

Ukraine: On the Border of Europe and Eurasia
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Centripetal/ Centrifugal Forces

Centripetal
The centripetal force is the force that acts towards the center of a circle. In the context of Ukraine, this force is represented by the historical ties and cultural similarities between the Ukrainian people and the Russian Empire, which have kept the country united for centuries.

Centrifugal
The centrifugal force is the force that acts away from the center of a circle. In the context of Ukraine, this force is represented by the growing nationalist movements and the desire for independence, which have led to the current conflict with Russia.

Sources

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Root of Conflict

Background
Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire during the reign of Catherine The Great in 1783 and remained part of Russia until 1954, when it was transferred to Ukraine under the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

East Vs. West
Historically, Ukraine has been split between the pro-European west and the pro-Russian east.

How It Began
In November of 2013, President Yanukovich abandoned the deal with the EU in favor of stronger ties with Russia. This president made it easier for Russia to influence Ukraine and further divided the people. Russia wants control of all of Ukraine because not only do they find Ukraine inferior but Ukraine also controls 80% of Russian gas pipes to Europe. Ukraine wants to join the EU, not the Eurasian Union (which offended Russia).

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Impact

- 5 million impacted
- 4,800+ dead
- At least 10,000 wounded
- 1 million displaced

Background
The Crimean conflict is a result of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. This event has led to a significant increase in tensions between Russia and the West, and has also led to a significant increase in military spending by both sides.

Media
The conflict has been widely covered by the media, with many news outlets providing live coverage of the events. This has led to a significant increase in public awareness of the conflict and has also led to a significant increase in public support for the Ukrainian government.

Form of Conflict

The Ukrainian/Crimean conflict is mainly between both countries want control over Crimea and feel that it belongs to them. This conflict also demonstrates

discrimination and open violence against Ukrainians, Russians or pro-Russian/only Ukrainians is obvious and this has led to protests, riots, and war.





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Centripetal/ Centrifugal Forces

Centripetal:

- The common Ukrainian history and culture is a force that holds the nation together. The country went through many historical events such as being conquered by Mongolia and being part of Russia. The Ukrainian culture such as the language, old traditions including dance and food, and a common identity all hold Ukraine together.
- War/Fighting- The outbreaks of violence has united Ukrainians in support of Europe together. Russian aggression is also uniting the people defending their motherland of Ukraine.
- The Ukrainian language has united the people.

Centrifugal:

- Language- While the Ukrainian language did serve to unite the people, there was some conflict over the official language and whether it should be Ukrainian or Russian. This split was mostly between Pro-Europeans and Pro-Russians.
- Whether or not Ukraine should join EU was also a dividing force. Many people believed Ukraine should join the Eurasian Union and others strongly felt it should join the European Union.

Involvement

Russia was criticized by the west for violating international law.

The US and the EU (European Union) expanded economic sanctions against Russia. The sanctions have been successful in terms of their purpose because the Russian economy is declining significantly.

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Media

This issue has gotten a lot of media attention. Many news websites, especially European news, have done articles regarding the conflict. Social media networks have also been spreading information regarding this issue.

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Spatial Extent

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The violence and conflict is occurring mainly in Crimea but there is also some conflict in Kiev, the capital.

This conflict is still going on today. Violence and protests began in November 2013 when President Yanukovich abandoned an agreement with EU, instead seeking closer ties with Russia. Since then, the violence has only escalated.

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The tension has been there for decades. In the book *Russia: A History*, Gregory I. Freeze says, "Ethnicity also raised delicate border issues, as in Crimea, which Khrushchev had given to Ukraine in 1954 but which had a Russian majority that identified with Moscow, not Kiev."

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