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Geography

Introduction

Ukraine means “border.” Boundaries of physical and cultural geography form the country: forest meets steppe, water meets land, and Europe meets Asia in the former frontiers of many empires and nations. Ukraine’s modern borders are with Romania (601 km/373 mi) and Moldova (1,202 km/747 mi) to the southwest; Hungary (128 km/80 mi) and Slovakia (97 km/60 mi) to the west; Poland (353 km/219 mi) to the northwest; Belarus (1,111 km/690 mi) to the north; Russia (1,944 km/1,2708 mi) to the north and east; and the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to the south.
Today Ukraine is the largest European nation, excluding Russia which spills over into Asia.\(^4\), \(^5\) Ukraine’s current shape and size are largely the result of military actions and socioeconomic policies of the former Soviet Union.\(^6\), \(^7\), \(^8\) The shrinking population of 44.43 million is 70% urban and 30% rural, distributed throughout 27 administrative districts: 24 oblasts (provinces) and the city-oblasts of Kyiv and Sevastopol.\(^9\), \(^10\) Before its annexation by Russia in 2014, the Crimean Peninsula was an autonomous republic within Ukraine.

### Geography

Ukraine lies almost entirely on the Eastern European Plain, at an average elevation of 175 m (574 ft).\(^11\) The country is divided into several broad geographic regions. Ukraine’s forest zone occupies the northern 20% of the country. Roughly 25% of the region is forested in pine, oak, birch, and alder trees. Peat bogs and marshes are common. Some agriculture also occurs in the region where there are sizeable plots of cereals, flax, and potatoes. Much of the area is cultivated for its natural pasture lands. Dairy and beef cattle operations are common.\(^12\), \(^13\), \(^14\)

The mountain zone makes up around 1% of Ukraine’s total area and is divided into two main sections. In the west are the Carpathian Mountains which average 600 to 2,000 m (1,969 to 6,562 ft) in elevation and include the nation’s highest peak—Mount Hoverla (2,061 m/ 6,762 ft). Along the southern coast lie the Crimean Mountains which are forested with natural alpine meadows, alpine grasses, and shrubs. The highest peak in this region, Mount Roman-Kosh, rises 1,545 m (5,069 ft).\(^15\), \(^16\)

Making up roughly 35% of Ukraine’s total area, the forest-steppe zone extends northeast from the northern shore of the Black Sea. Forests of oak, beech, and ash cover approximately 11% of the zone. Over 80% of the region’s fertile plains are heavily farmed. Wheat, corn, peas, beets, and potatoes are the primary crops, and grains are important commodity crops.\(^17\), \(^18\), \(^19\)

The steppe zone, located in the southern and southeastern sections of the nation, accounts for approximately 45% of Ukraine’s total area. More than 60% of the zone is
heavily farmed. One of the largest and most important regional crops is sunflowers. Maize is grown for fodder, and cattle and sheep husbandry is important. Grapes thrive in this climate.  

Climate

Ukraine’s temperate continental climate has warm summers and cold winters with snow blanketing the ground nearly three months of the year. The most pleasant months are May through September. There are considerable variations in temperature, however. Winters in western Ukraine are warmer and summers cooler than in the eastern regions. During July, the hottest month of the year, temperatures average 23°C (73°F) in the warmer southeast but drop to an average 18°C (64°F) in the northwest. In the summer, hot dry winds (sukhoviyi) blow from the east. In 2010, the highest summer temperature ever (41.3°C/106.3°F) was recorded in the eastern province of Luhansk. The coldest month of the year is January, which sees average temperatures of 5.5-7°C (42-45°F) in the cooler north and 11-13°C (52-55°F) in the warmer northeast. The mercury can, however, fall to -20°C (-4°F) in some parts of the country. Winter temperatures often feel colder due to the northeasterly winter wind known as the Bora. The extreme winter low of -42°C (-43.6°F) was recorded in the city of Playi. Rivers freeze in winter, interrupting navigation from December to March.

Average annual precipitation is about 60 cm (24 in) and is heaviest in the northwest. June and July usually see the maximum amounts of rain with February being the driest month. Less rainfall in the southeastern semiarid steppe requires irrigation for the region’s agriculture. Too much rain in the northwestern lowlands and mountains often causes flooding.
Bodies of Water

Rivers

Ukraine has thousands of small lakes, but the most important water resources are its nearly 23,000 rivers. Most of the rivers course in a southeasterly direction through the Ukrainian plains on their way to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Four of the most significant rivers are the Dniester (925 km/ 575 mi) and Southern Bug (806 km/ 501 mi) in the west, the Dnieper (1,121 km/ 697 mi) in the center, and the Donetsk (700 km/ 435 mi) in the east. The Southern Bug is the only one entirely within Ukrainian territory—the others flow from, along, or into neighboring countries. Other rivers Ukraine shares are the Northern Bug, which flows north along the Polish border, and the Danube, which empties into the Black Sea along the border with Romania. The Danube and Dnieper are navigable in Ukraine, in part because of engineered canals and dams. Soviet-era hydroelectric stations built along the Dnieper (with United States equipment and advice) created large reservoirs and submerged the historic Zaporizhian Rapids. Thousands of dams throughout the country regulate river flow, generate hydroelectricity, irrigate farm fields, and support fisheries.

Oceans and Seas

The Black Sea forms Ukraine’s southernmost border. It is the terminus of Ukraine’s primary rivers and home to many shipping ports. Commerce is crucial to the region, and the Black Sea zone sees extremely heavy traffic. The Ukrainian cities of Odesa and Illichivsk handle the majority of the shipping traffic. Heavy shipping has contributed to pollution. Oil spills in the region have endangered habitats. Pollution from the Dniester and Dnieper rivers pollutes the sea. Pesticides from farming, heavy metals from industrial waste, overfishing, and the introduction of non-native species have threatened marine habitats. The six nations of the Black Sea—Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine—signed the Convention for the Preservation of the Black Sea during the 1990s. Today, pollution levels remain high and threaten industry in the region.
The inland Sea of Azov, the world’s shallowest sea, forms part of the southeastern border of Ukraine. Linked to the Black Sea by the Kerch Strait, the Sea of Azov is an important body of water. Numerous rivers flow into the sea, depositing large amounts of silt that prevailing currents disperse in the sea. The silt is high in nutrients. The waters are nutrient rich, supporting a wide variety of marine life. The main species for harvest are anchovies and sardines. Transportation is a major industry in the region. Passengers are ferried to numerous ports along the sea coast. Coal, iron ore, building materials, oil, and other freight crisscross the sea. Violent storms can erupt in the region causing some ships to spill or jettison their freight. Past oil spills have caused great environmental harm to the area. A large sandbar on the western coast extends 113 km (70 mi), creating a web of inlets that separates the mainland from the Crimean Peninsula.

### Major Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population 2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kyiv (capital)</td>
<td>2,797,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kharkiv</td>
<td>1,430,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnipropetrovsk</td>
<td>1,032,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donetsk</td>
<td>1,024,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odesa</td>
<td>1,001,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaporizhzhya</td>
<td>796,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lviv</td>
<td>717,803</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Kyiv**

Kyiv spreads for 780 sq km (300 sq mi) along both sides of the Dnieper River in north central Ukraine; 170 km (106 mi) south and downstream of the border with Belarus, and 951 km (591 mi) north of the Dnieper’s exit into the Black Sea. Humans first occupied the area around 40,000 years ago; some 1,500 years ago, Kyivan Rus, the ancestral state of Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Russians, was established on the
high bluffs of the right (west) bank of the river. The city’s history is displayed in its buildings and monuments. A 20 m (66 ft) monument to Volodymyr the Great, who chose Byzantine Orthodox Christianity for the Rus, overlooks the site of the mass baptism of Kyivans in 988. Two eleventh century religious architectural ensembles, the cathedral of St. Sophia and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (Monastery of the Caves), are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. St. Sophia contains world-famous mosaics and icons, and houses the tomb of Yaroslav the Wise, son of Volodymyr. The Lavra, still a functioning monastery, maintains underground catacombs where respectful visitors may descend to view ancient mummified monks including St. Nestor, author of the earliest surviving chronicle of the Rus. The seventeenth century Kyivan Mohyla Academy, an early seat of Ukrainian higher education, closed in 1817, but reopened as a national university soon after independence.

Kyiv has been the site of many violent occupations since the Mongol invasion of the 13th century. When nationalists proclaimed Kyiv the capital of an independent Ukraine during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1918, the city was occupied by warring independents, Germans, White and Red Russians, and Poles. World War II left behind the Nazi “resettlement” site of Babi Yar. Today, Kyiv is not only the nation’s administrative, science research, and cultural capital, but a major manufacturing center and transportation hub for shipping, rail, and air.

Kharkiv

Ukraine’s second city, Kharkiv is the largest city in the industrial east. Located in the transitional forest-steppe belt at the confluence of three rivers, the city lies just 40 km (25 mi) south of the Russian border. It is home to a large Russian population—a minority in Ukraine but a majority in the city. Cossacks (“free men” of the steppe) built a seventeenth century fortress against Tatar raiders at the site, under the
formal jurisdiction of Muscovy. (Leading Cossacks were later absorbed into the Russian nobility, while others fell to peasantry and serfdom.) The Industrial Revolution brought many Russian immigrants to Kharkiv in the 19th century, while at the same time the city experienced a Ukrainian cultural renaissance.\textsuperscript{76, 77} In 1920, the city became Soviet Ukraine’s first capital until 1934 when the capital was moved to Kyiv.\textsuperscript{78, 79}

Large parts of Kharkiv were destroyed during both world wars. The historic Battle of Kursk ended in August 1943 when the Soviets thwarted a German tank attack and retook Kharkiv.\textsuperscript{80} Post-war Soviet construction created a modern city of massive buildings and public spaces, as well as a center for manufacturing industrial equipment such as diesel locomotives, mining and agricultural machinery, tractors, generators, steam turbines, tools, and electrical items.\textsuperscript{81} Kharkiv is also a communications center as well as a major highway and rail hub.\textsuperscript{82} Kharkiv, along with the rest of the industrial east, voted for Viktor Yanukovych in both the 2004 and 2010 presidential elections.\textsuperscript{83, 84}

**Dnipropetrovsk**

Dnipropetrovsk, roughly 450 km (280 mi) southeast of Kyiv along the Dnieper River, was founded in 1787 as Ekaterinoslav, named for Catherine the Great.\textsuperscript{85, 86, 87} For much of the 20th century, Dnipropetrovsk was closed to foreign visitors, while Soviet physicists and engineers came to study rocket science and build satellites and other military space projects.\textsuperscript{88, 89} The city’s Yuzhmash science-industry complex continues to be a world leader in these fields.\textsuperscript{90} Iron and steel are other major industrial products. Dnipropetrovsk has produced influential business and political leaders, from Leonid Brezhnev to Yulia Tymoshenko.\textsuperscript{91, 92} Today the city remains steadfastly pro-Ukrainian but its location, a mere 241 km (150 mi) from the separatist capital of the Donetsk People’s Republic, has caused some problems.\textsuperscript{93, 94}

**Donetsk**

Donetsk, near the eastern border with Russia on the headwaters of the Kalmius River, rests on the large coal deposits of the Donbas (Donets river basin) region. Welshman John Hughes founded the town in 1872 to produce iron rail.\textsuperscript{95, 96} The labor-intensive
heavy industries produced unions that played a pivotal role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine. In 2001, the city started its unique Forged Figures Park, now filled with almost 100 wrought-iron sculptures. Donetsk enterprises produce not only coal and iron, but steel, chemicals, textiles, apparel, furniture, and household appliances.

Today the city faces a certain amount of insecurity due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Donetsk is the capital city of the breakaway region known as the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). Many residents have secured firearms to protect themselves. Rebels police the streets. Refugees have been returning to the city since the halt in fighting. Infrastructure, especially water, is unreliable.

Zaporizhzhya

Zaporizhzhya about 85 km (53 mi) south of Dnipropetrovsk along the Dnieper River, is the historic home of the Zaporizhian Cossacks, who resisted outside authority—Tatars, Poles, other Cossacks, and finally Russian-sponsored Serbs and Romanians—from the 16th to the 18th centuries. The river island of Khortytsia, site of a Zaporizhian Sich (fortress), is now a national reserve with a history museum and presents a Cossack horse show. The ruins of other sikhis, as well as rapids that once prevented navigation between Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk, are now submerged under reservoirs created by a series of hydroelectric stations along the river. The dam at Zaporizhzhya is a source of employment and pollution. Area factories produce iron, steel, and chemicals.

Zaporizhzhya remains within Ukraine’s control though it is close to the break-away Donetsk People’s Republic and the Russian controlled cities of Mariupol and Donetsk.
Security has been a concern although the city has generally been spared the violence and fighting between Ukraine and Russian forces.\(^{108}\)

**Odesa**

Ukraine’s main commercial seaport is on the northwest coast of the Black Sea, 31 km (19 mi) north of the Dniester River estuary. Odesa is regarded as Ukraine’s most international city and currently claims residents from over 100 different countries.\(^{109, 110}\) Named for an ancient Greek colony, Odesa began in the 14th century as a Tatar fortress, and was subsequently claimed by Lithuania-Poland, Ottoman Turkey, and finally Catherine the Great as part of “New Russia.”\(^{111}\) Western Europeans governed Odesa on behalf of the czar in the beginning of the 19th century.\(^{112}\) Rail connections made Odesa a center for exporting grain and the city became imperial Russia’s second-most important port (after St. Petersburg).\(^{113}\)

Jews lived an unusually liberated life in Odesa during the 18th and 19th centuries, and Odessan Jews came to constitute roughly 30% of the city population. A community developed that supported a press and writers, as well as Russian Zionism and the Social Democratic Workers Party.\(^{114}\) Anti-Jewish riots and violence spread to Odesa in 1881 and 1905, and from 1920 the Soviets closed Jewish schools and synagogues. During World War II, Romanian and German occupiers deported and killed almost all the Jews in the city.\(^{115}\)

This southeastern port city has not escaped the political insecurity caused by the Ukraine crisis. Roughly 29% of Odesa’s population is Russian and protests between Ukrainians and Russians have been on the rise.\(^{116}\) Violence erupted in the streets between Russian separatists and Ukrainians resulting in more than 50 casualties.\(^{117, 118}\) Terrorists attacked the offices of the Ukrainian Security Service in September 2015, further adding to tensions.\(^{119, 120}\)
Lviv sits at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, an hour’s drive east of the Polish border. Prince Danylo of Halych named the new city for his son Lev in the 13th century, and it later passed through Polish, Cossack, Swedish, Austrian, Russian, German, and Soviet hands before becoming the western cultural and political center of independent Ukraine. The historic city center, still filled with ancient buildings and cobblestone streets, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Rynok Square is a fine place to enjoy a local brew on a summer evening. The university, one of Europe’s oldest, has Lviv Dormition (Orthodox) and Jesuit roots, and is now named for nineteenth century writer and nationalist Ivan Franko. The baroque St. George Cathedral is a historic seat of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Ukraine’s hybrid of Byzantine Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. The Lychakiv Cemetery, established in 1786, has become a park-like sightseeing destination. Ivan Franko is buried there, as are people of Lviv’s many different nationalities, veterans, and victims of numerous wars. Geographically distant from Russian supervision, Lviv developed a publishing industry in the nineteenth century that fostered the Ukrainian language and cultural identity. Lviv has been the site of many different efforts toward self-determination, including a 1980s dissident movement that produced the political party Rukh and eventually led to national independence.

Natural Hazards

Ukraine is at risk from a variety of natural hazards including earthquakes. The most seismically active regions are in the western, southwestern and southern parts of the country where the Carpathian and Crimean-Black Sea seismic regions are located. The single most active part of the country is near Zakarpattya. Earthquakes in the west generally measure less than 5.5 on the Richter scale, although tremors as high as 7.5 have been recorded. Other risks are weather related and include drought, temperature extremes, and storms that can cause severe flooding and landslides, especially in the southwestern regions. Floods are a frequent occurrence in about 27% of the nation. The most flood-prone regions of the country include the areas near...
the Carpathians, the Lower Danube River, and the Donbass. In 2014, for example, 750 people had to evacuate and thousands of homes were damaged near Lviv after torrential rains caused the Dniester River to overflow.

Severe weather can also cause problems. Extreme cold temperatures can cause damage to crops. Subfreezing temperatures also create hardships for people, especially the sections of the country where fighting is ongoing. In 2012, more than 130 people died after temperatures plummeted to -23°C (-9°F). In 2015, harsh winter temperatures prompted a mayor in the town of Genichesk near the Crimean border with Russia to appeal to the Russian president for aid. On the other hand, dangerously high temperatures can pose risks. In 2015, a persistent heat wave caused problems in Ukraine. In addition to causing discomfort for residents, heatwaves can also trigger summer storms which can cause flooding and drought. In 2011 and 2015, droughts threatened near one third of the nation’s wheat production. Forest fires have become doubly hazardous in areas polluted by industrial waste, most notably in the Chernobyl fallout region along the Belarus border.

Environmental Concerns

Ukraine’s natural environment is taxed by over a century of human activity that has intensified with population growth. Major challenges include pollution, inadequate supplies of potable water, deforestation, and radiation contamination. Air pollution is particularly problematic in the industrial sectors, including the areas of Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk, and Donetsk, where factories belch out sulphur dioxide and other chemicals. In 2012, the eastern city of Mariupol had the dubious distinction of having the most polluted air in the nation. Many of the nation’s water
sources are equally polluted. Urban and industrial waste is often dumped directly into the major rivers.\textsuperscript{155}

Land has been deforested, overgrazed, and overfertilized, thereby depleting soils and generating agricultural waste.\textsuperscript{156, 157} Rivers that were altered to produce power and irrigate arid lands have been polluted by agricultural, urban, and industrial runoff, lowering water quality and poisoning seas.\textsuperscript{158, 159, 160} Chernobyl is Ukraine’s most dramatic environmental disaster to date. The radioactive contamination will linger for decades, and the concrete sarcophagus covering the damaged reactor is in danger of failing.\textsuperscript{161, 162}

The requirements and consequences of war also threaten Ukraine’s environment.\textsuperscript{163, 164} Land mines from World War II remain, and surplus mines wait to be destroyed.\textsuperscript{165} Military industrial waste may be improperly disposed of because of a lack of civilian or public oversight.\textsuperscript{166} Nuclear waste is a threat to security and the environment.\textsuperscript{167, 168}
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Ukraine in Perspective

Chapter 1 | Geography

Assessment

1. Ukraine is a landlocked country, surrounded by Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, and Romania.

2. Major deposits of coal and iron ore in eastern Ukraine support heavy industry there.

3. The greatest amount of precipitation in Ukraine falls along the southeastern coast.

4. Water pollution in Ukraine is largely restricted to industrial factory waste along the country’s rivers.

5. The western city of Lviv has been an important site for the historical development of cultural identity and the recent movement to political independence.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. True
History

Introduction

Ukraine is an independent state with a long and complicated history. Neighbors Russia, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, and Romania all appear in the story of Ukraine, as do Lithuania, Austria, Germany, Scandinavia, Greece, Turkey, and Mongolia. Competing interpretations of Ukrainian history reach back 1,000 years to the early writings of saints and scholars in Kyiv. In the following centuries, winners, losers, and outside observers recorded multiple versions of historical events and eras. The challenge for the contemporary nation-state is to recognize the history that speaks for all the Ukrainian people.¹
Ancient Peoples

Hominids appeared in Ukraine during the Paleolithic period some 200,000 years ago. Both Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon (anatomically modern) humans lived in Crimea along the northern Black Sea coast around 30,000 B.C.E. Around 20,000 years ago humans had dwellings made of mammoth bones, and by 5000 B.C.E., they were making pottery, clay figurines, and farm tools at Trypillia (downstream of Kyiv on the Dnieper River). These “Trypillians” probably practiced shifting agriculture and cattle herding.

From about 3,000 years ago, a succession of sometimes nomadic, sometimes warlike peoples populated the region. First to arrive were the Cimmerians, probably from Iranian lands to the south. Next came the Scythians from Central Asia, who fought all challengers for centuries, defeating the army of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. Ruins of the fifth century B.C.E. Greek colony of Chersonesos (Greek for “peninsula”) are preserved near Sevastopol on the Crimean Black Sea coast. The Sarmatians broke Scythian power in the third century B.C.E., and dominated the territory until Germanic Goths migrated from the north in the second century C.E. Within a century, warrior Huns from Asia defeated the Goths, and Attila later ruled until his death in 453. Scandinavian Varangians (known as Vikings or Normans in western Europe) established trade outposts along the Dnieper River by the early ninth century.

Slavic peoples were settled in eastern and southern Europe as early as the second millennium B.C.E. During the early centuries of the Common Era, they began to separate into eastern, western, and southern groups, mixing with other peoples in each region. Historian Mykhaylo Hrushevsky, who became president of the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic in 1918, wrote that the Eastern Slavs developed into three distinct groups: the Ukrainians, interacting with Turks; the Belarusians, interacting with Lithuanians; and the Russians, interacting with Finns. Russian and Soviet historians wrote that the differences among Eastern Slavs were small, and that Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians share a single, Russian Slavic heritage.
Kyivan Rus

In 1982, the city of Kyiv celebrated its 1500th anniversary as the capital of Kyivan Rus. From settlements along the Dnieper, Kyivan Rus grew to include all the lands from Carpathia to the Volga River between the Baltic and Black seas, and was for a time the territorial state in Europe. According to tradition, Prince Kyi of the Polianians, one of several Slavic tribes along the Dnieper, founded Kyiv with his siblings in 482. Their successors fought each other to expand control of surrounding areas until Volodymyr (“the Great,” later “Saint”) consolidated rule in 980-1015. Chronicles describe the young Volodymyr as violent and licentious so that they may emphasize his transformation into a just ruler after his conversion to Christianity. Byzantine Orthodoxy gave to Volodymyr a divine right to rule, and to his subjects a source of shared identity. Kyivan Rus culture was enriched with Byzantine architecture, art, music, and literature. Volodymyr’s son, Yaroslav (“the Wise”) built St. Sophia Cathedral, which became his burial place. At St. Sophia, he established a school and library, where he had many books copied and translated from Greek into Old Church Slavonic, a liturgical language of the Slavic Orthodox churches. He is credited with the original book of the Ruskaia Pravda, the first Slavic law code.

Power struggles among related rulers were common in Kyivan Rus—when he died, Volodymyr was preparing to fight Yaroslav to collect unpaid tribute—and after Yaroslav’s death in 1054, conflicts among regional princes caused Kyivan Rus to decline. In 1169, Andrei Bogoliubskii of Suzdal (now in Russia) sacked Kyiv and took control of Kyivan Rus. In 1204, Prince Roman of Galicia-Volhynia conquered Kyiv. He was subsequently described as “grand prince, the sole ruler of all Rus.” In 1240, the Mongol Tatar sack of Kyiv marked the end of Kyivan Rus.
Galicia-Volhynia

Roman, the Prince of Volhynia (northwestern Ukraine), took the nearby territory of Halych (western Ukraine) in 1199 to form the powerful new principality of Galicia-Volhynia.39 (In later times, “Galician” became an identity that sometimes united Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, Jews, and other area residents). Roman died when his son and heir Danylo was only 3, and Danylo struggled to regain control of the entire principality until 1239 when he retook Kyiv. The Mongols soon destroyed Halych and Kyiv, and Danylo was forced to acknowledge Tatar rule. Seeking help, he turned to Pope Innocent IV, and agreed to accept Roman Catholic authority for the Galician church in 1253.40 In 1256, Danylo founded the city of Lviv, naming it for his son Lev, who reigned from Lviv after his father’s death in 1264. Lev’s grandsons died without male heirs, and the principality became fair game for neighboring competitors.41

The Rule of External Powers: Lithuania, Mongol Hordes, and Poland

In the 1300s, Lithuanian royalty married into Galicia and pushed the Tatars from the area.42, 43 The Grand Duchy of Lithuania controlled much of Ukraine and Belarus through the 15th century in what is sometimes referred to as the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state.44 ("Ruthenian" is a Latin derivation of “Rus").45, 46 During this time, the Lithuanians also allied with the Poles in royal marriages, Roman Catholicism, and the battle against the Teutonic Knights (from Germany).47 Orthodox Ruthenian nobility turned to the Russian principality of Muscovy in failed attempts to break away from the Lithuanian-Polish coalition.48

Descendants of the Mongols who had conquered Kyivan Rus ruled the steppe and the Crimean Peninsula for the next 500 years.49 But in the later 1400s, the Tatar Golden Horde disintegrated, and independent khanates emerged. In Crimea, the Giray Khanate had its own legal system, administration, currency, and army under the nominal rule of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The Giray made their living raiding mainland Ukraine for slaves and collecting tribute from Poland and Muscovy.50
In 1569, the Polish crown, already in control of Galicia, took from Lithuania the direct control of eastern Ukrainian territory in the Union of Lublin. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania retained the territory of Belarus.\(^5^1\) During the next 200 years, Ruthenian nobles were inculcated with the language, culture, and religion of the Polish aristocracy. Cities became filled with multinational tradesmen, merchants, and officials. Ruthenian peasants became landless serfs in Polish efforts to capitalize on grain exports.\(^5^2\) In the 1596 Union of Brest, Kyivan Orthodoxy agreed to acknowledge the authority of the Pope, creating the controversial Uniate Church. Poles became resented overlords as their ambitions reached all the way to Moscow.\(^5^3, 5^4, 5^5\)

Cossacks

The first Cossacks (from Turkic qazaq, “free man”) were fifteenth century Tatar mercenaries hired to protect the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Crimean khanate.\(^5^6, 5^7\) Soon others—not only Ruthenians and Muscovites, but also Moldovans, Poles, Jews, and Greeks—fled economic or religious persecution and sought self-determination in the “wild fields” of the steppe.\(^5^8\) By the mid-sixteenth century, Cossacks had sichs (fortresses) that housed and protected communities known as hetmanates, after the elected leader’s title of hetman. Sometimes Cossacks fought on behalf of one of the era’s dominant powers (Poles, Muscovites, Crimean Tatars, Ottoman Turks), and sometimes they raided villages and towns for their own motives. Poland registered Cossack military formations, and granted some Cossacks the privileges of the nobility. But by the end of the century, many Cossacks were rebelling against Poland.\(^5^9, 6^0, 6^1\)

In 1648, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, an Orthodox lesser noble of possible Cossack descent, began a personal vendetta with far-reaching consequences for Ukraine. To avenge the beating and deaths of loved ones at the hands of a Pole, Khmelnytsky convinced the Cossack Zaporozhian Host to rise up under his leadership.\(^6^2, 6^3\) He declared himself hetman of a Cossack (and Rus) state, then brought Tatar, Muscovite, and Swedish allies into the fight, and expanded the territories under Cossack control until his death in 1657.\(^6^4, 6^5\) In 1654, looking for an ally more reliable than the Crimeans, Khmelnytsky
negotiated the Treaty of Pereiaslav with Muscovy. Some historians view this as a temporary agreement that Khmelnytsky planned to replace with a Swedish alliance—a plan interrupted by his death. Others view it as the surrender of Cossack autonomy to Muscovy and the basis of Russian rule of Ukraine. \(^{66,67}\) Yet it would be another century before imperial Russia’s Catherine the Great formally (and forcibly) ended Cossack hetmanates. \(^{68}\)

**Russia**

By the seventeenth century, Muscovy was strong enough to appeal to Khmelnytsky as a military ally. After his death, Muscovite Russian influence grew in the Left Bank east of the Dnieper River. This was formalized in the 1667 Treaty of Andrusovo that divided Ukraine between Poland and Russia. \(^{69}\) In 1685–86, the Moscow Patriarch of the Orthodox Church achieved authority over the Kyiv Metropolitanate. \(^{70}\)

In the eighteenth century, Ukrainian resentment grew, challenging the rule of the Russian Empire. \(^{71}\) Ivan Mazepa, a registered Cossack hetman and advisor to Czar Peter I (“the Great”), turned against his ruler and fought for the King of Sweden at the Battle of Poltava in 1709. When the Swedish army surrendered, Peter’s forces executed Mazepa’s Cossacks, and Mazepa died in exile soon after. \(^{72}\) Peter and his court became less and less tolerant of Ruthenian “difference” and banned Ukrainian language publications in 1720. \(^{73}\) In 1762, a German princess who married Peter’s grandson ascended to the throne to become Catherine the Great. Remembered for a brilliant European court, she expanded her Russian Empire at great cost to many Ukrainians, ending the Cossack hetmanates and enserfing the peasants. \(^{74,75}\) When the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth fell, Catherine claimed lands all the way to Volhynia in the northwest, leaving only Galicia to Hapsburg Austria. \(^{76}\) Wars against the Ottoman Empire ended with the Russian annexation of Crimea, where Catherine’s early lover and longtime advisor Grigori Potemkin built Sevastapol and the Black Sea Fleet. \(^{77}\)

In the nineteenth century, Russia lost the Crimean War against the British, French, and Turks, after defending their naval base at Sevastapol for almost a year. \(^{78}\) Resentment against Russian czarist rule simmered, forcing Alexander II to abolish serfdom. \(^{79}\)
In eastern Ukraine, many freed peasants found jobs in the developing regional industries of mining and iron working. Interest in Ukrainian influence developed at universities in Kharkiv and Kyiv, inspired by the popularity of Western European philosophy, politics and culture. To combat this “Ukrainophilia,” imperial Russia arrested and exiled many nationalist-leaning intellectuals, most famously the poet and artist Taras Shevchenko, and again banned the printing or importing of Ukrainian language publications.

**Austrian Galicia**

In Austrian-ruled western Ukraine, similar events occurred in the 1800s. The reigning Hapsburgs, threatened by revolt, abolished serfdom. Freed peasants with neither land nor jobs began to immigrate to the Americas, carrying nationalist and early socialist ideas with them. Ukrainians demanded representation and rights equal to Poles in regional politics and society. Seminarians in Lviv developed nationalistic ideas, and Greek Catholic clergy began Ukrainian-language publications beyond the reach of imperial Russian control. Revolution broke out in 1848 with insurgents demanding the division of Galicia into two provinces: one Polish and the other Ukrainian. The revolt was quashed and in the aftermath, Austria ceded political control of the province to the Poles. Efforts at reconciliation between the Polish and Ukrainian groups largely failed and by the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnic tensions mounted culminating in the assassination of the Galician governor by a Ukrainian student in 1908.

**Revolutions, Wars, and Ukrainian Republics**

The early twentieth century saw rebellion against czarist rule throughout the Russian Empire. In Ukraine, industrial and agricultural laborers struck repeatedly in the revolution of 1905-07, and workers’ councils (called soviets in Russian, radas in Ukrainian) arose in many cities. Sailors on the battleship Potemkin mutinied at Odesa, and on the cruiser Ochakov at Sevastopol. When World War I broke out in 1914, more than 3 million Ukrainians fought for the Russian Empire, while about 250,000 western Ukrainians fought for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A borderland between the major powers, Ukrainian territory was a battle site where unknown numbers of soldiers and civilians died—one casualty estimate for the 1914 Battle of Lemberg (Lviv) is 250,000.
As empires collapsed during the war, Ukrainians tried to establish states independent of their fallen masters. When the czar was overthrown in the Russian Revolution of 1917, Ukrainians proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic in Kyiv. With the Hapsburg Empire collapsing in 1918, Ukrainians declared the Western Ukrainian Republic in Lviv. By the end of that year, the world war had concluded with Germany’s defeat, but Ukrainians and Poles continued to fight over Galicia, and the Bolshevik Red Army entered eastern Ukraine to quell Ukrainian nationalists and anti-Bolshevik “White” Russians. Civil war to the point of anarchy continued for several bloody years—for a time, the Poles and Ukrainians joined forces against the Soviets—and civilians suffered as well, especially Jews in the pogroms of 1919. The 1921 Treaty of Riga gave the western third of Ukraine to Poland, and the rest to Soviet Russia. Bolsheviks declared the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922.

Soviet Ukraine

Formation and early years

In 1919, the third All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets adopted the first constitution of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1920, the city of Kharkiv, near Russia and the resource-rich Donbas, became the first capital of Soviet Ukraine. In the beginning, Soviet leaders adopted a policy of “Ukrainization” as a means to strengthen Ukrainian acceptance of Soviet control. They recruited locals into Communist Party ranks and required officials (and later, the general populace, including resentful Russian speakers) to learn the Ukrainian language, history, and culture. Lenin’s New Economic Policy permitted some private enterprise; in particular, letting peasants reap personal benefits from surplus harvests. But in the 1930s, Stalin’s policies reversed course, enforcing economic industrialization, land and farming collectivization, and cultural Russification.

The primary event of early Soviet Ukrainian history is the Great Famine, or Holodomor, of 1932-33. In a tragically successful effort to destroy the “enemy class” of the rich rural peasant, Stalin imposed unattainably high quotas on the 1932 grain harvest.
Historian Andrew Wilson describes some of the consequences: systematic destruction of villages, mass starvation, and restriction of movement. Some resorted to cannibalism in order to survive. Soviet borders into Ukraine were closed to food imports.

Ukrainians in the Polish west and elsewhere protested the famine, and the Soviet consul in Lviv was assassinated in 1933 to force public awareness. Soviet officials denied the event or minimized its consequences. (In 2010, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych raised eyebrows when Holodomor information posted by previous president Viktor Yushchenko disappeared for a time from the presidential website).

While the Soviets suffered under Stalin, Ukrainians in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania were resisting assimilation. In Galicia, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church countered attempts to inculcate Polish identity upon Ukrainians. But in the Volhynian north, Ukrainian Orthodox believers were forcibly converted to Roman Catholicism. By the late 1920s, the underground militant Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was sabotaging and assassinating Poles. The killer of the Soviet consul in Lviv was also a member of the OUN.

World War II

Ukraine’s experience of the Great Patriotic War (as World War II was known to the Soviets) was similar to World War I. Ukrainians fought each other by allying with one of the main combatants—the Soviet Union or Germany—and by fighting for Ukrainian autonomy. Ukrainian territory saw years of terrible battles that left 80% of industrial and agricultural capacity destroyed, 10 million homeless, and 5 to 7 million dead. Fighting in Ukraine continued a decade beyond the war’s official end in 1945.

The war began with the Soviet occupation of Polish and Romanian western Ukrainian territories in 1939, sanctioned by a secret, German-Soviet non-aggression pact. When the Germans invaded the U.S.S.R. in 1941, some Ukrainians welcomed them as liberators. Germany soon disappointed by arresting OUN members, returning liberated Ukrainian territories to Poland and Romania, and killing Jews. Ukrainian peasants
were forced to continue collective farming, or worse, were sent to Germany as slaves. Underground resistance developed among both Soviet partisans and the nationalist Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), who fought each other as well as the Nazis.\(^\text{112}\)

In 1943, Germany began to withdraw from Ukraine, and by November, the Soviets were back in Kyiv. Guerrilla nationalists in western Ukraine continued to fight while the Red Army retook the region. End-of-war settlements extended Soviet Ukraine’s western territories into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania.\(^\text{113}\)

Postwar Stalinism proved almost as damaging as before. Hundreds of thousands of suspected dissidents were transported to Siberia. Russification reached into western Ukraine, including the arrest of the entire Greek Catholic Church hierarchy and its forced reunion with the Russian Orthodox Church.\(^\text{114}\)

**From Khrushchev to Gorbachev**

As Ukraine’s Communist leader in the late 1930s, Nikita Khrushchev conducted a party purge for Stalin.\(^\text{115, 116}\) When he rose to national power after Stalin’s death in 1953, Khrushchev tolerated some “Ukrainization,” even appointing a Ukrainian to lead the local Communist Party. In 1954, much was made of the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav as a symbol of Russian-Ukrainian fraternity, and Crimea was transferred to Ukraine. In 1956, Khrushchev’s “secret speech” denouncing Stalin moved some Ukrainians to reopen formerly taboo topics and rehabilitate former enemies of the state. For the next three decades alternating frosts and thaws in Moscow-Kyiv relations saw the development of Ukrainian history studies and the circulation of dissident samvydav (self-published) literature, but also the reduction of Ukrainian language education and the exile of human rights activists. Ukraine’s agricultural and industrial output, which accounted for one-fifth of the Soviet economy, ultimately slowed.\(^\text{117}\)

In 1986, the year when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) throughout the U.S.S.R., another significant event of Soviet Ukrainian history occurred—Chernobyl. Still the worst human-caused A radioactive sign hangs on barbed wire outside a café in Pripya in history, the breakdown
of the nuclear power reactor immediately killed 31 (and later, thousands more), and irradiated 258,980 sq km (100,000 sq mi) of territory in Ukraine and elsewhere—for centuries, perhaps millennia.\textsuperscript{118, 119, 120} Many analysts now view the accident and its aftermath as the event that began the end of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{121, 122, 123} Within a few years, independent Ukraine would inherit the ongoing problems of containing the reactor fuel and compensating the victims.\textsuperscript{124, 125, 126}

**Independent Ukraine**

By 1988, rallies in Kyiv and Lviv were calling for national autonomy, and in 1989 the Ukrainian Writers’ Union formed Rukh (movement), the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Reconstruction. In 1990, electoral law was changed to institute direct voting for representatives to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet (the national legislative body), and the newly elected deputies declared Ukraine’s state sovereignty to be above that of the U.S.S.R.\textsuperscript{127, 128} President George H.W. Bush warned Ukraine against “suicidal nationalism” in July 1991 because the United States was concerned about the capability of a new state to secure nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{129, 130, 131} But in August 1991, the KGB (Soviet state security) briefly held Gorbachev prisoner at his summer home in Crimea during an attempted coup. Within days, the Ukrainian Parliament proclaimed independence from the Soviet Union, and soon banned the Communist Party of Ukraine. Voters throughout Ukraine approved the declaration of independence in a December national referendum, and the new state of Ukraine was soon recognized by Poland, Canada, Hungary, Russia, and the Baltic states.\textsuperscript{132}

Ukraine has been proud and protective of its new sovereignty. The new nation limited its participation in the Commonwealth of Independent States, a post-Soviet federation.
of former republics, to focus on independent state building: forming an army, creating a banking system, and issuing currency. Internal security issues arose early in Crimea. The needs of some 250,000 returning Tatars, who had been deported en masse by Stalin at the close of World War II, clashed with the concerns of the ethnic Russians who had replaced them, particularly the former Soviet military presence in Sevastapol.\textsuperscript{133, 134} Some Ukrainians looked west for economic, political, and social support. Ukraine signed a cooperation agreement with NATO in 1997 and pursued a closer partnership until 2010.\textsuperscript{135, 136} In 2001, John Paul II became the first pope to visit Ukraine.\textsuperscript{137} Yet some Ukrainians disapproved of NATO actions in Kosovo, and Orthodox Ukrainians protested the Pope’s visit.\textsuperscript{138, 139} In 2004, Ukraine disregarded Romanian and European Union objections to opening a canal from the Danube to the Black Sea.\textsuperscript{140}

**The Orange Revolution**

Corruption, censorship, and violence plagued the administrations of Ukraine's first presidents, Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma.\textsuperscript{141} Yet Ukraine acted democratically in its Orange Revolution of 2004, named for the campaign color of political leader Viktor Yushchenko. He had been the opposition prime minister for a time under Kuchma, and advocated for a government that operated transparently and took responsibility for its actions. When a rigged election went to Kuchma's preferred successor Viktor Yanukovich, Yushchenko and his supporters took to the streets for 17 days of nationwide nonviolent protest, and eventually brought about a new election that Yushchenko won.\textsuperscript{142} Yushchenko’s presidency was diminished by political infighting with his prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko. Ukraine-Russia relations, prickly from the start, also deteriorated. Russia stopped gas flow to and through Ukraine in 2006 and in 2009, affecting Europe as well as Ukraine.\textsuperscript{143}
Recent History

By 2010, Yushchenko’s popularity had plummeted. Longtime rival Victor Yanukovych won the presidency and turned toward Russia and away from the West. Yanukovych instituted several foreign policy actions to appease Russia: He extended Russia’s Black Sea naval base leases for decades, halted Ukraine’s movement toward NATO membership, and refused to describe the Holodomor as a genocidal action of Russian Soviets against Ukrainians. Inside Ukraine, regulatory changes regarding parliament, judges, and elections, as well as the cancellation of the 2004 Orange Revolution constitutional reforms, gave the presidential office more power.

Yanukovych’s announcement that he would not sign a long-planned agreement with the European Union in 2013 sparked violent protests in Kyiv. Protestors took to the streets demanding Yanukovych’s resignation. In February, the two sides agreed to install an interim government and hold new elections. Yanukovych fled the nation.

In the heavily Russian Crimea, armed pro-Russian separatists occupied the parliament building and raised the Russian flag. On 6 March, the Crimean Parliament voted to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation. Ten days later, 97% of the residents voted for secession. Over a huge international outcry and strenuous objections from Ukraine’s government, Russia officially annexed Crimea into the Russian Federation on 18 March 2014. Russian troops quickly occupied bases throughout Crimea including the Ukrainian naval headquarters in Sevastopol.

The EU and other Western nations rushed support Ukraine’s position even as Russia continued to strengthen its hold on Crimea. As tens of thousands of Russian troops massed near the border, pro-Russian rebels stormed governments in several eastern
cities. The military battles between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels continued for months, displacing many residents and causing many civilian casualties.\textsuperscript{153, 154, 155}

Ukraine’s newly elected president, Petro Poroshenko, tried to restore peace but the fighting continued. By January 2015, more than 5,000 people had been killed in the fighting. In February 2015, a peace plan was in place.\textsuperscript{156, 157, 158} Peace has not yet come to Ukraine where Ukrainian and rebel forces clash daily. There have been 28,000 casualties and 9,600 deaths since the conflict began.\textsuperscript{159, 160}
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137 Popes were exiled to Crimea in Byzantine times.


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Assessment

1. Ukraine declared independence after the Orange Revolution in 2004.

2. Lev ruled the western Ukrainian principality of Galicia-Volhynia from the city named for him, Lviv.

3. Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon tribes colonized Ukraine around the time of the Varangians.

4. Descendants of Mongol Tatars occupied the Crimean Peninsula for hundreds of years.

5. By declaring independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine ended its ties to Russia and became an entirely European nation.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False
Chapter 3 | Ukraine in Perspective

Economy

Introduction

After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine liberalized its economy but resistance to reforms stalled progress. Partly as a result, by the end of the twentieth century, output had fallen to about 40% of its 1991 levels. New efforts at economic reform focused on bringing more jobs into the formal economy. While these efforts helped shrink Ukraine’s shadow economy, much more work remains. In spite of internal political struggles, the economy rebounded between 2000 and 2008. Ukraine’s heavy dependence on Russian energy, however, has exposed the economy to external pressures, especially fluctuating energy prices. In 2009, the economy began another downward spiral, contracting 15%.\textsuperscript{1, 2}
In spite of some support from western Europe, Ukraine’s economy slid even further. In 2015, the economy fell 12.5% and inflation was nearly 51%. The east of the country has been especially affected, with production falling between 32 and 43%. In the western sections, industrial growth has actually expanded by 4%. Predictions for growth in 2017 are a paltry 0.6% with inflation expected to hover around 12%. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to a series of loans to keep the economy afloat in 2014 and 2015, but little of that money has actually reached the country. Current political instability may delay payments even longer, placing the nation at further risk of economic collapse.

**Agriculture**

Over half of Ukraine is covered in the black chernozem soils which helps make the country one of the most fertile agricultural areas of the world. The agricultural sector has been the only part of the economy to defy the current downward economic spiral. Even so, agriculture accounts for only 10-13% of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs only about 6% of the labor force. Wheat, barley, rapeseed (canola), and sunflowers account for about 55% of agricultural output. Other important crops include corn, sugar beets, tobacco, legumes, fruits, and vegetables.

Livestock is an important subsector of the agricultural economy. Cattle and pigs are raised mainly in the forest-steppe regions. Beef cattle are common in the region near the Carpathian foothills. Sheep and goats are farmed in the Carpathian Mountains and in the southern steppe. Dairy farming has suffered as a result of the tensions with Russia and is expected to drop off in 2016, especially if Ukraine cannot find new export markets. Poultry is raised throughout the nation, mainly for eggs. Meat production is
on the rise and meat exports have been one of the few bright spots in the economy in recent years. Exports are on the rise and could increase more when the European Union grants Ukraine permission to export its meat to EU-member nations.\textsuperscript{15, 16}

Ukraine’s agricultural producers face many challenges. Bad weather can create poor harvests. Land ownership continues to elude private hands, particularly smaller growers. Most lands are controlled by investors. Restrictions to land access and land ownership focus production mostly on wheat, leading to a lack of crop diversification. Banks avoid loans without the collateral of a clear title to land. Without capital investment, agricultural technologies and practices become increasingly obsolete. State intervention in food prices and markets appears to diminish profits for producers.\textsuperscript{17, 18}

\textbf{Industry}

Under Soviet rule, Ukraine’s industries grew and developed. Major industries include power generation, fuels, chemicals, gas, machines, wood, and food production. The largest subsector is machine building, accounting for about 33\% of manufacturing jobs and 25\% of industrial assets.\textsuperscript{19, 20, 21} Much of Ukraine’s industrial infrastructure was devastated by World Wars I and II. The breakup of the Soviet Union caused a decline in production when government subsidies ended and guaranteed markets disappeared. Modest growth returned in the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{22, 23} Industry currently employs 26\% of the labor force and contributes about 24\% of GDP (2015 est.).\textsuperscript{24} Manufacturing accounts for roughly 53\% of national exports.\textsuperscript{25} Fuels and mining products account for another 13\%.\textsuperscript{26}

Ukraine is rich in the ores, fuels, and raw construction materials needed for massive infrastructure projects—mines, dams, foundries, factories, canals, ports, rails, roads, and nuclear power plants—and for the manufacture of energy, metals and machinery, petroleum and chemical products, glass and paper. Industrial workers also make processed foods, beverages, tobacco products, textiles, and leather goods.\textsuperscript{27} Most of the heavy industries, especially for fossil fuels, are located in the Donetsk region. Other smaller centers are located around Kryvbas, Nikopol, and Zakarpattia.\textsuperscript{28} Ukraine
remains among the world’s top producers of steel and pig iron. Recent privatization in the metallurgical sector did not insulate these industries from the economic downturn of 2008-2009, when the local steel market dropped 50% and caused a similar drop in production. Ferrous metal production declined significantly in 2013. Ukraine’s coal industry remains economically important. In 2012, Ukraine ranked fourth in coal production in Europe.

**Energy and Natural Resources**

Ukraine is one of the world’s largest energy consumers, due in large part to its manufacturing industry. In 2013, roughly 36% of energy was derived from coal, followed by natural gas (36%), and nuclear power (18%). Over half of its natural gas is imported, mostly from Russia. The country is heavily dependent its 15 nuclear energy facilities for electricity production. Ukraine mines about 30% of the uranium used in its plants, but must send it to Russia for processing into fuel. Ukraine buys all its processed nuclear fuel from the Russian company TVEL, but is looking at alternate supply options. In 2012, only two of the nation’s seven petroleum refineries were operating. Much of the national oil supplies were lost to Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Ukraine announced plans to go to court to recover lost revenues from the resources. Only 6% is hydroelectric power.

In addition to its energy resources (i.e. coal, oil, and natural gas), Ukraine is rich in minerals. Among the largest deposits are iron ore, manganese, titanium, bauxite, nepheline, alunite, and mercury. Ukraine is also home to a great variety of soils, some of which are the most fertile in the world.
Trade and Investment

For most of the decade between 2006 and 2016, Ukraine carried a negative balance of trade. In November 2016, Ukraine’s trade deficit totaled USD 235.5 million.\(^44\), \(^45\) The nation’s major exports include steel, coal, fuel and petroleum products, chemicals, machinery equipment, and grains. As of 2015, Ukraine’s largest export partners were Russia (12%), Turkey (7%), China (6%), Egypt (5%), Italy (5%), and Poland (5%).\(^46\), \(^47\) Ukraine’s major imports include energy, machinery and equipment, and chemicals. Its major import partners in 2015 were Russia (20%), Germany (10%), China (10%), Belarus (6%), Poland (6%), and Hungary (4%).\(^48\), \(^49\)

Ukraine receives a significant amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) dollars. Between 1998 and 2016, FDI in Ukraine averaged USD 1,048.57 million.\(^50\) Investment dollars to the nation dropped in 2015, partly as a result of the uncertainty related to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the continued state of unrest in the eastern regions. To help encourage investment, Ukraine implemented a number of reforms designed to improve the business climate.\(^51\), \(^52\), \(^53\) The largest sums of money in 2015 came from Cyprus (27%), Netherlands (13%), Germany (12%), Russia (7%), Austria (6%), and the United Kingdom (4%).\(^54\) The bulk of those sums were bound for the industrial, construction, trade, and agriculture sectors.\(^55\), \(^56\)

Tourism

In 2014, Ukraine’s tourism industry directly accounted for nearly 2% of national GDP and employed 333,000 people (1.7% of the labor force). When considering indirect contributions and employment, tourism accounted for 7.1% of total GDP and employed 6.4% of the labor force.\(^57\) Leisure travel accounted for the lion’s share of tourism revenues (93%) and the majority of were domestic (64%).\(^58\) In 2014,
roughly 13 million international travelers visited Ukraine. The majority came from neighboring nations, particularly Moldova, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Romania, and Hungary.\textsuperscript{59}

Ukraine has vast tourism potential but remains underdeveloped and in need of better infrastructure.\textsuperscript{60, 61, 62, 63} The country is working to improve passenger rail and air networks, including high-speed trains and international budget airlines.\textsuperscript{64} A wide variety of destinations, including historical sites to health spas, are attractive to tourists. Museums, religious sites, and historic rural villages are also popular.\textsuperscript{65, 66} Hunters, hikers, skiers, and spa-lovers visit the Carpathian Mountains.\textsuperscript{67, 68} Other popular tourist activities are Dnieper River cruises between Odesa and Kyiv, Cossack performance experiences, and even tours of Chernobyl.\textsuperscript{69, 70}

**Banking and Finance**

Ukraine operates a two-tiered banking system. The first tier is the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) which is charged with maintaining the stability of the national currency. NBU began as the Kyiv office of the State Commercial Bank (of imperial Russia) in 1839.\textsuperscript{71} The NBU’s mandate to ensure the stability of independent Ukraine’s monetary unit, the hryvnia (UAH), was formalized in the 1996 constitution.\textsuperscript{72, 73}

The second tier consists of commercial banks which provide traditional banking, lending, and investment services to their clientele.\textsuperscript{74} By January 2015, approximately 182 banks were operating in Ukraine. A handful of them controlled nearly half of sector assets. Most banks (71\%) are located in and around Kyiv.\textsuperscript{75, 76} Most of Ukraine’s banks are state- or locally-owned, although approximately 20\% are owned by foreign interests. Most are Russian-owned, but Austria also has a large presence. Many foreign banks left Ukraine after the financial crisis.
of 2008 and it appears more are poised to leave as the economy fails to recover.\textsuperscript{77, 78} The economic crisis has stressed banks and caused a number of closures. Low margins, increased credit risks, and the continuing devaluation of the national currency, the hryvnia, are likely to create more closures.\textsuperscript{79, 80}

The Ukrainian stock market is largely a local affair. Company ownership is concentrated in the hands of Ukraine’s six major financial groups.\textsuperscript{81, 82, 83} There are several stock exchanges, most of which were started to handle the privatization of particular state properties.\textsuperscript{84} The PTFS is the dominant public exchange. Originally supported with NASDAQ technology for electronic trading, the PTFS is reportedly moving to Russian software after volume problems in 2008.\textsuperscript{85, 86}

### Standard of Living

By international reckoning, Ukraine is a lower middle income country with high human development, ranking 81st of 188 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index of 2015.\textsuperscript{87} Ukraine’s life expectancy at birth is now 71.6 years.\textsuperscript{88} Life expectancy for males continues to be nearly 10 years less than for females.\textsuperscript{89} The top causes of death—coronary disease, stroke, liver disease, cancer, and lung diseases—are often preventable and are related to lifestyle.\textsuperscript{90}

The standard of living for ordinary Ukrainians has dropped significantly in recent years due mainly to a failing economy. In November 2015, Ukraine’s Ministry of Social Policy stated that the minimum livable wage for employed adults was UAH 2,785 (USD 107).\textsuperscript{91} Average monthly wages nationwide in 2015 were roughly UAH 4,362 (USD 168). Men’s wages were nearly 36% higher than their female counterparts (UAH 4,676/USD 180 for men vs UAH 3,437/USD 133 for women).\textsuperscript{92, 93} Wages were considerably higher in the capital of Kyiv where they averaged UAH 7,126 (USD 275) compared to the lowest wages in the nation in Chernivtsi (UAH 3,139/USD 121).\textsuperscript{94} Although the
official estimates in 2013 placed the poverty rate at about 8%, more recent estimates suggest the number is much higher.\textsuperscript{95} Some sources suggest that between 32 and 80\% of Ukrainians live in poverty defined as living on less than USD 5 per day. \textsuperscript{96, 97, 98} The situation is likely to worsen as inflation and unemployment rise.\textsuperscript{99}

**Employment Trends**

By the end of 2015, Ukraine’s labor market was depressed and the demand for labor had dropped. The number of unemployed soared to 1.6 million or 9\% of the working age population. Unemployment among the young, those under age 26, was 22\%, more than twice the national average. Rural unemployment was marginally higher than in urban areas (9.2\% vs 8.9\%). The decline in jobs ran across the full economic spectrum. Many Ukrainians have been forced to take part-time work. About half of all part-time jobs were in the industrial sector. Roughly 27\% of Ukrainians were employed in the informal sector. People aged 15-24 or between 60 and 70 years of age had the highest rates of informal employment. Unemployment is likely to continue to drop in 2016 with no real improvement expected in Ukraine’s economy. The pharmaceutical and information technology sectors, however, are one potential bright spot with positions in those areas expected to increase.\textsuperscript{100}
Public vs. Private Sector

At independence, Ukraine’s Soviet centrally-planned economy was, by definition, entirely in the public sector. In the disentanglement of Ukrainian interests from the larger Soviet economy, privatization often transferred valuable state holdings from the control of Communist Party elite to post-Soviet biznesmeni (an unflattering term applied to disreputable capitalists). \(^{101}\) Many Ukrainians, both inside and outside of government, were unhappy with diminishing state control and support, and the government later mandated national ownership of several resources and industries, including agricultural land and the natural gas monopoly Naftogaz. \(^{102}\) In 2015, 1,800 companies remained in the hands of the government. Most of these companies are in the energy and infrastructure sectors. Although the government expressed intentions to increase the privatization of these companies in 2015, the plan has been put on hold for a year. \(^{103},^{104}\) Ukraine is under continuing pressure from external agencies to turn once more toward privatization, in order to attract the foreign direct investment necessary to rescue failing enterprises. \(^{105},^{106},^{107}\)
Endnotes for Chapter 3: Economy


22 Jane’s, “Ukraine: Economy,” Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS, 10 February 2016.


31 Jane’s, “Ukraine: Economy,” Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment–Russia and the CIS, 10 February 2016.


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1. Agriculture is Ukraine’s most productive economic sector.


3. Since independence, privatization has ended the Soviet-style state control of agriculture and industry.

4. The overwhelming percentage of tourism comes from domestic leisure travel.

5. Foreign banks are prohibited from operating in Ukraine, where all banks must be state-owned.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False
Chapter 4 | Ukraine in Perspective

Society

Introduction

The Ukrainian people are often described as outgoing, genial, fun, and emotional. Although considered very pragmatic, Ukrainians also have a generally optimistic view of life, a sense of humor, and the ability to laugh at themselves.\(^1\) At the same time, foreign visitors often describe Ukrainians as brusque, rude, and intolerant of differences. These impressions may derive from the fact that Ukrainians often feel threatened by ambiguous situations. Following longstanding tradition without change is one way to minimize exposure to ambiguity. This helps explain why interactions with strangers are often formal and distant.\(^2,3\) Family and friends are more treasured
than jobs or careers. Personal relationships help shield individuals against life’s many difficulties. Ukrainians form lasting and loyal relationships with family and friends who can always be counted on to render aid and assistance.\textsuperscript{4, 5}

For much of its history, Ukraine endured turmoil while its lands and people were partitioned by other nations including Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Russia, and the Soviet Union. Yet even under Soviet rule, the Ukrainian people continued to nurture their national identity and culture.\textsuperscript{6} Most Ukrainians were happy when their leaders declared an independent nation-state in 1991. But the slow pace and uncertain direction of change in the following years disappointed many. Social inequities among classes, genders, linguistic and ethnic groups remained, and economic disparities grew.\textsuperscript{7} In 2013, ethnic divisions became more visible when the overwhelmingly Russian-speaking population of Crimea voted to join Russia. Fighting between separatists and the government broke out.\textsuperscript{8, 9} Although a peace plan was implemented in February 2015, sporadic fighting persists and peace remains elusive.\textsuperscript{10, 11} Partly as a result, Ukrainians find their standard of living has eroded and many now have fallen into poverty.\textsuperscript{12-15} In spite of these challenges, the Ukrainian people have once again proven their resilience as they join together to rebuild their nation and preserve their Ukrainian identity.\textsuperscript{16}

### Ethnic Groups and Languages

The government currently counts 130 nationalities and communities in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{17} The largest ethnic groups are Ukrainians (77.8\%) and Russians (17.3\%).\textsuperscript{18, 19} There are small ethnic populations from Ukraine’s other neighbors: Belarusians (0.6\%), Poles (0.3\%), a few Slovaks (among 1.8\% of reported “others”), Hungarians (0.3\%), Romanians (0.3\%), and Moldovans (0.5\%), as well as Crimean Tatars (0.5\%), Bulgarians (0.4\%), Jews (0.2\%), Greeks, and Roma.\textsuperscript{20, 21, 22} Among these minority populations are the Hutsul, Boiko, and Lemko (a.k.a. Rusyn) peoples of the Carpathians in western Ukraine, who have maintained traditional ways of life suited to the mountainous, sparsely populated region.\textsuperscript{23, 24, 25}

The only official national language is Ukrainian, which is spoken by roughly 68\% of the population. Russian is an important regional...
language and spoken by roughly 30% of the population. Twenty-four other languages are spoken among the various ethnic groups including Crimean Tatar, Moldavian, and Hungarian. Languages spoken by at least 10% of the population in a given oblast may be considered a “regional” language meaning it may be used as the medium of instruction in schools, courts, and other government offices.

**Religion**

Ukraine is a secular nation providing for religious freedom. Most Ukrainians are Christian and roughly 67-70% belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Within Ukraine, the Eastern Orthodox Church is not unified, but has three branches. The largest branch (22.4%) is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP). Created in June of 1992 as part of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, most followers are concentrated in western Ukraine and a few centrally located oblasti. The second largest branch is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) (17.4%). The UOC-MP claims direct descent from the original Ukrainian church founded in 988 C.E. It owns the majority of Eastern Orthodox churches in Ukraine and has its highest concentrations in eastern and southern Ukraine. The third and smallest branch (0.7%) is the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) with approximately 70% of its members living in western Ukraine. The UAOC remains independent of all other churches and is not recognized by ecumenical Orthodox churches.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is strong in western Ukraine. This church was aggressively attacked by Stalinist Russia. UGCC followers, who survived for years in hiding and in the diaspora that fled Stalin’s purges, returned to Ukraine in 1991. The Church claims about 4 million members and is a majority religious group in three western oblasts: Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil. In western

![View of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, Ukrainian Orthodox Church](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

![Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Vinnytsia](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
Ukraine, the Roman Catholic Church has a following of approximately 1 million, mostly ethnic Poles or Ukrainians of Polish descent.51, 52

Ukraine has a small Protestant community (1%). The largest Protestant group is the Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine. Other significant groups include Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormons.53

Ukraine has a small non-Christian population. The Muslim population numbers between 500,000 and 2 million, depending on the source. The majority of Muslims are Crimean Tatars, concentrated in the Crimean Peninsula.54 There is a small Jewish community consisting of between 100,000 and 370,000 members.55, 56 Even smaller numbers of Buddhists, Falun Gong, and Krishna Consciousness are also present.57

Cuisine

Ukrainian cuisine is as diverse as its population. Breads and cereals, vegetables and fruits, dairy products, poultry, pork, beef, and fish have local sources and traditional Ukrainian preparations. Ukrainians (and most of their neighbors) claim to be the originators of hearty peasant dishes like borscht (beet soup), varenyky (pasta-like boiled dumplings stuffed with everything from cheese to cherries), and holubtsi (cabbage rolls).58, 59, 60, 61 Steppe-grown grains combined with local honey, fruits, and poppy seeds become festive holiday breads. Kasha (buckwheat) and other grains are also served as a side dish or hot breakfast cereal.62, 63, 64 Salo, flavorful pig fat, is eaten like butter or cheese, and is sometimes prepared with bacon or garlic (or, as a gag gift, dipped in chocolate).65, 66, 67 Salo, pickles, and smoked or salted fish are popular snacks served with alcohol. Over the centuries Ukrainian cuisine has absorbed the flavors and techniques of Tatars, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, and Moldovans.68, 69, 70

Tea is the hot drink of choice in Ukraine.71, 72 In summer, street vendors appear with vats of kvas, a root beer-like drink fermented from rye bread. Horilka, Ukrainian vodka, is distilled from grain or potatoes and often flavored with honey, fruits, or
spices, especially chili peppers (horilka z pertsem). The British ambassador to Ukraine recently suggested that horilka might be protected as national intellectual property, like France’s champagne or Mexico’s tequila. Odesa and Kyiv produce “Soviet champagne,” and Lviv claims the oldest brewery and some of the best beer of the former Soviet Union. Odesa and Kyiv produce “Soviet champagne,” and Lviv claims the oldest brewery and some of the best beer of the former Soviet Union. Cost-conscious Ukrainians buy close to half their beer in plastic containers rather than more expensive glass.

**Traditional Dress**

Today Ukrainians typically wear traditional outfits only for folk arts performances or special occasions. The cut, colors, and patterns of the basic white embroidered shirt identify the gender, age, ethnicity, and activity of the wearer. Men wear their shirttails either out over narrow pants or tucked into sharovary (baggy trousers). A sleeveless jacket and an embroidered or tasseled waistband were common. Traditional men’s dress also includes a kozhukh, a long, sometimes embroidered robe, and boots.

Women wear a wraparound skirt, a short or long vest or corset with their shirt, an embroidered belt and apron, and leather boots, preferably in the color red, which signifies beauty in Ukrainian and other Slavic cultures. Distinctive regional headgear includes fur or felt hats and woolen caps for men, flowers and ribbons for girls, and embroidered, starched, folded, and wrapped scarves for women. One such head covering for married women, the ochipok, covered the entire head but had slits down the back for laces. Women traditionally wore leather shoes painted red, blue, or green. The married woman’s traditional headscarf is slowly disappearing.

Notable traditional hairstyles are the Cossack shaved head with a forelock known as oseledets (herring) or a topknot called a khokhol. Khokhol became a derogatory Russian term for Ukrainians,
and later a Ukrainian insult for Russified Ukrainians.\textsuperscript{85} Yulia Tymoshenko has made the tradition of braids pinned up around the head into a political statement. In daily life, most Ukrainians wear contemporary European styles.\textsuperscript{86, 87, 88}

\section*{Gender Issues}

Traditional Ukrainian ideas about gender begin from farming, where men work in the fields and women care for the homestead. The warrior Cossack—strong, tough, fearless, loyal—later came to represent masculinity, and mandatory military service continues to be the most widespread male rite of passage to adulthood.\textsuperscript{89, 90} These ideas about gender influence attitudes and behaviors with unfortunate consequences. Gender stereotypes have led to the designation of 600 professions prohibited to Ukrainian women.\textsuperscript{91, 92} Similarly, women are generally seen as incapable of being good political leaders, which may explain why women have held less than 10\% of Ukraine’s parliamentary seats since its independence in 1991.\textsuperscript{93} Those numbers are rising slowly, however, and in 2015 women filled 12\% of the national parliament seats.\textsuperscript{94} Ukrainian women are trafficked as prostitutes and for forced domestic or sweatshop labor.\textsuperscript{95, 96, 97, 98} Young women of the Ukrainian activist group Femen stage provocative protests against sex tourism in their country, and against other abuses of power in neighboring countries.\textsuperscript{99, 100, 101, 102}

The fighting in eastern Ukraine has created serious problems for women and sparked an increase in domestic violence. In addition, women are increasing victims of human rights abuses including sexual violence by opposition troops. Some women in the conflict area have turned to prostitution as a means of providing food and shelter for their families because normal economic opportunities are extremely limited.\textsuperscript{103, 104, 105}
Arts

Folk Arts

Decorated eggs called pysanky (literally, “written eggs”) may be Ukraine’s most well-known folk art. Pysanky use colors and designs drawn from nature that have been stylized over thousands of years. Symbolic of renewal, pysanky were once believed to have protective powers, and are now made for Easter. Pysanky patterns of geometric shapes or representations of rivers, plants, and the sun appear in other traditional arts such as embroidery, wood carving, ceramics, and weaving. Ukrainian folk dance is also well known, particularly the Cossack hopak in which men try to outdo each other in acrobatic feats. Other, older folk dances celebrate the seasons, and are performed to choral chanting instead of rhythmic musical instruments. The Christmastime “Carol of the Bells” is based on a Ukrainian folk tune once sung to wish a bountiful new year. Folk architecture and artifacts are preserved in large open-air museums, where dozens of homesteads, windmills, and churches may dot the landscape of hundreds of acres.

Religious Influences

Christianity inspired architecture, art, and music in Ukraine. Byzantine, “Cossack Baroque,” and rococo churches remain, although the Soviets destroyed many religious buildings and repurposed others into museums of atheism. Ukrainian religious icon painting first developed in eleventh century Kyiv, and a few twelfth and thirteenth century works survived. By the sixteenth century, a Western-influenced Galician style developed in Lviv, and soon Cossack icons were portraying local hetmans including Bohdan Khmelnytsky.
The craft disappeared in eighteenth century Ukraine, but revived among Ukrainian communities outside the country in the twentieth century, and is developing again in post-Soviet Ukraine.\textsuperscript{117, 118} In music, the early liturgical chant of the monks at Kyiv’s Caves Monastery evolved into the splendid polyphonic choral singing that later spread east into the Russian Orthodox Church.\textsuperscript{119, 120}

**“High” and “Low” Culture**

The Ukrainian intellectual and cultural elite grew from many different national traditions, and many world-famous writers, artists, and musicians have come from Ukraine. In literature, the words of Taras Shevchenko, the Bard of Ukraine, are memorized by every schoolchild, quoted by every politician and statesman, and inscribed on monuments and gravestones. His life and art embody Ukraine’s story: born a serf, he was freed in recognition of his creative talent, then exiled for writings critical of the czar.\textsuperscript{121} Ivan Franko and Lesya Ukrainka followed Shevchenko as champions of a Ukrainian nation and literary tradition.\textsuperscript{122} Sholem Aleichem authored Yiddish stories about Ukraine’s shtetls, Jewish communities, that became the source for “Fiddler on the Roof,” and Isaac Babel wrote about Odesa’s Jewish “Cossack” gangsters.\textsuperscript{123, 124} Russian writers with Ukrainian connections include Gogol, Chekhov, Bulgakov, Akhmatova, and Solzhenitsyn.\textsuperscript{125, 126, 127, 128} Artist Ilya Repin spent 13 years on the many versions of his painting “Zaporozhie Cossacks Writing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan,” a work that has inspired much Ukrainian nationalist analysis.\textsuperscript{129, 130, 131} Classical composer Mykola Lysenko, who adapted the folksong “Shchedryk” that later became “Carol of the Bells,” studied with Rimsky-Korsakov, and impressed Tchaikovsky with his opera Taras Bulba (based on Gogol’s novel).\textsuperscript{132, 133, 134} Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky are some other Russian composers associated with Ukraine.\textsuperscript{135}

Ukraine’s post-Soviet economy has given rise to a popular culture noted for extremes of consumption and unexpected juxtapositions (e.g., chocolate salo, mudwrestling feminists, etc.).\textsuperscript{136, 137} Andrii Danilko pokes fun at Ukrainian gender, class, language, ethnicity, politics, and nationalistic pretensions when he performs as Verka Serduchka, a busty, bossy traincar attendant who sometimes speaks surzhyk and sings like a pop star.\textsuperscript{138, 139, 140}
Sports and Recreation

The competitive athleticism of Cossacks and earlier warriors survives in exhibition groups that perform trick horseback riding, gymnastic dancing, and weapons demonstrations. Ukraine was part of the former Soviet Olympic training program, and continues to produce many competitive athletes. Ice skater Oksana Baiul was independent Ukraine’s first gold medalist, and other golds have gone to Ukraine in swimming, weightlifting, wrestling, shooting, and gymnastics.

Sergey Bubka, 1988 gold medalist in the pole vault, led Ukraine’s failed bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics in the Carpathian Mountains around Lviv. The Klitschko brothers dominated world boxing for years beginning in 1996. Soccer is Ukraine's most popular professional sport, and Dynamo Kyiv is usually the top Ukrainian team. Ukraine co-hosted the 2012 European World Cup with Poland; the championship match was played in Kyiv.

Chess is a serious competitive pastime throughout the former Soviet sphere, and Ukraine claims some of the game’s youngest grand masters.
Endnotes for Chapter 4: Society


27. Central Intelligence Agency, “Ukraine: People and


36 Oblasti are political entities within Imperial Russia, or of the U.S.S.R. or the Russian Federation.


70 Ryan Ver Berkmoes et al., Russia, Ukraine, & Belarus, 2nd ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000), 759-760.


77 Ryan Ver Berkmoes et al., Russia, Ukraine, & Belarus, 2nd ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000), 759-760.

78 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Agribusiness Handbook: Barley, M (EBRD) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2nd ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000), 759-760.


81 Sarah D. Phillips, “Ukrainians,” in Encyclopedia of Sex...
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112 Ryan Ver Berkmoes et al., Russia, Ukraine, & Belarus, 2nd ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000), 794, 814, 820, 836.


131 Andrew Wilson, The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation


1. Ukraine is a homogeneous society, in which nine out of ten people are ethnic Ukrainians.

2. Russian is the second official language of Ukraine.

3. Eastern Orthodoxy has splintered into several churches in Ukraine.

4. Traditional dress is still worn regularly in much of rural Ukraine.

5. Women are legally prohibited from working in some professions.
Introduction

Ukraine occupies a strategic area between Russia to the east and Europe to the west. Two main challenges threaten the nation’s political survival and stability: an ongoing pro-Russian insurgency in its eastern provinces and a failing economy.¹ ² Relations with Russia soured in 2014 with the Russian annexation of Crimea. Ukraine remains somewhat fearful of Russian military intervention into eastern Ukraine and has alleged that Russia is supporting the pro-Russian insurgency there.³ More than 9,000 Ukrainians have been killed in the insurgency and 900,000 displaced persons are now political refugees. The economic loss caused by the conflict is staggering, reaching
approximately USD 111.521 billion.\(^4\) Political infighting and corruption also threaten the security of the current government. Several key government officials, including the minister of economic development and trade, sparked a no-confidence vote in 2016. Although the government survived, public trust has dissipated. Without serious economic reforms, bailout funds from the European Union may not be forthcoming, leaving the government vulnerable.\(^5, 6, 7\) Without major reforms, Ukraine’s economy remains deeply troubled and unlikely to recover, leaving the nation at risk of losing any political gains from the 2013 Maidan revolution.\(^8\)

**U.S.-Ukraine Relations**

The United States recognized Ukraine’s independence on December 25, 1991 and has a vested interest in helping Ukraine become a stronger democracy and integrate with the European community.\(^9, 10\) U.S. interests have become even stronger since the 2014 revolution, after which the United States was the first to recognize the new government.\(^11\) The Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 requires the US president to impose sanctions on Russia’s defense sector and authorizes additional energy and financial sanctions. The bill further authorizes both military and non-military assistance for Ukraine.\(^12\) The United States and Ukraine cooperate in a number of military ventures.\(^13, 14\) In 2016, however, Ukraine’s government announced it would not allow the United States to establish a military base on its territory.\(^15\)

The 2008 Trade and Investment Cooperation Agreement established bilateral trade between the United States and Ukraine. It improved investment possibilities in Ukraine and allowed the country to develop a closer relationship with Europe. The U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership aims to improve defense, security, trade, energy, democracy, and cultural exchange. The Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program—a two-year initiative concluded in 2009—provided Ukraine with USD 48 million to help reduce corruption and achieve judicial reform.\(^16, 17, 18\) To help promote security, economic reform, and to provide humanitarian and social aid, Ukraine received funds as part of the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA), passed by the US Congress. Since
the law’s enactment in 1992, Ukraine has received USD 5.1 billion.\textsuperscript{19, 20} Since 2013, the United States has committed to providing more than USD 548 million to Ukraine and is likely to approve a loan guarantee of up to USD one billion.\textsuperscript{21} Since 2015, the Obama administration has been more cautious in its support of Ukraine, suggesting that the nation must implement serious reforms and continue in its efforts toward full democracy.\textsuperscript{22}

**Relations with Neighboring Countries**

**Belarus**

Belarus borders Ukraine to the northwest. It shares close historical, economic, and ethnic ties with Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine and Belarus maintain close, peaceful relations, although they bicker occasionally over minor economic differences. Bilateral relations have been serviceable since they achieved independence in 1991, and both countries work toward cooperation. Relations have strengthened since Russia’s annexation of Crimea.\textsuperscript{23, 24} In 1997, the two nations tried to resolve a border dispute, but it has yet to be ratified.\textsuperscript{25, 26} Belarus maintains that Ukraine must repay debt before it will ratify the agreement. Ukraine claims the debt is not national but corporate and refuses to repay.\textsuperscript{27, 28}

Trade relations between the two nations are strong. Ukraine is a top-five import/export partner for Belarus while Belarus is a top import partner for Ukraine.\textsuperscript{29, 30, 31} To aid Ukraine and facilitate trade relations, in January 2015 Belarus announced it would conduct transactions in the hryvna, Ukraine’s national currency. Further, Belarus announced plans to trade military equipment and supplies.\textsuperscript{32}

**Moldova**

Ukraine and Moldova share similarities in culture and history, yet their formal relations have yet to stabilize. Although they have partnered to resolve issues pertaining to Moldova’s breakaway Transnistria region that lies between them, those same issues have stalled agreements on border demarcation. The Crimean crisis has worsened
relations between Moldova and Transnistria as well as created tensions with Ukraine. In 2014, trade between the two countries totaled approximately USD 10.656 million with the balance of trade favoring Moldova. In November 2015, Moldova and Ukraine signed an agreement to jointly control the checkpoint at the Transnistrian segment of their common borders which would allow continued trade. That agreement was breached, however, in 2016 when Ukraine blockaded international trucks from crossing its border into Transnistria.

**Romania**

Ukraine has a history of troubled relations with Romania that are characterized by poor governmental cooperation and rivalries over resources. Ukraine and Romania disputed their borders along a portion of the Danube Delta and economic zones with the continental shelf of the Black Sea region. In February 2009, the Court of Justice in The Hague resolved the issue in favor of Romania, furthering Ukraine’s animosity. Ukraine accuses Romania of polluting the environment by dumping heavy metals into the Tisa River, and demands payment for damages. Russia’s actions in Ukraine, however, have helped warm relations between Romania and Ukraine. Romania, eager to resist Russian expansion, is trying to build warmer relations with its neighbor. In 2014, Romania and Ukraine signed a military agreement, along with other forms of cooperation. A meeting between the two nations’ presidents in 2015 reinforced their mutual desire for improved relations and expanded trade and economic cooperation.
Russia

Ukraine-Russia relations deteriorated following independence as Ukraine began cultivating relationships with the West. Ukraine stated its intent to join both the EU and NATO, going so far as to request a membership action plan from NATO. The Orange Revolution of 2004 exacerbated already strained relations with Russia, which saw the revolution as a U.S.-backed conspiracy. Relations deteriorated even further in 2014 with the overthrow of pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych. Russia, in a move not recognized by Ukraine, annexed Crimea in 2014. Ukraine’s and Russia’s dispute over their boundary through the Kerch Strait, which links the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, is on hold due to the situation in Crimea.

In spite of the tensions over the Crimean annexation and fighting in the east, trade between the two nations is robust. Russia remains Ukraine’s largest trading partner although the balance of trade favors Russia. Bilateral trade fell by nearly two-thirds in the first quarter of 2015, and in January 2016, trade relations soured when both countries imposed a mutual blockade on imports. Russia’s part of the embargo was precipitated in part by the implementation of a free trade agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

Visegrad Countries: Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic

The Visegrad Group (V4), comprising Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, is a loose conglomeration of countries that began working together to increase their integration within the European community after the Soviet Union fell. The V4 have worked to help Ukraine westernize and develop national and international policies consistent with European Union values.

Since 1991, Ukraine-Polish relations have been cordial, despite historical issues. The two nations signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1992 and in 1994 adopted a declaration recognizing their mutual strategic importance. Trade relations between the two nations are not as vibrant as they might be although Poland was a top-five
trading partner of Ukraine in 2014 with the balance of trade favoring Poland.\textsuperscript{61, 62} Poland is a top destination for Ukrainians looking for work. The Crimean crisis has escalated the number Ukrainian refugees and their rising numbers are straining relations.\textsuperscript{63, 64}

Ukrainian-Hungarian relations have been warm since 2010.\textsuperscript{65} Trade between the two nations is not developed. In the first half of 2015, total trade amounted to USD 1,414 million with the balance of trade favoring Hungary. Both countries cooperate in the energy sector, mostly in natural gas supplies flowing into Ukraine. Hungary provided roughly 1.3\% of Ukraine’s foreign investment dollars in the first half of 2015.\textsuperscript{66, 67}

Slovak-Ukrainian relations are heavily influenced by Slovak-Russian relations. Between 1991 and 2000, Slovakia was relatively disinterested in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{68, 69} Around 2000, Slovakia developed a more intense interest in Ukraine although relations between the two remained unstable.\textsuperscript{70} Ukraine became an important Slovakian business partner and the two implemented an agreement on mutual support and protection of investments in 2009.\textsuperscript{71} A natural gas pipeline between Slovakia and Ukraine became operational in September 2014 and Slovakia now supplies nearly 14 billion cubic meters of gas to Ukraine yearly. The two nations signed an agreement on natural gas delivery that same year, leading to a considerable reduction in Ukraine’s dependence on Russian energy. The Slovak gas supply has been much more reliable than that of Hungary, whose supplies fluctuate with its own concerns over its national interest.\textsuperscript{72, 73}

\section*{Police Force/Interior Security and Law Enforcement}

Ukraine’s Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) maintains internal security and order and governs the national police force, commonly referred to as the Militia. The police, with an estimated strength of 284,000, are divided into two main branches—the Criminal Police and the Public Order Police—although there are also some additional smaller specialized units. Each of Ukraine’s 33 oblasti (regions) has its own Ministry of the Interior Directorate and many larger towns and cities have their own police forces.\textsuperscript{74, 75} The second arm of Ukraine’s internal security forces, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), is tasked with gathering intelligence and has responsibility for the personal security of the president, members of parliament, and other state officials.\textsuperscript{76}
Ukraine’s internal security forces are highly unstable. Lack of funding means police forces are understaffed. Training, recruitment, and maintenance of forces are severely reduced. Budget shortfalls have been cited as one of the leading causes of corruption within the security forces. There are allegations of corruption and human rights violations. Small-time corruption by low-ranking personnel occurs regularly. Ministry of Internal Affairs officials and police forces are suspected of involvement in kidnappings and murders. They have also been accused of using force and intimidation against journalists, political activists, and political rivals. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2010 ruled against Ukraine in 11 cases involving human rights violations. Police and detention officials are routinely accused of procedural violations and torture to exact confessions from alleged criminals (forced confessions are often introduced as evidence in court proceedings), and violations against detainees in police custody and within the prison system.77, 78, 79

Ukraine has teamed up with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in recent years. INTERPOL provides training and funding to those MIA divisions that work in conjunction with the international police force. Ukraine’s border police (Derzhavna Prykordonna Sluzhba Ukrayiny: DPSU) is a militarized force of approximately 45,000 officers. The DPSU is poorly equipped and unprepared for counterinsurgency and policing functions, although it currently has access to INTERPOL’s databases to help increase and maintain border security.80, 81
Military

Ukraine’s armed forces consist of roughly 250,000 active duty personnel and approximately one million reserves in its three branches. The army is the largest branch, followed by the air force and the navy. The military is overwhelmingly a conscript force but there are ongoing efforts to retain qualified personnel to professionalize the armed forces. Troops are generally poorly trained, and plagued by discipline problems, corruption, crime, theft, and low retention rates.

When Ukraine gained independence from Russia in 1991, it formally instituted its military forces. It had inherited large numbers of troops, equipment, and weaponry, including nuclear weapons, from the former Soviet Union, making it the largest military force in Europe at the time. Ukraine’s Soviet-era military was designed for offensive operations, but the new government immediately set out restructuring for defensive and peacekeeping purposes. This included a drastic reduction in force. Ukraine joined the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START) in 1992, becoming a non-nuclear weapons state in 1994. It transferred its inherited nuclear weapons to Russia for destruction, disposing of nearly 2,000 nuclear weapons and closing 176 silos by 1996. Other conventional weaponry is slowly being destroyed with the aid and oversight of NATO and other agencies.

Ukraine is currently modernizing its military. In 2015, the national defense budget reached 5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the bulk of the funds spent on procuring modern weaponry, training, and maintenance of existing equipment. The force is also being formed into smaller, more self-contained units, which should improve readiness and response time.

Army

As of the beginning of 2012, Ukraine maintains a main military ground force consisting of army corps, tank/mechanized divisions, mechanized brigades, artillery divisions, and combined arms brigades, with three operational commands. Mainly for defense, ground forces assist other nations militarily, cooperate with international peacekeeping
missions, and act as law enforcement during national emergencies. Weaponry is almost exclusively of Soviet and Russian design. Main battle tanks include the T-64, T-72, and lesser numbers of T-54/55, T-64BM, T-84 and T-84-120, and T-80. A host of armored personnel carriers (APC) and infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) in the BMD, BMP, and BTR series form the remaining bulk of the army’s armor. Anti-tank weapons include the AT-3 Sagger, Stugna-P, and 100 mm T-12. Army aviation units are equipped with Hind-series attack and reconnaissance helicopters and Hip-series assault helicopters.

**Navy (Viyskogo-Morski Syly Ukrayiny: VMSU)**

The development of its navy is a high priority for Ukraine. Russian forces quickly overtook the naval base at Sevastopol in Crimea and seized 12 of the VMSU’s Ukrainian warships. Russia allegedly returned the ships after finding them in terrible condition. The navy’s readiness is currently an unknown since the force has never mounted any military missions. Ships spend an average of about 23-38 days at sea, further reducing training time. The Navy has participated in some peacekeeping missions with NATO and in an anti-piracy mission with the EU in 2013. Ukraine operates nine naval bases including ones in Odesa, Novozerna, and Saky. The VMSU has conducted joint exercises with NATO and Russia. The fleet possesses a few large surface craft including one or two frigates and as many as four submarines. These are augmented with a handful of patrol craft, fast attack craft, anti-mining boats, and landing ships. Naval aviation units are equipped with Mi-14 “Haze” and Ka-27 “Helix” maritime/anti-submarine helicopters, Ka-29TB “Helix-B” transport/assault helicopters, Be-12 “Mail” maritime patrol helicopters, and handful of transport helicopters.
Air Force

Although Ukraine’s air force is highly mobile, pilots are poorly trained and receive less than 65 hours of training annually. Budgetary problems have made it impossible for all pilots to train the necessary number of hours for mission readiness.\textsuperscript{102} The air force is believed to have approximately 234 aircraft, including roughly 66 fixed-wing aircraft consisting mostly of MiG-29 Fulcrum-A and -C multirole fighters, Su-24M “Fencer-D” and Su-25 “Frogfoot-A” ground attack, and Su-27 “Flanker-B” interceptor/air defense aircraft. Various reconnaissance, intelligence, transport, and trainer aircraft support these. Additionally, Mi-8 “Hip” transport and Mi-9 “Hip-G” command helicopters provided rotary wing assets. The condition of planes is faltering and many current aircraft do not meet operational standards. The Air Force relies upon a number of different air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles.\textsuperscript{103, 104}

Issues Affecting Stability

The two most volatile and immediate threats to Ukraine are the continuing violence by armed separatists in the east and economic collapse.\textsuperscript{105} Although a ceasefire went into effect in February 2015, fighting continues. Fears of a direct Russian invasion of Ukraine have subsided, but pro-Russian separatist groups are likely to continue to receive Russian support.\textsuperscript{106, 107, 108} The fighting has harmed Ukraine’s economy. Most industrial centers are located in the eastern provinces where the fighting is taking place. Damage to national infrastructure is estimated to exceed USD 350 billion, a sum Ukraine’s government will have difficulty budgeting.\textsuperscript{109, 110, 111}

The second major threat is social unrest. Ukraine is one of Europe’s most corrupt nations.\textsuperscript{112, 113} The minister of economy warned that Ukraine cannot
improve sovereignty and stability without ending corruption. The IMF is threatening to withhold USD 40 billion in much-needed funds if corruption isn’t tackled.\textsuperscript{114, 115, 116} If the current government fails to implement needed reforms, it is likely that anti-government protests will spread. A January 2016 poll found that nearly 55\% of Ukrainians were willing to protest. The current president, Petro Poroshenko, is unpopular throughout the nation. In 2016, only 14\% of Ukrainians approved of his policies; lower than ousted President Yanukovich.\textsuperscript{117, 118, 119} Reforms seem likely to stall, at least in the near-term, because of fractious political infighting and the preoccupation with the ongoing conflict in the east.\textsuperscript{120, 121, 122}

Crime in Ukraine is up dramatically, particularly in the eastern regions where the crime rates are higher. Incidences of murder, burglary, and arms-trafficking have all risen. Financial crimes, including money laundering, fuel national corruption. Organized crime has ties to political and business leaders, as well as the police. Organized criminal networks make it difficult to enact reforms and staunch corruption, further eroding confidence in the government.\textsuperscript{123}

**Outlook**

Ukraine faces challenges that make its political stability tenuous. Failure by the government to implement necessary reforms could spark additional political protests which could remove President Poroshenko from office.\textsuperscript{124, 125, 126} In February 2016, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets to protest the government’s failures to enact reforms which could help secure needed IMF funds to aid in economic recovery. Without serious reforms, popular unrest could spread to other parts of the nation. The government’s failures have sparked concerns about its legitimacy in the eyes of many. Rising prices for basic goods and services, fear that the government will be unable to make pension payments, and soaring prices are also sparking dissension.\textsuperscript{127, 128, 129} Poroshenko is generally pro-Western and his removal could signal a resurgence of radical nationalism.\textsuperscript{130, 131, 132, 133} Fighting with pro-Russian separatists has recently intensified raising the risk of instability. Instances of sabotage and terrorism related to the conflict are escalating, further raising fears about political stability.\textsuperscript{134, 135, 136}
Endnotes for Chapter 5: Security


6 Reid Standish, “Yatsenyuk Survives No-confidence Vote, but Will Ukraine?” Foreign Policy, 16 February 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/16/yatsenyuk-survives-no-confidence-vote-but-will-ukraine/


28 Andrzejj Szeptycki, “Relations between Ukraine and


34 Jane’s, “External Affairs: Moldova,” in Sentinel and Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS, 19 August 2015.


49 Taras Kuzio, “Poor Ukrainian-Russian Ties Reflect Yanukovych-Putin Relationship,” Eurasia Daily Monitor (Jamestown Foundation) 8, no. 180 (30 September 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_tinnews%5Btt_news%5D=38477


Chapter 5 | Endnotes


Country in Perspective | Ukraine


80 INTERPOL, “Member Countries: Ukraine,” n.d., http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Europe/Ukraine


1. The conflict with pro-Russian separatists and the failing economy are the two biggest threats to Ukraine’s security.

2. Ukraine no longer maintains significant trade relations with Russia.

3. Ukraine has resolved its border dispute with Belarus.

4. Corruption remains a major obstacle in strengthening the economy.

5. Ukraine maintains generally good relations with the four Visegrad countries.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. False; 3. False; 4. True; 5. True
Books


Websites and Articles


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Ukraine in Perspective

Final Assessment

1. Ukraine’s forest-steppe zone makes up the largest section of the nation.

2. The most seismically active regions in Ukraine are located in the north and west.

3. The city of Dnipropetrovsk is home to one of the world’s leading producers of rockets and satellites.

4. Poland lies south of Ukraine.

5. Even though the Cold War has ended, nuclear waste continues to be a problem for Ukraine.

6. In 2010, Ukraine’s President Yanukovich aligned his nation with Russia in a move away from Western influence.

7. During the Soviet era, Christianity was outlawed in Ukraine.

8. The 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav annexed Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula to imperial Russia.

9. During Polish rule of Ukrainian territory, social classes developed as Polish values and hierarchies were foisted upon the Ruthenian nobles, multinational city residents, and landless peasants.
10. Ukraine allied with Russia and the Soviet Union in the world wars of the twentieth century.

11. The largest provider of foreign direct investment dollars to Ukraine in 2015 came from the United States and Russia.

12. Ukraine's largest export partner is Russia.

13. According to estimates, as many as eight in ten Ukrainians live on less than USD 2 per day.

14. The Ukrainian monetary unit is the ruble.

15. The economic situation in eastern Ukraine is bleaker than in the rest of the nation.

16. Decorated eggs are among the most well-known forms of Ukrainian folk art.

17. Roughly 10% of Ukrainians are Protestant.

18. Ukrainians value loyalty to family members and friends.

19. Khokhol (the traditional male topknot) has become a term of praise among Ukrainians that connotes Cossack virtues of strength and courage.

20. Chess is not taken seriously in present-day Ukraine.
21. Ukraine has a history of troubled relations with Romania.

22. New gas pipelines from Slovakia have helped significantly reduce Ukraine’s dependence on Russia.

23. Ukraine’s police force is generally highly professional and competent.

24. Ukraine is actively pursuing modernization of its military forces.

25. Except for parts of the eastern regions of Ukraine, the government is generally regarded favorably by Ukrainians.