of the facts, no matter how disturbing, was the way forward. In a 1944 article, he wrote this: "Democracy and Judaism have nothing to fear from truth and fact finding, but they have much to gain by them" (Lewin, 1999, p. 263). He believed in the promise of reason, saw it as a critical underpinning of democracy and social science, and thought it was the job of both parents and education to instill it from the beginning of life. In a 1939 article entitled, *Experiments in Social Space*, in which he describes his experiments with democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire styles of leadership, he concludes this

"To believe in reason is to believe in democracy, because it grants to the reasoning partners a status of equality. It is therefore not an accident that not until the rise of democracy at the time of the American and French Revolutions was the 'goddess' of reason enthroned in modern society. And again, it is not an accident that the very first act of modern Fascism in every country has been officially and vigorously to dethrone this goddess and instead to make emotions and obedience the all-ruling principles in education and life from kindergarten to death. I am persuaded that scientific sociology and social psychology based on an intimate combination of experiments and empirical theory can do as much, or more, for human betterment as the natural sciences have done. However, the development of such as realistic, nonmystical social science and the possibility of its fruitful application presupposes the existence of a society which believes in reason."

(Lewin, 1997, p. 67)

One prays that Ukraine will prove to be such a society.

If so, reconstruction must include reinforcing and instilling democratic principles in general, and especially in the educational system and in the family. Lewin believed the same was essential to the reconstruction of Germany. In his 1941 article, *Democracy and the School*, he advocated that adults should treat the "... child as a thinking person. A child in a democratic atmosphere from his earliest days is not treated as an object but, as a person, is given explanation and reasons for the events in his surroundings, and especially for necessary limitations of his freedom; he is given the right to make himself understood, to ask questions, and to tell 'his side of the story.' He is given the chance to make a choice and to make his own decisions wherever this is reasonably possible. Such a child will build a better emotional basis for social living and will be prepared to shoulder responsibilities when he becomes mature enough to play with other children his age" (Lewin, 1999, p. 322).

In other words, even if you are teaching about democracy, but you are doing so by expecting students to only memorize the answers chosen by the authorities, and you are not encouraging them to speak and think for themselves, you are raising citizens who are prone to autocracy. Democratic behavior is not learned through loyalty and slogans (such as “we value freedom”), as previously stated, “Democracy cannot be imposed upon a person; it has to be learned by a process of voluntary and responsible participation” (Lewin, 1997, p. 37).

Last but not least, Lewin used his experience in Germany to study minority relations in a hostile environment, or what might be called racial tension today, and the tendencies of autocratic leaders to scapegoat minorities. Like a canary in a coal mine, prejudice *against any group* is a warning signal of anti-democratic tendencies in a culture. In his 1939 article, *When Facing Danger*, Lewin writes

“It should be understood that any underprivileged minority is preserved as such by the more privileged majority...Today again, it can easily be shown how any increase or decrease in the economic difficulties of the majority increases or decreases the pressure upon the Jewish minority. This is one of the reasons why Jews everywhere are necessarily interested in the welfare of the majority among whom they live.

It has been recognized long ago that the basis of anti-Semitism is partly the need of the majority for a scapegoat. Frequently in modern history it is not the majority as such but an autocratic group ruling the majority which needs the scapegoat as a means of distracting the masses. The most striking recent example is Mussolini’s sudden attack on the Italian Jews against whom practically no anti-Semitic feeling had existed before. The same Mussolini, who but a few years ago was favorably disposed toward Zionism, found it wise to follow Hitler’s example, or he may have been forced by Hitler to do so. Certainly nothing in the conduct of Italian Jewry has given the slightest cause for this change. Here again, the need of the majority or of their ruling elite alone has determined the fate of the Jewish community ...

Anti-Semitism cannot be stopped by the good behavior of the individual Jew, because it is not an individual, but a social problem.

How little relation exists between Jewish conduct and anti-Semitism is well illustrated by the way the majority shifts its official reasons for maltreatment. For hundreds of years the Jews have been persecuted for religious reasons. Today racial theories serve as pretext. The reasons are easily changed according to whatever seems to be the most efficient argument at the moment...in this country [the United States²] one of the most influential associations of manufacturers is working with two types of pamphlets. One of these pamphlets, used when a group of workers or middle-class people are approached, pictures the Jew as a capitalist and as an international banker. But if the same propagandist speaks to an audience of manufacturers, he uses a pamphlet which pictures the Jews as communists. The Jew answering accusations should realize that they are but a surface, below which deeper social problems are hidden even in those cases when the argument is put forth in good faith. The need of the majority for a scapegoat grows out of tension, e.g., from an economic depression. Scientific experiments prove that this need is particularly strong in tensions which are due to an autocratic regime. No “logical” argument will destroy these basic forces”.

(Lewin, 1997, p. 118)

2 Inserted by the author of this article.

The paradox is that to support democratic principles and erode authoritarian tendencies, Lewin was clear that democratic leaders needed to provide firm leadership, and that democracy could not afford to tolerate intolerance. In his 1944 article, *The Dynamics of Group Action*, he asserts

"The democratic leader is no less a leader and, in a way, has not less power than the autocratic leader. There are soft and tough democracies as well as soft and tough autocracies; and a tough democracy is likely to be more rather than less democratic. The difference between autocracy and democracy is an honest, deep difference, and an autocracy with a democratic front is still an autocracy..

It is particularly interesting to consider what might be called an efficient 'tough democracy.' The gospel of inefficiency of democracies has been preached and believed not only in Nazi Germany. We ourselves are somewhat surprised to see the democratic countries execute this war rather efficiently. When Lippitt's first study (1940) showed the beneficial effects which the democratic atmosphere has on the overt character of the member, how it changes his behavior from hostility to friendliness, from egocentrism to we-feeling, and to an objective matter-of-fact attitude, the argument was frequently presented that these results may hold in the friendly settings of a boys' club, but that the advantages of the democratic atmosphere would not stand up in a tough situation such as an industry requiring high efficiency".

(Lewin, 1999, p. 287)

Lewin believed that for democracy to work, freedom has to have limits, and democratically appointed leaders must enforce those limits "A democratic world order does not require or even favor cultural uniformity all over the world. The parallel to democratic freedom for the individual is cultural pluralism for groups. But any democratic society has to safeguard against misuse of individual freedom by the gangster or—politically speaking—the 'intolerant.' Without establishing to some degree the principle of tolerance, of equality of rights, in every culture the 'intolerant' culture will always be endangering a democratic world organization. Intolerance against intolerant cultures is therefore a prerequisite to any organization of permanent peace" (Lewin, 1997, p. 36).

The "intolerant" know no boundaries. The boundaries must be set for them or, as family systems theorist Edwin Friedman put it, they will spread like a virus. Empathy for the "rights" of the intolerant will only be used against the empathetic. According to Friedman,

"The form of human colonization that functions most similarly to a virus or a malignant cell is the totalitarian nation. No human entity is more invasive. The totalitarian nation is equally invasive of the lives of its citizens and the space of its neighbors ...The two are linked ... by the absence of self-regulation; they make no attempt to regulate their drive in either direction. They infect what they touch and they seek to replicate their own being by taking over any host they 'occupy.' They certainly do not know when to quit. It is this same lack of self-regulation and the inner integrity required for self-definition that makes totalitarian states as notoriously untrustworthy of agreements and treaties as a crime syndicate...and this brings us back...to the irrelevance of empathy in the face of a relentless force".

(Friedman, 1999, p. 148)

Lewin would certainly have agreed. Turning again to his "*Cultural Reconstruction*" paper he states

“It has been one of the tragedies of the German Republic that the democratically minded people who were in power immediately after the war confused democracy with ‘being unpolitical’ ... It was a tragedy that they did not know that ‘intolerance against the intolerant’ is ... essential for maintaining and particularly for establishing a democracy ... above all it was a tragedy that they did not know that strong leadership and an efficient positive use of the political power by the majority is an essential aspect of democracy. Instead, Germany congratulated herself on having ‘the freest Constitution in the world’ because technically even a small minority gets its proportional representation in the parliament. Actually, this set-up led to dozens of political parties and to the permanent domination of the majority by a minority group ...”

(Lewin, 1997, p. 37)

Appeasement of the more radical elements of society failed, even though the majority favored peace: “Even in Germany right after the last war the proportion of the population which turned to pacifism was probably larger than the group which started immediately to build for revenge ...” (Lewin, 1997, p. 36).

Lewin was a visionary about global peace and how to get there, but he was no proponent of always turning the other cheek, a lesson Ukraine has demonstrated. As Lewin put it

“Friendliness is no appropriate response to an aggressor. In recent years we have seen in world politics how undignified, morally distasteful and unwise is the policy of appeasing an aggressor. It is both shameful and stupid to talk to a man who is determined to destroy you. For the enemy such friendly talk means only that you are either too weak or too cowardly to fight him. We should not be mistaken about the following point either: the onlooker, who is not yet prejudiced, might be won over and brought to sympathize with an individual or a group of people who fight back with all their power against an aggressor, while he will show very little sympathy for people who bow to an insult. Britain has felt the truth of this simple observation rather keenly within the last two years.

I hope that Jews in America will recognize this truth before it is too late. There are now many among us who adopt the attitude of “talking things over” and “getting together” without the necessary discrimination. This attitude is entirely correct and advisable with friends and neutrals, but not if we have to deal with groups which have made up their mind to destroy us.

The Jew will have to realize, and he will have to realize it fast, that in fighting Nazis and their allies it does not pay to be polite. There is only one way to fight an enemy, and this is to return blow for blow, to strike back immediately, and if possible, harder. Jews can expect to get active help from others only if they themselves show that they have the courage and the determination to stand up for a fight of self-defense”.

(Lewin, 1997, p. 120)

Fortunately, when democracies take a stand, there is strong evidence that the same democratic principles that motivated the groups of children in Lewin’s experiments to take it upon themselves to keep working also motivates armies made up of democratic citizens. Let us turn to Victor Hansen, author of *The Soul of Battle*, who makes the case that the democratic culture, when necessary, produces a superior fighting force

“Democracies, I think—if the cause, if the commanding general, if the conditions of time and space take on their proper meaning—for a season can produce the most murderous armies from the most unlikely of men, and do so in the pursuit of something spiritual rather than the mere material ...

Theban hoplites, Union troops, and American GIs, this book argues, were ideological armies foremost, composed of citizen-soldiers who burst into their enemy's heartland because they believed it was a just and very necessary thing to do. The commanders who lead them encouraged that ethical zeal, made them believe there was a real moral difference between Theban democracy and Spartan helotage, between a free Union and a slave-owning South, and between a democratic Europe and a nightmarish Nazi continent. This study is more an essay on the ethical nature of democracies at war than a purely military history of three epic marches for freedom, for it claims that on rare occasions throughout the ages there can be a soul, not merely a spirit, in the way men battle".
(Hanson, 1999, p. 12)

Nonetheless, sustaining democracy through the willingness to fight is not the most desirable path. Even if it were, technological advances in the destructiveness of war will eventually make it unsustainable. Over-dependence on the military to sustain democracy also raises the specter of the "military-industrial complex" becoming an unhealthy influence, as per President Eisenhower's warning, and as many of founders of the United States feared. As James Madison put it in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, "A standing military force, with an overgrown Executive will not long be safe companions to liberty ... The means of defense against foreign danger, have been always the instruments of tyranny at home. Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war, whenever a revolt was apprehended. Throughout all Europe, the armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people" (Kohn, 1975).

Promoting democratic principles so as to decrease armed conflicts is a far better path and one which, if Hanson is right, makes the democratic culture all the more dangerous when forced to fight. Ukraine has proven that once again. A swing in postwar Ukraine toward the "security" of a more authoritarian government and culture, would potentially and ironically weaken the will to fight rather than reinforce it. Democracy is the best cultural path forward for peace and for war.

Conclusion

In sum, Lewinian social science was a guiding light for the reconstruction of Germany. It would be wise to apply the same to postwar Ukraine. The more engaged the people are in solving their own postwar dilemmas, the more clear intellectual resources are in providing active guidance, and the more clear government authorities are on the importance or rebuilding not just the infrastructure but also the social structure, the more likely a bright future for Ukraine will lie ahead. Indeed, Ukraine has a unique potential for become a guiding light for the world.

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