

Russian Security State

GOVT-5519 / IPOL-3519 / REES-5519

Lecture 23. Ukraine Backgrounder

Yuri M. Zhukov
Associate Professor
Georgetown University

November 21, 2024

Discussion:

“Decolonizing” the study of Ukraine

1. What do we miss by looking at Ukraine from a Russia-centric lens?
2. Since 2022, has anything surprised you about:
 - ☐ Ukrainian society
 - ☐ Ukrainian politics
 - ☐ Ukrainian military

Today's objectives

1. *Trace*: historical political geography of Ukraine
2. *Consider*: what is a “nation”, and who belongs to it?
3. *Discuss*: tug-and-pull between Ukrainization and Russification

Ukraine \neq Russia

How is Ukraine not Russia?

1. Muscovite Russia is an “imperial nation”, Ukraine is not and never was an empire
 - a) since 1500s, Moscow has been expanding into territories of groups w/ other religions, languages (e.g. Kazan', Siberia, Caucasus)
 - b) imperial management has centered on Russification, forcible conversion of conquered peoples to Orthodox Christianity
2. Ukraine has different institutional legacy
 - a) Poland-Lithuania (Rzeczpospolita) → checks on monarchical power, religious tolerance
 - b) Austria → minority rights, Ukrainian-language education, media, representative government
 - c) Russia → absolutism



Figure 1: What he said

Historical Political Geography of Ukraine



Figure 2: Ukraine and vicinity in 600

Slavs begin to appear in archaeological, written records c 600 AD.

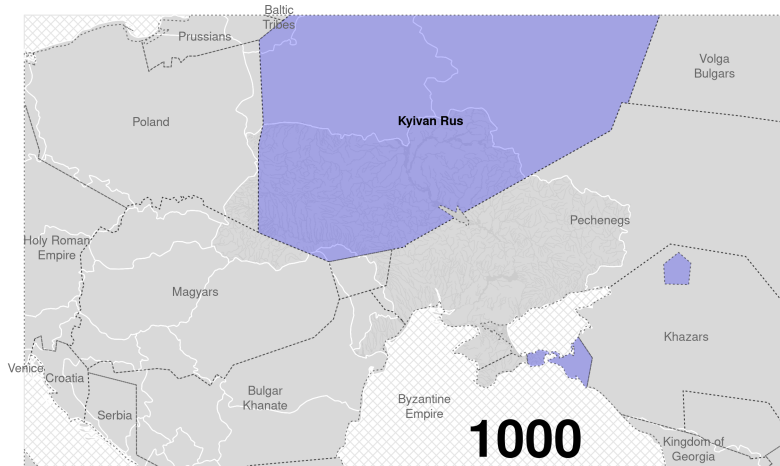


Figure 3: Ukraine and vicinity in 1000

Kyivan Rus (882-1240) became cradle of East Slavic civilization.

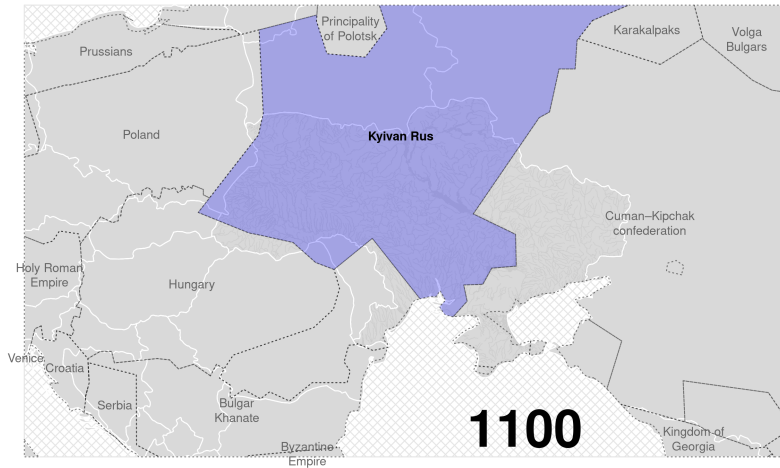


Figure 4: Ukraine and vicinity in 1100

Initially surrounded by nomads (south, east), principalities (west).

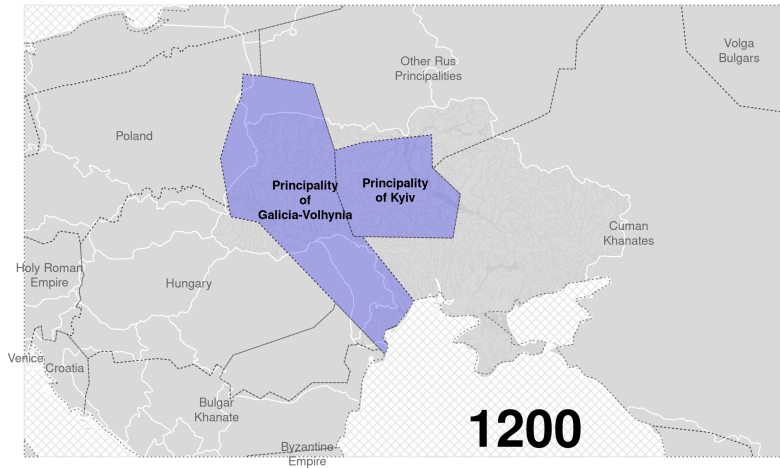


Figure 5: Ukraine and vicinity in 1200

Mongol occupation of Kyiv begins 1241. Kyiv destroyed in 1299.

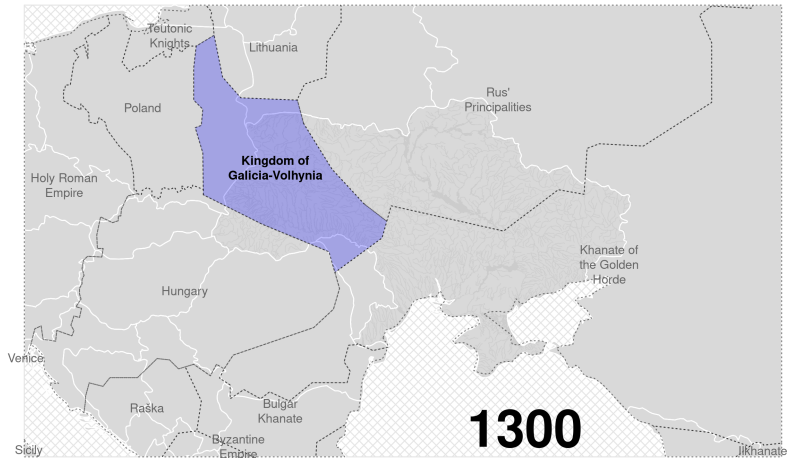


Figure 6: Ukraine and vicinity in 1300

Principality (Kingdom) of Galicia-Volhynia survives another 50 years.

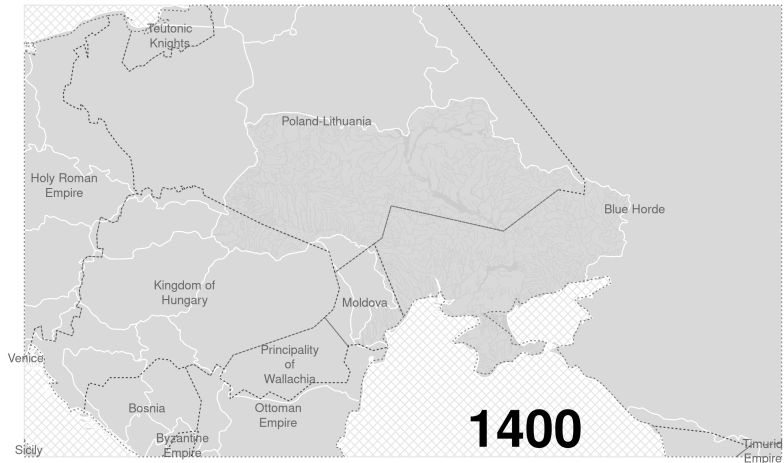


Figure 7: Ukraine and vicinity in 1400

Poland annexes Galicia-Volhynia in 1349, unites with Lithuania.

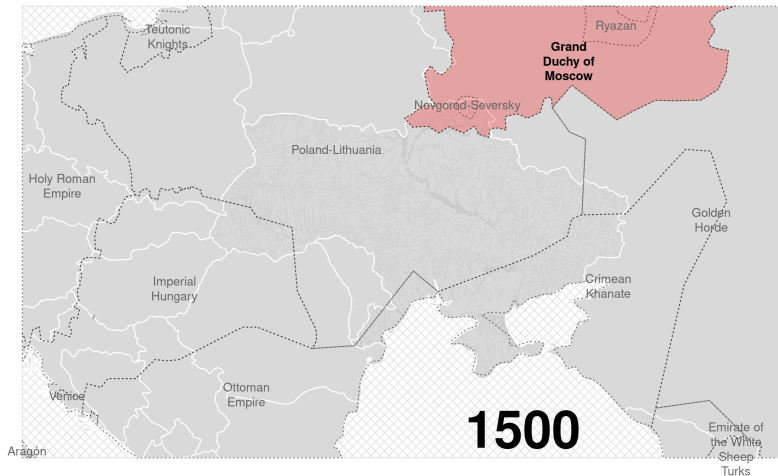


Figure 8: Ukraine and vicinity in 1500

Crimean Khanate forms in 1441, as a successor to Golden Horde.

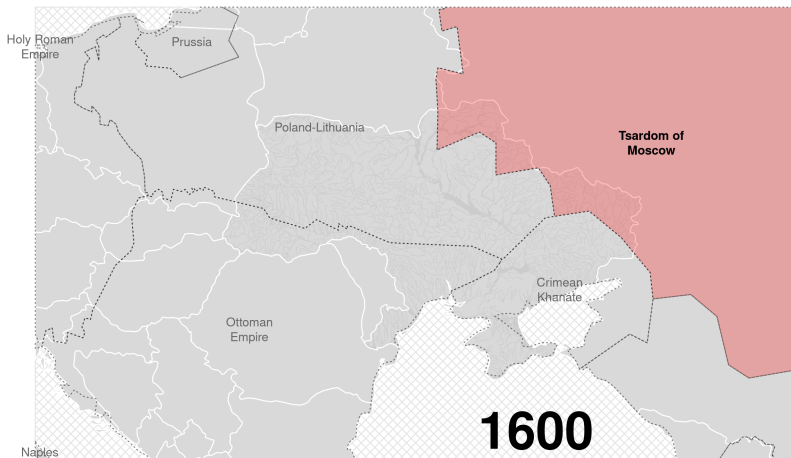


Figure 9: Ukraine and vicinity in 1600

Series of wars with Crimea lead to southern expansion by Moscow.

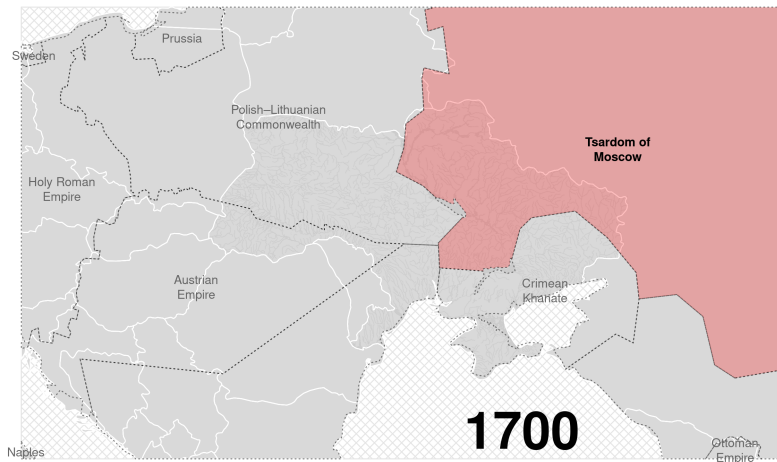


Figure 10: Ukraine and vicinity in 1700

Khmel'nyts'kyy uprising vs. PLC leads to partition of Ukraine.

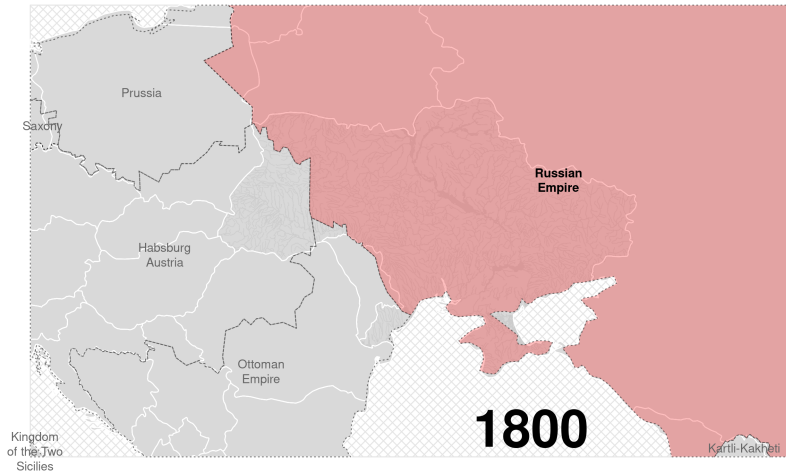


Figure 11: Ukraine and vicinity in 1800

PLC partitioned by Prussia, Austria, Russia. Russia annexes Crimea.

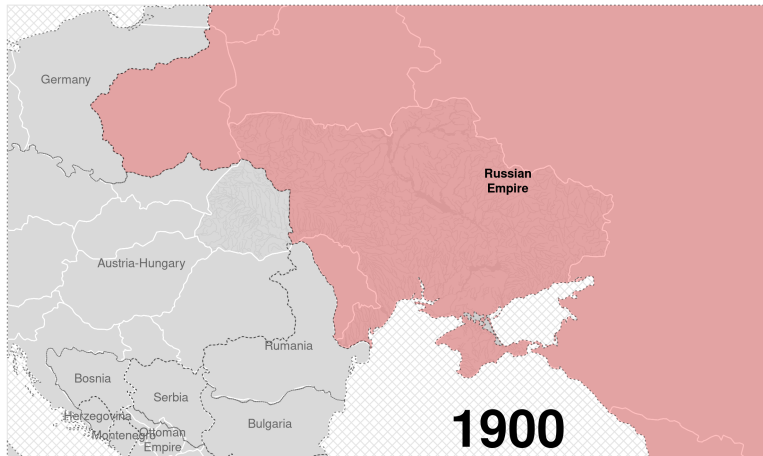


Figure 12: Ukraine and vicinity in 1900

Russia expands control of Poland. Galicia under Hapsburg control.

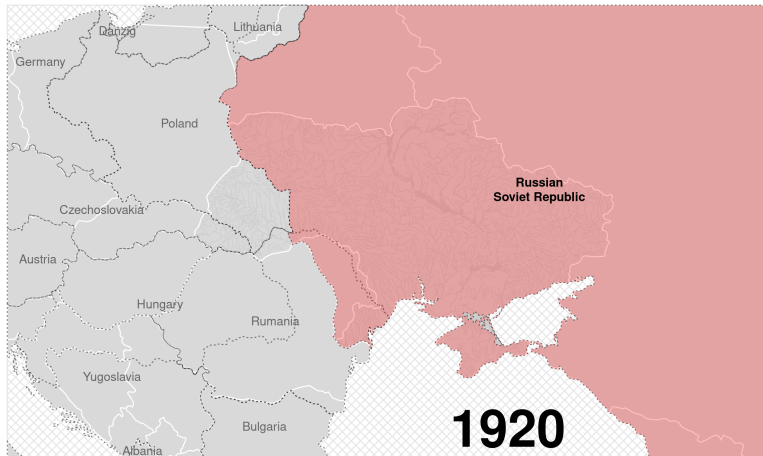


Figure 13: Ukraine and vicinity in 1920

Multiple short-lived Ukrainian states emerge after 1917 Revolution.

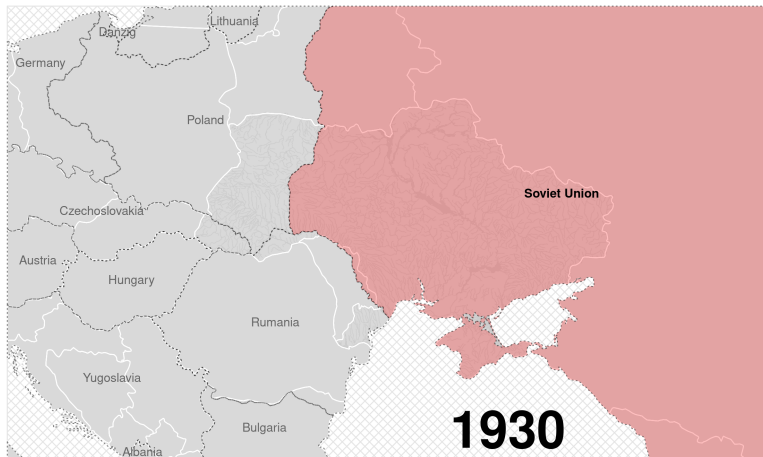


Figure 14: Ukraine and vicinity in 1930

Ukraine divided between Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, USSR.

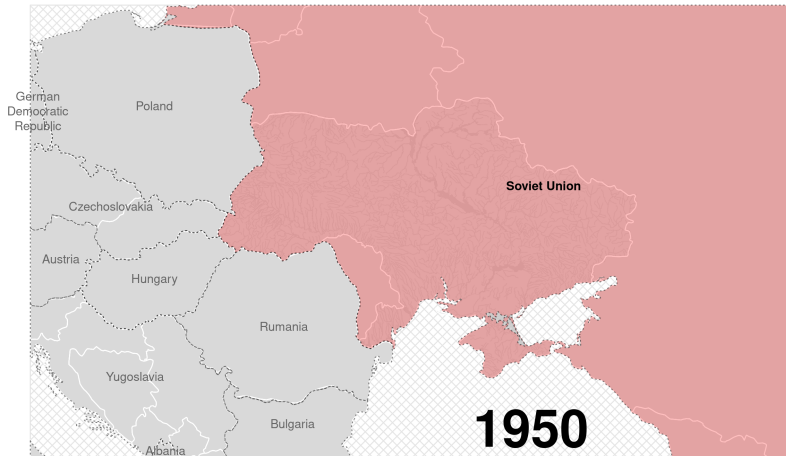


Figure 15: Ukraine and vicinity in 1950

Moscow doesn't gain full control of modern-day Ukraine until WWII.

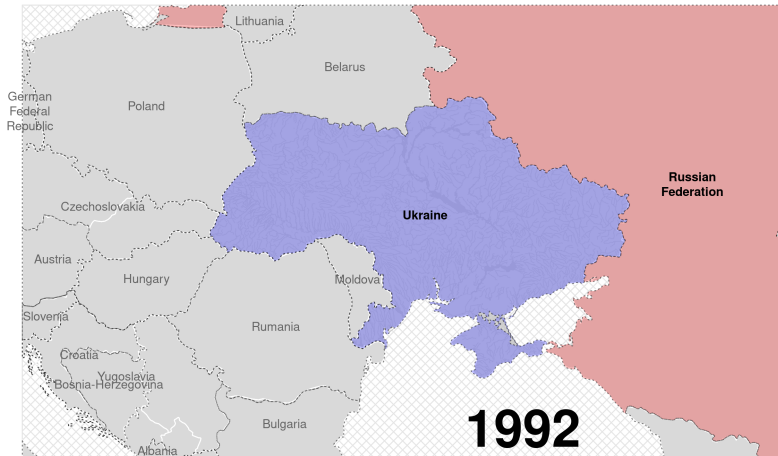


Figure 16: Ukraine and vicinity in 1992

Ukraine declares independence in 1991. Soviet Union collapses.

Who is Ukrainian?

What is a “nation” and who belongs to it?

1. Definition 1: shared customs, language
 - a) Ukrainian statehood needs “pure”, homogeneous culture, traditions
 - b) ethnocentric conception of nationhood (e.g. Dontsov, OUN)
 - c) problem: excludes minorities (e.g. Greeks, Jews, Poles, Russians)
2. Definition 2: shared political values
 - a) Ukrainian statehood needs support of diverse, multicultural cities
 - b) civic conception of nationhood (e.g. Lypyns'kyi, Doroshenko)
 - c) problem: perpetuates cultural dominance of former imperial elites



Figure 17: Dmytro Dontsov

Identity is often constructed in opposition/contrast to an “other”

(shared trauma → shared identity)

1. Poland as the “other”
 - a) Rzeczpospolita (1350s-1770s):
feudalism, domination of peasants
by Polish landlords
 - b) Austrian Galicia (1770s-1910s):
political competition in Sejm
 - c) 2nd Polish Republic (1918-1939):
political exclusion, discrimination
2. Moscow as the “other”
 - a) Tsardom/Empire (1650s-1917):
feudalism, Ukrainian language ban
 - b) Soviet Union (1923-1991):
Holodomor, mass deportations
(anti-OUN campaign), ban on
Greek Catholic Church



Figure 18: Hmel'nyts'kyy



Figure 19: Mazepa

Who turned Ukraine into “anti-Russia”?

1. Long-term legacy of Soviet violence
 - a) indiscriminate violence has identity-building effect
 - b) collective punishment/repression makes targets aware that they are part of a “collective”
 - c) this collective identity finds expression as opposition to perpetrators of violence (or their perceived successors)
2. Empirical evidence
 - a) famine (Rozenas and Zhukov, 2019)
 - b) mass deportation of Crimean Tatars (Lupu and Peisakhin, 2017)
 - c) mass deportations in Western Ukraine (Rozenas et al, 2017)

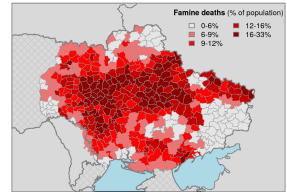


Figure 20: Famine deaths

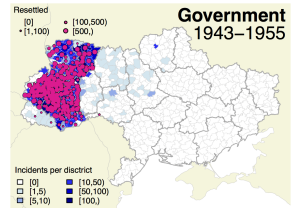


Figure 21: Deportations

Ukrainization vs. Assimilation

Early Soviet attempts at “Ukrainization”

1. Indigenization (korenizatsiya) policy
 - a) national minorities were key part of Red coalition in Civil War
 - b) Bolsheviks reverse pre-1917 assimilationist policies
 - c) expand use of titular languages in union & autonomous republics
2. “Ukrainizing” Ukraine (1923-1930)
 - a) government jobs require Ukrainian fluency (or mandatory courses)
 - b) Ukrainian-language education
 - c) Ukrainian-language newspapers
 - d) Ukrainian-language theaters
 - e) Ukrainian-language street signs
3. Policy is a success (↑ support for Soviets)
 - a) Ukrainians in party (KP(b)U):
 - 22% in 1922
 - 60% in 1933



Figure 22: Nove chtyvo

Return to assimilation

1. Ukrainization policy terminated (1933)
 - a) crop failures blamed on Ukrainian nationalists
 - b) Stalin orders reversal of Ukrainization policy
 - c) Ukrainian Communist party purge
 - d) leading Ukrainian cultural figures arrested, killed
 - e) 1938: mandatory Russian instruction in schools
 - f) 1939: replace Ukrainian schools with Russian schools in W Ukraine
2. "Language of friendship of nations"
 - a) post-WWII: Russian promoted as *lingua franca*
 - b) Ukrainian not officially banned
 - c) but assimilation key to professional advancement, social mobility



Figure 23: Friendly people



Figure 24: Racing together

Ukraine on eve of independence

1. Census statistics (1989)
 - a) nationality (self-reported):
 - 73% Ukrainian, 22% Russian
 - compare to 1926:
80% Ukrainian, 9% Russian
 - b) native language (self-reported):
 - 65% Ukrainian, 33% Russian
 - c) Russian *lingua franca* in Ukraine:
 - Russian: native language for 88% of minority population (Jews, Belorussians, etc.)
 - Ukrainian: native language for 3% of minority population
2. Political, economic dominance of east
 - a) 14 of 20 largest cities on left bank (other 6 are Kyiv, Lviv, Kherson, Mykolayiv, Vinnytsya, Cherkasy)
 - b) Donbas is most populous region, center of industry



Figure 25: End of history

Discussion

Does language matter?

1. Ukrainization came back after 1991, but more slowly, cautiously than in 1920s. Why?
2. Should Ukraine have followed the Baltic model?
(language as requirement for citizenship)
3. Are there advantages to being a bilingual nation?

NEXT MEETING

Russian-Ukrainian War: 2014-2021 (Tu, Dec. 3)

- prelude to the Great War
- why didn't the "Russian Spring" spread beyond Donbas?
- how effective was "hybrid warfare" in achieving Russia's political goals?