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# Demographic-Historical Analysis of Persons of Ukrainian Ancestry in the United States

**Abstract**

Ukrainians are one of the least researched ethnic groups in the United States. Part of the problem is the turbulent modern history of Ukraine: a) changes of borders and territory divided among several countries; b) slow development of Ukrainian identity; c) short period, since 1991, as an independent country. This resulted in incomplete and problematic official U.S. statistics about Ukraine and Ukrainians. We review the data available and their problems, and present a demographic-socioeconomic profile of Ukrainian-Americans. The also analyze the impact of the latest migration from Ukraine on the established Ukrainian-American community and problems resulting from the bilingual, Ukrainian and Russian, characteristic of these immigrants.

**Key words:** Ukrainian-Americans, Ukrainians in the U.S., Immigration waves

## Introduction

Compared to other ethnic groups, demographic and sociological research on Ukrainians in the United States (U.S.) has been quite limited. One possible reason for this situation is Ukraine's turbulent history in the 19th and 20th centuries. Except for a short period of independence during 1918–1921, Ukraine's territory was partitioned among different countries during the 19th and part of the 20th century, and acquired its independence only in 1991. Also, the concept of Ukrainian identity took some time to crystalize, and many immigrants at the turn of the 20th century stated their nationality not as 'Ukrainian,' but as 'Rusyn,' 'Ruthenian', 'Little Russian,' 'Galician,' 'Austrian,' etc. As a consequence of this historical legacy, categories like 'Ukraine' as country of birth or origin and 'Ukrainian' as ethnicity or ancestry were absent for many years in official U.S. data sources like census and immigration statistics. This complicates research on Ukrainian-Americans (or Ukrainians for short) and requires some knowledge of Ukrainian history.

Very few scholarly journal articles on Ukrainians in the U.S. have been published so far. Most of demographic-sociological-historical research can be found in books written by Ukrainians or Ukrainian-Americans (Halich 1937; Isajiw 1976; Wolowyna 1986; Kuropas 1991; Bachynsky 1994), or as chapters in reviews of Ukrainians in different countries (Milanytch 1980; Pawliczko 1994; Satzewich 2001). These are

works from the macro perspective. Recently a significant body of literature has emerged based on individual surveys and in-depth unstructured interviews, focused mainly on labour emigration from Ukraine to the U.S. and other European countries (Lemekh 2010; Fiń 2014; Rovenchak and Volodko, 2015 and 2017).

Although attempts have been made to analyze the Ukrainian migration experience in the U.S. within general theoretical frameworks on migration and ethnicity (Isajiw 1976; Satzewich 2001), this may be premature for several reasons. First, as suggested above and will be described in detail in this paper, unique historical characteristics of Ukraine and its people pose specific challenges to the analysis of their migration experience. Second, Ukrainian-Americans do not constitute a homogenous group. They are composed of different migration waves and their descendants, each with very different characteristics, and any analysis of the group has to take into account these differences. Third, the very important process of language assimilation is complicated in the case of recent migrants from Ukraine by a complex dynamics of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking migrants. Fourth, Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking migrants have different impacts on the already established community in the country. Fifth, recent political developments in Ukraine have had specific effects on the Ukrainian-American community, on the recent immigrants and the interaction between the two groups. Sixth, given the paucity of sociological and demographic studies of Ukrainians in the U.S., it is difficult to determine to what extent the different theoretical framework proposed in the literature of migration and ethnic studies are appropriate for the Ukrainian experience in the U.S.

The main objective of this paper is to present a broad demographic-historical overview of Ukrainians in the U.S. We describe the two main data sources, census and surveys data and immigration statistics, and problems associated with them as they relate to the four migration waves identified by scholars. The last migration wave from independent Ukraine, also called 4$^{th}$ wave, is described in more detail than the other migration waves.

As a group, Ukrainian-Americans have been very successful in terms of socio-economic status, with above average indicators in all dimensions. The last migration wave increased the size of the group by more than 25 percent, reversed the language assimilation process, but created a new phenomenon. The high percent of Russian-speaking immigrants resulted in more Russian-speaking than Ukrainian-speaking persons among all Ukrainian-Americans. We describe the impact of the 4$^{th}$ wave on all aspects of the Ukrainians-American community and suggest that the case of Ukrainian in the U.S. poses challenging theoretical questions in the field of ethnic studies.

## Data and Methodological Issues

Large-scale emigration from Ukraine to the U.S. can be divided into four migration waves: a) late 19$^{th}$ to early 20$^{th}$ century (1890–1914); b) interwar period (1922–1936); c) post-World War II (1945–1953); d) recent or 4$^{th}$ wave (1989 – present). 'Migration wave' is defined as a group of migrants who emigrated due to specific socio-historical conditions during a defined period, and who share a set of common

characteristics. The proposed dates are approximate; there is no consensus about the exact period for each wave. Migrants between these periods have more diverse characteristics and do not satisfy the definition of 'migration wave.'

Main data sources for the first wave are Annual Reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration (1899–1930) and the 1920 U.S. census. According to immigration statistics, 260,097 immigrants came from Ukraine to the U.S. during 1899–1920. These immigrants were recorded mainly as ''Ruthenians' (Halich 1937, p. 22), and this number is very likely an underestimate, as some immigrants from Ukraine were recorded as Russians or Austrians (Halych 1937, p. 150). The 1920 Census has data on country of birth, year of immigration and mother tongue, but no data on nationality, ancestry or ethnic origin. It can be used to estimate number of migrants from Ukraine, but not the number of Ukrainians in the U.S. in 1920.

The immigration statistics and 1920 census data illustrate some of the problems one has to deal with when studying Ukrainians in the U.S. First, as during that time Ukraine's territory was divided among several countries and the concept of 'Ukrainian' identity was not formed yet, estimation of migration is problematic. Different criteria were used to determine country or region of origin and the number of immigrants registered as from 'Ukraine' captures only part of all immigrants. Second, the 1920 census has the same problem regarding country of birth. Only two regions of birth registered by the census, 'Galicia' and 'Ukraine,' are parts of what later became Ukraine. For regions or countries of birth like Austria or Poland, it is impossible to estimate what proportion of immigrants came from areas that later became part of Ukraine. Third, as mentioned before, it is impossible to estimate the number of Ukrainian-Americans in 1920, as the census has no question on ethnicity or ancestry[1].

For illustrative purposes, we constructed a time series with 1920 census data, composed of immigrants born in 'Galicia' and 'Ukraine' plus immigrants born in 'Austria' with Ukrainian mother tongue, for 1899–1920. Figure 1 compares these numbers with the time series from immigration statistics. Immigration figures are consistently higher than census figures; the totals are 260,097 for immigration statistics and 192,332 for census data. This difference is due, in part, to the fact that we are missing in the census immigrants from other regions of birth that later became part of Ukraine, and immigrants with non-Ukrainian mother tongue born in parts of Austria that became part of Ukraine. Also, immigrants registered by a census at a certain date are affected by mortality and return migration. It is interesting to observe, however, that both time series follow similar patterns.

In-spite of the problems with immigration statistics, they probably provide more reliable estimates of Ukrainian immigrants than the 1920 census. Census data, on the other hand, provide a rich set of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of immigrants from Ukraine. Although it is impossible to capture all immigrants from Ukraine with census data, an analysis of census data of immigrants born

[1] Julian Bachynsky, p. 58–73, estimates in 470,000 the number of Ukrainians in 1909, but this is based on a set of assumptions that cannot be verified.

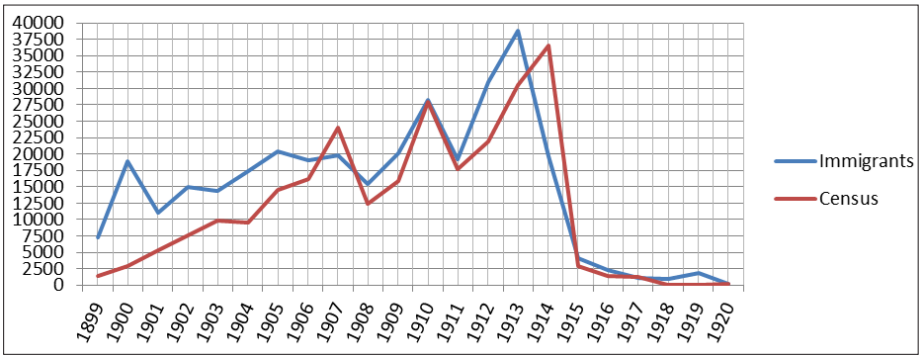



Figure 1. Yearly Number of Immigrants from Ukraine: Immigration Statistics and 1920 census, 1899–1920

Sources: Halich, p. 153 and 1920 census

in 'Galicia' and 'Ukraine' can provide a reasonable approximation to the characteristics of all immigrants.

Several attempts were made to estimate the number of Ukrainians in the U.S. during the first half of the 20th century. After a fairly complicated set of calculations, Bachynsky (1994) arrived at an estimate of 470,000 Ukrainians in the U.S. in 1909 (p. 58–73). Halich (1937) states that "At the present time there are in the United States more than seven hundred thousand people of Ukrainian blood, consisting of the immigrants themselves, their children, grandchildren, and in a few cases great-grandchildren" (p. 24). He does not provide any evidence for this figure and presumably the estimate is for 1937, the publishing year of the book.

The next estimate of the number of Ukrainian-Americans, 700,000 in 1935, is provided by Jaroslaw Chyz (1940, p.68–69). His estimate relies on church records, memberships in fraternal organizations and some assumptions, and is based on the concept of 'descendants,' i.e., all immigrants from Ukraine and their descendants. The first 'objective' set of data on Ukrainian-Americans is provided by the 1970 census with the question on 'mother tongue' that registered 250,000 persons with Ukrainian mother tongue, but this captures only part of all Ukrainians. John Fulton (1986, p. 16–17) estimates in 1,171,000 the number of Ukrainian-Americans in 1970. According to this estimate, 'mother-tongue' Ukrainians comprise 21 percent of all Ukrainian-Americans.

There are two ways of defining members of an ethnic group living abroad: descendency (immigrants from the original country and their descendants) and self-definition. The descendant-based definition has at least three problems in the case of Ukrainians. First, as explained above, until 1991 (independence of Ukraine), it was practically impossible to define immigrants from Ukraine. Second, to estimate descendants of these immigrants one has to project them into the future. This projection requires data on their fertility, mortality and net migration, information that is not available. Third, descendants of immigrants assimilate with time and a key question is at what point do they become completely assimilated and it does not make sense to count them as members of the group.

The question on "ancestry" in the 1980 U.S. census provides an objective and fairly precise way of estimating the number of Ukrainian-Americas. The question is "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?" and one has the option of providing one or two ancestries. The same question was repeated in the 1990 and 2000 censuses and, starting in 2005, in the yearly American Community Survey (ACS). The concept of Ukrainian-American (or any other ethnic group) based on the ancestry question is very different from the concept based on descendant. It relies on self-reporting and misses potential descendants of Ukrainian immigrants who do not consider "Ukrainian" as their sole or partial ancestry.

The definition of Ukrainian-American based on the concept of 'ancestry' has some general and some specific advantages for Ukrainians. In general, it provides a consistent way of estimation number of members of any ethnic group starting in 1980, and takes care of the problem of when a person becomes totally assimilated. For Ukrainian-Americans it provides a practical solution to historical problems with the existence (or non-existence) of Ukraine as a country and lack of Ukrainian identity, mentioned above. It is important to note that this method does not capture most illegal immigrants residing in the U.S., as they probably were afraid to answer the census or ACS questionnaires. This method of defining an ethnic group is not without its problems, and they are discussed in detail by Lieberman and Watson (1988).

There are two data sources for estimating immigrants from Ukraine: census and ACS (to be discussed later) and Yearbooks of Immigration Statistics (Department of Homeland Security)[2]. Immigrants are defined by country of birth, as immigrants by country of origin were not tabulated every year, and data for Ukraine is available starting in 1994 (three years after Ukraine's independence). U.S. immigration data on Ukrainians have several problems. First, they are available only starting in 1994. Second, immigrants are not registered by year of arrival, but by year when they acquired legal resident status. As many early 4$^{th}$ wave immigrants from Ukraine had the status of refugees, in most cases it took years before they were registered; thus the year in the Yearbooks does not coincide with the actual immigration year. Third, the reporting year is the fiscal year, October 1 to September 30 of the following year, not the calendar year. Fourth, only legal immigrants are registered. As will be explained later, census (and ACS) data provide a better way of estimating the number of immigrants. One advantage of immigration statistics is that they provide complementary information not available in the census, i.e., immigrants are classified by the following categories: family-sponsored preferences, employment-based preferences, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, refugee and asylee adjustments and diversity program (lottery).

Censuses (and ACS) data provide another way of estimating number of immigrants. They have data on country of birth and year of immigration, but Ukraine is listed as country of birth only starting in the 2000 census. It is also important to keep in mind that these estimates are affected by attrition due to mortality, outmigration and assimilation.

[2] Previously Statistical Yearbooks of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Assimilation is a complex topic and would require a special treatment. In this paper we will limit the discussion to two aspects of this concept: language assimilation and assimilation as attrition according to the concept of ancestry. Language assimilation is measured by percent persons who speak only English at home. Ancestry assimilation is measured by the decrease in number of persons who declared "Ukrainian" as their ancestry.

As the number of Ukrainian-Americans is very small, 0.3 percent of the total U.S. population in 2010, the Bureau of the Census (BUCEN) produces a very limited number of tabulations with data for the group. We rely on Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS), representative samples of complete census and ACS individual records, to produce the tabulations needed for our analysis (https://usa.ipums.org/usa/ accessed 20 June 2017; Ruggles et al. 2015). PUMS provide complete flexibility for producing tabulations, but they are constrained by sample size and each number is affected by sampling errors. The five percent samples for the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses provide results with acceptable sampling errors. Results from the ACS PUMS are less reliable because they represent only one percent of the total U.S. population. To increase the reliability of 2010 results, we pooled three yearly ACS data sets, 2009, 2010 and 2011, and calculated the average to produce 2010 estimates; we cannot do the same for 2015, as the PUMS for 2016 is not available yet. Thus the 2015 results, based on the one-year 2015 ACS are less reliable than the 2010 results.

## Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of Ukrainian-Americans in 2015

In this section we describe general characteristics of Ukrainian-Americans and compare them with the total U.S. population. Ukrainian-Americans are defined as persons who declared 'Ukrainian' as their only, first or second ancestry in the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses and the 2009–2011 and 2015 ACS; we exclude persons living in group quarters. We also include in our analysis informal estimates of the number of Ukrainian-Americans in 1909, 1935 and 1970. Table 1 presents changes in the number of Ukrainians between 1909 and 2015. Estimates for 1909, 1935 and 1970 are not based on uniform criteria for defining Ukrainian-Americans and rely on assumptions that are difficult to validate; these estimates should be considered as tentative. Starting in 1980 all estimates are based on the concept of ancestry and are quite reliable. The number of Ukrainians increases steadily from 700,100 in 1980 to 961,711 in 2015, and this trend is a function of three factors: natural growth (births – deaths), net migration (immigration – emigration) and assimilation. No data is available about fertility and mortality levels of Ukrainians in the U.S., but it is likely they are similar to those of white Americans with a natural growth close to zero or, given their older age-structure, slightly negative. Also, no data is available about emigration of Ukrainians who have legal status in the U.S.; anecdotal evidence suggests that their numbers are small. Assimilation is a natural process for all immigrant ethnic groups, and it is expected to gradually reduce the size of the group; it can be slowed down only by new immigration from the group's country of origin. As the components of natural growth and net migration have little effect on the

number of Ukrainian-Americans, the increasing trend observed since 1980 is due to the steady arrival of sizeable numbers of new immigrants.

Table 1. Temporal Dynamics of Persons of Ukrainian Ancestry, 1909–2015

| | 1909* | 1935** | 1970*** | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010**** | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 470,000 | 700,000 | 1,171,000 | 700,100 | 720,815 | 882,589 | 931,297 | 961,711 |
| % change | NA | NA | NA | NA | 3.0 | 22.4 | 5.5 | 3.3 |
| % US born | ND | ND | ND | 83.9 | 85.9 | 71.5 | 68.0 | 68.3 |
| % Ukrainian-speakers | ND | ND | NA | 16.1 | 13.0 | 13.4 | 15.3 | 15.4 |
| ND = no data; NA = not aplicable<br>*Bachynsky; **Chyz; *** Fulton; **** average of 2009–2011 ACS | | | | | | | | |
| Sources: Bachynsky ; Chyz ; Fulton ; 1980, 1990, 2000 US censuses; 2009–11 and 2015 ACS | | | | | | | | |

The three percent increase in the number of Ukrainians between 1980 and 1990 jumps to 22.4 percent in the next decade, thanks to the 4th immigration wave from Ukraine. There is a 5.5 percent increase in the 2000–2010 decade and a 3.3 percent in the next five years. The decline in percent U.S. born from 84 percent in 1980 to 68 percent in 2010 and 2015 is due to the large number of immigrants during this period. Percent Ukrainian-speakers reflects the interaction between language assimilation and the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian-speakers. The normal process of language assimilation can be observed in the decline in percent Ukrainian-speakers from 16 in 1980 to 13 in 1990. Thanks to the 4th migration wave this declining trend was reversed in 2000 and percent Ukrainian-speakers increased to more than 15 percent in 2010 and 2015.

Figure 2 provides a detailed picture of the dynamics of immigration from Ukraine (persons born in Ukraine) between 1944 and 2015, encompassing the third and fourth migration waves. In order to minimize the effects of mortality, emigration and assimilation on the number of immigrants reported in census and ACS data, we constructed a yearly time series of immigrants using different data sources for different time periods: a) 2000 census (no yearly immigration data is available in the 1980 and 1990 censuses) for immigrants arriving during 1944–1999; b) 2009–2011 ACS data for the 2000–2009 period; c) 2015 ACS data for 2010–2015 immigrants.

The post-World War II (WWII) immigration (3rd wave) is reflected in the jump in the number of immigrants between 1945 and 1954. The size of this migration wave is estimated in 80,000 (Kubijovic, vol. II, p. 1094)[3], but only a fraction was registered in the 2000 census, due to different types of attrition. The 1975–1982 jump is related to the historical background of the 4th wave and will be discussed in the next section. The 4th wave started in 1988, reached its peak with more than 20,000 immigrants per year between 1995 and 2000, and then entered a period of steady decline.

[3] The survivors of these immigrants, as captured in the 2000 census, are significantly diminished by mortality and assimilation.

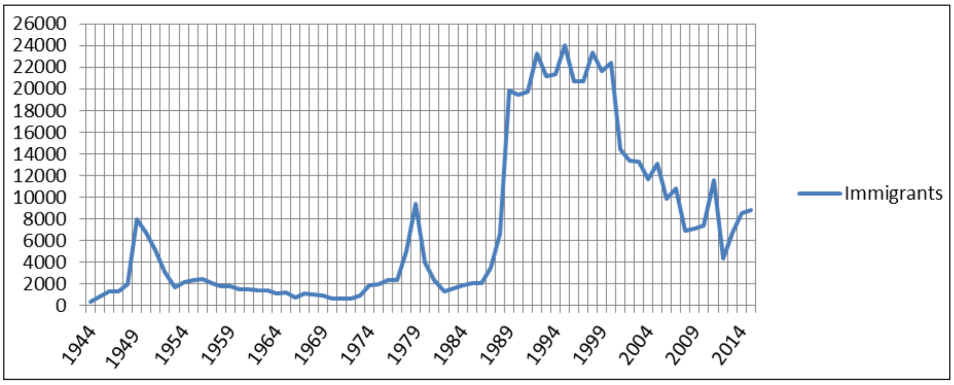



Figure 2. Number of Immigrants Born in Ukraine and of Ukrainian Ancestry by Year of Arrival, 1944–2014

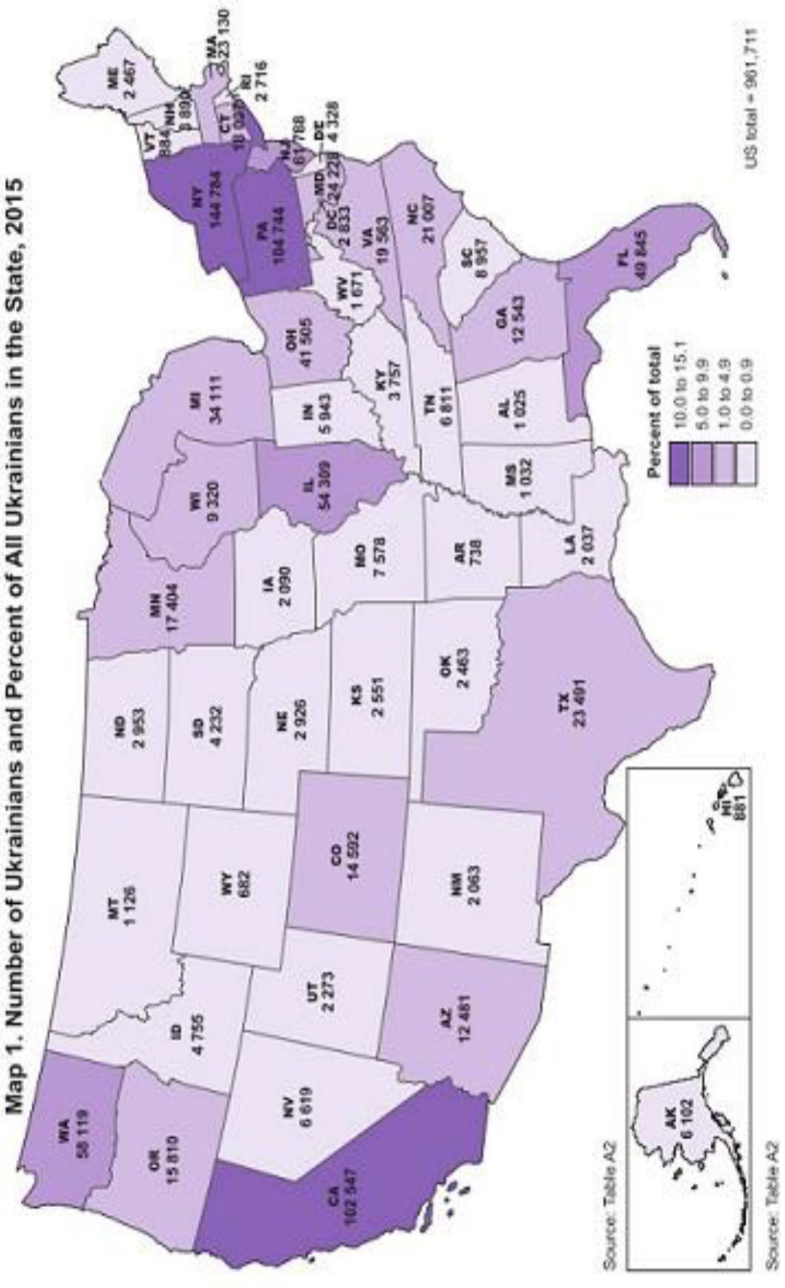
Table 2. Age-Sex Distribution: Ukrainians and US, 2015

| | Percent in age group | | Percent females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Ukrainians | US | Ukrainians | US |
| 00–04 | 5.4 | 6.4 | 52.7 | 49.6 |
| 05–17 | 13.8 | 17.2 | 47.8 | 48.6 |
| 18–24 | 6.8 | 8.6 | 53.4 | 48.0 |
| 25–44 | 26.5 | 27.0 | 52.3 | 50.8 |
| 45–64 | 28.0 | 26.1 | 50.1 | 51.3 |
| 65 + | 19.5 | 14.7 | 53.7 | 56.1 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 51.4 | 51.0 |
| Number | 961,711 | 321,418,821 | | |
| median age | 42.2 | 37.8 | | |

Source: 2015 ACS

Two demographic characteristics of Ukrainians in the U.S. are their older age structure and a highly concentrated spatial distribution. As shown in Table 2, Ukrainians had a median age of 42.2 years in 2015, while the median age for the U.S. was 37.8. Compared to the total U.S. population, Ukrainians had relatively fewer people in younger age groups and more people in older age groups. Ukrainians had slightly higher percent females than the total U.S. population, but this relationship varies for different age groups. Ukrainians have higher percent females than the total U.S. in younger age groups (except in the 5–17 age group) and lower percentages in older age groups.

Map 1 shows the distribution of Ukrainians by State in 2015. They are concentrated mainly in the East and West coasts, and also in Illinois, Ohio and Michigan, with relatively smaller numbers in the rest of the country. New York, Pennsylvania and California have the highest numbers of Ukrainians, with over 100,000 in each State, equivalent to 10 to 15 percent of the total number. These States are followed by New Jersey, Washington, Illinois and Florida, with between 50 and 62 thousand and a 5 to 10 percent range. The difference between this distribution and that of the


Map 1. Number of Ukrainians and Percent of All Ukrainians in the State, 2015
WA 58 119
OR 15 810
CA 102 547
ID 4 755
NV 6 619
MT 1 126
WY 682
UT 2 273
AZ 12 481
CO 14 592
NM 2 063
ND 2 953
SD 4 232
NE 2 926
KS 2 551
OK 2 463
TX 23 491
MN 17 404
IA 2 090
MO 7 578
AR 738
LA 2 037
WI 9 320
IL 54 369
MS 1 032
MI 34 111
IN 5 943
KY 3 757
TN 6 811
AL 1 025
OH 41 505
WV 1 671
VA 19 563
NC 21 007
SC 8 957
GA 12 543
FL 49 845
PA 104 744
NY 144 784
MD 24 228
DC 2 833
DE 4 328
NJ 67 768
CT 10 039
RI 2 716
MA 23 130
VT 884
NH 3 890
ME 2 467
Percent of total
10.0 to 15.1
5.0 to 9.9
1.0 to 4.9
0.0 to 0.9
US total = 961,711
AK 6 102
HI 881
Source: Table A2
Source: Table A2

total U.S. population can be summarized by the index of dissimilarity with a value of 58. The value of the index can be interpreted that close to 60 percent of Ukrainians would have to be redistributed among different States to match the distribution of the total U.S. population. A more detailed comparison of the spatial distribution of Ukrainians and the total U.S. population is given in Table 3, with percent distribution of both populations in the nine Divisions defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (BUCEN). Ukrainians have significantly higher percentages than the total U.S. population in Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ and PA) and Pacific Divisions (CA, OR, WA). They also have somewhat higher percentages in New England (ME, NH, MA, RI, CT) and East North Central Divisions (MI, IL OH, WI). Except for the South Atlantic Division (MD, DE, DC, WV, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL), in all the other Divisions percentages for Ukrainians are significantly lower than for the total U.S. population.

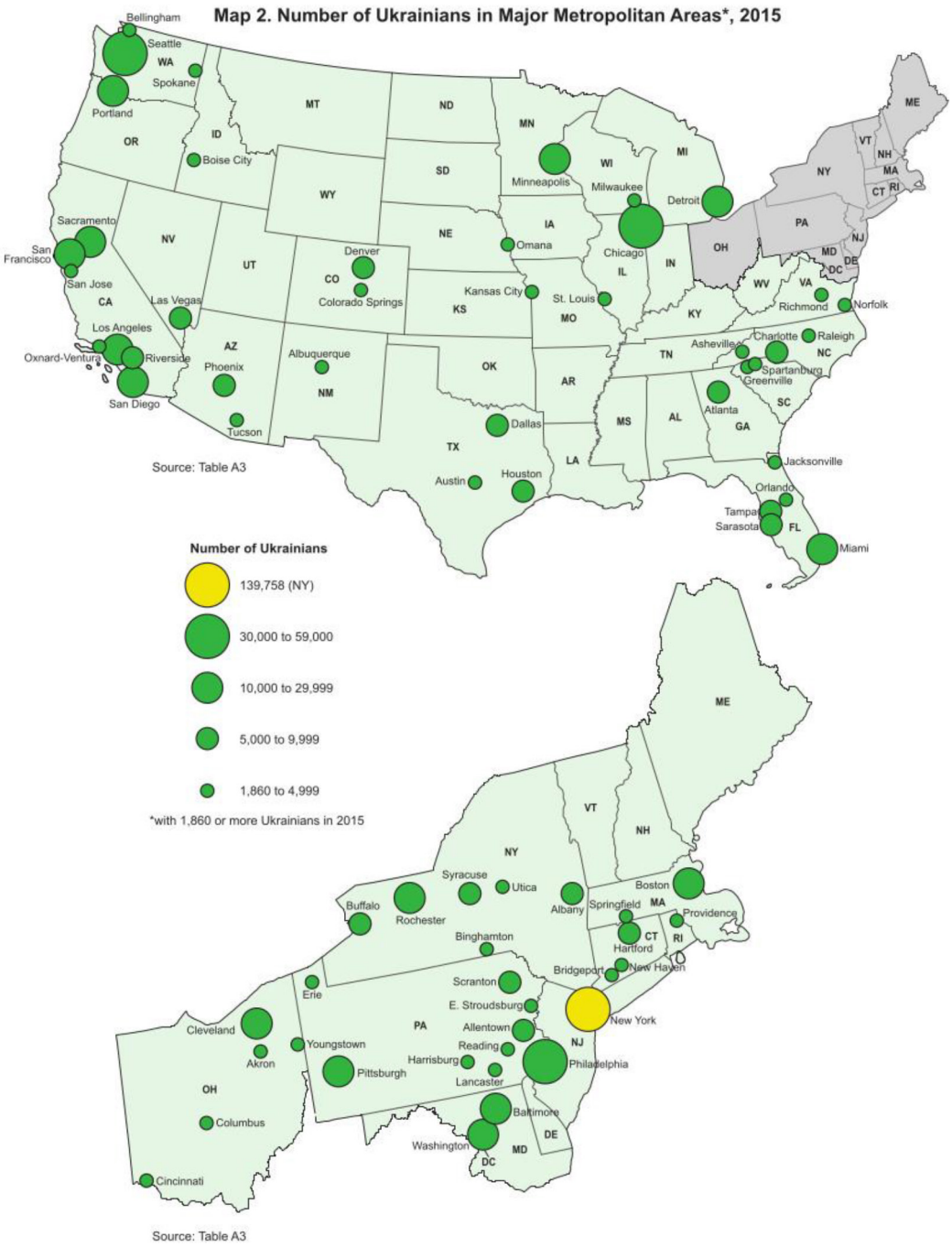
Table 3. Percent Distribution of Ukrainians and Total US Population by Census Divisions, 2015

| Division | Ukrainians | US |
|---|---|---|
| New England | 5.3 | 4.5 |
| Middle Atlantic | 32.4 | 12.9 |
| East North Central | 15.1 | 14.6 |
| West North Centra | 4.1 | 6.5 |
| South Atlantic | 15.1 | 19.7 |
| East South Central | 1.3 | 5.9 |
| West South Central | 3.0 | 12.2 |
| Mountain | 4.6 | 7.4 |
| Pacific | 19.1 | 16.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2015 ACS

Ukrainians are also highly concentrated in cities. Map 2 shows the distribution of Ukrainians by Metropolitan Areas (MA) with 1,860 or more Ukrainians in 2015. The dominant MA is New York-Newark-Jersey City with almost 140,000, followed by Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington MA with a much smaller number of 59,000 Ukrainians. Chicago is in third place with 51,000, followed by Seattle with 36,000 and Los Angeles with 30,000. It is not possible to estimate the overall urban concentration of Ukrainian-Americans, as the ACS surveys do not provide information on urban and rural areas. An approximate estimation of the urban concentration of Ukrainians is provided by percent of Ukrainians and the total U.S. population residing in the MAs with 1,860 or more Ukrainians in 2015. This percent is 79 for Ukrainians and only 57 for the total U.S. population, that is, Ukrainians are relatively more concentrated in these MAs than the general U.S. population.

We also examine the socio-economic status of Ukrainians in comparison with the total U.S. population in 2015, using selected indicators on education, occupation, income, poverty and homeownership (Table 4). The percent Ukrainians aged 25 years or more with a graduate degree (Masters, Ph. D. or professional degree) is


Map 2. Number of Ukrainians in Major Metropolitan Areas*, 2015
Bellingham
Seattle
Spokane
Portland
Boise City
Sacramento
San Francisco
San Jose
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
Oxnard-Ventura
Riverside
San Diego
Phoenix
Tucson
Albuquerque
Denver
Colorado Springs
Kansas City
Omana
Minneapolis
Milwaukee
Chicago
Detroit
St. Louis
Dallas
Austin
Houston
Atlanta
Asheville
Charlotte
Raleigh
Spartanburg
Greenville
Richmond
Norfolk
Jacksonville
Orlando
Tampa
Sarasota
Miami
WA
OR
CA
ID
NV
MT
WY
UT
AZ
CO
NM
ND
SD
NE
KS
OK
TX
MN
IA
MO
AR
LA
WI
IL
MS
MI
IN
KY
TN
AL
OH
WV
VA
NC
SC
GA
FL
PA
NY
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
NJ
MD
DE
DC
Source: Table A3
Number of Ukrainians
139,758 (NY)
30,000 to 59,000
10,000 to 29,999
5,000 to 9,999
1,860 to 4,999
*with 1,860 or more Ukrainians in 2015
Syracuse
Utica
Albany
Buffalo
Rochester
Binghamton
Springfield
Boston
Providence
Hartford
Bridgeport
New Haven
New York
Scranton
E. Stroudsburg
Allentown
Reading
Harrisburg
Lancaster
Philadelphia
Erie
Pittsburgh
Cleveland
Akron
Youngstown
Columbus
Cincinnati
Baltimore
Washington
Source: Table A3

twice the percent of the total U.S. population, 23.8 and 11.6, respectively. The occupational category 'managers and professionals' is a wide category encompassing public and private executives, managers and professionals in all areas; it includes the most prestigious occupations. Among persons aged 16 years or more, in the labor force and employed, 44.1 percent of all Ukrainians and 31.0 percent all U.S. inhabitants belong to this category. Percent below poverty level among Ukrainians is less than half of that of the total U.S. population, 6.2 and 13.5, respectively. Median yearly household income is 60.7 thousand for Ukrainians and 53.9 thousand for the total U.S., and 70.5 percent Ukrainian householders were homeowners, compared to 63.9 for the total U.S. These indicators show that, on the average, Ukrainians in the U.S. have achieved a significantly higher socio-economic status than the total U.S. population.

Table 4. Socio-economic Indicators of Ukrainian-Americans and Total US, 2015

| Indicator | Ukrainians | US |
|---|---|---|
| % with graduate degree* | 23.8 | 11.8 |
| % managers and professionals** | 44.1 | 31.0 |
| household yearly median income (2014) | $60,650 | $55,775 |
| % below poverty level | 6.2 | 13.5 |
| % home owners | 70.5 | 63.0 |

*25 years or more; ** 16 or more years, in labour force and employed

Source: 2015 ACS

## Characteristics of 4th Wave Immigrants

Due to data limitations, immigrants are estimated by country of birth, not by country of origin. We define '4th wave immigrants' as persons born in Ukraine who arrived in the U.S. after 1987 and declared 'Ukrainian' as their only, first or second ancestry. It is important to note that this definition does not include immigrants of Ukrainian ancestry arriving during the same period and born in other countries. We compare characteristics of 4th wave immigrants with the complement subpopulation we call 'non-4th wave immigrants' or 'non-4th wave Ukrainians ('non-4th wave', for short). This subpopulation is composed of three subgroups or persons of Ukrainian ancestry: U.S.-born, all immigrants arriving before 1988 and immigrants arriving after 1987 and not born in Ukraine.

The recent large-scale emigration from Ukraine to the U.S. started in 1988, three years before the country's independence. This emigration was triggered by the Jackson-Vanik amendment in Title IV of the 1974 Trade Act, which intended to allow religious minorities, mainly Jews, to emigrate from the Soviet Union. It denies most favored nation status to countries with non-market economies that restrict emigration. The amendment was signed by President Gerald Ford in January of 1975 and triggered a first mini-wave of emigration from Ukraine during 1975–1981, that peaked in 1979 (see Figure 2). However, "when the U.S. Congress failed to ratify the SALT II treaty, and refused to grant the USSR a most favored trade nation status,

the Soviet authorities begun to reduce the number of exit visas" (Martyniuk 2018, p. 261). This emigration stalled until 1988, when it gained momentum and started what is called the 4th wave. At least 258 thousand persons emigrated legally from Ukraine to the U.S. between 1988 and 2015. During the first 5–6 years most immigrants were Jewish, plus a much smaller number of members of Protestant denominations. Legal emigration became a reality for all Ukrainian citizens in 1992, after Ukraine's independence in August of 1991. Data on the composition of legal immigrants from Ukraine to the U.S. by nationality between 1994 and 2001 illustrate this dynamics (Figure 3). In 1994 more than half of all immigrants were Jewish and 27 percent of Ukrainian nationality. In successive years percent Jewish experienced a drastic decline while percent Ukrainians experienced a steady increase; starting in 1998 persons of Ukrainian nationality became the dominant component of this migration stream (see also Table A4).

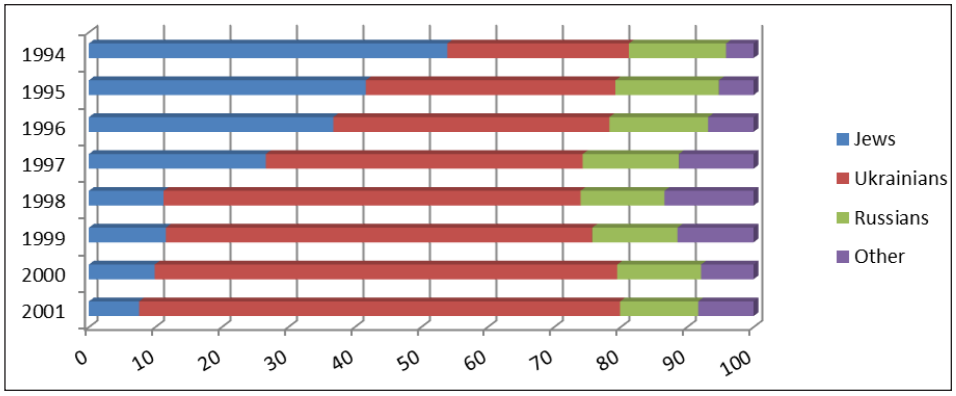



Figure 3. Percent Distribution of Immigrants from Ukraine by Year of Emigration and Nationality, 1994–2001

The 4th wave has had a profound impact on the already established Ukrainian community in the U.S. First, it increased the community's size by 28 percent, and this does not include the children of these immigrants born in the U.S., as well as the unknown number of illegal migrants. Second, it made its age structure younger. Third, 4th wave immigrants have a different spatial distribution than non-4th immigrants. Contrary to previous immigration waves, many settled in places with few or no Ukrainians. Fourth, the large influx of Ukrainian-speaking immigrants slowed down the process of language assimilation. The 2015 age-sex pyramid shows that the largest contributions to Ukrainian-Americans by 4th wave immigrants are in middle age groups; they comprise 25 percent of all men and 38 percent of all females aged between 25 and 54 years (Figure 4). The smallest contributions of 4th wave immigrants are found in age groups 0–4 and 70 and more years. Overall, 42 percent of 4th wave immigrants were 25 to 44 years old in 2015 compared to 22 percent of non-4th wave immigrants; persons 65 years or older were 12 percent among 4th wave immigrants and 22 percent among non-4th wave immigrants.

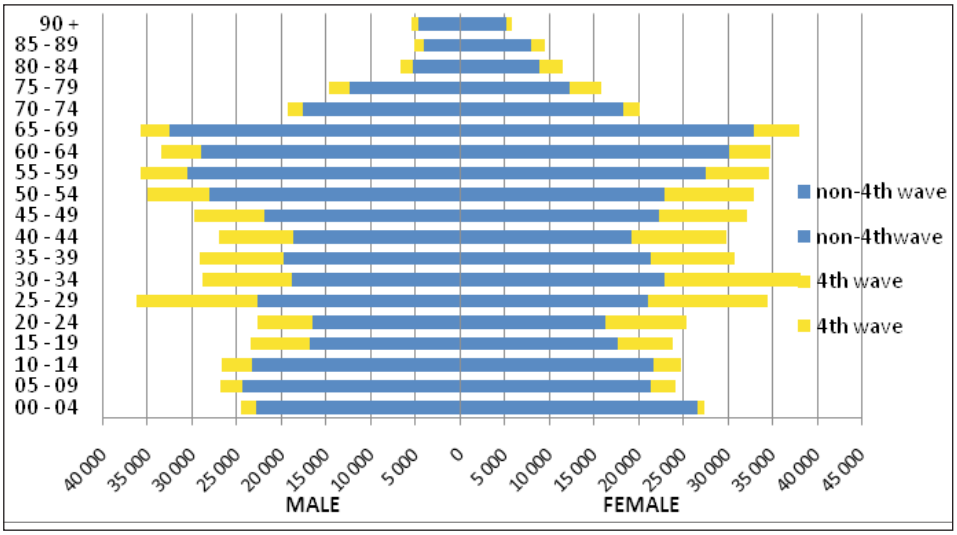



Figure 4. Age-sex Pyramid of Non–4th Wave Ukrainians and 4th Wave Immigrants, 2015

A detailed examination of the spatial distribution of 4th wave immigrants reveals a complex dynamics. First, the index of dissimilarity confirms the hypothesis that their settlement patterns are quite different from that of non-4th wave. Comparing their distribution by State in 2015 with that of non-4th wave, the index has a value of 54; this means that more than half of 4th wave immigrants would have to move to another State to match the distribution by State of non-4th wave. Second, 4th wave immigrants favor MAs with large numbers of Ukrainians, while non-4th wave are more uniformly distributed among MAs with different numbers of Ukrainians (Table 5). Specifically, 22 percent of all 4th wave immigrants live in the New York MA and 29 percent in MAs with 30 to 60 thousand Ukrainians, while respective percent for non-4th wave are 16 and 20. Among MAs with small numbers of Ukrainians, ten percent of 4th wave immigrants live in MAs with two to five thousand Ukrainians and only three percent in MAs with one to two thousand Ukrainians, while respective percent for non-4th wave are 14 and seven. It is an empirical question to what extent the existence of large and well organized Ukrainian communities or good job prospects in MAs with large numbers of Ukrainians were key factors in 4th wave immigrant's decision to settle in these MAs.

Third, the temporal dynamics of the 4th wave and non-4th wave composition in different MAs is even more complex. Besides the settlement preferences of 4th wave immigrants, regional effects of the economic crisis in the 21st century and in particular the 2008 financial crisis, also affected the internal migration of many non-4th wave Ukrainians. A thorough understanding of this dynamics requires a detailed analysis beyond the scope of this paper.

Table 5. Distribution of 4th Wave Immigrants and non-4th Wave Ukrainians by Groups of MAs, 2015

| MAs by number of Ukrainians | 4th wave | non-4th wave |
|---|---|---|
| New York-New Jersey MA | 22.0 | 15.8 |
| 30,000–60,000 | 29.0 | 19.5 |
| 10,000–22,500 | 26.3 | 27.5 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 9.8 | 16.0 |
| 2,000–4,999 | 9.8 | 14.1 |
| 1,000–1,999 | 3.1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2015 ACS

Table 6. Dynamics of 4th Wave and Non–4th Wave Composition of Selected MAs, 2000 and 2015

| Metropolitan Area | 2000 | | | 2015 | | | % 4th wave | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4th wave | non-4th | Sum | 4th wave | non-4th | Sum | 2000 | 2015 | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (4)/(1) |
| New York, NY-NJ | 37,668 | 105,112 | 142,780 | 42,840 | 96,918 | 139,758 | 26.4 | 30.7 | 1.1 |
| Philadelphia, PA-NJ | 7,684 | 48,253 | 55,937 | 13,010 | 45,993 | 59,003 | 13.7 | 22.0 | 1.7 |
| Chicago, IL-IN-WI | 9,629 | 36,104 | 45,733 | 20,187 | 31,551 | 51,738 | 21.1 | 39.0 | 2.1 |
| Los Angeles, CA | 6,572 | 21,906 | 28,478 | 6,510 | 23,201 | 29,711 | 23.1 | 21.9 | 1.0 |
| Seattle, WA | 9,643 | 10,202 | 19,845 | 16,746 | 18,913 | 35,659 | 48.6 | 47.0 | 1.7 |
| Sacramento, CA | 9,827 | 6,106 | 15,933 | 10,285 | 8,553 | 18,838 | 61.7 | 54.6 | 1.0 |
| Portland, OR-WA | 6,625 | 6,580 | 13,205 | 9,964 | 9,590 | 19,554 | 50.2 | 51.0 | 1.5 |
| Charlotte, NC-SC | 320 | 2,372 | 2,692 | 2,911 | 4,279 | 7,190 | 11.9 | 40.5 | 9.1 |
| N. Port-Sarasota, FL | 264 | 2,692 | 2,956 | 1,957 | 4,674 | 6,631 | 8.9 | 29.5 | 7.4 |
| Jacksonville, FL | 189 | 1,356 | 1,545 | 2,366 | 2,430 | 4,796 | 12.2 | 49.3 | 12.5 |
| Asheville, NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,059 | 840 | 1,899 | NA | 55.8 | NA |
| Columbia, SC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 458 | 1,326 | 1,784 | NA | 25.7 | NA |
| Pittsburgh, PA | 865 | 26,584 | 27,449 | 526 | 18,953 | 19,479 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 0.6 |
| Allentown, PA-NJ | 135 | 13,173 | 13,308 | 0 | 7,627 | 7,627 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Scranton, PA | 0 | 10,054 | 10,054 | 0 | 5,293 | 5,293 | 0.0 | 0.0 | NA |

Sources: 2000 census and 2015 ACS

Here we examine examples of MAs within five groups of MAs with different types of changes in their 4th wave/non-4th wave composition between 2000 and 2015: a) the four MAs with the largest number of Ukrainians in 2015; b) MAs with large numbers of early 4th wave immigrants; c) MAs with large increases in the number of 4th wave immigrants between 2000 and 2015; d) MAs with no Ukrainians in 2000; e) MAs with practically no 4th wave immigrants in both years (Table 6). In the first group, New York and Los Angeles experienced relatively small changes in their proportions of 4th MAs between 2000 and 2015, while Chicago and Philadelphia

had significant increases between 2000 and 2015. Thanks to relationships with U.S. churches, most early Protestant immigrants settled in MAs of Washington, Oregon and California: Seattle, WA, Sacramento, CA and Portland, OR. Already 50 to 60 percent of all Ukrainians were 4th wave immigrants in these MAs in 2000, with similar proportions in 2015. Numbers of 4th wave immigrants remained approximately the same in 2000 and 2015 in Sacramento, CA, and increased by 70 and 540 percent in Seattle and Portland, respectively. The third group is composed of MAs with small Ukrainian communities that were significantly reinforced by a large influx of 4th wave immigrants. About 12 percent of all Ukrainians were 4th wave immigrants in Charlotte, NC and Jacksonville, FL, in 2000, and nine percent in North Port-Sarasota, FL. By 2015 these percentages increased to 30 percent in North Port-Sarasota, 41 percent in Charlotte and 49 percent in Jacksonville. The number of 4th wave immigrants increased by a factor of seven in North Port-Sarasota, nine in Charlotte and 12.5 in Jacksonville.

Asheville, NC and Columbia, SC had practically no Ukrainians in 2000. Thanks to the migration of non-4th wave Ukrainians from other parts of the country and a large influx of 4th wave immigrants they developed viable Ukrainian communities. In 2015, Columbia, SC, had almost 1,800 Ukrainians with 26 percent of them 4th wave immigrants, and Asheville, NC, had almost 2,000 with 56 percent 4th wave immigrants. MAs seriously affected by the economic crisis attracted very few or no 4th wave immigrants and many of these MAs also lost non-4th wave Ukrainians. Examples are Scranton, Allentown and Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania. Scranton had no 4th wave immigrants in 2000 and 2015. Allentown and Pittsburgh had only one and three percent 4th wave immigrants in 2000, respectively, and lost many of them by 2015. In all three MAs there was also a large decline in the number of non-4th wave Ukrainians between 2000 and 2015.

Official immigration statistics provide additional information about 4th wave immigrants. To make immigration statistics more comparable to census data and more stable, we performed the following transformation: a) recalculation from fiscal year to calendar year; b) three-year averages.

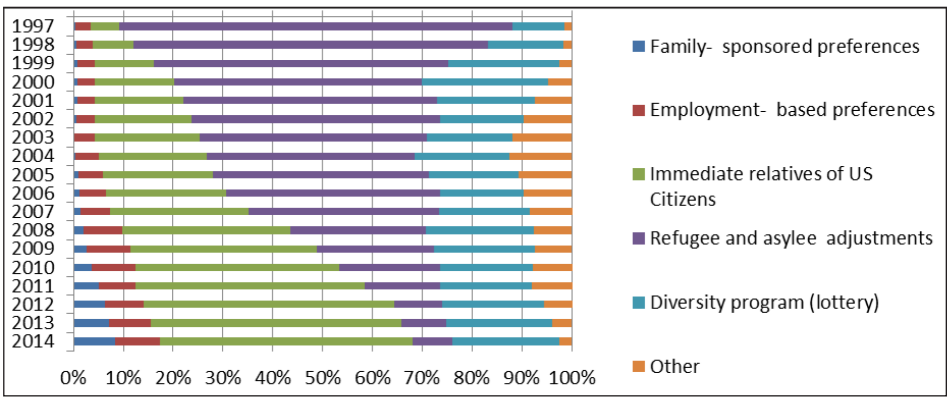



Figure 5. Percent Yearly Immigrants Born in Ukraine and Admitted to the US, by Class of Admission, 1997–2014

As in early years practically all immigrants from Ukraine were classified as refugees, they fall in the 'refugee and asylee adjustment' class, with 79 percent of all immigrants in that category in 1997. This class experienced a gradual decline as these refugees were progressively reclassified to legal resident status. The 'family-sponsored' and 'employment-based' preference classes were initially quite small and later stabilized in the 6–9 percent range. Besides 'refugee and asylee adjustments,' the two other major classes of immigrants born in Ukraine are 'immediate relatives of U.S. citizens' and winners of the immigration "lottery." In later years half of all immigrants were 'immediate family members of U.S. citizens' and more than 20 percent belonged to the 'diversity program (lottery)' (Figure 5 and A6).

## The Language Issue

Eastern Ukraine was part of the Russian Empire for more than 300 years, and became one of the Soviet Republics in 1922; Western Ukraine was incorporated into Soviet Ukraine after the Second World War. Both the Russian and later Soviet governments pursued aggressive policies of Russification and destruction of the Ukrainian language. There were periods when it was illegal to publish in Ukrainian and instruction in schools and universities was conducted almost exclusively in Russian. As a result of these policies, until this day a significant proportion of Ukrainians in Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine are Russian-speakers and Russian is more prevalent than Ukrainian in TV, radio and the press in practically all of Ukraine.

This dual-language characteristic in Ukraine has been "exported" to the U.S. by 4th wave immigrants and created what is probably a unique situation among ethnic groups in the U.S., i.e., more members of the group speak a foreign than the native language. Data based on the question "Does this person speak a language other than English at home"?, asked of persons aged five or more years, show that starting in 2000, there are more Russian- than Ukrainian-speakers among ALL persons of Ukrainian ancestry in the U.S.[4] This means that the number of Russian-speakers in the 4th wave migration was large enough to make the number of Russian-speakers larger than the number of Ukrainian-speakers among all Ukrainian-Americans.

The temporal dynamics of the language composition of 4th wave immigrants is determined by several factors: a) the Jackson-Vanik amendment described above; b) the nationality composition of the migration stream; c) effects of language policies in Ukraine; d) region of origin of the immigrants. There are no data on region of origin of the immigrants, but we can address the other three factors.

As noted above, during the first six years of the 4th wave migration the majority of immigrants were Jewish and the majority of them were Russian-speakers. This is reflected in the time trends of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking 4th wave immigrants. During the early years most of the immigrants were Russian-speakers and only in 1998 the number Ukrainian-speaking immigrants surpassed the number of Russian-speakers. After that year the number of Ukrainian-speaking migrants is consistently

[4] The question, asked to persons five or more years old, refers only to the language spoken at home and does not provide information about what language may be spoken outside the home.

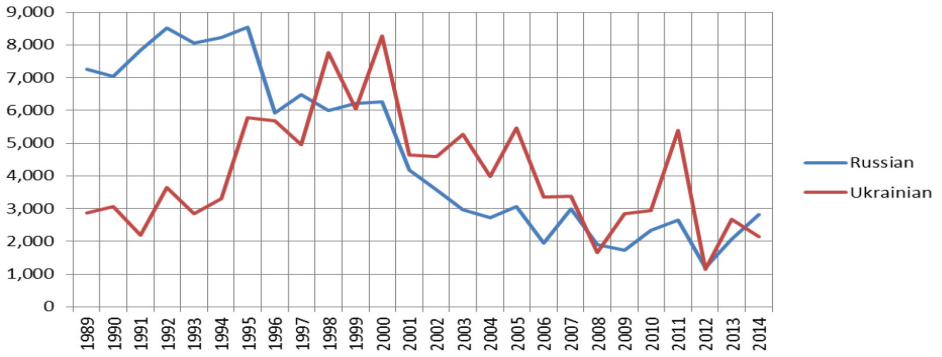



Figure 6. Yearly Number of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking Immigrants from Ukraine, 1989–2014

higher than the number of Russian-speaking migrants (Figure 6 and Table A7). These changes in the composition of the migration stream produced the following results. In 2000 14.2 percent of all Ukrainians five years or older were Russian-speakers and 13.4 percent were Ukrainian-speakers. The difference between these percentages diminished in 2010 to 15.9 and 15.3 percent, respectively, and these percentages became practically the same in 2015, i.e, 15.5 and 15.4 percent. Table 7 shows interesting changes in the age structures of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking 4th wave immigrants between 2000 and 2015. Among all immigrants, 48.5 percent were Ukrainian-speakers in 2000 and this percentage increased to 49.8 in 2015. In 2000 only the youngest and oldest age groups had more Ukrainian- than Russian-speakers, while in 2015 the two youngest and the 45–64 years age groups had more Ukrainian- than Russian-speakers. It is possible that these results reflect changes in the language situation in Ukraine. One of these changes is the gradual switch from Russian to Ukrainian as the language of instruction in most schools in Ukraine. It is likely that the increase in Ukrainian-speakers among younger age groups is partially because most of them attended schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction before migrating to the U.S. A full explanation of these results would require a detailed cohort analysis of the linguistic composition of the immigrants.

Table 7. 4th Wave Ukrainian- and Russian-speakers by Age, 2000 and 2015

| Age | 2000 | | | 2015 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Russian | Ukrainian | % Ukrainian | Russian | Ukrainian | % Ukrainian |
| 05–17 | 18,419 | 20,210 | 52.3 | 20,068 | 21,573 | 51.8 |
| 18–24 | 9,495 | 6,842 | 41.9 | 11,917 | 13,042 | 52.3 |
| 25–44 | 37,705 | 32,490 | 46.3 | 49,696 | 44,535 | 47.3 |
| 45–64 | 31,143 | 24,643 | 44.2 | 33,483 | 39,989 | 54.4 |
| 65 + | 22,489 | 27,928 | 55.4 | 26,039 | 20,999 | 44.6 |
| Total | 119,251 | 112,113 | 48.5 | 141,203 | 140,138 | 49.8 |

Sources: 2000 census and 2015 ACS

In spite of the fact that there are more Russian- than Ukrainian-speakers among the recent immigrant from Ukraine, the large number of Ukrainian-speakers among them has had an extraordinary impact on the Ukrainian community in the U.S. The age-sex pyramid of 4th wave and non-4th wave Ukrainian-speakers provides a striking picture of the potential impact of the 4th wave immigration on the vitality and survival of the Ukrainian community in the U.S. (Figure 7). In half of all 5-year age groups more than 50 percent of Ukrainian-speakers are 4th wave immigrants; in the prime working ages of 25 to 54 years more than 80 percent of all Ukrainian-speakers are 4th wave immigrants. These Ukrainian-speaking immigrants have slowed down the assimilation process of the larger community, filled in some instances almost empty churches, helped create new or revitalized older communities, and provided badly needed Ukrainian school teachers, leaders of youth organizations, community activists, etc.

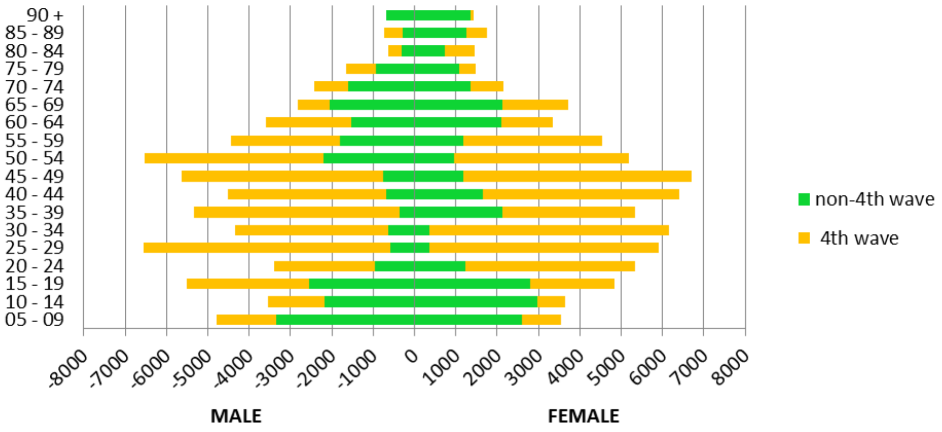



Figure 7. Age-sex Pyramid of Ukrainian-speaking 4th Wave Immigrants and non-4th wave Ukrainians, 2015

Although for a long time many of these immigrants were not active in the community, recent developments in Ukraine like the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014, followed by the Russian invasion of Eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea, motivated many of them to become politically active. They participate in rallies, sign petitions to American politicians and express their support of Ukraine in local and national media. Many of these "activated" immigrants are Russian-speakers, and the changing dynamics of the relationship between Russian-speaking immigrants and the rest of the community is a fascinating sociological topic waiting to be researched.

## Some Concluding Remarks

We have shown that, given the turbulence of Ukraine's modern history, research on Ukrainians in the U.S. presents specific challenges. Technical problems with basic demographic data make it more difficult to define and measure concepts

like 'Ukrainian' or 'immigrant from Ukraine', compared to the definition of similar concepts for other ethnic groups. This may be one of the reasons for the paucity of research on Ukrainians in the U.S., and this gap has at least two important implications. On the negative side, it has resulted in incorrect portrayals of the group's history and characteristics due to misrepresentations or omissions. On the positive side, some of these unique characteristics may suggest new research questions in the field of ethnic studies and challenge established research results.

The excellent overview of immigration to the U.S. since 1965 (Mary C. Waters and R. Ueda 2007) illustrates the first point. The book provides a comprehensive overview of the latest research results on immigrants and ethnic groups in the U.S., and has articles on many countries/ethnic groups. There are chapters on Russia, Poland and two chapters for groups of European countries with smaller numbers of immigrants: Western Europe (Germany, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Greece and Spain) and Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and former Yugoslavia). However, there is hardly any mention in the book of immigration from Ukraine and the Ukrainian-American community. The chapter on Russia has a few comments about immigration from Ukraine, but it has serious mistakes (Gold 2007). The article portrays implicitly immigrants from Ukraine as Russians, and the historical background suggests that Ukraine, at least until 1991, was part of Russia. It has surprising omissions like the fact that Soviet Ukraine was a Republic with many attributes of an independent country and full representation at the United Nations, or the key role played by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in the most recent emigration wave from the Soviet Union. There is no mention of separate U.S. data for the categories of 'Ukraine' and 'other USSR/Russia' as countries of birth starting in 1996 for immigration statistics and in 2000 for census and ACS survey data. The following statement is a complete misrepresentation of the recent immigrants from Ukraine: "Whether ethnically Russian or not, recent immigrants from Russian and the former Soviet Union are party to the Russian culture, language, and way of life to a greater extent than immigrants in the past. Because of their involvement with Russian culture, many develop ties to the greater Russian-American community when they arrive in the U.S. Regardless of their ethnicity and religion, they tend to speak Russian and have similar tastes and cultural outlooks (Walters and Ueda, p. 590). Table 3 (Walters and Ueda, p. 591) has the title "Ten cities with the highest populations of foreign-born Russians, 2000", but it has three columns of data labeled "Russians," "Ukrainians" and "Armenians." The discussion of the table focuses on Russians; it mentions one figure about Armenians, and there is no mention about the data on Ukrainians. In contrast to earlier years, there is currently ample data available for a detailed research of Ukrainians in the U.S., and it is possible to fill the research gap. The Ukrainian experience may not be as unique as it seems. A fruitful research strategy may be a comparison of the migration experience of Ukrainians starting at the end of the 19th century with that of earlier migration experiences of European groups like Italians (MacDonald 1963; Luconi 2003) or Germans (Walker 1964) in the 19th century. These immigrants also came initially from regions that only later formed the countries of Italy and Germany, and they

organized themselves around local, not national identities. In some cases the national identity of these immigrants and their descendants was actually formed in the U.S.

Systematic research on Ukrainians in the U.S. could provide answers to several important questions in the ethnic studies literature. To name three examples: a) it would be interesting to determine which of the two patterns, assimilation or pluralism (Alba and Nee 2007) best explains the Ukrainian experience of incorporation into American society, especially given the characteristics of the 4th wave and the current political situation in Ukraine; b) preliminary analysis of settlement patterns of the 4th wave suggests that their initial settlements may not conform to the modal pattern of settlement of attraction to core areas of settlement of the group; c) the dual-language situation of the 4th wave presents unique research challenges in the area of linguistic assimilation. It is our expectation that the analysis and basic data presented in this article will serve as stimulus for a more systematic quantitative research on Ukrainians in the U.S.

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