Cities of Russia
BETH A. MITCHNECK AND ELLEN HAMILTON

KEY URBAN FACTS

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KEY CHAPTER THEMES

1. Russia is one of the most urbanized countries in the world.
2. Russia has long been dominated by the primate city of Moscow, in spite of a two-century rivalry with St. Petersburg, the old capital.
3. Russia's urban development reflects the impact of three distinct eras in the country's history: czarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet.
4. Russia's vast size and harsh climate have greatly affected the urban system.
5. The main pattern of the urban system, with its strong reflections of European urban characteristics, was established in the czarist era.
6. The Soviet era (1917–1991) produced the most profound changes in all aspects of urban development and urban life, because of central planning and autocratic rule by the Communist Party.
7. The post-Soviet era has seen the need for complete overhauling and redesign of urban places in a now free-market economy and democratic society.
8. Severe economic recession in the 1990s at least temporarily caused a deurbanization or ruralization of the country.
9. Cities that are prospering are those with superior locations and attractive environments for foreign investment and economic growth.

10. The socialist support system of the Soviet era is gone, crime and corruption are rampant, and a host of problems beset the country as it struggles to reinvent itself.

On December 25, 1991, the eighth—and last—Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, resigned. Quietly, with no announcement, the Soviet hammer and sickle flag was lowered and the red, white, and blue of the Russian flag was raised, thus signaling the end of one of the most audacious experiments in nation-state development of the 20th century. Today, the Russian Federation (fig 6.1), the country with the largest territory in the world, is in the midst of a triple transition—economic, political, and social. Since the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, these various transitions have both precipitated crises and encouraged their resolution, resulting in trends that seem illogical to those unfamiliar with the country. For example, at the beginning of the post-Soviet period, economic collapse meant factory workers, teachers, and other urban workers moved from cities back to rural areas to practice subsistence farming, a process known as ruralization. Not surprisingly in a country nearly twice the size of the United States, the recent emergence of capitalism as a social and economic system, and the visual imprint of capitalism on the landscape, are unevenly distributed across Russian cities. The harsh climate, poorly developed (and frequently impassable) network of roads, and immense distances all exacerbate the fragmentation of the Russian urban system.

The built environment of Russian cities has changed so dramatically since December 1991 that many cities are nearly unrecognizable to those accustomed to the quiet, somber landscapes of the Soviet period. Moscow's Red Square is no longer a nearly deserted public space awaiting military parades. Instead, it is a bustling retail space. The sparsely distributed Communist Party billboards in every city and town have been replaced by brilliant neon and banner-type advertisements along all the major urban thoroughfares. Cities constructed for pedestrians and mass transit are now choked with all manner of vehicles. The typical Soviet rings of large apartment complexes are mixed with Western-style suburban developments of "cottages" and even gated communities.

Post-Soviet Russia is also grappling with changes in the location of urban development and the legacy of the Soviet spatial structure of the urban system. No longer do central planners choose a site for a new factory and then build a city around it, as was the case in the Soviet Union. The Soviet system of planning resulted in construction of cities in unexpected, and ultimately unsustainable, places such as the remote reaches of Siberia and the Arctic. Cities were often sited near natural resources, regardless of the location of those resources. To give but one example, Norilsk, a nickel-smelting city with more than a quarter million inhabitants, was built far above the Arctic Circle. The Soviet system resulted in an urban spatial pattern of economic flows between quite distant cities because the locations of suppliers, intermediate producers, and markets were of little concern in a system where transportation and energy costs were state determined and therefore perceived to be free.

Also gone now is the Soviet emphasis on the military-industrial complex (MIC) in determining the location of investment and urban growth. Many cities became closed cities (cities requiring permission to visit) because of their role in the MIC. Cities in the Urals, such as Perm and Magnitogorsk, grew in economic importance and population precisely because they were integral parts of the MIC. Decades of defense-related investments in these cities' industrial bases, housing stock, roads, schools, and other infrastructure influenced the population, economic, and urban geographies in ways that would not have been possible in capitalist economies where economic efficiency is the most important criterion for attracting new factories and urban development.

The demise of the Soviet Union effectively ended central planning, as Russian cities embarked on a new and equally radical experiment, the transition from socialism to capitalism. The 1990s saw the beginning of rapid and widespread change in the location of urban development in response to economic collapse and restructuring, increasing poverty (and especially urban poverty), and large inflows of refugees from other, more troubled parts of the former Soviet Union (fig. 6.2). This change will continue well into the 21st century.

Russia began the 20th century with less than one-fifth of its population living in urban places and ended it with almost three-quarters. Since the middle of the 20th century, the majority of the Russian population has lived in cities, many of which are large urban centers (tab. 6.1). The percentage steadily increased throughout the Soviet period; by 1989, 74% of the population of Russia lived in urban places. After that, the percentage of the population living in urban places declined slightly and then, by the late 1990s, leveled off at about 73%.
Data on the regional distribution of the urban population (tab. 6.1, fig. 6.1) highlight two important characteristics of urban development in Russia during the 20th century: rapid urbanization due to industrialization and the growth of cities in harsh and inhospitable regions such as Siberia, the Far East, and the Far North. Russia rapidly urbanized during the first half of the 20th century; however, significant levels of urbanization continued to occur in every region of Russia throughout the Soviet period. Even agricultural regions such as the Central Chernozem and North Caucasus regions had more than half of their populations living in urban places by 1979. There were also high rates of urbanization in the Arctic and Siberian regions as early as 1959. Because of the remoteness of these regions, the difficult climate, and the patterns of settlement, most people lived in urban places, but smaller ones than in the rest of Russia. In the late 1990s, the population of the Far North (the Arctic region) was nearly 80% urban, well above the Russian average of 73%.

For both ideological and security reasons, Soviet central planners promoted both rapid urbanization and urban settlement of Siberia, the Far East, and the Far North. On the one hand, Soviet doctrine saw urban life as bringing people closer to Communist ideals. On the other hand, planners used mathematical algorithms to choose the optimum location for investment in economic activities leading to the construction of new cities in previously underdeveloped regions like Siberia. Planners often determined optimum locations close to natural resources. Planners also considered the impact of defense when locating economic activity. They often chose sites that dispersed production to make the national economy less vulnerable to crippling losses if attacked militarily. For example, at the beginning of World War II, Soviet central planners oversaw the dismantling of factories in the western portion of the country, only to reassemble them in the Urals and Siberia.

Finally, these data also illustrate the 1990s phenomenon of ruralization. Small declines in the percentage of population living in urban places in the northern and eastern regions of Russia are due to large numbers of people moving out of these regions, with proportionally more people moving from cities than from rural areas. The small decline in the urbanization rate in the North Caucasus, which is an agricultural area along the southern border, is most likely due to an influx of a large number of in-migrants and refugees from the former Soviet republics who were assigned housing in rural areas.

### EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN SYSTEM

During the 20th century, Russia underwent one of the most dramatic urbanization processes anywhere in the world, only to lose urban population and experience a significant urban crisis in the final years of the century. Russia began the 21st century well into a new phase characterized by an equally dramatic reversal of the long-established urban settlement pattern. For centuries, the population had moved from the European core of Russia primarily to cities in the south (often capital cities in Soviet Central Asia) and to Siberian and Arctic cities. In the post-Soviet period, a significant movement out of the Siberian and Arctic cities (as well as from cities in the newly independent countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus), back to European Russia began as a direct result of the change from Soviet central planning to market-driven locational choices. Without central planners, cities in harsh and inaccessible places, such as Norilsk and Surgut, lost population quickly as the introduction of market forces resulted in rapid increases in once heavily subsidized energy and transportation costs. As subsidies dwindled, food, housing, and industrial production costs soared. Faced with ever-increasing costs and the need to ship frequently poor quality goods thousands of miles to distant markets, many factories shut down and unemployment surged. Those who could simply pulled up stakes and moved. Irrespective of the period, however, Russia has experienced a significant mismatch between the location of labor resources, markets, and urban-industrial power in the western portion of the country and the location of natural resources, including energy, in the eastern portion of the country.

### The Pre-Soviet Period

The first Slavic cities in the Russian Plain appeared only at the end of the 9th century. Crossed by many important rivers, this plain served as a vital trading route between Scandinavia and the eastern Mediterranean, which was commanded by the Byzantine Empire. The Vikings established a set of city-principalities, at once both military outposts and long-distance trading centers, where they collected tolls from merchants who traveled through the region. Kiev, Novgorod, and Smolensk were among the earliest urban settlements of this type. With time, the Vikings united the Slavic tribes who lived along this trading route, training them in the martial arts, and themselves becoming Slavic-language speakers.

The region gradually began to function independently and one city, Kiev (now the capital of independent Ukraine), became the focal point because of its favorable location where the forests of the North Russian Plain gave way to the grassland steppes. The location of Kiev was attractive to both forest trappers and steppe nomads. The Dnieper River provided access to the Black Sea and Constantinople. By the end of the 12th century, there were more than 300 cities in Kiev Rus, which extended eastward to the Upper Volga River and south to the Black Sea. Kievian Rus was characterized by
a set of urban centers with their own feudal organization, and the cities were in conflict with one another. Most of the cities in Kievan Rus were located along the vast network of rivers in Russia and were originally established as forts, known as kremlins. Many of these cities have survived today with their kremlins still intact. The famous Golden Ring of cities outside of Moscow (e.g., Yaroslavl, Suzdal, Vladimir) date back to Kievan Rus and continue to thrive as historic centers of Russian culture.

Despite the prevalence of fort towns intended to protect residents from invasion, from 1237 to 1240 nearly all cities in Kievan Rus were destroyed or plundered by invading Mongol Tatars. This phase of urban decline continued for another two centuries after the formal downfall of the Tatars in 1480. Indeed, as late as 1700, the number of urban centers was still approximately 300.

By the end of the 14th century, the urban system that became to be the core of Muscovy took shape in the more protected, forest-covered part of the Russian plain. Moscow dominated this new region of settlement from its location at the center of a river system, which permitted movement by water in several directions. Access to the Volga and Oka rivers gave a route to the east, although in early days this was blocked by the Tatran khanate of Kazan, which controlled the central and lower Volga. The Western Dvina led to the Baltic and the Don and Dnieper rivers led to the Black Sea. Moscow’s favorable location with respect to the major river routes was a key factor in its growth in the region when rivers were important for both trade and communications. Moscow’s location also provided security from attack.

Unlike in Kievan Rus, the princes in Moscow sought to eliminate the feudal organization of urban development in order to be able to defeat the Tatars should they attack again, and to consolidate political and economic power in one location. In doing so, the leaders of Moscow could only be described as strongly autocratic, the first in a long line of Russian and Soviet despotic rulers. The Muscovite rulers also sought to isolate the region from external influences and to extend their empire as far as possible. Centuries later, the Soviet leadership continued this tradition.

The importance of hills for defense and rivers as communication main lines during this period explains common features of most old Russian city centers. The surviving fortified core with a stone fortress, or kremlin, was always located on a high riverbank. The layout of streets was usually radial, reflecting the original concern about rapid dispatching of troops from the kremlin. Since medieval cores lay on riverbanks, cities subsequently developed mostly in imperfect circles away from the river, and in many instances new “beyond the river” districts came to be developed with the belated construction of bridges only in the 1960s and 1970s.

Czar Ivan the Terrible defeated the Tatars at Kazan in the middle of the 16th century and Russian settlements expanded eastward across the Ural Mountains into Siberia, encountering little resistance. New settlements such as Tobolsk (1587) and Yakutsk (1632) began as military outposts. Trappers plundered Siberia for furs, but little else of value came from this vast wilderness until 1647, when Russia settled Okhotsk on the Pacific Ocean. As the 17th century drew to a close, Russia remained essentially landlocked, controlling a vast territory with about 300 cities, the same number as had existed three centuries earlier.

Czar Peter the Great founded St. Petersburg in 1703, touching off a spectacular transformation of urban Russia as he sought to catch up to Europe. St. Petersburg was built to be a showcase port city and the country’s “window on the West”; the city quickly supplanted Moscow as the new capital. The reforms Peter the Great undertook revitalized both local and long-distance trade. New market centers developed; old urban centers changed and grew. Imperial support meant thousands of serfs were resettled to provide free labor to the trading companies. The creation of this new, Western-oriented city fed into the social tension between those who believed in Westernizing the country and those who preferred to emphasize Russia’s Slavic origins. The development of St. Petersburg was also a great precursor of the Soviet belief that humans can conquer nature in the name of economic development. St. Petersburg was originally an inhospitable swamp and thousands of Russians lost their lives while building the city.

The empire continued to expand and by the end of the 18th century there were approximately 400 cities accounting for about 4% of the total population; a century later found 700 cities holding about 16% of the total population. The beginning of industrialization fueled the growth.

Two main regions of industry emerged by the end of the 19th century. In Moscow and its surrounding centers (Tver, Vladimir, Ivanovo, Kostroma), textile manufacturing predominated. The availability of foreign cotton and textile machines meant large brick factories employing thousands of weavers had replaced the original small cottage industries by the 1880s. Beyond Moscow, most new centers of manufacturing were located outside Russia proper. The second area of industrialization and urbanization was the Donbass, in the steppe region of Ukraine, where there were local supplies of coal. The cities in Donbass focused on metallurgy in a maze of coal mines and blast furnaces. Other new centers of manufacturing developed in the non-Russian parts of the empire, including the thriving textile belt of Russian Poland, the engineering center of Riga (Latvia), and Baku (Azerbaijan), a boom city built on oilfields. In fact, most new centers of manufacturing were located outside Russia proper.

The Soviet Period

The Russian Revolution (1917) and ensuing civil war ended with the establishment of a political-economic system unlike any other in the world. The Communist Party took control and used its clout to establish an economic system guided by Communist principles instead of market forces. This new economic system was called the command economy because a group of central planners located in Moscow determined not only what was produced, but where, who could acquire products, and at what price. Central planners allocated all investment resources, made location decisions, and set national standards for urban development that had the force of law. Central planning meant national needs superceded local ones, including those related to urban development. Central planning forced a realignment of the urban system to reflect new political and economic priorities. In other words, city governments and city residents had little or no influence over local economic development, urban growth, and the internal structure of cities.

After acquiring a measure of political control over the country, the Communist Party took steps to consolidate its political power and reshape the economy to be consistent with Communist ideology. In 1918, the leadership moved the capital from St. Petersburg (subsequently renamed Leningrad) back to Moscow. The move was both symbolic and strategic; the
relatively recent capital built by the czars as a window on the West was replaced with a far older capital in the country’s heartland, which would be easier to defend. The Communist leadership also established a hierarchical urban administrative system to assist in carrying out its political and economic agendas, as well as to reflect the new ideology. By setting up a system of administrative centers in the oblasts (political units comparable to states or provinces), central planners were better able to control resource allocation and use in each region. Not surprisingly, these administrative centers benefited disproportionately from central investment decisions and became industrial as well as population centers. By the late 1990s, there were 89 oblasts. In two-thirds of them, the administrative centers accounted for a quarter of the oblast’s population.

The new territorial administrative system enabled central planners to realize new economic priorities, especially rapid industrialization, and oblast centers became the locations for massive industrial investment and grew rapidly. Soon, historic industrial centers such as Moscow, Yaroslavl, and Kazan were joined by administrative/industrial centers in Siberia and the Far East (e.g., Omsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, and Vladivostok). Planners also used investments to develop a system of secondary industrial cities focused on heavy industry (e.g., the automotive industry in Togliatti and aluminum and related industrial production in Bratsk) or natural resource exploitation (e.g., nickel in Norilsk and oil near Surgut).

In time, the concentration of industrial investments in selected regional centers meant that a new system of large cities (i.e., cities of more than 500,000 people) developed in Russia. In a country where big was seen as better, planners and politicians spoke glowingly of cities with more than one million inhabitants. But this enthusiasm was tempered with an understanding that promoting the growth, and consequently the spatial dispersion, of all cities would mean limiting the growth of the largest cities.

As figure 6.3 shows, in 1959 the largest cities, with populations of 100,000 and higher, were located primarily in the western portion of the country. Figure 6.4 illustrates the results of policies to concentrate investments in oblast centers, which resulted in a noticeable shift in the number of largest cities found in the eastern parts of Russia by 2001.

Much of the urban growth took place along the Trans-Siberian Railroad (completed in 1904) or its spurs (fig. 6.5). In the 1970s, Soviet planners began construction on a second Siberian rail route, the Baykal-Amur Mainline (BAM), as a means to further facilitate new natural resource exploitation and the transportation of goods across the vast Russian expanse. These railroads provided a lifeline to cities located thousands of miles from central Russia. In the Far North, cities primarily depended on boats using the Northern Sea Route along the Arctic coastline or Siberian rivers. Not even nuclear-powered icebreakers could ensure access to cities in the Far North year round, while the southerly location of the main railroad lines precluded year-round rail links. Winter roads along frozen rivers often provided the only links for much of the year, until the ice broke up in May or June.
While planners directed investment resources to specific cities, they simultaneously pursued a contradictory policy, namely, limiting population growth in many of the same cities. Planners used formal control mechanisms like the propiska, a legal permission to live in a city, that were ineffective at limiting urban growth. Many individuals found legal ways around the system, such as marrying someone who had a propiska to live in the city or finding employment and having the employer secure a propiska. Ultimately, pressures for ever-greater production frequently translated into investments in established sites, instead of new sites, because this made economic sense. But additional investments created additional demand for labor. Attempts by central planners to reap the benefits of economies of scale reduced the effectiveness of city size limitations.

**Urban and Regional Planning**

In addition to directing investment resources to particular cities, central planners determined the internal spatial structure of Soviet cities. In an effort to create a new kind of city that would be consistent with the ideals of socialism, planners adopted the following guiding principles for urban planning: restricting urban growth in order not to exceed the optimal city size; distributing consumer and cultural goods equitably to the population; minimizing the journey to work and relying on public transportation for spatial mobility; and segregating urban land uses.

The basic building block of Soviet cities was the mikrorayon, which housed 8,000–12,000 people who lived in an area designed as an integrated unit of apartment buildings, stores, and schools intended to provide the consumer with cultural and educational services required by Soviet norms. Mikrorayons were located near industry and other places of work so as to minimize the journey to work. Built using standardized plans, mikrorayons were strikingly similar whether in Novosibirsk, Vorkuta, or Moscow (fig. 6.6). Large tracts of identical or similar multistory apartment buildings ring Russian cities, a visible reminder of decades of Soviet construction.

The location of mikrorayons was determined by the so-called general plans, which determined the precise land use of every plot in the city—what would be built there, what it would look like, and how it would be used. General plans were so detailed that a milk store could not legally be built on a site designated for a bread store. General plans were intended to complement the shorter-term, five-year economic plans, which determined what would be made, how it would be made, who would make it, who would receive the final product, and at what price.

**Internal Structure of Cities**

The long history of planning in Soviet cities has left an indelible mark on the built environment, precisely because structures were located without reference to market forces. In the United States, demand determines what kind of real estate projects are likely to be profitable and, thus, built. In Soviet cities, by contrast, land was not bought and sold, but allocated for different purposes roughly in accordance with the socialist ideology and planning principles outlined above. Figure 6.7 compares population density in Paris and Moscow according to distance from the city center. In Paris, market forces mean that valuable land near the center of the city is more densely populated than less valuable land on the outskirts of the city. In Moscow, just the opposite is true. The most densely populated parts of the city were on less valuable land far from the city center. Instead of building skyscrapers on valuable land in the
city center, central planners built skyscrapers in the suburbs.

Soviet cities were also unique because the absence of a free market meant land was not recycled for other purposes, as would have been the case in cities in market economies. As a result, the rings of development in Soviet cities remain clearly visible today and partially explain why population density increased along with distance from the center. Beginning in the 1930s, huge factories were erected outside prerevolutionary city cores as part of the industrialization drive. In subsequent years, especially after the late 1950s, a near catastrophic housing shortage and renewed determination to improve people’s living conditions began decades of housing construction. New apartment buildings were built in successive rings on undeveloped land outside the city core, the existing housing stock, and the existing factories. As the decades went by, prefabricated apartment buildings used nationwide grew taller, and buildings constructed according to these designs were located farther from the city cores.

POST-SOVET RUSSIA: ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND THE URBAN SYSTEM

What have economic collapse and the introduction of market forces meant for cities and the urban system? The answer—a great deal. The overnight elimination of central planning has profoundly affected the internal structure of cities, as well as the urban system nationally.

Changing Urban Form

Perhaps no event has so profoundly affected the structure of Russian cities as the end of Soviet central planning and the reintroduction of market forces. Single-family houses have appeared seemingly overnight in what has become a new ring of housing development, namely suburbs surrounding the multifamily high rises remaining from the Soviet years (fig. 6.8).

Suburbanization is but one of many visible changes resulting from the development of land and real estate markets in cities where they had been prohibited for most of the 20th century. As land has become a commodity, the old adage of value being determined by “location, location, location” has never been more apparent. Old factories on land surrounding the historic city cores are increasingly being torn down and the land is being reused for other purposes, such as apartment buildings or stores. Existing buildings in poor condition, but in good locations, are purchased, upgraded, and reused for new purposes, such as office space or upscale apartments (fig. 6.9). In contrast, run-down high-rise apartment buildings far from the city center on nearly worthless land are deteriorating rapidly as the better-off tenants move to superior locations, leaving only the poorer people behind in what will likely become vertical slums.

Market forces have also visibly changed the location of economic activity within cities and thus the geography of Russian cities. Previously, retail trade occurred mostly in state-owned stores or in a limited number of farmers’ markets. Now, the spatial structure
of urban retail systems has altered dramatically. Each subway station or transportation hub has become a center of retail trade where shoppers and steel workers, and where urban retail centers such as malls have been built. Pre-revolutionary shopping centers have regained their functions in this new retail environment. For example, GUM department stores were remodeled to be first-class, high-end shopping mall (Fig. 6.10). Cities like Moscow have also seen their urban periphery turn into a new retail environment. Numerous retail stores, such as IKEA, are opening up outside of the traditional retail centers, which has the result of spatially extending the retail spaces of Russian cities.

**Demographic Change and the Urban System**

Societal change has other demographic consequences that are reflected in a restructuring of the urban system. Starting in the 1980s, a pattern of disappearing cities signaled changes to the Russian urban system (Table 6.2). The disappearing or declining towns are spatially distributed throughout Russia, with more than half of them in the industrial core regions around Moscow and St. Petersburg and in the Urals. By the mid-1990s, however, Siberian cities were accounting for a larger proportion of these declining towns. The agricultural regions accounted for the fewest declining towns, suggesting that the phenomenon is firmly rooted in the urban-industrial complex.

Analysis of the functions of the declining towns provides an interesting lens into the impact of restructuring on the urban system. Because of the boom-bust economies surrounding mineral and other resource exploitation, as one would expect, mining towns account for a large proportion of declining towns, roughly a quarter in both time periods. The big story is the large increase in the share of cities from the MIC proportionate to other kinds of declining cities. The MIC cities previously received special attention from the central government, which meant better-than-average access to goods and services, as well as higher salaries for employees in these places. Given the economic changes after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, it makes sense that increasing numbers of these formerly privileged places are declining. Nonetheless, this represents a significant change in urban geography. Table 6.2 also suggests another recent phenomenon, namely the loss of population in medium-sized cities, or those with populations over 100,000. This is most likely connected to the decline in MIC cities as well.

An interesting counterpoint to the disappearance of many towns in the post-Soviet period is the appearance of previously unacknowledged cities known as secret cities or, in Soviet parlance, “closed administrative-territorial formations.” Although some information is now available about these cities, it is still difficult to assess how many there actually were. Some experts place the number around 40. These were cities where employment was focused on highly classified military production, including nuclear research and missile production. The cities were located in many different regions of Russia, although clusters were found in Murmansk Oblast (related to naval operations), the Far East (also related to naval operations), the Urals, and Moscow Oblast.

**Economic Change and the Urban System**

The end of central planning profoundly affected the urban system, which had been strongly influenced by decades of an investment policy designed to promote industrialization across the country. Heavy industry was especially hard hit by market forces and the reorientation of the economy away from defense. As the borders opened, Russia was flooded with cheaper and better consumer goods, as demand for everything from locally produced steel to planes dried up. At the same time, regions began to scramble for new investments to replace investments made by the Soviet central government. The introduction of market forces resulted in clear patterns of winners and losers and large differences among places. Some cities benefited; most did not.

Figure 6.11 shows where industrial output per capita in 1998 was highest in comparison with average industrial output per capita for Russia. High rates of industrial output are found in just a few natural resource rich re-
regions in Siberia and the Far East. In these regions, at least two-thirds of total industrial output results from mining oil, gas, diamonds, and platinum. As this map illustrates, once powerful and economically significant manufacturing regions are no longer as important as they were in the past. The restructuring of the economy away from manufacturing to natural resources has meant that cities dependent on manufacturing are struggling to cope with high rates of unemployment and few opportunities for new development. It is precisely these cities that have been losing population in recent years.

Foreign direct investment provides another example of how economic changes are reshaping the urban system. As figure 6.12 shows, regions that have attracted many foreign investors on a per capita basis have done so either because they are rich in natural resources (oil, diamonds, gold, etc.) or because they are well located and attractive in terms of access to markets (as in the cases of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod). Both kinds of regions benefit from per capita foreign investment rates that are more than double the average rate for Russia. The pattern of foreign direct investment is indicative of where international businesspeople believe the economic opportunities lie. These regions are likely to become attractive destinations for migrants from more depressed areas of the country, which will contribute to reshaping the urban system in favor of the former and at the expense of the latter.

Political Change and the Urban System

The introduction of democratization and political decentralization rivals marketization and capitalization as important influences over post-Soviet urban geography. The first democratic elections took place in cities throughout Russia shortly before the end of

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**Table 6.2** Function and Size of Declining Towns in Russia

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</table>

the Soviet Union. For the first time, local politicians, at least in theory, were accountable to the local population, instead of to high-
level government officials. This accountability has had important implications for the spatial structure of cities, as urban geographies have begun to reflect the needs of the local economy, instead of those of the national one. Democratic local elections are one of the most visible elements of a broader process of political decentralization, which has both empowered local officials and made them more accountable. Local officials now have far more ability to directly and indirectly influence the internal geography of cities than they did a few years earlier.

One immediate result of this newfound local autonomy can be seen in the popularity of renaming cities and streets, in which names associated with prominent Soviet leaders are replaced with historic names dating back to the czarist past. For example, Leningrad reverted to St. Petersburg and Sverdlovsk (named after a local Communist leader) reverted to Ekaterinburg (literally, "Catherine's city," after Catherine the Great). Similarly, streets were renamed; for example, Moscow's Gorky Street, named after the Soviet writer, was renamed Tverskaya Street. The historic names were usually already well known; however, the changes contributed to a feeling among Russians of reclaiming their cities and neighborhoods.

Urban governments also reclaimed their economies. In capitalist economies, urban budgets generally reflect political priorities. In healthy urban economies, budgets grow. Russian cities were protected from the vagaries of fiscal self-management prevalent in capitalist economies because they did not manage their own budget or accumulate budgetary resources until the final days of the Soviet Union. Urban budgets and the revenues that fed those budgets were simply handed down to Russian cities. This meant that urban politicians neither set priorities nor directly influenced the health of the urban economy. Russian city governments managed some of the housing and most of the social services located in their cities, but did not provide funding for these activities. Nor did Russian city governments concern themselves with employment. Under the Soviet system of central planning, employment patterns were largely determined centrally, outside of the direct influence of city managers.

In post-Soviet Russia, everything has changed dramatically and rapidly, as can be seen from survey information. By 1997, nearly 60% of urban politicians surveyed viewed the industrial and economic decline (including the general economy and macroeconomic problems) as one of the three most important problems facing their cities. Transportation and communication were seen to be the second most important problem. City budgets and the housing situation ranked third. The next most often cited short-term priority was protection from crime or "social protection." Virtually overnight, budgets and taxes as well as managing economic change became priorities of urban politicians and important indicators of the rapidity of the introduction of capitalism to Russian cities.

**REPRESENTATIVE CITIES**

Russia's sheer size and long urban tradition mean it has a large number of cities of varying size and significance. Hence, it is best to focus here on cities that represent as much as possible the most significant changes to Russian cities in the post-Soviet period. Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novosibirsk illustrate the distinctiveness of capital cities. Moscow and St.
Petersburg are the largest cities in Russia and both have served as national capitals, embodying czarist and Soviet eras of Russian history. Novosibirsk is still considered the Siberian capital and it also is an example of an industrial frontier city. Also highlighted in this section are Kazan, an ancient city illustrative of the ethnic diversity of Russia; Krasnodar, a city struggling with refugees in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union; Obninsk, a former secret city once dominated by the MIC; and Tyumen, a city prominent in the oil industry. These cities and towns reveal how Russian urban landscapes, irrespective of size or national significance, are layered with evidence from czarist, Soviet, and modern Russian histories, each of which left its own distinctive imprint on the cities.

Moscow: Russia's Past Meets Russia's Future

Perhaps no city captures Russia's long history as vividly as Moscow. Modern Moscow is a chaotic blend of brash and unfettered capitalism seen in casino lights and chic boutiques, broad avenues and vast monotonous housing estates built by communism, and the red brick walls and onion-domed churches of the Kremlin, remnants of the czarist past (fig. 6.13). In Moscow, Russia's past lives cheek by jowl with Russia's future.

Founded more than 850 years ago in the declining years of Kievan Rus, the city grew rapidly in importance. Starting in 1485, Ivan the Great and his successors ruled Russia from within the thick red brick walls of the Kremlin for over two centuries, until Peter the Great moved the capital to St. Petersburg. The 1917 Russian Revolution returned the seat of Soviet power to Moscow, and the footfalls of Lenin, Stalin, and other Soviet leaders were heard in the halls of the Kremlin palaces.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, capitalism exploded through Moscow, which has attracted more foreign investment than any other Russian city. New foreign and Russian capital built business centers, set up real estate companies, and established a new retail sector. Once empty avenues filled with cars seemingly overnight. TVs, VCRs, designer clothes, furniture—Muscovites bought voraciously and then bought some more. In the early 1990s, kiosks appeared everywhere, stocked with an improbable mix of everything from candy bars to vodka, socks, and toys. Five years later, stores selling liquor, food, clothing, and toys, as well as every other possible consumer good, largely replaced the kiosks. Now, malls are beginning to replace hastily built and remodeled stores (fig. 6.14).

Historically the political, economic, media, educational, and cultural center of the country, Moscow added to the existing functions as its economy restructured and the city became the banking capital and the consumer capital as well. Moscow is in many ways the primate city of Russia, as was true in past centuries (box 6.1).

Moscow is vastly richer than most other parts of Russia, a result in part of inheriting immensely valuable real estate from the Soviet government and Communist Party. The city used its ownership and control over most real estate in its borders to leverage behind-the-scenes business deals with private-sector investors. Acquiring office space often means establishing a business partnership directly or indirectly with the city. Profits due to the city from these business deals are not paid into the city's budget, but mount up in an unknown number of bank accounts to be used for unclear purposes. Corruption is rampant. Accountability is nearly nonexistent. Not surprisingly, the business climate of the city is highly criminalized. The city's policymaking is often driven by the agenda of organized crime, more than the needs and desires of the city's citizens.

St. Petersburg: Window on the West—Again?

St. Petersburg remains a city of ornate palaces and water-filled canals. Shots fired from the battleship Aurora, docked across from the Winter Palace, signaled the start of the Russian Rev-
Box 6.1 Business Services in Moscow and the New Russian Yuppies

Olga Gritsai

In the 1990s Moscow, as the hearth of reforms in Russia, experienced dynamic structural transformations in both the economic and social spheres. One of the new and rapidly expanding sectors was business services; the share of employment in the city for this sector grew from practically zero in 1990 to 8.5–10% in 2000 (still much smaller than in the largest Western cities, but surprisingly high after only ten years). Such activities as banking, insurance, advertising, accountancy, corporate legal services, and management consultancies, along with a thriving real estate sector, became well established in the city economy. Big international companies operating in these sectors were among the first to register their offices in Moscow, followed by numerous Russian-owned companies, some of them quickly turning into successful competitors to the international giants.

Companies of this type created a specific job market, recruiting mostly young people with university degrees, good knowledge of foreign languages, and sufficient computer skills. Given the relatively late start of language and computer training in Russia, it is clear why the age limit for the employees in new business services is very low; even those in command of such companies are in most cases not older than 35, and are at maximum 40, while the general cohort of the employees is about 22–26 years old. Many of them start without any relevant education or professional experience, coming with a wide variety of degrees, from geology to journalism, and have to learn the new profession on the job. The same is happening in the service departments of the producing companies; their staff is on average much younger than the personnel in the rest of these companies. The possibility of making a quick career with a high salary (comparable to Western salaries) disinclines these young professionals to leave Russia and look for alternative jobs abroad.

These young, professional, educated, culturally attuned, well-off people have formed their own social group, akin to the Western yuppies (young urban, upwardly mobile professional) but combining pragmatism with the extravagancy and nonconformism of the BoBo (Bohemian bourgeoisie). They know the price of a good education. Their monthly income is $1,000–$2,000, while for more than 70% of Muscovites it is still below $400. They like comfort, are members of fitness clubs, prefer healthy food, have good cars and mobile telephones, and at the same time are well-informed about cultural events. They attend fashionable films and performances designed for intellectual audiences and are among the most frequent Internet users, considering Internet to be the main source of information and means of communication.

The quick growth of business services and their yuppy-like employees was followed by a boom in a new cultural industry that included elite coffeehouses; small, trendy restaurants that function as leisure clubs; and bowling clubs. Even in such a big city as Moscow the world of yuppies seems to be rather small; very often visitors to these clubs already know each other from university or from other clubs. The norm in these places is “healthy” behavior: freshly pressed juices, alcohol-free cocktails. Exotic types of tea and coffee are more popular here than alcoholic beverages. Many of these cafes and clubs have strong security control at their entrances to protect their images. Material welfare, career, and the freedom of self-realization are the main values for the new young Russians who frequent the clubs, making them a distinct group within the heterogeneous post-Soviet society.

So far, the Russian yuppies seem to be especially a Moscow phenomenon, although they are present in many other Russian cities. Moscow still concentrates 25–30% of national employment in business services, hosts by far the largest cluster of corporate headquarters, and is the major national provider and consumer of Internet services (until 1996, Moscow and St. Petersburg accounted for more than 90% of Russian Internet users). The contrast in prosperity between this group of young Muscovites and people of the same age category in the provinces gives rise to debates about the pathological inequality of opportunity and growing social polarization. But polarization exists also among young Muscovites themselves: those who do not have enough education, intellect, and character to become yuppies may end up as yuffies (young urban failures), get involved with drugs or other illegal activities, and slowly become marginalized. The problem is that there is very little middle ground between these two categories of young people.

The easy career making in private business also creates serious generational conflicts. It is indeed very difficult for many people whose professional lives passed mostly in Soviet times to accept that their children, with no experience and hardly any skills, and just after graduating from the university, can get salaries several times greater than those of their parents, not to mention the contrast with their grandparents’ tiny pensions. Different values and priorities, rationalism versus the traditionally praised Russian spirituality; preference for the new, technologically more advanced sources of information; and being at ease with the new market reality—all these make the well-known generation gap much wider than it otherwise would be under an economically stable development path.
in Russia, and a favorable location not far from Finland and Europe with excellent access to major railroads and highways. To improve long-term development prospects, St. Petersburg will work to improve economic growth by making the business climate more favorable and by better integrating the city’s economy into the world economy (fig. 6.15). In addition, the European Union is helping to fund the construction of a new highway to provide more efficient linkages between St. Petersburg and Finland. To improve the quality of life for city residents, the city will seek to make budgetary expenditures more effective by using them to improve the city environment and establish a more favorable social environment. For example, road congestion and air pollution have increased dramatically because per capita car ownership has more than doubled in recent years. It remains to be seen whether or not the government of St. Petersburg can improve living standards and promote restructuring, but strategic planning has at least begun the process.

Kazan: Volga Port in Tatarstan

Perhaps no city in Russia better symbolizes the diversity inherent in a country that extends across Europe and Asia than does Kazan. Nearly 1,000 years old, the city is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan and home to 1.2 million inhabitants. The ninth-largest city in the Russian Federation, Kazan is truly multiethnic. Tatars are the largest ethnic group in the republic; only 43% of the population is Russian. Tatarstan is one of the few “non-Russian” places to have a plurality (48%) of the group for which it is named (Russians are the largest group even in most of the ethnic republics).

Czar Ivan the Terrible succeeded in conquering the independent Khanate of Kazan centuries ago and memorialized his 1552 victory with the construction of the colorful St. Basil’s Cathedral on Moscow’s Red Square. But despite more than four centuries of Russian (and subsequently Soviet) rule, Kazan remained a Tatar city. The dissolution of the Soviet Union provided an opportunity to reclaim the city’s unique past, as well as to renegotiate the terms of Tatarstan’s relationship with Russia. Tatarstan is a key leader in seeking more rights and more local government control, and a place the other non-Russian republics have sought to emulate.

In recent years, a new school to educate Russians about Islam has opened in Kazan. The city government helped to construct a new mosque on the grounds of the historic Kremlin. The city’s cultural independence from Russia is seen in the historic forms of architecture that make up the built environment of the city. Buildings in the city combine many architectural styles, ranging from baroque to Moorish. Bas-reliefs created by traditional Tatar stone workers also embellish buildings in the city. Minarets dot the skyline, visible evidence of the nearly 1,000 mosques that have opened across Tatarstan in recent years.

Both Kazan and Tatarstan are of major economic significance to the Russian economy, which has provided additional leverage to local leaders to negotiate a unique relationship with Moscow. The city is a major port on the Volga River, the main water route through European Russia, and has served as a transportation gateway for centuries. The European Union is currently investing in modernization of the city’s port facilities. Kazan’s economy is closely linked to production of transportation equipment, including military helicopters and the gigantic trucks made by KamAZ. In addition to being an historic seat of the petroleum industry, the city is home to related petrochemical industries.

Novosibirsk: Siberia’s Center

Home to nearly 1.5 million people, Novosibirsk is the center for Novosibirsk Oblast as well as the fourth-largest city in Russia, despite being located 2,000 mi (3,200 km) east of Moscow. Founded in 1893 as a stop along the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Novosibirsk is located on the mighty Ob River, making the city a convenient gateway to other Siberian cities. Novosibirsk continued to flourish as the Soviets pushed east, investing heavily in natural resource extraction and related industrial development, including the decision to move entire factories east in the wake of the German onslaught during World War II. The city remains an important center of the military-industrial complex, despite the need for significant economic restructuring.
Novosibirsk is also the intellectual capital of Siberia, housing numerous educational, scientific, and research organizations. The long distance from Moscow meant that Soviet leaders were less able to keep track of what scholars were thinking and discussing and that ideas circulated more freely here than in Moscow. This alone made the city an attractive destination for intellectuals, despite its long, cold winters and general inaccessibility. A small city on the outskirts, Akademgorodok, houses the many research institutes of the Academy of Sciences of Russia, as well as Novosibirsk State University. It has long attracted some of the most talented and innovative scientists in Russia. At its height, Akademgorodok had 65,000 scientists and one could always count upon exceptionally well-stocked stores when others in the metropolitan region were empty. Now, with the collapse of central government funding for research and higher education, many of the scientists have left in search of regularly paying employment.

Despite being located in the harsh Siberian environment, Novosibirsk is like many other Russian cities. With its gray architecture, Soviet-style apartment buildings, and broad streets, it looks like many other Soviet-period cities. Like other cities in the post-Soviet period, it has developed a burgeoning retail sector that gives the look and feel of a city in, perhaps, Asia or Africa, where the informal street economy thrives, although in Novosibirsk these activities are often conducted in underground shopping arcades to escape the Siberian winter. There is brisk trading throughout the city, including bustling open-air markets with vendors selling goods from the United States, Europe, and Asia out of kiosks or behind cardboard cartons. Its location between European Russia and the Far East as well as its role as a transportation hub makes the city an ideal place for wholesale, retail, and informal trade. Vendors in Novosibirsk work in temperatures as low as −40 degrees Celsius (−40°F) and are vulnerable to frostbite. While the look and some aspects of the feel may be like other post-Soviet cities, the physical conditions create a very different experience for those living and working in Novosibirsk.

Krasnodar: Russia’s Gateway to the Caucasus

At first glance, Krasnodar, just northwest of the now independent Caucasian nation of Georgia, appears to be just another sleepy city grown to substantial size as a result of its role as a river port and railroad center for farming, food processing, and other agriculture-related activities. Krasnodar was founded in 1793 as a military camp. The region’s relatively moderate climate has proved beneficial not only to farmers but also to vacationers attracted to coastal resorts along the Black Sea. But Krasnodar’s location, so favorable in many ways, has been less fortunate in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. As waves of ethnic violence have washed across the Caucasus, hundreds of thousands of people have fled and many have ended up in Krasnodar.

The torrent of so-called forced migrants lies behind Krasnodar’s rapid population growth. The population increased from 619,000 in 1989 to an officially estimated 766,000 in 1997 (which is likely much too low)—and this at a time when many Russian cities were losing population. Chechnya is but the best known of the many conflicts in the region, as conflicts in Ingushetia, Ossetia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan have all contributed to the stream of refugees and migrants. Although the majority of the new arrivals are Slavs, the influx of non-Slavic Caucasians is the most visible. It is precisely these migrants who have borne the brunt of popular resentment and outright harassment. Krasnodar has continued to use the registration permit, or propiska (despite court rulings that the propiska is illegal), and harassment of people who do not look Slavic is endemic in the city.

The city has been particularly hard hit by the influx of migrants, because the central government, which has been struggling with its own financial problems, has provided little or no assistance to Krasnodar. At the same time, the end of central planning and the introduction of market forces has left the region struggling to modernize agriculture and food processing with few resources of its own to address these tremendous human problems.

Obninsk: “Atomic City” of the Cold War Era

Just a few years ago, the existence of Obninsk was a state secret. This medium-sized city of a bit more than 100,000 people, located 60 mi (96 km) south of Moscow, appeared on no maps. Obninsk was an “atomic” city where twelve state enterprises and associations were engaged in classified research on nuclear power and the actual production of nuclear energy. Obsessed with secrecy, the Soviet leadership designated Obninsk and approximately forty other cities engaged in similar activities as closed cities. Not even the country’s own citizens were allowed to visit most of these cities without special permission.

Obninsk and the other secret cities benefited from the best of what the Soviet state had to offer: stores were better stocked, residents were better housed and paid. But the end of the Soviet Union meant that developing new nuclear weapons was a much lower priority and that funding was slashed. Overnight, the city went from being unacknowledged, yet wholly subsidized, to being acknowledged, yet impoverished. Only half of the nuclear scientists continue to be employed in the state enterprises and those who do earn only about $60 per month, which is barely enough to cover basic necessities such as food and utilities.

Despite the economic difficulties, the city has embraced openness and has even set up a website as a conduit to the rest of the world. The city government is now actively engaged in attempting to restructure the city’s economy and become financially stable. The government does have a highly educated and skilled workforce to attract international investment. The city has attempted to make connections with its sister city, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, which is home to the Oak Ridge Laboratories, also well known for nuclear research. Obninsk is also trying to develop new economic activity by retooling its factories to produce mineral food supplements.

Tyumen: The Power of Oil

Tyumen is an oil boomtown. In the past ten years, the population has grown by more than 13%, from 476,000 to more than 550,000, in response to dollars pouring into the region to develop the massive oil and gas resources. Located in Western Siberia, in a climate where winter temperatures of −40 degrees Celsius (−40°F) are not uncommon, Tyumen is an odd mix of modest Russian wooden houses and new glass office buildings.

As is the case with so many other Russian cities, Tyumen owes its importance largely to its role as a transportation hub. The city has a port along the Tura River and is located at a railroad junction on the Trans-Siberian. But even rail and river connections do not translate into accessibility to most of Russia. The nearest major city, Ekaterinburg, is four to five
hours' travel by car or train. The rivers are navigable only during the brief summer season, which limits connections between the city and its surrounding area.

Tyumen is the regional center for Tyumen Oblast, which has been one of the country's largest producers of oil and natural gas since the Soviets began a massive program to develop these reserves throughout Western Siberia in the 1960s. Large investments in physical infrastructure (wells, pipelines, etc.) meant thousands of new jobs and the city grew rapidly. Although the oil and natural gas production occurs mainly in the non-Russian autonomous okrugs (political units below the oblast level) of Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets, Tyumen City is primarily Russian and was originally settled by Russians in the 16th century.

Tyumen has become a destination for migrants simply because of its importance to the oil and gas industry. While most other Russian cities scramble to attract investors and to cope with significant unemployment and social welfare problems, people in this city enjoy a relatively high living standard. Consumer purchasing power is estimated to be up to five times higher than in other Russian cities. Also, even after the financial crisis of 1998, the region and the city itself are home to several major banks, an indicator of the importance of the regional economy to the nation as a whole.

**PROSPECTS**

Cities in Russia today are the products of czarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian societies, as well as of the many different ethnic groups and cultures that inhabited the region for at least a thousand years. The blending of such a diverse set of cultures and histories results in cities with varied built landscapes. The natural environment, however, has always wielded an important influence over the location of urban settlements, irrespective of the time period or dominant ethnic group. The harshness of the Siberian landscape originally posed a barrier to the expansion of Russian settlement. Like the construction of St. Petersburg, heralded as a triumph although situated in a location where many during the czarist period thought it could not be built, the widespread urban settlement of Siberia became a great accomplishment of the Soviet central planners. This was in spite of the environmental degradation wrought by this settlement, the stranding of people in isolated and inhospitable places, and the immense social and cultural costs, not to mention the immeasurable financial implications.

Cities in the post-Soviet period thus must continue to struggle with the consequences of the Soviet harnessing of nature and the legacy of that era's internal spatial structure of cities. Urban governments as well as the national government are attempting to find ways to integrate, economically and politically, cities as disparate and distant as Krasnodar and Vladivostok. They need to consider the implications of that integration for the internal transportation and communications systems. Alongside internal integration, the integration of former Soviet cities into a larger geopolitical and economic framework stands out as a critical issue for the 21st century (box 6.2). For example, should cities far closer to Tokyo or Beijing than Moscow rely primarily upon trade within Russia for economic direction? What will happen to Soviet cities that were built under one system but must now function under another? How will long-lived structures such as factories, housing, roads, schools, and other buildings be adapted for new uses? How sustainable are cities in extreme environments, such as the Arc-

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**Box 6.2 Ukraine and Belarus: The "Orphan" States**

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, most of the republics became newly independent states. The question for geographers has been: Which region should they be assigned to when dividing up the world in macro culture realms? Ukraine and Belarus have been dubbed the "orphan" states, in the sense that they no longer fit neatly into any one region. For this text, the decision was to leave Ukraine and Belarus in the Russia chapter, since these two former republics still maintain closer linkages with Russia than with an expanded Europe.

Regardless, from an urban perspective, Ukraine and Belarus present some interesting similarities and contrasts. Ukraine is by far the more important of the two, with a population of 49 million, of whom 68% are urbanized. Moreover, Ukraine has seven cities of 750,000 people or more, dominated by the historic city of Kiev, with 2.5 million, followed by Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, and Donetsk in the million-plus category. Ukraine was the number one industrial region of the former Soviet Union. Belarus has only 10 million people and is about 70% urbanized, with urbanization focused around the old city of Minsk, with 1.7 million. Minsk (and Belarus) have changed hands numerous times in their long history, as the boundaries of Eastern Europe have moved back and forth. Belarus has a much weaker resource base than Ukraine and is heavily dependent on its customs union with Russia to survive economically.

Ukraine and Belarus have been described as a "pair of sluggish Slav countries." When they were part of the Soviet Union, their cities were subsidized to a large extent due to their focus on heavy industry, as detailed in the cases of other Soviet cities in this chapter. With the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the cities, especially in Ukraine, created a tremendous drain on the national budgets. Deindustrialization (i.e., modernization) lagged behind that of Russia, in spite of the fact that Ukraine is often ranked as the one former Soviet republic with the greatest development potential. The result is that the cities of Ukraine and Belarus remain worse off than the Russian cities. The situation has been made worse by difficulties in establishing true democratic systems. Moreover, Ukraine and Belarus have acquired bad reputations as conduits for the smuggling of drugs, migrants, and even weaponry. The two countries definitely have seen better times.

Within the cities, one can especially see the toll of ten years striving to create viable nation-states and livable cities. Odessa, in southern Ukraine, with a population stagnating at just under a million, is a good example. Beautiful, ornate structures of the czarist era, in varying states of disrepair, share space with the ugly utilitarian structures of the Soviet era. In the 1990s, retail shops appeared sparsely stocked, motor vehicles were not common, and the people seemed to walk through the streets with dignified resignation to their plight. Tickets to concerts or ballets at the Opera House, one of the best places to see the vanished glory of Odessa, could be obtained for a pitance by foreign visitors. Peddlers hawked their wares relentlessly on the steps leading down to the historic waterfront that played a key
role in the Russian Revolution so long ago (fig. 6.16). Recent data on quality-of-life measures reveal high rates of alcoholism, lower nutrition standards, and high rates of suicide. It is no surprise, then, that both countries are courting closer ties with the European Union as a possible solution to their complex problems.

Figure 6.16  The Port of Odessa, Ukraine. The city was founded by Catherine the Great in the late 18th century as Russia’s principal southern outlet to Europe, through the Black Sea and the Bosporus, past Istanbul. (Photo by Jack Williams)

it is like to walk around the city soon after the breakup of the former Soviet Union.

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SUGGESTED READINGS
