

# Russian Security State

GOVT-5519/IPOL-3519/REES-5519/SEST-6763  
Lecture 24. Russian-Ukrainian War, 2014-2021

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## Today's objectives

1. *Trace:* political economy of independent Ukraine
2. *Consider:* why “Russian Spring” didn’t spread beyond Donbas
3. *Discuss:* was Russia’s “hybrid warfare” a failure?

## 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, Odesa, Vinnytsya)

#### b) Donbas is most populous region, center of industry



Figure 1: End of history

# Independent Ukraine

## Overview

## Ukraine after independence

1. Second-largest country in Europe
  - a) 50M population, 600,000km<sup>2</sup>  
(now about 40M population)
  - b) resource-rich, industrialized
  - c) nuclear-armed (until 1995)
  - d) diverse, well-educated population
2. Tethered by Russian/Soviet legacy
  - a) Donbas strikes, regional autonomy movement (1994)
  - b) Crimean secession attempt (1995)
  - c) Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea
  - d) homecoming of Crimean Tatars (1989), tension w/ local Russians
  - e) resistance to Ukrainian language



Figure 2: Donbas miners



Figure 3: Black Sea Fleet

## Political (re-)awakening

1. Orange Revolution (2004)
  - a) protests vs. rigged presidential vote
  - b) outcome: new elections, loss of Russia-backed candidate (Viktor Yanukovych)
  - c) pro-Western leaders take helm
  - d) but reforms stalled by infighting, corruption
  - e) 2010: Yanukovych wins presidency
2. Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014)
  - a) protests vs. Yanukovych's rejection of Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with EU
  - b) outcome: Yanukovych flees to Russia, interim govt installed
  - c) Ukrainian state in paralysis



Figure 4: Maidan 1.0



Figure 5: Maidan 2.0

## Russian Annexation of Crimea

## Window of opportunity

1. Local political response to Euromaidan
  - a) rival “anti-Maidan”, “pro-Maidan” (Tatars) protests in Simferopol
  - b) local wariness of new Kyiv govt
  - c) but no large-scale agitation
2. Russia's concept of operations
  - a) Spetsnaz, VDV covert actions
  - b) Russian reinforcements arrive, under cover of exercises
  - c) Spetsnaz teams seize administrative buildings
  - d) Naval Infantry, VDV surround Ukrainian bases, sever lines of communication to mainland
  - e) BSF blockades Ukraine navy ships
  - f) Ukraine military offered choice: defect or leave
  - g) hold referendum on joining Russia



Figure 6: Tough crowd



Figure 7: Little green men

## Discussion: What explains Russia's successful seizure of Crimea?

Balance of power	Force employment	Geography	Information	Chance
numbers	doctrine	distance	surprise	weather
replacement of losses	strategy	terrain	intelligence	timing
industry/production	training	climate	analysis	luck
logistics	officer quality	roads	communication	
natural resources	technology	fortifications		



Figure 8: Ostrov Krym

# War in Donbas

# Overview

## Donbas (Donets'k + Luhans'k): Background

### 1. Politics

- a) supported Yanukovych
- b) attempted 1994 referendum on regional autonomy, language, economic union with Russian Federation

### 2. Demographics

- a) Ukraine's most populous region (6.5M, 15 pct of total pop)
- b) large, but not overwhelming Russian population (38 pct ethnic Russian)

### 3. Economics

- a) 2nd largest region by GDP
- b) most heavily-industrialized region of Ukraine, ex-USSR
- c) export-oriented economy
- d) long history of labor activism

Share of Ukraine's GDP (2013)

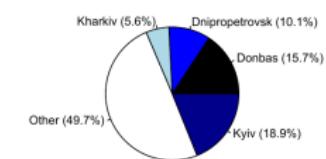


Figure 9: GDP

Industrial production (2013)

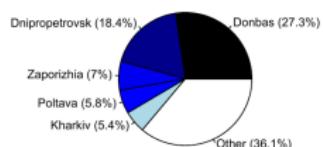


Figure 10: Industry

Share of Ukraine's exports (2013)

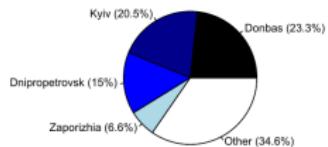


Figure 11: Exports

## Donbas War: Phase I

1. Pro-Russia protests (March 2014)
  - a) protestors (mostly unarmed) temporarily seize regional administration buildings
  - b) demands: federalization, Russian as 2nd official language, RF Customs Union
  - c) law enforcement cracks down, arrests protest leaders
2. Pro-Russia insurgency (April 2014)
  - a) armed men (w/ civilian mobs) seize government buildings, proclaim "People's Republics"
  - b) demands: independence, union with Russia
  - c) local police defect or flee

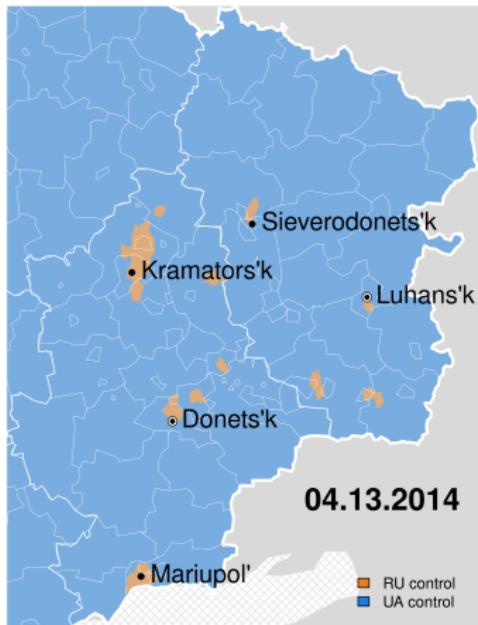


Figure 12: Territorial control

## Donbas War: Phase I (cont'd)

3. Anti-Terrorist Operation (April)
  - a) Kyiv launches ATO (JFO)
  - b) but Ukraine army paralyzed, stopped by civilians, abandons vehicles without a fight
  - c) martial law not announced
4. Political consolidation (May 2014)
  - a) separatist "referenda" held in Donets'k, Luhans'k (May 11)
  - b) Ukraine presidential elections (May 25), Poroshenko wins
5. ATO gathers pace (May-June 2014)
  - a) objective: isolate separatists
  - b) army lays siege to Slovyansk'
  - c) Metinvest (Akhmetov) steel worker militia drives separatists out of Mariupol'

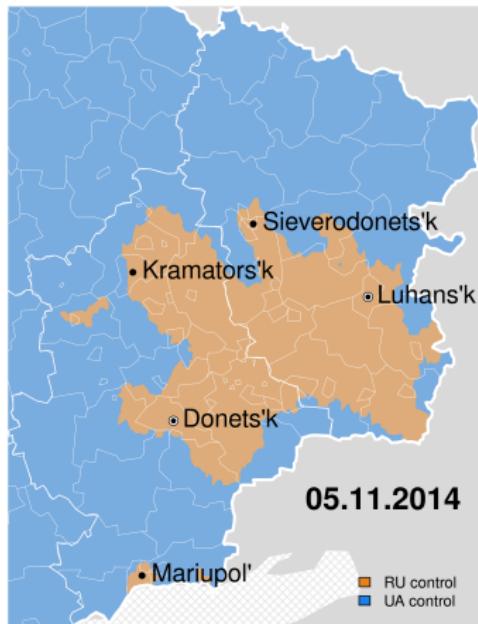


Figure 13: Territorial control

## Donbas War: Phase II

1. Ukraine on offensive (June-Aug)
  - a) siege warfare working
  - b) Kyiv regains control of border
  - c) takes Slovyans'k, Kramators'k
  - d) battle for Donets'k airport
2. Russia avoids direct action
  - a) 40,000 troops on border, as conventional deterrent
  - b) sends air defense systems, volunteer fighters
  - c) FSB, GRU teams on ground
  - d) but no direct, large-scale military support
3. Decisive moment (August 2014)
  - a) Ukraine encircles separatists
  - b) cuts territory in two
  - c) separatists on cusp of defeat

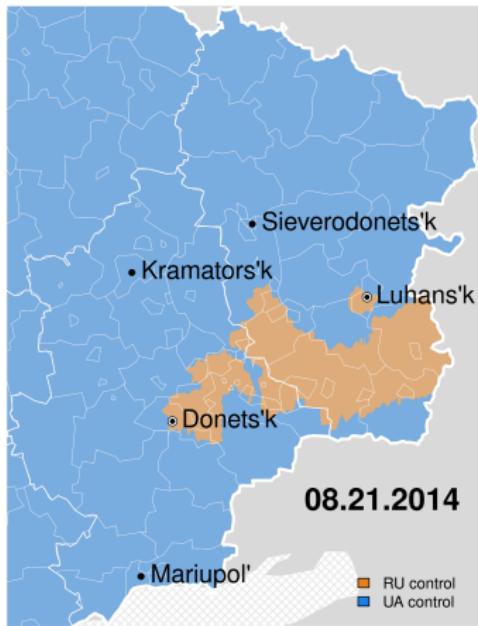


Figure 14: Territorial control

## Donbas War: Phase III

1. Russia intervenes (August 24)
  - a) brigade-size task force of Russian VDV, mechanized forces streams across border
  - b) "humanitarian convoy" cover
  - c) Ukraine army defeated at Battle of Ilovaisk
  - d) Russians reach Mariupol'
  - e) Ukraine: 60% equipment lost
2. Minsk I ceasefire (September 5)
  - a) pull back heavy weapons
  - b) OSCE monitoring mission
  - c) Ukraine agrees to "decentralize" power
  - d) Russia agrees local elections, withdrawal of armed groups
  - e) front stabilizes

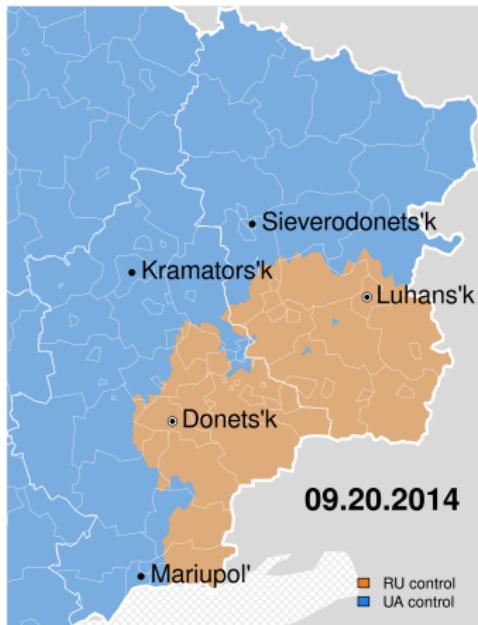


Figure 15: Territorial control

## Donbas War: Phase III (cont'd)

3. 2nd Russian offensive (January)
  - a) fighting escalates separatists capture Donets'k airport
  - b) separatists, Russian troops capture Debaltseve pocket
  - c) shelling of Mariupol', Kramators'k
4. Minsk II agreement (February)
  - a) Ukraine agrees to amend constitution, grant special status, amnesty for separatists
  - b) Russia agrees to restore Ukraine border control
  - c) front stabilizes (despite periodic flareups)
  - d) but political progress stalled
  - e) status quo until 2022

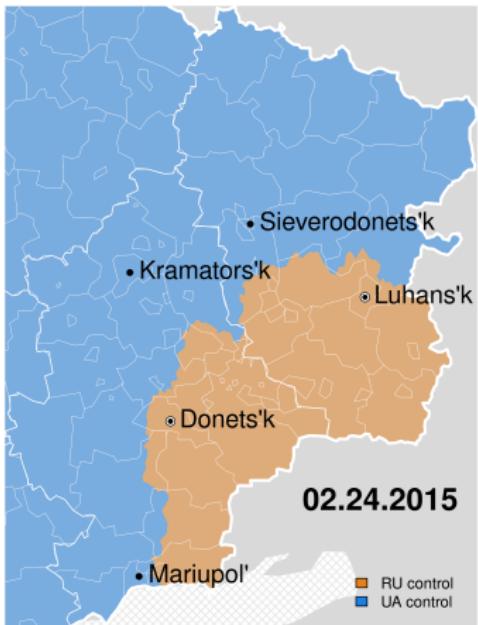


Figure 16: Territorial control

## Political Economy of the Donbas War

## What explains *local* variation in conflict?

- why did separatists attack some places, but not others?
- why did some towns fall to separatists more quickly than others?

Potential explanations:

1. Russian support for rebels
  - a) necessary, but not sufficient
  - b) cannot explain geography, timing of violence or territorial control
2. Ethnic nationalism
  - a) more Russian language/ethnicity → more support for separatism
3. Economic shocks
  - a) more local economic dependence on Russia → more support for separatism ✓



Figure 17: Economic engine

## Ethno-linguistic explanations

1. Primordialist hatreds
  - a) deep cultural cleavages, interethnic mistrust
2. Bargaining failure
  - a) issue indivisibility over language
3. Ethnic exclusion
  - a) grievances over perceived anti-Russian discrimination
4. Collective action
  - a) shared language facilitates organization, enforcement
5. External support
  - a) weapons, aid from co-ethnics in Russian Federation

### Hypothesis

- more violence in areas inhabited by Russian speakers / ethnic Russians



Figure 18: Mapa ros. movy

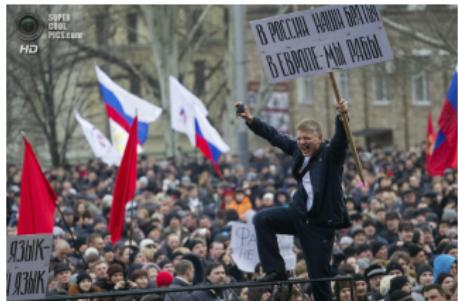


Figure 19: Nosiy movy

## Economic explanations

1. Negative shocks
  - a) less growth → unemployment, lower wages
  - b) change in terms of trade → unemployment, lower wages
2. Opportunity costs
  - a) participation in war rises as the opportunity costs of fighting fall
3. Looting / predation
  - a) financial incentives for opportunistic fighters

### Hypothesis

- more violence in areas potentially harmed by trade openness with the EU and trade barriers with Russia



Figure 20: Working man



Figure 21: Fighting man

## Ukraine's trade with EU vs. Russia

1. Export to Russia (pre-2013)
  - a) heavy machinery ✓
  - b) metals
  - c) agricultural products
2. Import from Russia (pre-2013)
  - a) oil and gas
3. Export to EU (pre-2013)
  - a) metals
  - b) agricultural products
4. Import from EU (pre-2013)
  - a) heavy machinery ✓
  - b) consumer goods



Figure 22: Trade tug-o-war

## Donbas' 'Big 3' industries

1. Metals (least threatened by EU deal)
  - a) 50% of industry in Donbas
  - b) exports to 50 countries
  - c) highly profitable, competitive
2. Coal (moderately threatened)
  - a) heavily subsidized, inefficient
  - b) 12% of coal to Russia
  - c) 33% of coal to factories dependent on Russian orders
  - d) IMF loans require end of subsidies, auctions, closures
3. Machine-building (most threatened)
  - a) 46% of industry in Donbas
    - locomotives, mining equipment, steel furnaces, industrial cranes, rolling mills
  - b) 60% of exports to Russia
  - c) no domestic demand
  - d) not competitive in EU, Asia



Figure 23: Steel magnate



Figure 24: Rust belt

## Which of these better explains the dynamics of the Donbas War?

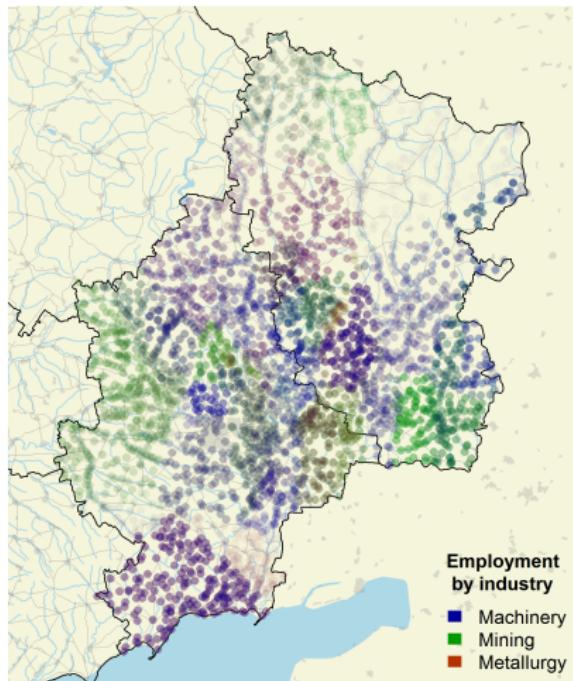


Figure 25: Economics

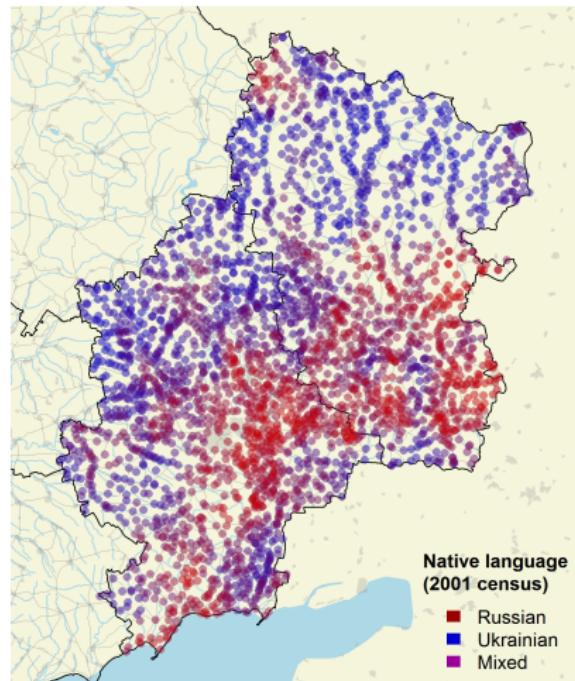


Figure 26: Language

## What do the data say?

1. Places that were more dependent on trade with Russia pre-2013...
  - a) saw more pro-Russian violence
  - b) fell to rebels earlier in war
2. Places with more Russian speakers...
  - a) also saw more pro-Russian violence
  - b) but this effect is more uncertain

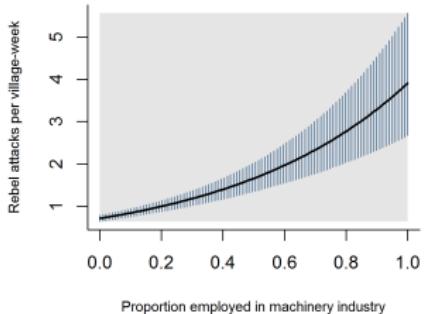


Figure 27: Economics

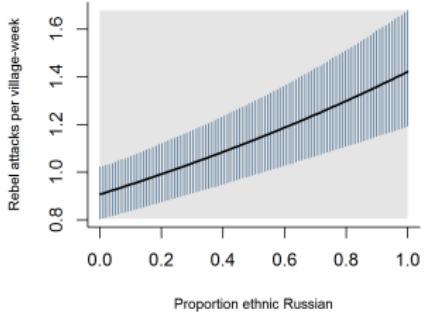


Figure 28: Language

## Discussion

### Language vs. economics

1. Which cause of conflict is more “preventable”/amenable to policy?
2. Should Ukraine have followed the Baltic model?  
(language as requirement for citizenship)
3. Are there national security advantages to being a bilingual nation?

# NEXT MEETING

*Russian-Ukrainian War: 2022- (Th, Dec. 4)*

- how has Russia adapted to early military failures?
- how likely is a peace deal in 2025?
- what would this deal look like?