


ROUTLEDGE FOCUS



# THE DYNAMICS OF EMERGING DE-FACTO STATES

Eastern Ukraine in the Post-Soviet Space

Tetyana Malyarenko and Stefan Wolff

ROUTLEDGE  
Focus



# The Dynamics of Emerging De-Facto States

What are the causes and consequences of the crisis in Ukraine, and what has been the nature of local, national and external actors' involvement in it? These are the questions that the authors examine in this comprehensive analysis of the situation in Ukraine.

The crisis evolved from peaceful protests to full-scale military conflict and to an unstable ceasefire frequently interrupted by, at times, intense clashes between government forces and separatist rebels. Tracing the emergence of two new de-facto state entities in the post-Soviet space – the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics – from the chaos of the early days after Russia's annexation of Crimea in Spring 2014 to the second Minsk Agreement in February 2015, and focusing on the actions of the immediate conflict parties and their external backers, the authors investigate the feasibility and viability of several prominent scenarios for a possible future settlement of the conflict.

As an in-depth case study of the complex dynamics of the conflict at local, national, regional and global levels of analysis, the book complements and advances existing scholarship on civil war and international crisis management, and also provides insights for the policy community and the wider interested public.

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# **The Dynamics of Emerging De-Facto States**

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November 2018

Tetyana Malyarenko  
Stefan Wolff

# 1 Introduction

The conflict in Ukraine has evolved since 2013 from initially peaceful protests against then Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to delay the signature of an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) to full-scale military conflict in 2014–2015 and to an unstable ceasefire interrupted by, at times, intense clashes between Ukrainian armed forces and separatist rebels in the Donbas region in the east of the country.

The conflict has had profound consequences locally, nationally and beyond Ukraine. Apart from the loss of life and physical destruction, it has caused the internal and external displacement of over two million people. The conflict has also led to the establishment of yet another de-facto entity (or, in fact, two) in the post-Soviet space, and one that dwarfs existing entities in geographical and population size. Due to the intense internationalisation of the conflict, the crisis in Ukraine has also been one of the most important drivers for the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West. As such, it poses one of the most critical contemporary challenges to European and international security.

Our aim in this book is to investigate the causes and consequences of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the responses to it so far by local, national and external actors. On this basis, we then examine the feasibility and viability of a number of options for the settlement of the conflict. In order to do so, we proceed as follows. We begin with a review of the existing literature on the conflict to date, identify some critical gaps and offer an overview of our own approach to understanding the dynamics of the emergence of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics (hereafter DPR and LPR), and what this reveals about the constraints and opportunities of conflict settlement. We then reflect on our methodology, discussing our data requirements and methods of data collection and analysis, considering in particular the ethical and other challenges of doing research in, and on, an ongoing low-intensity conflict. Turning to the empirical part of the book, we offer an analytical narrative of the emergence of the two de-facto entities in eastern



## 2 *Introduction*

Ukraine, focusing on its causes and consequences, as well as the responses by various direct and indirect parties to the conflict, and demonstrating the connections between developments at local, national and regional/global levels of analysis. In a final section of the book, we then use this analysis to examine the feasibility and viability of several prominent scenarios identified in the existing academic and policy literature on a possible settlement of the conflict. We conclude with a summary of our argument and main findings, and highlight future research needs.

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