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UKRAINE CULTURAL FIELD GUIDE

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Foreword

The Ukraine Cultural Field Guide is designed to provide deploying military personnel an overview of Ukraine's cultural terrain. In this field guide, Ukraine's cultural history has been synopsisized to capture the more significant aspects of the Ukraine cultural environment, with emphasis on factors having the greatest potential to impact operations.

The field guide presents background information to show the Ukraine mind-set through its history, language, and religion. It also contains practical sections on lifestyle, customs and habits. For those seeking more extensive information, MCIA produces a series of cultural intelligence studies on Ukraine that explore the dynamics of Ukraine's culture at a deeper level.

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Ukraine

UKRAINE

CULTURAL FIELD GUIDE

Ukraine is positioned between Eurasia and Europe, and the region has been influenced by many major civilizations. Ukraine, whose name means “borderland,” has lived under foreign powers for most of its existence. This is most recently evidenced by the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, controlled by the centralized establishment in Moscow under the communist regime. Even today the capital, Kiev, struggles internally between Moscow and the West, forcing Ukrainians to more closely identify with either their own cultural brethren or a new, more independent direction for the country.



National Flag

CULTURAL HISTORY

Pre-Slavic

The earliest inhabitants of what is now Ukraine territory arrived by the Black Sea about 150,000 years ago. Agricultural societies developed around 5000 to 4000 B.C., near the Dniester River east of the Carpathian Mountains. With agricultural development, came political and social organization and a growing population. By 2700 B.C., its villages contained up to 700 inhabitants.

Cimmerans were the first group identified by name in the region (in Homer’s *Odyssey*) and were the first nomadic group to master

horseback riding in the region. Around the 7th century B.C., Scythians from Central Asia inhabited the steppes of Ukraine, while the Greeks established their presence on the Black Sea. The Scythians may be ancestors to modern Slavs, though the validity of this theory is debated. The Scythians were a major civilization, interacting with the Greeks and fighting the Persian King Darius for what became Ukraine territory. The Scythians were overcome by the Sarmatians from the east, who by the 2nd century ruled the territory spanning the Eurasian steppes to the Volga River. Goths, Romans, and Huns also encroached on the territory later known as Ukraine.



Coat of Arms

Much folklore surrounds the founding of Kiev, but many scholars date origin to 483 A.D. when legend holds that four siblings — Ky, Shchek, Khoriv, and Lybid — founded the current capital.

Slavic

Beginning in the 6th century A.D., Scandinavians traded from the Baltic region and Novgorod to Kiev. Most historians claim that it is also around the 6th century that the “Slavs” appear. The Slavs, thought to have come from northwest Ukraine, Belarus, and Poland, flourished until the 8th century. The Slavs spread slowly from the Mediterranean and Black Sea to the northern reaches of the Volga River, evolving into more localized, distinct Slavic ethnicities. In 879, the Nordic King Oleh took control of Kiev, realizing its strategic importance on the Dnieper River with access to the steppe as well as the Black Sea.

The year 989 A.D. marks the beginning of the Kievan Rus era, the first Eastern Slavonic state. Scholars tend to agree that the Kievan Rus was a “result of a complex Slavic/Scandinavian interrelationship,” where the Scandinavians and Slavs together prompted po-



Independence Square Fountain Depicting the Four Siblings

litical and economic development resulting in a vast empire. The Kievan Rus is identified as a “political conglomeration” of many Eastern Slavonic principalities under a ruler in Kiev, who in reality had little control over the populace. The Kievan Rus gained prominence under Volodymyr the Great, who reigned from 978 to 1015. The empire stretched from the Volga River in present-day Russia to the Danube, as well as from the Baltic to the Black Seas. Volodymyr secured borders, undermined the importance of the Scandinavians, and focused control on trade routes stemming from Central Europe.

Volodymyr the Great adopted Orthodox Christianity as the official religion of the Kievan Rus, which established the influence of the Orthodox Church early in Ukraine’s history. The conversion of the Kievan Rus was prompted by the marriage of Volodymyr to the Byzantine princess, Anne. This union secured the conversion of Volodymyr’s subjects to Byzantine, or Orthodox, Christianity.

By 1240, the Kievan Rus was weakened by fragmentation and economic downturns, and they fell to a Mongol invasion. Historians believe this is when the distinction between Russians and Ukrainians emerged due to power shifts after the death of Volodymyr the Great. Historians argue that contemporary Russians originate from the Novgorod and Vladimir-Suzdal principalities, where Volodymyr’s son, Mstyslav, took control of all the land east of the Dnieper River. The other son, Iaroslav, controlled the land to the west. After Mstyslav died, Iaroslav reacquired the land east of the Dnieper. When the Kievan Rus was at its height, it had a huge expanse of land, significant development of cities, growth of the Christian Orthodoxy, and codification of law.

The Mongols, although initially overrunning the Kievan Rus, never had a firm control over the region. By the mid-14th cen-



Kiev

tury, the Lithuanians controlled Kiev; they incorporated the local Ukrainian elite into governance, designated Ruthenian the official language, and respected local customs. Later, Polish domination over western Ukraine caused conflict for centuries.

Roman Catholic Poles sought to undermine the Orthodox Church, while monarchs fought over control of the land. Muscovites encroached south and west by the end of the 15th century, winning the favor of some Ukraine rulers disgruntled with the Poles and Lithuanians. During this period many Ukrainian nobles, who considered Orthodoxy to be the religion of the peasantry, converted to Roman Catholicism under the influence of the Polish. These nobles assimilated into the Polish sphere, adopting its language, culture, and religion. Without the support of the noble class, nationalist movements in the 19th and 20th centuries could not flourish.



Monument to Revered Cossack Hetman, Bohdan Khmelnytsky

The Cossacks, or inhabitants of the steppe since the mid-15th century, became Ukrainian national heroes due to their resistance to the Poles, Lithuanians, Turks, and the Tatars. Cossacks were not governed by foreign powers invading other parts of the country. One of the most famous Cossacks was the hetman, or general, Bohdan Khmelnytsky. This hetman led Cossacks to defeat the Poles in 1648. The victory was short lived; Russians and Poles divided Ukraine in 1668 and incorporated the pieces into their territories.

Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire

In 1475, Ottomans assisted the Crimean Tatars in overcoming Greeks on the Black Sea coast. This populated the Crimean peninsula with Turks and Tatars. The Tatars adopted Islam in the 13th century and became a center of Islam in Eastern Europe for

centuries. The Tatars are known for capturing Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish slaves in southern Ukraine. Following Russian annexation of Crimea as a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768, Tatars moved east to the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. The Tatars were purged from Crimea during the Stalinist era and forcibly resettled to other parts of Central Asia. Today, only about 10 percent of the population of Crimea is Tatar. In two centuries under czarist rule, millions of Russians migrated to Crimea and influenced the culture of the peninsula.

Russia

In 1795, a treaty among Prussia, Austria, and Russia partitioned Ukraine. Moscow reached the Black Sea under the reign of Catherine the Great in the 19th century. Language restrictions began. Construction added the cities of Dnipropetrovsk, Sevastopol, Simferopol, and Odesa. Western portions around Lviv remained under Hapsburg control until the Soviet Union was established.

The Soviet Union

Illiteracy and a fragile republic weakened Ukraine nationalist movements at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1922, an independent Czechoslovakia incorporated parts of western Ukraine while the eastern portion became a Soviet Socialist Republic under Bolshevik rule.

Despite submission to Lenin, Ukraine's culture and economy flourished during the 1920s. However, this prosperity ended with Stalin, whose collectivization schemes in 1932–1933 starved 5–7 million Ukrainians.

This famine, or *holodomor*, remains a sensitive subject. Ukrainians call it genocide, while Soviets deny the events. The Russian



Holodomor Memorial for the Victims of the 1932–1933 Famine

Kremlin claims the famine does not satisfy the legal definition of genocide. In 2004, some Ukraine presidential candidates endorsed international recognition of the famine as genocide.

After World War II, Soviets controlled the western reaches of Ukraine. The Russian population of Ukraine increased while the Soviet Republic industrialized and urbanized. Soviets suppressed Ukraine's culture and nationalism. The national Ukrainian language was obscured, and numerous minority languages were forbidden. Additionally, Ukraine Orthodox and Uniate churches were shut down.



After the Chernobyl Disaster

Ukraine's culture was suppressed, and resources were exploited. The Ukrainian Socialist Republic contained 60 percent of all Soviet coal reserves and produced 40 percent of Soviet agriculture. Ukraine contributed 17 percent of the Soviet Gross National Product (GNP).

Environmental damage from 70 years of pollution and unsustainable growth took a toll, too. The most devastating environmental disaster of the Soviet era was the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident when a reactor exploded and dispersed radioactive material to more than a dozen countries.

Independence and Transition

While nationalist movements did occur in Ukraine, the Communist Party itself pushed to separate from the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. This move followed perestroika and glasnost, Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of "restructuring" and "openness" that ultimately contributed to the demise of the USSR. Ukraine Party members anticipating fragmentation of the Soviet Union declared sovereignty in July 1990 to protect their high positions.

Many former Soviet leaders continued to serve in government after Ukraine's independence. During privatization reforms, some government officials sold national assets far below value, pocketing much of the money. Privatization schemes made a tiny percentage of Ukrainians wealthy by laundering public money into private accounts. Newly rich businessmen would endorse candi-



Protesters, Independence Square

dates and political parties, creating a de facto oligarchy. Meanwhile, the rest of the population struggled in the first years of free-market capitalism.

Dissatisfaction with the massive corruption led to a series of protests in 2004 called the Orange Revolution. From November to December, protestors vocalized concerns about voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud. Under the leadership of Viktor Yushchenko, members of the reform movement wore orange. Tens of thousands of protestors demonstrated daily in Kiev's Independence Square. Sit-ins and general strikes highlighted the nationwide democratic revolution. The establishment feared Yushchenko so much that he was poisoned with dioxin. His survival amplified his popularity and strengthened opposition to Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Russian, establishment candidate, as well as Leonid Kuchma, president since 1994.

Nationwide protests resulted in Ukraine's Supreme Court ordering a presidential election re-vote on 26 December 2004. Under intense scrutiny by domestic and international observers, the second runoff was declared to be "fair and free." The final results



Viktor Yushchenko

showed a victory for Yushchenko, who received 52 percent of the vote, compared to Yanukovych's 44 percent. Yushchenko's inauguration was 23 January 2005; the Orange Revolution succeeded without bloodshed.

Yushchenko's Orange Revolution partner, Yulia Tymoshenko, was selected as prime minister and endorsed by the parliament. Tymoshenko, a tough businesswoman-turned-populist politician joined the opposition with Yushchenko with promises to curb corruption in the business world. Even aspects of her physical persona came to symbolize her popular heritage; her hair, worn in a traditional rural Ukrainian fashion, helped Ukrainians identify with her not as a politician, but as one of the people. Yushchenko and Tymoshenko set out to join European institutions, work toward accession into the European Union and NATO, and amend bitter feelings with Russian president Vladimir Putin.

However, personality clashes and accusations of corruption inundated the first months of Yushchenko's administration, distracting leaders from delivering the promised reforms. Government failure to punish corrupt officials and cronies of re-privatized Ukraine industries eroded public confidence. Economic growth slowed, and oil prices fell drastically. Yushchenko dismissed his entire cabinet, even Tymoshenko.

CULTURAL IDENTITY

The State and Identity Formation

Historic lack of a Ukraine centralized state and continuous conquests of territory shaped identity. The bombardment of conquerors forced Ukrainians to be resilient and uphold their identity as a

means of survival, preserving their language and religion despite foreign attempts to suppress them. Scholars debate when a distinct Ukrainian identity emerged, but Ukrainians most often trace their roots to the Polonians living in western Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus around the 6th century.

The Kievan Rus era also shaped cultural identity, as it was a major civilization of Slavic and Orthodox history. The Orthodox Church, Cossacks, and minority intelligentsia of the 18th to 20th centuries were influential in propagating a Ukrainian identity.



Orthodox Cathedral

The state did not play a large role in identity formation until Ukraine was a Soviet Socialist Republic. While Muscovites and Catherine the Great brought Russian culture to Ukraine during the 18th century, it was not until Ukraine came under the Soviet Union that their identity was brutally suppressed. The Soviet State controlled all aspects of life and strongly encouraged the sentiments of “brotherhood” and “Sovietness.” The Soviets suppressed Ukraine’s language, literature, and religion; broke its economic backbone; and reinterpreted history to weaken any ideas of Ukraine nationhood.

Political Culture

Powerlessness and acceptance of corrupt practices defined political culture during Soviet rule. Obstacles that impeded change included economic hardships, weak civil society and middle class, and little previous experience with democracy. Limited social trust and restricted media also defined Ukraine after the country gained its independence.

From 1990 to 2004, Ukraine, like many post-Soviet states, had “virtual politics,” where elections were held, though later delegitimized by voter intimidation, limited press coverage of all the candidates, fraudulent ballot tallying, and candidate intimidation. Burdened with decades of propaganda, people found trusting governing institutions difficult. Politicians undermined and intimidated the opposition rather than engage in debate.

Progress also was marred by politicians who organized in ways that guaranteed their continued stronghold of power. Resistance movements emerged. Some were inspired by the tolerant communism of Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s; others were inspired by nationalist efforts from the Lviv region

such as the Rukh movement, which arose in 1988 as a unique non-communist voice in Soviet Ukraine.

Today, as democracy and civil society develop in a post-Soviet Ukraine, the political culture is transitioning as well. Older generations find it difficult to adapt to the open society and their new role in the political process. Transforming the political culture of a society after decades of suppression is challenging. Moving beyond the memory of life in the USSR proves hard because many former *nomenklatura*, top echelons of the former Soviet Union, hold positions in government and business in newly independent Ukraine.

The Orange Revolution signaled a shift, and progress is being made. Transparency, free press, and political participation are on the rise. The 2004 Orange Revolution had tremendous implications for Ukraine's political culture. Ukrainians across all



Traditional Celebration

sectors of society, not only the educated elite or western Ukrainians, desired a new direction for their country. After decades of oppression, people changed the political process. Such a successful popular revolt would not have been possible previously. However, few reforms were implemented, corruption ensued, and deep clashes between Tymoshenko and Yushchenko marred hopes of progress.

Many Ukrainians have become discouraged by the political squabbling and economic decline since the Orange Revolution. Nonetheless, political culture has changed positively. The media is freer, journalists do not fear for their lives, elections are fair, and a much larger proportion of the population participates in political processes.



Tymoshenko Supporters

Media Culture

The Central Committee of the Soviet Union kept a tight rein on media. Speaking against the Party or its policies was strictly forbidden, and all media outlets were owned and operated by the state. U.S. broadcasting companies, such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, were examples of the few free media outlets in the Soviet Union.

Even after Ukraine gained its independence, the media was controlled by Kiev and the corrupt oligarchs. Harassment and kidnapping of journalists was common. The most famous case involved Georgiy Gongadze in 2001. Gongadze founded an independent newspaper called *Ukrayinska Pravda*. He was critical of the cronyism rampant throughout government and business. The journalist was abducted and found decapitated outside Kiev. The case became more prominent after evidence emerged indicating that Ukraine's president, Leonid Kuchma, ordered the journalist to be "taken care of," along with many other dissidents. Since the Orange Revolution, improvements to the system have been visible. The media has been deemed largely free and independent, and there are many additional news outlets, compared to the scarcity of preceding years.

Military Culture

Ukraine's military mirrors the deeply rooted nationalism of the civilian population. The Ministry of Defense is undergoing serious reforms to decrease the size of the military and to establish more mobile and better trained forces. Peacekeeping and counterterrorism are the main missions, and the Ministry of Defense goal is to have a fully professional armed forces by 2011.

Morale can be low among the armed services. The defense budget crisis, due to political squabbling in Kiev and the poor economy, delayed implementation of necessary reforms. Much of the equipment is worn, and training techniques are from the Soviet era.

The Ukraine Armed Forces endorses NATO accession and participates in multinational exercises. The Ministry of Defense and servicemen recognize the significance of these exercises and value training with international forces, particularly the U.S. military.



Great Patriotic War Memorial

Social Networks

Immediate and extended family are highly valued in Ukraine. The average family has two children, and both parents work outside the home. Elderly parents often live with their adult children and provide child care. Women perform household chores, and grandmothers living in the home are significant in decision making for the household. It is common for parents to support children through their adulthood and even marriage. In turn, children step up when their aging parents can no longer support themselves. The elderly are treated with love and respect. Passers-by in the street generally do not smile or acknowledge one another; however, once acquaintances are met, Ukrainians are hospitable people.

Individualism in Ukraine, though formerly discouraged during the Soviet era, is highly valued, as are friendships. Ukrainians have a strong sense of nationalism and cultural identity, particularly after their long struggle for independence. They take pride in their national heritage and are optimistic despite economic hardship, environmental problems, and ongoing social change. Work patterns, for example, are shifting from the old Soviet style to private enterprise, individual labor, and personal initiative.

Rural and Urban Divide

The rural-urban divide among Ukrainians is expanding as younger generations seek work and better education in cities. Sixty-seven percent of the Ukrainian population lives in cities; however, both rural and urban areas have seen a decrease in overall population due to emigration as Ukrainians seek a better life abroad. Rural



Ukrainian Folk Dancers



Rural Ukraine

people throughout Ukraine tend to be more conservative. They practice Ukraine traditions, may dress in traditional Ukraine clothing, tend to be more religious, and are closely linked with agriculture. Many rural Ukrainians still practice traditional methods of heating homes, cultivating land, and raising cattle. Most rural areas can access potable water, much of it from a protected well.

Religion

Between Catholic countries in the west and Orthodox Russia to the east, are Ukraine's communities of many denominations.

Religion is a significant facet of the Ukrainian identity. According to surveys, beliefs vary by region. Ninety percent of Ukrainians in each of the western oblasts (administrative provinces) claim belief in God, but only half the population in the eastern oblasts say the same. The eastern oblasts, such as Kharkiv, Luhans, and Donetsk, are predominantly secular, with only a small portion of the population attending religious services.

The Orthodox Church served as a powerful characteristic of Ukrainian cultural identity throughout history, as it distinguished Ukrainians from their many remotely occupying powers. The Orthodox Church was also a powerful political vehicle in the absence of strong central control until the 16th century.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate is the most popular denomination in Ukraine, with about 50 percent of the population identifying itself as Ukrainian Orthodox. Ukraine's struggle between east and west also is reflected in religion. In 1448, the Kiev Patriarchate separated from the Moscow Patriarchate. For centuries, the Kiev and Moscow Patriarchates wrestled over jurisdiction. It was not until the mid-1990s that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate was fully independent of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Ukrainians established the Uniate Church after the Treaty of Brest in 1596, which was intended to unite the Ukrainian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches (and to counter Muscovite influence).



Ukraine Street Decorated for Christmas

Instead, an entirely separate denomination was established that practiced Orthodox traditions while recognizing the authority of the Vatican. Locals sought protection from the Vatican and Poland, simultaneously attempting to keep old traditions.

After the Bolshevik Revolution, another Ukraine church was established and named the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. This church was a source of contention during the reign of the Soviet Union. Soviet *apparatchiks*, Communist Party or



Carpathian Mountain Church

government officials of the USSR, believed the church had nationalist tendencies. The Central Committee of the Soviet Union banned religious activity and purged thousands of religious leaders, who continued to preach underground.

Even in the 1980s, when glasnost reopened the doors of the churches, attracting parishioners who had left religion due to Party policies proved difficult. Some Ukrainians embraced the openness to a religious life, particularly as a way to cope with post-Soviet chaos that befell many former Soviet states. Religious institutions encouraged the nationalist movements by the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Ukraine, the Autocephalous Orthodox and Uniate Churches differentiated Ukraine's religious traditions from those of Russia.



Orthodox Priest



Kiev Church

Churches are still a venue for political influence, particularly between Moscow and Kiev. The Russian Orthodox Church, though separate from the state, is subservient to the Kremlin and supports its policies. When glasnost reopened religious institutions, the Russian Orthodox Church sought to unite all Slavs under one church.

Church politics pervades all levels of life in Ukraine and Russia. Because there are several large Ukraine churches, including the Autocephalous Orthodox, Uniate, Ukrainian Orthodox of the Moscow Patriarchate, and Ukrainian Orthodox of the Kiev Patriarchate, no single Ukraine church achieved the same close relationship with the state as the Russian Orthodox Church did with the Kremlin. The churches serve as strong points of cultural identity, and religious pluralism is significant in Ukraine.

CULTURAL ECONOMY

Ukraine has incredible potential for growth in a number of industries. The agricultural industry is historically significant for Ukraine, and proved lucrative during the 19th century and the Soviet era. Known as the “breadbasket of Europe,” Ukraine is the second largest global producer of sunflower oil. Ukraine is also rich in iron ore and coal.

Ukraine’s economy has a strong industrial sector in the eastern oblasts, where heavy metals and military technology industries flourish. Steel and iron industries have been profitable for Ukraine, which produces 3 percent of the world’s steel (the eighth largest global producer of the metal) and 4 percent of the world’s iron (the sixth largest global producer).

Agriculture has been a lucrative industry for Ukrainians throughout history. However, the agricultural industry has decreased from 22 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1987 to 7



Wheat Field

percent in 2007. Industry and manufacturing decreased by about 15 percent since 1987 as well. Conversely, the service industry jumped from 31 percent of the GDP in 1987 to 61 percent in 2007. This data, coupled with the strong migration of young Ukrainians to major cities, indicates a shift from traditional professions to professions characteristic of developed countries.

A diversified economy with large sectors in agriculture, industrial production, and service gives Ukraine enormous potential for growth. Like many former Soviet states, Ukraine's fragile economy is in transition. Corruption and political instability continue to hinder economic growth, thus deterring foreign investment and hampering reforms.

The Heritage Institute and World Bank identify corruption, high government spending, a weak financial and banking system, high inflation, and inadequate protection of private property as other impediments to economic growth. Despite promises during the Or-



Odessa Port

ange Revolution to improve these economic indicators, Ukraine ranked 152 out of 179 nations surveyed in terms of economic freedom. Internal political instability and the global financial crisis slow implementation of needed reforms.

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

Ukraine's Mediterranean climate on the Black Sea contrasts with that of the Carpathian Mountains of the western oblasts. Ukraine is 95 percent rolling plains with the black, rich soil vital to its agricultural industry. The fertile area is in the southern and eastern portion of the country. In the north and northwest are forests. Carpathian Mountains occupy the western oblasts, and the Crimean Mountains are on the Crimean Peninsula.

As Ukraine's geographical features did not provide significant natural boundaries, the country was subject to incessant invasion throughout history. Attacks came from many directions. The Eur-



Carpathian Mountains

asian steppe stretches from Manchuria to Hungary, and the mountain ranges across the steppes are easily traversed.

Invaders included Scythians, Mongols, Tatars, Turks, Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians. Conquerors had a lasting effect on Ukrainian identity, and historical figures who fought off invaders are revered. For example, Ukrainians revere the Cossacks, who fought the Turks, attacked Istanbul twice, and successfully waged a campaign against Polish-Lithuanian rule.

LANGUAGE

The only official language is Ukrainian, spoken by 67 percent of the population. Russian is spoken by 24 percent, and other minority languages are spoken by 9 percent of the population. Ukrainian is an Eastern Slavonic language, similar to Russian and Belarusian. The Cyrillic alphabet is said to have been introduced to Ukraine by Christian missionaries, Cyril and Methodius. Religious mate-



Crimean Coast

rial was produced in Old Church Slavonic, from which the modern Ukrainian is derived.

There are 32 letters in the Ukraine alphabet and two characters — the *miakiy znak*, or soft sign, and the apostrophe. These characters indicate softness in the preceding letter.

Ethnic Russians in Crimea differ from those in western Ukraine and Kiev in that almost 100 percent speak Russian at home. Many also understand Ukrainian. Language is an extremely sensitive issue in Ukraine, particularly in Crimea. Most ethnic Russians seek official status for Russian as a state language of Ukraine; western Ukrainians are staunchly opposed to the idea. Under Soviet rule, authorities in Moscow forbade the use of the Ukrainian language or alphabet and went to great lengths to destroy Ukraine traditions and institutions in an attempt to crush Ukrainian nationalism.

After gaining their independence, Ukrainians revived their language, folklore, and traditions to invoke nationalist sentiments. Many Crimeans want Russian to be an official language of Ukraine

to preserve their ethnic Russian identity. The issue sparked greater tensions between Crimea and Kiev when some politicians tried to integrate Ukrainian language and culture in Crimean schools, where most taught in Russian.

For daily greetings when meeting informally, men and women usually wave and say “*dobry den*” or “*pryvit*,” which mean “hello.” In formal situations, people shake hands and say, “*dobry den*.” Men wait for women to extend their hand first. In official situations, people use professional titles. Another respectful form of address uses the individual’s first name and the father’s first name with a gender-specific suffix. For example, a man with a father named Mikhailo would be called Stepan Mykhailovych; a woman with the same father would be called Oksana Mykhailovna.

CULTURAL ATTITUDES

Attitudes Toward the United States

Ukraine’s government and military tend to have a positive perception of the United States. Bilateral military exercises and assistance programs for the government help make relations between the United States and Ukraine amicable. The United States has sought to offer Ukraine a NATO Membership Action Plan, which would set the route for eventual NATO accession, despite opposition from some European NATO members. The United States encouraged Ukraine membership in the World Trade Organization and supports Ukraine accession into the European Union.

Ukraine has received generous amounts of funding from the United States since 1992 under the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA). Ukraine was the primary recipient of this funding, ac-



Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Yushchenko

cumulating more than US\$3 billion since the program's inception. The program aims to support Ukrainians transitioning to democracy and a free-market economy. Since 2006, Ukraine has also received assistance from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (to date, about US\$45 million) to reduce corruption and support civil society, judicial reform, and government monitoring.

Ukrainians have positive feelings for the United States, although sentiments can change from region to region. Western Ukrainians, who are strongly pro-NATO and pro-European Union (EU), tend to appreciate U.S. efforts to include Ukraine in these institutions. Crimeans are opposed to NATO accession, many of whom protest international exercises on the peninsula.

Attitudes Toward Neighboring Countries

Soon after its declaration of independence in 1990, Ukraine sought new relationships with all its immediate neighbors based on economic, political, and military ties. The creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) began the realignment of relations with Belarus, Moldova, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian states.

Ukraine became a member of the CIS on 8 December 1991. Although in favor of limited economic integration within the CIS, Ukraine refused to join other CIS structures such as the Collective Security Agreement and the ruble zone. Ukraine is a founding member of Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova, although Uzbekistan is no longer a member. The Western-oriented former Soviet states prefer to limit the CIS to economic relations and promote cooperation among emerging democracies.

Belarus

Ukraine relations with Belarus are calm. Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka opposed the Orange Revolution and endorsed Viktor Yanukovych, the pro-Russian Party of Regions establishment candidate. Lukashenka was concerned that the “color revolutions” would make their way to Belarus. Lukashenka’s fears were partially realized in 2006 when thousands protested in Minsk in response to Lukashenka running and winning his third term as president. The Belarus constitution only allowed two terms for each president until a questionable referendum in 2006 permitted him to run again. Lukashenka accused Yushchenko of forming groups to oppose his rule and criticized Yushchenko’s agreement with U.S. President George W. Bush to bring freedom and democracy to countries like Belarus. Despite political differences, Belarus and Ukraine have worked together economically during the annual gas crises each suffer with

Russia's gas monopoly, Gazprom. Furthermore, Belarus has been more frequently turning to the West for aid and reforms, evidenced by the release of political prisoners and the delayed recognition of the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Russia

The 11 million Russians living outside Russia's borders significantly shape the relationship between Ukraine and Russia. Moscow attempts to reassert its global standing and pursues policies to protect its citizens abroad. As Moscow rebuilds global power, Kiev seeks a deeper and broader integration with the West.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev indicate strong intentions to reunite ethnic Russians under a common identity and reassert power over former Soviet states. This is particularly true in countries such as Ukraine, with strong NATO and EU aspirations from the top echelons of the government, which pose a threat to Moscow. The Orange Revolution angered the Kremlin as its candidate-of-choice, Viktor Yanukovich, was denied the presidency after the re-vote. Many analysts regard the Orange Revolution as a pivotal downturn in Russia-Ukraine relations. Annual disputes over the price of Russia's gas cause unrest. Also, Russia's August 2008 incursion into Georgia alarms Ukrainians, who fear a similar fate.

Europe

Ukraine considers attaining EU membership essential for Western-leaning foreign policy. Ukraine is part of the European Neighborhood Policy, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe. Ukraine exercises the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and seeks NATO membership. Delays to reform hamper efforts for Westward integration;

political instability following the Orange Revolution also delayed integration. Multiple parliamentary elections and long periods of stagnation due to coalition-building in the National Council, or Verkhovna Rada, made accession more difficult.

In January 2006 and 2009, disputes over the Ukraine-Russia gas transit deals intensified. Gazprom cut gas supplies to Ukraine transit routes, leaving Europe without supplies for several weeks in the dead of winter. The January 2009 gas crisis was particularly problematic, as dissension between the Russians and Ukrainians further weakened Ukrainian-European relations. Many Ukrainians sympathized with Europeans during the gas crisis, expressing serious dissatisfaction over their government and Russia's inability to reach a compromise. The EU and NATO were divided on how to integrate with Ukraine due to economic and political instabilities. After the Georgia crisis of August 2008 and the gas crisis of 2009, the EU is increasing efforts for Ukraine integration.

Relations between Ukrainians and other Europeans are generally cordial, as more Ukrainians are able to travel and work in Europe. Also, surveys show the prospect for EU accession remains popular for Ukrainians, even though NATO accession does not.

Attitudes Toward Other Slavic People

The Concept of Rodina

In Ukrainian and Russian, *rodina* means family, specifically the extended family. *Rodina* also means homeland, a familial connection among people of a common territory and ethnicity. The notion of *rodina* is much stronger for the Eastern Slavic countries of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. This historic connection dates back to the Christian missionaries Cyril and Methodius' journey through Eastern Europe in the 9th and 10th century Kievan Rus era. The Slavic

identity is deeply inculcated with Eastern Slavonic language, history, territory, religion, and tradition. However, Ukraine nationalist movements of the 19th century stressed Ukraine's experiences under Soviet repression as distinguished from its eastern *rodina*.

Derived from the time of imperial Russia, the idea of *rodina* was imposed heavily during the Soviet era. Russia was called "Great Russia;" Belarus was called "White Russia;" and Ukraine was called "Little Russia." These names indicated all the regional Slavic lands were composed of not only Slavs, but also of ethnic Russians. Scholars argue it was not until 1917-1918 that Ukrainians were accepted by Moscow as a distinct nation rather than "Little Russians." In the Soviet Union, the power center enforced *rodina* to unite various cultures under one identity. With the fall of the Soviet Union, ethnic Russians abroad were forced to redefine identities within newly founded nations as minorities. However, Crimeans do not consider themselves to be a national minority.

Crimea

In the two centuries under czarist rule, millions of Russians migrated to Crimea and spread their culture throughout the peninsula. In 1954, Nikita Khrushchev donated the Crimea peninsula to the Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic as a symbol marking the 300th anniversary of Russia-Ukraine unification. Given that Ukraine was still a Soviet republic at the time, the action did not change Crimea culture, politics, or territory. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Crimeans found themselves separated from Moscow.

In 1991, Ukraine declared itself an independent, democratic state. The peninsula was granted autonomy within Ukraine. Crimeans became an awkward part of the new independent Ukraine and home to a significant Russian diaspora. As the Putin era ushers in



Fortress in Sudak, Crimea

a significantly more prominent Russia, Ukraine struggles with political turmoil in its national assembly and economic instability.

CULTURAL VALUES

Customs

Since Ukraine attained its independence, life for Ukrainians has constantly changed. Many long for the stability of the Soviet regime, and popular sentiment often is colored by cynicism toward those in power. Cronyism and corruption in business and government contribute to a negative opinion of leadership, but civic trust and political participation are showing signs of improvement.

Ukrainians are stoic people. Their Slavic heritage has been passed on through folk legends, songs, and art, including their world-renowned decorative Easter eggs and wooden nesting dolls.

Relatives and close friends use first names, and hug and kiss each other on the cheek when greeting. Ukrainians use moderate hand



Wooden Nesting Dolls and Pysanky (Decorative Easter Eggs)

and body gestures in daily conversation. Establish frequent, but not constant, eye contact during a conversation. When passing strangers in the street, it is not customary to smile, and Ukrainians generally will not smile back. To speak to a superior with one's hands in the pockets or arms folded across the chest is considered disrespectful. Chivalry is expected from men, to include opening doors, carrying heavy items, and standing when women enter the room.

Ukrainians may bring *horilka*, a special hard liquor, as a gift to hosts. During meals, Ukrainians may sing songs. Toasts are offered to celebrate an occasion such as hope for better times, best wishes for business transactions, and to honor women. The number of toasts depends on how many people are at the meal, but drunkenness is considered impolite. Toasts are given with the phrases *bud'mo* (we shall be!) or *na zdorovia* (to health!). The purpose of the toast is to warm relationships between people, including strangers or foreigners, and to make settings more informal.



Borscht



Easter Celebration

Because Ukrainians value hospitality, guests are always welcome, though prearranged visits are preferred. Friends, neighbors, and relatives visit one another often, and hosts always offer refreshments.

People eat light breakfasts, *snidanok*, and have their main meal, *obid*, in mid-afternoon. *Obid* consists of soup and meat or fish. Families eat the third meal, *vechera*, around 1800.



Bread for a Wedding Toast

Bread is a staple of the Ukrainian's diet; it is served at every meal. Guests are expected to linger after a meal to drink liquor or coffee.

Cultural Etiquette

Acceptable Practices

- Attempt to speak Ukrainian or Russian upon meeting; Ukrainians appreciate the effort. In Kiev, Ukrainian and Russian are used interchangeably. In eastern Ukraine and Crimea, most of the population speaks Russian but has a working knowledge of Ukrainian. In Crimea specifically, Russian is preferred. In western Ukraine, Ukrainian is more common and preferred. Most Ukrainians likely will not be offended by use of one language over the other, as an attempt to communicate in either is appreciated.
- In public or formal situations, address men with *Pan* (Mr.) and women with *Pani* (Mrs.), or *Panna* (Miss).
- Use the second personal plural pronoun in Ukrainian, *Vy*, in formal situations or when addressing an elder. It is considered rude to address an elder or a stranger too informally upon first meeting.
- It is appropriate to bring a small gift when invited as a guest to a Ukrainian's home. Chocolate, cakes, flowers, or alcohol for adults and sweets or small toys for children are appropriate. For flowers, bring an even number. Bouquets with an odd number are for funerals.
- Remove shoes and wear slippers upon entering a host's home.
- Inform the host of dietary needs prior to the visit; refusing food can be seen as rude.
- Say "*smachnoho*," or good appetite, before eating.

- Toasting is common for meals with guests, and depending on the occasion, several rounds may ensue. Guests may be asked to make a toast, which should be followed by “*bud’mo*” (we shall be!) or “*na zdorovia*” (to health!).
- During toasts, finish shots in one gulp rather than sipping.
- During conversations, Ukrainians tend to make occasional eye contact, rather than constant direct eye contact.
- Women should cover their heads and shoulders when entering an Orthodox church. Skirts should reach below the knees.

Unacceptable Practices

- Do not smile at passers-by in the streets; Ukrainians generally do not address or smile at one another in public, and may consider such a gesture odd.
- Do not put hands in lap or elbows on the table during the meal; this is considered rude.

ROLES AND ETHNICITY

Women

In this paternalistic society, many women still have traditional roles as housewife and caretaker of the family. Women are taking on more jobs historically dominated by men, as well as pursuing higher education. However, women are more likely to take low-paying jobs and to face discrimination. Chivalry is a significant



Traditional Weaving

feature of Ukrainian culture. Sex trafficking is a serious problem in Ukraine. Many women are lured into modeling or job agencies, but end up being trafficked in the sex tourism industry.

Ethnic Identity

Ukraine has a population of about 46 million people and a negative population growth rate. Since gaining independence, the population has decreased by about 6 million due to emigration and low birth rates. According to the 2001 census, the ethnic composition of Ukraine is as follows:

Ethnic Composition			
Ukrainian	77.8 %	Hungarian	0.3 %
Russian	17.3 %	Romanian	0.3 %
Belarusian	0.6 %	Polish	0.3 %
Moldovan	0.5 %	Jewish	0.2 %
Crimean Tatar	0.5 %	Other	1.8 %
Bulgarian	0.4 %		

Soviet authorities undermined ethnic and linguistic differences in Ukraine by restricting use of languages other than Russian, conducting propaganda campaigns, controlling the media, and suppressing religious groups. The Soviet Union went to great lengths assimilating ethnicities under its authority to consolidate power. With Ukraine's independence came a revival of national language, literature, history, and culture. New policies implemented Ukrainian as the only official tongue. All schools, except those in Crimea, required teachers to speak Ukrainian rather than in Russian.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russians living abroad had to re-evaluate their identities as a new minority outside Russia's borders. There has been increasing sentiment in Russia that ethnic

Russians living abroad are becoming too deeply assimilated into their host countries.

Russians and Ukrainians distinguish themselves as different ethnicities, but historically identify as “Slavic brothers,” or part of a common *rodina*. Both trace their ethnic roots to the Slavs of the Kievan Rus. Russians and Ukrainians are both native to the region and should be viewed as such in civic life as well as in identifying ethnicities. However, as



Ukrainian Youth

political ideologies divide, so do some interpretations of history. Because the Kievan Rus technically centered on Kiev, Ukrainians claim that Ukraine is the first Eastern Slavonic nation, which gives them special status as natives of the region.

Russians claim the Muscovite empire that followed the Kievan Rus makes them natives as well. Ukraine nationalists may view the ethnic Russians as a remnant of the Russian occupation, rather than welcomed migrants or “Slavic brothers” sharing a space. Some politicians claim that the insistence on “Slavic brotherhood” actually undermines Ukraine nationalism and ethnic identity. Ethnic differences between Russians and Ukrainians are more distinct, particularly after the Orange Revolution and the country’s path toward Western integration. Tensions between Moscow and Kiev magnify ethnic identity differences, particularly between Russians and Ukrainians.



Independence Square

Western Ukraine is ethnic Ukrainian and highly nationalistic. This region did not come under Russian power until the beginning of the 20th century. Kiev is a highly mixed, cosmopolitan center where Russian and Ukrainian languages are used interchangeably and where there is little animosity between the two groups.

Eastern Ukraine and Crimea have many ethnic Russians. Ethnic Russians in Crimea exhibit a stronger identification with Russia and attachment to their homeland. Public perception of Russia's "right" to the land in Ukraine is related to the ethnic attachment of Crimeans to Moscow.

Two other major ethnic groups are the Tatars and the Carpatho-Rusyns. The 260,000 Tatars are Muslims mostly living in Crimea. This group first inhabited the region in the 15th century as a Crimean Khanate, or principality, under the Ottoman Empire. Subsequent purges, the most infamous led by Stalin, significantly reduced the population of Tatars in Crimea.

The Carpatho-Rusyns (also known as Ruthenians) are a minority group without official recognition. Some 800,000 Carpatho-Rusyns are spread across Ukraine, Poland, and Slovakia. Carpatho-Rusyns are descendants from 7th century Slavic settlers in the Carpathian Mountains. This minority mostly inhabits the Zakarpatska oblast in Western Ukraine and has a unique mountain culture and dialect.

OUTLOOK

Ukraine is a transitioning democracy aiming to develop its civic society and political culture. The former Soviet state is engaged in an active and healthy dialogue with regard to its cultural history. The debate may become more intense as Ukraine continues to assert its independence from Russia. The importance of *rodina* in defining cultural identity will continue to depend on assimilation and domestic language policies, the degree of self-identification as an ethnic Russian or ethnic Ukrainian, as well as future relations between Moscow and Kiev.

