FORUM: RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Introduction: Anthropological Perspectives on War, Displacement, Humanitarianism and the Hierarchies of Knowledge in the Studies of the Conflict

It has been a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine started. It is clear that the impact of this war goes far beyond Ukraine. We already know that it will have long-lasting consequences for the regional and global economy, in particular for energy and food security. The war is reshuffling old geo-political arrangements and alliances. It is also shaping the political landscapes of European states: international relations, inflation and migration are increasingly becoming key topics in national elections.

Certainly, this war will determine the future of Ukraine and Russia as well as Europe, the EU and NATO. Consequently, many people are identifying this war as 'ours'. Many do so not only out of political awareness, but also in a gesture of solidarity. Yet I am hesitant to appropriate this war as 'ours' because, without a doubt, no one bears the cost and consequences of this war like Ukraine and its people do. I am deeply aware of my privilege, being in a safe location, with peace of mind, able to edit this Forum on war while others have to live through its unimaginable atrocities, caused by the Russian aggressor.

Since the 2022 invasion started, numerous articles and statements have been written. The strength of our discipline was reflected in many poignant essays offering insights into the situation on the ground, describing the experiences of people fighting to survive the violence (Kalenychenko 2022; Phillips 2022), self-organising defence and assistance (Caldwell 2022; Channell-Justice 2022; Nading 2022), managing the unimaginable. Many of those pieces were first-hand accounts by scholars who, in spite of difficulties, somehow found the strength to document the atrocities of this war. Most accounts grew out of long-term ethnographic engagements with local communities and in-depth knowledge of Ukrainian realities, and consequently showed very well what is at stake in this war.

Within this scholarship, special attention has been given to the Ukrainian people's displacement. It continues to be the biggest and the fastest displacement that Europe has witnessed since the Second World War. Since February 2022, approximately a third

of the Ukrainian population has been at some point during the crisis either internally or externally displaced. For those reasons, our Forum is also strongly focused on this topic. By March 2023, nearly 10.2 million crossings were registered at the Polish-Ukrainian border. Of course, many people returned to Ukraine or moved to other destinations; nevertheless, in absolute numbers Poland ranks first among European states in hosting the largest number of Ukrainian refugees (approximately 1.56 million). If calculating per capita, it is Estonia and Czechia that are becoming the leading hosts (Trebesch et al 2023: 18). Even though the USA, EU institutions and the UK so far have pledged the highest value of financial, humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine, such commitments calculated in per cent of donor country GDP are the highest in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (Trebesch et al 2023). Clearly, Eastern Europe is an important stakeholder in the current crisis, hence our focus on this region in this Forum.

But the strong support that people fleeing the Russian invasion have received in the last 16 months exacerbates the problem of selective compassion in Europe. People who have been suffering the consequences of violent conflicts in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria or Iraq have been rightly asking why they are not receiving the same attention, compassion and support as people running away from Russian tanks in Ukraine. As a result, the celebratory accounts of humanitarian efforts undertaken by volunteers in Poland, Slovakia or Romania quickly gave way to accusations of racism.

However, as Céline Cantat (2022) has signalled, even if racism influences selective compassion, it cannot explain everything. One explanation can be found in the EU's own intergovernmental arrangements, which already in 2017 granted visa-free travel privileges to Ukrainian citizens holding biometric passports. Consequently, when the invasion prompted the great displacement, the EU was, in a way, forced to accept Ukrainians by its own legal system – there was no legal basis to perform a 'push back' or to forcefully detain in the camps people who are eligible to benefit from the EU–Ukraine visa-free agreement. Of course, legalism is just one of the many possible perspectives. That is why in this Forum we continue to look for further explanations of the current situation. Using their expertise in humanitarian, migration and security studies, the contributors provide valuable insights into the worlds of people who are fleeing Ukraine and those who are involved in border regimes and humanitarian actions. For instance, by juxtaposing the situation at the Polish–Ukrainian border with the pushback against the migrants from the Global South that is taking place at the Polish–Belarusian border, Karolina Follis (this issue) shows that current attitudes towards Ukraine are strongly motivated by European concern for its own safety rather than empathy for the invaded state. This is confirmed by Volodymyr Artiukh (this issue), who adds that the specific perception of Ukrainian migrants and Ukraine's defenders as a European asset is a result of the self-representation of those groups, who strategically portray themselves as protectors against the Russian advance into Europe.

Olena Fedyuk and Emma Rimpiläinen (this issue) propose another angle and explain the trajectories of forced migration through an economic rather than a security lens. Both show that, in order to understand the choices that migrants make and the opportunities that they are given, we have to consider socio-economic patterns that were shaped in Ukraine and in host countries long before the 2022 invasion started. Similarly, in my own piece in this Forum, I argue that Polish aid to Ukraine has nei-

ther been 'spontaneous' nor a reflection of some 'hospitable nature' of Polish society, but instead should be seen as a result of the long-term historical, economic and political connections linking both societies. Conversely, Elizabeth Dunn and Iwona Kaliszewska (this issue) argue that key to the effectiveness of the Polish humanitarian response is the ability to work against established patterns, through emerging rather than institutionalised networks.

But the humanitarian and economic consequences of war have not been the only issue concerning anthropological minds. Since the invasion started, many of us – anthropologists of and in Europe – were also preoccupied with the 'why' question. Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Who holds responsibility for the current state of affairs? Only four days after the invasion started, *Focaal Blog* issued an opinion piece by David Harvey (2022). He argued that the economic and political humiliation Russia experienced after the collapse of the Soviet Union was to be blamed for the current state of affairs. He also attributed some blame to NATO for its expansion to the Eastern territories of Europe and the lack of respect for Russia's place in the global order. Responding to Harvey, Derek Hall (2022) and Elizabeth Dunn (2022) pointed out that the lack of consideration of the Ukrainian perspective in Harvey's piece was unacceptable. They also objected to the 'NATO expansion' narrative, noting that it neglects the agency of the Central and Eastern European states who willingly applied to become members of the pact.

Indeed, the tone and the timing of Harvey's piece could not have been worse. At a time when millions of people in Ukraine were under attack, when many of Harvey's readers in Central and Eastern Europe were directly involved in humanitarian efforts while also worrying if the war would spill to their home countries, Harvey opted to centre his piece on the suffering and insecurities of Russia. As Patty Gray (2022) noted, the time for such pieces was past long before the war started, when there was still time and space for conflict prevention. Such pieces might have some value in the future, but in February 2022 they sounded discordant, like an attempt to soothe the bruised ego of the bully.

At around the same time, the EASA Executive Committee issued a very strong statement against the Russian invasion. The statement condemned the war as unprovoked, illegal and imperialistic. It clearly sided with Ukrainian people. Yet it also included a sentence which identified the roots of the war not only in Russian imperial ambitions but also in 'NATO expansion into the Eastern European territory'. As documented by Martin Fotta (2022), this sentence sparked strong controversy among mostly Central and Eastern European scholars who, through email, requested that the Executive Committee take it out. Within a few days the sentence was gone.

What followed were strings of formal and informal conversations in which tensions were high and accusations of West-plaining, Euro- or Russian-centrism, NATO-philia or phobia, Putin-apologetics or paranoid nationalisms were frequently weaponised (Artiukh 2022; De Lauri 2022; Dunn 2022; Focaalblog 2022; Fotta 2022; Gray 2022; Hall 2022; Hann 2022; Harvey 2022; Kalb 2022; Ries et al 2022; Shtyrkov 2022). Each side accused their opponents of ignorance.

Perhaps ignorance of Ukraine and Russia and their troubled relationship, as well as of the wider regional history and current political landscape, is the key problem

here. Several scholars pointed out that the reason why in the earliest stages of the war so much attention was given to the 'Russian perspective' was simply a reflection of the ways in which studies of Eastern Europe have always been Russian-centric. Similarly, even though in the earliest stages of the war so many anthropologists acted as NATO experts and specialists in international relations, I learned while working on this Forum that finding an anthropologist with actual research-based knowledge of NATO who could provide a contribution regarding Swedish and Finnish accession to the Treaty was quite challenging.

Fredrik Barth (2002) shows that knowledge is central for the functioning of society. As he observes, in order for the members of one society to coexist peacefully, they must share some knowledge to be able to communicate. As the heated debates concerning the war reveal, our own anthropological community clearly needs to do a better job in generating and sharing knowledge directly relevant to the conflict. We cannot afford any blind spots in anthropology of Europe anymore. But we also have to move beyond regional boundaries and echo chambers. As Agnieszka Halemba and Agata Ładykowska rightly argue in this Forum, old hierarchies of knowledge must be revised. But the way the NATO controversy in the EASA statement was handled is not a way forward either. Even if those who initiated the petition achieved their goal of enforcing their view (the attribution of blame to NATO is gone from the EASA statement), they missed an opportunity to meaningfully present and convince others of their perspective, as they opted for forms of communication that prioritise private channels and informal discussions in their own echo chambers over transparent dialogue and public debate.

What the prioritisation of grapevine communication can achieve, though, is the strengthening of presumptions such as those fuelling the East vs West divide in our discipline. Throughout this year, when talking to my Polish colleagues and following Polish media, I frequently heard grievances about 'the West' supposedly not caring about the war and Ukraine. But the choice of Sweden and Finland to opt for NATO membership – a process described in this Forum by Ilmari Käihkö – counters such blanket statements. At the same time, as someone who lives in Slovakia, I am deeply aware that even in 'the East' views on the war are not homogenous. While Russia might be seen as the key aggressor in Poland, in neighbouring Slovakia the perspective differs. Depending on methodology, recent surveys estimate that between 19 per cent and 32.4 per cent of respondents wish for a Russian victory (Globsec 2022; see also Ako sa máte, Slovensko? 2022; Dlhopolec 2022, Kerekes 2022). Conversely, some estimate that 25.5 per cent to 47 per cent of Slovak respondents want Ukraine to defeat Russia. Significantly, these Slovak surveys reveal quite high levels of indifference, with approximately one third of respondents declaring no interest in the war. The simplistic nature of the East vs West perspective is also problematised by the work of Anastasia Astapova, who in this Forum focuses on Russian speakers in Estonia and the way they justify their predominantly anti-Ukrainian stance by resorting to conspiracy theories. Such a finding might not be surprising. Yet as Astapova reveals, the specific group is not fully isolated in either Estonia or in Europe, as it shares some of its views with local extreme nationalists and other European groups endorsing conspiracy theories regarding the war. This suggests that perhaps, instead of rehearsing old East vs West tropes when analysing this war and its impact on Europe, we should start paying more attention to the new ways in which political and ideological alliances are shaped across the continent.

Just as members of European societies express different views and attitudes towards the war, so do representatives of our profession and members of EASA. That is why the secondary goal of this Forum is to move the discussions concerning the war from the echo chambers to the public space of this journal. I neither believe nor hope that we have to agree on everything within EASA. But we have to communicate with each other and be open to each other's perspectives. As Barth notes, members of one society must differ in some knowledge to give focus to their interactions. According to him, 'the understanding of the balances of sharing and difference in knowledge that predicate social cooperation should constitute a vital part of any theory of human society' (2002: 2). That is why this Forum is motivated by the need to create a space where such dialogue can take place. My goal was to create space for a diverse range of views, in the hope that they will contribute to sharing knowledge and perspectives, and will eventually strengthen our capacity to support Ukraine.

I agree with Mariya Ivancheva when she writes in this Forum that anthropology must not be afraid to be political. I also strongly believe that our discipline is at its best when it offers explanations that go beyond the truth of the events themselves and instead foster insights and understandings (see Toren and Pina-Cabral 2011). Yet, as Emma Rimpiläinen (this issue) has noticed, almost every recent analysis and blog post about the war has been haunted by the need to produce authoritative knowledge about the invasion. The need to become arbitrators of truth might be surprising, especially for scholars representing anthropology, a discipline which historically has been mostly concerned with representation, whose objective has not been to show the world as it is but instead to provide understanding about how individual actions and collective illusions are interlinked and how they are loaded with meanings (Hastrup 2004).

But at the same time, this need to explain 'what is really going on', what this war is 'really' about, is also understandable. At a time of war, when a culturally constructed universe cannot explain the logic and the moral justice of the violent events, people seek theories that can help to make sense of the crisis. If this war is 'ours' then 'our' anthropological explanations of the current events are not attempts at providing insights into the world of distant 'Others' and 'their' crisis. It is anthropology at home, an effort to understand the crisis in which 'we' – European anthropologists and anthropologists of Europe – are also somehow entangled.

Anthropology at home is not comfortable. It comes with the advantage of insider knowledge, but it also comes with extra responsibilities: the necessity to understand and reflect on one's own positionality, biases and subjectivity. Anthropology at home – anthropology of this war – requires us to actively engage in the process of reflexivity, the self-evaluation of our own positionality and the acknowledgement of how this position might affect the research process and analysis. What do our lives, histories, cultural memories and education, as well as national disciplinary trajectories, mean for us as producers and consumers of knowledge about the invasion? How are we situated in the current conflict? Such reflection is not a limitation, but a possibility to gain an additional tool that can provide a more nuanced, transparent and maybe sometimes even more radically honest debate.

The insider–outsider dichotomy is hard to sustain when conducting research at home; it is perhaps impossible to maintain when analysing a war that can directly impact researchers' lives. Of course, the stakes are not the same for everyone, but

precisely because they differ, they should be reflected on in the process of building analysis as well as in the process of considering the sensibilities of audiences or the perspective of opponents. One of the great values of our discipline is the principle of compassion, an openness to diverse views and perspectives. If as anthropologists we can offer such concessions when studying controversial topics or radical and violent movements, we should also be able to offer similar accommodations to our colleagues.

While as anthropologists we might differ in the ways in which we identify the mechanisms that led to the invasion, and while we might not share perspectives on how and if the war could have been prevented, I am certain that we all want this war to end. Yet I also assume that when the peace talks eventually start, we might also differ in our views on the particularities of the conflict resolution. But I do hope that when that time comes, we can apply a more reflexive and more nuanced approach to our discussions regarding the end of conflict than we did regarding its origins.

The Forum is divided into two parts. The first part – dedicated directly to the war – starts with a discussion of the wounded Ukrainian landscape, painted by Nataliya Tchermalykh. We then move to a discussion of security and border regimes in Europe, with pieces by Karolina Follis, Volodymyr Artiukh and Ilmari Käihkö. Next, Olena Fedyuk, Emma Rimpiläinen and Anastasiya Astapova analyse war-related displacement and diverse responses to migrants in Hungary, Finland and Estonia. This first part of the Forum ends with pieces by Elżbieta Drążkiewicz, Elizabeth Dunn and Iwona Kaliszewska, who analyse factors that facilitated the effectiveness of the early humanitarian response in Poland and ask broader questions about the implications of the current war on the humanitarian industry. The second part of the Forum, while directly triggered by the war and anthropological debates surrounding it, turns attention towards our discipline and asks about the impact of the current crisis on anthropology of and in Europe. Here Agnieszka Halemba with Agata Ładykowska, as well as Mariya Ivancheva, discuss hierarchies of knowledge in our discipline and follow up on the discussions concerning the 'NATO controversy' in the EASA statement concerning the Russian invasion.

This Forum took much longer to put together than the situation would necessitate. But perhaps this delay is not a bad thing. When we are facing the risk that 'Ukraine fatigue' is creeping in and anti-immigration attitudes are increasingly surfacing across Europe, we must make sure that Ukraine and its people are not forgotten.

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Wounded Landscapes
Ukrainian Monuments in the Face of War

Since February 2022, the Ukrainian reality has come to confront social anthropologists with a new set of questions regarding cultural heritage and monuments in light of the abrupt political changes underway. In the pre-war times, those of us working in this field addressed the monuments as the material embodiment of *past* political and aesthetic projects – such as colonialism, imperialism or communism – that needed to be re-contextualised in the light of new political agendas. The current war in Ukraine urges us to modify this perspective. It requires approaching cultural heritage and its ruins, not as static objects, belonging to the past, but as a process of *ruination* that can be adequately described only in a present continuous tense. Speaking from the position of a Ukrainian-born, Western-trained anthropologist, I would like to draw attention to the subtle changes in the understanding of monuments that I noticed during the past nine months of war, between February and October 2022. In this paper I argue that the war in Ukraine offers an opportunity to reconsider monumentality – what the idea of a monument is.

Documenting Destructions, Witnessing Crimes

The first shift concerns the relationship between the state, the monuments (and their ruins) and the citizens. A few days after the war began, the Ukrainian state created an online register dedicated to the destruction of its cultural heritage.[1] This platform is not only for experts. Everyone who documents the destruction (for instance, with their mobile phone) can access and contribute to its database. Among the multitude

of catalogued and verified images are aerial photos of craters left by bombing in historic districts, bullet marks on church walls, hundreds of burnt and semi-collapsed buildings. Subjectively, the act of photographing the ruins of the places where one grew up can be seen as a form of mourning for one's past life, shattered by the experience of war. But also, potentially, it can be seen as a collective preparation for the future: documenting destruction today means building up a body of evidence for the trial against the Russian state in an international court of law, which recognises the destruction of culture – both tangible and intangible – as a war crime. Such a distributed, citizen-driven process of proof-gathering that relies on immediate visual documentation suggests a more horizontal and responsible relation to existing monuments. At the same time, it decentres the previous, rigidly top-down state-to-citizen model of cultural heritage, in which the definition of what counts as a monument belonged exclusively to the state.

From Anti-Soviet Iconoclasm to Creative Conservation

The second shift relates to the role of iconoclasm – the destruction of socially relevant symbols – in Ukrainian society. Long before the war began, Ukrainians had a complex and passionate relationship with their monuments. One still remembers the 'Leninopad', a post-Maidan wave of destruction of statues of Vladimir Lenin. This popular fury, directed at the monuments, was based on a deep belief that by dismantling the stone, one could get rid of the unbearable past, and perhaps change the course of the future. This popular sentiment was also enshrined in law, banning communist symbolism[2] on the same footing as Nazi symbolism. As a result of this de-sovietisation of the public sphere, championed by the Ukrainian state, hundreds of streets have been renamed and hundreds of Soviet-era monuments have disappeared. This move raised the opprobrium of intellectuals, who consider Soviet, Russian and Ukrainian cultural heritage to be interconnected. They tried to negotiate with the state for a space for preservation of Soviet-Ukrainian heritage, which became controversial. Then, the Russian intervention interfered, sometimes resolving the controversy. For example, the monumental coloured mosaics at Chernihiv airport (Balashova et al 2017), which were defended by intellectuals and local communities from 'de-sovietisation', alongside those remaining at the Lviv fish market,[3] Vinnitsa technical school[4] or Kyiv metro stations[5] were permanently destroyed by Russian bombing during winter 2022.

Writing about revolutionary iconoclasm, French historian Emmanuel Fureix noted that 'By instituting a new symbolic order and a new imaginary, revolutions turn iconoclasm into a creative destruction, according to a dialectic that each revolutionary moment negotiates in a singular way. ... Chosen targets may vary, but they all point to an order that has become intolerable in the temporal breach opened up by the revolution' (2014: 15). Similar processes have surely been documented in post-Maidan Ukraine, yet the breach opened up by the war seems to point towards a diametrically opposite shift – that of creative conservation of meaningful monuments and images, and hyper-semanticisation of those that can be related, in any way, to the suffering of the war.

It seems that since the beginning of the war, post-Soviet iconoclasm has been replaced, at least partially, by a no less passionate conservationist logic. In large cities, in anticipation of Russian air raids, statues of historical importance – the statue of Volodymyr, who baptised the Kyivan Rus, of Duke Richelieu, the founder of Odessa, or Princess Olga of Kyiv – are preventively wrapped in cloth and protected by rows of sandbags, according to the technique developed during the Second World War. This new, fragile appearance appeals to passers-by, who, between two sirens, take pictures in front of these monuments, perhaps to emphasise the transformative experiences of war endured on an equal footing by monuments and humans – and their shared vulnerability.

Redefining Monumentality

The third shift relates to the redefinition of monumentality in the context of the ongoing war and ruination, when the initiative of active monument-making (that for a long time remained a prerogative of state agents) has been, however temporarily, taken over by ordinary Ukrainians.

In March 2022, once the offence against the Kyiv region ceased, mass graves hastily dug along the roadsides were revealed in the surrounding areas of Irpin, Borodianka and Butcha. 'We buried a lot of people in the vegetable garden', recalls a resident of the city of Makariv in the Kyiv region, 'The cemetery was bombed, we were afraid to go there.'[6] A blue-and-yellow flag, a few flowers and candles, a first name scrawled in pencil, sometimes food, to honour those who died of hunger. These micro-monuments, that by a subtle human intervention transform what is commonly referred as a 'mass grave' into a 'cemetery', indicate the transformation of the very idea of what a monument means and stands for, driven by the human capacity to create and share symbols, as well as to provide them new meanings even in (or perhaps, especially in) the face of the violence of war.

Some new war monuments are not human-made material objects, but macro-monuments: inscriptions or traces in the landscape. In May 2022, the Ukrainian National Agency of Information (UNIAN) published an aerial photograph of a piece of land near Kharkiv, riddled with missiles. The author, a journalist-turned-soldier Oleksandr Makhov, lost his life in a battle in the Kharkiv region several days later. 'There isn't a whole spot on my soul – that is why I am putting this image, indefinitely, as my profile picture', wrote one of my Ukrainian friends on her Facebook page. 'I continuously felt and thought that the land is wounded', confessed Asia Bazdyreva, a Ukrainian intellectual, in an online diary,[7] inspired by this image. These reactions suggest a profoundly meaningful resonance between the representation of a wounded landscape and the subjective urge to translate inconceivable violence symbolically, given that the essence of this experience seems to lie beyond words.

Here, the wounded landscape itself has been reconceptualised as a monument to the ongoing war, a monument that embodies a totalising experience of ruination. These short acts of monument-making carried out at the verge of humanness unveil

the very essence of what a monument is, stripped from historical or ideological super-impositions. The war makes us realise that a monument is also a material object serving as an inscription of human suffering or loss – actual or past – in a certain landscape.

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VOLODYMYR ARTIUKH

Ukrainian Refugees in the EU
Racial Affinity or Selective Securitisation?

Russia's invasion has uprooted more people than any post-Second World War conflict in Europe, including the Yugoslav wars and the 'migrant crisis' of 2015 (Desilver 2022). Still, Ukrainian refugees have been welcomed in Europe more than victims of any recent wars. Although racial underpinnings of the European migration policy are often blamed for this paradox, my research suggests that a shift in the securitisation of migration played the key role in selective hospitality to Ukrainian refugees in Europe. The preferential treatment of Ukrainian forced migrants is due to the fact that they are perceived and (self-)represented as security assets for an externalised containment of the Russian advance into Europe.

In March 2022, The Temporary Protection Directive was activated by the European Commission for the first time since its adoption in the aftermath of the Yugoslav war. It granted migrants from Ukraine the right to stay, work and receive help in any EU country without going through a lengthy asylum procedure. This is a stark contrast with Europe's reaction to migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan, who not only do not enjoy such privileges but also experience violent pushbacks from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, the countries that extended a particularly warm welcome to Ukrainians (Follis, this issue). This prompted many to suspect a racially motivated preference for 'white' Ukrainians. Indeed, numerous reports pointed to the discrimination against Ukrainian residents of colour both in Ukraine and in Europe, in particular students at Ukrainian universities from the Global South, and against Ukrainian Roma (Howard et al 2022).

However, this is only part of the explanation. Hierarchy of deserving and undeserving migrants, including in a racialised form, has historically depended on the state's geopolitical interests (Cantat 2022). My ongoing research in Ukraine and Romania suggests that Ukrainian residents with Belarusian passports, who had to flee the Russian invasion after having escaped repressions at home, have also been discriminated against in Ukraine and in Europe despite being 'white'. Refugees with Russian passports face even more difficulties, as do Ukrainians who attempt crossing the EU border from Russia. Finally, Ukrainians as a traditional pool of cheap labour in the EU and as refugees from the war in Donbas have also been subjected to a racialising discrimination dynamic prior to the 2022 war (Shmidt and Jaworsky 2022: 104–114).

As my work on forced migration prompted by the Donbas conflict shows (Artiukh 2021), explaining the differential treatment of migrants requires accounting for changes in securitisation discourses intertwined with the class and gender construction of migration. As opposed to the previous 'migrant crises', when migrants were represented as dangerous, predominantly male, invaders, Ukrainians fleeing the war are presented in the media and by European politicians as exclusively women and children, even if this is only partially true. This image is further enhanced by the fact that men between 18 and 60 are barred from leaving the country, although many cross the border under various exceptions or (semi-)illegally. Additionally, there is a strong class dimensions: those who go to Europe tend to be disproportionately young, urban middle class families with prior experience of mobility. They own cars and have savings, and often speak English. My fieldwork in Romania shows that members of civil society involved in helping refugees feel class affinity with Ukrainians and strive to represent their country as a 'civilised' part of Europe.

This has consequences important for understanding the privileges of Ukrainians in Europe. First, there is an expectation that the current situation is only temporary, that Ukrainian refugees will eventually return to Ukraine, and most importantly to their husbands. Indeed, temporary protection doesn't prohibit people from returning home, as opposed to a refugee status, and many of my research participants in Romania regularly visit Ukraine. Second, supporting women and children while their husbands and fathers are represented exclusively as soldiers is regarded as a supplement to delivering weapons, a form of 'political kinship' (Dzenovska 2022). The support of social reproduction, in which Ukrainian women play a central role, becomes a European security interest comparable to weapons and munitions delivery to the Ukrainian army.

Not only is this image of male defenders and female reproducers cultivated by the receiving societies, it is emphasised by the migrants themselves. In the first weeks following the outbreak of the war, a video recorded by a Ukrainian soldier grateful for the reception his family received went viral in Romanian social networks and media. Female migrants and children dominate Romanian media and public representations, while male migrants are virtually invisible. Additionally, Ukrainian female refugees publicly perform their image as deserving migrants: they stress their links with the Ukrainian army as 'soldiers' wives', often going as far as shaming men who fled abroad.

Thus, if in 2021 migrants from the Global South were securitised as Russia's weapon in its 'hybrid war' on Europe, today Ukrainian migrants are portrayed and self-imagined as an appendage to European weaponry in the fight against Russia. This shows the benevolence towards forced migrants from Ukraine is only partially racially determined. The key factor shaping the response is general securitisation of forced migration (Hammerstad 2011: 251). Negotiating a balancing act between a direct clash with Russia and supporting Ukraine's resistance, Europe delegates the production of security to the predominantly male soldiers, while securing social reproduction through offering temporary protection to mostly women and children.

Acknowledgement

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KAROLINA FOLLIS

A Tale of Two Borders
Compassion and Repression Revisited

Among the crises ushered in by the war in Ukraine, the mass displacement of people, internally and abroad, is one complex story whose consequences will continue to unfold. In general, Ukrainian refugees crossed borders to neighbouring countries and the European Union (EU) without obstruction and received a compassionate welcome. This exceptional opening of borders, necessary as it was, contrasted sharply with the violent response to the arrivals of Middle Eastern refugees in Eastern Europe, especially on Poland's border with Belarus. But while disparate, these responses were not contradictory. Drawing on published sources and preliminary fieldwork in Poland in April 2022, I argue that this seeming contrast is emblematic of the intensifying tension between a politics of compassion and a politics of repression, which, as Didier Fassin has shown, represent the two poles between which the treatment of displaced people consistently oscillates (Fassin 2005).

Nearly six months before Russia invaded Ukraine, on 2 September 2021, Polish authorities introduced a state of emergency along the Poland–Belarus border. They were responding to what they described as 'a rapid increase in illegal border crossings' (Kamiński 2021: np), the result of blackmail by the Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenka, who manufactured a border crisis to pressure the EU into dropping sanctions. Lukashenka's regime was facilitating travel from the Middle East to Belarus to direct people towards the border (Grupa Granica 2021). Polish authorities called this an act of 'hybrid warfare' and responded by deploying the army.

Throughout autumn and winter of 2021–2022, thousands of men, women and children attempted entry into Poland, only to find themselves refused access to asylum procedures and pushed back to Belarus, abandoned in the forest between two hostile states. The humanitarian crisis peaked in November, but according to Grupa Granica, the Polish grassroots advocacy coalition assisting stranded refugees, in February 2022, 50–70 people per week still needed assistance. Meanwhile, some 450 kilometres to the south, at checkpoints along Poland's border with Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees began to arrive daily, admitted with minimal bureaucracy, and welcomed by citizen-volunteers and public authorities alike.

The Polish–Belarusian border remained an off-limits zone, where pro-refugee activists risked arrest for helping desperate individuals. Meanwhile, in early spring 2022, the Polish–Ukrainian border became a site of vast mobilisation of hospitality and resources to welcome some 3.5 million people. Moving scenes of welcome notwithstanding, it was difficult to resist the conclusion that the tale of two borders is one of 'embedded racism and selective solidarity' (Ratecka 2022), where the hardship of Ukrainian women and children is accorded different moral status than that of people from Iraq, Afghanistan or Sub-Saharan Africa.

The government capitalised on the good press, foreign and domestic, that extolled Polish hospitality. Politicians have also sought to exceptionalise the arriving Ukrainians by representing them as 'guests' rather than refugees. President Andrzej Duda said to the Ukrainian Parliament that

> your loved ones, wives, parents, children, grandchildren, millions of people who had to leave Ukraine for Poland, . . . they are not refugees in our country, but rather they are our guests. While you so bravely fight . . . they are safe in Polish homes. (Duda 2022: np)

Duda's framing corresponds to what William Walters calls domopolitics: the projection that the state can be governed as a home and understood as a space of familial intimacy (Walters 2004). Walters distinguishes between political economy (*oikonomos*), which imagines the state as a household, and domopolitics, where governmental rationality centres on the *domus* (home). It implies a 'conjunction of home, land and security' where security is rationalised by 'affinity with family, intimacy [and] place' (Walters 2004: 241). In spring 2021, Poles were encouraged to see Ukrainians not just as refugees but as kin, who can be welcomed into the home like friends and relations. By protecting them, as Artiukh points out (this issue), Polish hosts contributed to the greater European fight against Russia. The compassion of ordinary people became a political resource, deployed for local partisan purposes, and internationally to burnish Poland's image. The proximities of language, religion and phenotype between the Polish hosts and Ukrainian guests were taken for granted, but domestically the narrative also resonated based on the culturally shared perception of familiarity built on two decades of economic relations. Notably, Ukrainian women are commonly employed in Polish middle-class homes as cleaners and caregivers. Discursively assimilating 'Ukrainian guests' into the conceptual order of the home was not a stretch. This embrace conferred immediate benefits of safety and support to many (not all) fleeing Ukrainians. Longer term, such advantages are dependent on the volatile politics of the Polish and European response to the war.

According to the domopolitical logic, Middle Eastern refugees on the other hand occupy the undomesticated space outside the home, both literally (the forest) and symbolically: '[w]e may invite guests into our home, but they come at our invitation; they don't stay indefinitely. Others are, by definition, uninvited' (Walters 2004: 241). Those 'others' are cast outside the boundaries altogether, their abjection normalised through the long history of European racialised border security and reaffirmed within the dehumanising framework of Lukashenka's 'hybrid warfare'. In the end, in the shadow of the war in Ukraine on Poland's Eastern border, the political appropriation of compassion went hand in hand with the escalation of repression. Until recently, EU actors and institutions still advanced the technocratic fiction that the EU's external borders can be humanely 'managed'. Not true. The logic of invited guests and wretched 'others' prevails.

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ILMARI KÄIHKÖ

Explaining the Finnish – and Swedish – Ascent to NATO

On 17 December 2021, amid a build-up of troops that would two months later invade Ukraine, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov put forward a list of demands that included 'a legally binding guarantee that NATO would give up any military activity in Eastern Europe and Ukraine' (Tétrault-Farber and Balmforth 2021).

The Russian demands essentially meant halting and rolling back NATO expansion through an establishment of a Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. This concerned even Finland, a small Nordic country that had balanced between the East and the West following its independence from Russia in 1917.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Finland had increasingly oriented towards the West politically but remained neutral militarily. Absent security guarantees, Finland had continued compulsory male conscription and possessed a large, relatively well-equipped and well-motivated reserve. No less than 68 per cent of those Finns polled in September–October 2021 stated that they were prepared to defend Finland by arms even in a situation where the outcome was uncertain. Simultaneously, 51 per cent opposed Finnish NATO membership, with 24 per cent supporting and 24 per cent uncertain (The Advisory Board of Defence Information 2021: 19, 22).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 changed these figures. In the next poll conducted in April–early May 2022, 68 per cent were in favour of Finnish membership in NATO. Only 15 per cent opposed. In addition, 83 per cent were prepared to defend Finland by arms if necessary (The Advisory Board of Defence Information 2022: 15–18). On 17 May, Finland applied for NATO membership.

What explains this radical change and how did it happen?

One might intuitively think that the Finnish government persuaded Finns about the necessity of NATO in a time of deepening tensions. This is not what happened, at least in Finland. On the eve of the Russian invasion, the Finnish Prime Minister

Sanna Marin stated equivocally that Finland was not applying for NATO membership (Näveri and Bjurström 2022). This echoed the Swedish Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist's November 2021 assertion that he would 'never participate in a Swedish NATO application' (Dahlström 2022: np).

A deep-rooted perception of Russia in the Finnish society offers a better explanation for the reversal of Finnish military nonalignment. After the devastating civil war of 1918, it became politically convenient for both the victors and the losers to ascribe domestic strife to an external cause – Russia (Karesmaa 2006).

The idea that Russia constitutes an eternal and an external enemy was subsequently strengthened by the 1939 Soviet invasion, the unsuccessful Finnish revanche to reclaim lost lands alongside Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941–1944, and finally Finlandisation –the period when Finland's sovereignty was limited in the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War.

As one Finnish Ministry of Defence official told me in October 2022, the Finns who had been in favour of NATO before February 2022 had been so because of the Russian threat. Paradoxically, the same perception of Russia as a threat also explained opposition to NATO. The Russian invasion of another of its militarily unallied neighbours simply made the latter group join the first in seeking security guarantees.

In my discussions with Finns, the Russian invasion often triggered personal memories of the 1939 Winter War, where Finland was invaded after refusing territorial concessions to the Soviet Union. On the one hand, security was sought from NATO. On the other hand, many saw Ukraine's situation as history repeating itself. Thus, many felt that supporting Ukraine and Ukrainians was a deeply personal responsibility. The Finnish politicians had little choice but to follow suit.

Finnish politicians, however, felt that it was also in the national interest to apply to NATO together with Sweden. Unlike in Finland, where neutrality was a consequence of defeat in the Second World War and the subsequent price of belonging to Russia's sphere of influence, in Sweden neutrality had been a choice (Stenbäck 2022). On hearing about the Finnish decision to seek membership, Swedish Social Democrat Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson proclaimed 'damn Finland, now we might have to join too' (Strömberg and Nilsson 2022: np). Despite initial resistance, Hultqvist later explained that after the Finnish decision it was in Swedish interests to follow (Dahlström 2022). There would be political and security risks to staying outside the Western alliance once Finland joined, not least because Sweden would become the only non-allied country in the region. The government was also facing parliamentary elections, where the right-wing opposition alliance was guaranteed to turn NATO membership into an electoral issue.

After the Swedish government had made up its mind, the final thing remaining was convincing Swedes of the merits of this decision. This task was somewhat more complicated in Sweden than in Finland. As in Finland, in Sweden Russia constitutes a formative 'other'. Yet Sweden also has its second 'other', the United States. As NATO is frequently deemed the long arm of the United States, parts of the Swedish electorate required some persuading. The threat of Russia and the Finnish ascent towards NATO had nevertheless shifted Swedish perceptions of the military alliance. In the end Sweden applied for membership on 16 May, a day before Finland.

While the Russian war in Ukraine continues at the time of writing with an undecided outcome, one thing is certain. If Putin sought to halt NATO from expanding, his decision to invade Ukraine instead accelerated the process. Ultimately, the eventual doubling of NATO's border with Russia is the outcome of Russian military weakness against dogged Ukrainian resistance. Russia has diminished both as a military power and as an international actor. The country's resort to increasingly brute force can be interpreted as weakness, as Russia seems to have little to offer in terms of soft power. At the same time, Russia's status as the 'other', and the opponent of the 'West', seems like a recipe for long-term polarisation.

This polarisation poses a challenge for policymakers in Finland and Sweden, many of whom seem surprised about the belligerent and polarised public discourse about Russia. While this might counter what Elżbieta Drążkiewicz calls 'Ukraine fatigue' in her introduction (this issue), the flipside of the coin is that whereas NATO might offer security guarantees to its members, Russia is unlikely to disappear. While relations with Russia will never be the same because of its invasion of Ukraine, policymakers worry that belligerent politics do not help with long-term strategic thinking.

Polarisation and politicisation have historically also had adverse consequences for academic freedom – and hence inevitably even for the utility of social inquiry (Joas 2003; Price 2008). These consequences may especially affect anthropology. According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, anthropology 'searches for patterns and similarities, but . . . is fundamentally critical of quick solutions and simple answers to complex questions' (2004: 6). After breaking with its colonial roots, one of the main strengths of anthropology has exactly been its ability to return ambiguity to polarised and politicised situations (Käihkö forthcoming). Despite troubled times, we would do well to not lose sight of what unites rather than divides us.

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OLENA FEDYUK

Networks that Catch
A Collision of 'Old' and 'New' Migrations in the Context of the War in Ukraine

I haven't spoken to Nadia since 2015. In April 2022, she called my Hungarian number from Naples, where she had worked as a caregiver for over 15 years. She said that she needed to talk to someone, to help her decide what to do. She said her head was so full of confusing information, and that she felt incredible pressure to make the right choice for everyone. Since the beginning of the full-scale war in February 2022, Nadia had managed to bring over from Kyiv her mother, who was a cancer patient, her daughter – a 35-year-old lawyer from the Kyiv area – and her two teenage grandchildren. They all now lived with Nadia in Italy, all surviving on her income alone. Her mother needed surgery. Her daughter was thinking about going to earn money elsewhere, alone, leaving her two teenagers with Nadia. And then, there was Nadia's own job to attend to.

As in Nadia's case, the war has pushed much of the financial, emotional and social responsibilities of support to the networks well beyond Ukrainian borders. Much of the costs of new mobility, precipitated by the crisis, became individualised and redistributed further along already asymmetric transnational networks of care. Most people I met, while volunteering at a train station in March 2022 in Budapest, were fleeing the war to a specific destination: Poland, Spain, Italy, Germany, France. 'No sandwiches please, can you help us buy a ticket?' was the phrase that I translated the most often. Many had to make uneasy choices between two or three possible destinations: there could be a relative in one country, who might be too demanding in terms of familial obligations, then a friend in another country, who could provide greater moral support but had no clear housing options, or a former colleague in a third place. Potential wages, rent prices, social support, trust and childhood dreams of the Western '*dolce*

vita' – all these gained prominence in minds of people struggling with the chaos of their current situations, trying to 'do the right thing' for the entire family in the context of rapidly dwindling resources. Nevertheless, in most cases, everyone had someone abroad to help them make the first step.

While EU states provided the opening for this new mobility, it is old networks of labour migration that bore the weight of managing this crisis. The UNHCR (2022) indicates that, since February 2022, over eight million people have crossed the border from Ukraine. Looking at their countries of destination reveals that movement of people to a large extent mirrored already established labour migration routes. Because the activation of these networks is so situational and personalised, it seems difficult to draw any collective lessons from it. And yet, it is very important to understand the dynamic connection between 'old' and 'new' mobilities, in particular, the intensification of and shift in care responsibilities in established networks and a new intersectionality of vulnerabilities. As the editorial of this issue argues, the public have a responsibility to not only inform themselves but to generate reflexive public knowledge about this war (also see Kulick 2022). Many labour migrants saw their obligations multiply, as they needed to figure out safe ways to evacuate their families, make arrangements of care for those (often elderly) people who stayed, and save the remaining property and material assets of entire families, even pets. In their remaining free time, many also volunteer, protest the war and donate to Ukraine. In these times, the informal networks of material, social and moral support built over the last 30 years of extensive Ukrainian labour migration not only became the networks that caught and supported those fleeing the war. In many places, these same networks applied political pressure that helped shape local and national responses of EU states to the war in Ukraine. Not to mention their votes, which helped Ukraine win Eurovision . . .

And yet, after assisting their families to flee the war and reuniting with them in destination countries, many migrants found their jobs and ability to earn and provide for their families compromised. For instance, many Ukrainians who came to work in Hungary before the war stayed in workers' dormitory accommodation, where life regimes are subjected to the rhythms of production and give opportunity to maximise income in order to support distant families. Reuniting with family members and dependants revealed how much these housing options function as extensions of production regimes, shaping migrants into a particular working subject (Schling 2017), and how they are incompatible with family life and work–life balance. Furthermore, night work shifts and extra hours that previously guaranteed relatively good income through the accumulation of overtime bonuses also became unsustainable with new family life rhythms, thus reducing their income below a subsistence level. Similarly, people like Nadia, who provide care and domestic services so that other families can have more quality time, as well as more opportunities for work and personal growth, found it hard to reconcile full-time domestic sector jobs with care for their own families. Paradoxically, the arrival of families and dependants into the established migration networks brought to light the true cost of labour migration regimes. These jobs are made sustainable mostly due to the sacrifice of any semblance of a work–life balance among labour migrants. This has resulted in an instrumentalised turnover of people, bringing in those who can entrust highly gendered tasks of care along their family

networks and are thus able to separate the time and space of work from the time and space of 'life' back at home.

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EMMA RIMPILÄINEN

Housing Preferences of Temporary Protection Seekers in Finland

Since February 2022, over 50,000 people from Ukraine have arrived in Finland to seek temporary protection (Finnish Immigration Service 2023). Unlike in the case of asylum seekers from Africa, Asia or the Middle East, the majority of newcomers from Ukraine have been housed in private accommodation with friends, relatives or even previously unfamiliar volunteers rather than in reception centres. According to a survey conducted among displaced Ukrainians in Finland in summer 2022, less than a third of the respondents lived in reception centres (Svynarenko and Koptsuykh 2022). While asylum seekers from other countries are also technically speaking entitled to arrange their own accommodation, in practice the majority of them have been accommodated in reception centres while their applications are processed. Temporary protection applications for Ukrainians are processed very quickly, typically within one or two weeks. Even after receiving a decision, people granted temporary protection have the right to reside in reception centres, but many Ukrainians try to avoid this option if possible.

The observations I make here are based on discussions with representatives from the reception system and displaced Ukrainians in the Helsinki region between April and September 2022, when I worked as an adviser with the Finnish Refugee Council. In my work, I came into contact with displaced Ukrainians seeking advice about a variety of issues, from healthcare to language courses, but finding private accommodation or getting out of reception centre housing were the most popular queries. This did not come as a surprise to me, as I had previously conducted fieldwork in Ukraine and Russia among people displaced by the war in Donbas, Eastern Ukraine. During this research period in 2018–19, housing was one of the main issues preoccupying former residents of Donbas, bringing especially internally displaced people in Ukraine together in collective action.

It is fair to say that Finnish society, just like most others in the European Union, has reacted to Ukrainians more positively than to other groups of asylum seekers (see, for example, Cantat 2022; Dzenovska 2022). Still, preferential treatment of Ukrainians by the migration system is not the only explanation for their untypical housing situation – if anything, Finnish authorities have been taken aback by Ukrainians' desire to avoid reception centres. I argue that the determination of Ukrainians to find private accommodation is a concatenation of two factors: the role that housing plays in managing aid for forced displaced populations generally and the meanings attached to housing and homeownership in Ukraine in particular.

On the first point, housing is one of the most urgent issues to resolve in all displacement situations. Displacement as a social condition can be understood as both literal and existential homelessness, a loss of connection to one's homeplace (Höjdestrand 2009; Humphrey 2002; Stephenson 2006). Strengthening one's sense of security after surviving war is crucial, and the role of the living environment is particularly important in this. However, refugee camps or accommodation in refugee reception centres are the usual solutions to meet the housing needs of displaced people. Living in identical, austerely decorated rooms in institutions separated from the rest of society hardly increases residents' sense of control over their own lives, which have recently been upended by war. Indeed, my own and other scholars' (e.g. Dunn 2017) research into this topic confirms the view that the main motivations for housing displaced people in camps or collective housing are the ease of delivering aid and governing mobile populations, rather than providing a living environment suitable for rebuilding lives in a meaningful way. The notorious Irish direct provision system is a case in point (Hewson 2022).

With regard to the meaning of housing, it is hard to overstate the importance of homeownership in Ukraine. While renting is common in countries like Sweden or Germany, independent Ukraine has essentially been a society of homeowners. After the destruction wrought by the Second World War, Soviet Ukraine urbanised rapidly, and in 1957 Nikita Khrushchev initiated a campaign to 'house every Soviet family in a separate apartment within twelve years' (Zavisca 2012: 23). Although the Soviet authorities failed to live up to the promise of providing an apartment for every family, late-Soviet housing policies established a powerful expectation of 'normal living' among Ukrainians: that every family should have their own separate apartment with secure residence rights. The collapse of the Soviet Union signified changes to the state's role in the production and distribution of housing, but not a fundamental shift in the housing situations of ordinary people, many of whom resided in the very same housing

units before, during and after the political upheaval of the early 1990s. In 1992, laws initiating housing privatisation were passed, as the state was keen to rid itself of the responsibility of maintaining Ukraine's aging housing stock (Liasheva 2019). Citizens in Ukraine (and some other postsocialist countries) could privatise the dwellings they legally occupied for free. As a result, before the Russian invasion in 2022, more than 90 per cent of the Ukrainian population lived in a housing unit owned by themselves or a relative (Liasheva 2019; State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2018). Since independence, privately owned housing has also become a key site for stability and meaning-making practices, as the home has often been the main permanent feature of life in the midst of economic crises and, more recently, war.

How important homeownership is for Ukrainians is reflected in their choices to stay or leave the areas at risk. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, some of my informants (who had already lost their homes once in the Donbas war around 2014) have been particularly reluctant to escape the current Russian attack if they had succeeded in buying a new flat. For example, an elderly couple who escaped war in the Donetsk region in 2014 had bought a small flat in Irpin, northwest from Kyiv, just a few months before the invasion. As the Russian army drew closer, they delayed leaving until the very last moment out of fear that their flat would be lost to raiders or new occupiers if they abandoned it. They rejected my suggestions to flee abroad due to their lack of language skills and networks outside of Ukraine. In the end, the couple evacuated to Western Ukraine for a few months before deciding to go back to liberated Irpin, as their flat had been spared physical damage. This should act as a reminder that the most vulnerable people may not leave, even when the risks of staying increase, due to their material and affective investment in their homes (see also Artiukh's contribution in this issue about the typical profiles of leavers versus stayers). The meaning of home also explains why so many Ukrainians are eager to return to their own homes as soon as possible, even if it is not yet completely safe to do so, or why others – those who decided to leave – have been so determined to effectively resist placements in reception centres.

Perhaps the real question is not why many newcomers from Ukraine wish to avoid reception centres, but why other refugees fleeing other wars do not seem to have the option to choose. Reception service providers in Finland do not disagree with their Ukrainian clients when it comes to assessing the shortcomings of the system. One employee, responding to complaints from displaced Ukrainians about their living conditions, commented that reception centres are not, and are not *meant* to be, a home-like environment. The mobilisation of empathy towards people fleeing the war in Ukraine has created societal awareness about the bureaucratic absurdities and bleak living conditions faced by asylum seekers in Finland, inspiring hope that the immigration system might be seen less as a given and more as a result of conscious policy choices. This also shows that the repercussions of Russia's invasion are not limited to Ukraine, but reverberate globally.

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ELŻBIETA DRĄŻKIEWICZ

Humanitarian Compassion
What Triggers the Need to Help?

In the earliest stages of the war in Ukraine, at least 70 per cent of Polish residents contributed to the aid effort (Baszczak et al 2022: 4). It is estimated that the value of aid provided by families in Poland reached 10 billion PLN (Baszczak et al 2022: 4). This wave of support received high praise both internally and externally, with Polish people being celebrated for their solidarity and self-organisation skills at a time of crisis (see Dunn and Kaliszewska, this issue). At the same time, the crisis brought questions about the motivations of humanitarian compassion: what triggers the need to help (Malkki 2015), what context facilitates effective assistance?

Since 2006, I have been trying to answer these questions by studying the Polish aid landscape (Drążkiewicz 2020). Without a doubt, what we see today is an unprecedented wave of humanitarianism. But it was not born in a vacuum.

First, the aid effort of Polish citizens would not be possible without the Ukrainian diaspora living in the country – approximately 1.3 million pre-war residents who moved to Poland to work and study, as well as to seek a safer life after the 2014 annexation of Crimea. These migrants have been vital for aid efforts: organising their own networks of aid, joining other organisations. Pre-war networks connecting Polish and Ukrainian business owners, workers and families allowed a faster response to the needs, and the avoidance brokers.

Second, the rapid response to the conflict has also been facilitated by the connections linking Polish and Ukrainian state institutions and civil society organisations. When Poland joined the EU, the accession agreement obliged the state to create its own Official Development Assistance (ODA) structures. In spite of being pressured by the OECD/DAC and Brussels to direct most of its aid to Africa, Poland (like other Central European countries) insisted on prioritising previous Soviet Republics, in particular Ukraine. Importantly, both state and non-state initiatives in Ukraine have rarely been implemented by large institutions specialising in humanitarian or development assistance. Instead, development or democratisation projects were carried out by small and medium-sized NGOs, the Polish government and local administrative bodies who were sharing their own know-how. For instance, Polish academics supported Ukrainian colleagues in reforming their higher education institutions, Ukrainian civil servants undertook study visits and trainings in Poland, and Polish journalists worked with Ukrainian partners to support their media (Petrova 2014). What we saw in the early stages of the war – the outpouring of support for Ukraine, but most importantly the well-organised networks of assistance – was a result of the long-lasting and meaningful partnerships that took more than two decades to build. Thus, the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is more than a 'spontaneous' reaction. It is the outcome of personal, professional, institutional and economic ties linking people across the borders.

Third, without a doubt, the support offered to Ukraine is also a reflection of the region's tormented relations with Russia. When Russia invaded Ukraine, citizens of neighbouring countries were busy welcoming migrants while, simultaneously, they themselves stormed passport offices to make sure they had their own travel documents ready. When Russian troops took over Chernobyl, pharmacies in Eastern and Central Europe ran out of Lugol's Iodine. When, in November 2022, a missile struck the territory of Poland near the border with Ukraine, the country froze, fearing a Russian attack.

Polish and other Eastern European nations are frequently accused of Russophobia: uncontrollable, irrational fear. But in 2022, their response to the crisis was hardly paranoid. Instead, it can be seen as a set of actions informed by individual and collective memories and generational trauma caused by Russian imperialism. The above-mentioned attempts at preparing for an uncertain future were not only strongly informed by explicit threats made by Russian officials suggesting that Poland, Estonia or Lithuania 'will be next' but also influenced by knowing too much about the past (Cohen 1998; Etkind 2013; Grzechnik 2019). Solidarity with Ukraine is not just an act of compassion to a familiar needy neighbour but is also motivated by a collective fear of and

resentment towards Russia. It is a result of decades of Poles having their own painful memories delegitimised as a sign of nationalism, paranoia and inability to move on. It is also a result of the increasing incorporation of scaremongering and xenophobia into political discourses at play in the country (Riedel 2018; Zarycki 2004). Now, all those perceptions and feelings are accumulating and manifesting in an anger towards and fear of Russia, as well as rooting for Ukrainian success. The humanitarian assistance for Ukrainians fleeing their homes is linked with the support for those fighting on the military front (see Follis and Artiukh, this issue).

For donors, international assistance is always a form of autobiographical exercise (Drążkiewicz 2020). The case of Polish aid to Ukraine is no different. When in the late 1990s and 2000s Poland was battling the image of a poor, underdeveloped country, aid to Ukraine served as an opportunity to de-orientalise itself, often at the expense of its Eastern neighbour, through orientalising it (Drążkiewicz 2013). Now, when Poland is battling the image of a country that contradicts democratic rules and endorses right-wing, antimigrant politics, Polish involvement in the humanitarian aid chain allows for crafting the image of a nation that champions solidarity and compassion. Today, claims of moral superiority are frequently playing out the East–West divide, describing 'the West' as untrustworthy, ready to abandon allies for its own comfort and security, not generous enough. Germany is once again a key villain in those narratives. In the ethno-centric fashion, Polish media and state officials are frequently projecting on the current Ukrainian situation Poland's own historical experiences from the Cold War, the Second World War and even the 1919–1921 Polish–Soviet War. By appropriating the current war as 'ours', they reinforce Polish notions of victimhood. By emphasising Poland's unique role in the aid chain, they also reinforce national exceptionalism and narcissism.

Generating support for international assistance is a complicated task. It requires rendering distant strangers into the familiar needy, turning an abstract issue into a meaningful cause. It is about fostering a deep connection between aid donors and aid recipients. It is a balancing act of resonating with home audiences while keeping a focus on people affected by the crisis. All these mechanisms have been playing an important role in generating unprecedented humanitarian efforts in Poland. But as aid fatigue is already creeping in, the big question is how to make sure that national-istic discourses do not become a central mechanism in generating further support for Ukraine. Poland does not need more nationalism. But most importantly, the growth of nationalist sentiments will certainly not benefit Ukrainian residents, who can be easily turned from celebrated recipients of humanitarian compassion into targets of xeno-phobic attacks and discrimination practices – sentiments that were already brewing in Poland long before the War started.

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ELIZABETH CULLEN DUNN AND IWONA KALISZEWSKA

'We Created the Largest NGO in the World: the Polish People'
The Crowdsourced War

When Russia invaded Ukraine, over 3.5 million refugees entered Poland within the first month (UNHCR 2022). At the peak, more than 50,000 people *per day* arrived in Przemyśl, the nearest major Polish town to the Ukrainian border. International aid agencies seemed paralysed: as the mayor of Przemyśl told us, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees did not even approach his office until three weeks into the war, after millions of people had already passed through the town. With the exception of World Central Kitchen, which offered more than 35,000 meals a day on the Polish border, few international agencies offered much in the way of help. During our field-work in Podkarpackie Voivodeship (eight weeks between March and June 2022) we saw no sign at all of World Vision, Save the Children or CARE International, large aid agencies usually involved in mass population movements. The International Organization for Migration set up a tent at both the Medyka and Budomierz border crossing points, but the tents remained empty. Eight weeks after the war, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees had only offered one aid programme: a cash assistance scheme that benefited fewer than 62,000 of the millions of refugees in Poland.[8]

The 'humanitarian international', as the system of donor governments, international NGOs and UN agencies is called, has long relied on a Fordist model that relies on gaining economies of scale to provide large quantities of mass-produced goods to refugees gathered in camps. This system is what Hammes (2014) calls 'large and exquisite'. But increasingly, such aid systems don't work: most refugees worldwide now live dispersed in cities, not in camps. Indeed, although 1.1 million Ukrainians registered for long-term stays with the Polish government, none of them live in refugee camps and few of them even live in collective centres (UNHCR 2022). Overwhelmingly, Ukrainian refugees in Poland were housed in spare bedrooms and extra apartments by Polish citizens or Ukrainians already resident in Poland. As time went on, many refugees sought to rent apartments of their own. This has made the 'large and exquisite' approach to aid basically useless.

While the UN-led system struggled to develop new ways to provide aid, however, a robust volunteer humanitarian network based on interpersonal trust has sprung up in Poland. More than two-thirds of the Polish population has been involved in providing aid (Polska Agencja Prasowa 2022). Millions of person-to-person aid chains were quickly formed to supply food, housing, clothing and medicine. Many of these aid chains formed on the basis of prior institutions: for example, one large group Folkowisko put on folk music festivals before the war. Other aid chains were formed from anarchist movements, companies that employed Ukrainians, rural women's circles or even employees of the natural gas industry. Existing connections between Poles and the 1.35 million Ukrainians resident in Poland before the war also facilitated aid: as a friend commented, anyone who had a Ukrainian cleaning lady immediately had a pathway to provide aid to refugees. Still more aid chains were formed among strangers via the internet. One of the largest aid groups on Facebook, *Pomoc dla Ukrainy*, had more than 593,000 members. Refugees posted needs; volunteers responded almost immediately with offers of help.

The genius of these aid chains was that they were 'small, smart and many'. Rather than waiting for a slow-moving bureaucratic system to provide aid in huge quantities, these individualised aid chains provided small quantities of aid quickly. 'Virtual warehouses', or systems for aid providers or refugees to post needs on Facebook, made it possible for donors to provide exactly what was needed exactly when it was needed, which cut down on the costs of storing, sorting and transporting goods. Because aid was sent to recipients who had requested items, donors did not have to imagine what refugees might possibly need: instead, they knew exactly what each individual recipient required (cf. Dunn 2012).

As these chains expanded to providing aid to war-affected people in Ukraine, these small-scale, hyper-flexible aid chains had other advantages, too. While international agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNHCR struggled to rent large warehouses, assemble truckloads of aid in the midst of global supply chain problems and devise distribution systems (and thus delivered strikingly little), the volunteer chains filled tens of thousands of orders from Ukrainians and delivered them in small Sprinter vans. As an official from WHO told us in Lviv, the volunteers could supply food and medicine far more quickly and could deliver much closer to the front lines than WHO could. The fact that there were many aid chains forming and re-forming at

any moment meant that if a single shipment were stopped by Russian military activity, other chains could manage to deliver. And because all the people involved were volunteers, overhead costs were strikingly low: most volunteers only took money for fuel and auto repairs. While these volunteer efforts may not be sustainable in the long term, the small, smart and many supply chains managed to provide lifesaving aid where the large bureaucratised systems of aid could not.

The UN-led aid system has been plagued by bureaucratic rigidity, paternalistic determinations of refugees' needs, and an inability to respond quickly to emerging crises for more than a decade. In contrast, crowdsourcing for Ukrainians relies on individual ties to provide aid in a timely, cost-effective, targeted way. Although each aid chain is small, the aggregate result is enormous: where the state and the international system failed, individual people in Poland, working through personal networks, managed to care for millions of displaced people. As one volunteer told us, 'We created the largest NGO in the world: the Polish people.'

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ANASTASIYA ASTAPOVA

Russophones' Attitudes Towards Ukrainian Refugees in Estonia

Russian speakers, mainly Soviet-time migrants or their descendants, comprise about 30 per cent of the Estonian population. Despite decades of coexistence, Russian-speaking and Estonian-speaking populations have remained segregated: by language and often by values (Vihalemm and Masso 2007). The war has heightened the divisions.

While 84 per cent of Estonian speakers support the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees, only 53 per cent of 'other nationalities', which essentially encompasses Russian speakers, do so (ERR 2022). Even more telling than the statistics are the Facebook groups of Russian speakers in Estonia (e.g. *Russkie v Estonii* ['Russians in Estonia'] or *Tallintsy* ['Residents of Tallinn']). Here, group members frequently discuss the influx of Ukrainian refugees in highly negative terms. Even though, to prevent radicalisation and cyberattacks, Estonian police monitor social media for instances of Putin and war glorification, many users do not hesitate to condemn the Estonian government for aiding refugees and are blaming 'the West' for expanding NATO and 'provoking' Russia. Scathing rumours about Ukrainians are frequently spread on those groups. For instance, refugees' children who attend Russian schools are often accused of stealing from their Russian classmates.

So, what may be the reasons for such negative attitudes?

The most obvious answer is that Russians of Estonia live in the Russian Federation's information space. The opinion polls cited above show that while 73 per cent of Estonians follow Estonian news portals, only 44 per cent of Russians do. Even though the Estonian government has banned Russian propaganda TV channels in 2022, this hardly helped, as Russian speakers found an easy way to access them via the Internet Protocol Television services. Following Russian Federation media makes Russian speakers more susceptible to war propaganda, fake news and Kremlin-induced conspiracy theories.

Yet, one should not overestimate the Kremlin's impact. Russians residing in Estonia gravitate towards the Russian Federation media not simply due to pull factors that keep them connected with Russia, but also because of push factors that have made integration in Estonia difficult long before the invasion of Ukraine started. The vicious circle of ethnic divisions starts with segregation in the primary education system and

clear division between Russian and Estonian schools. It continues in the labour market, residential preferences, leisure activities, consumption patterns and inter-ethnic marriage (see overview in Astapova 2022). As a result, unlike other countries with a large migrant population, in Estonia, migrants' children do not experience a considerable increase in education and well-being compared to their parents (Lindemann and Saar 2012). Much poorer, Russian speakers have also been at greater risk of economic hardship caused by COVID- and war-induced financial crisis. Their economic vulnerability manifests in fear of losing otherwise scattered resources to Ukrainian migrants. Due to ethnic segregation, the Estonian government is mainly comprised of ethnic Estonians and is frequently accused of ignoring, if not worsening, the problems of Russian speakers.

However, the current situation in Estonia and the war-caused tensions cannot be simply reduced to being the result of ethnic divisions: migrants vs citizens, or Russophones vs Estonians. While it may seem that Russophones in Estonia stand out from the majority population, they have a lot in common with some niche Estonian groups. For instance, Estonian right-wing politicians, primarily the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (known as EKRE), oppose receiving Ukrainian migrants. To support their stand, EKRE members frequently use scaremongering tactics. For instance, they argue that Ukrainian migrants are likely to engage in prostitution and spread sexually transmitted diseases in Estonia. At the time of writing this article in March 2023, just before the parliamentary election, EKRE was the second most popular political party in Estonia, supported by about 22 per cent of the population. EKRE's narratives are illustrative of the rhetoric taking place elsewhere in EU countries, where populism has been on the rise. Yet, it is hard not to notice that EKRE's rhetoric has parallels with that of the Kremlin for justifying the war in Ukraine because of the need to protect 'traditional family values'.

Finally, the attitudes of Russian speakers towards Ukrainian migrants and the war are also influenced by other – more global – phenomena, such as internationally renowned conspiracy theories, for example, those about biolabs in Ukraine, the Great Reset and secret societies causing the crisis (Astapova 2023). Paradoxically then, even though Russian speakers in Estonia are standing against the majority of Europe supporting Ukraine, they are simultaneously strongly connected with certain like-minded Estonians and broadly Europeans who also endorse similar world views and values.

This generates a lot of tension in the country. Fearing potential provocations by Russian speakers, Estonian politicians have rushed to solve the 'Russian' problem by tearing Soviet monuments down or by refusing to issue new visas and residence permits to Russian citizens, many of whom are still in Estonia. These actions, however, have fuelled more conflict. The tensions are already moving from social media into the offline space. Cars with Ukrainian plates have been vandalised and Ukrainians have been insulted in public spaces. Of course, the vandals and bullies have not always turned out to be Russian speakers. It is important to avoid quick generalisation, as many Russian speakers have been helping Ukrainians. Yet, the potency for conflicts, violence and all sorts of sabotage in Estonia cannot be underestimated: even though the war takes place more than a thousand kilometres away, some front lines are also located at the Baltic Sea.

Acknowledgement

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AGNIESZKA HALEMBA AND AGATA ŁADYKOWSKA

On Hierarchies of Knowledge
Or Everyone Has Their Own Demons

Russia's aggression in Ukraine might contribute to shifting hierarchies of knowledge in social anthropology with regard to Central and Eastern Europe. These hierarchies have been discussed for some time, but with relatively little resonance (e.g. Buchowski 2004, 2012; Buchowski and Cervinkova 2015; Hann 2005; Pasieka 2014). The war, as a sufficiently horrific experience, provokes varied levels of fear, not only in Ukraine but also in other countries. Divergent interpretations mark divisions within the larger anthropological community, but at the same time the ensuing debate seems to yield some revealing insights. The eponymous hierarchies of knowledge, which allude to the fact that the voices of local scholars and those trained in the West do not bear the same valence, seem to shift, yet they are still there, proving the perpetuated existence of the wider cultural conditions that may have led to making Central and Eastern Europe a subaltern region. The reactions to the plea to remove one ambiguous sentence from the EASA Executive Committee's February 2022 statement on the Russian war against Ukraine allowed us to see that the tacit ideological implications of East/West divide

persist within the European anthropological community, and it may be a good time to put them in the spotlight.

The eponymous demons refer to the most widespread, widely accepted and powerful explanatory tropes that we see as expressions of those implicit ideological assumptions concerning the drivers of human misery in general. We, the authors of this contribution, think that in a large part of our academic discipline, 'Western imperialism' and 'neoliberalism' are implicitly considered as the main culprits of nearly anything. We are not blind to their dangers either, but the present situation makes it impossible for us to ignore the existence of other pressuring ideological forces. There are also other demons and one should be able to talk about them and expect to be heard.

Soon after the war started, the EASA Executive Committee issued its statement on the Russian war against Ukraine. The statement generally condemned Russia's aggression, but its initial version included the following phrase: 'We see him [Putin] as the main aggressor in the current situation that – as many anthropologists working in the post-socialist world have shown through their work – has its roots in both Russian imperial ambitions and the NATO expansion into the Eastern European territory'. A group of anthropologists from Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and/or conducting research in this region (including us, the authors of this contribution) asked the EASA Executive Committee to remove this sentence. The sentence was removed; however, the issue caused a debate in Facebook posts, private conversations and in the most visible and far-reaching form on the *FocaalBlog* and in *Anthropology Today* (June 2022 issue). Those who opposed the controversial sentence were accused of supporting militarism, warmongering and a deep admiration of NATO.

In fact, our rationale to remove this sentence was twofold. First, we aimed to state that – notwithstanding the complex background of the war – there was one military aggressor, Vladimir Putin's Russia. Second and more importantly, we read the sentence as denying agency to the people living in CEE, in those states that formerly belonged to the Soviet zone of influence. Evoking NATO's move closer to Russia's borders as a root of the war is a way of describing the situation that treats CEE exclusively as a zone of influence of external powers. Certainly, it is a zone in which political interests collide; after all, 30 years ago the region was partly delineated by the Iron Curtain and cut by the Soviet border. Still, NATO has not expanded militarily into CEE territory, but has been invited there by the governments of those countries. Hence our protest was against the political perception of CEE as a place where powers from outside the region clash, and the people living there are doomed to be pawns in their political games. The aim was to point out that the formulation that suggests that NATO's expansion to the East is responsible for the current war on a par with Putin's Russia could be read as assuming that the governments and parliaments of democratic Central and East European states have no voice in deciding on the political steps of the respective countries. Ours was not a position of support for NATO as a military alliance in general, and especially not a statement on the nature of its involvement in other parts of the world. Moreover, the scale and severity of the reactions to the protest concerning just one sentence in a half-a-page-long statement on the war in Ukraine indicates that there is something poignant here to talk about.

The discussion that followed mirrors the one within the European Left in general (e.g. Bilous 2022; Mannheim 2022). Volodymyr Artiukh pointed out that the European Left – and also many among our fellow social anthropologists – are preoccupied with analysing situations in CEE and in Russia using well-travelled roads of critique of American hegemony, the neoliberal turn and Western neo-imperialism. We agree with Artiukh that this approach fails to appreciate Russia as an agent, with its own internal political dynamics and the fact that Russia's agendas are 'no longer determined by the US or Europe, they are not a reaction, they are creation' (Artiukh 2022: np). This means that attributing blame for the present war to the 'eastern expansion of NATO' denies agency not only to countries and people of CEE, but also to Russia. Moreover, in this view Ukraine and Ukraine–Russia relations disappear completely from the picture. Other countries of CEE and Russia become merely a dependent factor as if the only real political agents are on the western side of the former Iron Curtain.

While everyone agrees that the war's background is formed by a complex political situation, for some anthropologists, for example some of those who discussed their positions on the *FocaalBlog* (Fotta 2022; Hann 2022; Kalb 2022), no matter what, the main culprits are always western colonialism, American militarism and, of course, neoliberalism. Those are at present the main anthropological foes. However, social anthropology in Europe, represented by EASA, is diverse. Our education, social networks, places and the people among whom we live and study, influence our perspectives. It is especially worrying when the views of colleagues working, institutionally or privately based, in or otherwise strongly linked to a region with which a given debate is concerned, are dismissed. They are considered invalid because they diverge from the dominant interpretation, despite the fact that they belong to local perspectives that are usually sought by social anthropologists.

The authors of this contribution and many of our colleagues working or living in CEE realise the dangers of neoliberalism and Western imperialism. Many works concerning postsocialist transformations point to negative or challenging effects of neoliberal reforms (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Cervinkova 2012; Dunn 2004; Hann 2002). Still, other demons remain critical in this part of the world and the fight against them is an important part of social, historical and cultural experience: those are various kinds of imperialism and totalitarianism. At the moment, the dangers brought by the Russian aggression seem to us more frightening and their threat much more immediate than anything else. In the last few decades the policymakers in Western Europe insisted that one can woo Russia through economics, that a traditional war with bombings and house-to-house battles in Europe was unimaginable, and that Russia would not attack. Today we know how wrong they were in their assessment.

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MARIYA IVANCHEVA

The War between Us

In early December 2013 at the Institute for Human Sciences, IWM, in Vienna, an institution until recently known for promoting post- and anti-communist liberal intellec-

tuals, Timothy Snyder – a historian of Stalinism – gave a lecture on Karl Marx. He declared Marx's 'anthropological' (as opposed to 'political economic') texts crucial for social scientists to understand the world in 2013. He praised the rising New Left in Eastern Europe (or rather some Left-Liberal groups in Poland and Ukraine he met) for rediscovering Marxian values despite witnessing the collapse of the former socialist world. As a Bulgarian who is part of this tiny New Left movement and positions herself further on the Left than most groups Snyder was referring to, I was perplexed: was this a signal of an ideological shift, or yet another asymmetric negotiation attempt between a Goliath (the (neo)liberals) and David (Eastern European leftists)? Were the liberals recognising, in the aftermath of the 2008 subprime crisis, amid rising anti-austerity social movements in the region and beyond, that their transition had gone wrong, and Marxism and 'really existing' socialism had some lessons to teach?

Days after this lecture, the EuroMaidan movement escalated, bringing millions to the streets of Ukraine under the banner of pro-EU and anti-Russian/Eurasian turn in Ukrainian economic policy, and eventually ended tragically in a wave of political violence, success for a liberal-right-extreme coalition in power in Ukraine, and the Russian invasion of Crimea and Donbas. The temporary liminal moment and spontaneous *comunitas* between liberals and the New Left melted into thin air. The liberals – those who since the 1980s championed tirelessly the dogmas of the free-market and European and Euro-Atlantic dependent development in the region – saw Euro-Maidan as a reinforcement of their 1990s ideals: the ideals on which they have built their academic, think-tank and political careers, such as 'the end of history' and 'There Is No Alternative' (TINA). A Europe driven by free market 'values' was still worth fighting for. Liberal media and political commentators, many of whom were based at academic institutions focusing on the region such as IWM, selectively chose a group of 'the people' on Kyiv's streets to stand with: university-educated middle classes with aspirations to be part of the 'civilised' capitalist Euro-West. For their audiences, this was what EuroMaidan stood for.

This process silenced and marginalised even further the voices of the tiny New Left. For its members, the ultimate goal was not the accession of Ukraine in the EU and NATO through a potentially catastrophic free-trade agreement and militarisation, but instead the improvement of the dire condition of the people in the country, for whom EU membership enabled working abroad. This was a necessity enforced by the hopeless coercive economic conditions at home, which a generation of anthropologists and social scientists working in and on the region, including colleagues associated with the New Left in Ukraine such as Volodymyr Ishchenko, Oksana Dutchak, Anastasia Riabchuk, Denys Gorbach, Aliona Lyasheva, Volodymyr Artiukh and others, have provided evidence and commentary on for over a decade.[1] This perspective was largely ignored, as were all indications of the tiny but strong nationalist core that gradually overtook the EuroMaidan framing and – among other activities – harassed the handful of leftists, including those championed by T. Snyder. The violent end of EuroMaidan brought the right extreme into coalition governments with free-market democrats, added fuel to the war fire ignited by Putin in 2014 and detonated eight years later.

Since then, the Eastern European New Left has plateaued and lost steam, but so too has the ever-more politically irrelevant liberal intellectual NGO-party complex.

An increasingly violent, transnationally-organised extreme right consolidated and became particularly strong in Eastern Europe – as we saw with the fight against the Istanbul Convention which Left and Liberals faced mostly powerless and disorganised. Unlike the former group, however, the (neo)liberal elites of Ukraine and Europe systematically failed to recognise the rising fascism at home until it appeared embodied by Putin as an external enemy. Then they 'helpfully' re-ascribed it to remnants of the communist past rather than the capitalist present, and prescribed the old remedy: TINA and the military-industrial complex. When Putin invaded Ukraine in 2014 and when he waged a full-fledged war on it in 2022, his atrocities merely presented a new opportunity to rehash Cold War imaginaries of an evil totalitarian Eurasian East in struggle with the noble democratic West. Such flawed Manichean logic resonated with European and broader publics force-fed with narratives equating neoliberal autocrat Putin either to a communist, or to a barbaric feudal overlord, neglecting the severe crisis of social reproduction in which the neoliberal dogma plunged Europe's Eastern margins post-1989.

The New Left struggled to counter this simplified rhetoric of fake binary opposites and to propose an alternative historically nuanced perspective on the conflict. This perspective includes (but is not limited to) the consideration of NATO's role in the region. It brings to the discussion the Euro-Atlantic military-industrial complex, packaged together with the Washington Consensus and European integration policies. This perspective is critical of the EU-driven years dismantling infrastructure, industry, agriculture, services and welfare, and sending millions in forced labour migration from Ukraine and the region in the last 30 years. Ukrainian migration into Europe before the war presented a key case in this process, with an acute crisis of social reproduction and a destitute job market at home. In Europe, many were treated as second-class citizens, racialised and exploited. Colonisation at its best. A similar colonial dependency proposed by Russia through the Eurasian Union promised nothing better. Eight years since EuroMaidan and many months since the war began, Ukrainians remain scapegoats of this deadlock, now hugely traumatised, mourning thousands of victims and destroyed homes.

Since the war started, the space for such argument, however, has been lost. As an academic from Eastern Europe, working in the West but engaged in political activism in the East, I find myself in a perpetual deadlock, betwixt and between liberal militarisation and the glorification of NATO and the currently much more incipient and complicit and yet not more divisive pro-Putin 'multipolar world' position, shared by the right extreme and the unreformed Left.

In academia – and as the pressure to change EASA's position on the war and the following debate[2] showed, especially in Eastern Europe – liberal social scientists supporting NATO, called by Don Kalb 'NATO anthropologists',[3] are still numerous, visible and noisy. The voices of those anthropologists and social scientists, trying to introduce nuance and complexity, and to challenge the fake dichotomies of the liberal narrative, are pushed even further to the margin as many of them have had to leave their home institutions and homes and to take economically precarious positions at Western institutions even before, but ever more since, the beginning of the war. Out in the streets of Kyiv, as in Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia and other Eastern European cities

and in the institutions of power across the region, however, the liberals are outnumbered and outshouted by the dangerous monster they helped to produce.[4] The rising far-right movements have garnered significant support, expressed in parliament and government representation. They conceal their volatile motivations behind promises of redistributive practices benefiting their respective chosen (white, nationally dominant ethnic) majorities. And we are, in anthropology, and academia, still pushed into fighting the battle between two tiny factions – the liberals and the Left. The former are significantly better positioned in access to secure positions and public platforms, but both are politically insignificant in their public impact beyond academia.

Ukraine has been given no choice but to fight. Who is next, and who will be there when they come for 'us', I wonder. Or when do we confess to ourselves, finally, that this 'us' is an illusion: that class struggle is ripe in our ranks and reconciliatory gestures like that of T. Snyder only stick a plaster on a pus-filled wound. Anthropology (and academia) will need to show stamina and commitment to provide a platform to amplify the voices of, and offer institutional stability to, those scholars in precarious positions who offer research-based discussion of the effects of economic dispossession and crises of social reproduction that dates from before the war, but that the war has escalated beyond proportion. We will either have to politicise our discipline to really act as a tool that can be used by those dispossessed by capitalism and its ongoing wars, or our discipline will have to die from its own historical irrelevance.

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Notes

1. The works of these and other authors have been featured on research-informed Left media around the region and beyond, including the Ukrainian media platform Commons/Спільне many of them have been involved in (www.commons.com.ua) and the transregional media platform LeftEast (www.lefteast.org) (accessed 20 July 2022).
2. https://rai.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-8322.12724 (accessed 20 July 2022); https://www.focaalblog.com/2022/04/14/martin-fotta-towards-anti-war-anthropology-on-easa-cee-and-nato/ (accessed 20 July 2022).
3. https://rai.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8322.12730 (accessed 20 July 2022).
4. https://lefteast.org/maidan-the-right-wing-and-violence-in-protest-events-analysis/; https://lefteast.org/beyond-moral-interpretations-of-hu-eu-migration-crisis/; https://lefteast.org/first-as-tragedy-then-as-farce-aur-and-the-long-shadow-of-fascism-in-romania/; https://lefteast.org/the-bulgarian-winter-between-the-devil-and-the-deep-blue-sea/ (accessed 12 December 2022).