

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

ETNOGRAFIA POLSKA
vol. 67

Warsaw
2023

THEMATIC ISSUE: *UKRAINE: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PAST AND PRESENT*

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Cover: Rafał Śmiałecki

Photograph on the cover: The territory of Olbia, the Ukrainian National Historic and Archaeological Reserve, a famous archaeological site, located near the village Parutine, Mykolaivska oblast', Ukraine. 29.08.2021. Author: Julia Buyskykh

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Etnografia Polska is regularly indexed/abstracted in the *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences*, *International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature*, *Anthropological Index Online*, *Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *Bibliografia Etnografii Polskiej*, *European Reference Index for Humanities (ERIH)*, *Index Copernicus*, *EBSCO*, *SCOPUS* and *DOAJ*.

Printed in Poland

PL ISSN 0071-1861

ISSN online: 2719-6534

Layout/skład: Studio DTP Academicon,
ul. Heleny Modrzejewskiej 13, 20-810 Lublin

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GUEST EDITORS' NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The special issue of *Etnografia Polska* journal, **“Ukraine: Lived Experiences of Past and Present”** was conceived as an intellectual and ethical response to the violence we have all been experiencing since the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which is the continuation of a war begun in 2014. It is not only the atrocity of physical violence that we have been witnessing, but also the violence of words and ideas under an academic frame of colonial thinking and ‘westplaining’. We strongly believe therefore that this, our focused effort herein, is an important contribution that sheds at least some light on this gathering, violent, darkness around us. As guest editors we want to express our deep gratitude to our authors – Tetyana Boriak, Olena Sobolieva, Viktoriia Dmytriuk, Pavlo Leno, Denys Shatalov, Mykola Homaniuk, Yanush Panchenko, Roman Liubavskiy, Yevhen Zakharchenko, Tina Polek, Olena Martynchuk, Oleg Kyselov, Magdalena Zatorska, Tomasz Kosiek, Matej Butko, Patrycja Trzeszczyńska and Ignacy Józwiak; the entire editorial team of Joanna Mroczkowska, Łukasz Smyrski, Maria Dębińska and Keith Egan; our translators from Ukrainian into English, Asia Fruman, Oxana Blashkiv, Viktoriia Shkurenko; our reviewers; and all those who have inspired and supported us on this journey unconditionally, including our families and friends. What has come about as a result of our joint effort is a decidedly rich series of contributions to the ethnographic archive. In what follows, we distinguish our reflections on various parts of this issue, where Julia introduces and frames the individual contributors who have conducted long-term research on Ukraine, which in some cases has been more than a decade, while Tetiana presents an overview of the shorter, more immediate provocations and reflections on contemporary Ukraine.

Julia Buyskykh and Tetiana Kalenychenko,
1 November 2023

JULIA BUYSKYKH

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BEYOND EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE:
UN-SILENCING DIVERSE UKRAINIAN VOICES

*Air-raid sirens across the country
It feels like everyone is brought out
For execution
But only one person gets targeted
Usually the one at the edge
This time not you; all clear.*

Victoria Amelina
(1986 – 2023)

On the first day of the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, I lost any sense of my professional work. I explicitly remember the first cold, loud night under shelling in the improvised bomb shelter in an underground car park where my mother and I went, taking only our cat with us. We still could not believe that Kyiv was under Russian siege, and that the war that had begun in 2014 was entering a new phase. After that night, I began to lose any sense of academic work; being an academic held little meaning for me in the darker days that came, whether I was in Kyiv, in the dark corridor of our apartment during the curfew, hearing explosions outside, or in Western Ukraine, baking bread for Eastern and Southern Ukrainian internally displaced people (IDPs). Even later, living abroad and volunteering as a translator for Ukrainian refugees in a Warsaw shelter, what was important had changed for me; I thought that research no longer mattered. All the good intellectual products academia had proffered, that reflected upon the catastrophes of so many twentieth-century wars, did not stop the current war in Ukraine from breaking out.

Unfortunately, we, humanity, have learned nothing from two horrible world wars and countless other conflagrations across our fragile world. Moreover, in our inhumanity, we continue killing nature, animals, and our kin. Why, to invoke John F. Kennedy (Kennedy 1940), has the Western world slept and overlooked the neo-imperial totalitarianism in Russia that is waging war in Ukraine? Where is the place for good intellectual thinking, now, for research, for ethics in our world? Why has

something gone so desperately wrong with our civilisation? These thoughts are neither new nor productive, but they held me, stuck, betwixt and between for months, trying to find new ground and a new sense of relevance for academic work.

Perhaps many, like me, thought back to the first months of the full-scale invasion, when I was petrified by its scale and the bitter losses it brought. Many Ukrainians have since joined the Ukrainian army, determined to defend our country. I have lost eleven friends, so far, in the last twenty-two months at the time of writing. Five of these friends were former colleagues of mine who perished at the frontline of this war since March 2022: an archaeologist, two historians, an ethnographer, and a philosopher. Young, talented men who are no longer alive, their words and new research papers are gone with their lives.

Other professionals, such as the Ukrainian writer and poet Victoria Amelina cited in the epigram, gathered evidence of Russian war crimes in de-occupied territories. She became a war-crimes researcher for the Ukrainian NGO *Truth Hounds*¹ collecting stories of those who had survived war violence. We met at a charity concert organised by the Irish Red Cross in Dublin, where Ukrainian women were presenting their writings, making vocal their stories of war, displacement, and hope.² Victoria Amelina was in attendance to talk about the importance of amplifying Ukrainian voices, especially those whom Russian aggression had made silent forever. Unfortunately, Victoria herself would soon become a victim of Russian aggression. She and I were supposed to meet in Kyiv in July 2023, but while in Kramators'k, Eastern Ukraine with a humanitarian mission, she was severely injured during a Russian missile strike on June 27th and died in hospital in Dnipro only four days later. Just before her unexpected death, she had saved the diary of Volodymyr Vakulenko, a poet and children's author who had been tortured and murdered by Russian soldiers near Izium in spring 2022. His diary, which Volodymyr had buried in his garden knowing that he might not survive the Russian occupation, recounted his experience of the war. With Victoria's help, the diary was published under the title "I Am Transforming: A Diary of Occupation. Selected Poems" (Vakulenko 2023). Two more souls sacrificed to the aggression, on and on, the chain of violence keeps adding links of friends and patriots.

Thinking about Victoria, Volodymyr and my colleagues, killed because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I have come to see my ethical duty and my responsibility as a scholar and as a Ukrainian as being to amplify the voices of physically endangered Ukrainian scholars. This is something that makes me feel that life in the context of war may still be meaningful, still capable of light and goodness. Yet the voices of Ukrainian authors are also endangered symbolically, through effective Russian propaganda unleashed on Western societies, and hierarchically, through their relegation in their legitimacy as articulate advocates of their own individual and collective destinies. This hierarchical imposition of knowledge leagues is dismaying,

¹ <https://truth-hounds.org/en/homepage/> (accessed 20.10.2023).

² <https://www.innerlight.ie/> (accessed 20.10.2023).

even as Ukrainians face colonial advances through their country, and on its history, cultural heritage and its citizenry. I am astounded by the extent and reach of Russian propaganda's influence in Western academia and the dearth of empathy prevalent in my professional life. All this makes the current issue even more important.

Reflecting on what I see as a curious failure in the intellectual apparatus of the West, then, I share Maria Sonevtsky's powerful assertion that the Russian full-scale invasion on Ukraine became a catalyst for putting a spotlight on "the epistemic imperialism that governs knowledge production between centres (often correlating to the hubs of former or present empires) and peripheries (formerly colonized spaces such as Ukraine)" (Sonevtsky 2022, p. 22). She defines "epistemic imperialism" as "the hubris of believing that what one knows or studies from a privileged perspective, as within the Anglophone academy, can be exported wholesale to contexts about which one knows little or nothing" (ibid.). Equally, I argue there is a certain *epistemic violence* influencing the reception of scholarly Ukrainian narratives, a violence that refuses to see them as anything other than "local" and "emotional", even illegitimate; I see this special issue as a response to this violence. As I have argued previously, Ukraine has been held in the maw of two colonial discourses, one of lingering Western Cold War supremacy and the other of resurgent Russian imperial colonialism (Buyskykh 2023, p. 65). This censoriousness regarding Ukraine is revealed in how Ukraine has been perceived by the collective West even after 2014, that is, exclusively through the prism of the Russian empire, the Soviet Union, and Russia. This is, of course, a quite limited perspective regarding Ukraine's diverse history, entwined as it is with Polish, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Romanian, and Russian political entities, and extant heterogeneous cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

As Prince (2023) has recently stated, most of Western academia, with a strong focus on Russia, has "overlooked" the trauma inflicted on Ukraine – as well as the Caucasus and central Asian states – by Russian imperialism and colonialism. But why did the full-scale war have to happen to make Ukraine finally visible? It should have been recognised at least in 2014 after the Crimean annexation and the start of the war in Donbas. Even the fact that the collective Western world only believed Ukraine could withstand Russia's aggression for three days before it was supposed to surrender, suggests, I argue, that Ukraine has not been seen as a viable, modern nation-state (Buyskykh 2023, p. 65).

Only those professionals who had been researching Ukraine for decades understood its ability, its will, and its existential need to fight for its freedom. In the mid-1990s, Mark von Hagen, in his influential essay "*Does Ukraine have a history?*", emphasises that, "If we leave Ukraine and look to the political geography of history teaching, we find virtually no recognition that Ukraine has a history" (Hagen 1995, p. 658). He goes on to say that, "Ukraine's history must be seen as part of a greater dilemma of eastern and central Europe" (1995, p. 659), noting that Ukraine was still seen and taught as part of Russia's legacy and influence. It is sad that little had changed by 2014, that even by the outbreak of the full-scale invasion in 2022, such a view was still globally entrenched. Timothy Snyder calls attention to the historical

background of this problem when he talks about the multi-layered magnitude of the ongoing war's tragedy. He appeals to academia to call things as they are and name the anticipated eradication of Ukrainian people that Putin is inspiring. For his part, Putin "has long fantasized about a world without Ukrainians" – a fantasy that he is now attempting to realise through the Russian army (Snyder 2022). Snyder goes on to state that one of the means to withstand Russian propaganda's influence in Western academia is to popularise the history of Ukraine, which he eloquently does, embedding it in a world-historical context, in possibly the only third-level history course taught exclusively on Ukraine in the United States.³

Despite the large exodus of Ukrainian scholars escaping abroad as war refugees – many with their children – and the ongoing attrition of Ukrainian academia through frontline casualties and this refugee migration, local scholarly voices still articulate the emic perspective of a nation fighting for recognition and freedom. For instance, since the spring of 2023, the Ukrainian Institute in Kyiv has launched a multilingual depository of articles devoted to the large theme of the decolonisation of knowledge regarding Ukraine.⁴ The archive currently contains information, principally in Ukrainian, English, Polish, French, German, as well as other languages, such as academic articles, essays, blog posts and fresh emotional reflections that have been issued as responses to the events of the ongoing war.

Together with responses from Ukrainian intellectuals towards the blindness of some Western Anglophone academic circles, particularly in relation to Russian (neo)imperialism and its crimes in Ukraine, emotional testimonies of war have become a matter of academic reflection. One such reflection, from Iuliia Lashchuk, asks the sharply rhetorical question as to what extent we, as scholars from and of Ukraine, have a *right* to be sincere and emotional, and to be free from being accused of lacking distance from our homeland and the ongoing war:

But what emotions are we, Ukrainian scholars abroad, expected to connect to in order to communicate our research [...]? The task is not simple. Apparently, it should be emotional, but not too much, not too sad, but not too happy either, persuasive, but not aggressive, evidence-based, but politically correct and inclusive (Lashchuk 2023).

In this regard, I want to underline the importance of acknowledging and recognising emotional testimonies as an essential part of research knowledge-production. I suggest that *respect for an emotional insider's testimony and emic perspective* should be perceived as a deeper, embodied form of knowing that contributes to more insightful and contextualised production of knowledge in academia (Ahmed 2014; Okely 2019). This kind of contribution, in turn, can lead to a deeper empathy when we as scholars step into the shoes of others, feel their emotions under our own skin, which can impel us to do something good for others as a profound act of solidarity.

³ <https://online.yale.edu/courses/making-modern-ukraine> (accessed 28.10.2023).

⁴ <https://ui.org.ua/en/sectors-en/decolonization-selected-articles-published-in-the-aftermath-of-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed 28.10.2023).

Empathy, or what Liu and Shange call “thick solidarity” (2018), recognises the very rupture within another person’s suffering and proposes. I read empathy as a capacious form of witnessing, existentially grounded in our shared, if unequally-distributed, sense of justice in this world. Empathy can even be a socially-affirming emotional response to people and events. Equally it can engender an experience of solidarity, or be an imaginative “co-feeling as social cognition” (Throop & Zahavi 2020). I argue then that empathy can serve as an emotional register of reciprocity beyond the rupture of events, amenable to articulating a shared humanity.

I appeal to our readers to think beyond colonial epistemologies and listen to the voices of the scholars who are usually perceived as “local” and therefore “lacking distance” to the region, field, events, and people. Now is the right time to question the epistemic authority of knowledge production when it (un)consciously keeps an “appropriate”, unemotional distance from painful fluctuations in history-in-the-making. I encourage all of us to think in ways that shrink the periphery of knowledge practices, where Ukraine has been usually placed; on the contrary, Ukraine is at the very centre of this history-in-the-making.

The entire context for this special issue is deeply intertwined with the course of the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine. We issued our call for applications in mid-September 2022 with the deadline for abstract proposals by December 1, 2022, a period of active warfare in Ukraine, with constant Russian missile shelling, which has become massive since October 10, 2022. On November 15, 2022 alone, Russia shelled Ukraine with more than a hundred missiles. These attacks targeted energy infrastructure and were designed to cause a total blackout in Ukraine, inflict collateral damage to civil infrastructure and take civilian lives. From mid-October 2022 to early March 2023, Ukraine lived with recurring blackouts, and reduced access to electricity, heating, hot water, mobile and internet connection. More than a million households in Ukraine were left without electricity, while others only had limited access. March 1, 2023 was our deadline for manuscript submissions.

Eight of our authors and my co-editor stayed in Ukraine during this period of shelling and blackouts. Two authors had to flee Kyiv under Russian siege in early March 2022 to save their children from war, to take refuge in several EU countries. In doing so, they had to leave family members behind, and were left feeling anxious about their lives every single day, not knowing whether their homes would be preserved after every new missile or drone attack. I have this fear too, thinking of my mother staying in Kyiv. We all live our lives liminally, the entire time, expecting to return home the following day, when the war would be over. Unbelievably, it is still not over...

I am convinced it is crucial to empathise with, to support, and to honour those people whose lives were ruptured by war. Those who still strive to maintain a scholarly identity, to work in unbearable circumstances – be it living under missile strikes in Ukraine during a blackout, or being torn apart from family and struggling for life elsewhere, alone with their children – these people speak for countless others. While some authors in Ukraine could work on their articles during in daylight hours, using

candles in the evenings without electricity, others struggled to send applications and submissions without even mobile internet. One author, having no electricity at home for two days, had to use the wi-fi connection at a local petrol station so as to submit their article. None of it should have been like this. I plead for these authors' considered, often emotional, efforts to remain scholarly in the eyes of our readers, to be acknowledged by us all as worthy. Life per se is fragile, but life under siege is dangerously and sharply fragile.

Other authors here, coming from Poland and Slovakia, revealed their deep and active empathy through helping Ukrainians fleeing the war to EU borders, translating for refugees, and volunteering in many different ways for Ukraine. Their contributions to this special issue not only exhibit their ethnographic research cases well but are also part of their conscious response to the war and its devastation. It is their empathic commitment to the region and language of their research, and to their study participants, friends, colleagues, even to complete strangers in Ukraine who have been affected by the Russian invasion.

Representing different regions and universities in Ukraine – from Kharkiv in the East and Kyiv in the north to Uzhhorod in the west and Odesa and Kryvyi Rih in the south – the authors bring to the issue their diverse backgrounds in history, archival studies, social anthropology, sociology, and religious studies. Their research cases reveal a historically-rooted range of Ukrainian identities, be it through contradictorily-entangled memories of the Second World War in local communities in Transcarpathia or Kryvyi Rih, or the culture and struggle for recognition of indigenous peoples of Ukraine, e.g. Crimean Tatars and Crimean Roma. Other authors offer insight into the role photography plays in the secular and sacred lives of various ethnic and religious groups in the Odesa region, into the roots pilgrimages of Hasidim to Uman, and into everyday economic and legal challenges. The contributors also illuminate the transcultural encounters people living at several borderlands face, the meanings of multiple linguistic belongings and the challenges that such meetings cause during fieldwork. We are thus bringing the local voices and experiences of Ukrainian scholars, as well as scholars in Ukrainian studies, to the surface, to allow them to speak about a multi-sited and diverse Ukraine from their grounded point of view. This rich and careful documentation of the heterogeneity of Ukraine and its citizens represents one symbolic form of resistance to ongoing efforts of colonial erasure that we all resist on a daily basis now.

We also strive to reflect on such issues as Ukrainian ethnography and history that have been silenced, that is, banned during the Soviet era, or that have yet to be voiced sufficiently to get the academic recognition and resonance they deserve. One such theme is the *Holodomor*, the Great Famine of Ukraine (1932–1933), the silencing of which through Soviet information warfare is the central point of **Tetiana Boriak's** article (pp. 26–47). The author writes soulfully that “the world kept silent about famine in Ukraine in 1932–1933” in part because of the active multi-faceted Soviet propaganda campaign that hid the worst ravages of the famine. Moreover, as the author underlines, “the world kept silent until the fiftieth anniversary of the famine, when the US

Commission on the Ukraine Famine (1984–1988) investigated the Holodomor”. In her paper, Boriak analyses instruments used by the Soviet state in the 1930s not only to hide information about the famine from the world but also to suppress memories about it. The article presents five different types of historical sources on the famine, more recently available and unsilenced testimonies of those whose experiences and tragic fates were erased. In doing so, she deconstructs historiographical myths invented by the Soviet regime around the Holodomor, paying attention, too, to the scholarly language that both expresses and constrains discussion of the most tragic episodes in Ukraine’s twentieth-century history through difficult terms such as “starvation”, “famine”, or “genocide”.

Language encounters and the ways we frame the contexts of our research are more important now than perhaps they have ever been before. How to even refer to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has at times shaped the experience of authors who contribute to this special issue. **Magdalena Zatorska**, for example, writes that her use of the word “war” to refer to Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine in a paper she wrote resulted in a surprising encounter with the respected peer-reviewed journal to which she had submitted the paper. Reflecting on the review process, she goes on to say that the editorial board actually took issue with her characterisation, proposing instead to replace her use of “war”, “in reference to the armed conflict in Donbas since 2014, for the term ‘conflict’”. Even though the author proposed to write “undeclared war” instead of “conflict” or “war”, her paper was ultimately rejected by the editorial board in March of 2022 (p. 66). To remind the reader, March 2022 was when the Russian war in Ukraine was effecting a full-scale invasion. The war that ought not to be named did not start on February 24, 2022; it began in March 2014 with the Russian Federation’s annexation of Crimea. By refusing to play language games with the descriptive term “war”, the author chose empathy, with her field and her interviewees in Ukraine, and with her Ukrainian colleagues and friends, who understand the invasion since 2014 to be a war and who have been suffering because of it. The author also chose academic dignity in her refusal to countenance trite ethical-linguistic substitutes such as “conflict” or “crisis”. I dare ask: what has the editorial board of that Western journal chosen?

We publish **Zatorska’s** article in our special issue with a full measure of respect for the author, her courage, empathy and ethical position. We respect, too, the value she has placed on the profound ethnography she did on Hasidic pilgrimages in the Ukrainian town of Uman (pp. 49–70). Researching Hasidic pilgrimages established around the tomb of the Jewish righteous Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, Zatorska explores the idea of energy employed by Uman’s non-Hasidic and non-Jewish inhabitants to describe the pilgrimages as well as the pilgrimage’s impact on the town’s urban space and its community life. She shows the meaning of certain places animated by divine power and how energy is produced in local and supralocal contexts. In particular she draws on the uneasy pursuit of national identity and long-lasting efforts to elaborate a peaceful coexistence between Christian dwellers of Uman (predominantly Ukrainian ethnic, although some Russian too), the local Jewish community and the Hasidic pilgrims arriving every year.

An uneasy coexistence of contradictory historical memories is the central topic of two articles in this special issue. While **Denys Shatalov** explores the memory landscape in an urban industrial area of Kryvyi Rih in Southern Ukraine (pp. 71–93), **Pavlo Lenio** exhibits the multi-layered and diverse palette of entangled memories in rural and urban dwellings of Transcarpathia, underlining the differences in remembering certain historical events by various ethnic groups in the region (pp. 95–121). In his paper, **Shatalov** argues that the sociological features of the heavily industrialised and entirely Russian-speaking region, which is deeply influenced by Soviet nostalgia, are nevertheless generally oversimplified in both historiography and in Ukrainian media discourses. As an insider, he presents a rich emic perspective of how current commemorative practices in the city's public space have been formed and what the sources of these rituals are. His paper addresses the shaping of commemorative practices and the overlapping of memories of three distinct historical periods: the first wave of the Russian invasion since 2014 with the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) in the Donbas; the Second World War (intertwined with the Soviet narrative of the Great Patriotic War 1941–45); and the late eighteenth-century Cossack roots of the town. Shatalov also raises the question of how the existing collective regional memories of the ATO and the Second World War are changing as a result of the ongoing full-scale Russian invasion and unbearable human losses Kryvyi Rih has borne. He raises two emotionally painful, yet crucially important questions: how will Ukrainian society commemorate the victims of the ongoing Russian invasion; and how will Ukrainians remember this unbearable trauma, the scale of which is yet to be comprehended?

Lenio, in his turn, presents the emic perspective of Transcarpathia, the westernmost edge of Ukraine, summarising and reflecting on more than fifteen years of doing anthropology at home among various ethnic communities of the region. His article addresses the complex question of how various ethnic groups in Transcarpathia, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans, and Roma among others, remember and commemorate the Second World War and its aftermath. This commemoration includes the painful border formation that divided villages, communities, families, and which has created sometimes drastically different views on the same turning points of this historical period. These differences may create ruptures in the relationships between the Ukrainian majority and, for instance, Hungarian and Slovak minorities, making visible uneasy layers of coexistence following the Second World War, through the Soviet era, and into independent Ukraine.

Slovak anthropologist, **Matej Butko** (pp. 123–139) argues for recognising the hybrid nature of Transcarpathian borders, especially the Ukrainian-Slovak border, which also serves as one of the external borders of the EU and the Schengen zone. Based on his fieldwork in a Transcarpathian village (2018–2019) and border observations during the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, when refugees from Ukraine were coming to Slovakia, the author examines local states and border administrations in terms of people's everyday economies, functions and purposes. The author presents local state institutions and border administration as socially negotiated

for decades by local inhabitants who have lived by the current Ukrainian-Slovak border (the former Soviet-Czechoslovakian border) for almost eighty years. Butko reflects on ongoing cross-border social relations and informal practices that are performed from within local state institutions. He discusses in depth the unwritten rules of people's economies in a particular Transcarpathian village community on the Ukrainian side of the border. One of the author's central arguments is that these economies are implicated in considerations of morality and solidarity in this time of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The invasion has caused extensive traffic to the external Schengen border and has made local inhabitants reflect on and rethink their networks, social strategies, informal economies, as well as their sense of solidarity and resilience to past traumas rooted in the history of the border. New traumas, stemming from the current war, are being added to that list daily.

Olena Sobolieva in her paper (pp. 141–153) explores another dimension of inter-generational trauma, drawing on ethnographic data on Crimean Tatars in Crimea (2003–2011) and Crimean Tatar exiles in Kyiv after the Russian annexation of the peninsula in 2014. Sobolieva's article is devoted to the meaning of identity and belonging in the generations of Crimean Tatars who are in the process of defending land rights following their repatriation to Crimea in the 1990s. Being forcibly resettled by the Stalinist regime in 1944 and therefore separated from their ethnic homeland, the Crimean Tatars formed an identity that had a distinctive connection to the lost territory and ancestral land. Sobolieva shows that political resistance continued during the Soviet period, until a mass, spontaneous repatriation of Crimean Tatars took place under the slogan "*the restoration of justice*". This slogan articulated the Crimean Tatars' moral return to their ethnic homeland to regain their rights to ancestral (often parents') land. The author shows this uneasy process and how it had great political resonance in Crimea and Ukraine overall, leading to a significant reorganisation of the cultural landscape of the peninsula. Providing us with the richness of her ethnographic data and the field context, Sobolieva helps us feel the pain of being exiles experienced by the generations of many Crimean Tatars who lost their homeland twice, in 1944 and in 2014.

The other two indigenous people of Ukraine who experienced the trauma of deportation in 1944 are Servur'a and Krým'a (Crimean Roma), sub-ethnic groups of Ukrainian Roma. These two groups are studied in depth by **Mykola Homanyuk** and **Yanush Panchenko** (pp. 155–173). Based on their ethnographic and historical research (2016–2022), the authors argue that the Krým'a and the Servur'a meet the criteria for being recognised in Ukrainian law as "indigenous people of Ukraine" who merit the state's protection. The authors exhibit the history of Servur'a and Krým'a for the reader, showing the distinctive ethnographic features of both groups, including their languages, cultures, social customs, religious rituals, and cuisine. The authors advocate for classifying Servur'a and Krým'a as indigenous peoples of Ukraine, with all the recognition and state support they deserve. They explore the groups' traumatic historical experiences, including the near-extirmination of the Roma during the Nazi occupation and the 1944 Stalinist deportation that they share

with Crimean Tatars. The authors underline the general vulnerability of these two indigenous groups, and their uncertain legal status in Ukrainian society, which is strengthened by negative stereotypes about Roma. However, as the authors state, these negative stereotypes are changing slowly regarding the role representatives of Roma communities have been playing in helping the Ukrainian army during the full-scale Russian invasion and in their demonstrable allegiance to the Ukrainian state. They hope that with their research they may draw attention to the urgent problems of all Romani ethnic groups in Ukraine and give impetus to the formation of state policy towards the Roma.

The interethnic and interconfessional coexistence of various ethnic and religious groups in the Odesa region, Southern Ukraine through the lens of photography is explored in **Viktoriia Dmytriuk's** ethnographically rich paper (pp. 175–196). Being a professional photographer and ethnographer, she researches the historical and cultural dynamics of the development of photography in the region, from sophisticated art available for certain strata of urban society to everyday vernacular practice present both in urban and rural areas. The author shows the operation of photography in traditional practices related to birth and death, religious rituals, and feasts of various groups, highlighting the most aesthetically-expressive ethnographic examples among local Bulgarians and the adherents of the local Innochemist Christian sect. Dmytriuk pays attention to the role of a researcher who holds a camera in the field, to her interactions with the respondents who shared their family albums with her, and to how the space for mutual trust developed in the field can be frequently fragile. She stresses how essential the ethical principles of photographers' and ethnographer's work in the field are, particularly when they not only listen to oral stories but also touch on families' pasts through family photo archives – repositories that may have remained unseen and silent for decades under communism.

The importance of an ethnographer's constant self-reflection in the field is the central theme of **Tomasz Kosiek's** paper, where he investigates language encounters during fieldwork among the Ukrainian minority groups in Poland and the Romanian borderland region of Maramures (pp. 197–212). Drawing his inspiration from Malinowski's iconic method of research, Kosiek follows his approach and stresses the deep need to know the language of the studied community. Comparing two minority Ukrainian communities in Poland and Romania, the author shows how knowledge of the Ukrainian language affected his self-identification with respect to respondents. Kosiek reflects upon the vulnerability of the field when language serves as an identifier of "self" and "other", engendering trust or mistrust, opening or closing certain doors and even the very hearts of the people. He stresses important moral and ethical issues to be constantly acknowledged during field research. He draws on examples of how, through a deep knowledge of the local language, the researcher's identity may be unintentionally misinterpreted by respondents, influencing their perceptions of the researcher, and he explores the ethical dilemmas such a situation may generate.

The authors here are moving from Ukrainian (also Slovak and Polish) into English, reaching across language boundaries to bring their research cases and emic

perspectives to a wider audience, seeking understanding, solidarity, and even refuge in English as an academic *lingua franca*. Some articles were translated into English, while other authors transformed their academic writing from their native languages into English themselves, to implement their need for their fieldsites to be seen and heard more widely. I, too, am writing in my fourth language, intending to inspire thoughtfulness in our audience to understand our main message of empathy, solidarity and hope. We all aspire here for the capaciousness of the host language to meet our basic need of recognition for our translated message, for it to be considered seriously. The alternative is for these texts to be rejected at the borders, without papers. That being said, if there are any rough edges in these texts to be found, they do not emerge from a lack of understanding of the host language, but from a resolute refusal to be readable completely in that language; part of each of us who writes here remains unable to leave the ongoing crisis. Each contributor for this special issue, in fact, has found him or herself living in a context of shifting and potentially annihilating meanings, seeking out edges and liminal spaces within which some record of their precarious lives can be communicated, however incompletely. Several authors speak through a longer fieldwork practice to address incessant atrocities that attempt a retranslation of hard-won Ukrainian independence back into a russified idiom of “liberation”. Rarely has the work of anthropologists been so important to move meanings to safety, and to preserve meanings in the face of such a comprehensive onslaught. As anthropologists, we understand here the power of reciprocity to return this generosity. We are grateful for what our authors have shared with us.

We live in a world where a colonial power seemingly from the awful past of the now-dominant West has risen to annihilate the very conditions of being in Ukraine, or even being from there. Many friends have come to our aid, and surprising new friends have been found in our time of need. But the war in Ukraine still goes on. We too often do not have enough trusted friends, enough words, enough weapons, enough food or other essential resources. All we have now is hope. Being Ukrainians, we hope, even though hope may just mean “another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed” (Solnit 2016, p. 4).

I ask myself repeatedly, can the existential search for hope be a common ground to experience active empathy, to practice being empathic? Following Michael Jackson, how we generate life comes from our ability to build relationships not only with ourselves but also with our various environments, and hope is the driving force in these processes: “Hope is predicated on the experience of being integral to the lives of the others, one’s own subjectivity coextensive with theirs” (Jackson 2011, p. 93). From such hope many Ukrainians and their friends make symbolic gestures, rallying our allies in efforts such as this special issue. We move forward as we may, across the world, into the penumbra of our now almost-forgotten peaceful lives, to remember with the force of a cannon, to resist, to overcome, to prevail. Each author here stands in empathy and solidarity with their friends and colleagues, with their fallen loved ones, and with the generations to come, to say to the physical and symbolic violence: you shall not pass. This cliché from World War One is deliberate; we

must resist this quintessentially anachronistic and banal evil now. We have to stop the violence, whether it is on the actual frontline or in the increasingly adversarial academic system.

Our country is much more than the enemy can imagine, and this special issue is but one stubborn reminder of the fractally beautiful, irrepressibly complex, and eternally resilient Ukrainian people. We write here to remind our colleagues abroad that solidarity is always an option, and to invite them to join us in celebrating our beautiful land, and the diverse cultures of Ukraine. Extend to us the empathy we require to feel that our plight has been recognised, that we need not do more to qualify for basic equality with the rest of humanity, to secure our right to live away from the shadow of evil oppression that has fallen over us all. Stand with us, stay with us, resist with us too. You are humans first: come, read, learn, join us, and respond, first with your humanity, only then with your intellectuality.

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REFLECTIONS UPON THE ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN RESEARCH AMIDST THE WAR

Ukrainian society struggles today to survive under the conditions of the long-term confrontation against Russia. Scholars who research in or on Ukraine also struggle to express their vision of a society under attack, or to analyse the changes that are occurring. At the same time how people – citizens and researchers alike – find support for continuing life are just some of the issues that are beginning to become the object of contemporary anthropological research regarding Ukraine. Despite the “hot phase” of military events and new tragedies that only increase every day, some main lines of discussion and questions can still be traced. As part of this special issue, authors of short essays and reflections discuss such concerns, touching upon the issues of identity, belonging, originality and understanding, as well as ways of making sense of the myriad current challenges we all face.

Who has the right to define boundaries between us and others? It is those who have the right to establish the politics of belonging who define them and divide social groups, notes **Tina Polek** in her self-observation of an anthropologist in the context of war (pp. 215–218). A sense of belonging becomes the measure of and engine for change that prompts self-research and re-affirmation for representatives of a society experiencing such a deep crisis. The very feeling of belonging can become a starting point for understanding and revising one’s own identity when it is actualised under the conditions of war.

The geography and mixed identity of one particular city with mixed histories and identities, which became emphasised after full-scale invasion and is still under threat, becomes a deep focus of research in Kharkiv in Ukraine. **Yevhen Zaharchenko** and **Roman Liubavskyi** (pp. 219–225) dig into this previously-industrial city of migrants and students, the first capital of Ukraine, to show how decommunisation and the issue of decolonisation changed the city landscape. They explore several Soviet monuments and the joint decisions taken at official levels on how to incorporate them into commemorative practices in a common post-war future. As the authors mention, this opens onto a broad discussion of the lingering colonial and imperial heritage in Ukraine. They reflect too on how this Soviet heritage has diminished too

slowly in its influence on the formation of Ukraine's own evolving grand narrative, for example, as an emerging modern European state.

Understanding one's own identity is a dimension of academic research that occupies scholars far beyond the borders of Ukraine. **Ignacy Józwiak** offers a vigorous discussion of "westplaining", a term that emerged after February 2022 in response to attempts by Western commentators to impose the paradigm of accounting for the war "through and by 'the West'" (pp. 239–249) on scholars from Central and Eastern Europe. Searching for one's own voice and proving the value of scholarship away from leading Western academic institutions is a balancing act that requires, on the one hand, engaging with academic failures to analyse events appropriately as they unfold and, on the other, responding ethically to those commentators who continue to ignore voices from the "periphery". We, as editors of this special issue, draw attention to the academy in its primary sense as a place where it is possible to articulate the complexity of reality, and we hope to nurture shared understandings that produce of new meanings and possibilities, instead of regurgitating clichés that ossify attitudes and dialogue.

Human dignity in general, and Ukrainian subjectivity particularly, have become pervasively contested. Will the world allow us to hear our own voices without constraint or reduction to banalities? Will there be a place for a vernacular eloquence that expresses a renewed identity, not only for Ukraine and Ukrainians, but also for other parts and peoples of the world where identity becomes unintelligible in the face of the Scylla and Charybdis of indifferent Western and malevolent colonial discourses and practices? Where may it be possible to find at least some pillars of humanity to recover the dignity of each individual who now lives under the conditions of a large-scale war on the European continent in the 21st century? These questions should not remain purely rhetorical, but can and should provide space for reflection on the reality that hope and safety are unequally rationed today, a basic truth that remains uncomfortable to talk about in places where it ought to be forcefully debated. Such truths pull researchers and leaders of public opinion out of comfortable conceptual frameworks, plunging them into the current, harsh reality of a contemporary world of precarity. Such pointed and poignant verities call for decisions to be made now, to prevent the direst of consequences for humanity.

Under the current ubiquity of fake materials and data, and the seeming hegemony of artificial intelligence, it is documentary evidence and personal stories that should remain the object of research. Thus, according to **Olena Martynchuk**, personal or family history can be told by and through photographs, which become actors in the social system and provoke people to communicate and interact with each other (pp. 227–229). In the case of Ukrainian refugees, who chose what they could take with them with little time to decide, family photo albums became valuable possessions that traffic in meaning, bringing them back to "normal life" at one point and serving as a symbolic reminder of life before the "war", itself a protean reality, shifting in register and meaning as the conflict trudges on.

The research concepts and terms we use also need revision because of the ongoing war. For example, **Patrycja Trzeszczyńska** is convinced that the term “refugees”, as applied to Ukrainians, should be reviewed (pp. 231–238). This concept, she argues, rather describes a person who loses the capacity for action and decision-making, which contradicts the prevailing image of Ukrainians who found themselves abroad during the war. This vulnerability, which becomes characteristic of the “refugee” in refugee discourses, deprives them of the possibility to exercise agency and to choose what to do next with their lives. In challenging this conceptual “refugee” in a variety of influential discourses, then, researchers, and anthropologists in particular, must attend to the task of defining new ethical boundaries, regarding the level of trauma that “refugees” they work with have experienced. They must consider the ethics of the narrative they transmit, and monitor their own level of involvement in respondents’ contexts. They must also bear responsibility for the enduring impact of the narratives that continue after the life of any particular project. In general, research in times of vulnerability should guide researchers by highlighting the ethical principle of *primum non nocere*, “first do no harm”, while still being in a position to document the personal and group aspects of experiences of shock and trauma in a way that brings respondents’ agency and inherent human dignity to the fore.

Academia has an opportunity to provide a platform for sincere and multifaceted discussions that can correct a flailing humanity at the peak of self-doubt and stultifying introspection. The moment requires an ever-higher sensitivity and perception of a decreescent global environment, even as much of humanity has to fight for bare, physical survival and the right to basic self-determination. The fact that scholars have not met the moment raises the question of the troubled subjectivity of social scientists and anthropologists worldwide. Personal, acquired experience of human struggle and tragedy, and the ability to understand it scientifically, become decisive here. Only through such a process of a global and collegial mutual understanding, framed in robust terms, may it be possible to render a coherent and persuasive description of those painful lessons. Thus may humanity itself learn that we may change our minds to respond intelligently and compassionately, in the places where intelligence and compassion are most needed. We invite you, here, then, to read, reflect and consider such reflections together with the authors of this special issue and to continue the dialogue beyond the pages of this journal, to participate in meeting the moment.

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SOVIET INFORMATION WARFARE ON THE HOLODOMOR
VS HISTORICAL SOURCES: ACTORS OF THE MEMORY BATTLE

INTRODUCTION

Whether one treats the demise of millions of Ukrainians by starvation in the 1930s – an event known today as the Holodomor – as a genocide¹ or not, and regardless of its interpretations by law studies researchers (Antonovych 2015, pp. 159–174), it was an occurrence that incontestably condemned millions of Ukrainian peasant families to slow, excruciating deaths.² Demographic studies of this historical period agree that 3.9 million people died directly as a result of the Holodomor, while 600,000 died indirectly (including, for instance, unborn babies lost through the deaths of women during this period), between 1932–1934, making a total of 4.5 million deaths in just three short years.³ This comprised 15.3% of the overall population of Soviet Ukraine at the time, with around 91% of rural deaths taking place in 1933 alone

¹ The term “genocide” is defined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). The Holodomor fits point “c” of article II “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”, i.e. confiscation of food from peasants households and creating obstacles to them finding food by themselves (blockade of administrative units, villages, rajons etc., ban on leaving villages, extortion of payments through extra taxation that left peasants’ with no money, forcible return of escaped peasants to the places of their residents).

² The term “Holodomor” means “to exterminate with hunger”, and was coined in a Czechoslovakian newspaper article about the Ukrainian famine in 1933. Survivors used the term “holodovka” (“starvation” of an extreme, artificial nature). Since the end of 1980s, the term “holodovka” has been supplemented with the term “liudomor” (an extermination of human beings), to coin “holodomor”, and, gradually, the contemporary rendering “Holodomor”.

³ Throughout this paper the term “Holodomor” refers to deaths occurring as a result of a man-made famine that at its peak lasted roughly six months from the end of 1932 through the first half of 1933. The dating of the Holodomor is more complex when a specific set of decisions that create the conditions for famine are factored in, expanding the timeline to more than a year (roughly August 1932 – December 1933). I discuss this more complex timeline later in the main text. The term “starvation” in the text refers to the period from 1929 where the consequences of the politics of forced collectivisation and industrialisation first began to take hold. “Famine” here means extreme starvation caused by non-natural reasons but by extortion of food reserves and the limiting of peasants’ mobility from the end of 1932 to the first half of 1933.

(Rudnytskyi et al. 2015, pp. 53, 69). Studies have worked to establish estimations that contextualise the famine in terms of: deaths relative to losses in the broader USSR (Rudnytskyi et al. 2015, pp. 192–222); urban and rural losses (Levchuk et al. 2015, pp. 1–14); losses at a regional level (Wolowyna et al. 2020, pp. 530–548); and monthly distribution of mortality (Kovbasiuk et al. 2016, pp. 1–28). They have elaborated a methodology to enable estimations of the amount of excess deaths in Ukraine in 1932–1934. Their estimations have supported similar conclusions by historians (Kulchytsky 2013, p. 221) who have argued that, at the end of 1932, a set of decisions was taken in the Kremlin that resulted in excess mortality in Ukrainian villages in the first half of 1933 until the autumn grain harvest brought some scant relief.

Other less empirically-grounded approaches to estimating mortality in this period have pointed to between six and ten million victims, but regardless of the final number of Ukrainians who were starved to death, the Holodomor has become an inalienable part of twentieth-century Ukrainian history. It has gradually taken its place in school curricula too, so as to explain to a younger generation what it meant to live under Stalin, and what consequences this life had for Ukrainians and Ukrainian statehood. It is not too much to say that the Holodomor has become one of the pillars of “the modern collective memory model in Ukraine” (Lysenko 2020, pp. 21–22).

As a people who only gained independence some thirty-odd years ago in 1991, Ukrainians were desperately looking for a new post-Soviet identity, to establish new commemorative practices and to define a new generation of heroes and enemies. When declassifying archives, however, they were horrified by the extent of Soviet crimes, especially the Great Terror, the Holodomor, and crimes during the Second World War. Such revelations coincided with the active development of memory studies in western academic and political spheres that defined post-colonial states’ attitudes toward their pasts and their emerging, collective visions for the future. For Ukraine in particular, as Lysenko (2020) notes, the foundations of collective memory (as shared social constructs about the past) have become entangled with historical Ukrainian struggles against the Russian Empire, Soviet colonisation (the Ukrainian revolution 1917–1921, the Holodomor and the Great Terror), and German occupiers (the Second World War), the minatory forces that wrought such destruction upon the Ukrainian people.

The conditions that brought about the Holodomor in particular may provide an instructive case to illustrate the tragedy of the ambitions of empire for Ukraine in the twentieth and indeed the twenty-first century. While the 1920s marked a powerful development in various spheres of Ukrainian social life, in the areas of culture, art, education and cinema production, for example, this took place under the banner of Ukrainisation to gain more support from a Ukrainian SSR population that remembered only too well the previous years of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 and the numerous revolts against the Red Army. Already in the mid-1920s, Soviet leadership took measures to implement collectivisation in the USSR in order to extort as much grain as the state needed, too, as it could not get this grain from individual peasants,

who could set their own prices for grain. But the legal foundations for the politics of collectivization were finally defined in November 1929 by TsK VKP(b), which speed up collectivisation, a forced change that affected other grain-producing republics too. Together with the politics of accelerated industrialisation (tacitly understood to include a rapid militarisation too) declared formally in that November meeting in 1929 (although launched earlier in 1925), collectivisation could not help but to create tensions. In the countryside, peasants were deported from Ukraine, and grain was confiscated as part of grain-procurement fulfilment campaigns, which triggered starvation. Social advances meant little to nothing by then, and economic life became badly disorganised, while peasants began to flee to the towns and cities. Under such conditions, this starvation also became increasingly widespread in other grain-producing regions of the USSR at the same time.

For Ukraine the Holodomor meant transformation from long-term, all-Union starvation caused by collectivisation and grain procurements in the 1920s, to the infamous famine created through the confiscation of grain and non-grain food reserves during the “total searches”⁴ of peasant households (Svidchennia 2016). Through this famine, the Soviet goal was to solve the problem of Ukrainian resistance to strict centrist control over all spheres of life, a politics that induced a drastic transformation in order to accord with the dominant Stalinist-Marxist approach to implement centrally-planned economies.

Tragically, the world kept silent about this famine in Ukraine (1932–1933). This silence, though, was for several reasons, not the least of which was a multi-faceted Soviet propaganda campaign that hid the worst excesses of the famine. The world kept silent until the fiftieth anniversary of the famine, when the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine (1984–1988) investigated the Holodomor. Available sources (diplomatic and security service reports, revealed in the archives of at least eleven countries) indicate that many states knew about the famine that was exacerbating the already-widespread starvation of previous years. All too quickly, an endemic failure to access basic sustenance created many more starving Ukrainians and saw many dying and dead of hunger on the streets. Indeed, the death toll was made worse by a brutal confiscation of food and the general absence of state help. Many of these conditions were known, but remained unacknowledged for too long by foreign powers. For these sovereign states looking on, fear of German National Socialists, the need to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR, the world economic crisis, and Soviet famine propaganda that had created an attractive image of the USSR all served to encourage the reticence of world powers and the League of Nations in speaking out.

This same silence, though, has in later years morphed into a specious argument that the famine memory has been to some degree invented by a Ukrainian “nationalistic” diaspora that supposedly tried to hide its “collaboration” with the Nazi regime (Himka 2013, pp. 436–437; Rudling 2013, pp. 233–237), or that it was merely

⁴ “Total” here means “*povalny*”, that is, the searches that took place in all villages inside the administrative borders of Ukraine.

politicised by then-president Viktor Yushchenko (Dreyer 2018, p. 557; Katchanovski 2008, pp. 19–26; Rudling 2013, pp. 238–243). Other polemics aver that the event has been wrongly interpreted by Ukrainian historians (Dreyer 2018, pp. 556–557), or that it cannot be distinguished from the Soviet Union-wide famine(s) that were raging concurrently.⁵

Critics of Yushchenko say that he began to use the topic of the Holodomor abruptly in his political speeches and incorporated the famine into the collective memory of Ukrainians by introducing commemorative rituals for the Holodomor victims. However, he also launched an initiative on the National Oral History Record Project on the Holodomor that resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of oral history testimonies, now preserved in Ukrainian state archives. Thanks to Yushchenko, too, the law on the Holodomor was adopted in 2006. The museum of the Holodomor was also established, as were the national memorial sites, and he appealed to foreign states regarding the recognition of Holodomor as a genocide. The problem is that, for foreigners at least, the issue of the Holodomor seems to have appeared abruptly with Yushchenko, but they do not know that the Soviets banned all discussion of the famine. Neither do they know about the presence of individual Ukrainians' memories about the famine, Ukrainians who were waiting on a signal from the state that they could finally tell their stories without fear of persecution. It was in this Yushchenko period when people were persuaded that the state was interested in their stories and that no one would be punished for saying previously "disgusting" things about the Soviet regime. Foreign observers consequently do not know about the trauma of millions of Ukrainians who often felt better having shared their survival stories and, more importantly, having commemorated their relatives lost to famine at public commemorative sites (even though many sites were in fact created from 1990). This new public face of the Holodomor overcame the fear of survivors who remained silent because of the lasting influence of this Soviet ban on speaking about the famine. Even though this fear was passed on to relatives and successive generations, so too were the stories; Yushchenko's mother had survived the famine and it is quite likely she shared her story with her son.

Looking at the Holodomor memory through the prism of a memory battle between two unequal combatants, it is possible to view one participant as the totalitarian state (in its avatars of both the Soviet state and the Russian Federation that claims itself as a direct successor), with its instruments of historical-political formation through a "politics of memory". The Soviet regime had skilfully kept the famine in Ukraine hidden from its citizens and from the world through a strategy of deception that involved a wide array of tools in its propaganda campaign, such as silence, commemoration, suppression and manipulation (Abrams 2010, p. 159). These tools obscured the full extent of the starvation of the Ukrainian population from the famine's beginnings right up to the end of the USSR's existence decades later. Standing in silent solidarity against this historical behemoth, and those who would claim

⁵ For more details see: Kulchytskyj 2021, pp. 167–169.

provenance from this period, historical sources and descriptions and memories of the famine form the arsenal of the second combatant in this battle. A contemporary Holodomor researcher can thus become a voice of the survivors and eye-witnesses of the Holodomor and use a range of extant sources, widely available since the end of the 2000s, to critique the various arguments used by Soviet propaganda (bad weather, poor harvest, diseases, all-union famine, economic transformations). In doing so the archive/archivist becomes the second participant. I argue that establishing these two actors as polemically entwined allows for an easier dismantling of Soviet propaganda on the Holodomor as well as helping one see more clearly the man-made nature of the famine. Such an uncovering of propaganda techniques indeed remains relevant to contemporary geopolitical realities in modern Ukraine.

THE SOVIET AUTHORITY'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
AND THE ORCHESTRATION OF THE FAMINE (AUGUST 1932 – DECEMBER 1933)

Holodomor as a man-made famine took place at the end of 1932 and lasted until the first half of 1933, a chronological framing that was surprisingly only confirmed in 2015. To provide context, 1932 saw 250,000 people perish, while excess deaths in Ukraine in 1933 comprised some 3.529 million. It is important to stress that of those, ca. 3.335 million deaths occurred in rural Ukraine. To compare, in 1934 another 163,000 Ukrainians lost their lives (Levchuk et al. 2015, p. 14). These estimations now establish that the peak of the Holodomor famine took place in 1933, correlating with survivor and eyewitness testimonies of extreme mortality in 1933.

Of special importance is a private letter from Josef Stalin to Lazar Kaganovych, dating from August 11, 1932. In it, Stalin openly expresses his dissatisfaction with “Ukraine”⁶ and his fear of “losing” Ukraine, if “[we] do not correct the situation in Ukraine immediately [*esli ne vozmemsia teper zhe za vysplavlenie polozheniia na Ukraine, Ukrainu mozhem poteriat*]” (*Holodomor Documents* 2008, pp. 23–24). Though Stalin may have chiefly feared disobedience from Ukrainian party and security service administration officials, he also fretted over peasants who fiercely defended their individualist way of farming, and who were leaving collective farms *en masse*. Security services had, of course, reacted to this exodus with typically brutal measures to suppress Ukrainian peasants. Stalin had witnessed the peasant potential to confront Soviet power in 1919 in Ukraine, when as a result of peasant revolts in Ukraine, the Soviet hold on power actually briefly ceased to exist. The rural population in Ukraine numbered as many as 24 million (compared to around 7 million urban residents in 1932) (Levchuk et al. 2015, p. 98), thus the famine was

⁶ Significantly, in this letter Stalin uses the term “Ukraine”, not the official title “Ukrainian Socialistic Soviet Republic”. This might indicate his understanding of the specificity of Ukraine as big and not-yet Soviet and socialistic because of the problems he saw and solved later with the help of the famine.

solving the Ukrainian question in terms of Stalin's vision that "the foundation of the national question, its inner essence is a peasant question" (Stalin 1952, p. 71).

A set of decisions was taken by the Kremlin and imposed on the Ukrainian republican organs of power in 1932: to strengthen "socialist" property (August 7th); to procure grain from the peasant sector on an intense, individually-targeted basis (November 11th); to strengthen grain procurements and liquidate counter-revolutionary groups (November 18th); and to repress Ukrainian villages (November 25th). An Operational Order of the DPU⁷ UkrSSR⁸ was issued to deliver "a decisive blow to all counterrevolutionary kulak-Petliura⁹ elements..." (December 5th); on "black-boarding" (extortion of all grain, a ban on movement and other repressive measures) of any village that sabotaged grain procurement (December 6th). The DPU also moved to stop the unorthodox Ukrainisation of Kuban¹⁰ and denounced the Ukrainisation of Ukraine itself as anti-Soviet and "of Petliura", instead promoting a more "correct" Bolshevik interpretation of Ukrainisation (December 14th) (*Holodomor Documents* 2008, pp. 22–43).

Other documents to orchestrate the Holodomor were adopted in 1933: the so-called "Stalin's telegram" ordering punishment for individual and collective farm peasants who would not return to the state the grain supposedly stolen by them was a signal for the local authorities to implement total searches (decree adopted on January 1st); a decree that closed the borders of Ukraine and Kuban and banned the selling of train tickets to Ukrainian peasants (January 22nd); a set of decrees on loans for food, forage and seed during the spring sowing campaign; and an order to the security service to stop repressions in the countryside that was an indication that Stalin had reached his goals without "losing Ukraine". That order also implies the successful suppression of an imagined all-Ukrainian peasant uprising, declared by the DPU to have occurred in the spring of 1933 (February 13th). The last document relating to the Holodomor in the calendar year of 1933, issued on December 28th,

⁷ *Derzhavne politychne upravlinnia*, State Political Department, the security service of UkrSSR from 1922 to 1934.

⁸ UkrSSR is the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, created after the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, the occupation of Ukraine with Soviet troops in 1921, and its inclusion in the USSR in 1922–1923. Since 1937 it was known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic until 1991.

⁹ "Petliurivsky", "Petliurivshchyna" in Ukrainian, that is, tied to the Ukrainian national liberation movement, with Symon Petliura as its symbol (one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921), who was shot in 1926 in Paris.

¹⁰ Kuban (during the Holodomor, part of Northern-Caucasus *kraj* of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (1924–1934), now part of Krasnodar *krai*, RF) during the Holodomor was treated the same way as Ukraine because of the numbers of Ukrainians living there. According to the 1926 census, 37% (3,107,000) of the population of the Northern Caucasus *krai* was Ukrainian. In 1927 and 1928 Ukraine looked to add these and other border regions to Ukraine due to the substantial Ukrainian population in these regions. Stalin refused, but in 1928 allowed Ukrainisation to take place in 37 rajons (of them 19 were located in Kuban) with a predominantly Ukrainian population in Northern-Caucasus *kraj* Kuban (Kulchytsky 2007, pp. 91–94). So taking into account predominantly the Ukrainian population in Kuban and the success of Ukrainisation there, the same measures were implemented in Kuban as in Ukraine at the end of 1932 to intensify starvation and induce famine.

contains statistics on resettlements from four different Russian regions, Byelorussian SSR and Ukrainian oblasts to the regions of Ukraine where effectively the local population had died of hunger (*Holodomor Documents* 2008, pp. 45–78).

These were among the most important decisions reflected in the official documents and which were adopted mostly from Autumn 1932 to January 1933. A combination of actions based on the instructions preserved in the official documents resulted in extreme starvation, leading to famine and high mortality. A deep analysis of the official and unofficial instructions that transformed the famine into the Holodomor is not the goal of this article, however, as these details have been well analysed by Stanislav Kylchyt's'ky (2018) and Anne Applebaum (2017). Rather I elaborate here on the range of sources that constitute a counter-narrative to the Soviet “politics of memory” that shaped much of the twentieth century’s failure to recognise the Holodomor famine. I argue for the triumph of the archive of official and personal sources of remembering as a key weapon in the arsenal of those who fight to preserve memory over sanctioned truth. It is a conflict that remains just as crucial today, while the shadow of Russian aggression once more falls over Ukraine, as it did in 1930s famine-stricken Ukraine.

THE INFORMATION WARFARE AGAINST THE FAMINE (1930s): ACTORS AND DIRECTIONS

A “politics of memory” implies the usage of certain images, events and symbols of the past with the goal of creating commonly-accepted understandings of the past among society members in order to promote the further development of a state (Kyrydon 2016, p. 121). One of the methods of such correction was the information warfare waged against the famine, as the Soviet state proved resourceful in covering up any information about starvation, employing an effective “silencing” campaign of both private and public spheres through a strategy of “quarantining” whole village populations. The physical movement of people, both survivors and eyewitnesses, was thus restricted as part of a range of conditions that tied peasants to their villages. A campaign to introduce passports began in the USSR in December of 1932,¹¹ an initiative that nevertheless did not actually issue passports to peasants. Furthermore, peasants were still obliged to seek permission to leave their villages. Authorities also prohibited rural dwellers from leaving their villages by placing them on a blacklist

¹¹ On December 27th and December 31st respectively, Soviet State and Ukrainian Republic decrees on the passport system and mandatory registration were adopted. Internal passports were introduced only for urban residents, and for worker towns. Only one category of peasants could receive a passport: those who worked in the Soviet farms (*radhospy*). Other peasants did not receive a passport at all, a situation that persisted until 1974.

(Ukr. *chorni doshky* or “black board”),¹² to prevent them not only from leaving Ukraine, but from buying train tickets, or even from entering the city of Kyiv.

Foreigners who could be potential eyewitnesses to the famine were often banned or restricted in travel. Already in 1932 Stalin was expressing irritation with articles by foreign journalists about starvation and a decree by the Politburo TsK VKP(b)¹³ expelled a Canadian journalist, Rhea Clyman, in September of 1932 (Holodomor Dokumenty 2008, p. 325), the first journalist to be expelled for “discrediting” the USSR. Such reporting revealed the obvious failure of widely-advertised Soviet economic transformations and probably not-so-obvious attempts to avoid the loss of Ukraine, according to Stalin’s letter from August 11, 1932. Subsequently this type of prohibition of foreign journalism shifted focus from individual bans to collective ones as the famine was reaching its peak. The state officially prohibited journalists from going to Ukraine starting from February 23, 1933 (Hudz 2015, pp. 160–161) during the peak months of starvation (see Applebaum 2017, pp. 315–322).

The 1930s saw a clear reliance on silencing strategies designed for external audiences, when they were first successfully implemented by the Soviet propaganda apparatus. While silencing had been partly achieved through the above-mentioned entry ban on entering Ukraine, another dimension to this strategy was implemented by creating excellent living conditions for journalists and diplomats in Moscow. Foreign travellers to Moscow were settled in top hotels, fed well, experienced rich cultural programs, and were only taken to trips along well-checked routes, presenting so-called Potemkin villages. Special exemplary collective farms were created for foreign visitors where guests saw well-fed, happy “peasants” working in clean clothes, in curated, famine-free surroundings near VIP-guest accommodation. Meanwhile, foreign guests’ freedom of movement was severely restricted.¹⁴ Such guests were mollified by their conditions and were thus unmotivated to go elsewhere, as the state persuaded them that all Soviet citizens were living like these “Potemkin” residents.

¹² Чорні дошки, *chorni doshky* – the lists of units (collective farms, villages and even rajons) that “failed” to supply grain. The names of these units (and sometimes even peasants) were published in official documents and the press. Being on a black board meant punishment: preterm obligatory payments; closure of a store in that area confiscation of all goods; a ban on collective farm-trade; and repression against administration and peasants. Historians estimate that blockading borders of UkrSSR was also used, most notably in survivors’ memoirs and oral histories. Tellingly, though, there are no indications of this blockade in any archival documents.

¹³ Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (*bolsheviks*); Tsentralny komitet Vsoioiuznoi Kommunisticheskoy partii (*bolshevikov*). The fact that the whole Central Committee controlled by Stalin adopted a decree banning foreign journalists from visiting the USSR points to the importance of the issue for the Soviet regime.

¹⁴ The term “Potemkin” derives from 1787, when Russian Empress Catherine the Great made a tour of the newly-conquered Ottoman territory (northern Black Sea region; now south of Ukraine). A count Hrihorii Potiomkin, who was, among other titles, Governor and Catherine’s minister and lover, reputedly created false portable villages for her that were decorated in order to make a false impression of a relatively affluent peasant way of life. In reality, although Potemkin probably did not decorate many villages, these efforts were most likely designed to impress foreign dignitaries travelling in the entourage more than Catherine herself, and his efforts were, in all likelihood, not kept secret.

As a result, articles in the foreign press described the good life of Soviet citizens and reflected the absence of famine reporting. One American journalist, Eugene Lyons confessed later: “In this or that way all journalists were guilty of collaborating in that ugly falsehood [about the famine]” (Halij 1968, p. 32). In private talks, New York Times journalist and Pulitzer-prize winner Walter Duranty admitted he knew of the famine during his time in Moscow, but in his articles he described a “starvation” that was less catastrophic.¹⁵ It has been rumoured that Duranty even swayed US understanding of the famine and the situation in the USSR in general, as well as influencing US President Franklin Roosevelt (Kulchytskyi ed. 2008b, p. 234).

At the same time, journalists who did describe the famine they had seen with their own eyes suffered from oppression, even after leaving the USSR. Malcolm Muggeridge, for instance, was labelled a liar and reactionary after publishing about the famine, first in a Russian English-speaking newspaper, then in a British one. For years he could not find a job in Great Britain, the BBC did not invite him on TV and the press condemned him (*Time and Eternity* 2010, p. 2).

Disinforming famous Western leaders was another tool for the Soviet state. The most telling example being the visit to the USSR, and Ukraine, of a former French prime minister, Edouard Herriot. His visit had been well prepared by the Soviet regime so that he did not see starving people and was not even able to talk to real peasants. As he described his visit in the foreign press and in the Soviet press, he sang the praises of the Soviet state (Dmytryshyn 2021, pp. 216–232). George Bernard Shaw and members of various Communist parties (from Canada and the USA) also spoke out loudly, denying the famine, thus influencing Western public opinion regarding awareness of the famine and affecting diplomatic recognition of the USSR (Applebaum 2017, pp. 313–314; Cipko 2017, pp. 104, 113–157; Kovalchuk & Marusyk 2007, pp. 201–202, 210–211, 219–220). It is important to keep in mind that these disinformation and manipulation campaigns took place when millions of people were deprived of food in their own households, had restricted freedom of movement to search for food and were dying from the effects of the famine.

Another instrument of the “silencing” strategy was censorship, involving restricted access to official documents and records, using special terminology (e.g. “food difficulties”) and deploying targeted censorship (both from above- and self-imposed) of officials and citizens. The most important consequence of censorship concerns the preservation of written historical sources, where at least 100,000 official documents from the so-called “governmental archive” covering the period of the famine were intentionally destroyed by the Soviet authorities (Boriak 2013, p. 17).

Silencing was also achieved through criminal punishment for writing or talking about the famine, which continued to be applied even after the famine. For instance, eight authors of diaries (1932–1934) that describe the famine (Dmytro Zavaloka, Nestor Bilous, Oleksandra Radchenko, Dorota Federbush, Oleksii Nalyvajko, Mykhajlo

¹⁵ For more details see, for instance, Applebaum 2017, pp. 316–317, 323–325.

Sinkov, Mykola Bokan and Ihnatii Prydkyj) suffered repression for years after.¹⁶ An engineer called Nykyfor Skliarenko was sentenced to be shot for disseminating a non-Soviet journal with an article about the famine.¹⁷ His colleague Viktor Safonov, who was discovered to have read the journal, received three years in a correctional labour camp (*Natsionalna knyha pamiati* 2018, pp. 923–924). Another aspect of repressive Soviet policies regarding the Holodomor was to blame those affected by the famine; official discourse (documents, speeches etc.) referred to peasants as “kurkuls” and “counterrevolutionaries”, who were persecuted accordingly.

Official sources kept detailed statistics that horrify the modern reader, recording how many were repressed in 1932–1933 in Ukraine. In 1932 alone, around 71,500 people were sentenced to be shot in UkrSSR. In 1933, 90% of heads of rajon Departments of Education and all the heads of the oblast Departments of Education were replaced for political reasons. In all, four thousand teachers lost their jobs. Between January and mid-October 1933, more than 15,000 Russian workers were sent to Ukraine; of them 95% were sent to take office as heads of party cells on collective farms (*Ukrajina i ukraintsi...* 2021, pp. 389, 456, 457).¹⁸

For survivors, the accusations and sentences handed down to neighbours, colleagues and other fellow citizens were a clear signal that talking about the famine would be treated as counter-revolutionary activity and would be persecuted by the state. However, by the end of the 1930s, internal audiences had been silenced as well, so after the Second World War, Soviet propaganda targeted their famine-related propaganda efforts abroad.

While Ukrainians in the UkrSSR were partly targeted through censorship and repressions, a process of commemorating progressive collective farmers (as opposed to bad *kurkuli*¹⁹), workers and other proletariat was implemented at the same time. This meant the creation of a pantheon of new heroes to galvanise the society dur-

¹⁶ For more details see: Faizulin ed. 2018.

¹⁷ The examination record calls this journal “c.[ounter]-r.[evolutionary] journal being published abroad”. There is neither a title nor a place of publishing, though. Since at that time Western Ukraine (part of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania) was considered by the USSR to be foreign territory, the journal could have been published there, but this is only a surmise.

¹⁸ In February of 1932, administrative reform was implemented in UkrSSR, when five oblasts were created with 341 rajons. In the second half of 1932, two more oblasts were created: Donetsk and Chernihiv. The presiding institution over education in UkrSSR, the People’s Commissariat on Education in UkrSSR, sent instructions to the Departments (*viddily*) of People’s Education at the oblast level. Each oblast Department of Education, in turn, communicated with the lower-level rajon Departments of Education. There were also Departments of Education in each town and city. Eventually, 90% of dismissed heads of rajon Departments of Education would mean more than 300 administrators in education were fired.

¹⁹ On January 30, 1930 in a secret decree of Politbiuro of TsK VKP(b) introduced a new division of rich peasants (*kulak*, Ukr. *kurkul*) into several groups with a corresponding measure of punishment (deportation to concentration camps or to the northern areas of the USSR or exile outside the village). The term “kurkul” was actively used during the Holodomor to blame peasants for: their resistance; non-willingness to deliver grain; or for keeping and hiding food. Also the term “sub-kurkul” (*pidkurkulnyky*) was coined in Ukraine to repress poor peasants.

ing the Second Communist Onslaught (1929–1938).²⁰ After stabilising the situation and strengthening centralised power in the Soviet republics, Stalin announced the renewal of the onslaught in 1929. This policy included forced industrialisation and collectivisation, eliminating private property, and transforming the society through “cultural revolution”. In the beginning of the 1930s, the Soviet state glorified both ordinary people (e.g. Pavlik Morozov, participants of Stakhanov movement and pioneers) and those “who fought against an enemy of the state” at any given period (leaders of the state, security service, army etc.): *kurkuls*, “*petliurivtsi*”, “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists”, “wreckers”, “supporters of Trotsky”, spies etc.

The particular glorification of ideologically “advanced” agricultural workers (Ukr. *peredovyk*; exemplary female peasant workers e.g. Pasha Anhelina, Maria Demchenko, among others) also took place.²¹ This glorification campaign was initiated to illustrate the success of collectivisation as well as to erase the social memory of starvation. It aimed to prove Stalin’s thesis (expressed in February of 1933 on the First Meeting of Advanced Collective Farm Members, during the Holodomor) that “previously poor peasants had become well-to-do collective farmers”, and that the next step was to make “all collective farmers rich” in two to three years (*Holodomor Dokumenty* 2008, pp. 693, 694). Pioneering farmers had thus become part of this glorification campaign. They participated in so-called “socialistic competitions” to fulfil bigger production plans. Such activities, called *peredovyky*, were widely commented on, illustrated and glorified in the Soviet press. They thus legitimised the methods applied during collectivisation and grain procurements by the state in society’s eyes. The participation of these pioneering farmers, therefore, helped both to modernise agriculture according to Soviet ideals (Mattingly 2018, p. 12; Stalin 1951) and to demonstrate success in state-organised agriculture. Still, the rural community tried to resist the activities of these icons of collectivisation, and pioneering farmers who remained in rural areas often suffered at the hands of their fellow villagers. One such

²⁰ The term “onslaught” is a typical for Soviet ideology. According to the Communist worldview, the USSR existed in spite of being surrounded by enemies who wanted to destroy it. Also, infallible Communist party ideology was defined as the only true guideline for the life of Soviet society. During the Holodomor, there were several groups of enemies as declared by the All-Union Communist Party: *petliurivtsi* (see note 10), supporters of already dead leader of Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1921; “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists”, a long-lasting term that was in use until the dissolution of the USSR; “wreckers”, a term typical for the 1930s and tied to factories and agriculture, when new technologies met with insufficient level of professional education and ill-considered state pressure for rates, norms and plans; the term “supporters of Trotsky” was used to accuse any opposition to Stalin and the Politburo line; the term “spies” was used to accuse people of collaboration with foreign “enemies”.

²¹ These pioneers were mostly female (*lankovi* – the heads of the groups of peasants, i.e. *lanka*, who worked on a collective farm field: sowed, weeded and collected harvest) for a number of reasons: firstly, more women than men survived the Holodomor, and those men who did survive often worked as tractorists and brigadiers (the heads of the brigades, *bryhadyry*) elsewhere; did various jobs on collective farms. Secondly, men were conscripted to the army; thirdly, the Soviet press published portraits of such advanced agricultural female workers to illustrate the equality between men and women in the USSR. In contrast, collective farmers were members of collective farms (*kolhospy*) and peasant workers were members of state farms (*radhospy*).

pioneering farmer, Pasha Anhelina, even mentioned attempts on both her own life and the lives of family members (Mattingly 2018, pp. 13–14).

Little evidence of successful Soviet agricultural policies in Ukraine could be detected in Stalin's mood however. In his speech devoted to the end of the first Five Year Plan, which he delivered on January 7, 1933, Stalin used the term “former people” (Russian *бывшие люди, byvshye liudy*) to define emerging enemies of the Soviet state:

private businessmen and their assistants, private traders and their assistants, former noblemen and priests, kulaks and sub-kulaks, former White officers [who supported “white” monarchist forces who fought for restoration of the Russian Empire during the 1918–1922 Russian Civil War and the 1917–1921 Ukrainian Revolution] and officials, former policemen and gendarmes, bourgeois intelligentsia [a Russian Empire and Soviet Union term for intellectuals] of a chauvinistic type and all other anti-Soviet elements (Stalin 1951).

A gradual campaign to conflate various enemies was launched, from press coverage of Holodomor survivors as treacherous, “supposed Kulak” women (Cipko 2017, p. 111), to combining various enemies from the above list with the definition “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist” (Danilenko 2011, p. 83). As Stalin stated in 1933, enemies “hated the Soviet power, [and had] a feeling of fierce hatred toward new forms of economy, everyday life and culture” (Stalin 1951). This rhetoric continued after the Second World War, when the USSR targeted people who had experienced the camps, or who had emigrated post-WWII. Those of the latter group were labelled “enemies of the state” who deserved any punishment they had experienced in their Soviet past.

The Soviets were indiscriminate in their condemnation of any perceived enemies who referred openly to Soviet malfeasance. The National Socialists knew about the famine from the diplomatic service in Ukraine and from Mennonites (German settlers in Ukraine) and thus openly used the famine as a topic in their speeches. During the 1930s, the National Socialist German Workers' Party often publicly mentioned the famine in Ukraine (Fonzi 2021b, p. 207; Fonzi 2021a, p. 30). The Soviet propaganda machine used these speeches to hide traces of the famine by accusing the Nazis of inventing the famine, arguing that Nazi Germany wanted to overthrow the Soviet regime and thus had dreamed up the famine to blacken Communism as the “ideal social system” (Marunchak 1985, p. 55). Soviet propaganda also used the opportunity to begin accusing Ukrainian diasporas of Nazi collaboration (ibid.; Papuha 2008, pp. 88, 91), establishing the connection: famine – Nazi plot – Ukrainian collaboration.

After WWII the USSR sought to bolster its international reputation and increase its usage of Nazism-related rhetoric against the Ukrainian diaspora to quell dissenting opinions. This propaganda accused Ukrainian refugees from the USSR who had settled in Europe and other Western countries of being Nazi collaborators. Any integration of survivors' memories of GULAG (Main Camp Administration; Rus. *Главное управление лагерей, Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei*),²² the repressive Soviet

²² The GULAG remains an enduring symbol of the Soviet concentration camp system from 1934–1960, although the last Ukrainian prisoner was released from a Soviet camp in 1990.

regime, or of the famine with Western academic discourse were rendered impossible until the late 1980s by such accusations. Diasporic Ukrainians were thus shunned from public social life until the end of the 1970s, when they gradually began to enter Western academia with the Ukrainian historical narratives they carried – including their accounts of the Holodomor. This Soviet propaganda momentum was needed to maintain a positive image of a country that had, in its own self-imagination, suffered the greatest losses in the war and that had so decisively combated Nazism.²³

This narrative of national sacrifice was buttressed by a growing philosophical and political chasm between Western democratic countries and the Soviet Union after the end of the war. One writer, Ivan Bahrianyi, noted that the USSR's refusal to allow Ukrainian refugees to return surprised the whole world (Bahrianyi 1946, p. 1). Ordinary Europeans were asking why Ukrainians, instead of returning home after the end of the bloodiest war in history, wanted to escape their “Russian brothers” (Kalynyk 1955, p. 13) and they simply could not believe that a man-made famine had taken place (Verbytskyj 1952, p. 5). Such were the contours of information warfare against the famine. How did historical sources on the famine reflect survivors' and eye-witness' memory of it, though?

ARCHIVAL HISTORICAL SOURCES OF THE HOLODOMOR: THE PRESENCE OF MEMORY IN TIME AND SPACE

In this part I investigate how memory endures in archival historical sources about the famine. I lay out the types of sources that exist on the topic, and when they were created. I explore the narratives these sources prompt and I ask how various types of sources narrate the famine, and how closely oral history sources correlate with this narrative.

There are two types of sources on what we now call the Holodomor: sources of institutional and sources of personal origin. Documents produced by authorities contain an “official”, top-down perspective, with a corresponding ideological narrative of fighting with the “enemies of the people”. There are gaps in all the official sources because of the intentional destruction of documents from the years surrounding the famine. One Ukrainian historian, Hennadii Boriak, who has managed to discover the traces of such destruction, calls this process an “archivocide” (Boriak 2013, p. 13). Documents from village councils, republican organs of power, death registry books, as well as DPU documents from that period, have for the most part vanished (Boriak 2013, pp. 13–17; *Holodomor za dokumentamy* 2010, p. 22). In these official archival historical sources, from the parts that remain intact, at least, and which date from the end of 1932 and the first half of 1933, starvation is portrayed as barely more intense than periods of starvation from previous years, which is why it is impossible

²³ As one can see, labelling Ukrainians as Nazis is not a contemporary invention. The roots of this propaganda effort, which go back to 1933, are visible even now, during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

to understand the reasons, processes and the consequences of the famine from official sources only. To get a fuller picture, one must use sources from individual testimony.

Surprisingly, though, even official sources such as security service documents still mentioned the famine: a special report of a head of Kharkov oblast department of the DPU, from June 5, 1933, refers to a “pretty difficult” situation with food in Kharkiv bilst “drastically worsened [since] the last time”. Documents record that in May 1933, 11402 homeless, sick and children were picked up in the city of Kharkiv (compared to 4476 in March-April and 1077 in the first three days of June). Such sources also note the presence of 992 corpses “of the dead on the ground of famine” compared to 196 during the first three days of June. They document 585 villages that had “food difficulties” by the June 1st, compared to 225 by April 1st. A great number of adult peasants are noted as having escaped the villages and abandoned their children, where people consumed substitute food, such as cats and dogs, and “cannibalism and corpse-eating progress” – 221 cases by June 1. More than 300 people are officially known to have died in Chepyshki village in spring, and around 3000 in Vovchy Yar within six weeks, with eight to twelve people dying every day in Vovchy Yar village. Many village councils did not register their dead; suicides were recorded due to “extreme exhaustion” (*Holodomor 1932–33...* 2008, pp. 875–879).

In eighteen village councils out of thirty-four, cases of “starvation, swelling and mortality” are acknowledged; in one village of 502 people, many of them have “been swollen of famine” and need “emergency food help”. Between January and March, ninety-four people are recorded as having died (thirty-eight on collective farms), “hungry” people eat dead horses, cats, dogs, old leather, a mother eats the corpses of two of her children and murders another son to eat him; in another village, corpses remain unburied for several days, only to be buried in a mass grave later (*ibid.*, pp. 773–774).²⁴

To analyse this harrowing narrative of famine better, I distinguish such types of individual testimony, which I refer to here as historical sources of personal origin with respect to the famine. These are: memoirs and oral histories of the famine; letters from famine-afflicted peasants as well as eyewitnesses such as workers, Komsomol [Communist Youth Movement] members, and children; articles in the non-Soviet Ukrainian press and the Western press of that time; documents produced by foreign security services and diplomats; poems and works of art; and diaries.²⁵

²⁴ Official Soviet documents are of five levels: all-Union level (all-Union organs of power and personal archival funds of Joseph Stalin, Lazar Kaganovich, Viacheslav Molotov); republican level (Soviet and party organs of power, including correspondence of Ukrainian party leaders); Ukrainian regional level; security service documents (DPU) and demo-statistical documents (Boriak 2007, p. 13; Pyrih 2003, pp. 83–95).

²⁵ I distinguish six types of such sources. The division is not strict because some sources partially overlap with other groups. The fourth group, documents produced by foreign security services and diplomats, is particularly difficult to classify. On the one hand, these documents can be found in the archival sources of various Ministries, thus they are products of state organs. On the other hand, these documents were produced by diplomats and security service agents communicating with agents and foreign counterparts, often as direct observation and personal communication with starving Ukrainians,

Memoirs and oral histories on the famine make up the most numerous group, more than 110,000.²⁶ “Classical” oral history projects were developed post-WWII with the collection of oral histories in Displaced People (DP) camps (Voropai 1953, pp. 24–25); “The Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System” (HPSSS) conducted 705 interviews with post-WWII refugees from the USSR; the Oseredok project is a Ukrainian museum and archival heritage institution based out of Canada (see Andriewsky 2021, p. 161); and the James Mace and Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine secured 179 original recordings of oral histories capturing the reality of the famine (*Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine*, 1998 p. 219), later growing the repository to 210 at the beginning of the 1990s (Kulchytskyi 2018b, p. 15). Memoirs were already being published during WWII in Nazi-occupied Ukraine (at least 180 testimonies were published, not counting numerous articles mentioning the famine), while hundreds of Ukrainian memoirs were published abroad in the post-war period.

In 1987, Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi, the first secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee, publicly confessed that there had been a famine in 1933, which opened some space for oral history projects in Ukraine to begin. As well as participating in these oral history projects, then, after Shcherbytskyi’s confession, many survivors (and later – their descendants) also began to send their memoirs to the state archives and to the regional press in Ukraine, a flow of memory that continues today. These latest recollections of the famine, arriving as they do during the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, compare survival during the Holodomor and the current Russian occupation (Kostiv 2023).

Interestingly, testimonies written before the 1990s and those after contain important differences. Earlier testimonies contain more details on the Ukrainian social and political village life and on Ukraine in general, due to the age of respondents during the famine – adults or teenagers. With the generational change in respondents who still engage, testimonies written in Ukraine since the 1990s contain more information on family experiences of survival. During the famine such eyewitnesses had been too young to remember much about the famine itself, and thus they usually do not provide general information about a village or the country, or the experience of other people who survived.

By the end of the 1980s, as Ukrainians began engaging with these new oral history projects, many other Ukrainians started to erect monuments to the victims of the famine without waiting for official instructions from Kyiv.²⁷ However, such initiatives often continued to meet with resistance from Soviet local party authorities (Veselova 2007, p. 5). Even though after the proclamation of independence the

which groups these sources with other individual sources like letters, observations by foreign journalists, diaries, as well as with oral history and memoirs.

²⁶ These and later figures on the number of extant sources are imprecise, but represent the author’s best estimations.

²⁷ For more details see: 33-j: *holod* 1991, pp. 128, 303; *Trahediia* 2003, pp. 54, 56–58; *Holodomor* 2001, p. 410.

situation with Holodomor studies and the commemoration of victims began to improve, members of the Ukrainian Communist Party also continued to deny the man-made nature of the famine, or even the famine itself, right up to the Party's dissolution in 2015 (the final decision being accepted in 2022). Nevertheless, by 2020 there were around 7,000 monuments to Holodomor victims in Ukraine.²⁸

In letters from peasants and eyewitnesses, two types of letters can be discerned: those either sent by starving Ukrainian peasants to relatives, or those sent by starving peasants, workers and students to Soviet authorities in Kharkiv and Moscow, and to local press. Such appeals were often published in the foreign press and were used by the foreign diplomatic and security services in dispatches informing their governments about the situation in the USSR. As a result of the Soviet "archivocide" (Boriak 2013, p. 13), though, there are no more than a few hundred of this latter sub-type of letters left in Ukrainian archives.

Reports about the famine collected by certain foreign journalists or specialists in various fields invited to the USSR to promote industrialisation were published in the foreign press or as separate editions. Gareth Jones' notes confirming the famine's existence are probably the most famous example of this type of source, and his diaries are now available online (Jones 2015). An Austrian engineer, Alexander Wienerberger, known as the "official photographer" of the Holodomor, also published his memoirs of his experiences of the Holodomor in Kharkiv, the former capital of Ukraine, and its vicinity.

Sources created by foreign security and diplomatic services are unique in their political consequences, as in many cases they were based on personal observations or informants. There are at least 650 testimonies from eleven countries that I managed to find. Canadian historian Roman Serbyn assumes that the publication of such sources at the end of the 1980s led to a shift of Soviet propaganda that could no longer deny the famine (Serbyn 2010, pp. 63–64). It is important to note that the work of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine (*Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine* 1988, pp. 1–228, 509–513) also influenced Soviet propaganda targeting the famine and broke the Soviet regime's silence around the Holodomor (Kulchytsky 1999, p. 27–45).

The fifth group of sources of personal origin, poems and works of art, contains both primary and secondary sources. Regarding extant poems, fourteen poets, intellectuals and eyewitnesses have been identified so far who saw the famine and described it in poetic form during or immediately after the famine, and later during the Nazi occupation, where several of these poets continued to capture their experiences. Secondary sources include fiction and poetry written after WWII to the end of the 1980s.

Finally, there are more than thirty diaries from the period of the famine written by eyewitnesses of various social strata; teachers, peasants, urban dwellers,

²⁸ The author expresses her gratitude to Vitalii Ohienko, a historian from the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, who shared these data with me.

party members and children.²⁹ These sources provide insight into the famine with detailed chronologies and reflections recorded during the famine itself. The majority of these diaries have survived as a constituent part of archival-investigative cases (Ukr. *Архівно-слідчі справи, arkhivno-slidchi spary*), where they had been used as proof of “counterrevolutionary” activity of the diaries’ authors. These archival sources are now kept in various Ukrainian oblast regional archives and in the State Branch Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine.

One can therefore see that survivors’ testimonies did not appear “abruptly” after WWII out of nowhere as an attempt, according to the Soviet propaganda, to secure Ukrainian refugees from accusations of being Nazi collaborators. Between the end of the 1980s and the 2000s, various types of official and individual sources about the Holodomor gradually began to challenge knowledge about the famine as they entered the public sphere from a variety of archives. The numerous oral history projects on the topic served to have a similar effect.

The famine imprinted itself on the consciousnesses of survivors and eyewitnesses who as a result represented the famine they experienced with their own eyes in these sources of personal origin. In addition to testimonies about the famine published in the non-Soviet Ukrainian press and the Western press, there were numerous articles about the protests and aid actions by Ukrainians in many countries – for instance, an influential newspaper appeal in the Lviv *Dilo* on September 25th, issued by the Ukrainian Public Committee for Saving Ukraine to Johan Mowinckel, Prime Minister of Norway and the Head of the Council of the League of Nations, signed by the deputy head of this Committee Milena Rudnytska and a secretary Zenon Pelenskyi (Kliuvak, Kutsynka 2008, pp. 93–95). Equally, an article about the International Conference on the Famine called by then-Archbishop of Vienna and Cardinal Theodor Innitzer (*Dilo*, December 21, 1933) (Kliuvak, Kutsynka 2008, pp. 102–103) did not go unnoticed internationally. There are other examples, of the activity of Ukrainians living abroad and of foreign leaders (both religion and secular), although this activity did not reach the goal of providing food assistance and saving the lives of starving Ukrainians. There was, however, evidence of the inability of the international community to intervene into what we recognise now as USSR’s genocidal policy against Ukrainians. There was also the obvious, superseding supremacy of national interests of foreign states over humanitarian crises. The effectiveness of Soviet propaganda diminishing the difficult existence of Ukraine as a nation – albeit a divided one – nevertheless did not manage to completely dent Ukraine’s appeal to many international institutions.

Despite the efforts of Soviet propaganda, then, the memory of the famine was gradually turning into an established social memory of the event. This communication of the famine experience, through personal experiences of survival via various publication channels, and acknowledgements of the famine expressed in commemorative events and reporting and writing, brought closer attention to the Holodomor

²⁹ See, for instance: *Represovani...* 2018, pp. 4–342 for a description of seven diaries.

topic in the 1980s, the last decade of the Cold War, one example of which was the aforementioned activity of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, 1985–1988. How, though, did the longer process of recalling the famine actually take place in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic? To begin with, printed recollections of the famine did not have to wait until the 1980s; the first “liberalisation” of anti-Soviet expression had allowed reflections about the famine to appear in print when the Soviet regime in Ukraine was replaced by Nazi occupation in 1941. Already in July of 1941 the press in Nazi-occupied Ukraine were publishing the first testimony about the famine (*Holos...* 1941, p. 3).

A second liberalisation took place in 1956. In Ukraine, reaction followed immediately: various party members raised the issue of the famine at numerous closed-party meetings. At a party meeting of the Union of Soviet Writers, poet Andrii Malyshko stressed that Stalin had intentionally organised the famine, and asked why the Twentieth Party Meeting of 1956 had ignored it (Hrynevych 2007, pp. 389–390). A third liberalisation began in 1986, when another poet, Ivan Drach, in a first-time meeting of writers (June 1986) in the Ukrainian parliament, referred to the famine as a man-made catastrophe and spoke of the millions of its victims (Nahailo 2021; Mace 2003).

Following a third liberalisation, tens of thousands of oral history testimonies about the Holodomor have been recorded in Ukraine. Their narratives have much in common with the sources of personal origin, left by survivor’s eyewitnesses, pointing at a man-made famine in the eyes of the authors: a report of the Polish Embassy to the Holy See from March 1934 states that after the famine, the Ukrainian national movement was no longer a threat and the capital was transferred to Kyiv (Athanasius et.al, eds. 2011, p. 81). A poem composed by a village teacher Oleksii Nalyvajko (1933) names robbery of the party as the reason for the “dying of people because of the hunger”: “There is no guilty in that [famine] // But bilshovyks, // They have cheated peasants // And now they eliminate them. // Do you hear, you, butchers, // Who take away, rob, // That you have returned Ukraine into a slavery!?” (Nalyvajko 2018, p. 319, translation by the author).

Despite official Soviet attempts to remove any record or memory of the famine, people in the USSR retained their memory of the famine however they could, from keeping memoirs in a sock drawer to delivering them to researchers, or sending them to the regional press when it was permitted. Many families, often overcoming fear and trauma, did their duty too, passing narratives about the experience of survival strictly through the generations. And then, finally, at the end of 1987, Ukrainian society received a signal from the party that memories of the famine were not officially silenced anymore. The writing of oral histories and the publication of testimonies about the famine began in earnest, and efforts to commemorate famine victims in various regions of Ukraine became increasingly widespread, as evidenced when monuments were erected even in Western Ukraine, which did not suffer from the 1932–1933 famine. Having battled the mighty Soviet propaganda machine with tools fashioned from the whispered and scribbled memories of one

of the great, unacknowledged tragedies of the twentieth century, the long war for the memory of the Holodomor is finally being won. The archives stand today as testimony to the enduring power of memory over ideological erasure, where those who died needlessly can now be remembered and honoured appropriately by their countrymen and women.

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SOVIET INFORMATION WARFARE ON THE HOLODOMOR
VS HISTORICAL SOURCES: ACTORS OF THE MEMORY BATTLE

Key words: Holodomor, Soviet propaganda, information warfare, genocide denial, politics of memory, sources of personal origin, Ukraine

The article explores the role played by awareness and memory in combating Soviet information warfare on the famine in Ukraine of 1932–1933 based on the historical and media sources on the Holodomor. The author analyzes instruments used by the Soviet state in the 1930s not only to hide information about starvation from the other states, but also to suppress memory about it. The article presents different types of historical sources on the famine that have been preserved. Knowledge of surviving historical sources, as well as of actions of the Soviet propaganda to silence the famine, allows deconstruction of the myths invented by the Soviet regime.

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THE TOMBS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND COSMIC ENERGY IN UKRAINE

INTRODUCTION

Most anthropological works in the field of pilgrimage studies concentrate on the pilgrims' practices, experiences, and narratives. I seek to go beyond this focus and examine the perspectives of people “on the spot” – local inhabitants who stay “outside” the pilgrimage but whose everyday lives are heavily influenced by the development of the pilgrimage industry. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted among the local inhabitants of the Ukrainian town of Uman,¹ which is important for Jewish heritage as a significant Hasidic² pilgrimage centre, I address the question of how residents respond to the town's growth as a mass pilgrimage destination. I trace and explore the notion of energy (Ukr. *enerhiia*, *enerhetyka*, Rus. *energiia*, *energetika*) used by some of my interviewees to explain their understanding of the impact of

¹ The article is based on data collected during ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Uman in 2012 (preliminary research), 2013, 2015 and 2017. The research in Uman was a part of a doctoral project *Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the context of contemporary Hasidic pilgrimages to Poland and Ukraine. A comparative study*. The project was funded by the Polish National Science Centre under the grant DEC-2013/11/N/HS3/04965. Due to the comparative character of the research, which was carried out not only in Uman, but also in two other localities, Lizhensk and Lelov in Poland, the fieldwork consisted of several research trips that lasted up to one month each time. The research did not require ethics committee approval due to its non-interventional character.

² Hasidism is often defined as a Jewish religious movement, focused on mystical practices, which developed in the eighteenth century in opposition to the traditional Judaism of the time. However, as David Assaf (2006) claims, Hasidism was never “a movement” in a strict sense of this term, because it did not have a centralised structure. Instead, “Hasidism” works as an umbrella term for various groups emerging and developing throughout the years and centuries (Assaf 2006, pp. 14–15). As Marcin Wodziński (2017) points out, it is challenging to provide a clear and adequate definition of Hasidism, both in relation to its history and its contemporary form. Wodziński clarifies that defining Hasidism as a sect or a movement leads to a misleading understanding of Hasidism as read through the lenses of abstract and doctrinal categories. Instead, Wodziński proposes looking at Hasidism as a form of confraternity, taking into account the Hasidic practices of everyday life and their diversity, which is difficult to grasp through the use of doctrinal analysis (Wodziński 2017).

the pilgrimage on the town and its inhabitants.³ However, I attempt to overcome this representational and meaning-related focus on “energy” as a notion present in my interviewees’ narratives. Therefore, I study not only people but also other actors in the “natural” and material world, investigating their agency, and exploring the role that energy plays in the relationships between people and people, people and place, and human and other-than-human actors. My aim to open up my study to non-representational perspectives arises from the need for “anthropological tuning on emic ontological sensitivities” (Lubańska 2021, p. 49). Taking this premise into account, I take seriously the ontology shared by my interviewees, and explore, with their assistance, the ontological status and specificities of energy. This takes my analysis beyond the representational understandings of agency, which I explain later in this contribution. The non-representational inspirations I draw on in my work were captured well in the following suggestion by Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen:

The point is not to keep looking for new alternatives to what the world is like. Rather, it is to find ways to allow the world, as it expresses itself in the contingent ethnographic situations that we encounter as anthropologists, to show us how things could be otherwise (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017, p. 68).

Uman, a town located in Central Ukraine, has 82,154 inhabitants today, according to state statistics (Timonina 2021, p. 45). Although the ancestors of some inhabitants lived in Uman before the Second World War, a high proportion of the local population consists of post-war settlers. The town’s residents mostly identify themselves as Ukrainians and speak Ukrainian, Russian, or *surzhyk* (a local mixture of Ukrainian and Russian languages). The town also contains two very small Jewish and Polish communities who had migrated there, had returned home after the Second World War, or who had survived the war in Uman, as well as their descendants. A growing Hasidic community has also emerged close to the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav, a Hasidic spiritual leader, whose tomb attracts around 30,000 pilgrims each year on Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year), with many others visiting throughout the rest of the year. Such a large number of pilgrims makes Uman one of the most-visited Hasidic pilgrimage destinations (Wodziński & Spallek 2018). Visiting the tomb on Rosh Hashana is an important element of the Bratslav ethos and this encourages devotees to take part in the gathering of pilgrims in Uman, called the Holy Kibbutz, even if this requires enduring great difficulties and confronting various travel risks (Biale et al. 2018, p. 322). For many pilgrims, travelling to Uman poses challenges related to visiting a culturally different, even alien, environment, one distinct on many levels, marked as it is with limited gender separation (what posits a challenge for the pilgrims coming from societies in which gender separation is one of the crucial

³ My interviewees were using these terms in both Ukrainian and Russian, depending on the language they spoke.

rules of everyday life), language differences, and associations with the Holocaust and a history of anti-Jewish violence (Epstein 2002; Marchenko 2017).

Although the pilgrimage to Uman started in the early eighteenth century, the pilgrimage really took off after the political changes of the 1980s and the break-up of the Soviet Union. These changes led to the lifting of travel restrictions on Hasidim coming from outside the Eastern Bloc. Thus, the revival of Hasidic pilgrimage to Uman after the break-up of the Soviet Union coincided with the Ukrainian proclamation of independence in 1991 and the subsequent years of nation-building processes, and lengthy struggles to stabilise the state (Wanner 2014; Mikheieva & Shevel 2021). Furthermore, significant changes developed inside the Hasidic community that influenced the pilgrims' needs and demands, for example the increase in popularity of Bratslav Hasidism, in which pilgrimage to Uman is an important practice. These developments also reflected economic and technological transformations of both a global and a local nature (Assaf 2008; Epstein 2002; n.d.; Stadler 2020, p. 30). Since the 1990s, then, the number of pilgrims visiting Uman for the Jewish New Year festival has been steadily growing (Akao 2003).

During my first visit to Uman in the late autumn of 2012 I met students from the local university who became my first guides in this town. They took me for a walk to Pushkin Street where the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav is located. The street is very close to the dormitory where the students were living, as well as to Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, one of Uman's main higher education institutions. Before the pilgrimage developed, the street had been rather quiet, since it is located at some distance from the city centre, with many single-family houses and several blocks of flats. As the pilgrimage took off, a majority of residents, identifying mostly as Ukrainians, either started to rent their houses to the pilgrims or sold their premises and moved out. The number of hotels and hotel-type buildings also began to increase.

During our evening walk, the area of Pushkin Street and its neighbourhoods looked like the industrial outskirts of a small town, with construction sites surrounded by simple fences and walls. The streets were empty and dark, as only a few street lights worked. The atmosphere on Pushkin Street in November did not resemble the vibrant festivities I would witness the following year, when large halls would turn into bustling kosher eateries during Rosh Hashana. At Rosh Hashana 2013, the houses and hotels rented to the pilgrims came alive with the sounds of music and celebration. Crowds gathered around the kiosks and restaurants, and the entire length of Pushkin Street turned into one big promenade and dance floor.

I spent many hours on Pushkin Street during Rosh Hashanah, with a big camera on my shoulder, and a collaborator, a photographer and ethnographer, by my side, to somehow legitimise my presence there. In this way I was able to gain time to observe, photograph, and, when the opportunity arose, strike up a conversation with those pilgrims who were willing to talk and did not look away from me due to my gender. Among the pilgrims there was always someone willing to talk to me in English or Russian. I realised that my interlocutors usually perceived themselves as mediators and translators between Hasidic and non-Hasidic worlds.

Hours of observation during the festivities were also an opportunity to talk to those who, like me, observed the pilgrims: taxi drivers waiting for customers, those who were renting accommodation to pilgrims, the security guards directing traffic and checking access permits to the area,⁴ cleaners, translators, local shopkeepers among others.⁵ Many of the people who provide support services for the pilgrimage, both those undertaking basic, physical jobs, and those in more responsible positions, such as translators and guides, were curious about what was happening during festivities. Those who were working with the pilgrims exchanged anecdotes and information about Hasidic rituals, and knowledge about Hasidism gained from the Internet. Language differences, though, prevented many of them from engaging in close contact with the pilgrims. As noted above, most locals spoke only Ukrainian or Russian, so even when they met pilgrims who were open and willing to engage, verbal communication was rarely possible.

The mass character of the celebrations presented a number of problems. Conflicts sometimes broke out between locals and pilgrims, and amongst the pilgrims themselves. There were verbal and physical attacks by pilgrims on women who came too close to the Rabbi Nachman's tomb. Talking to the locals, I discovered that, for them, the festivities were full of tensions they did not always know how to interpret. What concerned my non-Hasidic interlocutors living in Uman was the impact of the pilgrimage's development on Uman itself and its inhabitants, as well as why pilgrims came at all and in such large numbers.

Energy was one of the words some of my non-Hasidic interviewees reached for in order to put the pilgrimage into a broader perspective and to explain it. As it turned out, almost everyone who used the notion of energy was able to elaborate on this concept when asked, and they provided me with an explanation that interestingly went far beyond Uman as a pilgrimage centre.

The energy my interviewees engage with brings together different scales and incommensurables and enables them to locate Uman within wider contexts, such as the Ukrainian nation, humanity, and the world as a whole. Energy also activates a complex field of relations between various actors in the present (that is, Hasidim and non-Hasidic locals) and the past (for example, Jews, Ukrainians, and Poles of Uman before the Holocaust). Consequently, it creates a common ground for exchange and influence in both space and time, where the borders between the subjects begin to blur. As Dmytro, one of my interviewees quoted later in the text, put it:

⁴ During festivities, the neighbourhood of the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav and the area of Pushkin street are fenced off, with access to them is controlled by guards. Except for pilgrims, press and law enforcement services, anyone wishing to enter the area has to present an access permit.

⁵ Interviews with Uman's local inhabitants were conducted in the following languages: Ukrainian, Russian, *surzhyk* (local mixture of Ukrainian and Russian languages), and interviews with the pilgrims were conducted in English or Russian. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and gave their consent to take part in it. The names of all interviewees have been changed.

When you think, you think, yes, you give out a certain amount of energy. This energy, it doesn't disappear. It gathers with the energy of the same direction, shall we say, the same action...

I suggest that the interviewees' explanations of the energy may be shaped by the ideas of cosmism that became popular in post-Soviet culture alongside the revival of spirituality (*dukhovnost'*, Terbish 2019, p. 3), both inside and outside Russia. Although this argument requires further research, it can be useful for framing my analysis and putting my ethnographic material into a wider cultural context, and so I elaborate on it in the following section.

COSMIC ENERGY IN POST-SOVIET CONTEXTS

Russian cosmism (Hagemester 1997; Laruelle 2012; 2019) and the theosophical movement (Carlson 1993) that inspired it, together with mesmerism (Gantet 2021), provide cultural contexts within which the ontological status of energy, as experienced by my interviewees, can be considered. Cosmism's underlying assumption about the interconnectedness of spiritual growth and scientific progress, as well as its adherents' conviction that there is an intrinsic connection between a "macro" cosmos and a "micro" cosmos (Laruelle 2012; 2019), can be seen as enabling my interviewees to bring together different realms of knowledge and experience. Despite the fact that not every interviewee who spoke about energy used the term "cosmic", their understanding of what energy is and how it operates in the world shows the inclination to see material, biological, spiritual, mental, social, political orders, to name but a few, as inseparably intertwined.

Cosmism was born and developed in Russian intellectual circles during the early twentieth century. Scholars define it as a "scientific-utopian philosophy" (Smolkin-Rothrock 2011, p. 169) focusing on "the evolution of both humanity and the universe and the relationship between the two" (Siddiqi 2008, p. 265). Academic debate concerning cosmism's roots and the sources of inspiration for it emphasises that this interpretation of the universe was influenced by both western and eastern philosophical strands, especially theosophy, Pan-Slavism and Russian Orthodoxy. Although cosmism has significant connections with esoteric thought (Laruelle 2019, p. 30–33), it may not be fully justified to call it "occult" *per se* (Hagemester 1997, p. 187).

Apart from its esoteric provenance, cosmism developed in dialogue with Soviet science and technological utopias, functioning on the margins of science or as an "alternative science" (Hagemester 1997, p. 187). Important thinkers in cosmism were connected with technological utopians either through personal relationships (Siddiqi 2008, p. 284) or because they combined their own scientific work with religious and spiritual thought. Konstantin Tsiolkovskii, for example, tended to bring together mysticism with technological thinking (Siddiqi 2008, p. 288) and attempted to reconcile events described in the Bible with modern science (Siddiqi 2008, p. 267; Laruelle 2019, p. 28).

The quest to understand the connections between the material and spiritual realms manifested itself in the use of the notion of energy or similar concepts in cosmism philosophy. Michael Hagemester and Marlène Laruelle connect the interest in energy to the pan-psychism of cosmists' thought (Hagemester 1997, p. 187; Laruelle 2019, p. 33). Cosmism thinkers were focusing on the possibilities of "human control of nervous-energy flows" (Laruelle 2019, p. 33) or exploring the functioning of human reason as a "form of energy [that has] the ability to change [...] material processes" (Laruelle 2019, p. 44). As Hagemester puts it, for cosmism thinkers, "[t]he belief in and the practice of science as a means to uncover hitherto concealed, all-powerful psychic, nervous, or cosmic energies appears to be especially characteristic" (Hagemester 1997, p. 187).

According to Hagemester, the cosmists' belief in science was rooted in and inspired by occultism, a perspective built on the conviction that (secret) knowledge has magical power (Hagemester 1997, p. 187). The cosmists' belief in science may be also associated with the Soviet Union's reception of the philosophical writings of such German scientists as the chemist Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932) – who proclaimed that the basic principle of all natural phenomena is energy, not matter (Hagemester 1997, p. 194) – as well as with scientific activity in search of ways to develop the human capacity to affect external reality. Research on developing these capabilities took the form of experiments at the periphery of Soviet science from that time, such as research on "psycho-physical energy", brain radiation, mental suggestion, telepathy and telekinesis, led by scholars over the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The religious, mystical, and speculative dimensions of cosmism were politically rejected with the establishment of the Stalinist regime in the 1930s, when the focus on the fundamental sciences was replaced by the pursuit of applied science that emphasised industrial productivity (Siddiqi 2008, p. 285). However, according to Baasanjav Terbish, many cosmism ideas were still influencing philosophical thought, literature, art, as well as social practices (Terbish 2019, p. 3) for decades after.

At the beginning of perestroika, various religious, spiritual, healing and magic practices that had been present in everyday life came to light; though not visible in the public sphere, they had nevertheless been pursued privately and discreetly throughout the Soviet era (Lindquist 2006, p. 35). According to Hagemester, the sudden increase in popularity of cosmism in the 1990s away from the scientific environment "reflects the increasing awareness of crisis and the need for a theory that assumes the world to be a rational entity with humankind at its centre" (Hagemester 1997, p. 186). This post-Soviet continuation of cosmism may be linked, as Laruelle proposes, to the New Age movements that have been developing in Russia since the 1990s (Laruelle 2019, p. 46), a claim that may well apply to other post-Soviet countries remaining under the influence of the Russian language and Russian popular culture too. In any case, the heterodox nature of this phenomenon requires an approach that is sensitive to its local variations and idiosyncrasies. Cosmism in its popularised and heterodox forms, entangled with post-Soviet versions of New

Age, constitutes an important context, then, for understanding the notion of energy used by some of my interviewees in describing the impact of Hasidic pilgrimages on the town of Uman.

ENERGY AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE

Drawing on research conducted at Orthodox Christian pilgrimage sites in the post-Soviet region, several authors have explored the language of energy used by pilgrims to describe their religious experiences. Jeanne Kormina (2010) has discussed the Soviet popular culture provenance of energy in urban settings and its connections with New Age phenomena, while Stella Rock (2012/2013) and Magdalena Lubańska (2007; 2021) have examined Orthodox Christian theological expositions concerning “divine energies” and pilgrims’ interactions with the material culture of particular shrines. Drawing on her analysis of the intersection between Eastern Christian theology and pilgrims’ religious imaginaries, Lubańska claims that the refined theological concepts developed with respect to the material aspects of religious practices create “favourable ground for a synergic relationship of the faithful with these sacred objects and encourages an ontological conviction about the special healing powers of sacred objects and substances” (Lubańska 2021, p. 67). In the emic-oriented approach pursued by Lubańska, theological concepts and religious education not only co-constitute and moderate the religious experiences of the faithful, they may also be understood as sources of language that enable the naming and verbal elaboration of these experiences (Lubańska 2021, p. 50; 2007, p. 13–17).

An emic term, widely used in the discourse on pilgrimage destinations, is *namolennoe mesto* (in Russian) or *namolene mistse* (in Ukrainian),⁶ a term meaning literally “a place filled-in and activated with prayers” or, as Kormina puts it, a place that has “absorbed many prayers” (Kormina 2010, p. 276). My interviewees use it to describe shrines attracting many people who pray there with all their heart and leave their faith and prayers behind, contributing to the spiritual value of the place and strengthening its agency. A *namolene mistse* affects the experiences of other pilgrims, especially in a sensory and emotional way, and facilitates their contact with God.

The agency of a *namolennoe mesto* / *namolene mistse* is connected with the notion of *namolennost’* (Russian) / *namolenist’* (Ukrainian) – a quality that constitutes such a place. Kormina translates and interprets *namolennost’* as “antiquity”, highlighting its cumulative character, as such a place gathers the prayers of entire generations,

⁶ Agnieszka Halemba documented a similar expression in Medjugorje (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), a place of Marian apparitions, used by a Ukrainian Greek Catholic pilgrim from Transcarpathia. The expression used by the pilgrim was *premolenoe mesto* (through-prayed place). As Halemba explains, for her interviewee the pilgrimage places are blessed by God and humans have the responsibility to sustain the sacred status of these places through prayer. In order to keep various pilgrimage sites sacred, including ruined or abandoned cloisters or churches in Ukraine, the interviewee visits them regularly together with an informal group of believers (Halemba 2011).

consequently becoming a source of grace (*blahodat'*) or energy for others. Kormina interprets the energy of a prayerful place as a quasi-scientific metaphor, enabling the translation of religious ideas into the everyday language shaped by Soviet urban beliefs (Kormina 2010, p. 276).

Catherine Wanner enhances our understanding of the agency of prayerful places, arguing that such places have a common feature, an affective atmosphere of religiosity, thanks to which people attached to these places tend to understand both individual experiences and political events in “otherworldly terms”. Prayerful places are often employed politically (by shrine operators or in national ideologies for instance), and those places simultaneously activate understandings of the political in religious terms. For Wanner, however, the ontology of a place animated with prayer and its energies are enclosed within a theory of semiotic ideology (Wanner 2020, p. 79): “[P]eople anticipate and imitate the experience of energy and ascribe a transformative power to it. By doing so, they perpetuate the cycle of validating the energy’s power and reaffirming the status of a place as ‘animated with prayer’” (Wanner 2020, pp. 80–81).

Wanner’s explanation focuses on how the political and the religious are intertwined in places animated with prayer thanks to the accumulation of devotional practices. From this perspective, energy and its transformative power are matters of belief and interpretation. In this article, however, I go beyond this representational approach in order to understand the energy my local interviewees engage with. By looking through the lens of a knowledge-belief distinction, which is widely explored in non-representational critiques of “belief” (Holbraad & Pedersen 2017; Lindquist & Coleman 2008; Paleček & Risjord 2012; Risjord 2020), I explore the relationship between the agency of various actors (human and other-than-human) and energy, and the ontological implications of this relationship. Hence, I concentrate on the ontology of energy by drawing on the notion of animacy proposed by Tim Ingold, understood as a “dynamic, transformative potential of the entire field of relations within which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence” (Ingold 2006, p. 10). From this perspective, energy is something that has the potential to transform other beings. Energy is also something that beings leave behind at different places and times. It is, finally, something that shows the commonality of seemingly incommensurable worlds, which “on the level of energy” turn out to be mutually comprehensible; energy, we must conclude, intertwines and binds beings together.

THE CULT OF NACHMAN OF BRATSLAV

What makes Uman unique on the map of Hasidic pilgrimage destinations is the cult of Nachman of Bratslav (Bilu & Mark 2012; Bilu 2020). The Hasidim come to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc to visit the tombs of their spiritual leaders, the *tsadikim*. A *tsadik*, as a holy, pious man (Ben-Ari & Bilu 1997, p. 69) and a sainted figure (Bilu 2010, p. 55) acts as “an intermediary between the Hasidim

and the Divine” (Bilu & Mark 2012, p. 48).⁷ Pilgrimage to a *tsadik* or to his grave had already been an important part of Hasidic religious life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Epstein n.d.). In contemporary Hasidism, pilgrimage to the countries of former Eastern Bloc to visit the graves of *tsadikim*, followed by particular Hasidic groups, remains a widely-spread religious practice.

The gravesite of a *tsadik* fits the definition of a place animated with prayer, as I will demonstrate. Indeed, several ethnographic studies of Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe have already presented impressive evidence showing that gravesites are treated as power places by some non-Jews who look for spiritual experiences or healing there (Cała 1995; Kaspina & Amosova 2009; Belova & Petrukhn 2007; Olędzki 1989).⁸

Although Rabbi Nachman (1772–1810) is buried in Uman, he spent most of his life outside the town and only moved there shortly before his death. As ChaeRan Freeze explains, Nachman chose Uman for his burial place “so that he could pray for the souls of the martyrs of the Gonta pogrom” (Freeze, n.d.), anti-Jewish violence that took place in Uman in 1768 that involved the mass murder of Jews and Poles during *koliivshchyna* (*haïdamachchyna*).⁹

The status of this rather niche figure of the Bratslav holy man, or *tsadik*, has undergone a massive transformation in recent decades (Mark 2010; 2015). This transformation is associated with the expansion of Bratslav Hasidism from a comparatively marginal stream of Hasidism into a thriving and diverse community that is attracting not only new followers but also huge attention through external publicity, media, and public debates (Bilu & Mark 2012, p. 48). In their comparison of Bratslav Hasidism and Chabad, Bilu and Mark (2012) interpret the appeal of Bratslav Hasidism as being due to the messianic features of Nachman of Bratslav (2012, p. 48) and to the fact that the community does not have a living *tsadik*, for most groups “a *sine qua non* of Hasidism” (Bilu & Mark 2012, p. 48). According to the authors, the absence of a presiding *tsadik* creates space for a wide range of autonomous activities around and approaches to his cult (*ibid.*).

⁷ Detailed discussion on the figure of a *tsadik* and its historical and cultural “prototypes” may be found in the work of Yoram Bilu *The Saints’ Impresarios: Dreamers, Healers, and Holy Men in Israel’s Urban Periphery* (2010) or in *Hasidism: Key Questions* by Marcin Wodziński (2018).

⁸ Igor Tourov proposes an interesting comparison of Hasidism and Eastern Christianity revealing thought-provoking convergences between the two traditions, such as the role of the *starets* (lit. old man) as a spiritual guide and the relationship to him after his death, as well as connections between Eastern Christian Orthodox mysticism (hesychasm) and Hasidic prayer practices (Tourov 2004). A comparative analysis of Hasidic mysticism and devotional practices of Eastern Orthodoxy would require further research. Such studies could, however, shed light on the connections between those distinct spiritual realms and would help to clarify possible inclusive strategies that Uman’s non-Jewish inhabitants pursue in order to understand and encompass the Hasidic pilgrims’ religious practices.

⁹ The term *koliivshchyna* (*haïdamachchyna*) refers to a rebellion (1768–1769) by Cossacks and Ruthenian peasantry against Polish nobility and clergy, as well as Jews perceived to be part of the Polish authority structure at that time.

LOCAL RESIDENTS AS PART OF THE 'CULTIC CONSTITUENCY' IN UMAN

Due to the revival of the pilgrimage and its intense development during the last forty years, the infrastructure for pilgrims has been constantly expanding and has changed both the local landscape and the local economy. The few anthropological publications describing and analysing the Hasidic pilgrimages to Uman in recent years have emphasised the impact of the pilgrimage on the political situation at local, national, and international levels (Akao 2003; 2007; Marchenko 2014; 2016; 2018). However, my research has focused on the local inhabitants' responses towards the pilgrimage. I have been inspired by scholars who have pointed out that pilgrims *as well as* other social actors, who for various reasons stay "outside", are involved in the development of pilgrimage cults. Such a broadening of perspective may lead to investigating pilgrimage and the shrine's sacred powers as having been constructed by varied representations and produced by diverse sectors of the "cultic constituency", including actors from outside the pilgrimage (Eade & Sallnow 1991, p. 5).

In comparison to the meanings attributed to the pilgrimage by the pilgrims themselves (Canetti, forthcoming; Marchenko 2018), outsiders' views about the Hasidic pilgrimage are prone to simplification and stereotyping. Many local residents in Uman, for instance, display limited knowledge about the cult of Nachman of Bratslav and even less about Hasidic pilgrimage as a religious practice. However, these outsider perspectives say a lot about how these residents – who identify themselves mostly with Orthodox Christian and Greek Catholic religious traditions – experience the pilgrimage's development, as well as and changes in the town that have been induced by this process in recent years.

Treating the local non-Hasidic and non-Jewish inhabitants, who are outside the pilgrimages or "orbit" around them, as part of a "cultic constituency" (Eade & Sallnow 1991, p. 5) encourages research that looks outward. As Simon Coleman (2002) suggests, we should appreciate the value of research that does not focus on the institution of pilgrimage itself, but which treats it as a case study through which we may understand human behaviours (Coleman 2002, p. 363). By looking through the prism of the pilgrimages, I examine how my interviewees construct the "cultic constituency" of the Uman pilgrimage centre, as well as how their everyday life, their economic situation, and their living-space are shaped by and "beyond" the pilgrimage. Hence, I investigate how, for my interviewees, the pilgrimage dynamics activate national and religious identity questions, as well as reflections on the contemporary world.

Thanks to the pilgrimage, Uman is perceived as a unique place not only by pilgrims, but also by the non-Jewish residents of the town, whose sense of belonging to this place is affected by the dynamics of pilgrimage and the local pilgrimage industry. In their study on the development of saints' sanctuaries as a mechanism of urban transformation in Israel, Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu (1997) point out that:

[...] the *tsaddiq* accords the town an aura of sanctity, through which it is 'cathected' with the holy man's divine grace. In this way, the residents' sense of belonging to the locality acquires a wider meaning (Ben-Ari & Bilu 1997, p. 77).

This observation by Ben-Ari and Bilu in Israel encourages us to reflect on how Nachman's tomb in Uman might affect the local residents' sense of belonging there. It raises the question of whether the shrine is (at least) doubly alien for the residents, because of religious and national differences, as well as the fact that the pilgrims are, from a local perspective, outsiders.

For my interviewees, the pilgrimage, perceived by them as an influx of people from outside, is at the same time a direct driver of the town's development and a source of significant changes in its infrastructure, thus bringing to the inhabitants both benefits and problems. Apart from during the Rosh Hashana period, the area around Pushkin Street is a lively construction site, with new hotels and rental houses emerging. The space is changing, attracting increasing numbers of investors, while limiting the small entrepreneurship of those with little or no capital. Among my interlocutors were many people who had lived in this part of the city in the 1980s and 1990s, and their story of the growth of the pilgrim movement is, among other things, a story of loss. This loss materialises in the fences which enclose previously open spaces and courtyards. It is also a story about the need to escape from this place during Rosh Hashanah, when lights, music and the crowds of celebrating pilgrims make everyday life impossible. As a result, for the residents, the neighbourhood is becoming progressively more alienated from the city as a whole, which is reflected in the expression "Nachman City" that some use to refer to the Hasidic quarter.

The pilgrimage stimulates the economy of the city, though; hotels are being developed even outside the Pushkin area, the market in building materials and souvenirs is flourishing, the water-supply system is being improved, and the reconstruction of the local airport is anticipated (*Ukraine Crisis Media Center* 2017; Pomidorov 2021). Many students and residents of the city and surrounding villages find employment during the annual pilgrimage too. However, as my interviewees explain, the rapid development of pilgrimage markets also generates criminal activities associated with big capital in Ukraine, a sex-work market is developing, and the inhabitants are convinced that the growing pilgrimage is benefitting only those in positions of economic and political power. Although residents emphasise that the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav is a centre of authentic religious worship, they are concerned by the changes in the pilgrimage dynamics, explaining that Uman is like Lourdes, which first developed as a religious centre and then became highly commercialised (Coleman & Eade 2018).

The reaction of Uman's residents to the visiting pilgrims is strikingly similar to that described by Christopher McKevitt, capturing the sharp divide between those attracted to Padre Pio's shrine in southern Italy and the inhabitants of the local town, San Giovanni Rotondo (McKevitt 1991). McKevitt claims that the cult attracted increasing numbers of pilgrims as well and led to a sense of alienation among local inhabitants, who also resented the growth of a tourism industry monopolised by foreigners (McKevitt 1991, p. 87), ultimately viewing the shrine as primarily a centre of "secular power, represented by the outsiders" (Eade & Sallnow 1991, pp. 12–13).

Although there are a number of similarities between those living in San Giovanni Rotondo and Uman, then, I want to explore the impact of the pilgrimage dynamic on

the local space, religion, and spirituality through the lens of the energy of Nachman's tomb. I also want to go beyond explaining the dynamics of relations between pilgrims and local inhabitants solely in terms of secular power relations. My research shows that the relationships between locals and the Hasidim are mediated by the figure of Nachman of Bratslav, whose tomb is treated by the non-Jewish interviewees quoted below in terms of a place animated with prayer, and thus charged with the energy coming from the prayers of pilgrims and a growing, local Hasidic community. There are, however, other actors mentioned by my interviewees; the influential businessmen who make up the local structures of economic-political power; and those historical figures claimed by interviewees as the heroic leaders of the Ukrainian national liberation movement. In the following sections of the article I show how, thanks to their experience of the tomb's energy, my interviewees are able to identify intersections between local secular and religious power relations, connect with entities such as the nation, humanity, or the world, and link Uman's past to the present situation in the town as a pilgrimage centre.

THE ENERGY OF THE *TSADIK*
IN THE NARRATIVES OF UMAN'S NON-JEWISH INHABITANTS

At the time of my fieldwork, Dmytro was a small-business owner in his late forties who ran a shop in Uman. As he explained at the beginning of our first meeting, the pilgrimage generated a vast part of his income. Although our conversation focused mostly on the economic benefits of the pilgrimage industry and trade related to it, in his narrative he also employed the notion of energy to explain how he understood the impact of Hasidic pilgrimage on the town. He introduced me to "Gregor's field" (*pole Gregora*), explaining that it is a term used for an energy-information field; when people perform a certain activity, such as thinking about something, they release energy from themselves. This energy, as cited earlier, does not disappear but "gathers with the energy of the same direction, shall we say, the same action". As Dmytro clarifies:

it is very clearly seen in the animal world. Here are flocks of birds, shoals of fish, herds of animals, they do not agree among themselves where to swim or how to jump high or fly high. But they act, it seems, in a team. There is a shoal of fish, one fish turns, the whole shoal – op! They all are united by this Gregor's information field, so-called. Well, in principle, the science has already proven that it exists, but we know little about it, understand little about it.

Later on in our conversation he stated that this way of energy operating in the world connects groups of people as well, such as families. "You cannot release yourself from it, because it begins to drag you back. This is a power called Gregor [Gregor's field]."

Dmytro used this energy-information field theory to deepen his explanation of the development of the pilgrimage to Nachman's gravesite:

They [Hasidim] have spiritual leaders, it is written in the Talmud, in the Torah it is written that the physical shell which we are in, it is basically worthless. What is worth something, this is a soul, well, so to say [...] Why come here? Well, to the bones of the tsadik. Well, what do they [the bones] represent? His teachings might represent something, his soul might represent something, Gregor [Gregor's field] – this field that he [Nachman of Bratslav] created and thanks to which a certain number of people from all over the world gather together, these have some kind of power, not his bones.

Dmytro then explained the unique status of Uman on the Hasidic pilgrimage destination map by referring to the notion of *namolennost* (being filled-in with prayers). He argued that the recurring presence of pilgrims, and their prayers at the tomb, leads to an accumulation of the energy of prayers and thoughts:

But in any scripture there is such a phrase – ‘In the beginning was the Word.’ And that’s where it all starts. That is, the word is not just a sound that flew in and out, disappeared. It also has energy; it also creates something. But in order for a word to arise, there must be thought, and it too has energy, no less than a word. That is, you need to think correctly in order for the right events to occur around you – well, from the same area. Therefore, if you explore purposefully and are tying this to their prayers – yes, to any prayers – then why do they say a place filled-in with prayers [namolennoe mesto]? Because this is where it already works.

The value of the energy-information field of Nachman’s gravesite as a place animated with prayer can be intentionally boosted as well:

They [Hasidim] did not in vain hire the people who prayed there [at the tomb]. They needed to create this energy-information field in order to start pulling. The more people think, think, and pray, the more Gregor [Gregor’s field] grows.

Although consistent with the “logic” of the place animated with prayer (Kormina 2010; Wanner 2020), this statement introduces an additional dimension that individuals and groups can influence and enhance the status of such a place with their actions. Others, however, perceive it as oppression, the energy of Nachman’s grave, developed by prayers, turns out to be a source of pressure for Dmytro:

Gregor [Gregor’s field] can oppress. That is, let’s suppose it can oppress ... the other faith, the other course of action. That is, for example, the same [Gregor’s field] of anti-Semitism can oppress. For example, you even can’t have thoughts to say something bad to a Jew, because the Gregor [Gregor’s field] that they [Hasidim] created, it won’t let you do it. You will think that this is tolerance. No, this is actually the field they created.

The field created by the prayers thus became for Dmytro an explanation for abstaining from anti-Semitism as well. Thus, Nachman’s tomb as a place animated with prayer becomes implicated in Dmytro’s resentment of the Hasidic presence in Uman and is used to discuss the structure of domination to which Dmytro feels subordinated. This accords with the process described by Wanner, where places animated with prayer have the “political utility” of being able to arouse attachment to a contested place by providing new forms of place agency (Wanner 2020, p. 100).

Another key informant, Andrii, was also in his late forties when we met. He had worked both as a guard and a cleaner during Rosh Hashana in Uman. Both kinds of work required constant but specific contact with the pilgrims. As a guard, Andrii checked whether the people passing through a gate leading to a hotel or to a canteen possessed relevant documents, while as a cleaner he picked up rubbish from the street. During one of our long conversations, after a lengthy discussion on the energy of Christian Orthodox sanctuaries, I asked him about the grave of Nachman of Bratslav. Had he ever visited Nachman's tomb? Did he feel energy there similar to that experienced in the Orthodox monasteries he had visited many times? His reply was slightly evasive and told me more about how Andrii understands the ontology of energy rather than his attitude to Nachman's tomb:

The energies are all around, they act differently for different people. They act differently for everyone. Just, you know, this is what we have to respect, because this is as fire. Fire is also for everyone, right?

In response to my further inquiries, Andrii admitted that he did not try to get in contact with Nachman, because he was not interested. Although Andrii said that he was not interested in communicating with the energy of the *tsadik*, during our conversation he did reveal his interest in Hasidic religious practices:

You see, everything is practically prescribed in there [in the Scripture]. So, for him, he is a Hasid; he wants to live well; he is supposed to eat properly. God forbid, if you do not eat in a right way; that's it, you are already practically sinning. To wash yourself, to shave; well, to do anything. For example, even to use this kind of water or rain water, you are supposed to use rain [water], because it is natural, it is structured, it is healthy water for your health, for everything.

“Structured water”, which Andrii refers to, was water with a “regular structure of molecules” and therefore possessed positive energy. By using this terminology to explain Hasidic customs, Andrii created a common ground where Hasidim and those coming from other religious, cultural or national backgrounds like Andrii himself, might meet and understand each other.

Both Dmytro and Andrii talked about the energy of Nachman of Bratslav and his tomb. Dmytro focused on distinguishing various actors that, thanks to the *tsadik's* energy, developed their own energies which could operate in the wider world—the *tsadik's* soul and remains, pilgrims' prayers and thoughts, Uman as a place suffused with prayers. Andrii, however, explored the broader connections between various realms of the world and the various actors inhabiting them, such as the energy of “structured water” being universal, one's interaction with the shrines' energies as an outcome of one's openness to them, and “being interested” in the *tsadik* and his tomb.

The energy Dmytro and Andrii engage with constitutes common ground for communication between groups (Hasidim and Uman's non-Jewish inhabitants), between people and place (the shrine and the town of Uman), and between human and other-than-human actors, such as the tomb, water, and animals. Although “energy” often refers here to the agency of humans or a saint, it is clear that it is

also understood as the property of various actors; the narrative of energy created by Dmytro and Andriï rejects human-centric understanding. My interviewees' engagement with energy challenges the binary distinctions between knowledge and belief, sacred and secular, or culture and nature, and offers instead a world of mutual connections, where the whole variety of actors are immersed in and influence each other (Ingold 2000, p. 187).

ENERGY AS SELF-AWARENESS

To understand Andriï's narrative, recorded during my fieldwork in 2017, and what was happening in many of our conversations, we need to contextualise it within the political situation of Ukraine he referred to, that is, the protest movement of Euromaidan and the subsequent Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014, followed by the Russian annexation of Crimea, and War in the East, as my interviewees named the armed conflict in the Ukrainian region of Donbas, involving Ukrainian national forces on one side, and local separatists supported by Russia with military manpower and material on the other side (Yekelchuk 2015, p. 141). The Euromaidan Revolution, a wave of protests, demonstrations and armed clashes in Ukraine, began on November 21, 2013 in Kyiv and were triggered by then-President Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign an association agreement with the European Union. The Euromaidan Revolution (which lasted from November 2013 until February 2014) preceded the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation (ratified by Russia's Duma in March 2014). The subsequent armed conflict in the eastern provinces of Ukraine (in April 2014), would take the shape of an undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine, and bring so much death and displacement to people over the following years (Wanner 2021, p. 1). As Serhy Yekelchuk clarifies, "[t]he fighting in eastern Ukraine or, to be precise, in Donetsk and Luhansk provinces combines features of a covert foreign invasion with those of a civil conflict" (Yekelchuk 2015, p. 5).

In the course of my fieldwork, consisting of several research trips between 2012 and 2017, I observed that the events of Euromaidan and the military conflict in Donbas became not only a poignant part of my interviewees' daily lives, as interviewees' family members had been sent to the front and many of Uman's inhabitants were involved in supporting the soldiers from the region by sending them parcels with food, warm clothes and personal protective equipment. The events of the Euromaidan Revolution and the fighting in Donbas also became for them an important point of reference when they talked about Ukrainian-Hasidic relations in Uman, juxtaposing the problems of Ukrainian statehood with local economic, social, and political challenges resulting from the mass pilgrimages and the growth of the pilgrimage industry. Hence, Andriï's description of Hasidic pilgrimage to Uman, the development of the pilgrimage industry and the tensions around these were deeply embedded in his broader concern about the Ukrainian political situation, Ukrainian society and its energy, understood as "national self-awareness". All of this Andriï incorporated

into a description of recent global changes, including the climate and refugee crises. Energy in Andrii's narrative is what unifies the political and environmental processes operating both globally and locally.

The Euromaidan Revolution, the Crimean annexation and the conflict in Donbas were instances of the challenges to Ukraine's sovereignty and the tensions of post-Soviet nation building (Wanner 2014, 2020; Riabczuk 2015; Mikheieva & Shevel 2021). On the local level, this political situation strengthened the ways in which Ukrainian national and civic identities were manifested. An event contributing to this process involved a monument being erected to Ivan Gonta and Maksym Zalizniak, who led the 1768 rebellion of Cossacks and Ruthenian peasantry (*koliivshchyna* or *haïdamachchyna*) during which the murder of Jews and Poles who had sought refuge in Uman's fortress took place. As a result of this event, Uman, as Paul Magosci (1996) clarifies, became "an important symbol in the historical mythologies of Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews, yet one profoundly different for all three" (Magosci 1996, p. 297). From the popular Polish perspective, the "massacre of Uman" is often seen as an example of the Cossacks' "barbarism" against Polish "civilisation". From the Jewish side, the event, as "the second Ukrainian catastrophe" (after the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising of 1648), materialises the traumatic history of anti-Semitic violence in the Ukrainian lands (Magosci 1996, p. 296–300). Hence, this event is often described by Jews and Poles in terms of martyrdom. However, for many of those Uman interviewees who identified with the Ukrainian national movement, "the capture of Uman" in 1768 symbolised a victory in the long struggle for national freedom. Yet, at the same time, Nachman of Bratslav, who was born four years after the massacre, chose Uman as his burial place precisely because of the events of 1768 (Freeze, n.d.; Magosci 1996, p. 299).

During fieldwork conducted in 2015 and 2017 in Uman, this historical event, the Euromaidan, and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine were often mentioned during my interlocutors' reflections about Hasidic pilgrimage to Uman. These reflections compared tense relations, those between locals and Hasidic pilgrims to historic Ukrainian-Jewish and Ukrainian-Polish relations, to the events of 1768 (*koliivshchyna*). They also made reference to what they perceived as the driver for the Crimean annexation and the military conflict in eastern Ukraine, namely contemporary Ukrainian-Russian relations.

This narrative was based on the notion of "oppression" which was used by my interviewees to express their sense of a continuity in the dominance structure through various times and across different scales. With regard to the *koliivshchyna*, then, my interlocutors believed that the oppression back then was perpetrated by Poles and by Jews working for the Polish administration of the area before the Second World War. As for the recent military conflict in eastern Ukraine, the oppressor was Russia, while in contemporary Uman itself, everyday life was marked by the oppression wielded by the influential businessmen operating locally and controlling the pilgrimage industry in the town. Hasidic pilgrimage was seen by my non-Hasidic interviewees as contributing to the local structures of political and economic domination. The development of Uman as a pilgrimage centre meant for them that the interests of

the Hasidim were prioritised over others by the local authorities and business. As another interviewee put it: when 300,000 pilgrims come to Uman instead of 30,000 pilgrims, the Gonta and Zaluzniak monument is sure to be removed.

The tense relations between the locals and the Hasidic pilgrims were also expressed in more direct manifestations, such as protests against the Hasidic presence in Uman that employed anti-Semitic iconography or conflicts around the cross erected by local national-civic activists over the lake where pilgrims gather and pray (Zatorska 2019). The energy that my interviewees described was also an aspect of their experience of their own identity. Through this energy they can connect with other people, nation-states, and events of various scales both in space (the interviewees themselves, Uman's inhabitants, the Ukrainian nation, humanity, the world) and time (the Polish colonial past, the 1768 rebellion by Cossacks and Ruthenian peasantry, and contemporary conflicts with the pilgrims). Energy as an aspect of identity, then, activates the complex field of past and present Ukrainian-Jewish-Polish relations and mobilises it into the present struggles that form part of the local experience of pilgrimage.

CONCLUSION

In this contribution I have sought to look beyond the dominant representational approach towards pilgrimage. Drawing on my ethnographic fieldwork conducted among the local inhabitants of the Ukrainian town of Uman, I have explored the ways in which residents have viewed the town's growth as a mass pilgrimage destination visited by Hasidim. I have shown how local non-Jewish inhabitants who stay "outside" the pilgrimage, but whose everyday lives are heavily influenced by the development of the pilgrimage industry, respond to this flock via their engagement with energy. I traced the notion of energy (Ukr. *enerhiia*, *enerhetyka*, Rus. *energiia*, *energetika*) to the tradition of Russian Cosmism and explored how it is used by my interviewees to explain their understanding of the impact of the pilgrimage on the town and its inhabitants. In the broader context, I argued that my interviewees' experiences of energy has enabled them to engage with the complexities of historical memories and traumas, reflecting past Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish relations as well as the ongoing war with Russia over Ukrainian sovereignty.

For my interviewees from Uman who are neither Hasidic nor Jewish, the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav contributes to the town's unique global status and impacts their sense of belonging to the place. The shrine has become, for them, both a centre of secular power connected to Uman's rapidly-developing pilgrimage industry, and a place suffused with other-than-secular power, that is, energy or energies comparable to those they have experienced at Orthodox Christian sanctuaries. For them, the tomb of Nachman of Bratslav, as a place animated with prayer, accumulates the energy of both historical and contemporary activities and events, such as the 1768 rebellion and recent conflicts around the cross built over the lake. In this context,

the tomb, constantly reinforced in its *namolenist'* by pilgrims' prayers, becomes an actor in the local field of power relations; it attracts new pilgrims, it is the centre of an alienated territory, and it reveals the sacred inextricably entangled with the economic and political.

For my interviewees, the energy of Nachman of Bratslav, his tomb, the presence of Hasidim in Uman and pilgrim prayers and thoughts are ontologically connected with the energy of place and actors in the "natural" world, such as water or animals. This connection exists prior to any differentiation between spirit and substance or agency and materiality. As such, it blurs the distinctions between human and non-human, secular and sacred, political and spiritual. Moreover, the explanation of this interconnectedness goes beyond the question of the agency of human and other-than-human actors. Energy connects various actors and places, with each other and with the world, and is understood in terms of "animacy".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The article was originally prepared as a workshop paper and further developed with the aim of entering a special issue of one of the leading social science journals focused, *inter alia*, on the post-Soviet world. During this process, the article went through peer-review and three revisions. The last stage of work on the article coincided with the Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. The final refinements of the article consisted of the editorial board editing the paper and providing comments and wording suggestions to the author, including a suggestion to exchange the term "war", used by the author to refer to the armed conflict in Donbas since 2014, for the term "conflict". At the same time, the editors asked for a theoretical paragraph devoted to the details of cosmism. The author provided the required theoretical paragraph and agreed to replace the term "war" for "conflict". However, the author also added a short passage of text explaining that the "conflict" discussed in the article had a status of "undeclared war", a claim backed up with references to academic scholars who are well established in the West: "which took the shape of an undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine, bringing a lot of people's deaths and displacement during the following years' (Wanner 2021, p. 1). As Serhy Yekelchuk clarifies, '[t]he fighting in eastern Ukraine or, to be precise, in Donetsk and Luhansk provinces combines features of a covert foreign invasion with those of a civil conflict' (Yekelchuk 2015, p. 5)." The paper was rejected by the editorial board in March 2022, with the explanation that the changes provided by the author did not resolve the problems they had with the article and (somehow) instead generated new ones that could not be worked on further, due to time constraints. The editorial board did not provide any other details regarding these new problems that had arisen from the amendments. The author assumes that the rejection of the article at this final stage of work may stem from political considerations related to the use of the term "war", despite the editorial board's attempts to eliminate this word from the article.

The article represents another reworked effort to balance any potential concerns, as well as a serious engagement with the purpose and approach of this special issue to speak to and from contemporary Ukrainian scholarship. The author would like to thank to the editors of this special issue, Julia Buyskykh, Joanna Mroczkowska, and Keith Egan, as well as the anonymous reviewers, for their encouragement in developing the final version of the article.

Despite the rejection of the article by the journal mentioned above, the author would also like to express her gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers of that journal for their inspiring and insightful comments, as well as to the guest editors of that special issue for their guidance and exquisite support

in the development of the article, both in its structure and its language. Without the engagement of the guest editors and anonymous reviewers of the journal that in the end rejected the article in March 2022, the current version of the article would never have been possible.

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MAGDALENA ZATORSKA

THE TOMBS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND COSMIC ENERGY IN UKRAINE

Key words: pilgrimage; Hasidism; agency; energy; Ukraine

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in the town of Uman (Ukraine), an important Hasidic pilgrimage centre built around the tomb of the Jewish righteous Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, I explore the notion of energy employed by Uman's non-Hasidic and non-Jewish inhabitants to describe the pilgrimages and their impact on the town. I argue that for some of the Uman residents energy, as a part of a wider set of ontological convictions, explains the agency of human and other-than-human actors, as well as the animacy of the world they inhabit. In this contribution, I show how the notion of energy reflects the local and supralocal contexts, in particular the struggles for national identity and sovereignty and is employed in the process of co-creating the Hasidic pilgrimage to Uman by the pilgrimage's "others".

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INTERTWINED MEMORIES OF KRYVYI RIH: THE ATO, SECOND WORLD WAR, AND THE COSSACKS¹

INTRODUCTION

Before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and after the Revolution of Dignity (The Maidan Protests) and the beginning of Russian-Ukrainian confrontation in Donbas in 2014, the politics of memory in Ukraine had been the focus of some academic research, drawing the attention of scholars from within Ukraine and from without. In the majority of cases, however, scholarly interest had been centred either on the national implementation of memory politics (Hritsenko 2019; Kasianov 2022) or on cases in larger cities like Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa. At the same time, the leading research themes being developed were focused on broader issues such as the politics of “decommunisation”, discussions around Second World War commemorations or the legacies of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

Meanwhile, much less is known about how a national “politics of memory”, that is, one initiated by state institutions, has been implemented at the local level, in particular, in the cities of Southern Ukraine (excluding Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia, which were researched earlier: Kas’yanov ed. 2018; Kozlova 2017). In using the term “politics of memory” here, I follow Georgii Kasyanov, who defines a politics of memory as a range of practices, “related to the shaping of collective/historical memory [and] does not include interventions in the sphere of professional historical writing and didactical history” (2022, p. 18). As such, my research asks how commemoration has been influenced by the political opposition of local elites to central government in this region. In addition, I interrogate the peculiarities of several local memorial spaces, and I ask how different memory layers can coexist and interact in the same urban space. This paper, then, maps the complex, connecting factors shaping the

¹ This paper was prepared as a part of the research group “War, Migration and Memory” within the academic program *PRISMA UKRAÏNA* at the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin) in 2022–2023.

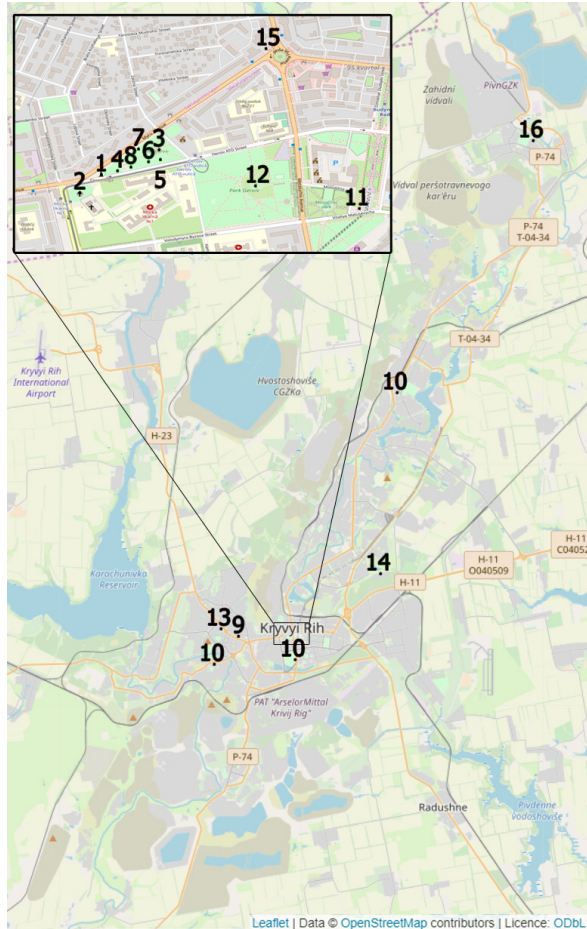
implementation of memory politics at the local level by presenting a detailed analysis of such practices at Heroes' Square in the city of Kryvyi Rih, one of the largest cities in Southern Ukraine.

Methodologically, my research draws on the concept of "places of memory" (Nora 1989) to examine how memory politics takes up residence in local urban spaces in complicated ways. Using the example of the space of Kryvyi Rih's WWII memorial, and Heroes' Square nearby. I will show how the Second World War mythology in Kryvyi Rih overlaps with contemporary practices commemorating the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), which took place in Eastern Ukraine from 2014–2022.² I show explore too how deeply intertwined the memory practices surrounding these two wars have become in the city memorial space. The history of public practices around the 1968 Soviet "Victory" Memorial, dedicated to the Great Patriotic War and the space behind it, is a pertinent example of how memories of the two wars in Kryvyi Rih have been transforming. Observing these transformations illustrates how the interests of local elites and the demands of state memory politics intertwined in this Southern Ukrainian city. This memorial space demonstrates, too, how the war that began in 2014 came to be overlaid onto commemorative rituals dedicated the Second World War, and how one may trace the impact of Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion on these commemorations. In this paper, I situate the city's "Cossack myth" – which embodies Ukrainian national values and notions of a glorious national past from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries (for more on this, see Gerus 1984; Plokhly 2012) – on local memory in contemporary Kryvyi Rih, where it even fuses with WWII commemoration.³

A principal source I draw on for this study are reports on city events taken from local media information sources, which are available through open-access online photo and video archives. These reports have allowed me to better reconstruct the city's commemorative practices in this period of change. Another source of information is the author's long-term participant-observation as a city native, where I have documented evolving commemorative practices since the early 2000s. My observations are presented chronologically and thematically, to highlight the dynamics of changes in the city's practices, changes which constitute a shifting "politics of memory", as evidenced in the transformation of Heroes' Square, the focus of this study.

² The Anti-Terrorist Operation in Eastern Ukraine officially started on April 14, 2014 in response to Russian-backed separatists taking control in Donbas. As of April 30, 2018, it was reformatted into the Joint Forces Operation. In the text, for the sake of simplicity, I will use "ATO" to refer to the entire period from April 2014 to February 23, 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

³ The terms "The Second World War" and "The Great Patriotic War" (GPW) refer to two existing models and politics of memory about that period of conflict (1939–1945 and 1941–1945 respectively), models that remain germane to Ukrainian society today. They can be defined as the (post-)Soviet model of "the Great Patriotic War" and the Ukrainian national model of "The Second World War". The first is oriented towards commemorating "the Great Victory" and the liberating campaigns of the Red Army, while the second stresses the Ukrainian context of the war and its victims.



Map 1. The monuments mentioned in the paper on the map of Kryvyi Rih.
 Author: Denys Shatalov. Scheme based on the OpenStreetMap.

1. The “Victory” Memorial, 1968
2. The St George’s Bell Tower, 2008–2010
3. The Stele of Heroes, 1971, 2013
4. The Monument to the “soldiers-internationalists”, i.e. Kryvyi Rih residents who died during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 1987, 2013
5. The ATO Victims’ Plaque, 2014–2022
6. The Memorial Cross in Honour of these Fallen Kryvyi Rih ATO Soldiers, 2016
7. The Monument to the “Chornobyl Liquidators”, 2019
8. The Ilovaysk Cross, 2020
9. The Memorial to the victims of the Holodomor and political repression, 2008
10. Monuments to Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, 1954
11. The Monument to Cossack Rih, 2011
12. The Monument to Cossack Mamay, 2016
13. The Monument to the Petro Kalnyshevs’kyi, 2018
14. The Cossack Cross at the Alley of Honourable Burials at the Central Cemetery, 2022
15. The “People’s Memorial” with Plaque of the Fallen, 2014–2022
16. The Monument to the fallen in the ATO soldiers in the Ternivskiy city district, 2016

KRYVYI RIH: GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The city of Kryvyi Rih is the district centre of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast. With a population of around 600,000 inhabitants, it is larger than most other oblast centres in the country. It is a large industrial city with a metallurgical plant and several large iron-ore mining and processing companies. Quarry dumps and mine shafts are common features of the local landscape.

In the eighteenth century, the vast, surrounding steppe territories belonged to the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who lived scattered around in *zymivnyks* (homesteads). In April 1775, the Cossack post station was organised at the confluence of the Saksagan and Ingulets rivers near a tract of land named Kryvyi Rih, considered today to be the first landmark in the city's "biography". Within months, however, the Zaporozhian Sich (Zaporozhian Cossack Host) was dissolved, and its territory became part of the Novorossiia Governorate in the Russian Empire. The Zaporozhian Cossacks were then forcibly resettled onto *slobodas*, state villages, which is how the first hamlet of Kryvyi Rih came to be founded (Rakitin 2007; Shatalov 2021a; Shatalov 2021b).

In 1828 the village of Kryvyi Rih was turned into a military settlement of cavalry, and became part of the New Russian Military Settlement of the Russian Empire (*Polnoe sobranie* 1830, p. 1093). From then on, its inhabitants were conscripted as military personnel who had to combine military service and managing a household. Thirty years later, in 1857, after the defeat of the Russian Empire in the Crimean War (1853–1856), and with the beginning of the reign of Alexander II, the system of military settlements was abolished. Since 1860, then, Kryvyi Rih was turned into a little town (*mestechko*)⁴ with a population of approximately 3,500 inhabitants, the majority of whom were peasants (Varhatiuk, Kan, Osadchuk 1977, p. 286).

Since the late eighteenth century, geologists had been recording the presence of iron ore in the rocky outcrops on the local riverbanks. These findings, however, had no practical significance until the 1870s, when a local landowner, Oleksandr Pol, started the industrial extraction of local ores. In the early 1880s, Pol succeeded in arranging for a railway line to be built to Kryvyi Rih, which connected local ore deposits with Donetsk coal. This new line was a prerequisite for an industrial boom, and after its construction, the region of Kryvyi Rih became a lodestone for hundreds of workers from Ukrainian and Russian gubernias (Varhatiuk, Kan, Osadchuk 1977, pp. 286–288). In 1916, the population of Kryvyi Rih, with the mining district, was tipping 40,000 (*Spisok naseleennykh mest* 1917, pp. 92–94).

Driven by 1930s Stalinist industrialisation policies, a metallurgical plant and several large mining enterprises were built in the region, leading to a population explosion that quadrupled the population to 213,000 by 1941 (Varhatyuk, Kan, Osadchuk 1977, p. 302). After the Second World War, the Soviet government continued to develop heavy industry in the region, with metallurgy in particular being important, which

⁴ *Mestechkos* were small towns with a semi-rural nature particular to this region and with their own special legal status in the Russian Empire.

attracted huge financial support, allowing the city to expand further and more intensively develop the urban infrastructure. By 1959, the population had doubled again, reaching 412,000, 306,000 of whom were Ukrainians, 84,000 Russians, 10,800 Jews, with 6,000 Byelorussians (*Varhatyuk, Dol'chuk 1966*, p. 148; see also the section “Mistakes Noted”). By 1970, the city had 641,000 inhabitants, while in 1993, at the peak of its growth, the number had reached 789,000 (Mel’nyk, Steblyna 2019, p. 32). Young specialists sent by the state distribution system, demobilised military personnel, natives of collective farm villages, released prisoners, and representatives of other social strata from Ukrainian regions and beyond all found employment here; Kryvyi Rih was a kind of Soviet “melting pot”.

As an urban space, though, Kryvyi Rih is relatively new. Aside from a few streets of the former *mestechko*, the city comprises areas of monotonous, standardised construction from the second half of the 1940s and the 1950s, and panel high-rise buildings dating from the 1960s to the 1980s. It is therefore a new city almost without historical landmarks. In addition, it does not have a distinct city centre; instead, the city stretches for sixty kilometres, following the ore deposits.

In terms of its background, comparisons with Donbas are to some extent appropriate. However, the Kryvyi Rih iron basin, also known as *Kryvbas*, has no strong regional identity.⁵ Even though Kryvyi Rih, like Donbas, is usually regarded as “the South-East”, it is normally referred to as “the South” (while Donbas is “the East”). This is true not only due to the geography but also due to the electoral preferences of its inhabitants. As in Donbas and other cities of the Southern Ukraine, the pro-Russian Party of Regions, led by Victor Yanukovych, was popular here.⁶ At the second (re-run) round of the 2004 elections, he was supported by 57.7% of the city’s residents, while in 2010 this number reached 63.6%.⁷ In the 2010 municipal elections,

⁵ Donbas and the “Donetsk identity” have been the object of researchers’ attention since the early 2000s, and the war in eastern Ukraine, which started in 2014, has garnered much interest for such studies too. Kryvyi Rih, however, has remained outside the scope of academic interest. My comparisons are based primarily on my own observations and impressions, and are rooted in my regional (Donetsk–Kryvyi Rih) background.

⁶ Established in 1997 as the Party of Regional Revival of Ukraine, the Party of Regions changed its name in 2001. In 2003 it was headed by Victor Yanukovych. Since 2010 it has been the senior partner in the ruling coalition. Part of the party ideology was the “Protection” of the post-Soviet vision of WWII and the Russian language in Ukraine. The party stopped its *de facto* activity in early 2014 after Yanukovych was removed from power, as a result of the mass protests known today as the Revolution of Dignity. Among the Party’s promises was a special (or even second-national) status for the Russian language. They promised, too, to maintain a close relationship with Russia and other post-Soviet countries. Apart from this, their programme did not differ much from the other main Ukrainian parties, containing rather populist promises of economic development and the improvement of state social care.

⁷ With respect to city data, I provide the average figures for territorial electoral districts Number 31, 32, 33, which Kryvyi Rih belongs to. However, these electoral districts include also several suburban villages and towns. The calculations were made based on data from the website of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/> (accessed 24.10.2023).

the Party of Regions received 71%, while the Communist Party won 10%,⁸ a showing that highlights both Soviet nostalgia among the local electorate (both parties refer to it in different ways in their propaganda) and the weakness of the pro-European forces in the city at that period.

Due to the Party of Regions' rejection of Ukraine's move towards Euro-integration and its support for the bloody suppression of the Maidan protest in Kyiv, known today as the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014), the Party was discredited and effectively stopped all activity. Despite this, former party representatives did not lose much popularity in the Kryvyi Rih. After the 2015 elections, for instance, 45.3% of Kryvyi Rih City Council deputies were from the Oppositional Bloc, an ostensibly newly-formed party that absorbed many former Party of Regions politicians.⁹ In the 2020 city council elections, the Vilkul Bloc ("The Ukrainian Perspective")¹⁰ and "The Oppositional Platform – For Life" (OPZZh),¹¹ two political parties descended from the discredited Party of Regions, were still able to attract 30.88% and 14.36% of the electorate, respectively. Even more tellingly, in the 2020 city general election, Kostyantyn Pavlov, a representative from the OPZZh, won in the second round, receiving almost 57% of the vote.

In Kryvyi Rih today, nostalgia for the Soviet era is particularly palpable, especially among the elderly population, a fact that can be explained by their memory of the city's development in the decades from the 1960s-1980s and the contrast it provides for the current economic stagnation there. Nostalgia is most likely sustained by the dominant memory policy surrounding the GPW and Soviet heritage, supported by the Party of Regions and their political offspring. In light of the Orange Revolution (2004–2005) that protested the violations that led to declaring Yanukovich the 2004 presidential winner and ended with Yushchenko becoming the legitimate winner, the Party's ideology included the idea of "protecting the Victory", i.e. the (post-)Soviet memory discourse regarding the "Great Patriotic War" (GPW). The theme of the "protecting" the memory of GPW in their propaganda has been supplemented with the presentation of a "threat" of their political opponents "rehabilitating fascism" (Osipian 2019, pp. 275–282) and it is reflected in public practices relating to Kryvyi Rih

⁸ The first attempt to legally prohibit the Communist Party took place in Ukraine as early as August 1991. However, in 1993 the Communist Party of Ukraine renewed its activity as a formally new party. The ban on its activity was adopted in the summer of 2014; finally, the ban was supported by court ruling in 2022.

⁹ Even though it was formally a new party, it in fact consisted of former leaders and deputies of the Party of Regions, who joined it in spring 2014. The name itself embodied the attitude of its leaders towards the post-Maidan pro-European government. In 2021, due to internal frictions and tensions, the party stopped its activity. In the summer of 2022 as a representative of pro-Russian forces, it was banned by the courts.

¹⁰ The project of the local-born Oleksandr Vilkul, one of the former leaders of the Party of Regions and the Oppositional Bloc, established after his split with other ex-leaders of the Party of Regions.

¹¹ Formed in November 2018, it was an association that includes the most pro-Russian part of the Opposition Bloc leaders, led by Yuriy Boyko and Viktor Medvedchuk. Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the party's activities have been banned.

memorial places and rituals. However, in light of recent historical events, a complete conservation of the Soviet mythology has, in the last decade, proved impossible.

THE COSSACK MYTH OF KRYVYI RIH

Until recently, there was no written history of Kryvyi Rih, and even the year of its foundation was unknown. Despite this, since the late nineteenth century, whenever the local past was mentioned in texts (in mostly geology or industry-related works), the origin of the town was unequivocally associated with the Zaporozhian Cossacks, even though no specific dates or circumstances were provided. This confidence was facilitated by both the awareness that the local steppes had previously belonged to the Cossacks, and by the settlement's the Cossack-style name. A local patronymic legend seemed to appear in the 1950s, tracing the beginnings of the city to the settlement of a (fictioned) Cossack named Rih (Eng. horn), who was one-eyed or lame (Ukr. *kryvyi*) (Huseynov 2005, pp. 28–32; Shatalov 2021a). In the late 1960s, Avram Popov, a local amateur historian, and Yakov Rakitin, the director of the local museum, traced the city's origin to the 1775 establishment of the Cossack post-station, which led to the city celebrating its 200th anniversary in 1975. Nevertheless, the legend of Cossack Rih continues to be locally popular (Shatalov 2021a, Shatalov 2021b).



Photograph1. The monument to the legendary founder of the city Kryvyi Cossack Rih, 2011. Author: Auroramarket. Source: Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0 Date: March 22, 2012.

The city's Cossack identity is reflected in its many monuments. In 1954, three monuments to a figure known as Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky were erected in Kryvyi Rih. In the Soviet era, he was honoured mostly as a leader who contributed to "the reunification of Ukraine with Russia", while today, in independent Ukraine, he is perceived as the founder of the Ukrainian Cossack state. In 1998 the city's Zaporozhian identity was recorded on its new coat of arms with a Cossack horn-shaped (Ukr. *Rih*) powder magazine as its central element to replace the Soviet-era coat of arms that had a silhouette of the coke-fuel chemical plant and mine shafts.

The first Cossack monument to be erected following Ukraine's independence was dedicated to the legendary Cossack Rih. It was placed in front of the City Hall and unveiled on May 28, 2011. At the same time, together with this fictional *kryvyyi* Cossack Rih, the city commemorated the last *Koshovyi otaman* (leader of the Zaporozhian Cossacks), the Saint Petro Kalnyshevs'kyi, on whose order the post-station had been founded. In May 2018, the city's anniversary was marked by unveiling a monument to Kalnyshevs'kyi (placed in the street renamed for him in 2016). In the same year, on Ukraine's Independence Day, the Twenty-first Brigade of the National Guard stationed in Kryvyi Rih was named after Kalnyshevs'kyi. The Kryvyi Rih's Orthodox Eparchy (of Moscow Patriarchate) honours Petro Kalnyshevs'kyj not only as a canonised saint but also as the city's heavenly patron.¹²

As a result of his physical embodiment in the city space, the place of Kalnyshevs'kyi in the city's Cossack myth has been strengthened. In 2019, an official ceremony with the mayor in attendance was held at his monument to mark the anniversary of his death. Now dedicated to Ukraine's Independence Day, ceremonies performed by the Central-City District (*Tsentrarno-Miskyi*) officials regularly take place under the Kalnyshevs'kyi monument, a modern symbol of the struggle for independence.

The city's Cossack identity is not only anchored in the image of the two "founding fathers" Rih and Kalnyshevs'kyi; the Cossack hero "pantheon" is also complemented by Cossack Mamay, a Zaporozhian Cossack character from folk paintings who stands as a metonym for all of Ukrainian Cossackdom. A further monument to Cossack Mamay was unveiled on October 14, 2016. It is important to note the sequence of these monuments; the first two to mythical Zaporozhians, the *kryvyyi* Rih and Mamay, and only then a monument to a historical Cossack, Kalnyshevs'kyi.

On July 16, 2022, a Cossack Cross was unveiled in the Alley of Honourable Burials at the Central Cemetery, where ATO soldiers and the current war's victims are being buried. The cross was erected to honour all the soldiers who have given their lives for Ukraine's independence. Thus a symbolic continuity with the Cossack era is being built here, leaving no space for any links to the memory of the Second World War.

Cossack presence in city rituals goes even further, in that the Cossack monuments have become a place for several of the city's most important civic ceremonies. Symbolic "Cossacks" (youth dressed in stylised Cossack dress) participate in solemn

¹² In the local church of St. Nicholas, the Worker of Wonders, there is even an icon of Kalnyshevs'kyi portraying him as the founder of the city.

city marches on May 8th (Victory Day) and February 22nd (the Day of the City's Liberation from the Fascists, known locally as "Day of the City"). They also participate in other city ceremonies, such as the Day of the City's Founding, the unveiling of the Monument to the Kyivan prince St. Volodymyr, the baptizer of Ukraine, and official mourning ceremonies for ATO soldiers, all of which reinforces the idea that the Cossack myth is the strongest part of the city's identity.

HEROES' SQUARE AND THE "VICTORY" MONUMENT

At the point of convergence of two roads in the central part of Kryvyi Rih stands a monument called "Victory" (Ukr. *Peremoha*). This monument, unveiled there on May 8, 1968, commemorates the Soviet liberators of the city from the Nazis. Its complex consists of a seven-meter-high statue of a Soviet soldier standing on a fourteen-meter-high pedestal. Behind the soldier is a stele with bas-reliefs presenting scenes from the war and a list of the Red Army units that participated in the city's liberation. Next to the stele are ten gas torches, which are lit during commemorative dates. Further on behind the memorial complex there is a small park square (*skver*). The "Victory" Monument has become the main city's visual symbol of WWII/GPW commemoration and one of the great architectural symbols of Kryvyi Rih.

From the beginning of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, GPW commemorations became even more intense in Kryvyi Rih. Firstly, a two-level commemoration of Victory Day was introduced as a permanent practice; separate city and city district level commemorations began to be held, even though previously such events were limited only to city districts celebrations. Since 1992, then, the city has held its own annual ceremony on May 8th (sometimes on May 7th), allowing the district ceremonies on May 9th to be held separately. A typical city ceremony has included speeches from city officials and guests of honour, laying of flowers, lighting the torches, and a parade of military equipment, soldiers, and cadets. On May 9th, just as in Soviet times, crowded commemoration ceremonies were held in the city's districts.

Also already in 1992, the first year after gaining national independence, commemorations of the Day of the City's Liberation from Fascists were also introduced at the "Victory" Monument. The ceremony was virtually the same as the city event in May 7th or 8th, although the scale of the February event was more modest. At the district level, the February 22nd commemorations were limited to rather small rallies at local memorials around the city.

After the Orange Revolution (2004), changes in the performance of urban rituals became noticeable; flags of new colours (blue and white) have been added to the ceremonies, supplementing the usual national and Soviet or Communist Party red flags. The city was under the control of politicians affiliated with the Party of Regions at this time, who used the theme of "protecting the memory of the war" both to mobilise their own supporters and to establish an antithetical counter-politics to then-President Yushchenko's commemorative memory politics.



Photograph 2. “Victory” Monument, 1968. Torches are lit in honor of the City’s Liberation Day. On the left is St George’s Bell Tower, dedicated to the memory of Soviet soldiers who died in the “Great Patriotic War”. Author: Denys Shatalov. Date: February 22, 2023.

Yushchenko’s commemorations focused more on remembering the Holodomor and promoting WWII-era Ukrainian Nationalist movements members as fighters for Ukrainian independence (Ararat L. Osipian, Alexandr L. Osipian 2012). Thus from then on, Kryvyi Rih’s commemorative ceremonies more closely resembled Party of Regions events, with dozens of blue and white flags flying over the crowds of participants and spectators. At this time, the tradition of holding a citywide ceremony on May 8th continued, and from the outside it appeared to be a celebration of the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation being promoted by Yushchenko (which falls on May 8th). In Kryvyi Rih, however, it was actually Victory Day that was celebrated (for example, see report on 2013 ceremony, Mikheychenko 2013).

The Party of Regions’ opposition to President Yushchenko’s humanitarian policy also affected the space near the “Victory” monument. As part of the campaign initiated by Yushchenko to commemorate victims of the 1932–1933 man-made famine, a memorial to the victims of the Holodomor and political repressions was unveiled in Kryvyi Rih on November 22, 2008. Meanwhile, in April 2008, city authorities approved the construction of another memorial object. To the right of the “Victory” monument, construction began on the St George’s Bell Tower, dedicated to the memory of Soviet soldiers who died in GPW. This project was positioned as a “people’s cause”, and local citizens were encouraged to donate to the construction

(see *Shanovni kryvorizhtsi* 2008). In fact, two thirds of the costs were paid from the city budget. Standing fifty-one metres tall, the Bell Tower was handed over to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and was opened during a solemn ceremony dedicated to the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Victory on May 8, 2010. Since then, a prayer service in the Bell Tower has become an integral part of the Monument's February 22nd and May 8th commemorative ceremonies.

Since the autumn of 2013, the square behind the "Victory" Monument began to transform from a mere park into a commemorative space. The Stele of Heroes, a typical Soviet-style monument from 1971, was moved here from a nearby park. The monument lists the names of Heroes of the Soviet Union and Heroes of Socialist Labour from Kryvyi Rih, so with its relocation, the stele was supplemented with the names of the local "Heroes of Ukraine". At the same time, another monument from the same park was moved to the square, this one a 1987 dedication to "soldiers-internationalists", Kryvyi Rih residents who died during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But as it turned out, they were just the first memorials to be added to this space; further tragic events would give reasons to place more monuments for Ukraine's fallen here.

THE ATO AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MEMORY OVERLAPPING

The beginning of 2014 was shocking for Ukrainian society, with its mass killings of Maidan protesters in Kyiv by riot police, the fall of Yanukovich's regime, and the Russian annexation of Crimea. Sixty-seven people died as a result of the shooting of protesters on the Maidan between 18–20 February (*DBR zavershylo...* 2023). On the morning of February 22nd, as the Ukrainian parliament removed Victor Yanukovich from office, the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Kryvyi Rih Liberation was held. Due to nationwide mourning in the wake of the Maidan killings, the parade element was eventually cancelled. There was, however, an innovation: the "Victory" Monument and the square became a ceremonial space, and the laying of flowers began with the Stele of Heroes and the monument to the fallen in Afghanistan (*Svyashchennyi vyzvol'nyy vohon'* 2014). Clearly, the Maidan had done little to change the political landscape in the Kryvyi Rih, where former representatives of the Party of Regions, now transformed to the Opposition Bloc, remained dominant.

On April 14, 2014, the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Eastern Ukraine (ATO) officially began. This Ukrainian government's military action aimed to regain control over Donbas, then occupied by Russian-backed separatists. On May 2nd, dozens of pro-Russian protesters died in a Trade Unions House fire in Odesa and the tragedy was used to mobilise pro-Russian sympathisers in Ukraine. Against this background of escalating public confrontation, the commemoration on May 9, 2014 was used by the Opposition Bloc to demonstrate its influence in the South and East (Hellbeck and Titarenko 2016). Kryvyi Rih's commemoration on May 8, 2014 was no exception either. However, apart from a few flag-bearers, members of the Armed Forces or

Internal Troops as official representatives, there were no longer such great numbers participating in the city ceremony. The “parade” part was narrowed down to the procession of WWII-era trucks carrying war veterans, School of Civil Aviation cadets,¹³ pupils from the city military Lyceum,¹⁴ and symbolic “Cossacks”, young men dressed as Zaporozhian Cossacks, marching.¹⁵ Behind them a larger group, the “Immortal Regiment” action, followed with a banner displaying the words “Thank you grandfather for the Victory!”. Its participants carried portraits of WWII veterans on poles. It was the first time an action of the Immortal Regiment had been held in the city.¹⁶ It was clear that the celebration of the “Great Victory” in the “Great Patriotic War” took precedence over the commemoration of the war victims (*Obshchegorodskiy meropriyatiya...* 2014). This style of commemoration was a demonstration of opposition to the post-Maidan government, even though the participants and guests of the event did not don the St. George ribbons that had been symbols of the GPW since 2005.¹⁷ They were not banned officially at the time (it happened in 2017) but were discredited as symbols used by pro-Russian separatists. Instead of the usual blue and white flags of the Party of Regions, that year’s celebrations were backed by blue and yellow national and Soviet red flags. It is noteworthy that, among the spectators and the portrait-bearers of the “Immortal regiment” in footage and photoreports, we can see many young people. Their participation could be partly explained by the locally well-known, but rarely acknowledged, practices by coercive administrators corralling school and university students and communal employees into provide a larger audience for city and district ceremonies (as an example see *Dan’ traditsii...* 2018; *V Krivom Roge...* 2018, *Na prospekti...* 2018, *Novosti...* 2018). There were also other participants, of course, who attended of their own will.

From the end of May 2014, relatively small military clashes in Donbas turned into full-scale battles, employing aviation, tanks, and artillery. On the night of June 14th, a Ukrainian Il-76 military transport plane carrying nine crew members and forty paratroopers of the Twenty-fifth Brigade (six of whom were from Kryvyi Rih) was shot down by by the separatists (actually they were PMC Wagner mercenaries,

¹³ Its official name is the Kryvyi Rih Professional College of the National Aviation University.

¹⁴ Its official name is the Kryvyi Rih Lyceum-Boarding School with Advanced Military and Physical Training, which, in fact, is not a military training institution, but a type of secondary school.

¹⁵ These Cossack-dressed young men officially presented as members of the “Sich” patriotic organisation. However, I have been unable to find information about any of its activities beyond this symbolic representation of the city’s Cossack identity.

¹⁶ For more about the action, see Fedor 2017; Kurilla 2018. In the Ukrainian context, the Immortal Regiment was interpreted as a pro-Russian event. See, for example, the definition in Materials of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (*Materialy...* 2021).

¹⁷ The black and orange Ribbons of Saint George were introduced in Russia in 2005 as the official GPW commemorative symbol. In this role they also were promoted in Ukraine while the Party of Regions held sway. Since the Maidan protests, the annexation of Crimea and the first clashes in Donbas in 2014, they have become a symbol of the pro-Russian position and marks of distinction for separatists.

as it was later discovered) while landing at Lugansk airport (*SBU zayavila...* 2019).¹⁸ It was the largest single loss in the history of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to date, and it shocked Ukrainian society. On June 19th, acting on the initiative of the city mayor Yurii Vilkul, a plaque with portraits commemorating the fallen paratroopers was unveiled in the alley between the Stele of Heroes and the “Victory” Monument (*U Kryvomu Rozi za initsiatyvy...* 2014).¹⁹



Photograph 3. Space of Heroes' Square with its monuments. From left to right: the Stele of Heroes, ATO Plaque of the Fallen Kryvyi Rih citizens, The Ilovaysk Cross and Memorial Cross in Honour of the Fallen Kryvyi Rih ATO Soldiers. Next to them stands the monument to “soldiers-internationalists” and on the opposite side of the alley placed the monument to the “Chornobyl Liquidators”. About 120 metres to right is the “Victory” Monument located. Author: Denys Shatalov. Date: February 22, 2023.

At 4 a.m. on June 22nd, a memorial event was held near the “Victory” monument to commemorate the beginning of the German-Soviet war. During the event, flowers were also laid on the memorial plaque to fellow countrymen who had died in the ATO (*Aleksandr Vilkul...* 2014). A month later, on July 25th, a solemn ceremony of parting for the aircraft paratroopers who had been killed took place on the same site, with the honour guard being held by soldiers and “Cossacks” (*Kryvyi Rih*

¹⁸ The Private Mercenary Company Wagner in fact is a Russian state-affiliated military organisation, and since 2014 it has engaged in non-official Russian actions in Ukraine, Syria and various African countries.

¹⁹ The plaque actually contained seven portraits. Six of the paratroopers who had died in the aircraft, one more who had died earlier in battle.

poproshchavsya... 2014). WWII and this new war in Donbas thus almost immediately began to merge in the commemorative space of Kryvyi Rih.

On April 9, 2015, the Ukrainian parliament adopted “decommunisation” laws banning the public displays of Communist and Nazi symbols and propaganda (*Zakon...* 2015).²⁰ However, the law came into force on May 21st, and consequently, in Kryvyi Rih, red Soviet flags could still be seen at the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the “Victory”. During the city ceremony on May 8th, the flowers were again placed on all the memorials in the square behind the “Victory” Monument, including the above-mentioned ATO Victims’ Plaque, augmented since June 2014 with portraits of other local fallen soldiers.²¹ The “demilitarisation” of the events is noteworthy here. The only military equipment used was a 1940s-era T-34 tank and a WWII-era truck, on the back of which rode WWII veterans. That year the military parade was finally replaced by cadets and cadettes from the civil aviation college and military lyceum, the “Cossacks” and schoolgirls and schoolboys wearing military-style uniforms taking part in the parade. The procession was further attended by Soviet border troops veterans, and a relatively small group of men in modern camouflage uniforms with Ukrainian stripes and state flags, identifying them as ATO participants (*70 let velikoy Pobedy...* 2015). “Victory” Day is currently perceived as a “veterans’ holiday”, and veterans of the new war, which had at that time been going on for a year, joined in the celebration. City (and district) commemorative events increasingly resembled a war-themed carnival.

In the following years, until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in early spring of 2020, the February and May commemorations took place without major alterations and with only small numbers of marching participants or old military vehicles involved. As was usual by then, the majority of the audience consisted of school students who were brought there from classes (*Dan’ traditsii...* 2018; *V Krivom Roge...* 2018). During this period, all the memorials of the Square were honoured (the number of which had been steadily increasing, as detailed below), which consolidated the significance of the place as a space of official commemoration for ATO soldiers. In addition to laying flowers during the WWII commemoration events, the remembrance of those who died in ATO was manifested in other practices. For example, on May 7, 2016, relatives of those killed in the ATO stood in a special place of honour (directly opposite the torch-lighting ceremony), holding portraits of the fallen (*Po sluchayu...* 2016). The host of the ceremonies also emphasised the participation of Kryvyi Rih units in the ATO and the fact that ATO participants were invited to the torch-lighting ceremony.

However, despite the ceremony being well established by then, the celebration of the City’s Liberation Day in 2018 was marked by a deep scandal. As in previous

²⁰ For more information about the implementation of “decommunisation laws” see: Hrytsenko 2019, pp. 46–112.

²¹ Since the outbreak of hostilities in Donbas, new portraits of the fallen have appeared there, until 2022. A second plaque was placed nearby, to hold all the portraits. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to this object in the singular.

years, at the head of the procession, soldiers, this time from the National Guard, solemnly carried the national flag and two red banners with Soviet symbols. The banners were the WWII-era battle standards of Soviet units, normally kept in the local museum (*74-ya godovshchina...* 2018). That year's performance of the ritual resulted in the initiation of a criminal case under the paragraph on propaganda of the communist regime (*Vneseny v YERDR vedomosti...* 2018). The commander of the National Guard unit was immediately demoted (*Parad...* 2018). However, the provenance of the historical banners and the appropriateness of their inclusion in the ceremony was later established; the use of such symbols is allowed under "decommunisation" law exceptions, and the case was closed (*V Krivoy Rog...* 2020). Nevertheless, after February 2018, Soviet symbols finally left city events.

THE ATO: A COMMON SPACE FOR TWO WARS

From the summer of 2014, then, the space of the "Victory" Monument and the square behind it came to be used to honour the soldiers who perished in the ATO, and in the following year, two official ceremonies were held near the plaque with the portraits of victims of the ATO, the first on June 14th and the second on August 29th, the anniversary of the Ilovaisk tragedy.²² Ilovaisk has a particular resonance for Kryvyi Rih because the locally-formed "Kryvbas" battalion suffered heavy losses that day, and there were city residents in other units involved in the operation too; a total of thirty-seven soldiers from Kryvyi Rih were killed during the withdrawal from Ilovaisk.

In 2016, ATO-related changes affected the space around the "Victory". As part of the decommunisation process, the street named after the Bulgarian communist Georgi Dimitrov, which forms one side of the triangle with the monument and the Square, was renamed to ATO Heroes Street. From the same period, the previously unnamed, square behind the "Victory" was given the (semi-) official name of Heroes Square.²³

On June 8, 2016, the Kryvyi Rih City Council formally recognised June 14th as a Day of Commemoration for ATO participants. On June 14, 2016, the space in Heroes' Square was supplemented with a new object, a Memorial Cross in honour of these fallen Kryvyi Rih ATO Soldiers, backed with plaques with names of fallen. Its installation was an initiative of relatives of the fallen, and supported by city authorities.

²² On August 14, 2014, Ukrainian troops who were surrounded near town of Ilovaisk were supposed to withdraw through an agreed "green corridor". Instead, they were attacked by regular Russian army units from pre-arranged positions. Ukrainians lost 366 soldiers and several hundred more were wounded or captured. Ilovaisk remains in the public consciousness as the most painful tragedy of the ATO for Ukrainian society.

²³ I was unable to find any official information about the renaming, but since that period the name has been in use and is marked on maps.

Commenting on the choice of place for the Cross, the city mayor Yurii Vilkul said: “It is very important that it will appear here – *next to the monument to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War* and the monument to Krivyi Rih citizens who fought in Afghanistan” [emphasis added] (*V Krivom Roge v seredine...* 2016). Thus, a tradition of commemorating fellow countrymen who died in the ATO had finally been established in the official city space of memory next to the World War II memorial and Heroes’ Square became a venue for the annual city commemoration of the ATO fallen on June 14th. These commemorations, with the participation of city officials and relatives of the fallen, follow a generally standard ceremonial structure, with the laying of flowers at the Memorial Cross and the ATO Plaque of the Fallen, and a prayer service at the site (but not in St. George’s Bell Tower just 250 metres away). The tradition of commemorating those killed in the ATO in the park on August 29th, the date of the Ilovaik tragedy, has also become an annual event. In 2017, this day was also included in the Charter of the Territorial Community of Kryvyi Rih as one of the four memorial dates to be celebrated in the city (*Statut...* 2017) while in 2019 it was adopted as a national “Memorial Day of Defenders of Ukraine Who Died in the Struggle For Independence, Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity Of Ukraine” (known informally as the Day of Memory for Defenders of Ukraine).²⁴

It is worth noting that Heroes’ Square is not the only city site commemorating the ATO events either. Another place of remembrance is the “People’s Memorial” at the roundabout of Quarter 95 Square, just 500 meters from Heroes’ Square.²⁵ From 2013, it became a meeting place for Kryvyi Rih pro-European activists, and by the winter of 2014, photographs of the Maidan protesters who had been killed were posted here; portraits of the fallen ATO soldiers would be added soon after. Later, this memorial developed into a place for commemorative ceremonies organised by the public. As I see it, the reason for organising these events separately from official city ceremonies comes from opposition by local pro-European activists to city authorities, who are comprised largely of (former) Party of Regions members, and their unwillingness to share such places with them. It is also interesting to note that since 2019, this “oppositional” Plaque of the Fallen starts with portraits of local leaders of the 1917–1920 Ukrainian fight for independence (*U Kryvomu Rozi...* 2019). I treat this as an illuminating controversy regarding the placing of the “official” Plaque near the Soviet GPW memorial, just a few metres from the Stele of Heroes and close to the “Victory”. While the previous case presents (in an indirect way) modern Ukrainian soldiers as descendants of Soviet heroes, the other case links them to the anti-Soviet struggle of the beginning of the twentieth century.

²⁴ Of the four dates the Charter includes, two relate to the ATO, with the other two being the Day of Liberation of Kryvyi Rih from Nazi invaders (February 22th) and the City Day (May 8th), which is actually celebrated on the last Saturday of May.

²⁵ On March 19, 2016, another monument to the fallen soldiers in the ATO was erected with the support of city authorities in the Ternivskiy city district. It was the first actual monument in the whole of Ukraine dedicated to this conflict – not just a plaque. The choice of location (very north of the city, twenty-nine kilometres away from Heroes’ Square, meant it did not acquire a similar citywide significance.

On April 26, 2019, yet another object was added to Heroes' Square, this one dedicated to 'Chornobyl Liquidators,' those persons who participated in mitigating the consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster. The memorial was quickly included in the main commemorations by laying flowers there as well, as at the main memorials, at the ceremonies on February 22nd and May 8th. On April 26th and December 14th, special events are also annually held at the monument to commemorate these "liquidators".²⁶ In this sense, the new memorial has a "higher" status than the monument to the 'internationalist' fallen in Afghanistan nearby. The latter has not acquired the significance of a central place of memory, due to the fact that, in addition to the monument, there are two other larger "Afghan" memorials in the city, in Pokrovskiyi and Dovhyntsevskiyi districts, which are the sites of the city's main commemorations.²⁷

Strange as it may seem, the Kryvyi Rih habit of combining objects related to the memory of Afghan war participants, Chornobyl liquidators, WWII and the ATO in one place is not unique; it is fully consistent with the Ukrainian and post-Soviet vernacular practice of merging these events in the commemorative space (Kas'yanov ed. 2018, pp. 140–141; Konradova & Ryleva 2005, pp. 249–253).

THE PANDEMIC AND WAR: SIFTING OUT THE SUPERFLUOUS

In early 2020, the world was gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic and on March 12th, quarantine restrictions were introduced in Ukraine, affecting public events. Thus, in that year, the ceremony was held on May 9th without the public and was limited to laying flowers at the monuments and lighting torches (*Den' Peremohy...* 2020). The events on June 14th were not overcrowded either (*Z povahoyu...* 2020). In contrast, a large number of people were present on August 29, 2020, at the unveiling on Heroes' Square of the Ilovaisk Cross, which had been championed by the veterans' community of the "Kryvbas" battalion (*Vidkryttya...* 2020; *V Kryvomu Rozi...* 2020).

Then, in September 2020, Konstantin Pavlov became the city mayor. Under his tenure, the city commemoration of the Second World War underwent a significant modification. At the limited ceremony on February 22, 2021 – which, due to the quarantine, was held without an audience – the event allowed only the lighting of torches, laying flowers and a prayer service. But there was another innovation that cannot be explained by quarantine restrictions; there was no traditional commemoration at all the Heroes' Square memorials (which nevertheless change on a yearly basis) (*Fakely pam'yati...* 2021). The city ceremony was identical on May 7, 2021,

²⁶ April 26th is the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Radiation Accidents and Disasters and Day of Remembrance of the Chornobyl Accident, December 14th is Day of Honoring Participants In The Liquidation Of The Consequences Of The Accident At The Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

²⁷ In Yubileinyi Park in Dovhyntsevskiyi district, next to the memorial sign to soldiers who died in Afghanistan, the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God "Recovery of the Fallen" was built, and is dedicated to these soldiers.

albeit with the addition of old WWII-era military vehicles to the procession (*Seychas: zazhzeniye fakelov...* 2021). Obviously, this innovation was the result of a change in the city's administration; Pavlov was a representative of OPZZh, which had a reputation as perhaps the most pro-Russian political force. Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, this political organisation has been officially banned (*Za initsiatyvy...* 2022). Nevertheless, Pavlov could not ignore the ceremony honouring those who had fallen in the ATO on June 14th (*Viddaly...* 2021).

The quarantine also caused the cancellation of the traditional May 9, 2020 district celebrations. The lack of administrative mobilisation, in particular the absence of schoolchildren, resulted in the commemoration being limited to the laying of flowers at local memorials by quite a small number of citizens acting on their own initiative (*Den' Pobedy...* 2020). The next year the district ceremonies were also held in a truncated format. The most numerous, with the participation of Mayor Pavlov and the heads of all district councils, took place in the Inhuletskyi district (in fact this action replaced the city's commemoration). Journalists reported, perhaps exaggeratedly, about 3,000 participants (*Zhiteli Inguletskogo...* 2021). In other districts, only the flowers were laid on the WWII mass graves, without speeches or concerts. The most-attended event of 2021 was in Heroes' Square, at the ceremony of commemoration of those killed in Ilovaisk on August 29th, which took place without Pavlov, who had died on August 15th (*Zaraz u Kryvomu Rozi...* 2021).

From August 25th, Yurii Vilkul, appointed to City Council Secretary, served as interim city mayor. With his return to office, the city resumed the integrationist model of World War II commemoration with the honouring of all memorials in Heroes' Square. On February 22, 2022, two days before the Russian invasion, the city celebrated the seventy-eight anniversary of its liberation from the Nazis. The solemn procession was not held again, but the ceremony, including the laying of flowers at all the Heroes' Square memorials, was held in the style of pre-quarantine times (*Kryvyy Rih vidznachyiv Den' vyzvolennya...* 2022). In the spring, when Russian troops were about forty kilometres from the "Victory" monument and Heroes' Square, due to the increased danger of shelling, all mass events in May were cancelled. Only Yurii Vilkul laid flowers to all the monuments in Heroes' Square, once more without any public presence, and only journalists on hand to document the ceremony (*Yak proyshov Den' pam'yati...* 2022). No events were held in the districts at all. This mayor's lone presence at the May 9th memorial contrasts with the participation of several dozen people in the commemorative ceremonies on June 14th and August 29th (*U Kryvomu Rozi vshanuvaly...* 2022; *U vos'mu richnytsyu...* 2022).

Due to the combination of restrictions arising from the pandemic and the war, then, the scale of World War II commemorations in Kryvyi Rih has decreased, possibly never to reach pre-war levels of participation again. It seems too that the absence of administrative coercion has revealed the degree to which such commemorations had been driven by top-down processes all along. Acting on their own initiative, only a very small number of citizens have been willing to performatively commemorate a past that is receding into historical oblivion in light of the exigent

circumstances of defending Ukraine symbolically as well as militarily. In the future, these memorials may well have an entirely new form, then, with new demands on the city to remember the most recent national and regional tragedies and losses, of which there are already too many, as evidenced by the crowded monuments and the ever-expanding calendar of commemoration.

CONCLUSIONS

In Kryvyi Rih, the new politics of memory around WWII, promoted at the state level in Ukraine since 2014, faced opposition from local elites, for whom preserving a post-Soviet style of commemoration under the guise of “protecting the Victory” was important to their struggle for electoral sympathy. The commemoration of the GPW/WWII came to be the main public holiday in Kryvyi Rih, rivalled only by the Day of the City’s Foundation. At the same time, the pandemic and the full-scale war that began on February 24, 2022 revealed that this holiday commemoration was preserved in the city by local authorities who commemorated according to the memory politics of the political forces they represented. The use of administrative mobilisation to enlist local students and city employees in mass participation was also a crucial factor for crowded ceremonies.

The space of a small square and the nearby monument complex have become a place that condenses memorials and ceremonies related to two wars. Observing how the memorial landscape and the events held in it are transforming suggests that the overlap of the current war, the ATO, with the memory of the past war, WWII, had already begun in 2014. However, in Kryvyi Rih the WWII memory turned out to be an integrative symbol, as central city commemorations began to include and honour ATO events in various ways. This inclusion did not flow both ways; ATO commemorations have not included references to the Second World War.

The experience of the February 2022 outbreak of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war provokes ever new, and yet still open, questions. WWII commemorations remember an evermore distant past and will not gain so many adherents in the city again, especially now that such remembrances are overshadowed by the present war. But how will the present war and WWII interact in commemorative space? Heroes’ Square is already oversaturated with monuments. Without reconstruction, it will hardly be able to incorporate a memorial to the current war that is relevant in scale to its significance for the present generation (even if its ending is unclear now). Since 2014, the ATO commemoration has taken over the physical space, leaving no room for the next war (which took everyone by surprise). Now the ATO is in the shadow of a full-scale war. It is still unclear what narrative may be built, but it is clear that February 24, 2022 will need its own place, central to the contemporary generation, equal in importance to the GPW for the Soviet generations.

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INTERTWINED MEMORIES OF KRYVYI RIH:
THE ATO, WORLD WAR TWO, AND THE COSSACKS²⁸

Key words: Politics of memory, Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas in 2014, WWII, Ukraine, Kryvyi Rih, monuments, commemorations, Cossacks

In the last decade, the politics of memory in Ukraine, implemented after the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas in 2014, has been the subject of intense scholarly attention. However, researchers mainly focused either on the national level of collective memory or on the cases of the few largest cities. Much less attention has been paid to processes at the local level, in the towns of Southern Ukraine.

Kryvyi Rih is a large industrial city in Southern Ukraine. It is usually characterized by general sociological features of the region: Russian-speaking and Soviet nostalgia. In the context of the local history and political situation, the author shows how the presentation of three layers of memory about the past of the region entangled in the city's space. Established on the former Zaporizhzhia Cossacks lands, the city manifests its Cossack identity. Simultaneously, the most popular politicians in Kryvyi Rih are still those associated with the former Party of Regions, which was presented by former President Viktor Yanukovych, who was removed from power during the Revolution of Dignity in 2014. The basis of their memory politics was to protect the (post)Soviet version of the history of the Second World War as the "Great Victory". But since the summer of 2014, its commemoration has intersected with the commemoration of city residents who died during the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Donbas. The paper addresses the evolution of commemorative practices and the overlapping of commemoration of the ATO, the Second World War, and the Cossacks. It also raises the question of what place the memory of the ATO and the Second World War will take in the conditions of the ongoing war.

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²⁸ This paper was prepared as a part of the research group's "War, Migration and Memory" activity within the academic program *PRISMA UKRAÏNA* at the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin) in 2022–2023.

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HISTORICAL MEMORIES IN TRANSCARPATHIA: ORAL HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND WORLD WAR

INTRODUCTION

This article analyses the personal stories of Transcarpathian inhabitants who reflect on their collective memory and experiences of the Second World War in order to understand the regional context of memory that shapes understanding, through the eyes of witnesses to past events, and to reconstruct the features of collective regional memory narratives, which are, I argue, significantly different from the official Ukrainian version of national history.¹ The basis of this research is the memories of people from the older Transcarpathian generation who reflect on the past in a more distinctive and significant fashion than can be found in official accounts of history. These oral history data allow us to place the memories of ethnic minorities alongside testimonies from the national majority, ethnic Ukrainians for comparison and contrast. Each group had its own distinct experience of living through the region's extreme history in the 1940s, as ethnicity or nationality could determine a person's place in the social and political hierarchy, influence the possibilities of social advancement, or, conversely, could engender different forms of persecution or repression.

¹ The name “Transcarpathia” is used to denote the interwar territory known as “Subcarpathian Rus”, which was part of the First Czechoslovak Republic, when it was inhabited by Rusyns, who only received the official ethnonym “Ukrainians” in 1944. Other nationalities, namely, Magyars (Hungarians), Slovaks, Jews, Romanians, Germans, and Roma, were subsumed under this ethnonym at the same time. The most illuminating ethnographic studies of these communities in Transcarpathia are: Tyvodar (2011), Maryna (1995), Elynek (2010), Navrotska (2007), Moimir Benzha (2005). It should be noted that a separate controversial topic (a review of which is not within the scope of this study) is the issue of the identity and status of the Carpathian Rusyns. In Ukraine, academic discussion on this matter has been complicated when taken up in the political sphere. Examples of an academic approach to the issue of options and the development of the Carpathian Rusyns identity can be found in the works of Mahochi (2016, 2021), Lysiak-Rudnytskyi (1994), Hyidel (2007).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Transcarpathia lies in the westernmost part of Ukraine, bordering Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland. Historically, this land has been a part of different states, kingdoms and empires at different times: the Kingdom of Hungary (since the eleventh century), the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918), Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period, the Hungarian Regency during the Second World War, the USSR (1944–1991), and now independent Ukraine. Despite historical changes in various types of belonging, the region has always remained a border-zone, or peripheral territory, far from each successive new capital. A century ago, the Transcarpathian population was regularly described in the works of popular writers, photographers' albums, and tourist guides, as a traditional, conservative community of peasants living in harmony with nature and their neighbours (Prokop 1934; Olbracht 1933; Oplestilova & Babka 2014).

The multiculturalism of the population, however, has become a distinctive feature of the region. In addition to Rusyns, there were compact settlements of the ancestors of modern Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Romas, and, since the eighteenth century, Swabians (Germans). Historically, Jews constituted the majority of some cities and towns, in particular, in Mukachevo and Solotvyno (Elynek 2010; Slavik 2017). The ethnic diversity of the population was complemented by religious diversity and socio-economic differentiation. Such geographical features as mountains, foothills, and valleys served as natural borders and contributed to the development of the Rusyns' ethnographic mosaic and the spread of smuggling activities on both sides of the political borders.² From the second half of the twentieth century, this part of the Carpathians attracted researchers interested in national identities, as a trip to this destination was "an excuse for exciting research [...] and contained many universal values" (Lysiak-Rudnytskyi 1994), and this region was seen to represent the whole of Europe in miniature.

The relatively calm life of the local population was interrupted by world events in the late 1930s and 1940s. To begin with, a decision of the 1938 Munich Agreement transferred the region from Czechoslovak to Hungarian power.³ Carpathian Ukraine was proclaimed in March 1939, but was quickly drowned in the blood of its defenders; the Jewish community of the region was all but destroyed during the regency of Miklós Horthy by the end of the war (Slavik 2017), and with the arrival of the Red Army in 1944, repressions of ethnic Germans and Hungarians began in earnest (Makara 1995). As a result of their defeat in the war, the latter lost the status of the titular (dominant) ethnic group in the region. Subsequent events, particularly the incorporation of the region into the Ukrainian SSR, led to the fact that local Rusyns

² Local Ukrainians are typically divided into four sub-ethnic groups: Hutsuls, Lemkos, Dolynians, and Boykos (Tyvodar 2011).

³ The Munich Agreement was concluded in Munich on 30 September 1938 by Nazi Germany, Great Britain, the French Republic and Fascist Italy. The agreement provided for the annexation of part of Czechoslovakia by Germany.

gained this status. The ethno-cultural characteristics of the Carpathian Rusyns allow scholars to consider them as a part of the Ukrainian ethnic group, which was in line with Stalin's geopolitical interests and became a pretext to justify the inclusion of this region in the process of "collecting Ukrainian lands".⁴

The result of this "reunification", the assessment of which differs in various national historiographies, was the proclamation of Transcarpathian Ukraine, incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR/USSR from 1944–1946 (Mishchanyn 2018, pp. 73–114).⁵ This historical reinterpretation did not erase the millennium-long development of the region, however, and therefore there was a need for a more "organic" incorporation of this new Transcarpathian Ukraine into the official canon of Soviet Ukrainian history. Operating with the procrustean concepts of "class and national struggle", Soviet historians fashioned a narrative that had local Rusyns living for centuries in isolation from the surrounding Ukrainian peoples, without losing hope of merging with a (now re-imagined) Ukrainian (read: Soviet) nation. Soviet historiography thus claimed a common historical past between the Carpathian Rusyns and the proto-Ukrainian population of Kievan Rus, beginning under Prince Volodymyr the Great, who controlled Transcarpathia and the local tribe of White Croats in the 10th century until the region was "occupied" by the Hungarians in the eleventh century (Leno 2018b).⁶

The process of "creating a common past" was accompanied by a policy of "erasing" all positive references to previous political periods, which could only be mentioned in the context of criticism and accusations of oppression and "foreign enslavers". With respect to ethnic minorities, Soviet historians of Transcarpathia used class theory to argue that local proletarians of Hungarian/ Slovak/ Romanian origin endured economic oppression by exploitative manufacturers and landlords, and were saved by Soviet military "liberation" (Leno 2018b).⁷

After the region's incorporation into the Soviet Union, the lives of all Transcarpathian generations were affected by the experience of living within the Soviet system. After the fall of the USSR, Ukrainian sociocultural space continued to exert much

⁴ The process of collecting lands inhabited by representatives of the Ukrainian ethnic group. During the period of Stalin's rule, it took place under the slogans of restoring historical justice, the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians against foreign masters and representatives of the exploiting class. This process is described in detail by Yekelchyk (2004).

⁵ There are wildly diverging assessments of the "reunification" event: from the triumph of historical justice to soft annexation and even occupation.

⁶ This mythologised version of the past contradicted historical realities, but it is worth noting that Rusyns sincerely accepted the region's entry into the Ukrainian SSR, as well as the fact of replacing the ethnonym "Rusyn" with "Ukrainian" (see Leno 2018a). However, this acceptance was quickly overshadowed by the forced collectivisation that began once Soviet and Czechoslovak authorities officially recognised the new borders between them on June 29, 1945 (Mishchanyn 2018, pp. 1103–114).

⁷ The role of creation was assigned to professional writers and poets, linguists and historians such as Mikhail Pokrovsky, Mykola Bazhan, Maksym Rylskyi and others (Leno 2018b). More information about the participation of intellectuals of that period in the development of the Soviet model of historical memory, in the context of the whole of Ukraine, can be found in Yekelchyk 2004.

influence on local everyday life. Education policy, for instance, has ensured that the majority of Ukrainians know and support the official version of history, which, following independence, has emphasised the rehabilitation of Augustyn Voloshyn, the Carpathian Ukraine President, as well as other victims of Soviet repressions. Although the Ukrainian national grand narrative replaced class theory, a shadow still falls over the rather distinct patchwork experience of “history” that the diverse Transcarpathian population has endured throughout the twentieth century. Transcarpathians even highlight this historical irony through a commonly-retold joke in the region about a local peasant of a rather blurred ethnic identity who has been a citizen of many different states, while never even leaving his village it is a witticism that captures the paradox of so much change within such an otherwise bucolic region of the world.⁸

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Neither the collective memory of the Transcarpathia population nor local historical narratives were objects of much academic interest in Soviet times. While one must assume that in connection with Russia’s current war in Ukraine, the process of national history revision may accelerate and pay closer attention to regional memory, history textbooks as yet do not contain regional versions of the past from the perspective of the local population.⁹

A more local, historically-oriented view of the Second World War, however, can be found in studies based on oral sources. Similar oral history studies have been carried out on the consequences of the region’s ethnic homogenisation in the middle of the twentieth century. First came studies of the Holocaust and research on the process of inhabitants of Transcarpathia opting for Czechoslovak citizenship (Elynek 2010; Khudish 2016; Slavik 2017).¹⁰ A separate niche of modern oral history research is devoted to recording Soviet repressions of the Hungarian population in Transcarpathia, such as Panyakó (1993) on repressions in the Transcarpathian village of Beregujfalu (Berehiv district). This field data was collected in the early 1990s, when the village was still inhabited by twenty-seven people who had survived the Stalin-era deportations and concentration camps.

⁸ One version of the joke goes as follows: an old Transcarpathian man tells journalists that he was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, went to school in Czechoslovakia, served in the military in Hungary, married in the USSR, and retired in independent Ukraine. Amazed, the journalists ask “Have you travelled a lot during your life?!” He replies “No! I have never left Transcarpathia, but I have lived in five states!”

⁹ According to Volodymir Fenych’s assessment, only 0.2% of the text is devoted to Transcarpathia on the pages of the twenty-two most widespread domestic generalised works of Ukrainian history as of 2005 (Fenych 2014). I personally doubt that this situation has significantly changed in the fifteen years since the calculations were first made.

¹⁰ This process was established by the Agreement, transferring Subcarpathian Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia to the USSR, signed in Moscow in June 29, 1945.

Two studies that try to reproduce the local experience of the Second World War with an emphasis on personal stories are worthy of attention: Hrytsak and Ofitsynskyi (2013) write detailed essays in their study of Transcarpathian labour camps, and include a large number of transcribed interviews with participants who endured forced labour during the war. Aladar et al. (2006) tell the stories of local Roma who shared their impressions and personal tragedies of the 1940s and early 1950s with the researchers.

These studies focus on personal life experiences in the extreme conditions of war, occupation, and repression, but do not go beyond the scope of their subject matter. Currently, there is only one example of a broader analysis of Transcarpathian historical memory (Ferkov, Ferkov & Shterr 2018), based on the results of a questionnaire and short selective interviews with two hundred people from every Transcarpathian region.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOURCES USED

Oral history data collected by my students and me during Uzhhorod National University's ethnographic expeditions, which took place over the past eight years, became the main source for this study.¹¹ Before the COVID pandemic, we would conduct three-to-four week ethnographic expeditions every year, thanks to which we covered a significant number of villages and towns, almost the entire Transcarpathia. As opposed to deep and prolonged immersion in the context of a particular research problem, Ukrainian ethnologists usually practice an extensive version of field ethnographic research. This means having a large number of specialists (ten or more) on certain ethnographic topics. They travel for several weeks to the ethnographic field, where they work in the format of "bush" or "route" expeditions. In this way, more than a dozen settlements can be covered in a few weeks, and hundreds of respondents can be interviewed, more details about which can be found in Hrymych (2008) and Hlushko (2008).

In this article, though, I rely principally on my own field data, most of which was recorded in the last eight years, but with additional field records dating back to the second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Of necessity, I occasionally include material recorded by my students as well though. Such a need arises when working with Hungarian students who can more easily interact with residents of ethnically-Hungarian villages. During field research, we used primarily in-depth biographical and semi-structured interview methods. I typically preferred a semi-structured or

¹¹ I have been leading the students' ethnographic practice since 2016. Usually, one expedition group consists of about twenty people. During an academic year, there may be two or more such groups. In total, hundreds of students have participated in expeditions since 2016, many of whom have been involved in recording oral history materials. The scope of this publication does not permit the listing of every name, so I will mention only those who are currently enrolled in a doctoral programme: Halyna Reitiy, Mykhailo Perun, and Mykhailo Rekrutyak.

in-depth biographical interview, while my students usually worked through questionnaires, conducting structured interviews.

I also had the opportunity to participate in other research projects in Transcarpathia. Among them is “Holosy” (Voices), organised by the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center.¹² This project recorded more than 130 interviews with witnesses of the Holocaust and World War II. Another powerful project was “Mist 19” (Bridge 19), which aimed to record the oral histories among the divided villages and families that one day in 1946 found themselves on either side of a new state border with Czechoslovakia.¹³

Interviews collected by the Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute reveal the Hungarian experience of Soviet repression and Sovietisation. In terms of research, ten interviews with repression victims and 170 questionnaires with post-memory carriers were conducted.¹⁴ The results of these studies have not received the attention they deserve and remained practically unnoticed among Transcarpathian residents, not to mention the population of Ukraine in general. It is symptomatic that Ukrainians study their own collective traumas but are inattentive to the traumas of “domestic others”, such as Transcarpathian Hungarians or Germans. As a result, in Ukrainian society, there is a lack of robust discussion about diversity and mutual openness to otherness, which leads to a dearth of collective empathy, and promotes the cultivation of a sense of sacrificial exclusivity of one’s own ethnic group.

Other pertinent information can be found in published memoirs (for example, Baleha 2006; Kediulych-Khymynets 2011) and historical and local history books written by amateur historians.¹⁵ Soviet historical myths and interpretations still endure in some form, in particular, a much-repeated claim of almost 115,000 Transcarpathians who were killed by the Nazis, without specifying that approximately 100,000 of them were Jews. Such manipulative methods have continued in local or non-professional research on the Soviet era, where victims of the Holocaust have been concealed among general population losses.¹⁶ These publications nevertheless contain the memories of elderly people who speak as the voices of the *local* majority,

¹² Project Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Centre “Voices. Testimonies of the Holocaust in Ukraine” (June–December 2018–2021). Project manager: Gelinada Grinchenko.

¹³ Project NGO “Molotok” (Nyzhnye Selyshche, Zakarpattia), Moara Veche – Alte Mühle – Régi Malom – Old Mill (Hosman, Romania): BRIDGE 19 (May 2021 – February 2022). Implemented with the support of the House of Europe and the Goethe Institute in Ukraine. Project manager: Tetiana Belousova.

¹⁴ Reports of conference participants (Braun 2004; Gerendely 2004; Stark 2004), part of transcribed interviews and examples of questionnaires: <https://kmf.uz.ua/mr/index.html> (accessed 18.10.2023).

¹⁵ The list of such local history monographs is quite significant, so I mention only a few, selected at random: Hvozdo 2009; Kerechan 2004; Kutskir & Rubish 2012; Mateleshko 2009; Rosokha 2014.

¹⁶ Non-professional local historians still use the authoritative Soviet-era publication *Zakarpatska oblast’* (Transcarpathian region) from the series *History of Towns and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR* (in 26 volumes). This publication existed in two versions: Belousov (1969), Semenyuk ed. (1982). It contained quite detailed historical information about all settlements of the region, which explains its popularity. However, this factual richness was accompanied by tendentious Soviet clichés that are still uncritically repeated by local amateur historians.

as well as of local “domestic others”. Their stories are thus powerfully representative of ethnic minorities in this region. In particular, the memories of a former Soviet partisan Ivan Rusyn negate the Soviet thesis about a heroic and massive partisan movement in the region and testify to the reality that partisans could peacefully coexist with Hungarian gendarmes (Kutskir & Rubish 2012, pp. 77–78).

The ethnographic data used in the research primarily reflect the subjective views of rural inhabitants and geographically covers the territory of the entire region.¹⁷ For the analysis, I used the testimonies of elderly interlocutors who could provide, when interviewed, coherent and consistent accounts of that time. An important criterion for selecting testimonial narratives was the fact that key aspects of the narratives were repeatedly documented in interviews across the region over the course of the study.¹⁸ Interlocutors are mostly civilians but there were also military–local participants in the Second World War from both the Hungarian Army and the Soviet Red Army.

In addition to the stories of autochthonous Transcarpathians, memories of migrants from other parts of Soviet Ukraine and the Soviet Union, who were sent by authorities to establish order in Transcarpathia, were recorded. The majority of my interviewees are Ukrainian, but there are also interlocutors of Romanian, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian origin. There were also those from ethnically-mixed families that became common in the post-war period. Tellingly discussions of conflict have mostly been avoided in such families. Sometimes there were cases where the descendants of Soviet “liberators” were critical to the consequences of the arrival of Soviet troops and “Matskals” in Transcarpathia, where, it must be said, nobody needed “liberation”. They did not, however, speak badly of their parents in any direct fashion during the interviews.¹⁹

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Theoretical approaches to collective memory owe a great debt to Maurice Halbwachs (2007). Through him, social memory can be understood as a specific construct, influenced by the framework of social communities to which an individual belongs: family, community, class, and denomination. Assmann (2004, 2010), in his turn, has broadened the understanding of this process to “cultural frameworks”, to include texts, rituals, holidays, landscapes, and other phenomena.

¹⁷ According to the census in 1930, almost 70% of the Subcarpathian Rus population was employed in the agricultural sector. This indicator was even higher among Rusyns, as 82% were employed in agriculture (Prunytzia 1995). During the years under Soviet power, the urban population grew, but even today, two thirds of the region’s residents live in rural areas.

¹⁸ Most of my interlocutors were autochthonous Transcarpathians born in the 1920s and 1930s, but in the process of recording materials I had to communicate with people even older. The oldest recently turned 106 and is still in good physical shape for his age and of sound mind.

¹⁹ Matskal/Moskal is an external ethnonym with a negative connotation, widespread throughout Ukraine, which the local population used to refer to “Russians”.

Grounding my research in Halbwachs and Assmann, then, I read the main source of local memory differentiation as the social and cultural framework, while incorporating a significant ethnic character. In my research I use collective (social) memory as an explanatory tool. At the same time, I use this concept metaphorically, as a reflection of the processes of accumulation, reproduction, transmission, and reception of information that makes up a relatively stable image of the past of certain social groups. Such an image is an important condition for the group's identity construction. In the case of Transcarpathian Ukrainians, it allows me to talk about the important ground of their regional identity.

I contrast collective memory to communicative memory (Assmann 2010), collected memory (Olick 2007), and communal memory (Thompson 2005) to understand the manifestations of local memory narratives, which can contradict as well as complement and clarify the generalising images of collective memory. It should be noted that the apparent simplicity and explanatory power of the terms proposed by Assman (2010), Olick (2007) and Thompson (2005) are often severely tested when exposed to the many nuances inherent in field realities. Communal (or community memory) as I read it in my area of research is the memory of a group of people living in a certain area who recall biographical events that have remained stable in the absence of external pressure to change these memories (cf. Thompson 2005). One proviso I must include though is that in my research case, external influence is observable because in Soviet times the memory of groups was subjected to various forms of active correction, falsification, and erasure (which sometimes included an ancillary form of forgetting the community would fall into themselves when subjected to effective propaganda). This primarily affected the post-war generations of Transcarpathians who studied Soviet history textbooks and grew up in the symbolic space of a region rich in communist heroes. However, the memories and visions of the past produced by representatives of the pre-war generation allow us to defend the existence of a distinct communal memory process that Transcarpathian ethnic groups engaged in.

The Transcarpathian region is an exemplar of a borderland that has experienced a broad cultural palette since at least the Middle Ages (Kilianova 1994). A distinctive feature of this contact zone has been the convergence of confessional and ethnic boundaries. Being a Rusyn meant attending a "Russian" church, which is an Eastern rite church, and this religious identity still plays an important role in Ukrainian self-identification in Transcarpathia. Other ethnic groups in the region have belonged to other denominations: e.g. Jews were, naturally, representative of Judaism; Hungarians and Slovaks were partially Greek Catholics or Roman Catholics; and Germans were Protestants or Roman Catholics. Regarding Roma and Romanians, who were also mostly Orthodox, the differentiation took place primarily at the linguistic level. Within the boundaries of the villages, local government was carried out by representatives from ethnic communities who did not interfere in the internal life of other ethnic groups. The consolidation of ethnic identity was facilitated by the rural nature of the region. Even today, two thirds of its population live in the Transcarpathian

villages, barely diminished since the beginning of the last century, when peasants made up approximately 90% of the inhabitants (Laver and Makara 1993; Mahochi 2021; Tyvodar 2011). Local ethnic groups were characterised by conservatism and endogamy, and even in the case of villages that had a prominent ethnic mix, mixed marriages were rare, a reality that has largely continued until today.

Since the village community and the family were the main social institutions, and were traditionally conservative, it was they who influenced processes of rural identification, as well as the “framework” for collective memory. Transcarpathians conceived and built their narratives (including memorials) based on binary oppositions such as “ours/theirs”. This can be traced from the ethnographic works of nineteenth-century intellectuals such as Ján Čaplowič, the founding father of Slovak ethnography and author of *Ethnographic Observations from Hungary* (Čaplowič 1970) and Vasil Dovhovyč’s 1824 critical review of it (Dovhovyč 2003). Indeed Yuri Zhatkovyč’s reflection upon the book can be included too (Zhatkovyč 2007), as all three emphasised the ethno-cultural differences among local ethnic groups. Opposition at the ethnic level can also be observed in examples drawn from folklore tradition (Melnyk 1970; Senko 1996a, 1996b).

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the traditional demarcation of the region’s ethnic groups was reinforced by the national policies of the ruling regimes, primarily the Hungarian authorities. Ethno-mobilisation projects, which intensified in Transcarpathia in the interwar period, had difficulty in reorienting the conservative population to think in national rather than religious categories. The events of the middle of the twentieth century, and especially the war period, exacerbated the “ethnicisation” of relations, which was especially manifested in the conditions of the Hungarian occupation during 1939–1944 and later under Soviet occupation (Leno 2019a). The Manifesto text on the reunification of Transcarpathian Ukraine with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is an ideal example of ethnicity instrumentalisation (Leno 2018a).²⁰ As my previous research illustrates, lured by the prospect of being the titular ethnic group in the new state, the local Rusyns supported this Manifesto, although the version of the region’s history it proposed contradicted their personal experience and historical memory (ibid.). In particular, over the last millennium (until 1944), the region developed under the influence of the ebb and flow of dominant European powers, which kept the region largely unscathed by the spheres of Russian Empire or USSR influence.

Thus, since 1944, we can observe differences in the memories of different ethnic groups. The result was the dominance of the official (Soviet and modern Ukrainian) versions of Transcarpathia’s past and the parallel “underground” existence of the memory narratives of local ethnic groups. They were transmitted mainly in the form

²⁰ The Manifesto was proclaimed on November 26, 1944. Its text contains many ethno-mobilising slogans. It focuses on the historical justice of the reunification of Transcarpathia with the Ukrainian Socialist Republic, as well as historical grievances and centuries-old suffering of the local population under the control of foreign “exploiters” (Leno 2018a).

of oral narratives and more often appeared on the pages of memoirs or local history monographs. In addition, in recent decades, they have influenced the appearance of new memorial sites in Transcarpathia.

DIALECTICS OF TRANSCARPATHIAN MEMORY NARRATIVES

Oral histories of Transcarpathians can be divided into two large divisions: *memories of extreme* experiences (suffered in the midst of everyday life during extreme periods of history) and *memories of peacetime*. Here we can see a pattern of memories of extreme times differing according to the ethnicity of the narrators. In other words, the memories of Ukrainian and Hungarian peasants reported about the Second World War differed, sometimes quite strongly, regardless of their age. In times of radical change and war, ethnic status (whether majority or minority) influenced both the level of suffering experienced and the possibility of survival. In the peacetime of the Soviet era, conversely, nationality played less of a role. Meanwhile “peaceful stories” are correlated according to cohort (respondents’ age category), which is to say that the memories of Hungarian or Ukrainian workers during the Soviet period were similar, especially if they belonged to the same generation. In other words, we can speak about some differences in collective memory based on socio-economic distinctions of class.

The interwar period

In almost all the memories of the older respondents (aged between seventy and ninety at the time of research), the political periods in the life of the region are divided by ethnicity: times “for the old Magyars” (Hungarian Kingdom period, which lasted until 1918), “for the Czechs” (the interwar period), “for the new Magyars” (1939–1944) and “for the Russians/Moskals” (1944–1991). The earliest period that my interlocutors remember was the 1920s, when Transcarpathia was under Czechoslovak rule.²¹ From the point of view of elderly respondents, these were the best times in their lives, while the following periods, “under the new Magyars”, and “under the Russians/Moskals/Soviets”, were the worst. To my surprise, this attitude towards the Czech period is sometimes found even among the local Hungarian community, which had the status of majority ethnic group during the Hungarian occupation of Transcarpathia (1939–1945).²² Not all local Hungarians, however, share this view and believe that the best time was under “their” rule, but other locals agree about the

²¹ In some memoirs, one can find earlier testimonies, but this article is primarily concerned with the interwar and later periods, which can be “reached” with the help of living witnesses.

²² In Hungarian publications, the period of the Hungarian Kingdom in Transcarpathia (1939–1944) is not considered an occupation. Conversely, for Hungarians, the period of occupation was the interwar Czechoslovakian period (1919–1939).

“golden” interwar period, especially in comparison with the Soviet times. Recently I had the opportunity to hear from several old women of Ukrainian origin that the best life had already been in the most recent years of independent Ukraine (this was a few years before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022).

My narrators’ memories of people and events were usually centred around their own locality, which is not surprising, as social mobility and travel opportunities were generally much lower a century ago. Quite often, though, the conversation turned to regional or metropolitan centres too. In the mental maps of my interlocutors, such centres of political or economic attraction were Prague, Budapest or neighbouring cities. Interviewees rarely mentioned Kyiv, L’viv, Kharkiv, or Moscow as actually Ukrainian or Russian, except in conversations about relatives who had been captured by the Russians during the First World War.²³

Sometimes in the narratives about the interwar period, and foreign cities and places, the topic of employment of Rusyns and Romanians in the Western European countries and the USA or Canada were mentioned. Based on them, it seems promising to study how this experience accelerated changes in their communities and influenced the modernisation of the local population. I did not come across any stories about local Hungarians or Germans leaving Transcarpathia for work, but I must assume that there were some. During the conversations, the narrators were often shown photos of that period. A visual comparison of photographs from the interwar period with more recent photographs from the Soviet period revealed that the level of cultural development and economic prosperity declined significantly after World War II. We can, in fact, confidently state a noticeable regression in many spheres of society. In the photographs of the interwar years, Transcarpathians look more modern, happier than the next generation, whose childhood was spent in the Soviet period of the 1950s.

Sometimes it was possible to detect the theme of a gradual militarisation of society, manifested in stories about the participation of young people in various organisations that began to function on the eve of the war.²⁴ It is possible to note the absence of stories that would testify to inter-ethnic tension or confrontation in the rural environment. Sometimes in our conversations, there were hints of anti-Semitism or antipathy towards Roma, but these were usually emotional expressions against specific people and their “immoral deeds” that did not reflect a general attitude towards an entire ethnic group. Negative moments arose more often in conversations

²³ Among the emancipated youth, who later became active persons in Carpathian Ukraine, there were active connections with representatives of Western Ukrainian territories (see, for example, Kediulych-Khymynets 2011). However, the task of this article is to reflect the memory of the region’s ordinary residents, and therefore the memories of representatives from among the intellectual class are almost not found here.

²⁴ The militarisation of society began before direct hostilities, one sign of which was the appearance of people in military uniforms. Among the paramilitary organisations of that period were: the Ukrainian National Defense, People’s Defense Organization Carpathian Sich, Hungarian youth military, and the sports organisation Levente.

about “drunkards” or “thieves”. Although endogamy and ethnic separation prevailed in society, representatives of different cultures generally remembered treating each other with respect, as can be seen from many interviews. Of course, this did not exclude inter-ethnic tensions, which were rarer. According to numerous oral memoirs, despite the high level of interethnic tolerance, there was also a certain hierarchy. In particular, while no ethnic group objected to a Hungarian being the head of the village, they never wanted to see a Gypsy in this position.

The Period of War

The period of the Second World War is an important milestone in our recorded memories. Even my earliest field research demonstrated the unsuitability of research frameworks that are typical for conversations and memories about the war in other territories of Ukraine. Usually those frameworks capture and discuss the issues of Nazi occupation, mass-partisan struggle, collaboration, Gestapo activities and other similar topics, which are not related to the Transcarpathian context. The question of the war’s local chronology also turned out to be debatable. In addition, it was interesting to trace the characteristics of everyday life, the course of the Holocaust, the relations of residents with German army representatives, the public reaction to the arrival of the Red Army, the attitude to the spread of banditry, to military raids by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. While for any historian the importance of chronology and dating of historical events cannot be overstated, for my interlocutors these aspects were not considered essential. The question of an exact or approximate date of the beginning of the war sometimes gave rise to long reflections and even active disputes in cases where a group interview was conducted, because there was no common opinion on this matter.

Some considered that the war had started in the autumn of 1939, but there were other dates mentioned. For example, the beginning of the armed confrontation between the Sichmen²⁵ and the Czechoslovak army, and later, Hungarian soldiers, which took place in March 1939. But Ukrainians from the Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, and Berehovo districts believe that the war began in the autumn of 1938, when in November, according to the Munich Arbitration decisions, Hungarian troops occupied a large part of the region. Many other elderly people, regardless of their ethnic origin, said that the war began in the summer of 1941.²⁶

Thus, based on the subjective ideas and memories of Transcarpathia inhabitants, it is possible to revise the usual chronology of the war and change its beginning to the autumn of 1938. At the same time, it should be remembered that in their personal

²⁵ The Sichmen were members of the Carpathian Sich People’s Self-Defense Organisation, a kind of military force of Carpathian Ukraine.

²⁶ According to the Soviet propaganda interpretation, the war began on June 22, 1941, when Hitler attacked the USSR. This date would later form the basis of the cult of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union.

experience, there is no specific date when the war started, or it was declared to have begun on June 22, 1941, the date of the German attack on the Soviet Union, to which Transcarpathia did not belong yet. In the personal stories, experiences, and memories of the native Transcarpathians it is impossible to find any subjectively distinct recollection of a day when the war began. We can see the difference with the Soviet Union population, for whom the war began with the attack of Germany on June 22, 1941. Likewise, when we look at the present recollection of Russian aggression – for the vast majority of Ukrainian inhabitants, the beginning of the current war is February 24, 2022, as everyone has come to subjectively experience and feel it. Since Transcarpathians do not have such a personal (subjectively suffered and experienced) dating for the beginning of that war, they often mention the date that they learned at school, through Soviet commemorative policy and in books and films. It is also noteworthy that this Soviet periodisation of the war is found in the memories of all Transcarpathian ethnic minority groups.

The end of the war as it emerges in the personal stories of local people does not coincide with the official Victory Day (May 9, 1945) either. Oral testimonies allow us to conclude that, for most narrators, the war ended when the “Magyars” retreated and the “Russians” (Red Army) occupied the territory, in other words, when the front moved further west. Alongside such a subjective (local) vision of the end of the war, there is also an official date, Victory Day, May 9th. If for the Rusyns the arrival of the Red Army was associated with hopes for a peaceful life, the Hungarians and Germans did not know what to expect but looked on at the change of power with fear.

An interesting and ambiguous topic is the impressions of Transcarpathians regarding the participants of the conflict: the German, Hungarian, and Red Armies. In addition to these main characters, Ludvík Svoboda’s Czechoslovak Corps,²⁷ units of the RLA²⁸ and UPA,²⁹ and representatives of the Galician SS³⁰ all appear in personal stories. These latter military units will not be discussed now, but the collected material opens the prospect of further research, since the stories tell of interesting domestic relations and surprises. I will only add that none of them provoked any preferences; in the narratives the newly-arrived soldiers did not loot, they behaved decently, communicated with and contacted local residents on a range of topics, and tried to maintain good relations.

²⁷ Czechoslovakian military units within the Red Army were formed from immigrants, prisoners, and fugitives in 1943. This Czechoslovakian Army Corps was commanded by the future president of the Czechoslovakia, General Ludvík Svoboda.

²⁸ The Russian Liberation Army (RLA) was a collaborationist formation, primarily composed of Russians that fought under German command during World War II.

²⁹ *Ukrayins’ka Povstans’ka Armiiia* (abbreviated UPA). The Ukrainian Insurgent Army was a Ukrainian nationalist paramilitary and guerrilla formation founded by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists in 1942.

³⁰ The Fourteenth Waffen-Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) was a military formation of Nazi Germany during World War II, consisting mainly of military volunteers of Ukrainian ethnic origin, later also Slovaks.

German troops were stationed in the region for a short time (summer–autumn 1944), but they were vividly etched in the population’s memory. Their presence was not accompanied by local oppression, as Transcarpathia belonged to their partner Hungary. My interlocutors’ memories of the Germans were mostly neutral and often positive, although, at the same time, the narrators expressed the fear they felt in the armed soldiers’ presence. It is interesting that in their stories the locals used the ethnonym “Germans” and did not use the word “Nazi”, unlike some of my interlocutors who moved to Transcarpathia from other Ukrainian regions after the Second World War.³¹

The stories reflect a wide range of relations between Germans and the local Ukrainian population. Germans attended Sunday services in the church, which surprised and impressed the pious locals (Interview with male Ukrainian born in 1923, village of Velyki Komyaty). The teenagers and children of that time remembered how the soldiers shared chocolate with them. The older ones said that the soldiers paid attention to the children, played games and talked with them, showed them photos of their family members, and admired the surrounding nature (Rosokha 2014, p. 130). One of the interviewees was struck by how “very young Germans cried and prayed” before the battle (Interview with female Ukrainian born in 1929, village of Luh). Sometimes soldiers helped peasants on the farm, for example, by plowing the land with their horses. They shared products, and paid for housing, food, and for washing clothes (such local commerce was recorded in many villages and in the memoir literature, in particular, in the book of Yuri Balega, b. 1928 [Balega 2006]). There were cases of soldiers showing interest or even falling in love with local girls, but the commanders maintained discipline and punished offenders. Despite the ban on flirting with persons of the opposite sex, however, there were cases of intimate relationships and even births of children by local women.³² The relationship between the locals and the Germans is a complex issue that requires a particularly sensitive approach and separate research.

Memories of German units’ presence were also occasionally negative though. For example, in the village of Chorny Potik, they burned houses in which Soviet partisans were hiding, and became more active in the summer of 1944 as the front line came closer. In another story, the interlocutor recalled how the Germans, playing with a little girl, threw her up, scaring the child and making her cry, although they probably did not wish her any harm (Interview with female Ukrainian born in 1926, village of Bushtyno). Other unpleasant cases were also mentioned. However, in general, the German military collective image in Transcarpathia is one of an ordinary person, with none of the features of a Nazi occupier with sadistic tendencies that appears in stories from Ukraine or Belarus.

³¹ This also applies to Hungarians, who were also called *nemetek*, that is, “Germans”.

³² Information recorded from a Ukrainian woman, born in 1926, village of Lazeshchyna. She said that several children were born in the village at that time, who were physically (hair and eye colour, body shape) very different from their parents. Similar information was recorded from other narrators.

The negative image of the “local Nazi”, which was later actively used in Soviet popular and scientific literature and commemorative politics, was assigned to the Hungarian gendarmes and partly to soldiers of the Hungarian army. People’s memory connects them with the extermination and persecution of Sichmen and those who supported the proclamation of the Carpathian Ukraine, the Holocaust, the requisitioning of horses, and the mobilisation of Transcarpathian people into forced labour units and battalions to construct the Arpad Line fortifications, parts of which still exist in the region.³³ From the testimonies of former workers, we can see that the forced labour affected various ethnic groups of the region: Romas/Gypsies, Jews, Ruthenians and Romanians, Slovaks, and even local Hungarians (Hrytsak and Ofitsynskyi 2013).³⁴

Hungarian gendarmes, as representatives of the administrative authorities, maintained strict public order and forbade communication in non-Hungarian languages in public places. They could severely beat people for using a non-state language, regardless of their gender or age. Remarkably, Transcarpathians of Hungarian origin never told me about the language intolerance of the Hungarian authorities, just as they did not try to justify the gendarmes. At the same time, interviewees from all parts of the region admitted that, thanks to the “pyryashes”, the abuse of tavern keepers stopped, and there were few problems with village drunkards.³⁵ We see morally ambivalent features in images of the Hungarian gendarme, but at the same time, contemporaries recognise them as “conscientious” servants of public order.

Representatives of the local Hungarian population remembered the military and gendarmes with greater respect in contrast to Ukrainian-Rusyns. However, there were also those who experienced fear, as in cases of public order violation, they were also punished. There are cases when Hungarians hid Jews or Roma, even though if they were exposed, it would lead to the rescuer’s execution (Aladar, Zeikan & Navrotska 2006). It should be noted that more recently, local Hungarians usually claim to have had good relations with Jews during the war and that they condemned the repression and extermination of Jews initiated by the authorities.³⁶ Oral memories testify that humanity and empathy, and envy and hatred did not depend on ethnicity of the inhabitants of the region. Most watched the eviction of the Jews in silence because they were afraid of the military or of gendarmes. There were those too who, out of hatred for them or for pragmatic reasons, handed Jews over to the gendarmes. Then

³³ The Arpad Line is a line of fortifications built in 1941–44 in the Carpathians along the border of the Kingdom of Hungary.

³⁴ Their local ethnic name is *Tsygani* (“Gypsies”), and so is their self-name. However, in recent years, the power of the media has gradually influenced the spread of another name; Roma.

³⁵ *Shandars*, *pyryashes*, *pyryaniks* are the local names of Hungarian gendarmes. The latter two names are derived from the long feathers (Ukr. *pyrya*) that were an element of their headdress.

³⁶ A similar opinion is shared by Hungarians in all villages and towns of Transcarpathia, where the interviews were recorded. For example: Mali and Velyki Heyivtsi, Chaslivtsi, Surte, Berehove, Batyovo, Mala and Velyka Dobron, Yanoshi, etc.

there were some who hid and helped Jews or Gypsies, who, although to a lesser extent, were also subjected to repression during the war.³⁷

Soviet Red Army representatives left an ambiguous and contradictory set of memories behind them (Leno 2017) as the Transcarpathians experienced the peculiarities of life in wartime conditions in September-October 1944. Although it lasted no longer than a month, it can be compared to the negative war experience that Ukrainians, residing in different parts of the country, endured for several years. The Rusyns were waiting for the Soviet soldiers' arrival, bringing, as they had hoped, the end of the war with them and the hope of meeting a "brotherly" nation, actively promoted by influential Russophile representatives in the interwar period.

In many Rusyn, Slovak, and Romanian villages, the Soviet Red Army was welcomed with joy, which did not at the same time exclude fear. Nevertheless, the villagers showed their hospitality sincerely, even if "liberators" did not always behave decently (Ferkov et al. 2018; Ofitsynskyi 2015b). Some demanded alcoholic beverages, arranged drunken fights, took people's possessions, and abused girls and women (Ofitsynskyi 2015b, p. 135).³⁸ Their popularity among Rusyns was further diminished by the recruitment of "volunteers" that resembled forced mobilisation. A lot of men hid for months and avoided this "voluntary" conscription, although others willingly enlisted in the ranks of the Soviet Red Army (Interview with male Romanian born in 1935, village of Bila Tserkva). Among them were many young men and even girls who were lured by the new uniforms and the promise that they would first be trained and not immediately sent to the front line (Interview with male Ukrainian born in 1925, village of Simer). Judging by the memories, not everyone was so lucky, as many Transcarpathians died in their first battle, without having gone through the proper military preparation. As a result of these and other circumstances, when the cult of the Great Patriotic War began to form in the mid-1960s, it did not find a significant number of supporters in Transcarpathia. This mythology³⁹ could not take root here, despite the considerable efforts of Soviet propagandists and mass commemorations, which really began during the tenure of General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev.

Although Soviet Red Army soldiers of Ukrainian origin often appeared in personal stories, narrators usually used the words "Russians" or "Matskals" as a general term for "liberators". The first ethnonym was connotatively identical to the endo-ethnonym of the local Rusyns, which provided some local justification for their sense of kinship

³⁷ The repression of Gypsies during the war is a separate topic. They were not subjected to total persecution in Zakarpattia as the Jews were, but many of them did suffer as a result of the Paraimos (Gypsy Holocaust). So far, these studies in Transcarpathia remain a promising and under-researched area. Some of this information can be found both in published oral history materials (Aladar, Zeikan, Navrotska 2006) and in recorded memoirs of elderly narrators from various local ethnic groups.

³⁸ Information about the "liberators" is quite contradictory. Local Hungarians speak extremely negatively about them (Ferkov et al. 2018, p. 6). Among other ethnic groups, they may encounter both more positive and negative memories.

³⁹ This cult in Zakarpattia was supported primarily at the official level. At the family level, it was revered mainly by immigrants from other parts of the country who experienced the German occupation regime during the war.

with the “liberators”. The second ethnonym (“Matskals”) was almost never found among Transcarpathians during the war, so it obviously spread later and expressed an exclusively negative attitude. It was not used in communication with Russians and was used in relation to them in the circle of other ethnic groups. This dysphemism is most likely a consequence of the negative attitude towards Russians as representatives of the Soviet government which was formed over the following decades in Transcarpathia. It should be noted that in the second half of the twentieth century, there was no erasure of differences between local ethnic groups in the region. Despite Russification, which has led to the contamination of local dialects and languages with “Russisms”, local Rusyns mainly identify themselves as Ukrainians and oppose themselves to “Matskals”. In the case of mixed families that appeared after the war as a result of the resettlement of Russians in Transcarpathia, offensive ethnic names were usually absent in the family members’ memories of the war period.

The ambiguous attitude towards the “liberators” is demonstrated by the memory of other local nationalities: Hungarians, Slovaks, Swabians (Germans), Romanians and Jews.⁴⁰ Thus, the Soviet troop offensive brought much suffering to those belonging to the former titular ethnic groups, the Magyars (Hungarians) and the Swabians (Germans) (Mishchanyn 2018, pp. 140–152). If for the pro-Ukrainian Rusyns, the arrival of the Soviet Red Army can in principle be called “liberation”, then for the Hungarians and Germans this period is more characterised by years of persecution and poverty, a characterisation that is still not widely publicised in the context of the whole of Ukraine and which appears very superficially in history textbooks (Leno 2019b).

In ethnically Hungarian and German villages, and sometimes in Slovak and Romanian ones, according to the testimony of narrators, the “liberators” robbed shops (Interview with male Hungarian, born in 1924, village of Muzhievo; male German born in 1926, village of Bohdan), raped women (Interview with female German, born in 1942, village of Zhdenievo; female Hungarian, born in 1923, village of Velyki Geyivtsi), and killed people who seemed suspicious. These are stories the eyewitnesses of those events are still afraid to tell (Interview with male Slovak born in 1934, village of Dravtci; see also Braun 2004). In November 1944, long before the region officially joined the USSR, repressions initiated by the decisions of the Fourth Ukrainian Front command began (Mishchanyn 2018, p. 141).⁴¹ This applied to all Hungarian men aged eighteen to fifty (Makara 1995, p. 649), although there were also cases of repression of younger boys and older men. The cynicism of the repressions is compounded by the fact that in 1945, a monument dedicated to liberations with the words “gratitude on behalf of the residents” appeared in the centre of Berehovo, where Hungarians comprised the majority (Leno 2019b, p. 87).

⁴⁰ This topic is partially covered in the following studies: Leno (2017); Ferkov et al. (2018).

⁴¹ The official accession of Transcarpathia to the USSR was preceded by a period of being a quasi-state of the Transcarpathian Ukraine (1944–1946).

While the men were in concentration camps, Hungarian women were subjected to violence by military personnel for several years after the war. Such stories are told by Hungarian, Roma, and Ukrainian interlocutors. From them, we learn how young women hunched over, put on old clothes and masked their faces with mud so that the Soviet soldiers would not flirt with them (Interview with female Hungarian, born in 1923, village of Velyki Geyivtsi). Such testimonies partially coincide with the archival data, but in general, this page of the history of the Soviet Transcarpathian “liberation” remains unknown.⁴²

It is estimated that at least 10,000 out of 25,000 Transcarpathian Hungarians died in concentration camps.⁴³ Most interred Hungarians did not know the Russian language, which only added to their problems.⁴⁴ Often, the Soviet secret police investigators attributed accusations to them and provided pre-written confessions for them to sign, which Hungarians did without hesitation, having no idea what was written in these confessions. The victims of the camp who survived and lived until 2004–2005 did not show any anger or resentment, the result of the fear that haunted them all their lives.⁴⁵ However, it is noticeable that in the memory of the older generation of Hungarians, Stalin was seen as the culprit of the tragedy and was especially hated. For example, in one of the Hungarian villages we were told that when he died in March, 1953, residents smashed his statue without waiting for any official dismantling and threw the fragments into the river (Interview with male Hungarian, born in 1937, village of Shalanky). Local Swabians (Germans) did not escape Soviet repressions either (Interview with female German, born in 1942, village of Zhdenievo). According to the orders of the Fourth Ukrainian Front, men between eighteen and fifty and German women between eighteen and thirty were subject to labour mobilisation and deportation (Makara 1995, p. 649). As a result of the repression, their numbers in the region decreased to approximately 4,000, which was less than a third of their pre-war numbers. Among the stories told by Hungarians, there were memories of how they used their knowledge of the Rusyn or Slovak language to allow them to declare themselves Ukrainian-Rusyn/Slovak and avoid repression (Braun 2004). A similar practice of mimicry during the war was sometimes used by Jews who changed their faith or declared that they had changed it and married people of other nationalities. Such cases are recorded in the memories of several Ukrainian narrators from villages of Maramorosh district; Shiroky Lug, Uglya, Bushtyno, etc.

⁴² This topic is partially covered in my article about the crimes of the Red Army in Transcarpathia, written on the basis of archival data (Leno 2018b).

⁴³ There are no exact data on the number of Transcarpathian Hungarians who died in Soviet camps. Researchers suggest that this number ranges from 10,000–16,000 (Dobos & Molnár 2017; Shtork 2010).

⁴⁴ Transcribed interviews from several local Hungarians who passed through the Soviet camps can be found here: https://kmf.uz.ua/mr/7_digit_inteju.html (accessed 07.11.2023).

⁴⁵ In 2004–2005, the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute conducted oral history field research in Hungarian villages in Transcarpathia, involving hundreds of post-memory carriers and some living victims of Soviet repression and Sovietisation.

Local Slovaks, despite their fear of the military, mostly welcomed the “liberators”, as they associated them with hopes for Czechoslovak power restoration in the region (Interview with male Slovak, born in 1934, village of Dravtci). As an interviewee related, the Romanians, who, like the Rusyns, suffered from forced labour and the horrors of the war (Ofitsynskyi 2013), also welcomed the arrival of the Fourth Ukrainian Front troops (Interview with male Romanian born in 1935, village of Bila Tserkva). At the same time, representatives of both national minorities have many stories to tell about the repression and destruction of their community members by Soviet power, especially because of the first post-war years during the preventive Sovietisation.⁴⁶ The first victims of Soviet persecution were priests and the so-called “kulaky” (in Russian) or “kurkuli” (in Ukrainian) who resisted collectivisation⁴⁷. Persecution for them meant being either physically destroyed or, more often, being sentenced to extended periods in Stalinist camps. Tragically, two respondents from the Romanian villages of Solotvyno and Bila Tserkva, recalled that Ukrainians or Moldovans (the latter essentially Romanian⁴⁸) were reportedly the most violent guards in the camps. Other informants from Romanian villages (seventeen records) could not confirm this information, however. Among my Hungarian respondents (more than thirty entries), I heard similar information from three elderly interlocutors. Then, as others noted, among the Russian or Ukrainian soldiers and guards, there were both good and bad people.

EVERYDAY LIFE DURING THE WAR

A separate theme of our conversations with interviewees was everyday life and their experience in war. During the war there were no massive evacuations of enterprises and factories, no collapse of infrastructure, no protracted battles, no strict regime of German occupation, no collaboration with the enemy, or, vice versa, no mass involvement of civilians in hidden or guerrilla struggles or Nazi repression. Such narratives of war, inherent to other territories of Ukraine, were absent here. Some of these aspects appeared in this region, but in fact, the Hungarian occupation regime was much more lenient than the German one.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Preventive Sovietisation is the period of the first years of Soviet power in the region (1944–46). The first Sovietisation events took place on the territory of the puppet quasi-state of Transcarpathian Ukraine. The implementation of collectivisation, the establishment of the cult of Stalin, and the creation of the Soviet system of regional management took place while preserving the formal independence of this state entity.

⁴⁷ “Kulak” or “Kurkul” was a negative name for the category of peasants who were considered ideological enemies of the Soviet government. Usually, this category included reasonably wealthy and commercially successful peasant farmers.

⁴⁸ By ethnic origin, Moldovans share a common ancestry with the Romanian ethnic group, as evidenced by their common language and traditional culture. Moldovans became a state-forming ethnic group as a result of Soviet policy and the proclamation of the Moldavian SSR.

⁴⁹ There was no German occupation regime, no organised partisan activity, and no Soviet saboteurs. They tried to exile the latter in January 1942, which ended with the operative destruction of

This situation was the result of the official “Ugro–Rusyns” policy, according to which the historical and national unity of Hungarians and Rusyns (Slavik 2013, p. 117) was defended and coexisted relatively peacefully for almost a millennium as part of the Hungarian Kingdom.⁵⁰ Thus, we can speak about a relatively high loyalty to the Hungarian authorities during the war. From the beginning of the war to the autumn of 1944, there were no military actions in the region’s territory. The front passed the Transcarpathian territory in September–October 1944, however, which in some places led to the serious destruction of local infrastructure and human casualties on both sides (Ofitsynskyi 2010, p. 252).

The personal stories of the locals give the impression that the rhythm of everyday life in the region during the war did not differ too much from the pre-war period until the spring and summer of 1944. Changes did take place, but the stories of people I spoke with were sketched mainly within the boundaries of their own settlement or the neighbouring administrative centre, where the villagers went to the market or on other errands. Inhabitants of lowland villages recalled that with the war’s outbreak, not many changes took place in daily life, apart from a mobilisation of men into the Hungarian army. The Transcarpathian highlanders, who, due to the economic and geographical specificity of the region, had a more difficult life than the valley dwellers even in peacetime, gave different information that the war immediately caused more difficult times. In the memories of combatants who have survived to the present day, there are no hints of any heroic moments connected with the war; they only remember their fear, their difficulties, and death. During the war, the organisation of forced labour in the region was announced. It had a temporary (shifting) nature that allowed people to carry out their usual daily activities, take care of livestock, engage in agriculture, harvest crops, and sell products in markets. Only a relatively small number of local people became “Ostarbeiters” working in the territory of Germany.

The effects of the war began to be felt after the local Holocaust, which caused profound demographic and economic changes in the region. The Jewish community, which was the third-largest community and constituted the majority in some villages and towns, practically disappeared in the spring of 1944 (Slavik 2017). This affected economic life, as Jews traditionally received raw materials and products from people and ensured trade. The Holocaust did not directly affect other ethnic groups in the region, as mixed marriages were rare. The Holocaust experiences were felt at the neighbourhood or at individual levels, and this event still evokes condemnation and negative local memories. However, in the 1950s and 1970s, authorities took consistent measures to eliminate any references to the Jewish presence in Transcarpathia from the collective memory and the symbolic space.

Borkaniuk’s group. Soviet sabotage groups, as well as partisans, became active soon after, at the end of the summer of 1944.

⁵⁰ The Kingdom of Hungary was a monarchy that lasted for almost a millennium until 1918. For almost the entire period, the Transcarpathian territory was part of the kingdom.

At the end of the summer of 1944, the front approached Transcarpathia, which deepened the shortage of consumer goods. I recorded such information from members of all ethnic groups living across the region. In order to escape possible bombings as the front approached, the locals began to dig “dykunky”, fortification pits for their families. It became customary to turn off the lights at night and cover the windows in houses, because planes on both sides could drop bombs by targeting the light. At the same time, there was a shortage of livestock, which was increasingly taken by the army (first Hungarian, later Soviet), although Soviet troops took the cattle without a word (Rosokha 2014, pp. 130-132), while Hungarian soldiers provided compensation or issued receipts, according to which the owners could receive compensation in the future (Leno 2017, p. 50).

Military actions took place in the region during the second half of September and lasted until the beginning of November 1944. In general, compared to other territories of Ukraine, Zakarpattia was spared the horrors of war. However, even two months of active hostilities in the region had their impact on the rules and norms governing traditional morality. Marauding became common during this period. Many testimonies have been collected about men or teenagers who would undress the corpses of dead soldiers and steal their clothes and especially shoes (male Ukrainian born in 1930, village of Orychovytsa). The bodies of the dead people could even be dug up for this purpose, their lower limbs cut off when their shoes were frozen to them (male Ukrainian born in 1936, village of Zhdenievo). Not all locals committed such acts, and many condemned looting. One story, for instance, tells of a woman forbidding her daughter to communicate with a potential groom when she learned that he had removed the outer clothing of a dead soldier (female Ukrainian born in 1926, village of Bushtyno).

Another negative consequence of the war was the emergence of gangs, which was mentioned by narrators from different districts of the region: Khust, Perechyn, Tyachiv, etc. Some aspects of these gangs have been studied by local historians (Arzhevitin 2020; Danylets 2023), which emerged as a result of desertion, evasion of Hungarian and Soviet mobilisations and the presence of a significant number of weapons among the people (Danylets 2023). Such gangs were dominated by Rusyns, but other ethnic groups were to be found among them too. In addition to gangs appearing spontaneously, bands of marauders were created by the Soviet authorities to fight the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Mainly bad memories have been documented with regard to the bandits and the Red Army soldiers who tried to eliminate them. Local people often found themselves “between a rock and a hard place” during these operations, since the Soviet Red Army also committed robberies as well as violence against the civilian population (Leno 2018c; Mishchanyn 2020).

COMMUNAL AND “OFFICIAL” FEATURES OF THE MEMORY LANDSCAPE

Certain local and communal variants of memory in Transcarpathia that have a certain ethnic specificity can be clearly discerned, existing at the family level and mainly transmitted orally. They can additionally be seen in material forms that exist

in parallel or are sometimes embedded in the “official”, ceremonial landscape of memory. Among the most common forms are: monuments and war memorials that serve as official (state) places of remembrance; rural and urban cemeteries; and crosses and monuments that have emerged as a result of private or regional civic initiatives.

The full-scale war that started in February 2022 launched a mass dismantling of Soviet monuments in the region (*Ziavyvsia*). This communist legacy of monuments had been dominant in the region, as memorials were placed mainly in towns centres. In Soviet times, cemeteries could provide some competition to official memory places. They preserved both their religious and ethnic specificity: Hungarians are buried in the Lutheran cemetery; Ukrainians at the Orthodox and Greek Catholic cemeteries; and Slovaks and Hungarians mostly at the Roman Catholic ones. These rural cemeteries are still distinguished by the symbolism of the images, epitaphs on the tombstones, and the specifics of the ritual burial. Among them, Romanian cemeteries can be singled out as a separate topic of research; large and elaborate, they can be explained by the peculiarities of their mentality, and not only by the peculiarities of memory. It should be added that during the Soviet period, urban cemeteries were characterised by a certain “internationality”, while rural cemeteries were marked by a kind of ethnic or confessional homogeneity.

The Jewish layer of the memorial landscape is represented by their cemeteries too, though burials there have not taken place for decades. The local Jewish community was subjected to a double extermination: because of the Holocaust, they were physically destroyed, and any memories or traces of their presence were erased in Soviet times as well, when Jewish religious or administrative buildings were repurposed or neglected. Evidence of the gradual erasure from memory of Jews was not rare, as the Transcarpathian post-war generation (Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Russians) removed many tombstones for private or summer-house construction, a fact attested to in many oral testimonies.⁵¹ Only during the last thirty years have Jewish cemeteries begun to be maintained properly at the expense of descendants of local Jews. Other attempts to restore a Jewish memorial presence have as yet not found support from the authorities. As an example, only twelve memorial sites have been opened in eight regional towns, where approximately 90% of their pre-war population were killed as a result of the Holocaust. Attempts to return preserved religious buildings to the Jews (such as philharmonic halls, cultural centres and banks) have been unsuccessful.

In recent decades, changes to the region’s memorial space have taken place that have made it less official. Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, and Ukrainians opened monuments or put up commemorative plaques to “their” heroes and “victims” or to famous events. During the Soviet period, it had been forbidden to mention them, as they did not “fit” into the communist pantheon of heroes. The subsequent initiative and implementation of such projects came from both private individuals and

⁵¹ This happened under the Soviet authorities, which did not shy away from such practices; gravestones from the old city cemetery were used to make paving slabs near a large department store in Uzhhorod.

state authorities. The specifics of these places of memory, as well as the issue of their coexistence in the space of official memorials, requires more research.

CONCLUSIONS

The grand historical narrative of any country and local versions of history, which are recorded in regional variants of collective memory, are characterised by significant differences. This is particularly evident in the case of such border regions as Transcarpathia. As a result of the oral-historical reflection analysis of the Second World War period and the beginning of Sovietisation in Transcarpathia, the following conclusions may be reached. As the region was a part of Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the interwar period, Transcarpathians developed a special vision and understanding of the events. Particularly noteworthy are the commemorative narratives of 1938–1945, the interpretation of which differ from the interpretation of the war that can be found in official textbooks of Ukrainian history. This applies both to the features of everyday life during the war years and to relations with German or Hungarian and Red Army soldiers. Even in the memories of former soldiers there are almost no heroic motives in the stories about life during the war or the tragic component of life. Except for Carpathian Ukraine and the Holocaust events, there is no great separation into larger narrative layers.

In many regions, the rhythm of life during the war did not differ too much from the pre-war period, and the population had significantly fewer negative experiences compared to inhabitants of other regions of Ukraine. In particular, this less extreme experience of the period meant that efforts to galvanise support for a cult of the Great Patriotic War in Transcarpathia ultimately failed. The cult, which became a cornerstone of Soviet identity, could not take root in Transcarpathia, since its veneration among the population was more formal in nature.

The memories and personal histories of Transcarpathians, however, are often intertwined with official narrative theses. A common example is the different dates for the beginning of the war. Most of the narrators reproduce their own experience of the war, which is usually limited to the outskirts of a particular settlement or the nearest administrative centre. However, in cases where the subject of the conversation went beyond the boundaries of the town or village, the interlocutors provided information that they received from school courses, Soviet and special modern TV, the media, feature films, or literature. The exception was the recorded stories about the Hungarian or Soviet Red Army soldiers; in such cases, the geography of personal memories was much wider.

The personal experiences of different local ethnic groups within the same region must sometimes differ significantly. This applies especially to the tragic historical record associated with Hungarian and Soviet repressions. Unfortunately, more recent collective traumas of local ethnic groups have not yet passed the stage of recognition and discussion between the titular majority and the many ethnic minorities.

This suggests a reluctance to bear responsibility for the past, as well as a weak level of collective empathy that is manifested even at the level of low commemoration practices—each group perpetuates its own victims. The same can be said of the ethnicity of the past. Respondents from different ethnic groups look at the past using their own “ethnic optics” that contains the potential problem of developing into some local version of the “war of memories”.

In general, the collected oral history data open the prospect of further research, for instance in challenging and deconstructing the region’s “liberation” process. Such research has great potential, but has not yet taken place as the “liberation” narrative still holds sway in books and general works. In addition, less well-known topics remain; the stories of Transcarpathians mobilised to the Hungarian army, the Holocaust, and many other pages of local history that have not come to the researchers’ attention yet. The data collection continues while interlocutors still wish to speak and offer their memories and interpretations, so that in time, such dialogues may be possible, and more equitable histories may be written.

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PAVLO LENO

HISTORICAL MEMORIES IN TRANSCARPATHIA:
ORAL HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Key words: Transcarpathia, cultural and communicative memory, oral history materials, World War II, Sovietization, Carpatho-Rusyns, Hungarians, Germans

Transcarpathia is a border and mostly mountainous region with a rather complex ethnographic and religious mosaic. It borders 4 countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), and geographically is the westernmost part of Ukraine. These factors contributed to the shape of a local multicultural population with fluid identities and very specific worldviews. The deepening of cultural ruptures is increased by regional historical memory, which shows the past in a way that is not described in the official historical grand narrative. This situation is also influenced by ethnic diversity and the presence of ethnic minorities, in particular local Hungarians and Germans, whose reflections on World War II and Sovietization differ both from the official grand narrative and from the memories of local Ukrainians.

This study exhibits these differences and attempts to generalize and explain them. The ethnographic data was collected during the author's fieldwork. Among the respondents, there are representatives of various Transcarpathian ethnic groups, direct witnesses of the XX century's most significant events. Memories of these events are analysed through their impact on the everyday life of ordinary people.

Article translated by Viktoriia Shkurenko

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“OUR PEOPLE, OUR RULES, AND OUR BORDER!”:
VILLAGE NETWORKS, PEOPLE’S ECONOMIES,
AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE AT THE WESTERN
EDGE OF UKRAINE¹

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the local economy of a small village community situated in Transcarpathian Ukraine, relatively close to the Slovakian-Ukrainian border that was originally established in 1945 between Czechoslovakia and Soviet Ukraine. I uncover the beginning of this particular local economy and the favours that ensured the smooth running of economic activity in the local region under Soviet rule, and I trace its transformation over time. The local economic activity I researched² is currently most visible in the everyday operation of the external Schengen

¹ I am grateful to Juraj Buzalka and the anonymous reviewers of *Etnografia Polska* for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

² Presented data come from a year-long period of ethnographic fieldwork in 2018/2019, while data regarding the recent Russian aggression were gathered in 2022 through online calls with my informants. My doctoral field research project served as basis for my 2018/19 ethnographic research and was approved by the Institute of Social Anthropology, Comenius University, before I entered the field as part of my studies. I am grateful for the generous funding of my 2018/19 doctoral fieldwork to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (Saale), and namely to Chris Hann and his initiative the “Visegrád Anthropologists’ Network”.

By employing narrative and informal unstructured interviews during my research, I looked at people’s perspectives on life and turns of events in socialist and post-socialist period, with particular regard to their economies and livelihoods, and also to village politics. Participant observation of public and private events, respectively of locals’ everyday activities in the village and home environment, allowed me to build rapport, but also a safe space to conduct mostly unplanned, informal interviews on sensitive topics (e.g., illicit practices). I want to state that I have no personal experience with actual instances of illicit livelihood strategies (e.g., smuggling) discussed in this article, and also that I have no information about actual cases of carrying out of such practices by my informants.

border³ and the municipal office, from which so-called *favours* are facilitated. However, in local memory, other village institutions (for instance, the local unit of *kolhosp* [Ukr. “collective farm”] and the municipal office) were also spaces from which favours were once facilitated. My primary concern is to explain which particular circumstances caused the practice of favouring from within state institutions to emerge in this village community. I demonstrate what constituted its basic characteristics under the socialist regime and how these attributes have changed over time. I discuss how the past and present expressions and functions of favouring relate to changes brought by bigger political-economic (socialist and post-socialist) transitions. I explore the implications of these economies (carried out in the form of cross-border businesses) for the local community and also for the functioning of the state at the border since the softening of border regime after dissolution of USSR. Finally, I explore the impact of the observed economies and the personal connections, utilised in these economies, on the facilitation of the two-way movement of people and commodities through the Schengen border in times of Russian aggression in Ukraine. I look at the locally-remembered agency of three generations of communal leaders who belong to a particular family network and their role in people’s economies from around the beginning of the socialist era in Transcarpathia (1945) to the present day.

First, I look back into the socialist history of the village and, through local perspectives, I illustrate the ways these economies developed under socialism, with regard to the changes brought by regime and pro-communal agency of two-generations of local leaders. Next, I use the concepts of *post-peasant economy* (Buzalka 2022) and *economy of favours* (Humphrey 2017; Makovicky 2017) to comprehend this local economy theoretically. I suggest this economy is an unintended product of socialist modernisation, based on a non-calculative rationale connected to the traditional mores of the village community (shared view on morality, solidarity and belonging expressed in intra-communal cooperation). In the third part, I argue for the expanding scope of these economies into new institutional spaces arising from the administration of the Schengen border in the post-socialist period, which introduced vast political-economic changes. I then describe these economies as the basis of informal, cross-border business, mobilised around the third-generational communal leader who has supported his community since the material crisis of post-independence Ukraine in the 1990s. In the fourth part, I conceptualise the three-generational agency of the local family in these economies in terms of the state’s functioning (expressed in the form of the international border) using James Scott’s (1990) concept of *hidden transcript*, and I argue for the key role of these morality/solidary-based economies for the actual functioning of the state since the end of socialism. In the final part, I shift to the recent Russian aggression against

³ The external Schengen border (or just Schengen border) separates the Schengen area (space formed by European countries, including Slovakia, where controls on borders are abolished to provide free movement of people and commodities) from those which are not (including Ukraine). Thus, on the Slovakian-Ukrainian border, which is an external Schengen border too, various types of controls are still present.

Ukraine and suggest that the actual subversion of border administration and village institutions by the local family network is an essential instrument for facilitating the movement of people and commodities through the Schengen border. It is also a strategy of coping with the recent crisis for the village community and as well as for those passing through the border (that is, both those fleeing the Ukraine or those providing humanitarian support).

FAVOURING FROM ‘BETWEEN THE LINES’ IN SOCIALISM

Brashovo⁴ is a village in the Transcarpathian region⁵ of Ukraine, located in its north-western part. It sits on a relatively flat terrain, a few dozen kilometres from the region’s capital, Uzhhorod. It is situated within reach of the almost 100-kilometre-long Slovak-Ukrainian Schengen border and the border-crossing point Ubl’a–Malyi Bereznyi. The vast majority of its inhabitants identify as Ukrainians and only a very few individuals as Rusyns. The ethnic composition of Brashovo has remained relatively homogeneous over the course of its history, despite various ethnic policies and initiatives that Transcarpathia experienced (Magyarisation, Russification). Brashovo’s population is currently evenly split between the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Before World War I, Brashovo was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the interwar period it was subsumed into the First Czechoslovak Republic. Brashovans remember these periods as dire times because attempts to improve the living conditions of the mostly-rural population, which was devoted to traditional livelihood strategies like peasantry, through modernising the region were not successful. People escaped dire conditions initially through seasonal migration to the Hungarian lowlands, and later to the industrialised region of Czechoslovak Moravia. Sometimes they even emigrated to the United States. Brashovan families still remember using these ways out, which were possible until the region’s incorporation into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945.

In addition to the highly-monitored international border installed near the village in 1945, other socialist institutions and policies were introduced. One such policy which noticeably impacted the life of the predominantly rural population was that of collectivisation. A so-called *kolkhosp* was established in the village, where lands previously owned by peasant families were taken away and collectivised by the Soviet state. The lands were then handed over to be operated as a collective farm which was, at that time, employing roughly between one fourth and one third of Brashovo’s population.⁶ Meanwhile the greater part of Brashovo shifted to paid work in the growing industry in surrounding cities during the first decades of socialism.

⁴ I altered the actual name of the researched village and the names of my respondents.

⁵ Zakarpats’ka oblast’ (in Ukrainian) is Ukraine’s westernmost administrative part, bordering with Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland.

⁶ Estimate of local elders.

The mobilisation of villagers into *kolkhosps* was slow during the 1940s and 1950s, as people generally refused to engage with the collective farms, and even actively resisted working there and occasionally protested openly. More often locals engaged in sabotage of the collective farm's daily operation (see Allina-Pisano 2010; Magocsi 2015; Marples 1992). Jessica Allina-Pisano (2010) in particular takes a close look at several local, historical examples of subversive strategies carried out in *kolkhosps* settings (including theft and squandering of resources, and infringements of workplace duties) that expressed villagers' efforts to preserve the economic autonomy of their individual households. These strategies were also used to ensure the continued functioning of their traditional household economic model in parallel with – and often at the expense of – the state-run *kolkhosps*, all of which meant that the *kolkhosps* struggled to draw local support.

In Brashovo, such pragmatic and subversive strategies are vividly remembered as informal agency, carried out “from within” Soviet structures and “for local people”. Locals remember mostly the ways in which members of one particular family network, probably the wealthiest local peasants in the pre-Soviet era, who I refer to here as the Brisudskyy family, were able to obtain a number of positions in the structures of the socialist state (*kolkhosp*, municipal office and border administration). By favouring, from within Soviet structures, this family was able to provide material resources for other local families.

What most people pointed out when speaking about the significance since early socialism of this family network, and in particular its leader, for the community was that (in words of a local elder, Ivan):

Uncle Mykola was a great man that this village remembers, even though this all happened a while ago. He was a great goodman, knew how to do everything at the plot, and to get along with people... But first and foremost, he knew people would suffer if there were some further conflicts [because of the establishment of kolkhosp]... But uncle Mykola willingly offered himself to our kolkhosp, to Communist Party, and served as its member. Or, at least people “up there” [referring to district/region-level state representatives] thought so. But truly he was with us, his people, all the time, helping us, quietly providing our families with stuff from kolkhosp which was once ours. It did not matter how things were done... He was doing this for his people and as far as I remember, those apparatchiks from Uzhhorod had not even noticed someone was ripping off the state.

Theft from *kolkhosp's* resources, squandering and misuse of machinery on people's own garden plots are just some examples mentioned by villagers who remember “the everyday reality of *kolkhosp's* operation” (words of local elder, Igor), and examples to which one of them refers to as “helping” and “providing” in the excerpt above. The family network is most commonly recognised for transacting “from within” the state structures to benefit the community. It is still seen locally as responsible for taking this openly non-resisting, yet covertly subversive, stance in relation to any novel state policies and institutions in times of political-economic transformation. Thus, based on the memory of locals, the dominant family network (and notably Mykola Brisudskyy Sr., its head) found a way to illicitly favour their peers, mostly

families of those working in the *kolhosp*, irrespective of their denomination or other demographic characteristic, with state agricultural material resources or the use of machinery. This proved useful for locals’ home-grown gardens and enabled them to partially subsist economically.

The key position of this family network within the community became even more strengthened over the time, as locals recall. After its leader Mykola Brisudskyy Sr. served in the executive of Brashovo’s *kolhosp* in early socialism, in the 1970s and 1980s his son Mykola Jr. went “in his father’s shoes”, as he became the village head and “another true leader of people” (words of local elder, Kyrylo).

In addition to being considered “a good, helpful and skilful guy” within the community, according to villagers it was mostly the informal, pro-community agency (locally referred to as “legacy of his father”) in which he had been engaging since his youth which was decisive for his rise to the position of village head. Apart from his talent for keeping local families content through the informal redistribution of state resources, he at the same time kept district and region-level representatives confident about his devotion to the Communist party. It was in this period when his family network, including his extended family members, also strengthened their reputation among village patrons by obtaining a majority of village council and executive of village institutional seats. Thus, as Brisudskyy family network united the extended family relatives of Mykola Jr., including his cousins, uncles, aunts and their spouses⁷ within high-ranking positions in Brashovo’s institutions, it represented the most dominant political unit in Brashovo. Two other extended-family networks, however, are also remembered for obtaining of high-ranking positions in local institutions, although, to a lesser extent, and without maintaining as many numerous favouring channels as other family or neighbourly networks, as the Brisudskyy had.

Like his father, Mykola Jr. was a local Communist Party and *kolhosp* member who “did not mind getting his hands dirty for them [the Brashovans]” (words of retired village priest, Petro). However, now his pro-community agency not only provided material opportunities for others (via redistribution of resources to other family networks), but it also had visible outcomes in the modernisation of the village, for example in a new school and library being built, and village infrastructure being renovated. Hence, in this generation of the Brisudskyy family network, subversion of the state extended into the municipal office and council also, and is remembered as a form of sincere engagement in community beneficence.

Additionally, for locals who remember everyday life in socialism, this way of subversively transacting ‘between the lines’, or as they say, of “doing favours”, is

⁷ Association of individuals with this family network has been based on family-bond to its leaders, or to a leader’s close relatives, ever since the socialist past. Nevertheless, locals stated that even when someone was not considered a member of the Brisudskyy family network through family bonds back then, they could still get into very intensive, mutually-benefiting relations with this network. Even now, the Brisudskyy family network’s members, unlike members of other family networks, have numerous patron-client bonds with their supporters, who are either their neighbours, (former) employees in institutions run by Brisudskyy, or, as I will further illustrate, have been involved in their informal businesses.

considered part of the everyday economy termed locally as *selyans'ke zhyttya* [Ukr. “peasants’ life”]. However, Brashovans’ memory of this way of life under socialism not only connects to illicit favouring, but also to everyday cooperation strategies perceived as more traditionally rural. This co-operation “made the life easier back then” (according to 60-years old local, Dmytro), and the two generations of Brashovo leaders are remembered as enthusiastic goodmen for such aid.⁸ These favours, performed between members of family or neighbour networks, included ad hoc lending of agricultural goods and services (e.g., help in people’s gardens, lending of agricultural machinery) and providing with expert services, mostly by local electricians, plumbers and masons. Moreover, favours were also connected to villagers’ participation in traditional gatherings held by families or organised communally (e.g., harvesting of crops, slaughtering of farm animals).

It is worth noting that these favours are remembered as being used in everyday interactions between other local family members and members of the Brisudskyy family network. As Svitlana, administrative worker in the municipal office from Mykola Brisudskyy Jr.’s era, remembers:

Although we were just neighbours and not their family, they [Brisudskyy] were really good to us. For example, Mykola promptly provided us with house-building license we sought for some time after we got married with my husband... or, as an employee of municipality I was given many gifts on occasions... And when the need arose my husband [local electrician] did some repair works on Brisudskyy’s house, or my son [kolhosp worker] helped the Brisudskyy during grape harvest in their vineyard, both cost-free... because we were thankful to Brisudskyy for what they were doing for us, neighbours, and for the community for generations.

Thus, it may be implied that favours from members of the Brisudskyy family to their supporters (i.e., to neighbours or those who worked in institutions informally run by the Brisudskyy family network), were usually returned in the form of favours with the aforementioned contents of everyday importance to locals. The agency of the Brisudskyy family was, then, usually followed by these kinds of assistance from members of other family networks to express their gratitude to their village leaders.

APPROACH TO PEOPLE’S ECONOMIES

Although these economies resembled some traditional traits of peasant community (relevance of inter-familial cooperation and frequent socialisation at characteristic rural activities and events), I theorise this economic activity using Juraj Buzalka’s (2022) notion of the *post-peasant*.⁹ Everyday strategies, including favouring from

⁸ Brashovans use term *gázda* (equivalent of English “yeoman”) on both Mykola Brisudskyy Jr. and Sr. to accentuate their engagement in cooperation and socialisation in activities and events perceived as “peasant-like”.

⁹ Buzalka (2022) theorises the term *post-peasant house*, but I adopt his perspective on the factors influencing the presence of the model of people’s economic activity under socialism.

within state institutions by networks around two-generational communal leaders, represent coping mechanisms adopted by village community in order to adapt to profound structural changes. These changes are connected to industrialisation and urbanisation, while “the socialist economy, weakly penetrated by market relations [...] nurtured practices which had their roots in an agrarian era” (Buzalka 2022, p. 45). Under the centrally-planned economic system, then, people, and Brashovans among them, relied on “kinship ties, [...] exchanges, and values associated with an agrarian past” (p. 45).¹⁰ According to Buzalka (2022), this reliance “further produced relations reminiscent of the village community” (p. 45). Thus, I refer to a *post-peasant* model because people utilised rather traditional social foundations and forms of morally and solidary-based cooperation and socialisation in the village community during socialist modernisation. Accordingly, they were able to stay self-sufficient and to exert influence over the everyday operation of the village’s political institutions through cryptic favouring practices from within these institutions.

Moving from the origins of these economies to their logic of functioning, I use *economies of favours* to refer to the acts illustrated here not only because locals use the term *favour* (*posluha* in Ukrainian). Applying Makovicky’s (2017) definition of *economies of favours* to the state-subversive practice of favouring, I suggest it highlights a specific, idiomatic register of action, which is irreducible to a cost-benefit rationale. Favours, enacted by the Brisudskyy family, are considered here to be a part of an *economy of favours* because these favours are remembered as gratuitous (usually not directly returned) moral acts with benefits to the community. They are based on a distinctive performance within the state administration that enabled a particular network to influence the administration’s actual operation according to locally-shared moral values. In addition, in terms of the acts performed and conceptualised as *favours* it is, however, also necessary to stress the importance of the “moral aesthetic of action that endows the actors with standing and a sense of self-worth, and [...] the circles that provide the recognition” (Humphrey 2017, p. 51), in the case of Brashovo, of the connections between the family networks belonging to local community.

To recap, I theorise these practices, enacted across two Brisudskyy generations, as *post-peasant* because they were expressions of traditional village sociality that enabled the community to adapt to regime developments at a local level. They were also expressions of an *economy of favours* whose practices represented gratuitous performances expressing and adhering to the community’s moral values in different areas of the village institutions’ actual operations and rural cooperation. Further they enabled members of a particular family-network to become respected community leaders.

¹⁰ The values observed in Brashovans’ practice of favouring (and in memory of it) are morality, solidarity, a sense of belonging to village community and a connection to a rural/agricultural way of life (so, to the notion of “the peasants’ life”).

In the next part, I move on to the post-socialist period and describe developments in Brashovans' livelihoods in terms of transforming political-economic conditions. Analysing the agency of the third-generation communal leader in the new political-economic circumstances which came into being after the dissolution of socialist state and introduction of market-economy, I aim to update Chris Hann's thesis about "the *everyday moral communities* of socialism [which] have been undermined but not replaced" (Hann 2002, p. 10, emphasis in original). Brashovans' economies and the agency of the third generation of leader are, then, approached as particular, everyday expressions in people's "micro-worlds", which were capable of reacting to the situation after the collapse of the socialist regime's "macro structures" (centralised party-states and administered economies). In particular they "produce autonomous effects that may have unexpected influence over the [new] structures that have been emerging" in post-socialism (Burawoy & Verdery 1999, p. 2). Thus, members of the Brashovan community partaking in these economies shall not be perceived as mere observers of larger processes "happening to them", but as participants in these processes, as people who are competent in "making some sense of the world around them" (Humphrey 2002, p. xvii).

In terms of this ability of people to react to changing political-economic conditions, I argue that despite the practice of favouring that emerged under specific circumstances (for instance, institutional constraints imposed by the socialist regime), and later in the post-socialist period (that is, after the establishment of a market economy and an independent state) favouring was transformed, while at the same time maintaining its importance and moral dimension for people. Despite being built on the traditional parameters of village community (morality, solidarity, common belonging, rural- or agriculture-based cooperation and socialisation) and having once been carried out from within the village's institutions, the practice of favouring actually later expanded into new spaces, namely the Schengen border administration, as a result of the changing political-economic conditions in the post-socialist period. Added to that, I also suggest that the observed agency, the de facto favouring of villagers with economic opportunities as part of a flourishing, informal, cross-border business not only improved people's economic prospects during a crisis-laden 1990s, it also ensured the continuity of an actually informalised operation of state institutions (according to community values) in the post-socialist period. Then I broaden my argument by theorising the relation between people's economies and the state border through Scott's (1990) concept of *hidden transcript*, and suggest that the continual, morally-based agency of the Brisudskyy family network can be understood as a crucial practice of influencing the functioning of the state long-term.

FAMILY NETWORK, VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS AND THE BORDER

Brashovo experienced the consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of an independent Ukrainian state in 1991. Hyperinflation of the

official currency caused the collapse of state production and distribution chains, while chaotic privatisation of previously state-owned properties (including the *kol-hosps*) left the vast majority of Brashovans without official livelihoods. Moreover, “political instability hindered the building of functional administrative institutions like tax authorities, and escaping into the untaxed shadow economy was easy” (Sutela 2012, p. 4).

People remember this period as a time when their livelihoods depended on intensive cooperation within the village community. Villagers solved vast shortages in state food production by partial subsistence and reciprocal exchange of home-based products. The lack of official services was addressed through the exchange of resources (wood for heating, house building products) and trading of skilled assistance between neighbours (expert services were favoured between locals). Even though households “started preferring to count what, to whom and in what amount was given [sic]” (sixty-year-old Oksana), locals still stress today the importance of the inter-familial networks’ everyday economies for their survival in the early 1990s. Hence, since the emergence of independent Ukraine, Brashovans have improvised in terms of livelihood strategies and have used already-established channels of favouring that function in parallel with the official economy.

The change that provided people with economic opportunities was the transformation of the international border. In particular, the opening of a new border-crossing in 1995 between the villages of Ubla and Malyy Berezhnyy, not far from Brashovo, and the later admission of Slovakia into EU caused what Jessica Allina-Pisano (2009, p. 274) described as an “explosion of trade”. In Brashovo the price difference and softening of the border-regime caused a similar demand for cheap spirits, tobacco products and sweets, as Allina-Pisano observed in another Transcarpathian village, while in Brashovo these commodities were sold predominantly in kiosks along the village’s main street, which profoundly changed its appearance.¹¹ There were, however, more profitable ways of improving the economic situation, according to villagers.

One of them was cyclical economic migration through the newly-established border crossing, mostly to Czechia’s Moravia region, where some Brashovans have had distant relatives since Czechoslovak rule in Transcarpathia.¹² Even today, work migration to Czechia (or other nearby countries) in organised travelling groups remains a popular strategy for improving people’s financial situation.

However, there were different, more ‘shadowy’ economic strategies for which Brashovo became known for being ‘smugglers’ village’, and which offered “instant, big money” (Borys, former smuggler). Because of the introduced quantity limits on transferring the most popular commodities (tobacco products, spirits, fuels)

¹¹ *Kiosks* were often run by Brashovans living along the village’s main street, who either engaged or were associated with those who took part in other forms of informal business (that is, smuggling).

¹² Another family link to present-day Brashovans exist in some villages in Hungary, where their ancestors migrated for agricultural work before the First World War. A few distant relatives of Brashovans are also scattered across Eastern Slovakia, which belonged to the same Czechoslovak state as Brashovo between 1918 and 1939.

from Ukraine to Slovakia, smuggling businesses flourished all along the Ukrainian borderlands, and particularly in Brashovo in the 1990s and 2000s. It is rumoured by locals that at the beginning of the 2000s at least one quarter of Brashovo's households directly depended on incomes from smuggling (of tobacco products, spirits, fuels), while at present more than half of them engage in some kind of informal economy (smuggling, petty-trade, or self-employment) or work migration.

As many past or present smugglers noted, it was more profitable to engage in smuggling from the position of belonging to a local smuggling network than to do so individually. Also, as one of the former smugglers, Oleh explains, engagement in a local smuggling group was not solely an economic decision, but a reflection of the importance of the communal ties for him:

I tried travelling to Moravia for some years, working on the building site. It was good money, but I missed home, family. And there turned out to be better options, when I was able to remain at home, make better money, and have people I know for decades around me, [...] I did what I had to do for my family, started to do some jobs for my cousin, who was very helpful in this, [...] who gave us opportunities, [...] because he had these connections at the border – relatives, neighbours who worked as border guards, or like that [...] It was not ideal sometimes, doing the jobs through the border, I had problems with law because of it [...] But there were always my people, my man, Vasil, who took care of me and gave me many opportunities to earn good money while still being at home.

According to locals with experience in smuggling, it was decisive that the network operating the informal cross-border business since the 1990s was the already-established Brisudskyy family network, whose leading members were considered “patrons” because they provided economic opportunities to their supporters from the community. Thus, the agency of this family network from within the state structures (favouring of job opportunities in smuggling) has remained recognised as a key factor for the well-being of the village community. Unlike in the past, favouring did not occur only from within the local state institutions, but from within the administration of the nearby border-crossing, which has employed a few members of the Brisudskyy family network, and thus represents an ideal space for establishing informal business in the post-socialist era. However, the Brisudskyy's way of retaining the position of communal leaders remained very similar to that in socialism. This is to say that it depended on a morally-plausible distribution of favours from the members of this family network to other local family-networks among the various ranks of the village community. These ranks comprise the supporters who tend to cooperate with the Brisudskyy family network and have been economically dependent on it since socialism. Or as former smuggler and supporter of Brisudskyy family, Roman, stated:

In dark times you turn to those you have good experience with, with whom you and your close ones shared the past... I did what I was told to [to smuggle], had a good life – same as my dad who worked under Uncle Mykola [Jr.]. And how I gave back to Brisudskyy's? The least I could do was to help them in whichever way possible, whether asked, or not... I helped them to renovate their houses, assisted on their family's or municipal feasts they organized, drove them to places... I was there, always, ready to give back one favour after another.

During the crisis in the 1990s, as before, another leader emerged, Vasil, son of Mykola Jr., grandson of Mykola Sr. It was he who built businesses upon fair and loyal relations with the supporters of his family network (in some cases lasting two generations) and took care of them. Despite not having experience with executive functions, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vasil, as his ancestors did, turned out to be a respected member of community. By utilising family connections in the administration of the border (relatives employed as border guards since socialist times), in the 1990s, Vasil's popularity in, and importance for, the community arose because he assisted in his peers' group-work travels through the border to Czechia and facilitated others' partaking in smuggling jobs through the border.

Proof of his importance for the community was reflected in the growth of his smuggling group, which started with around ten men and grew over the next decades. Moreover, in the late 1990s, he was elected village head and served the village for some twenty years (he was in office during my research) because "he remained important for people the whole time, offering us [note: locals] the opportunities when needed from both of his places, from the border and from the office" (as was noted by Hrihor, former smuggler).

Favours from Vasil or his close relatives to his supporters outside the Brisudskyy family network cannot be reduced to goods or money, although sometimes these are also the objects of favours, for which I have never known them to demand returns. Specifically highlighted by villagers are favours in the form of solidary interventions in cases of the need to provide livelihood opportunities to his supporters, or their relatives. During my stay, I observed mostly cases when particular tasks related to informal businesses run by the Brisudskyy family were assigned to members of other families by Vasil or his close relatives.

One of these was when Pavlo, an elderly former smuggler from Vasil's group, and his neighbour, sought to find at least temporary employment for his son Marko, a recent college graduate, and asked Vasil for his help during a private dinner party. A few weeks later, Marko started working in the municipal office as Vasil's part-time assistant and occasional driver of local, work-related group travels to and from Czechia (organised by Vasil), while some time later he admitted to also "smuggl[ing] a bit, here and there, according to Vasil's instructions". The return of this particular favour containing livelihood opportunities, the favour's explicit value, or any other details related to it, were not discussed or mentioned during my stay. Even though Pavlo and Marko seemingly returned the favour to Vasil later by their very pro-active volunteering during preparations for village festivities (sponsored by the municipality), all three (Vasil, Pavlo and Marko) emphatically stated that their favours were "cost-free". All three also stated that it is not future return, but the preservation of genuine and solidary relations within the community that is important in such favouring. However, one inference from this example we may draw is that despite the fact that returns are not expected after Vasil's (or his relatives') favours, such favours are typically followed by his supporters' efforts to benefit the Brisudskyy or the community specifically in areas of life where the

Brisudskyy family network's interests lie (informal business, local politics, and most visibly in public life).¹³

It is apparent that Vasil's social talent for negotiating with and leading people, that is, to instruct them and favour them with opportunities or resources, is still valued among villagers and influencing socio-political relations in the village since the 1990s. Vasil's facilitation of people's local economies, then, proves that in Brashovo, throughout the post-socialist transition, "favours have not disappeared, [...] because their implications are ongoing [...] and [...] simply because people are used to, prefer, and value highly acting this way" (Humphrey 2017, p. 53). The practice of favouring expanded into new spaces (border administration) since the emergence of the 'quasi-market', and thanks to Brisudskyy family-network's agency its morality- and solidary-based character has remained essential for people's economies and livelihoods. Hence, in the post-socialist period, favours maintain their original functions (outside of economics) for Brashovans, as these acts give rise to the "lasting relationships and circles of beneficence/gratitude, and [...] confer a sense of self-worth within these arenas" (Humphrey 2017, p. 69).

However, in order to understand the implications of such economic practice in its fullest, we also need to look outside the community and reflect on how it connects to the institution of the border, which has not only remained important for locals' livelihoods in the last thirty years, but has also been a space where favouring has been present. In the next part, I conceptualise these economies as constitutive to the institution of the border, and favours conferred as *hidden transcripts* (Scott 1990) whereby Brashovans are able to adjust the actual operation of the state since socialism.

BORDER, STATE AND COMMUNITY

The border should be understood as a state institution whose operation does not depend solely on top-down political impositions. Borders are spaces "where it is possible to see the potential conflict between the citizens and their state amplified to the maximum" (Polese 2012, p. 22), where "local moralities overlap, conflict, and partially replace the state morality" (p. 34). Thus, they are spaces "where the powers of the state are monumentally inscribed" (Wilson & Donnan 1998, p. 8). In order to approach the border as the expression of state power in all its complexity, we should consider the role of groups in negotiation with state power, while paying particular attention to identities, values and relations within these groups. Added to that, when approaching the border as a state institution in a *relational approach*, we consider the past experiences of people that shape their understanding of how

¹³ As in socialism, such mutual favouring was not limited to individuals or families of the same denomination or of any other demographic characteristic. Right to the present day, the strongest indicator for engaging in favouring with someone is past experience with the person's extended family network.

states should operate in certain settings. How is the image of the state negotiated by particular social-political units (e.g., family networks) that constitute it, and what of the embeddedness of actors in the functioning of state institutions (Thelen, Vetter, von Benda-Beckmann 2014)?

Applying this approach, I argue that in the context of the border located nearby the village of Brashovo, the past experiences of Brashovans with the socialist state regime are being reflected in their current agency. Thus, agency takes up residence in the subversion (and negotiation) of state administration via acts of favouring from public offices and institutions that have been run informally by local family networks since socialism. When approaching the border (or other state institutions) in its fullest form, we should acknowledge the influence of the communal experience with the socialist regime, and the position of local family networks that operate as units of social-political organisation, embedded in formal structures.

Looking closer at the character of the three-generational agency of the Brisudskyy family network in the context of its influence over state institutions, I propose this agency should be conceptualised as a *hidden transcript* (Scott 1990). Scott’s sense of agency resembles the *hidden transcript’s* form and function for locals, basically representing the overtly unarticulated, but covert everyday practices employed by locals to resist authority in a way that seemingly does not breach official regulations. Performing favours from ‘between the lines’ of socialist village institutions (while feigning compliance with formal rules), then, represents inventive and, at first glance unrecognisable, ways of subversive coping through inter-familial connections and according to shared moral and solidary village community values. Thus, influence over the operation of the border(-crossing) and local state institutions should be understood in terms of the continuity of this *hidden transcript* (i.e., favouring from within state’s structures, according to community’s moral rules) from socialist into post-socialist times.

It is important to account for larger processes enabling the continuity of favouring (in form of *hidden transcripts*) in post-socialism. As Hann (2017, p. 121) puts it, “especially when there was no stable currency to facilitate the functioning of markets [...] people fell back on the informal institutions upon which they had depended under the quite different conditions of single-party central planning”. In practice, the “personal connections became even more crucial in key domains of life, for example in obtaining a job” (p. 121). The unpreparedness of the state’s political-economic apparatus, then, should be considered a push for further engagement from the family networks in a state-subverting and community-supporting agency. Thus, on the larger scale of post-socialist transformation, “grey economic practices [such as favouring, in case of Brashovo] continue[d] to provide a safety net for many people, who in turn continue[d] to view them as moral acts, within the proper order of relations within families and communities” (Pine 2015, p. 39).

Therefore, if we are to acknowledge the actual influence of the village community on functioning of state institutions since socialism, we must also include this moral aspect of their economies in the equation, and stress that the informal daily

transactions within state institutions reflect shared morality- and solidary-based values, and a sense of belonging to the community. How does this perspective alter, though, in light of the recent situation in the borderlands?

SOLIDARY CONTEXT OF FAVOURS IN TIME OF WAR

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the external Schengen border shared with Ukraine has been under extreme pressure. People have been fleeing the country to safety since February 2022, while simultaneously humanitarian aid has been flowing in the opposite direction. Border-crossings represent spaces where those migrating and those providing assistance have been interacting daily. The border-crossing located relatively close to Brashovo became one point of encounter; in February and March 2022, kilometres-long queues of people trying to reach the border-crossing crowded onto Brashovo's main street.

Brashovans remember this period vividly, particularly because they were providing assistance to people fleeing to safety, either on the border-crossing, near it, or in their village. When the waiting time was counted in days, Brashovans were aiding those waiting for the passage through the border by providing them with food, hygienic products or whatever they needed. Brashovans noted they were also keen to let them use their homes to rest before waiting in line for the border-crossing again, and the village facilities were also used for this purpose. Local families provided aid along the main street of Brashovo, where the people queueing waited in their cars. The Brisudskyy family even installed a temporary stall at the village's crossroad where refreshments were offered cost-free. The Brisudskyy's also helped those fleeing the country on foot by providing them with transportation to the border-crossing and aiding them in their passage through the formal procedures by utilising the family connections there.

The same kind of local knowledge and intimate relationships were also used on the entrance into the Ukraine, because from the very beginning of the war, material aid started flowing into Ukraine via border-crossings, including the one nearby Brashovo. "[T]hose who were carrying it needed to pass the border without any problems and delays, as soon as possible", Vasil Brisudskyy explained to me. He added that his network had a role in assisting the groups providing humanitarian support to get past the border:

That is our role, our duty, to work things out our way when there are struggles for others, for the country. It is our people, our rules and our border! When the war started, we knew what to do, we knew our people need to help those passing through the border from both directions. We have many friends from Slovakia who help our country, and for that they need to pass the border with hygienic products, clothes, and other stuff which is heading to regions of Ukraine... It is simple... when someone wants to pass the border with help, materials... I just talk to my family or neighbours who work at the border, and we sort things out at the border-crossing... It is our way of help, because we know how slow it is to get through the border sometimes... so we do what we know best, what we have learnt

from living by the border... We make the passages as swift as possible for people who are helping us, Ukrainians, because it is our duty to do so... by any means necessary.

Statements like this highlight the importance of informal agency, performed as a *hidden transcript*, which in recent crisis has involved local networks helping people fleeing the country and providing humanitarian support. Vasil's words suggest that during the crisis the established channels of gratuitous favouring (from within the state administration) extended the boundaries of the village community, and were actively used to express solidarity with people who found themselves in hardship. Although these channels, used in local people's economies, originate from a strong local foundation, namely, inter-familial relations within a village community, it is necessary to stress these channels' importance for the community in the broader sense of the word too. Thus, groups interacting at or near the border rely just as much on such channels. The recent crisis, then, allows us to perceive the moral underpinnings of Brashovans' agency, performed beyond the local community, with the aim of ensuring the well-being of groups currently in hardship. Hence, as the statement above and in particular utterance “It is our people, our rules and our border!” indicate, the everyday operation of state institutions follows the principles and rationale of the locally-developed favouring agency, which connects to the sociality and values of the village community, and which these days appears to remain solidary in its nature.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I focused on the local economy present in the Transcarpathian border village. Using the concepts of *post-peasant economy* (Buzalka 2022), *economies of favour* (Makovicky 2017; Humphrey 2017) and *hidden transcript* (Scott 1990), I reflected on the origins of these economies, on its functional logics and on its implications for the community and the current operation of state institutions. I suggest the practice of favouring, currently undertaken from within village institutions and at the border, and often illicitly, draws from the traditional parameters of village community (moral values, cooperation and socialisation in a rural setting). It can be understood as an inventive and enduring adaptive strategy of a resilient border-village community in terms of an changing political-economic conditions since socialist times. I illustrated that favouring within these economies not only serves as a means to an end in the material and economic spheres, but it has wider implications for the organisation of the local community (in the local leaders' structures across three generations). It also shapes village and network members' long-term participation in the actual functioning of state institutions. Additionally, I illustrated that agency within these economies, at first carried out from within the local institutions of the socialist state and later expanding to the administration of the border, has remained a meaningful strategy in recent times too. The ability to perform the favours, and

thus to informally operate around and through the border and beyond, then, turns out to represent a morality- and solidary-based strategy affecting the operation of the state and everyday life of local community. Such favouring has also taken its place in the form of facilitating the community to provide aid to those passing through the border during the recent crisis.

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MATEJ BUTKO

“OUR PEOPLE, OUR RULES, AND OUR BORDER!”:
VILLAGE NETWORKS, PEOPLE'S ECONOMIES,
AND FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE AT WESTERN EDGE OF UKRAINE

Key words: local economy, village community, state, border, Ukraine

This paper aims to present local state and border administrations in terms of people's everyday economies (their function and purpose). Instead of seeing local state institutions and border administration from a top-down perspective, I present them as socially negotiated, since the days of socialism to the present, by locals who have lived by (and made a living from) the international border with Slovakia for almost eighty years. I particularly reflect on the social relations and informal practices carried out through the border and performed from within local state institutions, and the unwritten rules of people's economies in a particular Transcarpathian village community in Ukraine. I argue these economies, carried out within family networks that form a village community (built on sense of common belonging, trust, and moral obligations to peers), have served to establish local networks as effective means for gaining control of public offices and institutions (including the administration of the border) during socialism and in post-socialism. Hence, the local economy is presented as a model of transacting within and between local family networks in the environment of the local state and border administrations, whose functioning is strongly influenced by sociality and practices of the village community. The community, I posit, had adapted to socialism as a state regime by developing a performative competence to act according to communally-shared rules, albeit sometimes beyond formal rules. Adding to the key influence of interactions and transactions within local networks' economies on the functioning of the border, I argue that the economies here served also moral and solidary purposes in times of more recent crises, that is, during the ongoing war in Ukraine that has brought extensive traffic to the external Schengen border. Favouring as a key resource in managing, negotiating and ultimately subverting official structures and institutions should thus be considered a core strategy of long-term resilience of local collectives against past and present adversities.

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COLLECTIVE MEMORY, JUSTICE, AND LAND DISPUTES AFTER THE REPATRIATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS

The twentieth century was marked by radical social experiments concerning the redistribution of property in the countries of Soviet socialism. Collectivisation, political repressions, persecutions and mass deportations all resulted in large-scale property transfers. This paper addresses the issue of property loss during these deportations and the subsequent social movement for land rights during the massive, spontaneous repatriation of Crimean Tatars at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The inevitable repatriation of Crimean Tatars to their ethnic homeland began in the 1970s and 1980s and continued for several decades, starting even before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The largest number of Crimean Tatars, however, immigrated to Crimea in the 1990s. In 2001, for instance, 249,714 Crimean Tatars lived in Crimea where they accounted for 12% of the entire population of the peninsula at the time (*Pro kilkist...* 2001).

Anthropologists have had a long-standing interest in issues relating to property, dating back to the institutionalisation of the discipline in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when research focused on traditional property relations in Indigenous societies (Turner 2017). From the second half of the twentieth century, studies of property in anthropology have revolved around a variety of topics, such as conflict, legal pluralism, social structure, kinship relations and inheritance, property and gender, politics and power relations, land and the commons (ibid.). The collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by increased scholarly interest in the processes of transition from collectivist to new forms of ownership in the countries of the former Soviet Union (Hann 2007). Anthropology has made important theoretical contributions to the study of property ownership by developing approaches that consider various factors influencing economic decisions, including subjective ones such as emotional attachment and belonging to the land or place, and notions of morality and justice (Ballard, Banks 2003; Fay 2008; Hale 2006; Meillassoux 1972; Turner 2017). Based on my research I argue, after Edward Palmer Thompson (1971), for a reading of Crimean Tatar land agitation in line with the notion of a moral economy

that is grounded in an understanding of the relationship between economic activity, moral norms and concepts of justice.

The connection between historical memory, land and territorial identity is a topic of research in many other social disciplines apart from cultural anthropology: history, cultural geography and sociology. In anthropology, space is considered both as a physical category and as a combination of human practices, memories, ideas, emotional bonds, customs and bodily experiences (Low 2009), while places are constructed or “produced” through the meanings that individuals or groups of people attach to them. Current studies of local commemorative practices echo various renderings of the concept of “places of memory”, introduced by French historian Pierre Nora (1982), which remains pertinent in my study of the return migration of Crimean Tatars and the related land disputes that this return has engendered.

This paper is based on field research conducted in the period from 2003 to 2011 in Crimea and subsequently in the years 2015–2016 in Kyiv, complemented by an ongoing analysis of current media reports.¹ My fieldwork research in Crimea consisted of extensive participant observation among families with representatives of different generations of Crimean Tatars. About 300 respondents of different ages in Crimea were interviewed, alongside eight respondents who were forced to leave the peninsula after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 and who were at the same time we spoke residing in Kyiv.² Most of the interviews were conducted in the format of in-depth, semi-structured, biographical narratives. Respondents laid recurring emphasis on ethnic culture and family history in the twentieth century, where many conversations started with reflections on individual experience and biography in the context of interlocutors’ return to their homeland, which they considered to be the Crimean peninsula.³

DEPORTATION AND THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF CRIMEAN TATARS

The cultural landscape, identity and sense of territorial belonging of Crimean Tatars changed dramatically after their deportation in 1944 by the USSR from the Crimean Peninsula to Central Asia. The official reason for this deportation was the (false) accusation that the whole community was involved in a “betrayal of the Soviet Motherland” by cooperating with the invading German Army. According to a secret

¹ In 2003–2009 my field research was financed by Kyiv Taras Shevchenko University as part of my MA and PhD projects. From 2010–2011, one year’s field research was financed and organised by the Institute of Art, Folklore and Ethnology, National Academy of Science of Ukraine.

² The exact number of Crimean Tatars currently living in the city of Kyiv is unknown. According to the information from the prosecutor of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol Ihor Ponochevny, however, in total, thirty thousand Crimean Tatars have left Crimea for other regions of Ukraine since 2014.

³ Research materials are stored in Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University, at the Institute of Art, Folklore and Ethnology of the Academy of Science of Ukraine, as well as in my private archive.

decree of the State Committee for Defence of the USSR dated May 11, 1944, No. 5859, signed by Joseph Stalin, the operation to deport Crimean Tatars from Crimea to the Uzbek SSR and other soviet regions started on May 18, 1944. Over the following days, according to the official data, more than 191,000 people were deported from Crimea. The deportees were transported in freight wagons; many children and old people could not withstand the journey and died on the way to the Central Asian Republics. Just one year later, after WWII, the demobilised Crimean Tatars who had served in the Red Army would meet the same fate (Buhai 1992, p. 40). In the places of deportation the Crimean Tatar population lived, the deportees endured in extremely difficult conditions of special settlement system. The regime of forced special settlements with movement restrictions was cancelled only in 1956. Over the next twelve years, in the places of deportation, they were required to register every month, and were forbidden to visit neighbouring settlements, even in the case of the death of a relative. For non-compliance with the rules, offenders were sentenced to between twenty and twenty-five years of forced labour. A large number of people also died from malnutrition and various diseases in the first years after the deportation.

In the wake of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars to Central Asia, the connections between the community and its cultural landscape, land and spatial objects, such as cemeteries, mosques, shrines, houses and gardens, were lost. Immediately following Crimean Tatars' expulsion from their ancestral lands, the Soviet government started an ideological transformation of Crimean cultural space by renaming places bearing Turkic names, destroying Muslim cemeteries and mosques and resettling colonists from the central regions of Russia into cleared Crimean territories. Alongside these demographic and landscape transformations, Soviet authorities began a gradual process of eliminating or stigmatising Crimean Tatars in history textbooks; a few decades later little was remembered of the Crimean Tatar community on the peninsula. All of these official Soviet actions (forced replacement, rewriting of history, renaming of toponyms) can easily be understood within the frame of settler colonialist practices (Sviezhentsev 2021, pp. 604–608).

The colonisers' discourse of alienating the Crimean Tatar community was inherited by the Ukrainian official narrative in the first decades of independence, and rediscovering the Crimean Tatars' history and culture as an Indigenous people started only after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 (Sviezhentsev & Kisly 2023). Inspired by the myths of the Soviet era, the colonial attitude remained dominant in the first decades of independence both in media discourse and in official statements. According to Soviet propaganda statements, the Crimean Tatars had been positioned as traitors, their culture considered less civilised than the culture of the Russian colonists. The ethnic origin of the Crimean Tatars became associated exclusively with the nomads of the Middle Ages, mainly with the Mongol invasion. After the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, however, the Crimean Tatar community and its political leaders acted as almost the only organised force that resisted occupation on the peninsula. The expressed pro-Ukrainian position of the Crimean Tatars made Ukrainian society rethink Tatars' role and significance in the recent history of Ukraine.

LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY

The experience of persecution, combined with the enduring sense of belonging to a particular place (Crimea), led to a large-scale political movement of resistance from the Crimean Tatars against the Soviet government, one that triggered a return migration; among the slogans of the repatriation movement was “We are on our native land!”. This movement fought for the restoration of dignity and justice for parents and grandparents, as well as the desire to have an opportunity to die in their native land. The Crimean Tatars’ began attempts to return to their ethnic homeland as early as the 1960s, particularly after a 1967 decree annulling the previous Soviet allegations against them. However, this “rehabilitation” did not entail a right to return. Nevertheless, from the 1960s until the 1980s many Crimean Tatar families still made short-term trips to Crimea, during which they attempted to find their natal townlands or their family property. They visited their native villages, returned to their abandoned homes, searched for the remains of desecrated cemeteries where their ancestors had been buried, and visited other local sites. They brought “gifts” from these natal localities for exiled relatives: water from wells, a handful of earth, an apple from a family garden. By the 1980s, these trips to Crimea had become a massive phenomenon. In that period, almost every Crimean Tatar family travelled to the peninsula for “memory vacations” before repatriation, trying to reconstruct, at least in their imagination, the places lost during deportation, the symbolic natal landscape and the physical territory.

Those trips were followed, then, by their first, often unsuccessful, attempts to return to Crimea. The real mass migration of Crimean Tatars to the Peninsula finally took place between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Interlocutors I spoke with always emphasised their connection with their homeland based on memories and emotions that persisted despite having built comfortable lives in Central Asia:

But despite the fact that we lived very well there, we had a good apartment, good neighbours, but we were drawn here. As I remember, I ran barefoot in Bakhchysaray. Childhood, memory remains. We went to the forest, collected dogwood. I have a memory from my childhood. That’s why I was drawn here. And we are in the 1990s years, when there are already people [other Crimean Tatars, who arrived in previous years], when it is already free [as before], we arrived here. We bought this house, half a house (Interview with Aishe, F, b. 1932, Beregove, 2003).⁴

The process of the mass migration of Crimean returnees to their native lands coincided with the crisis of the Soviet system and the collapse of the USSR. After Ukraine declared independence, its government adopted a number of laws that enabled the repatriation of Crimean Tatars. Having come to Crimea, the Crimean Tatar families were confronted with the issue of securing ownership of lands and housing. There were several ways to solve the problem of housing: buying a home or

⁴ All names of informants have been changed. No real names are revealed used in the article to preserve the privacy of interlocutors.

an apartment with their own money; obtaining land for house construction from the state (these plots of land were usually inconveniently situated in remote villages); or squatting on land with the view to being recognised through subsequent legalisation (Vyatkin & Kulpin 1997). Among the factors influencing where they would take up residence, economic pragmatism played a large part, but access to infrastructure, job opportunities and administrative barriers also shaped residence patterns. In the late 1980s, for instance, Crimean Tatars had been prohibited from settling in southern areas of the peninsula or close to Simferopol in the centre.

Historically, before the deportation, the largest number of Crimean Tatars lived in the area of the Southern coast and in the central mountainous part of the peninsula. Two sub-ethnic groups of Crimean Tatars, Yuliboilu (inhabitants of the coast) and Tat or Ortalar (inhabitants of the mountainous middle strip of Crimea) lived there. Steppe Crimean Tatars or Nogai lived on the territory of the Crimean steppe in line with the cities of Yevpatoria in the West, Simferopol in the centre and Kerch in the East. But the Crimean Tatar steppe people were the least numerous group in the middle of the twentieth century. Equally, in Soviet times the Southern coast of Crimea was transformed into a tourist area with numerous sanatoriums, hotels and departmental institutions, explaining why a Crimean Tatar return to the South Bank was so complicated, as it met with resistance from local authorities (Sobolieva 2015, pp. 41–65).

Nowadays the largest number of Crimean Tatars continue to live in the central regions of the peninsula: Bakhchisaray, Simferopol, Bilohirsk. A high proportion of the population is located in the eastern part of the Peninsula (Leninsky, Nizhnyhirsky district, Feodosia). When asked why a particular family returned to a certain locality, the respondents usually indicated that at that moment they were guided only by the circumstances and settled “where it was possible”. This can be exemplified by data gathered in different regions of Crimea in the period 2006–2011. As part of the study, I interviewed 212 people previously deported from Crimea by the Soviet authorities. Among them, only 19% (41 people) returned to the area where they were born and only 8% (17 people) returned to their hometown or village. However, a more detailed analysis of the results of this ethnographic research shows that the Crimean Tatar resettlement also has a territorial pattern that reflects pre-war and pre-deportation realities.

Such large realities are perhaps best viewed through the ethnographic lens of individual accounts of pragmatic decisions to settle for taking up residence in similar areas. Below is the story of Rustem who in 1976 tried to come back to the Bilohirsk region, which abuts his native Sudak region and has a similar landscape (a mostly mountainous and hilly area). His efforts, however, were not successful because of restrictions by local administrations and authorities. He moved to Kuban, a region situated in the South of Russia, from the Taman peninsula next to the Crimean steppe town of Kerch.⁵ He was only able to return to Crimea after fifteen years, but

⁵ The Kerch Peninsula, on which the city of Kerch is located, is the easternmost point of the Crimean Peninsula. It is separated by the Kerch Strait from the Taman Peninsula (administratively included in

during his stay in Kuban, the steppe region became familiar to him, so he decided to return to Kerch:

In 1976 I came from Central Asia and stopped in the Bilohirsk region. Then in 1976 there were very uncomfortable times for us, they kicked us out, they didn't register. And during this period [April to October] all the time we were struggling with local administration. And in the end, I was driven to a heart attack. Then such a heart attack was a serious illness, I was lying for 40 days. And we moved to Kuban. We lived there for 15 years. And all the time we went to the market in Kerch. Then it was the ferry. It was convenient. And all this time we were visiting Kerch, and during this time Kerch became dearer to me than other regions. And when, already in 1978, in 1988, in the 1990s, our Tatars began to come here, I landed right here. Since then, I have been the head of the Kerch mosque here (Interview with Rustem, M, b. 1932, Kerch 2011).

Another interlocutor explains why his family returned to the steppe region of the peninsula. Alim's parents and great-grandfathers were born in the Western steppe Crimea. That is why, when they returned to the Motherland, they chose the steppe city of Evpatoria for resettlement and life. It was the steppe climate and landscapes that were most attractive to him:

*– There was no other place back then, in this part. Only Yevpatoria, it was a sort of a centre.
– But still not in Bakhchisaray? Are there Crimean Tatars, too?
– I actually went to visit Bakhchisaray, or Simferopol, and I don't feel comfortable there. And here I come to Ismail-Bey – I feel at home (Interview with Alim, M, b. 1967, Yevpatoria, 2010).*

Crimean Tatar families, in spite of administrative and economic difficulties, then, chose to live in areas closely related to their ancestors' lands and localities (steppe, mountains, coastal regions) both generally in terms of geographical location but also drawn by the symbolic landscape. Even after the return, though, the tradition of visiting the ancestors' lands continued. An event called *koydeshler* is held annually, and involves a meeting accompanied by collective meals, prayers and other commemorative practices that unite the communities of the old villages:

He [the husband] went there with the children. Well, they found something there, those stones laid out there, you can see that there were houses, gardens. They walked there with their children. They found some dishes there. That's what my husband brought. At the beginning, they used to travel there every year [...]. They went there often, he drove with children, showed them (Interview with Afise, F, b. 1966, Bakhchisaray, 2010).

During those nostalgic pilgrimage to these erstwhile places of residence, the repatriates reproduced in their imagination the old "remembered" Crimean landscape of innocence and childhood, lost after deportation. Some pieces of their former property (a brick from an old well, a stone from the house foundation), or things

the Krasnodar Territory of the Russian Federation). It was between the Kerch and Taman peninsulas that the Kerch bridge between Crimea and the Russian Federation was built in 2018. Until then, the usual transport between Crimea and the Taman Peninsula was a ferry crossing.

that were rescued during the resettlement (a Koran, a towel) were thus turned into family relics, physically anchoring these memories across time and space.

STRUGGLE FOR THE LAND

At the beginning of the mass repatriation, particularly in the 1990s, after a place of residence was chosen, a long process of obtaining land plots and building houses began for the newly-returned Crimean Tatars. Legislative mechanisms for allocation of land plots and housing to repatriates were not regulated, which led to conflicts around land issues in Crimea. For decades, so-called *samozahvat* or squatting was the most commonly-used form of reclaiming land plots and housing for Crimean Tatar returnees.⁶ For this purpose, self-organised groups of returnees found plots of land, mostly abandoned or in public use, arranged their fields of pickets and built temporary constructions that marked each individual plot. Subsequently, after a few years of negotiations with the local administration and some legal wrangling, Tatar ownership of those lands was recognised by courts (Zynych 2005). The process of recognition of land plots was stretched over time and lasted through the last decades of Ukrainian independence. The main logic of the land activities was the restoration of the right of returnees to own the land on the territory of their historical homeland. In the Ukrainian legal system (Zaplitna 2016) after the collapse of the Soviet collectivist farm system, only members of collective farms (*kolkhoz*) were able to receive a plot of land. Repatriates, who returned mainly from Central Asia in the 1990s, usually did not manage to become members of collective farms. As a result only “locals”, the mostly Slavic population of Crimea, had a realistic chance of receiving land plots. For the Crimean authorities, Crimean Tatars were not locals, which resulted in the emergence of the resistance movement within the Crimean Tatar community in the 1990s and which lasted into the 2000s (Zynych 2005).

Restitution of old property would remain impossible, as the former property of Crimean Tatar families had long been redistributed among other residents of Crimea. Old Crimean Tatar houses had been inhabited for many decades by other people, typically Russians and Ukrainians, who had mostly been resettled on the peninsula after the deportation of Crimean Tatars. Even the Mejlis (a representative body for the Crimean Tatars) have never directly demanded or voiced the need for this fuller restitution, realising it would be an unrealistic demand. Since the restitution of property was out of the question, then, the Crimean Tatars invoked their moral right to engage in prolonged conflicts and to claim land titles. Not every family in Crimea could buy land, apartments or houses. This practice of obtaining housing in the Crimea, therefore, was the least common. The lands allocated from the state were often located in remote regions of the peninsula or in places with poorly developed

⁶ Later some of the Slavic inhabitants (ethnic Russians and Ukrainians) of the peninsula took part in this movement. They joined Crimean Tatars squatting groups with the purpose of obtaining land for themselves.

infrastructure. Such settlements often lacked water and gas, and there were problems with transport. That is why Samozahvat or squatting became a massive phenomenon in Crimea in the 1990s and early 2000s.

A moratorium on the commercial sale and purchase of agricultural land was lifted only in 2021 (*Derzhheokadastr...* 2021). Before that, there had been no regulation of the agricultural land market which thus operated in a shadow sphere of bribery and corruption among local officials who were still responsible for distributing former collective lands. As argued by Alexand Bohomolov et al. (2012), under such circumstances, the position and claims of Crimean Tatars were the most transparent and unambiguous, unlike other parties to the conflict over land titles i.e. local officials, tenants from agricultural holdings, developers, or new owners of collective farms. The Crimean Tatars' demands for land ownership gave rise to a massive social movement, which united and mobilised a large number of participants, had its own activists and leaders and a complex structure (Bohomolov et al. 2012). This movement resulted in the restructuring of social relations in Crimea. Repatriates who fought for ownership of the land united in temporary organisations, so-called "protest fields", led by political leaders and public activists. Self-organised groups of returnees usually chose abandoned land for squatting, where temporary buildings marking future individual plots were built on these lands and protesters designed districts "streets of the future" and chose places for mosques to be built.

Thompson's "moral economy" is instructive here (Thompson 1971, p. 88). Studying the bread market in times of economic instability and crop failure, his focus was peasant riots as a direct action. The aim of such actions was to achieve:

[...] consensus as to what were popular and what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices marketing, milling, baking, etc. This in its turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. An outrage to these moral assumptions, quite as much as actual deprivation, was the usual occasion for direct action (1971, p. 79).

Thompson's theory of "moral economy" was repeatedly deployed and widely extended in successive historical works (Frevort 2019). Looking at the practices of land-squatting by Crimean Tatars through the prism of the theory of moral economy they were acts of direct action aimed at exercising the right to privatise land by Crimean Tatars. The chief "moral economy" argument of the Crimean Tatars has been for a recognition of unfair punishment for historically non-existent crimes that led to their expulsion from their native land. Returning to their native land, receiving land and building new homes can partly offset the losses they experienced during the time of repression. One of the political leaders of the Crimean Tatar community described the community's position regarding land relations in post-Soviet Ukraine:

We asked for the adoption of normative documents according to which land would be issued free of charge to returning Crimean Tatars, but the local authorities said that there were no grounds

for this. Then people started just occupying vacant plots. Thus, about 300 new settlements and micro-districts appeared in the Crimea, which de facto stood on lands that were not registered in any way. And this problem was solved (Zhylin 2017).

Another popular belief was the idea of the continuity and inheritance of the land title: great importance was attached to the legitimisation of requirements for receiving plots. There were disputes between Crimean Tatars, and Ukrainian and Russian citizens, regarding who could claim the land title: those who were born on the land; those who had been working there for a long time; or those whose ancestors were born there. It is also evident from the land disputes that the collective interests of the group has had greater symbolic capital than individual claims. For the Crimean Tatars, the approach of mass collective squatting has focussed this symbolic capital in protest fields that sometimes had thousands of participants. During squatting protests Crimean Tatars occupied mainly abandoned lands with no farms on them, where according to the traditional beliefs of Crimean Tatars, cultivating and arranging abandoned lands is a noble calling.

As Bohomolov et al. (2012) correctly point out, the principle of morality and the discourse of restitution of lost property are the bases for those ideas of obtaining land through squatting. The very act of deportation and the resulting loss of land rights and their own houses as material objects is perceived by Crimean Tatars as a Soviet crime. Restoration of rights to lost property, as stated, remains technically impossible, which is why representatives of the Crimean Tatar community have considered it fair to demand land for the Crimean Tatars where possible, rather than property. According to their shared sense of justice, obtaining lands should partially compensate for the material losses suffered by the Crimean Tatars as a result of their maleficent eviction from their native lands. In an article in the local press in 2016, a Crimean Tatar man comprehensively described the Crimean Tatars' approach to the concept of land as private property. His position strongly implies that it is a popular notion among Crimean Tatars that members of the Crimean Tatar community as an indigenous people have a "natural" right to receive land in private ownership in their native Crimea. He writes that the land:

is the basis of human wealth. It is the main means of production. Lack of ownership or use of land makes a person vulnerable, dependent on any circumstances, drives him to the land in search of food, depriving him of his roots and the people of their integrity (Seitbekirov 2016).

American anthropologist Greta Uehling, considering the issue of squatting on the land by representatives of the Crimean Tatar community, noted that the main strategy of the returnees was to appeal to self-sacrifice, and the whole process of property reclamation had expressive performative forms (Uehling 2004, p. 222). The construction of private houses and the "land activism" of the first years of repatriation made Crimean Tatars prominent social actors in the Crimean landscape. So-called "compact settlements" with new buildings, mosques and minarets are now situated in every region in Crimea. These new localities create a completely new public space and image of villages and towns on the peninsula.

The events associated with the Crimean annexation by the Russian Federation in February and March 2014 led to a wave of political migration of Crimean Tatars to Mainland Ukraine. This migration was triggered by economic factors (sanctions, inaccessibility of the Western economy, unfavourable conditions for small businesses) and political repression by the Russian authorities that both Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars were subjected to in the occupied territories. According to data from Anton Korynevych, a representative of the Ukrainian President in the Autonomous Republic (AR) of Crimea, between 2014 and 2021 nearly 100,000 Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians left AR Crimea (*Skilky krymskykh tatar...* 2021). This reality of occupation and forced migration today rekindles the problem of property loss, as forced migrants claim that they are in the same situation as their parents and grandparents were. The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation led to an unfettered series of violations of Ukrainian private and state property rights. According to estimates in 2015, direct losses of state and private property amounted to 1 trillion hryvnias (more than USD 44 billion) (Tishchenko 2015, p. 24). Violation of property rights have continued in the following years. The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation (No. 201, dated April 20, 2020) established a ban on Ukrainian citizens (and in general, all foreigners) from owning land plots in most regions of Crimea.⁷ Ukrainian authorities officially announced that this decree was illegal and void, and that Ukrainian citizens should keep their property documents. The Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dmytro Kuleba, has emphasised that the right of ownership will unequivocally be restored after the end of the occupation of Crimea (ukrinform.ua 26.03.2021). Through the example of land disputes, we can see powerful return of old tropes of disenfranchisement through the annexation of territories, aggression, crimes against human rights and political unilateralism increase uncertainty and contested claims regarding property and civil rights in Crimea.

CONCLUSIONS

The spontaneous and massive repatriation of Crimean Tatars that took place at the turn of the twenty-first century was accompanied by demands for establishing historical justice and the return of land titles (Uehling 2000; Williams 1997; Zaloznaya & Gerber 2012). Memories of natal lands and ancestral houses were a consolidating factor for these demands during the repatriation. Believing that trauma resulting from political repression and forced migration may be partially offset by the acquisition of land by returnees, the repatriation process itself emphasised the implementation of the right of Crimean Tatars to live on their own land. The demand to receive property became the central political slogan for the mobilisation movement and

⁷ The land in Crimea at that time was owned by a significant number of Crimean Tatars who left Crimea after 2014 and who now live in other regions of Ukraine. They are citizens of Ukraine and are thus subject to this law.

the political struggle for the rights of Crimean Tatars. This demand for the return of property was based on a principle of moral economy. Since old houses had long since been destroyed, or were inhabited by others, the possibility of restitution of these former properties was not entertained. Land acquisition and building their own homes has thus become perceived by Crimean Tatars as their final recourse to achieve full repatriation.

Thus, the struggle to legalise the land rights of Crimean Tatars has transformed into an organised mass social movement largely reforming social relations in Crimea and economic practices in the field of land ownership. This activism in turn formed Crimean Tatars into a prominent social force. The building activities of Crimean Tatars has also greatly transformed the cultural landscape of Crimea. The presence of Crimean Tatar districts, places of “compact residence” for Crimean Tatars, has made them visible on the peninsula. The events related to the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the redistribution of state and private property in the region have further complicated land conflicts on the peninsula. Powerful ideological pressure, administrative persecution and legal transformations in today’s Crimea have thus re-politicised the land issue, both in the symbolic sense and in the concrete legal context.

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COLLECTIVE MEMORY, JUSTICE, AND LAND DISPUTES
AFTER THE REPATRIATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS

Key words: Crimean Tatars, deportation, land ownership, repatriation

This article is devoted to the meaning of identity and belonging in the processes of defending land rights. The twentieth century was marked by an unprecedented scale of rejections of land ownership claims and forced redistributions of property in the countries of the Warsaw Pact member states. Forced confiscation of property and collectivisation consequently changed the landscape of land ownership in these countries. In some border territories of the historical Soviet Union, which includes the present-day Crimean peninsula, ethnic deportations of the autochthonous population had a decisive influence on the redistribution of land ownership. Separated from their ethnic lands, the Crimean Tatars formed an identity that maintained a clear connection to the lost territory and homeland. This connection was one which expressed a political resistance that continued during the entire Soviet period until a mass and spontaneous repatriation took place. This repatriation was organised under the rallying cry of restoring justice through a return of Crimean Tatars to their ethnic homeland. After the successful return of a large part of the Crimean Tatars, the fight to restore land rights began. This fight generated a great political resonance in Crimea and led to a significant reorganisation of the cultural landscape of the peninsula.

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SERVUR'A AND KRYM'A (CRIMEAN ROMA) AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF UKRAINE

The Roma are an internally differentiated “intergroup ethnic formation” consisting of distinct subethnic groups, of which each possesses its own social and cultural characteristics (Marushiakova 2008). There are currently at least ten Roma subethnic groups living in Ukraine: *Sérvur'a*, *Krým'a*, *Vláxur'a*, *Kišyn'ovár'e*, *Lovára*, *Rúska Romá*, *Kotlár'a*, *Plaśúna*, *Ursár'a*, and *Hímpeny* (Cherenkov 2008; Makhotina & Panchenko 2020). In 2021, the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) of Ukraine passed Act No. 1616-IX, entitled “On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine”, whereby three groups of people, the Crimean Tatars, the Karaites and the Krymchaks, each became recognised as indigenous people of Ukraine. The Act outlined the criteria for recognition as being an “autochthonous ethnic community that was formed in the territory of Ukraine, is a bearer of its distinctive language and culture; has traditional, social, cultural or representative bodies; identifies itself as an indigenous people of Ukraine; forms an ethnic minority within Ukraine’s population and has no state formation of its own outside Ukraine” (Act No. 1616-IX). There are, however, at least two other ethnic groups in Ukraine that meet all these characteristics of an indigenous people as set out in the Act and can therefore be regarded as indigenous peoples of Ukraine. These are *Sérvur'a* and *Krým'a* (Crimean Roma).¹

This article examines the principal socio-cultural characteristics (namely: geographic, linguistic, material and spiritual culture, experience of collective trauma) of these ethnic groups to establish that *Sérvur'a* and *Krým'a* meet the criteria for recognition as indigenous people of Ukraine. In doing so, we draw on our own

¹ Hereinafter we shall refer to the Roma ethnic groups by their endonyms, using the transliteration of Romani terms that are standard for Roma studies, even though the names *Sérvur'a* and *Krým'a* are better rendered into English as *Servuria* and *Krymia*.

ethnographic field research and sociological surveys conducted in Servur'a and Krym'a communities from 2016–2022.²

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A widely-accepted definition of indigenous people has remained elusive since the matter was first formally debated during the preparation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Martinez 1987). At the time, the UN's expert panel concluded that, due to the complex sets of circumstances specific to ethnic groups across the world, it would be too difficult to provide a “universal” definition of indigenous people. In contrast, in his 1987 study of discrimination against indigenous populations, José Martínez Cobo offered this following definition:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems (Martinez 1987, p. 29).

Cobo's research, and thus his definition, was grounded in New World indigenous experience and was difficult to apply to other cases. For instance the definitions “pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies” do not fit for all countries. Professor Erica-Irene Daes suggests a number of criteria that could be used as a basis for defining the term “indigenous people”:

the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include aspects of language, social organisation, spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions; self-identification as a distinct collectivity; an experience of subjugation, marginalisation, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist (Daes 1996).

Again, this definition still retains some distinctive and thus exclusionary features.

Benedict Kingsbury, an academic on the rights of indigenous peoples in international law (1998) analyses different criteria concerning the concept of “indigenous nations”, and proposes to divide them into two categories: “essential requirements” and “relevant

² The ethnographic field trips were part of two projects *Ethnosociological Research of the Roma Population of Kherson Region* (Renaissance Foundation and Roma Education Fund) and *Materielle Unterstützung von Opfern des Genozids an den Roma in der Region Cherson* (with the financial support of EVZ Foundation, Latscho Diwes Program). The former was focused on gathering information about folk traditions and ritual holidays of Roma in Southern Ukraine; the peculiarities of spoken language in different groups; and the social structure of these communities. Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted as part of the program entitled “War, Migration and Memory” (financed by Forum Transregionale Studien), which were aimed at exploring the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian war on Romani identity.

indicia". The essential requirements for indigenous status are: self-identification as a distinct ethnic group; historical experience of, or contingent vulnerability to, severe disruption, dislocation or exploitation; long connection with the region; the wish to retain a distinct identity (Kingsbury 1998).

In her endeavour to establish the Crimean Tatars' right to the status of "indigenous people of Ukraine", Natalia Belitser emphasises the significance of the following criteria: the group's self-identification; group consciousness; experience of forced displacement from the historic homeland (Belitser 2017).

For the authors of the Ukrainian *Act on the Indigenous Peoples*, which was initiated by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the "area of formation" was an essential factor: "The indigenous peoples of Ukraine that were formed in the territory of the Crimean peninsula are the Crimean Tatars, the Karaites, and the Krymchaks" (Act No. 1616-IX). Since the Crimean peninsula lies wholly within the borders of Ukraine, the abovementioned Crimean ethnic groups were formed entirely within the territory of present-day Ukraine; this, presumably, was the logic of the legislators. Furthermore, the Act states that only an "ethnic community" can be legally recognised as an indigenous people.

Given the status of the term "indigenous people" in international law and the national standards that apply in each particular case, we shall regard the criteria listed in the Ukrainian Act No. 1616-IX as the crucial ones guiding our argument here, and those set forth in the UN documents as the supplementary criteria to help contextualise the principal criteria in the paper.

ARE THE SERVUR'A AND KRÝM'A ETHNIC COMMUNITIES THAT WERE FORMED IN THE TERRITORY OF UKRAINE? (ACT NO. 1616-IX)

The first criterion mentioned in the Act "On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine", that allows us to classify an ethnic group as an "indigenous people" is territory, where the group was formed. Servur'a are the most widespread Roma group in Ukraine.³ The main area of their settlement is Left-Bank Ukraine, especially Slobzhanshyna (Sloboda Ukraine) and Donschyna (the Don region).⁴ Depending on the historic area of their dissemination, Servur'a are divided into six main subgroups: *Poltavci* (from the former Poltava Governorate of Russian Empire), *Tavryčány* (former Taurida Governorate), *Kylmyšy* (Western Central Dnieper Ukraine), and *Sérvy-Zadnopr'any* (Eastern Central Dnieper Ukraine), *Vorón'ežski Sérvy* (former Voronezh Governorate). Another distinct subgroup, *Horodskí Sérvy* (Eng. urban Servur'a), includes all the

³ Endonyms: *Sérvy*, *Sérvur'a*, *Servicki Romá*, singular: *Sérv(o)*, *Sérvica*, adjective: *Servicko*.

⁴ Left-Bank Ukraine refers to the geographic region on the left bank of the Dnipro river (looking south, following the flow of the river) that corresponds to parts of Northern, Eastern and Southern Ukraine.

Servur'a families that adopted a sedentary way of life between the mid-eighteenth and early twentieth centuries (Makhotina & Panchenko 2019; 2020).

Servur'a are among the first Roma groups to have appeared in the territory of Ukraine. They were formed as a separate group under the influence of the Ukrainian language and literature, and have become an exclusively Ukrainian Romani group, as evidenced by their second endonym; most of their subgroups (with the exception of the Voronezh Servur'a) refer to themselves as *Ukráínski Romá* ("Ukrainian Roma").



Photograph 1: Krym'a, possibly the city of Kakhovka, in the 1980s. It may appear to an outside observer that the Roma feel like descendants of Indians. There have been many academic publications on the Indian origins of the European Roma, but this theory has not been part of Romani identity in Ukraine. However, the Indian style occurred as a fad both among Servur'a and Krym'a until the early 2000s. Source: Yanush Panchenko's personal archives. Author unknown.

It is important to distinguish between "the Roma of Crimea" and "the Crimean Roma". The former describes all the Roma who lived or who are living in Crimea, while the latter denotes one specific Roma subethnic group, whose self-designated names are *Krýmy*, *Krýmskà Romá*, and *Krým'a* (singular: *Krym* (m) *Krýmka* (f)) and who form the focus of the following discussion.

As a distinct ethnic subgroup, Crimean Roma were primarily formed through their contact with Crimean Tatar culture, Ukrainian and Russian cultural influences had a similar, if somewhat lesser, impact on the Crimean Roma. The majority of Krym'a are currently living outside the Crimean peninsula, in Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa regions of Ukraine and in Krasnodar Krai, Sverdlovsk, Samara, and Tula regions

of the Russian Federation, as well as in Kazakhstan. Just as Servur'a, Krym'a are divided into subgroups, although there is no academic consensus on this division. In current scholarship, the names of these subgroups are mixed with the names of large clans.⁵

ARE THE SERVUR'A AND KRÝM'A BEARERS OF ITS DISTINCTIVE LANGUAGE? (ACT NO. 1616-IX)

The second criterion that allows us to classify an ethnic group as an “indigenous people” is the possession of a distinct language. Except for those languages that developed in isolation and which cannot be classified within the framework of broader linguistic groupings, Romani dialects can be divided into four main groups: Vlach, Balkan, Northern and Central (Matras 1995). This classification can be problematic however, as different authors classify the Servur'a dialect in sometimes conflicting ways: some think it belongs to the Vlach group, others to the Central group. There is good reason for this ambivalence, as the Servur'a dialect has features typical of both dialect groups. Regardless of this minor controversy, the Servur'a dialect can still be subdivided into at least four sub-dialects.⁶ All of this is to suggest that the complex internal differentiation of these dialects does indeed indicate the presence of a distinctive language community that conforms to the criteria of the act for recognition of indigenous peoples. In what follows we offer a brief overview of what makes the Servur'a dialect, and by extension, its sub-dialects, so distinctive.

The Servur'a dialect has had strong contact with several Southern Slavic languages, as seen in terms like *bába* (grandmother), *katúna* (tent), and has retained many Romanian loanwords, too, as in *mýca* (cat), *felástra* (window), *róta* (wheel), *úrma* (surname). Its most recent shaping, however, took place through its contact with the Ukrainian language. Contemporary scholars of Servur'a note that they also often speak Ukrainian and a mixed Russian-Ukrainian dialect (see Cherenkov 2008). Such a description is not entirely accurate, though, as it would imply, wrongly, that the language that part of the Servur'a population uses is identical to the dominant language surrounding them. Unlike the surrounding Ukrainian language, the Servur'a dialect has Romani lexical units and entire phrases adjusted to Ukrainian grammar. One of the notable

⁵ Vadim Toropov gives the following list of Crimean Roma subgroups, also based on the areas of their formation: *Kyrymlýdes*, *Herišlýdes*, *G'ozulúdes* (according to our informants, this word form is incorrect; the correct form is *Gozuvlúdes*), *Orlúdes*, *Hohoídes*, *Džundúkéja*, *Kefelydes*, *Kyrlýdes*, *Baré paněngere*, *Kišajalé*, *Kubaniúdes/Kubanlýdes*, and *Čornomorlúdes* (Toropov 2009). We suggest two additional groups that could be classed as Krymian subgroups: *Aryká* and *Korainá*. Furthermore, the term *Kyrymlýdes* needs to be clarified: it may indeed be the name of a Krymian subgroup, or else it might be a general name for the whole Crimean Roma community, along with the term *Krym'a*.

⁶ *Séryv-Zadnopr'any*, *Poltavcí* and *Horodský Sérvy* lost their sub-dialects, having retained only occasional lexemes of Romani origin. *Tavryčány's* situation is similar, but in some places one can still encounter native speakers of this sub-dialect.

features of Servur'a is the presence of Ukrainian words and phrases that are literal loan translations of Romani ones: *jisty na sobi mjáso* (*їсти на собі м'ясо*, lit. "to eat one's own flesh") means "to feel nervous", a calque from the Romani "*xal per péste mas*".⁷

Furthermore, unlike in the surrounding language (Ukrainian and the Ukrainian-Russian dialect), a considerable segment of Slavic vocabulary connotes taboo subjects such as genitalia and bodily discharges in the Servur'a dialect thus rely heavily on allusion to remain in everyday use. For instance, "egg", "hen", "pour", or "sausage", are referred to using euphemisms drawn from both Romani and Slavic sources. For egg, Servur'a say *bilén'ke* (Ukr. whitish) or *parnoró* (Rom. whitish). For hen, *let'úča* (Ukr. a flying one)⁸ or *kahní* (Rom. a hen) must be used.⁹



Photograph 2. Servur'a. Beryslav, 2021. Center: Leonid Dejnega. Right: Oleksandra Sizonenko (with a white headscarf on her shoulders). Both survived the Roma genocide during WWII. Their family members were killed by German soldiers.¹⁰ The inscription on the garage says *Baxtalo drom* (Rom. a happy journey [to you]). Photo by Samira Tymchenko.

⁷ Other examples include: *xodyt' važká* (*ходитъ важка*, lit. walks around heavy) means "is pregnant" – a calque from the Romani *phirél pharí*; *bilén'ke* (*біленьке*, literally: whitish) means a chicken egg – a calque from the Romani *parnoro*.

⁸ Ukrainian word *kurka* (Ukr. a hen) is used in argot with meaning "vulva".

⁹ Other examples include: instead of pour, *sýpat'* (Ukr. to pour smth granular); instead of sausage, *kovbásy* (Ukr. sausages) or *gojá* (Rom. sausages), that is, the word "sausage" is only used in its plural (either Romani or Ukrainian) form.

¹⁰ Kali Traš, Testimonies of the Genocide of Roma: Leonid Dejnega and Vursova Maruša. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ED6Fyuv2tJ8&t=176s&ab_channel=%D0%AF%D0%BD%D1%83%D1%88%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BE (accessed: 01.04.2023).

The Crimean Romani dialect is the only Romani dialect in Ukraine that belongs to the Balkan group, having come under in contact with South Slavic languages and the Crimean Tatar languages. The percentage of words of Crimean Tatar origin is probably as high as 36% (Bessonov 2000). Vadim Toropov distinguishes four sub-dialects of the Crimean Romani dialect: *Kyrymlýdes Hohóides*, *Kubanlýdes/Kubanlýdes*, *Čornomorlýdes* (Toropov 2003). Active contact between the Roma and the surrounding population, however, has always resulted not only in the Roma borrowing lexical items from the surrounding language but also vice versa. Romani loanwords are to be found in most European languages, including Ukrainian and Russian. For instance, many Ukrainian and Russian argots use such Romani loanwords as *lavé* (money), *xávaty* (to eat), *rakló* (young non-Romani man; in Ukrainian and Russian it has the meaning of “uncouth person”, or “boor”).¹¹

ARE THE SERVUR'A AND KRÝM'A BEARERS OF DISTINCTIVE CULTURE?
(ACT NO. 1616-IX)

Material culture of Servur'a and Krym'a

Distinctive culture is the third criterion that defines indigenous people according to the Act No. 1616-IX. Servur'a and Krym'a both provide further evidence that both groups continue to be bearers of a distinctive, contemporary, material culture grounded in tradition, for instance in their clothing and interior design, through specific household items, and in their cuisine. Other local artefacts and distinguishing practices provide even more compelling evidence to support the two groups' official recognition as indigenous groups by Ukraine.

A tradition of wearing garb has been better preserved in the Krymian communities; Servur'a have only partially retained it. Krym'a women start wearing a headscarf after marriage to symbolise their marital status, while among the Servur'a, this tradition was already dying out in the 1970s; nowadays, only the oldest Servur'a women (65+) wear headscarves. Conversely, Servur'a girls and young women continue to wear long or medium-length skirts, and shorter skirts or dresses (above the knee), as well as trousers, are not permitted for Servur'a girls above fifteen years of age. Adult Krymian women only wear long clothes.

¹¹ Furthermore, the verb *labáty* (to play a musical instrument) is derived from the Romani word *dilábel/dilabál* ([he/she] sings, plays [an instrument]); *čuvak* (guy, dude) is derived from *čhavó* (boy, son) (Barannikov 1931).



Photograph 3: Krymian people in the village of Lyubymivka (Kherson region), 2021. Author: Volodymyr Panchenko.

A young Servur`a man is not likely to look different from non-Romani youngsters, even though there are some clothing restrictions for men, for instance Romani men typically do not wear shorts. Krymian and older Servur`a men wear characteristic caps known as *kapitánka*, or sheepskin hats known as *kubánka*. Among middle-aged and older Servur`a and Krym`a, one can still see people with golden teeth, which in the recent past was a symbol of wealth, and people used to even have gold caps put on healthy teeth.

Traditional Romani dishes were influenced in part by contact with Ukrainian cuisine. Servur`a traditional dishes for example are mostly based on Ukrainian cuisine, with certain modifications: *cyhánskyj boršč* (“Roma borsch”, a cold fish borsch); *štrúnhèli/šmúndi* (casserole made with boiled dough instead of potatoes), *žarkóje* (casserole), *pyrožńa* (Christmas pudding), *vúška/kanoré* (dumplings with twisted edges). While Servur`a cuisine overlaps with Ukrainian cuisine, Crimean Roma cuisine, in contrast, shares much more with Crimean Tatars’. However, all Romani subgroups in Ukraine have a common culinary feature: a great number of meat and dough-based dishes.

Among the traditional dishes of the Crimean Roma, one should mention *jantýkà*. A dish of the same name (*yantiq*) is well-known in Crimean Tatar cuisine: small, flat, meat turnovers, fried on a pan. The Crimean Roma *jantýkà* differ from the Crimean Tatar ones in shape (the Romani ones are round) and cooking method (the Romani ones are deep-fried). Other traditional dishes of the Krym`a include *kiíkà* (shortcake

with raisins), *košekboréka* (small dumplings), *adalmádes* (unleavened dough, cooked in boiling water and stuffed with duck), *kanzúrka* (fried hedgehog meat) etc. The last one is rarely cooked now.

Families often keep heirlooms. In Servur'a families, for example, these would be *masxára* (icons), whereas in Krym'an families would keep *xamalíja* (a little bag containing a verse from the Qur'an). People also keep various objects related to the nomadic lifestyle of their parents and earlier ancestors, such as a *katúna* (tent), means of transport (various types of horse-drawn carts), traditional handcrafted goods and tools made by the Roma artisans themselves. During our field trips, we have seen such objects as leather harnesses, whips, leathercrafter's vices, horseshoes among other items, that capture a tradition of farriery that stretches back through this material culture to the nineteenth century.

Spiritual culture of Servur'a and Krym'a

The Krym'a are traditionally Muslim, while the Servur'a are traditionally Orthodox Christian. However, in both groups, these religions have a number of folk features, and customs vary widely in different subgroups, clans and even individual families, highlighting the ongoing, distinctive and fluid interactions with the dominant religious cultures that surround them.

For most members of these communities, such a formula as "We, Krym'a, are Muslim" or "We, Servur'a, are Orthodox Christian" is enough of a profession of faith without further elaboration. The particular denomination of Islam (Sunni or Shia, the relevant Madhhab, or authority it is administratively subordinate to) or of Orthodox Christianity (whether it belongs to the Patriarchate of Moscow, of Constantinople, or another Patriarchate) is seemingly irrelevant. Doctrinal issues and administrative subordination of the religious institution do not play any significant role in the religious life of the Servur'a and the Krym'a; church or mosque regular attendance is equally unimportant. It is normal practice among Muslim Krym'a to attend an Orthodox church if there is no mosque in their city (although they are not allowed to cross themselves). Some Krymian homes even have Orthodox icons hanging on the walls. For a Servur'a Roma, it does not matter which church they attend, that is, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church or the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Indeed, Servur'a who have migrated to Europe fleeing to the Russian invasion have begun in some cases to attend Catholic churches.

Christian baptisms in Servur'a communities are carried out most frequently during the first year after birth, but they can also take place later, between the ages of six and fifteen. Sometimes baptisms of children also occur among the Krym'a. Notably, the Krym'a do not practise circumcision.

In Krymian and Servur'a communities, religiosity does manifest itself in food taboos. As Muslims, Krym'a do not eat pork, but they do eat horse meat. As Christians, Servur'a can eat any kind of meat, but they have their own prohibition against

horse meat, which might be explained by the Servur'a sacralisation of horses. In the ethnographic literature, one can find descriptions of Servur'a rituals involving horses, e.g. bringing a horse into the house for Christmas or baking special bread for horses.

Servur'a ritual holidays are related to the main Christian Orthodox holidays and Ukrainian traditions in general. As for Ukrainian secular national holidays, the Roma do not celebrate them (Makhotina and Panchenko 2020). Among the most important Servur'a ritual holidays is *Páska/Patradí*¹² (Easter), which, a week later, lengthens into the commemoration of the dead. Roma Easter has its own distinct folk features, for instance as a family reunion event. For *Páska*, the Servur'a bake *páskas*, cylinder-shaped Easter cakes, which are two to three times bigger than *páskas* baked by Ukrainians. The custom of baking a *páska* for Easter sometimes also occurs among Krym'a who have family ties with Servur'a. Other important and distinctive Servur'a holidays are *Sv'atýj v'ěčir* (Ukr. Holy Evening) or Christmas Eve (January 6th), *Rožestvó/Krečúno* (Christmas, January 7th), *Melánka* (January 13th), *Cyhánskyj Nóvyj Hod* (Roma New Year, January 14th).



Photograph 4: *Páskas*. They are baked in special ovens; some families have them, so friends and relatives come visiting from other cities and even regions to bake *páskas* in their ovens. Photograph by Christina Miller, 2015.

The main Krymian holidays are Jilbáši and Jagor'á. Jilbáši is the Crimean Roma New Year, celebrated on January 14th. On this day, young people visit each other

¹² Two names for one feast – in Ukrainian-Romani fusion and Servur'a Romani dialect.

and sing a ritual song, *Šaramazáni*. Jagor'á is the day of commemoration of the dead and falls on the Thursday before Orthodox Easter. On this day, the Krym'a make special memorial coffee; they also make a bonfire in the courtyard and jump over it. As for Muslim holidays per se, such as Kurban Bayram, Uraza Bayram and so on, the Krym'a do not celebrate them and, in fact, generally know very little about them.

The customs that remain closely connected with Romani religious life are burials and commemorations, though Servur'a funeral customs are very similar to those of the surrounding population. People keep vigil in the house where the deceased lies. The funeral usually takes place on the day after death. The body is put into a coffin and buried, where the grave is covered with earth. Servur'a first put a wooden cross on the grave and later erect a tombstone. Relatives of the deceased organise memorial dinners on the ninth and the fortieth day after death, as well as for the six-month and one-year anniversaries.

The Crimean Roma, however, have a different burial tradition. A Krymian funeral usually takes place on the seventh day after death, although sometimes earlier. The grave, between 10-12m², is recreated as a replica of a typical room of a flat, with actual furniture, household appliances, decorations, and other belongings of the deceased, like gold jewellery. Although the dead body used traditionally to be wrapped in a carpet, the custom of putting the body into a coffin is becoming more common now. The grave is not filled with earth; instead, it is covered in with a reinforced steel ceiling and then more concrete is poured over that. A wake takes place on the third, seventh, fortieth, and hundredth day, as well as on the one-year anniversary of the death. Sometimes an iron stele with a crescent and a star is erected soon after on the grave.

Another aspect of traditional religious culture is the practice of ritual purity, known as *mahrimó* among the Servur'a, and *harámi* among the Krym'a. The system of ritual purity is complicated and multifaceted. Taboos largely relate to the impurity of the lower body, primarily that of a married fertile woman, since they believe that a woman is less pure than a man, while children are believed to be the purest creatures. Traditionally, then, women wore several skirts and an apron, although this tradition, as detailed above, has considerably diminished. For the same reason, *mahrimó* forbids washing underwear together with outer garments, footwear together with any other pieces of clothing and face towels together with bath towels—the list continues. It is also forbidden to use a utensil if an animal has eaten from it. It is forbidden to share a drinking vessel with a person who has been excluded from the Roma community, or with those non-Roma whose lifestyle is incompatible with the principles of *mahrimó*. Furthermore, within the framework of ritual purity, there exists an idea of a *neighborhood of objects*: for example, a towel and a dirty garment cannot even be placed in the same compartment of a bag, if they would not technically touch while there.

DO THE SERVUR'A AND KRÝM'A HAVE REPRESENTATIVE BODIES?
(ACT NO. 1616-IX)

The next criterion that allows us to classify an ethnic group as an “indigenous people” is the presence of traditional, social, cultural or representative bodies. Even though the Roma encampment (a clan, a group consisting of several families who travel or live together) as a traditional social unit has effectively ceased to exist in Servur'a and Krym'a communities, some of its elements persist to this day, namely its legal system and various ways of exercising power. Both the Servur'a and the Krym'a have a number of self-governing structures, which are both traditional and modern, and act unofficially as well as officially.

Self-governance within Roma communities is different from what most Ukrainians may imagine. There is a common misconception in Ukraine that the unofficial leaders, the so-called “barons”, govern Roma communities. In the minds of the surrounding population, a “Romani baron” is usually an authoritarian man who often resorts to unlawful methods to expand his influence. In present-day Servur'a and Krym'a communities, there are, of course, respected and reputable men whose opinion is taken into account, for instance, *syndomár'a* (experts on Roma judicial affairs), but these people do not have any real authority.

The most powerful and influential institution is the “Roma court”, known as *sýndo* in Servur'a and *séndo* in Kryma dialects. It is still typical for the wider Roma, including the Krym'a and the Servur'a, to meet in assembly to resolve serious internal social issues. This assembly is indeed considered a Roma court, dealing with conflicts such as property disputes and family matters and can act as a mediator, where members of the Roma community hear both sides of a dispute and arbitrate a solution. If necessary, the defendant will swear an oath as a last resort of resolving a litigation matter, and the highest penalty can be the exclusion of the offender from the community.

Both the Servur'a and the Krym'a have their own official organisations too. In the 1990s, Romani “ethnocultural associations” began to appear in Ukraine; they have the status of public organisations and position themselves as representative bodies in relations between Roma communities and official agencies like local government bodies, charitable foundations, other (i.e. non-Romani) ethnocultural associations, public councils under the government offices. Formally, any person from any Romani group can join these organisations. In practice, however, local (city and regional) Romani ethnocultural associations are subethnic, representing either the subgroup that is the largest in number locally, or the subgroup to which their leader belongs.¹³

Neither the Servur'a, nor the Krym'a, nor the Roma in general, are state entities. For the Roma, the absence of a state or autonomy within a state—moreover, the absence

¹³ Some prominent Servur'a organisations in Ukraine include: *Lačo Drom* (Zaporizhzhia), *Arca* (Kremenchuk), *Society of Tsyhans of the Southern Region “Romano Than”* (Kakhovka), *Roma of Ukraine “Ternipe”* (Lviv). A prominent Crimean Roma organisation is *Amaro Kher* (Pavlohrad).

of a desire to have either a state or autonomy—is not a sign of some deficiency but a cultural feature. Similarly, not harbouring state ambitions is not a weakness for Roma but one of the idiosyncratic cultural characteristics of their community. Some of the social principles forming part of the *romanipé* code¹⁴ include, among other things, not serving in the army, the police, state security forces, judicial institutions, or at the prosecutor's office, is rooted in this existential and political ambiguity, although these principles are beginning to change, as we discuss below.

ARE THE SERVUR'A AND KRÝM'A ETHNIC COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE TRAUMATIC HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES?

While the historical experience of dislocation, forced displacement from the historic homeland, experience of exclusion or discrimination, belonging to non-dominant sectors of society and other traumatic experiences as criteria of indigenous people are not included in Act No. 1616, they are discussed as part of the above-mentioned international definitions (Martinez 1987; Daes 1996; Kingsbury 1998; Belitser 2017). We consider such criteria for our argument.

These two groups' claims to indigenous status may also draw on traumatic historical experiences that form part of both Servur'a and Krymian recent history. The genocide of the Roma by the Nazis during WWII, the deportation of the Crimean Roma from Crimea in 1944 and the USSR's campaign to put an end to the traditional Roma lifestyle are three such atrocities that merit greater attention here.

Kalí Traš ("black horror") is the Romani name for the Roma genocide. For Servur'a and Krym'a, the Second World War meant civilian casualties and forced removal from their historic lands. During the 1944 deportation, as the Krym'a were regarded as Crimean Tatars – since they were Muslim and spoke the Crimean Tatar language – they were exiled to Central Asia,¹⁵ along with Crimean Tatars and other ethnic groups living in Crimea (Germans, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians).

Subsequent Soviet campaigns to settle the Roma resulted in the destruction of their nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles. The best-known campaign started in 1956 after the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) had issued the decree "On Engaging *Vagrant Tsygans in Labour*" (Voitenko & Tiahlyy, 2018). *Failure to comply with the decree was punishable by deportation for a term of five years, combined with hard labour*. For Krym'a and Servur'a, this decree actually had some positive consequences, where illiteracy decreased, access to healthcare improved, begging ceased to be a common way of making a living. There were, however, a number of negative consequences too, as nomadic Roma experienced judicial persecution, their habitual way of living was destroyed, and they were

¹⁴ A complex of notions defining "Romanipe" (Krym. *romanipé*; Serv. *romanimó*) and "non-Romanipe" (Krym. *gadžipé*; Serv. *gadžimó*).

¹⁵ They were exiled particularly to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan.

forced into new Soviet-approved forms of labour such as collective farming. These changes affected their traditional culture and way of life, and led to the gradual loss of their traditional trades like smithery, horse-trading, leathercraft, basket-weaving and fortune-telling.

In an independent Ukraine, Krym'a and Servur'a became more involved in different fields of public life. Initially, the main field of activity both for Servur'a and for Krym'a was trade in consumer goods (clothes, bed linen, haberdashery). They traded locally as well as in farther-flung places such as Western Ukraine, Crimea, and Russia. Other popular activities were scrap-metal collection, buying gold, and fortune-telling. After the Russian-Ukrainian war broke out in 2014, most Krym'a and Servur'a lost their habitual sales markets in Crimea and Russia, so many Servur'a, as well as other Ukrainian residents, became labour migrants in Europe.¹⁶

Until 2014, Donbas region was one of the main settling areas for Ukrainian Servur'a, and Donetsk itself had been the unofficial centre of Servur'a culture in Ukraine and Russia. After 2014, broader Servur'a connections with Roma living in the occupied parts of Donbas were largely severed and Donetsk's cultural significance to the Servur'a diminished. Those Roma who remained Ukrainian citizens were no longer able to enter the territory of the so-called LPR and DPR (Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic). For those Roma remaining in occupied Donbas, travelling to the rest of Ukraine became very difficult, because they needed to cross a frontline. Further splintering these groups, the occupation meant that part of the Servur'a population chose to leave these occupied areas and move to neighbouring Ukrainian regions, while another part moved to Russia—specifically, to the Rostov-on-Don and Moscow regions. The majority, however, remained where they had always been.¹⁷

Over the last thirty years, increasing levels of discrimination and hate speech in the media have been documented in places where Servur'a and especially Krym'a live, culminating more recently in open conflict and physical fights between Romani and non-Romani citizens.¹⁸ Sadly, the feeling of being discriminated against is a characteristic one for the Ukrainian Roma. Although there have been occasions when Servur'a became village and city council deputies, neither Servur'a nor Krym'a are represented in their local governmental authorities (councils and executive committees).

After February 24, 2022, Servur'a and Krym'a from the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine found themselves either in the combat zone or the occupied area. A significant number of Roma had to leave their homes, and while some of

¹⁶ Yanush Panchenko's fieldwork.

¹⁷ Yanush Panchenko's fieldwork

¹⁸ For instance: Bandu nakryly u Chaplyntsi. Novakahovka.city, 27.10.2021, <https://novakahovka.city/articles/171829/bandu-nakryly-v-chaplyntsi?fbclid=IwAR37GWPuG9kQU03TajvXdOtMUIXElc-4J6waGTOw622M-HL8poyquQjoRh2o> (accessed: 07.10.2023).

Rozdolyans'ki vyiny. Kakhovka Kryminal'na. Facebook-group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kakhovka.kriminalna> (accessed 07.10.2023).

them were able to go to territories under the Ukrainian government's control, others had to travel to European countries. Despite the generally positive attitude of European countries towards migrants from Ukraine, there have been reports of human rights violations against Roma in Europe, in particular in the Czech Republic¹⁹ and Hungary.²⁰ The most tragic aspect of the Romani plight, however, is the situation in the occupied territories of Ukraine, where the Roma population mostly consists of Servur'a and Krym'a. The media have repeatedly reported on Roma falling victim to the Russian occupiers.²¹

However, the history of Roma in the occupied territories is not only one of victimisation.²² The participation of Roma in Ukraine's armed resistance and their maintenance of public order in Ukraine deserves special attention. Since the summer of 2022, the Ukrainian media have been reporting stories about Roma serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the National Police of Ukraine, and volunteer organisations. It is not always possible to identify the Romani group to which the protagonists of these stories belong, but there have definitely been Servur'a²³ and Krym'a²⁴ among them.

DISCUSSION

Despite what we feel is a compelling case for the inclusion of these two groups under the aegis of Ukrainian legislative protection, there is one point that remains to be addressed. Can the Krym'a and the Servur'a can be properly called ethnic groups or it would be better to use a term such as "(sub-) ethnic Romani group". However, even if were to engage with this discussion about stable nomenclature, the debate itself cannot influence the decision to grant indigenous status. Simply put, the Krymchaks and the Karaites, who are on the list of indigenous peoples of Ukraine, are in any case often classified as sub-ethnic groups themselves. The ethnic

¹⁹ <https://romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-mayor-makes-openly-racist-statement-that-her-town-just-wants-white-refugees-from-ukraine-not-children-and-women-of> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

²⁰ <https://adcmemorial.org/en/news/hungary-discriminatory-practices-against-roma-refugees-from-ukraine/> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

²¹ <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/v-okupovaniy-makiyivci-vbili-sim-yu-z-vismoh-lyudey-chetvero-z-nih-diti-zlochyn-mogli-vchiniti-viyskovi-rf-2231572.html> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

<https://vchaspik.ua/regiony/535673-kak-v-tretem-reyhe-v-lisichanske-okkupanty-ubili-cyganskogo-barona?amp> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

²² Another vivid episode of the war is linked with Krym'a. One of the most remarkable news items of the first days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was the news that Roma had stolen a Russian tank. On February 27th, the Ukrainian TV channel 1+1 announced in its newscast that this event had taken place in the village of Lyubymivka, Kakhovsky district, Kherson region; there is, indeed, a large community of Crimean Roma living there, and it is to them that the tank theft was attributed.

²³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2023/01/18/if-not-me-then-who-ukraines-roma-defy-prejudice-to-join-fight-against-russian-invasion/> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwzMy7XwO8E> (accessed: 01.04.2023).

belonging of the Krymchaks and (Crimean) Karaites is therefore currently unclear, because, even though many researchers consider both groups to be separate ethnic groups, some scholars have also argued for classing them as sub-ethnic ethno-denominational communities of Jewish descent.²⁵ By the standard set in Ukrainian law, then, and as we have laid out here, both the Krym'a and the Servur'a deserve this serious consideration, for their own good, and for the good of a more equitable Ukraine that honours its citizens justly, to be included and recognised fully as meriting indigenous status.

CONCLUSION

The two groups discussed in this article, Krym'a and Servur'a, are (sub-) ethnic groups that meet all the national, and international, criteria for classifying an ethnic group as an indigenous people. Both groups were formed within the territory of Ukraine, and are predominantly based in Ukraine; they are bearers of distinctive languages and cultures; they have traditional, social, cultural and representative bodies; they self-identify as indigenous people of Ukraine, as is reflected in their self-ascribed names; both are ethnic minorities within the larger population of Ukraine, and neither has a state formation of its own. Therefore, both groups fully meet the requirements of the relevant Ukrainian legislation and are recognisably deserving within international definitions of indigeneity too.

Additionally, initiating a discussion on granting indigenous status to the Servur'a and Krym'a may draw attention to the pressing problems of other Romani groups, and the Roma in Ukraine in general, and provide the impetus to formulate and implement appropriate legislation to guide state policy towards the Roma. Preserving a distinct Romani cultural identity, which may manifest itself in upholding language, traditions, spiritual values, among other values, customs and practices. Such state support could truly help develop these communities, as well as other territorial communities, wherever they may reside. In fact, given the characteristics of the Krym'a and the Servur'a, the existing clauses of the Act "On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine" can already become the basis for the state's policy towards these ethnic groups within its territorial boundaries.

Finally, one does need to acknowledge the objection that the inclusion of Servur'a and Krym'a on the list of indigenous peoples of Ukraine may invoke new threats. It may, for instance, affect the situation of other Romani sub-ethnic groups in Ukraine, who also need additional attention from Ukrainian state and society, or whether the granting of this status could negatively affect the Servur'a and the Krym'a currently residing in the territory of the aggressor state (the Russian Federation)

²⁵ Others argue that at least the Crimean Karaites are descendants of Turkic peoples and their religion is based on ancient Turkic beliefs, having only an indirect connection with Judaism (Tyahlyk 2007; Vodotyka & Savenok 2011).

and Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. However, the moral case is clear, and, we hope, clearly argued here. It is always the right time to do the right thing, and given the exigent existential threat to many from these groups that emanates from ongoing Russian aggression, war-crimes and crimes against humanity, the Krym'a and the Servur'a deserve to hear in clear terms that all of Ukraine stands in solidarity with their indisputable humanity. Such official recognition of their indigenous status, their unassailable belonging both to and within Ukraine, would send such a message.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Yanush Panchenko is grateful for support from the Indiana University-Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program (Robert F. Byrnes Russian and East European Institute).

Mykola Homanyuk would like to thank the Prisma Ukraina research program at the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin, Germany) and the Centre for Interethnic Relations Research in Eastern Europe (Kharkiv, Ukraine) for their support in making this article possible.

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SERVUR'A AND KRYM'A (CRIMEAN ROMA) AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF UKRAINE

Key words: Ukraine, Krym'a (Crimean Roma), Servur'a, indigenous people, Romani (sub) ethnic groups

The article presents an ethnographic and sociological description of two sub-ethnic groups of Ukrainian Roma: Sérur'a and Krým'a (Crimean Roma). Based on the field research conducted in 2016–2022, we have concluded that the Krym'a and the Servur'a are (sub-) ethnic groups which meet most of the national and international criteria for being regarded as indigenous people of Ukraine. Servur'a and Krým'a were both formed in the territory of Ukraine, are predominantly based in Ukraine, are bearers of distinctive languages and cultures, have traditional, social, cultural and/or representative bodies, identify as (indigenous) people of Ukraine, as is reflected in their self-names; each of them is an ethnic minority within the population of Ukraine, and neither has a state formation of its own outside of Ukraine. Therefore, they fully satisfy the requirements of the relevant Ukrainian legislation. Additional grounds for classifying Servur'a and Krym'a as indigenous peoples are their non-dominant position in society, their traumatic historical experience, which includes the Holocaust of the Roma, the 1944 deportation of the Crimean peoples, as well as their vulnerability to forced displacement from their historic lands and the fact that the Krym'a became refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In the authors' opinion, the initiation of the discussion on granting indigenous status to the Servur'a and the Krym'a can draw attention to the urgent problems of all Romani ethnic groups in Ukraine and give impetus to the formation of the state's policy towards the Roma.

Article translated by Asia Fruman

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PHOTOS AS A CULTURAL CODE OF THE ODESA REGION

INTRODUCTION

I survey a sample of the vast cultural wealth that the project I was involved with gathered through an extensive data-collection process of nearly x`ten years. I tour in this paper a range of these cultural contexts to provide a flavour of our developing understanding of family life rituals and their capture for posterity. Thus, I establish the provenance of the project and the data through which I situate the ethnographic engagement with photography via various approaches. The richness of life-cycle rituals in the Odesa region is also explored to show how particularly ethnic Bulgarian rituals have been reflected in family photo archives.

This study has represented a profound investment in careful documentation and collection of the photos. It was a departure for ethnographic inquiry, to collect so carefully the living archive of deep cultural life that the respondents, as amateur ethnographers themselves, had established as a proto-archival resource. While so much may be already lost, they have gathered and curated their own vital clues to the vibrant past of their own people. We merely continue the work here, for them, ultimately, we feel, for Ukraine.

The archive can give insight into larger populations, but can also permit us to focus in on the rich texture of micro-histories of regions and movements by exploring their visual cultures. Thus, the paper ends with an in-depth look at one nun’s existential representation of her worldview embedded in her community’s religious life.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF READING PHOTOGRAPHS

John Berdzher compares photography to a major cultural phenomenon that infuses virtually every aspect of modern life (2014). Indeed, visualisation of almost all areas of life is generally one of the most prominent trends of our times. In Ukraine, as in the rest of the world, the transition to visualisation has brought an expanding range and evolution of the functions of photography, in part through a simplified

production and presentation of traditional images. Photographic images are specific representations of historical reality that are distinct from textual and spoken language. The emergence and spread of video and digital technologies have significantly reduced the use of analogue photography and influenced the ways in which images are stored and used, as well as attitudes toward their supposed authenticity. These changes have made the study of photographic practices as components of culture more relevant to understanding the ways in which memory and identity are formed and stabilised in visual contexts.

Photography appeared in 1839 and the first hundred years of photography can be regarded as an initial stage of knowledge accumulation, characterised by professionals and amateurs alike exploring the possibilities of photography as a new tool for understanding reality, and the search for its place in science and art. At first, scientists used it as proof and a way to reproduce reality or for illustrative purposes (Derzhavyn 1914; Mead 1988). The ethnographic and anthropological approaches, which consider photography as a tool for their own scientific data collection, emerged in the late nineteenth century when ethnographers began to use photographs to describe and study the ways of life, traditions, and customs of different cultural and ethnic groups (Bateson & Mead 1942). The sociological approach focused on the present moment, on explaining the social phenomena and processes depicted in photographs, the norms of behaviour, and the dynamics of their formation (Bodryiur 1999; Boitsova 2013; Bourdieu 1990; Shtompka 2007). The historical and cultural approach has investigated not only the technical but also the cultural significance of photography (Arnkheim 2007; Fliusser 2008).

The interpretive approach analyses the content of photographs, drawing on semiotic principles such as denotation and connotation. The art criticism approach, which dominated until the mid-twentieth century, remains widespread, focused only on the specifics of artistic practices, methods and genres, and the aesthetic qualities of photography. This approach considers photography as a part of art that has taken over the functions of painting, rendering a creative view of the world (Barthes 1968; Sontag 1990). The psychophysiological approach is also worth noting here, as it involves solving psychological problems of photography in the context of the development of human memory (Nurkova 2006).

In recent decades, a multicultural approach (or multimodal analysis) has become widespread. This perspective explores the methodological possibilities of interpretation and is based on the creation of complex “texts” in which visual elements are woven in. This perspective describes how people in modern, industrialised nations have a better perception of information presented as a combination of visual and textual blocks (Batchen 2002; Dmytriuk & Prigarin 2015).

One innovative trend was the treatment of photography as a new category of historical sources for everyday life (Arnkheim 2007; Berdzher 2014; Chalfen 1987). The most recent developments in this field relate to the “digital revolution” and the transition to “post-photography”, in particular due to its loss of connection with immediate reality. It is characterised by diversity and innovation in this research, much

of which focuses on the phenomenology of photography. In the case of Ukrainian historiography, creating comprehensive research – combining archives, ethnography and photography – on specific features of the development of photography in different regions of Ukraine helps us recognise the vast diversity of culturally-shaped practices across the state. In what follows, I analyse the evolution of photographic practices within the Odesa region from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century among the various ethnic groups from across this region with whom I have worked over the last decade. I trace the local differences between research cohorts through photography, and the way photographs are involved in everyday life, and the religious and secular cultures of these groups.

STUDYING PHOTOGRAPHY IN ODESA.

CAPTURING A DIVERSE PLACE: THE ODESA REGION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Modern Ukraine is a complex territorial entity, in which each of the political and cultural regions has had its own historical trajectory that developed within different, often overlapping, civilisational systems (Nahorna 2008, p. 11). The Odesa Region (*oblast'*) is a special historical and ethnographic region with a multicultural population that can be considered a kind of multifaceted frontier due to its geographical location at the intersection of different borders, cultures and historical legacies. This territory has long been a borderland between settled and nomadic populations, Christianity and Islam, traditional agricultural and industrial economies (Smolii 2014, p. 94). Today, Odesa is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in Ukraine.¹ The area falls within several historical and cultural regions within the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea; the Balkan-Danube, the Carpathian-Black Sea, Northwest Black Sea, as well as the historical borderland regions of Budzhak and the Bessarabia, straddling Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. The Odesa region is also classified into three historical areas: Southeastern Podillya, the Bug-Dniester steppe interfluvium and Budzhak (the latter two are coterminous with the western part of Southern Ukraine). Historically, different parts of the current Odesa region belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, the Tatars, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Kingdom of Romania. In the nineteenth century, Odesa developed as the main seaport town in the region between the Southern Bug and the Dniester. As a major port city in the region, it has become a melting pot for various ethnic and religious groups to congregate and make their home there.

¹ According to the 2001 All-Ukrainian Population Census, representatives of over 133 nationalities and ethnic groups inhabit the region, including Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Moldovans, Jews, Gagauzes, Belarusians, Poles, Armenians, Roma, Crimean Tatars, Germans, Albanians, Romanians, Czechs, Greeks, and others [Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy: State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine].

CREATING A DATABASE.
NOTES ON A METHOD: FROM DATABASE TO INSIGHT

My long-term research project includes the examination of the photo archives of Odesa residents and residents from the wider region of southwestern Ukraine. I started working on it as a professional photographer and a Ph.D. researcher in the research team of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology of Ukraine, Faculty of History, I. I. Mechnikov National University of Odesa in 2012. In accordance with the method of classifying collected archival photographs, these images can be divided into discovered sources (in the collections of archives, museums, and during extensive field trips), and created sources (ethnographic and oral history databases).

Based on the form of preservation I divide them into printed and digital sources, drawn from the introduction to scientific archival, field, and published data gathered. Especially important were sources gathered during field trips, such as collections of digital copies of photo albums, individual photographs, narrative memories about the photographic process and the use of photographs. In total, over 150 in-depth biographical, fifty-three structured, and sixty-eight semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2012–2019, in fifty-one settlements of the Odesa region, including Odesa itself and other towns of regional significance. I conducted my fieldwork both independently and as a research member and photographer of comprehensive historical and ethnographic expeditions from the I. I. Mechnikov National University of Odesa, first as a Ph.D. student there, and then undertaking supplementary self-funded research across the entirety of the Odesa region to augment the dataset, in towns from Balta, Bilyaivka, and Podilsk, to Chornomorsk and Izmail. To compare regional and local features with national specifics, interviews were also conducted in certain locations in other regions of Ukraine (namely in the Mykolaiv, Vinnytsia and Kherson regions). Information on the functioning of photographic institutions and the activities of photographers in Odesa in the second half of the nineteenth century was found in the State Archives of Odesa Oblast'. Moreover, extensive collections of photographs from the family archives of residents of these districts were found in the local history museums of Balta, Kodyma, Podilsk, and Izmail. Publications in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Odesa periodicals and local history works formed an important part of the database (Drozdovskiy 2013; Vizirov 2012). Internet sources also played a significant role.² Data from various specialised websites and relevant internet social networks were used to establish certain aspects of the functioning of photography in different social contexts. These included photos of respondents from their personal pages on Facebook and Instagram.

Accessing, processing and interpreting this empirical data has allowed me to explore the multi-faceted role of photography in contemporary cultures in a new

² *Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy. Pro kilkist ta sklad naselennia Odeskoj oblasti za pidsumkamy Vseukrainskoho perepysu naselennia 2001 roku*, <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/general/nationality/odesa> (accessed 11.10.2023).

State archive of Odesa region <https://archive.od.gov.ua/> (accessed 11.10.2023).

light. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation makes the issue of preserving Ukrainian diverse ethno-cultural heritage more pressing as well. As such, continuing the work on identifying, preserving, and processing photographs from family albums of Odesa region residents becomes imperative for me as a photographer, an anthropologist, and a Ukrainian citizen.

Viewing family photo albums holistically involved using ethnographic and interview techniques to supplement basic elicitation strategies. Deploying this more comprehensive approach during ethnographic fieldwork among local communities allowed me, then, to better understand better how particular images could function in a given culture and context. One of the most effective ways to build communication between the researcher and the interviewee was by accessing family memories, where the conversations were usually more sincere and open. Ironically, family albums often also acted to structured interviews like a type of questionnaire, that is, structured by life itself and by converging individual biographies stored in the albums, not by the researcher.

In order to capture a wide range of interpretative variations from these sources and provide them with scholarly reflection, a special, mixed method was developed for processing extensive collections of photographic images. It comprises two components: the first was the study of the specifics of photographic creation and associated practices, and the second was the photographic heritage available in the cultural environment by converting image elements, first orally, and then into printed form. The first component concerned direct interactions with the interviewee, to capture interviewee characteristics such as gender, age, social status and level of education. Depending on the flow of the conversation, I conducted formalised or semi-formalised interviews – where I used a pre-designed questionnaire – or in-depth biographical interviews conducted with a special questionnaire based on the structure of an in-depth biographical interview framework (Hlushko 2008). In addition to viewing photographs together with the respondents, I covered many thematic issues that had been developed before the interviews, a list of mandatory topics was developed.³ During my fieldwork, I also set the criteria for selection: by time of origin (photographs that belong to a specific historical period); by composition; and by a complex processing of photographs of a given locality or ethnic group. Occasionally I asked interviewees to choose their favourite photos from a family album.

The second component of research concerned the recording and description of private photo collections, and it consisted of two stages. The first involved obtaining information, and the second stage involved deciphering it. Where possible, different people asked questions, took notes and took photos to avoid distracting the interviewee from the story. For description and decoding, I used the methodology proposed by visual anthropologists for analysing an image and its corresponding text, which includes: description (technical characteristics and description of the image's plot), reconstruction (the analysis of the meanings of textual and visual materials

³ For example, an ethnographer may be interested in the problem of the ban on photography in certain local cultures.

and the reconstruction of the cultural context) and socio-cultural interpretation (interpretation of the symbolic and semantic content of the image) (Dmytriuk & Prigarin 2015, p. 1420).

Considering each family photo album as an object of archival studies, i.e. as a mono-document that is a single archival record (Kasian 2016), I found it necessary to draw up a full archival description for each photo album. This description included external and internal information about the document. The external information also consisted of the following: archive (or assigned) number; title (if any); type of album; personal data of the album owner; number of pages and photos; and their chronology.



Photograph 1. Odesa, 1910, Staged family portrait in Gottlieb's photo studio (archive of the author).

Typological analysis procedures such as classification, categorisation, and periodisation were used to organise the collected material. The classification was carried out according to several criteria: the form of storage (printed, electronic media); the nature of the image (portrait photographs include individual, couples, collective; photographs of material culture objects include houses, clothes, tools and crafts; tourist photographs; photographs of everyday life and festive ceremonial events; photographs of religious feasts); places of residence (city or village) and locations. Family photo albums were also divided by genre into general, children's, school, demobilisation (dedicated to military service), wedding albums, and others.

The internal content description included a chronological description of the photos. Before describing them, the photos were numbered in order (from left to right, top to bottom). The “five W’s rule” were used when completing the description: who (who is in the photo?); what (what is there?); why (why was this photo taken?); when (when it was taken?); and where (where it was taken?). That is, all available data were recorded: place; date; filmmaker; description of the event or plot; and actors or agents. When filling in the description, as much as possible was discovered about each photo: who took it and when, why, where, etc. When it was not possible (due to time restraints or technical feasibility) to capture the entire album, the most characteristic or oldest photos were selected for scanning or photographing. Both sides of the photo were scanned because the back (mat) often contained various marks and inscriptions with useful information.

Quantitative processing of such a large amount of data required the use of a sampling method, allowing us to select some elements from the overall pool and form a representative sample, and to extend the results of processing the sample data to make generalisations. This method can be used to find out which practices are common, and which are taboo in certain communities. With the help of comparative and content analysis, it was possible to establish characteristics of given worldviews and identify their manifestations in photographs, as well as to reconstruct the historical and ethno-cultural features of the photographs (Prigarin 2011, p. 440). For example, funeral rituals have traditionally been recorded earlier and more often in the Balkan populations of the Odessa region than among Ukrainians, Russians, and Germans, and more frequently among villagers than urbanites. Researchers also found examples that documented different traditional forms of Bulgarian wedding rituals over time. These examples particularly showcased such rituals from the central Odessa region, which southern Bulgarians have not practised. In each album, it is possible to see both modern and traditional features and trace the specifics of the genre composition.

To study the characteristics of creating photography as an everyday phenomenon in ethnic cultures, I propose to use semiotic analysis to focus on systems of signs that carry cultural meaning. After all, an anthropologist is interested not only in photographs of events but also in the events of photographing. For example, during the Second World War, and for years after, brides used ordinary, everyday clothes for their weddings due to financial constraints. Wedding dresses could be of different colours, even multi-coloured, where only a veil with a wreath would act as the “sign” of the bride’s wedding dress. In such a case, the semiotic approach is useful for comparing the values of different groups and their cultural codes.

Photographs from family albums of residents from the Odessa region can be used to study the microsocial spaces of different ethnic and religious cultures of Ukrainians, Old Believers, Greeks, Poles, Bulgarians, Albanians, Gagauzes, Moldovans, Roma, among others, living in rural and urban areas. While analysing these photographs it was clear to me that examining them without acknowledging the context of their creation and functioning would prevent us from determining the ethnicity of the subjects depicted. Ethnical belonging is, conversely, something difficult to

understand at first glance; we must carefully read various cultural codes to reveal it. Nevertheless, with a sufficiently nuanced approach to the images and the material sources, a number of carefully preserved family photo albums – approximately thirty or forty as it turned out in my fieldwork – from one village or town became a unique, multifaceted source for the study of micro-history (family history) and a fascinating reconstruction of everyday life not only of these villages and towns but the entire Odesa region.

INTERLUDE: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PHOTOGRAPHY TRADITIONS IN THE ODESA REGION
(MID-NINETEENTH – EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY)

Here I distinguish three historical stages in the evolution of photography: professional or occupational (traditional); amateur (related to the Soviet period); and contemporary. The first period, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century and ended in the 1920s, was characterised by elitist photographic practices. In terms of the studied region, the first customers of photographic products came from the Odesa “beau monde”, aristocrats, merchants, and wealthy urban citizens, who used photographs to create and supplement their own portrait galleries. As photography became accepted by the upper classes, photographs were commissioned not only as an alternative to painted portraits, but also as a way to capture and display status.

In this stage, the photographer was seen as a bearer of secret knowledge and mystery for customers; the photographs were mostly staged (taken in a studio), and created by professional photographers. By the early twentieth century, the practice of periodic family visits to the photographer by entire families to create family portraits had become widespread. For example, one photo from 1910 (Photograph 1) typifies the tradition of family photography as practised by a wealthy German family living in Odesa. We see a mother with her children and their godparents. Although the photographer at that time acted as a scriptwriter and fully controlled the process, the clients required him to show the attributes commonly accepted for their status in the photograph, sometimes even bringing certain items with them. Photographs had to emphasise social position and point to the income level of the subject. For this purpose, various backgrounds and accessories were used. The very fact of visiting a photographer was significant and elevated the status of the customer.

Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the first photographic studios, often divisions of Odesa businesses, appeared in remote suburbs and towns. Until the 1920s, the practice of domestic photography had been largely regarded by peasants as a whim or as entertainment for the rich. The prosperous social strata of the countryside, priests, tavern keepers, teachers, etc., did, however, visit photographers when visiting an urban centre, as evidenced by photographs from rural family albums dating from the 1880s and later. From the 1920s on, though, with easier access to more rural studios, local peasants, for example,

from the village of Znamianka – Katarzhyno (which belonged to the Tiraspol district until 1920) would visit photo studios in Yanivka, Odesa, and Tiraspol. In the village albums of this period, we found a number of typical group family photographs. All of them were staged: older family members are sitting, sometimes holding small children or grandchildren in their arms, and adult children are standing behind them.

The next, amateur period, from the 1920s to the 1990s (referred to hereafter as the “Soviet” period), is characterised by the development of a photography that began in the last pre-revolutionary years. Anyone could take pictures if they mastered photographic techniques, and the photographer became an active actor in photographic practices. It should be noted, too, that in the southern Odesa region, representatives of the clergy (priests, deacons) of various Christian confessions were engaged in photography. The development of photography in the late 1950s and 1960s was associated with a clear division of photography into amateur and commercial, professional photography. The democratisation of social life, which had been observed since the late 1980s, led to the polarisation and separation of family and work/leisure time. In urban families’ albums, there are photos of picnics, city walks, fishing, etc. New household items, such as a new car, a fashionable dress, or furniture, triggered a desire to be captured on film. Since Odesa is a famous tourist Black Sea resort, every Odesa family typically has pictures at the seaside or on the beach.

The last period begins in the late twentieth century and involves the coexistence of modern (digital) and traditional (analogue) forms of photographic images. The transition from film (analogue) cameras, which would not allow one to immediately see the final snapshot, to digital cameras, has meant that photographers can take advantage of not only taking a photo instantly, but also to evaluate it, delete a bad image, and publish a good picture on social media. Today, cameras are integrated into all popular digital devices and in the twenty-first century, almost everyone can take a vast number of pictures instantly without asking permission from photographed subjects, an emergent ethical and practical context for contemporary photography.

LIFE CYCLE RITUALS IN FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS

At the beginning of the twentieth century, photography emerged as an important part of many ceremonial practices, and from the second half of the twentieth century it became indispensable, forming a certain “photographic ritual”, and in some cases even canonically depicting events like weddings and funerals. The photographer in effect became an obligatory and active participant in many rites of passage. The proliferation of amateur practices over time has led to the emergence of a new type of source, conventionally called vernacular photography. Photographs that reflect the ritual and its process have acquired the status of official public documentary, providing visual evidence that can be considered a unique source for a detailed study of historically-ephemeral social processes in general. Photo albums of residents from

the Odesa region convincingly demonstrate that these were the most frequently photographed subjects. Rural and urban spaces did not always have the same photographic canon, which was due to a variety of factors, such as the availability and proliferation of photographic practices at different times, and according to changing rules, and taboos among certain ethnic groups.

Family photographic rituality and formality primarily involve recording the most important rituals of family life that accompany the main life-transitions; births, weddings and funerals. Every family album contains photos that capture the main events of the first months and years of a child's life. Since delivery rituals have always belonged to the domestic sphere, however, the birth of a child and accompanying rites were not photographed. During the Soviet era, it became a common tradition to photograph a baby with its parents, close relatives and friends at the doorstep of the maternity hospital when the mother and the baby were being taken home. In fact, for many, these were the first pictures of their lives. Such photos are quite schematic, and their style has remained unchanged to this day.

Some significant changes and transformations began at the beginning of the twenty-first century when smartphones made it more possible to take pictures of the first days of a child's life. The special feature of these photographs is that they are rarely printed; instead, the mother sends them directly to the father, relatives and friends. For a long time, there was a widespread taboo against showing a child and his or her photos to outsiders until the age of one month; even with the advent of social media, some respondents noted that they did not post photos of their own children until a certain age (one year or three months). Since most of the owners of the photo albums we studied were Christians, the first transitional rite in a child's life that was photographed was related to religious initiation, namely baptism. In Soviet times, though, when baptisms were prohibited, parents did not dare invite a photographer or take pictures of the ceremony themselves. In the post-perestroika period, Christening photographs began to appear in family albums on a massive scale. The tradition of photographing this rite simultaneously became commonplace both in towns and villages. Other important events in a child's life, related to both socialisation and personal history, were also subject to "mandatory" photography. Special children's albums were even created to document the main rituals and which contained amateur photographs from the child's everyday life: bathing, first steps, first tooth, first day of school, graduation, etc.

The wedding photographic canon was also subject to transformation. For a long time, the staged studio portrait was the only photograph to document the wedding event. It was common practice to take a "portrait" photograph after the wedding, where sometimes the time between the date of the wedding and the visit to the studio was more than a month. The newlyweds could wear their best weekend clothes rather than wedding outfits, which was especially true in rural areas, particularly in the post-Second World War period. It was in the second half of the twentieth century that events on the wedding day began to be recorded in greater detail, thanks to the work of photographers employed at civil registry offices.

Photographers who worked in registry offices during the Soviet era note that there were certain clichés: portraits of the newlyweds before the wedding, the wedding itself (the newlyweds and witnesses), the exchange of rings, and group photos with guests. When we consider the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, we can talk about the dominance of the Soviet canon of wedding photographs. In the city, this involved photographing the main moments of the wedding ritual at the registry office, the wedding procession walking through the city being photographed near the monuments, or studio shooting, and the banquet. Portraits of the newlyweds and group portraits with guests against the backdrop of memorable places during the wedding walk (Odesa Opera House, Teatralnaya Square, Potemkin Stairs, Duke's Monument, etc.), which took place after the marriage ceremony, were *de rigueur*. Wedding photos with local tourist landmarks in the background are recorded in almost every family album. There is evidence from respondents of a well-established tradition of handing out printed wedding photos to guests on the second day of the wedding. As one respondent, a former photographer of village weddings noted, the photos of the first day had to be developed and printed overnight, as some of the guests were not local and were leaving for home the following afternoon.



Photograph 2. Pasitseli village, Odesa region. A Ukrainian family. Photo after the wedding in church, during the Romanian occupation, 1942 (archive of the author, Odesa region).

There was a distinct canon for photographs of village weddings in the Soviet period too. The ritual actions and the corresponding attributes and symbols that reflected a local or ethnic flavour were an indispensable part of the photographs. A custom often encountered in Ukrainian village-wedding photos is the so-called “wedding train”, that is, a wedding procession walking through the village after the wedding. Until the 1950s, horse-drawn carts were used as part of the procession, and since the second half of the twentieth century, cars have been used. More recently a motorcade of cars is used, decorated with ribbons, flowers, and dolls on the hood. The wealthier the family hosting the wedding, the more impressive was the “train” (or convoy), and its passage was accompanied by music and songs. In the early twenty-first century, methods related to the transition to digital photography and the use of photo editors such as Photoshop became increasingly popular in wedding photography, subtly changing the parameters of the canon again.

In the 1850s and 1860s, a new fashion for posthumous photography emerged in Western Europe. The obligatory list of services provided by photo studios included taking pictures of the dead, who were posed and portrayed as if they were still alive. The most common photographs were of children, who were captured with a favourite toy in their hands and other symbols of their everyday life surrounding them. Sometimes the dead were even depicted as alive by using retouching to “open” their eyes.

Less typically, we find variations in how children are depicted. We have, for instance, only two examples of photographs from the mid-twentieth century in which deceased children were not depicted in a coffin. According to the photographs’ owners, both were created as mementos for the parents, as they had not taken any photos with the children during their lifetime. The first photo was taken in the south Odesa region, in the village of Vladychen, Bolhrad district, showing a small, deceased child with his mother next to him. The second photo was collected in the northern Odesa region, in the village of Demydove, Bereziv district. It depicts a mother with two children, one child deceased, the other alive. This latter photo shows the final farewell. According to the information provided by the respondents, there were no other photographs of the deceased child, so they decided to make a single posthumous one. Such scenes are thus atypical for the Odesa region and are an exception rather than a tradition, even though they reveal much about photographic techniques there.

The tradition of photographing funeral rites was more typical for villages than for cities. As a rule, if such photographs were found in photo albums of urbanites, their owners came from rural backgrounds. I have a whole array of sources from the southern Budzhak region, where the tradition of photographing funerals became widespread during the Soviet period.⁴ Some of our respondents, mostly from the Old Believers community, an Eastern Christian sect who settled in the region in the early eighteenth century, testified to a long tradition of sending funeral photos by post to relatives unable to attend the funeral. Another death-related custom is the

⁴ One of the respondents noted that she had seen a whole album dedicated to the funeral of just one person, but unfortunately, I was unable to see it.

marking of a deceased person with a cross, placed in a photograph either over the deceased person or on their forehead. The date of death would be indicated on the reverse side. The popularity of the genre of the funeral photo was observed only for a few decades, until by the end of the twentieth century, the practice became less common. Today, the funeral rite is not documented photographically. The most recent photographs I have seen date back to the 1980s.⁵

In addition to being taken during the ritual, photographs can capture places before, after, and even instead of it, due to photography's primary purpose, to capture the outcome of the transition. For instance, I recorded a case in the village of Pasytseli, Balta district, Odesa region, where in 1942, during the Romanian occupation, the new authorities forced a couple to get married two years after their (Soviet) wedding. This fact is captured in a photograph of the "newlyweds". The "bride" is wearing an ordinary dress, but the wedding candles testify to the ceremony. The couple actually celebrated their married life from the moment of the wedding and treated this photograph with respect as a historical document (Photograph 2).⁶

ETHNO-CULTURAL EXPRESSION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICES

One of the peculiarities of photography is its ability to reflect through visual codes and symbols the spiritual, symbolic culture of a nation, its psychology, worldview, ways of thinking, and aesthetic tastes. Photos from family albums provide information about how much tradition has been preserved in different periods too. My research indicates that photographs documented a number of elements of traditional rituals, particularly specific features of festive meals, folk weddings and festive costumes, dance and music traditions, for instance. For cultures inhabiting the Odesa region, one of the regional and local peculiarities is the preservation of traditional norms and practices among certain ethno-cultural groups (Old Believers, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, etc.), as evidenced by the distinctive symbols portrayed in the photographs. For example, certain attributes of the Old Believer culture, like icons, bread, *kibalka* (traditional headscarf), are regularly visible in many photos. The Ukrainian context includes traditional, embroidered towels (*rushnyky*), icons, wedding candles, or a wedding loaf. It is characteristic of Ukrainian weddings that the parents are the main masters of ceremonies during the wedding. Parents blessed their children with "farewell" bread and icons decorated with "blessed" towels, which were embroidered

⁵ At the time photography was developed in the region, the festive culture included a set of religious, royal, church parish, military, city, and folk holidays. Some of these festivals had disappeared or were banned before photographers could begin to record them, though. We did, however, come across cards documenting the celebration of Christmas and Easter from when the ban was rescinded.

⁶ Looking at contemporary photographs from the family albums of Odesa region's residents, one notices the diminishing and evolving holiday traditions from Soviet times to the socio-cultural space of modern Ukraine, where the emphasis had been on official public events, while personal history gradually comes to the fore in contemporary culture.

with traditional motifs (*rushnyky*). For the Old Believers, the priest played a leading role in the wedding, and icons were obligatory and occupied a central position in the wedding processions even in Soviet times.

Bulgarian group photos often depict wedding ceremonies, specifically the ritual of transporting the bride's dowry to the house of the bridegroom.⁷ In the villages in Bulgaria such as Znamenka and Blagoevo, for instance, the bride comes out onto the porch, looking through a mirror that lies on a plate with wheat, coins, sweets, and three apples (sometimes with an onion and apples); one of them has an iron coin (Photograph 3). "After bowing to the guests, she scatters all the treats from the dish in different directions. She throws one apple to the right, one to the left, and the third, the most beautiful, in front of her. After that, she takes five steps and returns to the house with the support of a boy from among her relatives (Dmytriuk 2019b). Based on my research it seems that Ukrainians who lived in the ethnically Bulgarian villages for a long time adopted this rite. But similar evidence is not to be found among the "northern" Bulgarians of Budzhak, so we can conclude that this rite is based on authentic Bulgarian features associated with the colonists' ancestral homeland (Katarzhino and Blagoevo were founded by Eastern Thracians from south-eastern Bulgaria) (Vizirov 2012). The custom of the bride coming out on the porch with a mirror and a tray is confirmed by numerous photographs and demonstrates cultural variation: the rite is typical for Bulgarians in the north of the region and is not known to Bulgarians in the southern (Bessarabian) part.

Instead, among the Bulgarians of the south of the region: villages Holytsia, Krynychne, Vasylivka, Zhovtneve (Karakurt) we found photographs depicting the veneration of St. Trifon, whose day is celebrated on 14 February. In Bulgarian Orthodoxy, he is considered the patron saint of vineyards, so the main ritual of this day was the pruning of vines, which was performed only by men. Interestingly, this custom was adapted to socialist life during the Soviet era and even continued to be reproduced in collective farms.

As a result of various factors (urbanisation, secularisation, changes in economic situation, etc.), some rituals have disappeared from the traditional culture of various ethnic and religious groups of the region, or have been reduced or modernised. Thus these efforts to track and trace of the provenance of the photographic memory of the rituality of the Odesa region ensures that the vast cultural richness of these people remain evident and accessible. Such photographic practises also highlight the dazzling complexity that Ukraine contains, making projects like these more than academic exercises; such documentation may well become part of the struggle for Ukraine in time.

⁷ Today, the Bulgarian diaspora in Odesa region is the largest and accounts for 73% of all Bulgarians living in Ukraine (Yevtukh 2004, p. 56). The most densely-populated area is Bolhrad district, created in 1940 after Bessarabia was annexed to the USSR. The history and everyday life of the Bessarabian Bulgarians living in southwest Odesa differ significantly from the "northern" group.



Photograph 3. Znamianka village (Katarzhyno), Odesa region. A Bulgarian family wedding ceremony, 1976 (archive of the author).

THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES IN HOME INTERIORS

This study also investigated evolving traditions around the use and function of photographs in the homes of residents in the Odesa region over 150 years as expressive components of folk life. It considered factors that influenced this process: living conditions, social class environment, ethnographic and territorial features. In contemporary Odesa urban culture, family photography that reveals the interiors of private homes is practically absent. In rural areas since the mid-twentieth century, in contrast, the interior photo has been playing a leading role in signifying home comfort, and still functions as a cult object, along with family icons.

Studying the correlation between the practical and symbolic functions of photographs over time suggests that photographs in home spaces function not only as visual (iconic) evidence but that they also have different symbolic meanings. The

multi-ethnic arrays of photographs we studied reproduce local models of this phenomenon in contemporary living spaces. I have considered the use of photographs in housing interiors, private albums, and religious practices, outlined trends in contemporary photographic practices and demonstrated how visual images form part of a system of constructing social identity. I have traced clear differences in the social functions of photography in various periods. The function of the photography in the first period (ca. 1850–1930) was to “capture the moment”, preserve (primarily family) memory and reflect the times and the people in them. After the digital revolution, however, contemporary photographs began to reflect everyday life in social relations and interactions too. Digital communication in everyday life has led to the fact that the functions of the family album are now almost entirely transferred to virtual space, and the emphasis has shifted from capturing significant events in family life to the field of individual practices. The relative simplicity of handling a photographic image and the possibility of computer-aided design have led to photography losing its single author and has become a collective work.

The earliest dated portrait that I have managed to find was taken in 1900. It depicts two men in military uniforms with the inscription, “In memory of military service”. The photograph was taken in a photo studio, as evidenced by the stillness and static poses. The photograph itself is in the centre of a coloured illustration featuring military insignia. It was taken it seems for the purpose of sending it to relatives as a memento of military service. The recipients of the photo are displayed on the wall, as evidenced by the nail hole in the wall. Such storage, without a frame and glass, suggests that the customers were middle-class. In rural communities of the region during the Soviet era, photographs were often hung above or pinned to the carpet that was erected on the wall (a common practice in Soviet times). The presence of a carpet and a large-format portrait in a village house was a sign of a family’s wealth, but also its secular or atheistic belonging. During my fieldwork, I observed wedding portraits of the owners, their ancestors, or descendants in the corners or above the bed on the wall in almost every village house. The frequency of placing such photographs in an honourable, prominent place, sometimes next to icons, suggests that the photographs were equated with family icons. This way of using the photographs is particularly common among Bulgarians, Moldovans, and Old Believers in Budzhak, and Ukrainians in the northern Odesa region.

THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

As part of the research, I investigated photographs of religious practices as well as how people engaged in religious rituals were captured, various religious attributes, and the use of photographs in these practices to sanctify public and private spaces.⁸

⁸ One of the signs of Sovietisation was the state’s monopolisation of all spheres of life, including religion, which was manifested by imposing atheism on rural, agricultural communities deeply rooted in religion.

Folk or vernacular religious practices often entail a rather free interpretation of (Orthodox) church teachings. Since believers value the essence of an image and its “divine” power, as they believe, rather than how this image was made.

The secularisation of everyday life in Soviet Ukraine has given rise to various blended forms of religiosity. In their post-Soviet efforts to recreate the Christian world, various groups of Christians have endowed photographic images of icons with the same power as hand-painted ones (Dmitryuk & Prigarin 2019, p. 100). This substitution has taken place gradually and unevenly, with local differences in ethnic traditions, and with a characteristic change in form and function.



Photograph 4. Odesa region, Podil district, “Novyi Rai”, religious community “Innokentievtsi”, 2014. The house of Mother Seraphima (archive of the author).

During my fieldwork, I documented the amateur photography of religious practices and the associated photographic elements, participants and objects, and studied the use of photographs in such practices and how they can become a tool for sacralising space. In the churches and home shrines of the Lipovans⁹ in Bessarabia, there are still many near-iconographic photographs of Orthodox metropolitan bishops, bishops, monks, and priests, as well as photographs of diocesan meetings, congresses, or ordinations of mentors, and isolated examples of religious processions and church festivals. In general, photographing the consecration of churches, cathedrals, and meetings was almost ritualistic for this group. Similar phenomena were found

⁹ One of the sub-ethnic groups of Old Believers.

among Orthodox practitioners. Their iconostases (screens where icons are hung) contained photographs of church holidays, places of pilgrimage, and portraits of clergy. In contrast, Roman Catholics practiced having portraits made after the rite of confirmation.

Church parish feasts in honour of parish patron saints or local church holidays, called *khram* (“temple”) and *sobor* (“cathedral”), occupy a special place in the ritual calendar for mainly Old Believers and Orthodox communities, and attracted both local amateur photographers and visiting professionals. These holidays continue to be celebrated in grand fashion, and neighbours, priests and church choir singers from other parishes are regularly invited for a festive meal in the churchyard. It was believed that the more guests who visited a parish house on this day, the better the family’s life would be the following year. Most of those who had left the region for work, or emigrated permanently, planned return visits to their homeland to coincide with these feast days. Thus, photographing such events had a socialising function, contributing to cohesion, formation of ethnic identity, and collective memory, as the photos documented people who no longer lived in the village, and people collected such photographs as souvenirs.

Using a regional example of one religious sect, the quasi-monastic, utopian community of followers of the Innochentism movement in Podillya district of Odesa region (*rayon*), I studied the use of photographic prints as sacred objects. Communities of followers of the Innochentism movement are now widespread in Romania, Moldova, and in the neighbouring territories of Ukraine (see Kapaló 2019).

The Odesa region is thus the historical and religious centre of the Innochentism sect’s formation (Dmytriuk 2019a). My colleagues from Odesa university and I travelled to visit them in the Kotovskiyi district and Baltskiyi districts of the Odesa region, subsequently adding Podilskiyi district in 2015 to our itinerary. Photograph 4 is a regional example of the use of photography as a “mega-photo-iconostasis”, captured in July 2014 during my fieldwork in the Innochentism community Odesa. This community lives in the village they call a “New Paradise” (*Novyi Raj*), on the outskirts of the Lipetsk (Kuibyshev) village council. I found a multiple usage of photos as icons in the house of the self-styled Mother Seraphima. Until her death in 2015, she lived in one of the small rural houses built close to a local former monastery, an ardent apologist for her faith, calling herself *matushka* (“mother”) or *ihumenya* (“abbess”). The place where she lived is called “the Garden of Eden”, “the New Jerusalem”, and “Golgotha” by community members and it was here that a specially-built underground monastery was located from 1913–1920, almost 100,000 sq. m. of underground utilities connected up, with hundreds of cells for monks and nuns, and three churches. Above the monastery was a garden with an orchard surrounded by farm buildings, chapels, and a cemetery. The monastery itself was built by the followers of Innochentism to save the righteous during the Last Judgement, and so Innochenitist supporters called the monastery “the New Paradise”.

Ivan Levizor (in monastic life, Innochentiy, hence the name of this sect and the community) was born in 1875 in the village of Kosoutsy, Bessarabia province

(territory of current Moldova). In 1908, Levizor was invited to a monastery in Balta, where he took the vows and became Hieromonk Innochenity. In 1908-1909, his staged miracles of healing in Balta sparked a massive obsession with faith in the new saint, the so-called “Balta psychosis” (Sushynskiy 2005, p.189). After being exiled to Kamianets-Podilskyi in Western Ukraine and then to the Murom Monastery in Russia, in 1917 Innochentiy appeared in Lipetsk and returned to active preaching. He died in 1919.

In 1980, Neonila Safonova learned about his teachings from Father Nektarii (Archimandrite Nikodim) and decided to move to Lipetsk, closer to the monastery, where she took the name Seraphima (Dmytriuk 2019a). Almost all the walls and corners of Seraphima’s house were covered with many icons, reproductions, and photographs. Her personal photographs (photos of herself at different ages and photos of her relatives) were placed in the same row as images of saints, symbolising her involvement in the sacred sphere. The presence of photographic portraits of Innochentiy, and amateur photographs of the apostles and his followers indicates the magical presence of the saints in the space of the house. According to Seraphima [personal communication], she “communicates with the saints” through photographs. A large number of reproductions, cut-outs, and non-canonical images of Orthodox saints, which are also photographs in terms of their technical characteristics, were documented by my colleagues and me in her house. Innochentist believers perceive such images to be true icons, despite the absence of the usual attributes of sacred images.

For a person from the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, such photographs are a kind of marker not only of memories but also of ritual practices. It is significant that in the context of non-canonical beliefs, artisanal and amateur photographs are more in demand, playing the role of coded transmission, objects of worship, objects of interpretation, and contestation.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, photographic practices have acquired everyday cultural and practical forms that were naturally embedded in the infrastructure of each ethnic group in the Odesa region. The archaeographic evidence of the origin and development of photography in the Odesa region is helpful in reconstructing this part of the region’s past. Indirectly, they allow us to reveal the specifics of the transition from photographic art to craftsmanship, the functioning of photographic genres and compositions, their dissemination to different strata of society, etc.

Since its founding, the city of Odesa itself has been a powerful centre of cultural modernisation. The analysis of the multicultural variation in family photographs has shown that photographs from family albums provide information about the degree of preservation of traditions within and across periods. A photograph is not only a document that records an event (for example acquisition of a new status) or a source for studying rites of passage, but also an integral part of modern ritual practices.

The studied museum collections of photographs, materials from periodicals, as well as local, historical, printed sources (journals, newspapers, reports) contribute to the categorisation and restoration of urban and local photography customs. They allow us to conduct historical and anthropological comparisons and reconstruct secular and religious festive practices among city dwellers and rural residents. The data collected during my own fieldwork allow me to comprehensively establish the general characteristics of a history and anthropology of photography almost from the moment of photography's appearance in the region to the present day. Thus I have been able to analyse ethno-regional features of photographic practices among the multi-ethnic population of the Odesa region, and to point out both general and specific features. The processed photographic materials allows one to identify and explore the specific features of the historical past, traditional identity, and interactions among representatives of different nationalities as well as the mutual influence of cultures.

The patterns recorded in the Odesa region reflect both the traditions of individual ethno-cultural groups and the general photographic practices over the entire history of photography. The discovered original and newly-produced corpus of sources significantly expand the source of historical and ethnological research in the South of Ukraine, and the work on their identification and preservation continues.

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PHOTOS AS A CULTURAL CODE OF THE ODESA REGION

Key words: photography, amateur photography, family photo album, ethnocultural variability, field fixation methods, sociocultural anthropology, visual sources, Odesa region

In Ukraine, the transition to visualization is observed in the expansion of the range, change of functions, simplification of production and demonstration of the traditional photo image. Personal and family photographs play an important role in cultural memory, and working with photographs offers a particularly productive way to understand social and cultural aspects of memory. In the article

proposed, I research the variability of the functions of photography in polyethnic and multicultural region of Southern Ukraine, taking as the main example the city of Odesa and the Odesa region. I seek to reproduce and describe the historical and cultural dynamics of the development of photographic practices in Odesa from art to craft, and eventually to everyday practice from the middle of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. I aim to reveal the ethno-cultural expressiveness of photographic practices among the multi-ethnic population of Odesa, to point out general and specific features, to investigate local differences of ethnographic groups, structures and everyday practices, features of material and spiritual culture, socio-cultural norms. During 2012–2019 independently or taking part in complex ethnographic expeditions of I. I. Mechnikov Odesa National University, I have conducted more than 150 in-depth biographical, 53 focused interviews and 68 semi-formalized interviews in 51 towns and villages of Odesa region, including Odesa, Balta, Bilyaivka, Podils'k, Chornomors'k and Izmail.

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„YOU SPEAK UKRAINIAN VERY WELL” LANGUAGE ENCOUNTERS DURING ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

Most students of anthropology begin their study of the method of ethnography by reading at least part of Bronisław Malinowski’s magisterial *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1981), in which, based on his experience during his field research on the Trobriand Islands, he formulated guidelines and postulates defining a new type of research method in social anthropology. One of the most important aspects of Malinowski’s methodological manifesto was drawing attention to the fact that the language of the studied community is a necessary tool. Malinowski emphasised that ethnographers cannot explore the culture of the studied communities, and especially their “spirit”, without knowing the language of the local people. Thus, the ability to speak the respondents’ language, in addition to long-term field research, became a guiding principle in ethnographic studies. Of course, a great deal has changed since the days of Malinowski’s research and methodological guidance on the subject of what ethnographic fieldwork is and how it should be conducted, as well as how we should treat our fieldworkers (see Amit 2000; Halstead et al. 2008; Okely 2012). What remains unchanged for our method and ethics, however, is a commitment to understanding the world of another group.

Although anthropological reflection in Poland on what the field is and what it means to be in the field is not new (see Buliński & Kairski 2013; *Etnografia...* 2021), I have been unable to find similar Polish examples of in-depth reflections on the linguistic aspects of being in the field. How then are we to understand this ability to speak “the language of natives”? Is language acquired during language courses or philological studies a sufficient tool to help ethnographers during their research? How does using a local language in the field position us, influence our research and the behaviour of our research partners, by initiating, for example, certain situations that may reveal deep structural elements of the social reality under scrutiny? This article explores some answers to these perennial questions. The starting point for this reflection on ethnographic presence in the field, then, is language as encountered through levels of linguistic (in)competence. Drawing on my own research experience, I show that the language that ethnographers must adopt and adapt to in order

to access the field is a tool for communication with fieldwork partners. Importantly, competent contact with a speech community, on their own terms, can be observed to reveal even more. To achieve this, I focus on several highly personal aspects and consequences of my linguistic immersion in the field. As Paweł Ładykowski (2021, p. 235) points out, “Ethnography as a product of research and writing by ethnographers or anthropologists is entirely their own work, i.e. the explanation of social reality from a perspective and using tools that they developed during their academic life and research practice”, but reflections on language use during field research seem to be untheorised in Polish anthropology.

According to Danau Tanu and Laura Dales (2016, pp. 353–354, cf. Moore 2009), although language itself is often the subject of anthropological studies, reflections on the role it plays in the research process are extremely rare, and yet it determines our being in the world of the respondents. Ignoring this aspect in ethnographic self-reflection is a surprising lacuna, because language use remains a vital tool for conducting research. Researchers’ levels of language proficiency not only position them within communities being studied, they also have methodological consequences. However, it continues to be overlooked, as is the use of interpreters in the field, which for some researchers is suspiciously underexplored (Borchgrevink 2003); the reason for this may be a fear of losing the status of anthropological authority. I leave the last word on this matter here to Axel Borchgrevink:

If anthropologists should be unable to learn something as public as the language of the people they study, how could they ever claim to be able to understand the innermost meanings that people attach to things and events, or to discover the hidden mechanisms that make society function, or the secrets hidden from outsiders and casual observers? Clearly, anthropology’s claim to understanding other people and their lives, societies and cultures, could be convincing only if it were based upon mastery of the local language (Borchgrevink 2003, p. 96).

CONTEXTS AND METHODOLOGY

In what follows, I discuss my usage of Ukrainian during my fieldwork through two different observation and research contexts. The first one concerns my research among the Ukrainian minority in Poland. At this point, I have to emphasise that I have lived in this environment for about twenty years. While my interest in this community started from an anthropological curiosity about the world of what I initially and naively considered to be “Others”, Ukrainians from Poland, I am now immersed, linguistically, as an acquaintance, friend, and, for many years, as the husband of a Ukrainian woman. In addition, this role as a husband brings with it other responsibilities now, as a son-in-law and father (for more on the process of entering this community and its consequences, see Kosiek 2019). My presence within this Ukrainian minority, then, is to a large extent that of a recognisable, social person with rights, duties and responsibilities in the community. Having friends and living

in a network of relations formed by this community means, however, that I have the opportunity to observe and record many more behaviours, habits and opinions that are shared by many in the group. Nevertheless, most of my observations are not strictly “academic”, in the sense that they are largely not a consequence of ongoing research projects, coming instead from my personal immersion in the everyday life of the group. What is more, I do not use these observations to create regular *fieldnotes* in my observation log, which I could look up at any time, read and use in my research work. Recorded and remembered situations resulting from my functioning in the Ukrainian community, which I will partially refer to in this article, are closer to *headnotes* (Ottenberg 1990; cf. Okely 2008), that is, fieldnotes stored in the head. These are traces of certain experiences, situations, events or statements I have remembered, which I reach for when necessary. For an anthropologist, *headnotes* are no less important than standard *fieldnotes*, because they often help to interpret *fieldnotes*, although in my case they are recalled in the context of ongoing research work rather than as a reference to (non-existent) *fieldnotes*.

According to colleagues, because I have such an excellent “entry” into the Ukrainian group, I should have been using it to carry out research in cooperation with the group all along. After my first experience with research on mixed marriages in this community (see Kosiek 2008), though, I avoided further projects for years because my immersion in the Ukrainian group and my, sometimes almost uncritical, openness to it was also influencing my personal identity. This change in personal identity was described by one of my ethnological friends as “Ukrainisation”, which he understood as the (full) adoption of a Ukrainian identity. I do not agree with such a characterisation, but undoubtedly the proximity of relationships, including family relationships, with the Ukrainian community did have an impact on my identity, which created an internal block against conducting research *at home*. Several years ago my approach changed a bit in this respect, when I managed to overcome my internal resistance for an oral history project that allowed me to address my reticence and to show myself in the local community as a committed researcher, a friend and a Pole married into the community. Since then, I have not avoided projects focused on the Ukrainian minority in Poland, and I am eager to work on a better understanding of this community, not only through my personal immersion, but also through research projects I am carrying out.¹

The second context from which I draw examples for my analysis comes from research in the Maramureş region, Romania.² The material I use comes from ethnographic field research as a PhD candidate conducted in 2009–2010, which was

¹ Since 2015, I have been working on several projects in Biały Bór, Giżycko and the surrounding area, and now, from 2021, in Przemyśl. In all these towns and cities, the research projects concerned various aspects of the life of the Ukrainian minority in Poland.

² The use of the adjective “Romanian” is related to the fact that in 1303–1919 Maramureş was a Hungarian county, and as a result of the First World War it was divided approximately along the upper Tisa River into the northern part, which is today within the borders of the Ukrainian Transcarpathian Oblast (Transcarpathia), and the southern part of the Romanian county of Maramureş (Magocsi, Pop 2005).

devoted to issues of the identity of the Ukrainian national minority living in this region, where, for almost eight months, I lived in two villages, Repedea, by the Ruscova River, and Remeți, by the Tisa River.³ I have supplemented this PhD material with more recent research from Romania in 2022.⁴ In contrast to my experience of the Ukrainian group in Poland, in the Maramureș Carpathians I conducted ethnographic research (Angrosino 2007), combining participant observation, conversations and unstructured interviews, structured interviews, and desk research. In this case, my immersion in the field did not differ from a typical ethnographic project, and the relationships I built with field partners did not reach such a degree of intimacy as I have managed with the Ukrainian community in Poland.

WAYS OF LEARNING THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE

Since the subject of my reflection is the Ukrainian language I use during my research, I give a brief mention of how I learned it. Although my interest in Ukrainian issues began before my ethnology studies in Poznań, I only became interested in the Ukrainian language itself as I developed my research interests, realising that ultimately I would be unable to carry out projects of sufficient quality on Ukrainian topics without being able to use this language. Thus, my efforts to learn Ukrainian began when I was a third-year student of ethnology, attending a Practical Ukrainian Language course at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. At that time, Ukrainian was not completely unfamiliar to me, through my interest in Ukrainian music, but I was far from being able to use it actively. Learning Ukrainian during my third and fourth years of studies did not go well, as I was not systematic, but in the summer of 2006 I went on a two-month fieldwork project in the Eastern Carpathians in Ukraine. Thus, I had little choice but to start actively using Ukrainian. Interacting with speakers of Ukrainian on a daily basis turned out to be the best way for me to start speaking this language, although I still would have made mistakes. After returning from research and starting a scholarship at the Department of Ethnology, Ivan Franko University of L'viv, I heard from L'viv friends that the Ukrainian I used differed from the literary version, and that I spoke like *diad'ko z polonyny*, (“uncle from the valley”), that is, I was “speaking” a Carpathian dialect. As a person who had just started speaking Ukrainian, I was unable to notice such linguistic nuances, but

³ I used findings from this project to prepare my doctoral dissertation, *The “Ukrainian” national minority in the Romanian Maramureș and problems with their identity* (under the supervision of Prof. Aleksander Posern-Zieliński) (Kosiek 2014). The research I refer to here was conducted in 2009–2010 within the framework of a KBN (Research Programme of Committee for Scientific Research) promoter grant (NN109223636).

⁴ From September to December 2022, I was held a scientific internship at the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities in Cluj-Napoca funded by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. At that time, in September and November, I conducted ethnographic research in villages in the Ruscova river valley.

the language I learned in the valley of the Hnyla brook was quite different from the language spoken on the streets of L'viv. My studies in L'viv and subsequent immersion in the “Ukrainian world” eventually eliminated many early Carpathian accretions, and became, if not close to the literary version of Ukrainian, at least closer to the variant used by the Ukrainian minority in Poland.

This article does not primarily focus on the intricacies of the Ukrainian language. One may note, however, that the complexity of Ukrainian’s many iterations extends beyond the interplay between the standard literary form and regional dialects spoken by indigenous Ukrainian communities in neighbouring countries. Since Ukraine’s independence in 1991, for one thing, the Ukrainian language has undergone various transformations and evolutions. Additionally, the Russian language maintains a significant regional presence in Ukraine, although this presence has more recently diminished as autochthonous Ukrainian communities make language choices in light of the ongoing invasion. Furthermore, the perceived pervasiveness and influence of Russian in Ukraine – in fact Russian has had quite a regionally-bound presence for some time – have been leveraged as propaganda tools to justify Russia’s invasion of Ukraine (see Bilaniuk 2005). Finally, indigenous language choices have also had an impact on *surzhyk*, a range of Ukrainian-Russian linguistic blends, the prevalence and representation of which in media, social, and domestic spheres have sparked numerous debates and discussions. Clearly, when referring to the Ukrainian language, it behoves us to tread softly across this fraught linguistic landscape.

UKRAINIAN MINORITY IN POLAND

Before I discuss the Ukrainian language and how I use it when communicating with the Ukrainian minority in Poland, it is worth presenting some basic information about this group from before the outbreak of full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Members of the Ukrainian national minority are today a widely-dispersed community across Poland. The largest populations of Ukrainian origin live in the provinces of northern and western Poland, where almost eight decades ago, during the 1947 “Operation Vistula”, Polish citizens of Ukrainian ethnicity were forcibly deported and dispersed to the “Recovered Territories” that became a part of Poland after World War II. Both this displacement and earlier deportations to the USSR (see Pisuliński 2017) all but eradicated the former, original local communities living in south-eastern Poland.

According to historians, the 1947 deportation was the final event of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict that had begun before the 1940s (see Motyka 2023; Snyder 2003a). It is noteworthy that before the post-war deportations of the Ukrainian population, the ethnic and religious divisions between Poles and Ukrainians in south-eastern Poland were quite fluid (Snyder 2003b). To understand the identity-forming processes in this area in the pre-war period, therefore, the category of national indifference may shed some light (Zahra 2010).

In the years between 1947 and 1952, the deported and dispersed Ukrainian population was subject to an assimilation project planned by the Polish authorities. At that time, the community was not allowed to organise any cultural activities or teach the Ukrainian language, and the dissolution of Greek Catholic Church structures in 1947 also radically disrupted religious practices. Timothy Snyder (2003a) perceives the Polish government's policies of *assimilation* as a strategy aimed at creating a homogeneous nation-state, a culmination of the dreams and plans of Polish political elites from as early as the interwar period. From 1947 to 1989, state propaganda successfully promoted the false claim that all people of Ukrainian descent were collectively responsible for ethnic cleansing in Volhynia and subsequent post-war armed conflicts in south-eastern Poland. Because of this Polish communist propaganda, Ukrainians were labelled *banderowcy* (Banderites) and *rezuny* (murderers). As a result of the post-deportation breakdown of traditional family and neighbourly ties, and their dispersion and assimilation to the Western Pomeranian Region (the former Prussian territory), the Ukrainian community had to develop new ways to resist and counteract ongoing assimilation processes. In response to these targeted actions, then, many from the Ukrainian community developed strategies to hide their identities, while at the same time opposing the oppressive policies of the Polish state. Other displaced Ukrainians chose to assimilate, trying to blend in with Polish society as quickly as possible in order to survive. Another strategy that enabled the survival of the Ukrainian minority was the acquisition of networking skills among the communities that had been scattered across Poland. These new networks reached far beyond previous family and neighbourly ties. From 1956, cultural events, religious ceremonies and a reviving Ukrainian education system were indispensable in building new types of relationships, eventually even in developing a model of endogamy (see Kosiek 2018).

Over time, local Ukrainians in Poland made the experience of the 1947 deportation a focal point in shaping the social memory of this group, and the experiences of the loss of their "small homelands" and their forced displacement were passed on in families to subsequent generations. Meanwhile, the community began to organise cultural events, including gatherings at schools and anniversary celebrations. After the 1989 democratic transformation in Poland, local Ukrainian communities began to publicly commemorate Operation Vistula (1947) by erecting monuments and crosses, and by placing memorial plaques to the deportations in many locations. Memory and symbolic actions constructed around displacement trauma promoted the myth of the pre-1947 world and its loss (Lehmann 2010; Pactwa 2014; Wangler 2012).

LANGUAGE ENCOUNTERS AMONG PEOPLE FROM THE UKRAINIAN MINORITY IN POLAND

The Ukrainian language is among the more important elements shaping the identity of the Ukrainian national minority in Poland. Keeping this language in daily use in Ukrainian families and communities underpins the conscious effort of

Ukrainians to survive as a distinct group. A study among Ukrainian women conducted by Aleksandra Herman (2019) revealed, for example, that the community's approach to the Ukrainian language has evolved over the seven decades since the displacement. Over this period, however, the command and use of the Ukrainian language has always required making certain choices and having a certain awareness about the meanings of those choices. Conversely, these code-switching strategies also have helped keep a number of choices more explicit for those who choose to speak Ukrainian (Herman 2019, pp. 166–183).

I remember how teenagers from my first entry into the Ukrainian environment (2002–2004) most often communicated with each other in Ukrainian, and when a person who did not know Ukrainian would turn up among the speakers, the young people would switch to Polish. Several of my friends explained to me at the time that this was done out of respect for people who might not understand the conversation, so that they would not feel excluded. Over time, however, when the circle of my acquaintances expanded to include elderly people, I began to hear the word *cwynkajut'*, a term used by fellow Ukrainians to describe members of the community who had assimilated more in Poland. These more integrated Ukrainians felt obliged, due to their origin and given circumstances, to switch more to Polish, albeit imperfectly, which meant leaving tell-tale traces of their Ukrainian identity show in their pronunciation. *Cwynkajut'*, then, is a way of pejoratively judging a specific linguistic behaviour, especially with regards to children and adolescents, for instance with reference to teenagers in Ukrainian school corridors or to those gathering for a church liturgical service. In general, then, this term indicates disapproval and criticism of a linguistic behaviour related to the use of Polish in a situation where Ukrainian should be spoken.

When I returned to Poland from my time in Lviv and the Ukrainian community of Biały Bór, I began a Ukrainian language course. Ukrainian gradually became, at least partially, my second everyday language, a fact that was noticed by local Ukrainian leaders. I remember, for example, how one day, my wife's cousin, a student in the local Taras Shevchenko Secondary School, told me that a teacher had mentioned me while criticising students for their insufficient effort at learning Ukrainian. This teacher had argued that if a Pole could learn and speak Ukrainian, then as young members of the minority, they should make at least the same effort. I did not pay much attention to the story back then. Over the years, though, there have been other situations when my command of Ukrainian was commented upon by people from the Ukrainian community, both in Biały Bór and Sanok, where I have lived for several years and where there is also a minority Ukrainian population. People noticed my Ukrainian and commented on it, and although they never addressed these opinions directly to me, they spoke with some appreciation, and a little envy that, “[these] in-laws are lucky, because although they have a Polish son-in-law, he speaks our language” and “the husband of D., although he is Polish, he knows Ukrainian so well” [personal communications].

Such situations and phrases can be interpreted in three ways. Firstly, they indicate that the command and use of the Ukrainian language was, until recently, a necessary

and valued trait for the Ukrainian community, and certainly remains so for the generations of people who are now in their fifties and older. Using this language at home and in interactions with people from the community was in some ways a must, an element of identity for people of Ukrainian descent. Secondly, undoubtedly in the face of their experience of deportation, the difficulty of assimilating into a new social reality, their resistance to assimilation processes and the pressure of negative stereotypes, a Pole who shows mastery and a willingness to use the Ukrainian language without prejudice is immediately noticed. His behaviour is interpreted as a form of appreciation for Ukrainian culture and language. A Pole who has learned to use Ukrainian displays a lack of prejudice, and thus is quickly noticed as their behaviour is interpreted as showing a kind of valuing of the Ukrainian culture and language. Finally, Ukrainian people's astonishment with a Pole speaking even competent Ukrainian, in my opinion, is fuelled by the fact that Ukrainian has become an imagined feature, identified exclusively with people of Ukrainian descent. A non-Ukrainian, that is, a Pole, who speaks Ukrainian is a surprise to people from the Ukrainian community, as his attitude deviates from the everyday, (negatively-) imagined standard drawn from a set of colonial memories. Moreover, meeting such a person attenuates imagined ethnic boundaries, and the identity of a Ukrainian-speaking Pole may even become less definitively "Other" to a person from the minority. Furthermore, over several years I had many encounters with a group of people with Ukrainian roots, where strangers took me for a person of Ukrainian descent. Moreover, they were quite surprised when it turned out that they were dealing with a person without such a provenance. These kinds of situations did not seem problematic to me until 2018, when I went to Giżycko to do a small oral-history project.

For this research project, I collected eleven biographical interviews with people who, as children or teenagers, were displaced from their hometowns in the south and east of Poland and who now live in Giżycko or in its surrounding villages. In deciding to do this project in a northern Polish Masurian town, I knew I was going to enter a community that was practically alien to me, despite my being a native Pole. A friend who was born and raised in this community and whom I had known for years was able to help me reach older people from the Ukrainian group. This "gatekeeper" arranged meetings with people I wished to interview, and she introduced me as a trusted researcher from Rzeszów who spoke Ukrainian. When meeting my research partner, of course, I introduced myself and also talked about the purpose of my visit. However, knowing who I was visiting, I used the Ukrainian language almost from the moment I crossed the threshold. Having obtained permission to record witness accounts for addition to the archives of the Wrocław Centre for Remembrance and the Future, I proceeded with the interviews. Hours of meetings, stories about a world now gone, covering deportation and growing into a new community; these are all account I cherish in their collection, and materials I will revisit in a professional capacity. Here, however, I discuss a different kind of problem that bothers me to this day and which concerns two of those interviews. After the recording was completed, my research contributor asked me if I was Ukrainian.

Answering truthfully “no”, I noted great surprise in my research partner. Another lady was clearly confused by my answer. Her confusion was so great that a few hours after we parted, she called me asking if I had come to visit her from a borderland (*Kresy*) organisation in Wrocław that was looking for something unknown among the Ukrainian minority. Her questions made me feel uncomfortable and I began to wonder how much that situation, and the concerns of my interlocutor, were brought about by my attitude or behaviour. I concluded that perhaps my fledgling fluency in spoken Ukrainian, as well as the fact that we had met the day before the interview during a service at the local Greek Catholic church, made her believe that I was “the same” as her, that is, a person with Ukrainian roots. But it may be that her concerns were also related to her own life choices. Following retirement, the woman had rediscovered her Ukrainian roots when she got involved in the life of the local Ukrainian community, which implies that the woman may have tried to efface her identity from the local Polish community. Nevertheless, I think that, in the case of both interviewees, my comportment during the meetings meant they mistook me for being Ukrainian, and my consistent and competent use of their language made my identity less clear for them and caused misconceptions. These situations recall observations made by Anna Wylegała (2013) that our fieldwork, our interactions with field partners and its result are to some extent also shaped by our own ethnic origin. My research partner’s surprise at my true origin may also hint at the fact that, if they had been aware that they were talking to a Pole, other things could have been mentioned in their stories, and they would possibly have kept quiet about certain issues.

To summarise, I would like to highlight two aspects. Firstly, the situation when my identity became unclear to my research contributors because I speak Ukrainian gave rise to several ethical concerns. For some time after my experiences in Giżycko, I wondered whether in the future I should inform my interlocutors about my Polish descent. And if so, how should this be done? *Dobryj den’, mene zwaty Tomasz, ja Polak...*⁵ Today I am still not sure that would be the best solution. What I can do is minimise misunderstandings, be honest whenever questions emerge and not pretend to be Ukrainian, which I have never done anyway. Nevertheless, because of my immersion in the Ukrainian community, my life-choices, my knowledge of cultural context and my relationship with people from Ukrainian minorities across Poland, and my proficiency in Ukrainian, my identity may indeed be unclear to my research partners. Perhaps I have already adopted a native-like demeanour, in the sense defined by Barbara Tedlock (1991, pp. 70–71), approaching an almost *bicultural stance* that makes deciphering my identity much harder for my fieldwork partners.

Secondly, a Pole who can easily use Ukrainian is a surprise to people from the Ukrainian minority, as such a character can unwittingly makes it impossible for Ukrainians to establish his or her identity. Secondly, the situation in which a Pole *freely* uses Ukrainian is surprising for Ukrainian minority individuals. In such a case,

⁵ “Good morning, my name is Tomasz and I am Polish.”

those from the Ukrainian community lose the ability to easily recognise the identity of their interlocutor. This situation additionally points to the success in developing Polish and Ukrainian national ideas that have aimed to create a social world composed of ‘pure’ ethnic categories, ideas in part stemming from, respectively, the implementation and impact of ethnic cleansing and deportations. “Fluid” identities present in the history of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland have thus radically diminished. It is poignant, for instance, that I often heard during biographical interviews with ethnic Ukrainians that in the times before the Polish-Ukrainian armed conflict and the two waves of displacements, a Polish neighbour who spoke Ukrainian fluently was a normal thing. Polishness was in the past more determined by religion than by language, which often amounted to celebrating the most important holidays in the Gregorian calendar, in contrast to Ukrainian identity, which remained linked to the Julian calendar. In other words, in the remembered world of south-eastern Poland, the ease of communication, even bilingualism, that existed in relations between neighbours who were assigned to different ethnic categories was nothing exceptional. However, after more than seven decades, for the same people who remember the lost world, and for their descendants, Ukrainian-speaking Polish neighbours have become such a rare thing that their identification may have become problematic.

LANGUAGE ENCOUNTERS IN MARAMUREȘ

Quite a number of villages in the valleys of the Ruscova, Vișeu and Tisa rivers in the Romanian Marmaros bordering Ukraine are populated by a Slavic-speaking people, usually identified by most researchers, as well as by Romanian legislation, as a Ukrainian minority from Romania (Leno 2010). The issue of the ethnic identity of this community is arguably more complex, but it is not the subject of consideration in this article (see Kosiek 2020). However, records of Slavic-speaking people living in this area date back to at least the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries (Pavlúk & Robčuk 2003, p. 19). The identity-forming processes that affected this group were clearly different from the experience of the Ukrainian population from Poland, but until the end of World War I, the communities of Marmaros that I researched were subject to processes similar to those in the area of today’s Zakarpattia Oblast in Ukraine (see Magocsi 2021, pp. 61–122).

According to Ukrainian linguists, the Slavic-speaking community of Romanian Marmaros uses distinct Ukrainian dialects (Pavlúk & Robčuk 2003). Regional Transcarpathian dialects are used in most villages, while local Hutsul dialects are used in the villages of the Vișeu valley (*ibid.*, pp. 23–24). Mykola Pavlúk and Ivan Robčuk (2003) also emphasise that in Marmaros, as with the Ukrainian population from other regions of Romania, use of the literary version of the Ukrainian language never spread as widely, which has been interpreted as a consequence of poor Ukrainian education in local schools (*ibid.*, p. 10). However, it should be kept in mind that the Ukrainian language was indeed taught in these schools, including under communism.

Moreover, in the first decades after World War II, there were even secondary schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction in Sighetu Marmăției by the Tisa river (Pavliuk & Zhukovsky 1993, p. 306). Thus, there may well be other reasons for the unpopularity of the literary version of the Ukrainian language.

After completing my research and analysing my fieldnotes, I realised that both my perception and understanding of Maramureș were largely determined by my comprehension of the languages I encountered during my fieldwork. The common languages used by researcher and field partners were the milieux through which I made observations and interpreted the features with the identity of the studied community. Moreover, I believe that if I had had to research through Romanian, my interpretations might have been significantly different. The fact that during my Romanian fieldwork I used the literary version of Ukrainian – or as close as I could manage – strongly influenced my experience in the field, as well as my subsequent analysis of the ethnographic research.

I distinctly remember my first field trip in Marmaros in autumn 2008, where I made my first contact and established where I would start the project. Approaching the Ruscova valley, I gave a lift to a hitchhiker, and we soon started speaking Ukrainian together. As our Ukrainian conversation continued, I drove him to the house of a friend of his where he made an introduction that allowed me to stay for several nights. This first field experience created a recurring point of contact, from which I would develop important field relationships with several people living in Repedeș at the time. The entire initial episode allowed me to believe, erroneously as it turned out, that I would not need to learn Romanian, as our communication in Ukrainian had been so easy. Thus I assumed, equally wrongly, that Ukrainian would be sufficient to conduct my research.

I returned to Marmaros a few months later, brimming with confidence. However, as soon as I left the circle of my hosts' closest friends from Repedeș, it became clear that the local spoken language differed so greatly from my literary version of Ukrainian that I experienced many mutual misunderstandings with local people. Unfortunately, then, my first language encounters in autumn 2008 disappointed me greatly. During the course of research, I learned that my hosts had graduated from a Ukrainian university in the 1990s, and for this reason our communication in Ukrainian had been unproblematic. Interestingly, even at this home of two teachers educated in Ukraine, Ukrainian was used only in conversations with me. When my hosts had their relatives or neighbours visiting, however, those gathered used only the local language.

Over time, of course, my capacity to function in the local language from the Ruscová valley improved, but right until the end of my research in 2010, my research contributors sometimes had problems understanding what I was saying. This was the case both with young people, who were learning the literary language at school as part of Ukrainian language courses, and with older people. One time, in the mountain hamlet of Bardea, in Poienile de Sub Munte, to take an example, as I was strolling between buildings with Vasyl one of my field partners, we met a man who

was in his sixties or seventies. My questions to him were posed in literary Ukrainian and were translated into the local language by Vasyl, even though I understood the interlocutor's answers well enough that I did not need explanations. He, however, did not understand me; I could progress only so far in the time I had in the region.

In contrast to my experiences with using the Ukrainian language in interactions and research on the Ukrainian minority in Poland, in the context of Maramureş, my Ukrainian has always been something that clearly emphasised my strangeness and outsider status. The locals in Maramureş sometimes took me for a Ukrainian, but one from Ukraine proper, never one of their own, i.e. not a person from a Ukrainian village in northern Romania. I suspect this was because in everyday life, apart from Ukrainian lessons at school, practically no one uses the Ukrainian literary version there. Some of my research contributors even defined the literary variant as “foreign” or “incomprehensible”. During my autumn 2022 research, I was told that if a local person tried to use the literary version of Ukrainian in an everyday situation, their peers would think that they were either having a joke and wanted to tease them, or that they were trying to exalt themselves at the expense of those peers. When finishing my project at the end of 2010, I had a chance to say goodbye to my hostess from Repedeá, a Ukrainian language teacher at the local school, and I heard that she was happy that I had lived with them for so many months, so that her daughter could get used to Ukrainian!

I did not learn Romanian well enough to conduct research in this language. My linguistic incompetence also became a factor in initiating certain situations during my research. One situation concerned my participation in Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventist prayer meetings in the Protestant communities of Repedeá and Remeţi. In Repedeá, after an earlier meeting with the local Pentecostal presbyter, I was invited by him to participate in a prayer meeting. I gladly accepted his invitation, as I was curious about this religion, but I also wanted to know more about how they prayed, whether for instance they only used Romanian when praying, which I had previously heard from other local Ukrainians activists. During the service, it turned out that the vast majority of prayers and songs were not in Romanian, but in the local speech. Although this experience initially indicated that the Ukrainian community leaders had been wrong, a few days later, a respondent told me “*my mother had not sung as much in Rus’ky as she did during the last service*”, the one I myself had attended.⁶ Thus, perhaps it was my presence, as a person who did not know Romanian, that *created a choice* for the congregation to sing Rus’ky songs and recite Rus’ky prayers, a choice they would not otherwise have made. Rus’ky was a language which, according to my respondent, was only sparsely used during prayer meetings. Thus respondents were accommodating me and in doing so, inadvertently diminishing the value of my time among them.

⁶ *Rusyn (Ruthenian)* – this is a category used by many local residents to self-define or name the local speech. This category has nothing to do with Russianness. It is rather a term that has been used since before the emergence of the category *Ukrainian*.

Undoubtedly, researchers having limited command of the languages used by their field partners sometimes has interesting consequences (cf. Winchatz 2006). In my research in Maramores, my rudimentary knowledge of Romanian was a factor in my lack of attention to the regular use of the term *corcitură* in statements from my research partners. This word in Romanian means “mongrel”, and my partners used it to name their local speech and identity. Although I noted the term at the time, it remained on the periphery of my analytic awareness as I wrote my doctoral dissertation. Only with time did I realise that it might be more important, a local sign of national indifferentism, or a form of *anational* identity, as suggested by Agnieszka Halemba (2015), terms indicating that possessing an ethnic or national identity is not necessarily fundamental to one’s sense of self. Researchers of nationalism, when considering these terms, highlight the existence of groups that remain detached from nationalistic endeavours (Van Ginderachter & Fox 2019), often challenging the chauvinistic policies of nation-states through certain actions and perspectives. One notable aspect of indifferentism, for instance, is the use of terms that do not neatly fit within the ethnic and national classifications endorsed or promoted by nation-states. Categories such as *tutejsi* (the people from here) (Labbé 2019) *mieszany* (mixed, a term prevalent in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland until the 1940s deportations), or *corcitură* (which I encountered in my research on Romania and remains in use) can be viewed, among other attitudes and behaviours, as expressions of national indifferentism or *anational* identity.

* * *

“You speak Ukrainian very well” are words that I have heard many times from people of Ukrainian descent, both during fieldwork and in everyday interactions. To hear this, as a person who is in daily interactions with my interlocutors, is flattering of course. But as an anthropologist, I sense there are many much more important reflections that come with it, related to my being in the field and not being a Ukrainian myself. These words communicate just that and, as in “thick description” (Geertz 1973), these words are associated with a wide of aspects of functioning in a group and being in the field. Acts of identification and ideas about the addressee of this statement are among them.

Undoubtedly, fluency in the language of a local community is extremely helpful, even crucial, during fieldwork. Command of the language used by the people among whom we research creates not only an opportunity for communication, informal conversations, or interviews, but is also an important aspect of our being ethnographers in the field. Language helps in building rapport with our interlocutors that goes beyond mere communication as information-gathering; it leads so often to a meaningful exchange in our attempts to better understand our world. Reflexivity about our linguistic presence in the social environment of our research seems to be no less important than entanglements in the ethnographic field caused by emotional and identity-related issues (see Stanisiz 2011). For me, this aspect of fieldwork experience is certainly essential, and in the context of my research in Romania and

my everyday functioning in the Ukrainian community in Poland, has different and important manifestations that continue to unfold as I move deeper into both fieldsites.

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TOMASZ KOSIEK

„YOU SPEAK UKRAINIAN VERY WELL”
LANGUAGE ENCOUNTERS DURING ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

Key words: Ukrainian minority, Poland, Romania, language, Ukrainian, fieldwork, methodology

Some students of anthropology must be familiar with passages from Bronisław Malinowski's work (1981), in which, based on his personal field experience gained in the Trobriand Islands, he formulated guidelines and postulates defining a new type of research method in social anthropology. One of the most important aspects of Malinowski's methodological manifesto was drawing attention to the fact that the language of the studied community is a necessary tool. Malinowski strongly emphasised that ethnographers cannot explore the culture of the studied communities, and especially their "spirit", without knowing the language of the local people. Thus, the ability to speak the respondents' language, in addition to long-term research, became a rubric for ethnographic studies. In this article, the starting point for the reflection on ethnographic presence in the field is the language and the ethnographer's level of linguistic (in)competence. Using my own research experience as an example, I show that the language of locals spoken by ethnographers is not only a tool for communication with fieldwork partners, but also that the very use of this language and the level of its competence or the use of its specific variants can become, if ethnographic reflexivity is maintained, the subject of observation and reflection, revealing selected aspects of the explored community and its culture.

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A SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Any war *per se* always evokes sharp and polar emotions. For me, it is hardly possible to write about war in Ukraine from the inside without experiencing these emotions, so I would like to dedicate this text to my own anthropological reflection. I strive to reflect on an inevitable part of living through the war experience, which is *the sense of belonging* to the war. I have to mention that Ukrainians do not use this term as an emic category. We do not have special words to describe this feeling; you just “know” or “don’t know” what the war is. My aim is to get deeper into this inner knowledge via my own reflections, as a Ukrainian, by observation of my circle of communication, composed of different people with different backgrounds from central, northern and western Ukraine, and by observation of people in the streets of Kyiv, Vinnytsia and Ivano-Frankivsk.

By using term *the sense of belonging* I mean “the subjective feeling of a deep connection to social groups, physical space, and individual and collective experiences” (Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney & Slavich 2021, p. 87). The experience of war is one that provokes a very strong emotional response, and therefore a very strong sense of connection with those who have gone through similar experiences.

However, not everything is as simple as it seems at first glance. Indeed, at the macro level, Ukrainians seem to be extremely united in solidarity, because all citizens of the country have faced the war in one form or another, and therefore everyone belongs to it. People unite in joint efforts to help the Ukrainian army, IDPs, people in the de-occupied territories, etc.

However, at the micro level, Ukrainians experience a sense of belonging to the war in very different ways. If one gets closer to the level of everyday practices, one will see that the experience of the war varies within the country, and the criteria for feeling belonging to this experience are correspondingly different. In contrast to the macro-level, this differentiation of involvement within the country becomes a factor of separation rather than unification. For example, for some Ukrainians, belonging to the war is about the shelling of their neighbourhood when they are in their houses, for others it is about air raid warnings and listening to the sirens. Some would say that it is about a power outage and a blackout they have experienced

in the autumn and winter of 2022/23. At the same time, the sense of belonging to the war refers to the suffering caused by the war, about personal physical losses of loved ones, about a large number of very painful emotional experiences that affected everyone to a very different extent.

Moreover, the sense of belonging to war is always a dynamic process, constantly transforming, depending on the surrounding context (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 199). Accordingly, at different moments of the war, Ukrainians feel belonging in very different ways. At the same time, they expect to encounter similar emotions in other Ukrainians who have undergone a similar transformation over time. For example, the pain the Mariupol residents experienced at the beginning of the full-scale invasion had different emotional colours and contextual shades than the pain experienced by Mariupol residents who remain in the city today. The war of February 2022, the war of November 2022, and the war of February 2023 are completely different experiences of war for Ukrainians that create distinct senses of belonging in very different ways.

The migration and refugee scholar Nira Yuval-Davis speaks of the *politics of belonging* that begins where “in/out” opposites come into play, and the establishment of boundaries between them (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 204). And here an important question arises: are there any “insiders” and “outsiders” within the global community of Ukrainians who feel belonging to the war? How to describe the attributes of belonging and who has the right to set these criteria? What experience of war is common for Ukrainians and make them feel the sense of belonging to war?

There are a lot of questions in the air that can separate Ukrainians when they try to define the “true” war experience. Are those who left Ukraine because of the war “insiders” or “outsiders”? Do they still share the experience of war when they are abroad? Have Ukrainian men the right to feel a sense of belonging to war without by taking up arms to defend their country? Are those who have not lost loved ones true “insiders”? Are those who have not lost their homes true “insiders”? I can ask myself questions like this endlessly.

I see this struggle to define what belonging is and who is entitled to belong to the war in Ukraine as the politics of belonging. Regarding the everyday context of war, the specific social conditions and particular narratives of identity constitute the background of a politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 205). Belonging is constructed not only by experience, but also by different media, as well as by a multitude of local contexts. At the same time, this sense of belonging itself constructs and modifies identities. I see it as a two-way process. Russian-speaking Ukrainians who are now consciously abandoning the Russian language are a prime example. Their identity is being modified by their sense of belonging to the war, and at the same time, their sense of belonging to the war begins to absorb the practice of abandoning the Russian language.

The feeling of belonging is not just an internal emotion. People clearly articulate and demonstrate their belonging to the war both verbally and visually. In fact, refusing to speak Russian is one of the verbal ways of demonstrating belonging. Belonging to the war is also revealed in experiencing and expressing hatred towards Russians

and using obscene language against them. These practices have become normalised over the past year, even among those Ukrainians for whom obscene vocabulary in everyday communication would have previously been unacceptable. The language of belonging immediately helps them to see “friends” and “foes.” In the first months of the full-scale war, “we” asked each other constantly “how are you?” and were sincerely surprised when foreigners we knew asked “are you safe?” After all, since February 2022, it has become obvious to everyone inside the war that there are no safe places in Ukraine, even away from the frontline, and this is also one of the narratives of a sense of belonging.

At the same time, belonging is demonstrated visually both offline and online. It can easily be seen on the streets of any Ukrainian city: people wearing clothes with patriotic prints and symbols (prints with the national symbol of the trident, the blue and yellow colours of the national flag, the words “Ukraine”, “Good evening, we are from Ukraine!”); coffee shops the shops donate the price of a coffee to the Ukrainian Armed Forces; local businesses advertising that they donate part of their profits to the Ukrainian army or posting information about current fundraisers for the military; street musicians singing patriotic songs; and patriotic songs on the radio and on television. All of this creates a certain background belonging that is to be followed and spread. Consumer behaviour also demonstrates a certain belonging; more and more people choose Ukrainian brands, especially those brands that demonstrate support for the Ukrainian army.

Belonging to the war is present in the everyday online life of many Ukrainians. In fact, it is gradually provoking the formation of a new etiquette on social media. When the full-scale invasion began, the content that people shared underwent fundamental changes. For example, everyday life disappeared from Instagram, and the social network turned into reposts of news about Russian crimes and became a way to disseminate information about current fundraisers for the needs of the Ukrainian army or people affected by the war. Photos in beautiful dresses suddenly became inappropriate. Ukrainians who fled the war and went abroad were condemned and despised for showing their new everyday life on Instagram. There was even a practice of creating public posts, for example, about fundraisers, but posting photos from a party or vacation only for a limited number of people to avoid misinterpreting somebody’s belonging. Of course, these rules have also changed over time, and everyday photos in coffee shops or gyms are back now in spring 2023, but revealing somebody’s everyday coffee, meetings with friends or, showing some parties, with no mention of the war at all, is unacceptable from the point of view of the new ethics.

However, the sense of belonging is still about what people have in common, and therefore about not being indifferent to others who are going through similar experiences. The problem is in defining the experience of war that will be common to all Ukrainians. It works on the macro level, where all Ukrainians are citizens who have faced the war, and therefore who belong to the same country. But it does not work at the micro level, where Ukrainians’ everyday life experiences of war are completely different. So, it raises a question: what kind of experience may be regarded as “true”

and confers the right to feel a sense of belonging? And who can set these criteria? It is important to find answers to these questions, because such a sense of belonging is supported by common strong emotions, and thus has a chance to become the basis for strong Ukrainian solidarity in the future.

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THE CULTURAL SPACE OF THE CITY ON THE FRONTIER: KHARKIV DURING DECOMMUNIZATION AND THE WAR

The events of “the Revolution of Dignity” (2013–2014) initiated profound processes in Ukrainian society in terms of rethinking its many identities. Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? These paradigmatic questions arose for a society that had ceased to be Soviet after 1991, before it fully understood what it meant to be Ukrainian. Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, however, made reflecting on such issues more urgent. Central to this reflection is the problem of understanding the cultural and historical heritage that had accreted under the *longue durée* of the Russian Empire’s colonial presence in Ukraine, from the second half of the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, and the USSR’s assumption of similar ambitions of empire here from the 1920s to 1991.

To illustrate the problem of the urgency of identity formation under an existential neo-colonial threat, we focus on Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine, which for a long time held the mythical status of the “capital of Ukraine”. As the capital of Soviet Ukraine, Kharkiv could be described as having been a city of migrants since the early Soviet period. The processes of modernisation in the second half of the nineteenth century, industrialisation in the 1920s and 1930s, and post-war reconstruction and urbanisation in the 1970s and 1980s never ceased to attract new residents. Rural dwellers from the outskirts, engineers and other specialists, military personnel and students all moved to Kharkiv, entering the “melting pot” of historical memory, integrating into its infrastructure and developing it too. This “city on the frontier” received new residents from Left-Bank Ukraine, its South, Donbass, certain regions of Russia and elsewhere, all migrants who brought with them their family stories and memories and found a home and a life there.¹ Many achieved professional success

¹ Left-Bank Ukraine refers to the geographic region on the left bank of the Dnieper river (looking south, following the flow of the river) that corresponds to parts of Northern, Eastern and Southern Ukraine.

and a few found fame in the USSR; all of this was contributing to the city's particular image in this period. The image of a city, of course, depends on one's perspective: Kharkiv had been a frontier fortress in Cossack times; a provincial, industrial and educational centre in the period of Empire; and a mythologised "first capital" in the Soviet period. Moreover, the modern image of this city was continually being formed even over the last decade; this unfinished project has not ceased even now, as the city remains subject to the menace of Russian missile shelling.

In an attempt to confront the competing claims for what kind of Ukraine was possible, several laws were passed in Ukraine between 2014 and 2019 that condemned the crimes of the communist regime and put on the national agenda a need to rethink not only one's own past in the twentieth century, but also the modern representation of this past in the public arena (Rudling, Gilly 2015). These laws came to be known collectively as the "decommunisation laws", and they had their apologists, their sceptics and their critics. The laws prohibited the use of Soviet symbols; the hammer and sickle, the Soviet star, the toponymical usage of names of historical figures who had once held state and party positions, and they expanded access to archival documents from the Soviet era, among other initiatives. The main promoter of these changes in law was the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, the central body of executive power. The Institute's vision of the past has held that the seventy-year history of Ukrainian lands within the USSR has been one of "Soviet occupation", a conclusion that replicates a gradual shift in historical politics to conflate anything "Soviet" with everything "Russian" and, by association, "foreign" and "hostile". This conflation comprised all public symbols, including street names and monuments. Thus what had been Soviet became read as something imposed from outside and against the will of Ukrainians. Such an interpretation, of course, was based on an appeal to the final defeat of the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic in 1921 by the Russian Bolshevik Red Army and the occupation of Western Ukrainian lands (formerly the Polish Eastern Borderlands) in 1939 by the Red Army. The practical manifestations of this tendency to meld the "Soviet" and the "Russian" could be seen in the policy of mass renaming of toponyms in populated areas of Ukraine, the demolition of monuments of Soviet figures, and the erasure or removal of communist symbols from building facades in public spaces. Following on from the eradication of Stalinist monuments from the 1960s (more about that later), for instance, Lenin's turn would come when people sought more examples of this "Soviet imposition" to destroy, all of which generally outlines the features of decommunisation as a process. Within the framework of this policy, then, this so-called "Leninopad" began as a mass demolition of monuments to Vladimir Lenin in Ukrainian cities and towns, one that recalled the 1950s Soviet de-Stalinisation that had brought so many of Lenin's statues to Ukraine to replace Stalin's many memorials. While initially a grassroots movement, instigated by certain people in villages and towns who were enthusiastically destroying monuments, the Leninopad gradually became a (reasonably controlled) top-down process.

THE MONUMENT CANNOT BE PRESERVED/BE DISMANTLED

Monuments to Vladimir I. Lenin had been erected in almost every city of Ukraine in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, and stemmed from changes in the historical policy of the USSR that rolled out a process of de-Stalinising Soviet society in the wake of the Soviet dictator's death. Rejecting the cult of Josef Stalin, Soviet authorities promulgated a new mythos, through the image of Lenin and the saga of "the Great Patriotic War" (1941–1945). It is significant that the initiators of such a commemoration were often representatives in local authorities who were demonstrating party loyalty (Gayday 2018). Such is the drama of history that in the 1990s, at the beginning of Ukraine's independence, that a similar process was undertaken to dismantle these newer monuments to Lenin, mainly in the West of the country at first. Across the disintegrating Soviet bloc, comparable erasures of memorials took place, in the Baltic countries and beyond, spurred on by the Velvet Revolutions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During "the Revolution of Dignity", this process took place in the cities of the Centre, South, and East of Ukraine. This effacement often took on a spontaneous character when public activists decided to dismantle these objects on their own. Such monuments were typically not governed by any city authorities, were not municipal property and were not included in the register of national monuments.

In Kharkiv, a monument to Lenin was located in the centre of the square from 1963–2014, and was the site for several memorial moments in modern Ukrainian history. It is noteworthy that it was only included in the State Register of Immovable Monuments (*Reyestr pam'yatok*) in 2013, while in the city's promotional video for the Euro 2012 Football Championship bid, it was completely erased from the footage. In 2014, too, the area around the monument in Kharkiv became a site of confrontation between "pro-Maidan" and "anti-Maidan" forces. After the demolition of the Lenin monument, a cross was installed on the pedestal in its place, and by 2019, a fountain finally replaced the monument. The practice of "Leninopad", however, was unevenly implemented, as seen, for example, in the continuing presence of the figure of the Soviet apparatchik, Mykola Skrypnyk, in the public space of Kharkiv. Skrypnyk, who belonged to the top party and state leadership of the Ukrainian SSR (and had been the head of the Bolshevik government in Ukraine, and the People's Commissar [Minister] of Education), had pursued the so-called "Ukrainisation" policy during the 1920s and 1930s, and had committed suicide against the background of Stalinist repressions.

The most powerful conflict of memories from 2014 arose around the statue of Georgi Zhukov, the Soviet military figure who became famous as the Soviet "Marshal of Victory". Facing a post-Soviet ideological vacuum in the early 1990s, city elites united the community around the more comprehensible and familiar historical myth of the Great Patriotic War with Zhukov as its figurehead. In particular, the bust of Zhukov was installed in the city's residential area, and the avenue and the metro station were renamed in his honour, while a second bust was also installed in the lobby of the metro station. Against the background of "the Revolution of Dignity"

and decommunisation, there was a reinterpretation of the image of Zhukov from “the Marshal of Victory” to a “bloody executioner who did not value the lives of soldiers” (Salimonovych 2019); the metro station was renamed in 2016, and the bust was covered with a false wall. A group of activists tried several times to dismantle the bust on the avenue and petitioned to rename the avenue in honour of Petro Hrygorenko, a human rights activist and member of the Moscow and Ukrainian Helsinki groups who had advocated for the rights of the Crimean Tatars. However, the city authorities were in no hurry. In the end, after several appeals to the court, Petro Hrygorenko Avenue received its current name. The monument, however, remained until the spring of 2022, until – even subject to the conditions of war – the memorial was dismantled by representatives of the Ukrainian military formation and taken to an unknown destination. Under martial law, the city authorities commented that their position on the incident was that it displayed “inappropriate timing” and left it to the community to decide the monument’s fate after the end of hostilities. Kharkiv’s attempts at rethinking history can thus be characterised as uneven or fluid, as many actors and stakeholders tentatively have probed the limits and requirements of what may or may not be remembered.

Decommunisation Kharkiv-style is also notably prone to “neutralising” Soviet toponyms, where the old name is kept, but with a new meaning invented for it. Shevchenkivskyi district provides an example. There is a lane, these past two hundred years, in the central downtown area called Iarmarochnyi. At one point, around 1850, its name was changed to Monastyrskyi. In the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks renamed it Spartakovskyi, its namesake recalling the *Spartakusbund* – a German league of Marxists. Then in 2016, decommunisation came and the city council chose to ignore the pre-revolutionary toponyms (Iarmarochnyi and Monastyrskyi), finding instead a new namesake for the lane. So it was “renamed” Spartakovskyi, to commemorate Spartacus, a leader in the Third Servile War. Neither the Thracian gladiator nor the German Communist league, however, are in any way connected to Kharkiv. Still, the “decommunisers” were appeased, even though nothing had changed, which goes some way to demonstrating how difficult a “rational” policy of re-remembrance can be. According to Mariya Takhtaulova’s calculations, 268 urban names, seven administrative districts and six metro stations were renamed in the city (Takhtaulova 2017, p. 149). Fundamentally new names of toponyms have also appeared as well, dedicated to the heroes of the social activists who died during “the Revolution of Dignity” in Kyiv in 2014 and known as the Heavenly Hundred. Other toponyms remember Ukrainian soldiers who died during the Anti-Terrorist Operation (now The Joint Forces Operation, military operations in Donbas and Luhansk region against separatists 2014–2019). As a result of the current war, with an increase in the number of fallen defenders of Ukraine, this trend toward renaming is becoming increasingly relevant.

“IS PUSHKIN TO BLAME THAT PUTIN WAS BORN?”

The current full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine has turned the page in the reinterpretation of historical heritage. The processes of decommunisation received a new, more powerful impulse, transforming it into a broader trend – decolonisation understood now as de-Russification. De-Russifying or decolonising Ukrainian local public spaces, in Kharkiv in particular, raises important questions of understanding regarding the origin of the modern citizenry of Ukraine and its cities in the South and East of Ukraine. Such cities as Dnipro, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Odessa, Donetsk, Luhansk, for instance, all developed in line with Russian Imperial policy, from the second half of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century and the rise of the USSR. In fact, the infrastructure and public spaces of these cities were created from scratch precisely within that timeframe. As we have seen, according to some recent interpretations, all Russian imperial and Soviet symbols must be read as foreign, that in fact these Ukrainian cities are without cultural heritage, either because any extant Russian/Soviet public culture suppresses Ukrainian heritage, or because Ukrainian cultural heritage is inescapably wedded, for better or for worse, to this colonial imposition of “high” cultural elements from elsewhere. This ambivalence towards the symbolic artefacts of Russification has opened up a wide arena for discussions about what image, what stable symbolic face, the region and the city of Kharkiv deserve.

What is called “decolonisation”, then, in public discourse, revolves around the erasure of Russian culture and its representatives, in particular the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, the writer Leo Tolstoy, and the writer and playwright Mikhail Bulgakov. However, any tour of Ukrainian cities would, until recently, have yielded a rogues’ gallery of other such Russian “exemplars” lionised in concrete or cast form. Supporters of this direction of “decolonisation” argue that the Russian Empire, and later the USSR, both tried to remake Ukraine in their own image. Monuments to Pushkin were the most common imperial addition to many Ukrainian cities, and were erected not only during the period of the Russian Empire, but also during the Soviet era; Kharkiv was no exception in this.² In 2022, there was a wave of “Pushkinopads” in Ukrainian cities (evoking the former “Leninopads” in character and intent), when proactive figures from civic society and from the city government (Rudenko 2022) sought to remove the many monuments. In Kharkiv, the monument was dismantled by the city’s public services on November 9, 2022. Here we can observe the reaction of the city elite to a powerful public demand; if, in the spring of 2022, they did not pay attention to the egregious bust of Zhukov, saying the problems of urban toponymy were being addressed “at the wrong time”, then later in the autumn, the city leaders themselves initiated the process of dismantling

² The bust of this quintessential Russian poet was installed on Theatre Square in 1904, when, it should be noted, the first attempt to demolish it was made at the same time. Representatives of a nationally-conscious youth group planted explosives, but the explosion only damaged the pedestal slightly.

Pushkin's monument. We do not know whether the opinion of the city leaders has changed, but we can state that public opinion has changed, becoming so powerful that it has become impossible to ignore it. Passionate "battles" for the recoding of urban space continued around Kharkiv's Academic Russian Drama Theatre as well, also named after Pushkin. The council has several times looked for and found various reasons not to change the name, and even when it came to taking a decision, the regional council deputies failed to vote (Kotubey 2022). Kharkiv residents then created a petition addressed to President Volodymyr Zelensky, urging his intervention in the situation and, as a result, on December 24, 2022, this theatre changed its name to "Kharkiv Academic Drama Theatre".

INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

"The Revolution of Dignity", which initiated the process of decommunisation from 2014–2019, raised this issue of how we might distinguish the face and image of a city through (updating) toponyms and monuments. Although such updating was not carried out systematically in Kharkiv, changes in the city space did become noticeable. Implementing a process of renaming, the authorities followed several strategies: to return urban toponymy to pre-Soviet names, i.e. to those names from the time of the Russian Empire; to search for new meanings in old Soviet names (in most cases unsuccessfully, whereupon these objects were renamed anyway); to formulate new names (figures of Soviet science and culture, who were in some way related to Kharkiv); and to include new heroes in the toponymic map of the city, such as heroes of the Heavenly Hundred and servicemen who died in the anti-terrorist operation. After the start of decommunisation and with the beginning of the Russian attack on Ukraine, naming and commemorative practices concerning specifically Ukrainian historical figures who better represent Kharkiv as the core of the Ukrainian national project, began to appear in the city. Powerful examples include a monument to Ivan Sirko and Petro Sahaidachny, seventeenth-century Cossack leaders; murals depicting Taras Shevchenko, a Ukrainian poet, artist, and central figure of the nineteenth-century Ukrainian national revival; and Hryhorii Skovoroda, an eighteenth-century Ukrainian poet and philosopher.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 has further activated Ukrainian society, and in particular the public of Kharkiv, who have raised the issue of how to decolonise the city's urban space. They have queried how, too, to free the city from symbolic connections with Russia, by dismantling, for instance, visible symbols that could be interpreted as Soviet or imperial ciphers. Clearly, war as an extreme experience radicalises society and leave little room for nuance. Under martial law, while real missile attacks destroy the city space and its infrastructure, public opinion is becoming aimed at "demonising" the image of the enemy, to create a "natural" distancing from everything related to the aggressor. This impels us to discuss more explicitly how to read and understand the palimpsest of colonial legacies that have

impacted Ukraine. Is there any rhetorical space for us to ask questions about Soviet cultural heritage as one of the elements in the formation of Ukraine's own mature narrative? Is there a narrative that could correspond to the self-representation of Ukraine as a modern European state, one that understands the role of its complex history as takes its place in the community of contemporary nations?

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A REFLECTION ON VERNACULAR PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINIAN WAR MIGRANTS IN POLAND

July 2022. The Poznań-Przemyśl train on my way to Ukraine. A woman and her son sat next to me. It was easy to recognise where they were coming from and where they were going. Suddenly, the woman struck up a conversation with me. It seemed to be typical small-talk (which I am not a lover of, despite my anthropological interests) with neighbours in a compartment. However, after a few minutes the woman was showing me personal photographs from the gallery of her smartphone. In a few photos, she told me about her destroyed house in a town in southern Ukraine, about her relatives scattered around the world, and about her husband, whom she was going to visit in Ukraine. In that moment, looking at these pictures was unexpected and confusing for me, but I wanted to learn more about her intention to share the experience of war through this medium with a stranger.

Photography has become such a banal social practice that we often do not even realise how much we depend on it. In everyday life, photographs accompany people and interact with them in various ways. In this essay, I will try to reflect on the meaning of vernacular photographs in the context of forced migration caused by the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In line with the posthumanism perspective and the anthropology of things, photographs, both in their material and digital forms, are actors in the social system. Photos can generate strong emotions and change a person's mood or behaviour. Various “registers” of photos (e.g., a passport photo, a wedding portrait on the wall, or a photo on a phone's lock screen) have become commonplace. We interact with photos in different ways: apart from taking them, we view them, store them, send them, buy them, collect them, exchange them, give them as gifts, edit them, delete them, and destroy them. A photo may be considered by many people as an “information source” or just a “visual record,” ignoring the potential of being imbued with agency.

In 2022 I started a pilot anthropological project, with which I am engaged not only as a researcher, but also as a Ukrainian. The main research questions focus on the potential of vernacular photography in the context of forced migration and how photographs, together with other objects, are part of the experience of forced

migration caused by the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. I have conducted ethnographic (unstructured) interviews with Ukrainian women of different ages (20 – 60), who have found shelter in Poznań. In the interviews, research participants emphasised that photographs were among the necessary personal items to locate and bring while under evacuation to a safe place in Ukraine or abroad. First of all, the photos that were close by, “in plain sight”, were put in the emergency suitcases (so-called “bug-out bags”). The extreme conditions created a need to be resolute and fast, so often a few photos quickly taken from the table became almost the only material fragments of the “pre-war” reality. In this context, photographs acquired the meaning of a memory object (Edwards & Hart 2011, p. 333) that documented a period of “normal life”. This type of photograph earns the status of a relic to be passed down to the next generation.

In the everyday life of migrants, photography also plays the role of a mediator in communication with relatives, friends at a distance, and even the deceased. This is due to the association of photography with the image of a person. The perception of the photographic image as a substitute for the person “captured” is an attempt to revive or recreate the human figure to some extent, to establish contact with him or her, to feel that other’s presence. In this context, a photo can serve not only as a manifestation of the living person, but also a symbolic continuation of a private space that was damaged or destroyed as a result of military actions. The photo preserves the image of a well-known and safe place in a before-time, which is so needed in the context of a permanent sense of precarity, a lack of stable accommodation or social life. At the same time, the sentimental component of photographs can have a negative impact on the owner: it can provoke difficult memories, emotions, and lead to re-traumatisation.

Photographs, just like migrants, travel across the borders (Fedyuk 2012, p. 283). Taken out of their original context, photographs receive a “new life”, travel with other objects with which they have not been in contact before, “settle” in the space of temporary homes, and become a mediator in communication with close people. As Susan Sontag has noted, a photograph changes depending on the context in which it is viewed (2017, p. 116). For example, an album of family photos that was rarely viewed before the full-scale invasion can, in the context of forced migration, preserve identity and collective memory. Some of the Ukrainian migrants did not expect to leave their homeland for a long time, so they decided not to take such things as photos with them. Only from a distance did they realise the symbolic value of photos and the risk of losing them forever.

The existence of photographs in extreme conditions is not accidental. Along with other personal items, photographs become witnesses to the criminal acts of Russian imperialism. Furthermore, photography has the status of a mediator between a past and a future life. Being close to their owners, photographs give a sense of connection to a place, family, and society and help preserve identity.

These are only some of the possible roles for photographs in the search for a safe place and ways of adapting to new cultural contexts. Without warning, photographs

have taken on the role of non-human partners that accompany their owners, fostering a strong emotional connection with family, home and homeland. Where human life ends, however, the lives of photographs often end too. In this case, photographs are lost in the ruins of cities and broken human lives. Some of these photographs may exist only in the memory of a person. Conversely, sometimes a photograph is all that remains of a person.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have written this essay had I not met an unknown woman with her son on the train. I am grateful for her honesty and openness. This conversation on the train gave me a lot of reflections and an opportunity to show you which spheres of life Russian imperialism has invaded.

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CHALLENGES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH WITH WAR MIGRANTS FROM UKRAINE

In this short reflection on ethnographic research with forced migrants who arrived in Poland after February 24, 2022, I would like to address some issues that seem crucial to me, an anthropologist, Ukrainian studies specialist and researcher of Ukrainian communities in Poland, including war migrants. These are primarily issues related to research ethics, particularly in the context of difficult research in cooperation with potentially traumatised people who have been positioned by popular discourses as refugees and victims of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition, my reflection concerns the researcher’s involvement and responsibility, the specificity of the situation in which this research is conducted, as well as the problems and challenges involved in archiving and representing research. I will indicate the risks to war migrants that researchers must take into account, such as revictimisation, lack of psychological tools and the burdens of the researcher, and the further life of the constructed ethnographic knowledge, built on the experience of war migrants from Ukraine. I also include some practical advice on designing conversations with war migrants that may be of benefit to those working with vulnerable research associates.¹

Let me start with the term used in relation to my Ukrainian research associates in Poland, “refugee”, and its stereotyping, which deprives people of agency and positions them in power relations, by first clarifying the legal definitions that apply to Ukrainian newcomers in Poland. The most relevant point of reference is the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ratified on July 28, 1951.² Events that confer the right to seek international protection within the terms of the Convention include conflict, violence or “other circumstances seriously disturbing public order”.³ Before February 24, 2022, this was the legal definition of a refugee in force in the

¹ The author would like to thank the editor Keith Egan for his valuable suggestions on earlier version of this article.

² Commonly known as the Geneva Convention or the UNHCR Convention (as the body entrusted with the implementation of the provisions of the Convention).

³ <https://www.unhcr.org/pl/365-plwiadomosci2016uchodzca-czy-migrant-tlumaczymy-roznicze-i-wyjasniamy-ich-sens.html> (accessed: 15.02.2023).

Republic of Poland. However, mere weeks after the outbreak of a new phase of the war, the adoption of the so-called Special Act altered this legal definition significantly. According to the Special Act, a refugee from Ukraine is now considered to be any Ukrainian citizen who came to Poland on February 24th, 2022 or later. This means extending the definition of a *de facto* refugee to all those arriving from Ukraine without the need to formally apply for refugee status within the terms of the Geneva Convention.⁴ However, even before the Act was adopted, the term refugee began to function as a kind of shorthand for Ukrainian citizens arriving in Poland who were being forced to flee by the Russian invasion. On the one hand, “refugees”, used in the colloquial sense, helped to distinguish these arrivals from earlier migrations of Ukrainians to Poland, it also specifically indicated their forced characteristics arising from warfare. However, the unconsidered use of the term became abusive. In practice, only a small number of refugees from Ukraine, especially in the weeks and months following the war, took advantage of the refugee procedure and applied for international protection.⁵ Moreover, in the context of the humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border and ongoing media and political discussions, the term refugee has acquired an evaluative connotation. As some researchers dealing with migration and refugee studies point out (e.g., Allwood 2010; Bragg 2022; Ghorashi 2005; Malkki 1996; Renkens, Rommes & van den Muijsenbergh 2022), the term refugee positions a person as passive, deprived of agency and the ability to act, dependent on institutional actors, on legislative solutions defining their status and on humanitarian aid. The term refugee also imposes a monolithic, homogeneous view of forced migrants, which does not take into account, for example, class issues. Equally it positions them solely as beneficiaries of basic forms of assistance while at the same time reducing their aspirations and agency. War migrants in Poland, however, perceive themselves differently, and in different ways. Some may identify themselves with the term refugee, for instance, but others prefer the term “displaced persons”, or, as many of my research participants said, simply “a person who intends to wait until the war is over”. Therefore, in the context of the arrival of Ukrainian citizens to Poland, the general terms “forced migrant” and “war migrant”, imperfect though they may be, are still much more precise and also less stigmatising than “refugee”.

To a certain extent, researchers follow aid organisations, volunteers, institutions and sponsors who have somehow been taking care of forced migrants and whose contacts preceded any research encounter. It is important, then, to position research goals and interests to ensure the research does not become exploitative, while carefully distinguishing the researcher’s activities from various forms organizational aid. We should be particularly sensitive so as not to place our field collaborators into the victim schema, reproducing power relations, or positioning “refugees” as passive

⁴ I.e. the Act of March 12, 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of this country; Cf. Dz.U. 2022 r., poz. 583.

⁵ <https://udsc.prowly.com/224477-ochrona-miedzynarodowa-w-2022-r-ponad-dwukrotny-wzrost-rozpatrzonej-wnioskow> (accessed: 12.09.2023).

victims needing help. The universalist, homogenising, even orientalising categories of refugee, victim, vulnerable person, or beneficiary of help, all position a person as disempowered. Van den Hoonaard (2018) draws attention to the medical research ethics codes context in which the term and the concept of *vulnerability* refer to the ability of a patient/ research participant to give informed consent to research. There are consequences, too, in a facile application of this term in the social sciences, one which blurs its precision, makes it “fixed and unmovable”. Once labelled vulnerable, a “refugee” may find it difficult to recover their agency before the institutional gaze. Moreover, his/her fluid experience of everyday life is reduced to this immutable category, that lingers as they try to recover the sense of a life more fully lived in a foreign place. Also, it ignores the research participants’ own perspectives on their lives.

What characterises research conducted in cooperation with forced migrants from Ukraine is the simultaneity of the events: the war is on-going. Although some war migrants have been staying in Poland for many months, they are still suspended between their old lives and their new ones, lives which they are trying to tame and settle in a foreign country. In addition, they may be in the war trauma. Even if researchers try to focus on other issues, for instance, those related to how war migrants in Poland are adapting to life there, it is quite likely that conversations will include images of war events and embodied experiences, often of suffering and violence. Most often, the collapse of the known world, a loss of sense of security, predictability of life, acting according to well-known cultural and societal scripts are more pressing than the researcher’s own project in such conversations. These stories do not have to be direct observations or experiences of violence to bear witness to suffering. All this means that we are dealing with an extremely delicate, fragile and abuse-prone accounts.

Since most of the qualitative research conducted since February 24, 2022 in cooperation with war migrants from Ukraine in Poland is based on substantially formalised interviews, including those of a documentary nature, I will focus below on a few issues related to the ethical and methodological challenges of such research.⁶

ENSURING COMFORT, REDUCING RETRAUMATISATION

Researchers should provide as much comfort as possible and create an atmosphere of understanding and trust, acceptance and empathy, as well as clearly present the long-term goal of our research to our research participants. What exactly our research is to be used for must be communicated, whether we are collecting personal testimonies of the wartime experiences of ordinary people or evidence of crimes and legal testimonies of these crimes. Also, we must explain where and what will

⁶ Because of limited space, I only indicate two examples: *24.02.2022, 5 am: Testimonies from the War*, IFiS PAN, <https://swiadectwwojny2022.org/>; *Migranci i migrantki przymusowe z Ukrainy w Krakowie w świetle badań jakościowych* (2022), *Multiculturalism & Migration Observatory*, <https://owim.uek.krakow.pl/index.php/publikacje/> (accessed 17.11.2023).

be published: popular book, newspapers, legal documents, political policy-making, etc., as well as who will read the story.

It is absolutely necessary to invite into our research only such people who have left Ukraine several months previously and who have already received basic psychological support as needed. The assessment of risk and well-being depends on the researcher's skills and relies on accurate self-reporting by potential research participants. It is also a challenge for researchers, because it requires a quasi-therapeutic vigilance. A referral to a psychologist after the meeting may not be enough, because it requires extra effort from the interlocutor, who may nevertheless require therapeutic support during the meeting, not a few days after. Researchers should at least establish some regular channel of trusted communication between a Ukrainian-speaking/Russian-speaking psychologist and researcher to facilitate ethical and sustainable interviews, possibly where after interviews the participants may talk to a psychologist. However, the interlocutor's psychological condition may also change at any time during the meeting. Perhaps an ideal model is the solution proposed by Hasan Hasanović, head of the Oral History Project at the Srebrenica Memorial Center,⁷ a psychotherapist is available in the next room at the project office. This, however, leads to the next question about finding suitable spaces for meetings with war migrants, whether the participant feels the need for the psychologist to be close, or whether a cafe is better or an office space.

Suitable places may be a cafe, an office in a Ukrainian organisation or other aid organisation, a playground (as many of war migrants have children; if there interlocutors' children are nearby, then this should be agreed upon separately), or even a beauty salon. Wherever the research associate feels safe and at ease, any place that they are familiar with can work as a venue to meet. Of course, ethnographers strive to create a bond that distinguishes their fieldwork from one-off interview meetings in quicker qualitative research. In the case of cooperation with war migrants, this requirement should be even more stringent: the need to ensure a kind of intimacy and commitment, which is very difficult to achieve in a single research encounter, even a very intense one. Therefore, it may make sense to deepen informal contacts, spend time with research participants in places they are familiar with, where they feel comfortable, before embarking on a formal interview or a more structured conversation that is guided by the researcher's questions. Also, we need to consider how much time we can give ourselves and the interlocutor. How many meetings do we anticipate? Do we assume we will return to this person in a year, two or three?

Another important solution related to the protection of the research participant against the potentially retraumatising effects of the conversation is the assumption that our interview scenario is not immutable, that it can be modified not only from interview to interview, but also during a single meeting. It is necessary to have

⁷ *Testimonies about the war in Ukraine: How to conduct interview-based research*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYswk0T8yUI&ab_channel=Deutsch-UkrainischeHistorischeKommission (accessed 15.02.2023).

a dynamic, movable research tool that enables us to respond to the interlocutor's story, instead of a highly-structured one. An open-ended and flexible tool would create space for choice for the interlocutors, whether to talk about personal experiences or not. Finally, attention should be paid to the limitations of the voice recorder. The research participant may find it difficult to consent to record.

Each question/topic must be assessed for potential harm to the research participant. We need to consider which questions are for now and which should wait for the next meeting. There is always a risk that asking about aspects of their lives before the changes, including childhood, work and home, may direct the research participant to the most painful areas of their experiences. We should not ask if our interlocutor has lost a loved one, about Ukrainian-Russian relations or plans for the future as these issues seem to be the most painful and acute or difficult to imagine. It is also probable that we will meet someone from eastern Ukraine who has experienced the war since 2014.

Researchers from Ukraine who are active in Poland, have war experience and can build a community of experiences with research participants are to a greater extent situated as insiders. Researchers from Poland will always be outsiders, because they simply cannot establish this community of common, war experiences, even if they have suitable language skills (Ukrainian and/or Russian is indispensable). However, our involvement in aid activities as volunteers may be helpful for establishing rapport. My experience shows that it is much easier for the war migrants to become research participants of someone whom they already know, whom they have trusted, with whom they have regular contact. This does not necessarily mean dependence or a sense of duty, compensation for the care shown. Such experience offers much greater psychological comfort and trust, which are difficult to foster through quick contact, where additionally there may be a relationship of a certain dominance of subject-positions: a "victim-refugee" who is "given a voice" and a researcher who "represents the institution" (although, of course, the care relationship itself does not remain untouched by asymmetry or power relations). It is imperative, then, to build rapport, lasting bonds, trust and comfort in this relationship, even after the end of the interview and to avoid a one-off, formal meeting, during which we "jump" into someone's experience, only to leave that person with open wounds as we "jump out" again.

THE ETHICS OF A NARRATIVE AND THE POSITIONING OF A NARRATOR

Interviewing always carries the risk of rapid, dirty ethnography that exploits the interlocutors and distances us from what is non-verbal and non-declarative, and therefore remains unrecognised during a formalised meeting. After all, we know that many experiences may not be structured in a language. While building their story, the narrators encounter emotions, often facing their own unforeseen reactions. They also perform cognitive work on an ongoing basis, transforming experiences

and emotions into a narrative structure, into a commentary on events, giving a verbal shape to what is an array of emotions. This difficult task additionally requires meeting the expectations of the researcher who comes with questions and whose mere presence gives a frame to the story. But what if the interlocutor has no skills to tell a story smoothly? And what if the entropy of experiences is so pervasive that it cannot be arranged into an orderly narrative? What if the experiences are inexpressible or the interlocutor who cannot uncover a deep sense of him/herself in the presence of the researcher, what if there is no flow between them? The researcher must be prepared that the story will be fractured or fragmented, where the speaker is maybe not ready to tell the story. Additionally, the recorder may be an obstacle to the interview, therefore, the researcher must be prepared to make detailed notes.

When researchers look at a transcript of such an interview, in which the narrative breaks, the story is somehow torn and there are gaps or obscurities. The nascent order that they had hoped for is missing; such a narrative may be disappointing, at least after a while. A way to avoid undermining it may be reading the transcript and listening to the recording at the same time, or just listening to it. Then we can see again what the transcription has flattened and blurred.

Researchers perform a kind of mimicry in the Derridian sense, transforming living people into ghosts, providers of voices, reports or testimonies. After the narration, each transcript is a further decontextualisation of experiences, and the next stage of decontextualisation is archiving. It takes a lot of effort and research reflexivity not to lose the narrator in this multi-stage decontextualisation, so that people's voices are not trivialised. And that the war told would not be trivialised.

RESEARCHER'S INVOLVEMENT

Another issue is how dialogic the interviews are and how deeply the researcher becomes involved. Does s/he just listen? Does s/he react, or share his/her feelings? Are any means taken to disturb the asymmetry between the silent researcher and the research participant's effort? How much of the researcher can be heard in the recording/seen in the transcript? What kind of reactions does s/he allow? Are they verbalised, like the narrator's story, or do they take place at the level of looks, gestures, nods, disbelief expressed when our eyes meet? And is empathy, immanent in such research, visible or audible? The researcher must be active to remain ethical; a researcher must be more than just present, more than just a listener for two, equally ethical, reasons. The first has an internal dimension and is associated with the need to show the researcher's empathic involvement in the story – active listening instead of interrogation. The second can be described as external, and concerns the potential future use of our materials, especially when we are conducting a documentation project. This solution speaks to the researcher's ethical signature, indicating the ethical solutions adopted and included in the recording so that they are “readable” for the listener or reader of the transcript.

FURTHER USE OF NARRATIVES AND THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION

Since the time of Franz Boas, we have known that we rely on culturally produced forms of knowledge, arrange them into structured and recognisable prototypes. In case of projects in cooperation with war migrants from Ukraine, our professional culture may easily become less so by making classifications that are too superficial, too quick and too rigid, even before the research questions are asked, simply by imposing the form and subsequently the way of communicating of it.

If the project is based on recorded narratives, it usually means that language is reduced to transcripts. This will be a serious limitation for the voice of the narrators. Will we be able to see again the woman and her life turned upside down in this transcript? Will we understand what she went through? How many of these experiences and images are inaccessible to us due to the choice of a research tool? A narrative should not become more important than the narrator her/himself. The anonymisation, documentation and generalisation result in silencing *individual* experiences and subjectivity, and limits the possibility of being heard with one's distinctive story. Individual fates disappear in the archive. The form of representation is always epistemologically violent in some way, imposing the categories and tactics of the representer, not the represented. How to show these experiences so as not to flatten them into one polyphony? How to remain humble in the face of experiences and the need to tell stories, in order not to fall into a somewhat violent empiricism and a kind of "phantomisation"? How to preserve the subjectivity of these voices?

We take responsibility for evoking a narrative about someone's suffering. And we have to have an idea of how to handle it as researchers, but also as people responsible for these narratives. We keep releasing them. And now they belong to more than just the narrator. We work with people who have escaped the war that we can only think about and try to represent, while they retain this experience in their heads and in their bodies. The researcher must, therefore, be a listener and learner, not an expert, also in the field of ethics and methodology. The ongoing war that affected war migrants' lives must force ethnographers planning research in cooperation with them to rethink and radically raise the ethical standards in our discipline.

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CHALLENGES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH WITH WAR MIGRANTS
FROM UKRAINE

Key words: war migrants, Ukraine, ethics, ethnographic fieldwork

This short reflection on ethnographic research with forced migrants who arrived in Poland after February 24, 2022, addresses topics that are crucial in designing a research project in cooperation with people who fled from Ukraine. Issues related to research ethics, the situation of difficult research in cooperation with potentially traumatised people, positioned by popular discourses as refugees and victims of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are explored here. In addition, my reflection concerns access to the site, the researcher's involvement and responsibility, the specificity of the research situation, as well as problems and challenges facing their archiving and representation. I indicate research risks such as revictimisation, lack of psychological tools and burdens of the researcher, and the further life of constructed ethnographic knowledge that is built on the experience of war migrants from Ukraine. This reflection text also includes some practical advice on designing conversations with war migrants from Ukraine. In addition to the indicated challenges of ethnographic research in cooperation with forced migrants from Ukraine, the paper contains an appeal for a radical increase in ethical standards in a situation of war and forced migration.

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AQUI ÉA UCRÂNIA! UKRAINE AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF THE OPPRESSED

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the “emergency situation” in which we live is the rule. We must arrive at a concept of history which corresponds to this. Then it will become clear that the task before us is the introduction of a real state of emergency; and our position in the struggle against Fascism will thereby improve (Benjamin 2005 [1940]).

In this short intervention, I touch upon the phenomena of *westplaining*, postcolonial and neo-colonial fantasies, and Central and Eastern European exceptionalism present in the public and academic debates around Ukraine before and after February 24, 2022. The issues at stake are the war of aggression and the existential threat to Ukraine as a nation, and this requires more than amplifying the voices of Ukrainian scholars, experts and social movements in response. To be sure, this amplification has been happening, and any attempt to raise the profile of such voices is needed and deeply appreciated when it occurs. Here I call for setting anthropologies and ethnographies of Ukraine in the wider context of global, egalitarian and engaged knowledge production.

The problems of the hierarchies of knowledge entailed in social and economic inequalities between and within Central and Eastern Europe – and elsewhere – have already been widely discussed (see Buchowski 2012; 2018; Capo 2018; Hrymych 2018; Levitt & Crul 2018). The war in Ukraine, which had been ongoing since 2014 until it became a full-scale invasion in 2022, serves as a catalyst for the analysis of pre-existing socio-political issues *within* and debates *about* the current state and future circumstances of Ukraine. As argued by Agnieszka Halemba and Agata Ładykowska, the war might “contribute to shifting hierarchies of knowledge” (2023, p. 150). However, as the authors also note, despite almost two decades of deliberating on these hierarchies, the voices from the locations under discussion are too-often ignored.

There exists an established tradition among anthropologists in Poland, which dates back to the 1990s, of doing ethnography in Ukraine, and writing and teaching about different Ukrainian cultures and its society. This writing and teaching retain some lingering evidence of (post)colonial attitudes, the scent of exoticisation and

the traces of enduring unequal relations between scholars from the two countries (cf. Buchowski 2012; Buyskykh 2016; Hrymych 2018; Józwiak 2011). At some point, though, this tradition also paves the way for some kind of academic convergence and a bridging between diverse world anthropologies (cf. Buchowski 2019). These inequalities and possible bridges put a burden of responsibility on scholars engaged in Ukrainian studies, especially if they are also active outside the ivory tower of academia.

HIERARCHIES OF KNOWLEDGE AND EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE
IN THE SHADOW OF EMPIRE

In 2009, I participated in a Polish-Ukrainian anthropological conference in Warsaw called *Anthropology of borderlands – Polish-Ukrainian neighbourhood*, where my presentation on the regional specificities of the Ukrainian territory of Transcarpathia was met with criticism from Ukrainian participants. I was urged to treat certain regional issues with caution, as some discourses about “regionalism”, “uniqueness” and “exceptionality” might fuel anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian sentiments, thus putting Ukrainian national integrity in danger. It was followed by informal discussions in a mixed Polish and Ukrainian group, where opinions differed along “national” lines. The Polish side (mostly students) represented what “we Poles” then thought of as a reflexive and critical approach to topics like folklore, tradition and nation-building processes. The Ukrainian side (mostly young academics) represented for us what “we Poles” regarded at that time as old-fashioned empiricism, primordialism and the “naïve” search for “objective truth”. One of “us Poles” jokingly remarked that our Ukrainian colleagues represented “engaged anthropology”, which I eventually accepted myself was actually an accurate description. They represented a cause – the right of Ukrainians to exist as a nation – the defence of which was grounded in anthropology. Unlike the Polish students, who embraced postmodernism and deconstructivism, Ukrainian scholars were more oriented to historical and cultural continuity, and a (national) unity manifested in material and symbolic artefacts. Equally, (and yes, I was aware of this back then) certain inferiority-superiority relationships may also have existed between the Ukrainians and “we” Poles, considering the looming Russian imperial menace.

This is not to say that my colleagues were entirely “right” and I was (or we were), entirely “wrong” about our approaches. I might still not agree with some of my Ukrainian colleagues on certain issues, but I believe they were justified in their sensitivity towards the potential silencing of Ukrainian voices and the delegitimising of the integrity of the state. This sensitivity is a double-edged sword, however, as it gives priority to the nation- and state-building efforts at the expense of ethnic minorities, regional specificities and cultural diversity. To this day, I cannot get rid of the impression that, for the Ukrainian conference participants, *any* mention of regional specifics and cultural diversity was considered a threat to Ukrainian national security, which was why my emphasis on the regional characteristics of Transcarpathia created such a controversy back in 2009.

Such concerns echo in other social sciences and humanities, as a philosopher friend of mine from Ukraine discovered. In 2001 he participated in a series of seminars with philosophers from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. The seminars took place in Kyiv and Crimea, where the initiative had come from Russian academic institutions, as part of an effort to strengthen cooperation between humanities scholars from CIS countries. At the roundtable discussions, the common historical and cultural legacy of Russians, Belarussians and Ukrainians and their respective lands came up. The Russian delegation, however, seemed uninterested in their Ukrainian and Belarussian colleagues' opinions. At one point, a participant from Russia expressed his interest in exploring possible ways to bring parts of Ukraine "back to Russia", to which another philosopher responded "we should tell them that they are Ruthenians" (*nada im skazat' chto oni rus'kiye*).¹ Such a formulation re-presented the imperialist and chauvinist ideology of the so-called *Russkii Mir* (Russian World), which perceives Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians as one people, originating in Rus' (Ruthenia) and inhabiting "Rus(s)ian lands" in an academic setting. This experience has made my friend cautious about making any supposedly "innocent" statement regarding ethnic boundaries, nation-building, languages or dialects; "Russia is waiting with its tanks for these kinds of statements" was his remark.

The above-mentioned anecdotes highlight the difficulties Ukrainian scholars have faced when confronting Russian imperialist propaganda. The events of 2014 and 2022 further show that, in light of the emerging threat from the Russian (neo-)Empire, concerns for Ukrainian national vulnerability have been justified. It is debatable whether the Russian leadership actually needed any rational grounds in order to invade (according to an old Polish proverb, if you want to hit a dog, you will always find a stick). It is more likely, in fact, that these discourses of Ukraine's "culpability" would not exist without the Kremlin's imperialist and revanchist policies. The ignorance of this powerful propaganda that some intellectuals and opinion makers in the "Global West" display is another obstacle one encounters while discussing Ukrainian-related topics at the international level.

Since March 2022, I have taken part in countless discussions with people from all over the world about Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In most cases these were people outside of academia and not involved in Ukrainian issues. All of my interlocutors condemned the Russian aggression, each felt sorry for the Ukrainian losses, and most of them were in favour of Ukrainian defensive efforts. Still, some of them presented opinions that I found either *difficult* to accept or *outright* unacceptable.² I was told that: the war in Ukraine is actually a proxy war between the USA, Russia and China; Ukrainians are pawns in a global game; peace and ceasefire are always

¹ Unlike *russskie* (with double s), the word *rus'ki* (single s and a soft sign) does not refer to Russians and Russia but to the broader and diffuse category of Ruthenians or Rusyns. The use of this concept does not necessarily imply pro-Russian or greater-Russian sentiments but can also be used to stress the supposed community of Russians, Belarussians and Russians as one "family" with common ancestors.

² In order not to create a national differentiation, I do not name the nationalities of the people who expressed these views.

better than war; Ukrainian people should not take part in a war waged by elites and in the interests of elites on both sides; Russia was provoked into invading Ukraine.

Juxtaposing the lived experience of the people of Ukraine with the fantasies of Western commentators, Oksana Dutchak, a Ukrainian sociologist, exposes the limitation and superficiality of such “popular” opinions and the arrogance and ignorance of those who voice them (Dutchak 2022). Importantly though, similar opinions have also been expressed by Western academics and public intellectuals. The choir which repeatedly sings the same old “peace now” and “Russia was provoked” tunes is led by the linguist and political theorist Noam Chomsky and is joined by, among others, economists Yanis Varufakis and Jeffrey Sachs, sociologist and philosopher Jurgen Habermas, and diplomat and political theorist Henry Kissinger (cf. Gorodnichenko et al. 2022; Gorodnichenko 2023; Wężyk 2022). It is notable that these choristers are from such radically different political positions, ranging from anarchism and socialism through liberalism to conservatism.

Among anthropologists, or scholars recognised by the anthropological audience, we find similar views expressed by David Harvey, in his short entry on the *Focaal-blog*, where he blamed “Global Western elites” for the supposed “humiliation” of the Russian leadership, and pointed to NATO’s “eastward expansion” for what he called “recent events in Ukraine” (Harvey 2022). Interventions by Don Kalb (2022) and Chris Hann (2022) provoked emotional reactions among many of my colleagues, too, both in social media and in our conversations. Kalb and Hann, who are both engaged in fieldwork in Central and Eastern Europe and in debates with anthropologists from this region, condemned Russian aggression and declared that they had “understanding” for Ukrainian self-determination. Still, they fell into the trap of tracing CIA plots that were supposedly playing out behind the scenes, and they paid disproportionate attention to the frankly exaggerated problem of the Ukrainian far-right. They also called for acknowledging the Russian “perspective” of the events. In her polemics with Harvey, Elizabeth Cullen Dunn claims that this blame-the-west approach gives a *carte blanche* to Russian expansionism:

The notion that the Russian invasions of Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, and Ukraine again now are defensive actions on the part of Russia is deeply wrongheaded. They are pure aggression. They are first of all aggression towards the peoples and territories forcibly incorporated into the Russian Empire in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. As the experience of Chechnya shows, Russia is willing to utterly destroy places and people that seek to leave the empire (Dunn 2022).

In a similar manner, Derek Hall criticises Harvey’s West-centric approach and his lack of sensitivity towards relations of dependency and oppression in this part of the world:

The possibility that the liberated states might have desperately wanted, and might now want more than ever, to be protected from the re-imposition of a Russian imperialism from which they have suffered grievously in the past is not raised. [...] The goals, aspirations, initiatives and fears of

Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, and many other countries are ignored in favour of a narrative in which all agency is attributed to “the US and the West” (Hall 2022, np).

In the anthropological milieu, these Harvey-esque voices seem rather an exception than a rule. They nevertheless require a counter-narrative, one which can also serve as a contribution to public debate about Ukraine in the context of global inequalities and injustices.

INJUSTICE, EXPLOITATION AND THE COMMUNITY OF THOSE WHO RESIST

In March 2022, Andrii Sadovyi, the mayor of Lviv, publicly suggested seizing the London properties of Russian oligarchs in order to convert them into reception centres and living spaces for Ukrainian refugees (Harding 2022). In May 2022, a group of activists occupied the Zattere art gallery in Venice belonging to Leonid Mikhelson, the CEO of Novatek gas corporation, a Russian oligarch and patron of the arts (Global Project 2022). The campaigners pointed to the patron's close links to Putin and the hypocrisy of “Western/democratic” elites doing business with Russian companies, which in fact delivered more money to Russia, in their payments for fossil fuels, than to Ukraine in humanitarian and military support. In an accompanying statement they released, the campaigners situated their occupation of the gallery within a context of the Russian war against Ukraine. They also invoked a global context of wars, various imperialisms and exploitations involving Russia, the Unites States, other powerful governments and other international, non-state actors:

Since the invasion of Ukraine, EU countries have paid around \$35 billion to the Russian Federation for oil and gas, their spending to militarily support for Kyiv amounts to €1 billion [...] The use of art and so-called philanthropic foundations are a powerful means to cleanse the reputation of those who owe their wealth to exploitation and devastation³ (Global Project 2022).

This identification of Ukraine as an entity subjected to violence and Ukrainians as fighting against an oppressor could also be seen in late May 2022 in the district of Carapicuíba, São Paulo. A friend of mine who an activist and union organiser from Brazil sent me a picture of a group of tenants protesting their eviction. One of their slogans, visible on the façade, was “Aqui éa Ucrânia!” – “Ukraine is here!”. The tenants were comparing their situation – of being under attack by the oppressive force of the Brazilian police – with that of Ukrainians being under attack by an oppressive and violent arm of the Russian war machine, with both powers acting out of greed

³ Automatic translation from Italian with the use of Deepl. The original text reads: *Dall'invasione dell' Ucraina, i Paesi dell'UE hanno pagato circa 35 miliardi di dollari alla federazione russa per petrolio e gas, la spesa europea per sostenere militarmente Kiev ammonta a 1 miliardo di euro [...] L'utilizzo dell'arte e di fondazioni cosiddette filantropiche sono un mezzo fortissimo per pulire la reputazione di quanti devono la propria ricchezza allo sfruttamento e alla devastazione. Artwashing, cultural washing: nomi diversi per una pratica assai diffusa, invasiva e dannosa.*

and lust for power. “It is a kind of solidarity among the oppressed,” I was told. One might doubt if a comparison between being evicted by the police and being bombed by missiles is legitimate but it is the historical and systemic exclusion, submission, violence and the continuous struggle for justice and dignity, not the scale of suffering, that is being weighed in such a juxtaposition. It resonates with Ukrainian economist Zakhar Popovych’s thinking that Palestinians and Syrians tend to have a better understanding of Ukraine than Western Europeans (Popovich 2023).

In the end, Sadovyi’s plea has never been seriously considered by the London boroughs or the British government. Equally, the occupation in Venice lasted only a few hours. Nevertheless such symbolic statements provide critical lenses through which anthropologists (and anyone else interested in Ukrainian issues) can look at Ukraine: its statehood, its society, colonisation, war and various intersecting inequalities at national and international levels that are part of public research and debate. These lenses see the people of Ukraine and their struggles as, respectively, agents and contexts of resistance from the perspective of the global oppressed and dispossessed.

WESTPLAINING VS GLOBAL RESISTANCE

It is difficult to trace the exact origin of the concept of *westplaining*, but Srdjan Garčević, a Serbian writer and traveller, is usually credited with coining the term in his 2017 article “Westplaining the Balkans” (Garčević 2017). Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the concept became increasingly prominent in debates and was adopted in anglophone opinion journalism and online forums worldwide. The term points to the privileged position of those from the West who express their opinions and make their claims, and confer a certain inferiority to Central and Eastern European actors. These Central and Eastern Europeans are then understood to be unable to judge their own situation properly, as they are seen to lack the basic knowledge of their own countries and regions and of geopolitical realities. *Westplaining* as a practice thus often refers to a Global Western commentariat that ignores voices from less-privileged parts of the globe (Brom 2022; Smoleński, Dutkiewicz 2022). It also means perceiving the whole world through the prism of a stable paradigm of “the West”, thus “explaining” not only *by* but also *through* the West. The latter can be seen, for example, in how the USA and NATO are being blamed for the war waged against Ukraine by Russia, so that only Western institutions retain agency (Artiukh 2022). In both cases, we can speak of West-centrism and forbidding people (whole populations!) from debate and decisions about their fate, from even expressing themselves. Perceiving Ukrainian resistance through the lens of global struggles of the oppressed, exploited and disposed allows us to counter this kind of geopolitical – or civilizational – narrative. It is also helpful in avoiding the traps of idealising the supposed war between “Western values” and “Eastern barbarianism”.

Seen through the lens of resistance against centuries-long oppression, Ukraine appears neither in the “East”, nor in the “West” and not even in the “Centre”. As

expressed in the graffito on the walls of an evicted house in the outskirts of São Paulo, “Ukraine is here”: among activists, housing initiatives and other social justice movements; among colonised peoples fighting for their self-determination; and among those who oppose racism, apartheid and other forms of structural violence. This is not to claim that there is no injustice within Ukrainian society or that there is no racism in Ukraine. In many cases, the same people resisting Russian invasion also fight against social inequalities, corruption, racism and queer-phobia in modern Ukraine. Among academics, the war has triggered discussions about prevailing West-centrism, blame-the-West approaches and the agency of the people of Central and Eastern Europe. On the ground in Ukraine, Russia’s full-scale aggression has been met by a multitude of social mobilisations in support of civilians and the army alike. Among soldiers in the trenches and activists providing different kinds of help, we find the unemployed, farm workers, industrial workers, returning migrants, trade-union members, feminists, LGBTQ+ people, Roma people, anarchists, socialists and international volunteers of different backgrounds.⁴ As well as calling for dismantling the global hierarchies of knowledge, this situation calls for putting participatory and justice-seeking anthropology in its place. *And – to quote Walter Benjamin – our position in the struggle against Fascism will thereby improve.*⁵

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Fabio Bosco, Dmytro Kobrynskyi and Monica Tiengo for providing me with crucial contextual knowledge for my argument. Comments on early versions of this paper suggested by Joanna Mroczkowska and Łukasz Smyrski helped me clarify the argument too. And so did those at a later stage by Keith Egan. Above all, the article would have not seen daylight without inspiring conversations with dozens of people – their acknowledgements would have been longer than the article.

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⁴ The three international fighters, Cooper Andrews (a Black American activist), Dmitry Petrov (a Russian anthropologist with anarchist convictions) and Finbar Cafferkey (an Irish socialist), who fought in the same military unit and who were killed in the same battle in Bakhmut, are symbols of global resistance in Ukraine. What places this emancipatory struggle in the context of contradictions, unlikely alliances and possible convergences in the time of war is the fact that the military unit they served in was run by the conservative-orthodox “Brotherhood” group (cf. Filiu 2023).

⁵ Writing about the “struggle against fascism” in 1940, Benjamin was clearly referring to German National Socialism in the opening months of WWII, as well as Italian fascism. The word “fascism” is often abused in public debate but there are also justified claims to think of the Russian Federation AD 2023 as either a fascist or quasi-fascist state (cf. Budraitskis 2022).

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“JUST ORTHODOX”.
BELONGING TO A TRADITION BUT NOT TO A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Review of:

Catherine Wanner, *Everyday Religiosity and the Politics of Belonging in Ukraine*.
Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2022.

Every scholar of religion chooses between two options: to describe people, their beliefs and practices in their own words, visions, and explanations, or to re-describe them using the concepts of social sciences and humanities. Traditionally, social and cultural anthropology tries to combine both approaches, starting from emic self-description and ending with etic interpretation from the point of view of various social theories. This book by Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at the Pennsylvania State University, Catherine Wanner, links emic and etic approaches.

As a Ukrainian scholar, I look at Wanner’s book as an “insider” looking at an “outsider’s” research. My attitude to this situation is that scholars should not seek the insider’s approval. Furthermore, an outsider’s perspective can be helpful for insiders, as it proposes explanations of the facts that are usually never questioned by insiders. In my case, I myself do not identify as “Just Orthodox”, as do those who are the focus of Wanner’s research. As a Ukrainian scholar, I am curious about the new perspective that scholars such as Catherine Wanner can offer.

Two issues are crucial in the book: the correlations between everyday religious practices and Church institutions that try to regulate and promote them (p. 7); and how Ukrainian society may be “simultaneously increasingly religious and enduringly secular” (p. 21). Studying the Just Orthodox (*prostō Pravoslavni*) helps to explain these problems because they are involved in religious practices while not belonging to any ecclesial institution. They demonstrate religiosity but are removed from Church influence. In the Ukrainian case, the Just Orthodox are a notable group of believers (8.4% according to the last sociological survey of the Razumkov Center, 2023) who identify themselves with a particular religious tradition (Orthodox Christianity) but do not belong to a particular Church or religious community. One of

their main features is the refusal to identify themselves with the two main churches of Ukraine: the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (24.7% and 13.3% of Ukrainians identify themselves with these Churches, respectively, in 2021). The latter Church was part of the Russian Orthodox Church, but it declared independence from the Moscow Patriarchate in May 2022. Nevertheless, the Church's current status is unclear, and many people, e.g., experts in religious issues, think that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is still part of the Russian Orthodox Church. Identifying oneself with one of the Orthodox churches is often not so much a religious but a political act; people would like to show their support to a certain church, just as they might support a certain political party. To be "Just Orthodox" means to refuse rivalry between the Churches. This is one of the options of being *spiritual but not religious* or manifesting *believing without belonging*. These people often practise vernacular religiosity and belong to a tradition but not an institution. When the author first mentions Just Orthodox in the Introduction, she compares them to the "Nones", as American sociologists call people who are not affiliated with a particular religious institution. Interestingly, when I first heard about the "Nones" during my stay in the USA, I associated them with the Ukrainian Just Orthodox!

Wanner describes several religious practices that are widespread not only among Just Orthodox Ukrainians but among the adherents of both Orthodox Churches. I must say, even as a professional scholar of Ukrainian religion myself, I found the book informative. This is the strength of the outsider approach, to start from seemingly trivial facts that lead, through studying them deeper and deeper over a long period, to finding something new, unknown, or unrecognised, even to expert insiders.

At the centre of Wanner's book is an event known as the Revolution of Dignity or the Maidan (2013–2014) and what happened after it, namely the war with Russia that started in 2014. The author focuses on the religious dimensions: rituals and commemorating practices. One of the things that caught my eye is the repetition of the now-dominant narrative in Ukraine about the Maidan and the granting of a *tomos* for the Orthodox Church in 2019, the document officially granting the independent status of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine from the Constantinople Patriarchate. This recognition had been seen by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, as the final step toward the full independence of Ukraine. As such the idea that an independent Ukraine should have an independent Church only came into being in the 1990s.

I expected greater balance in interpreting popular understandings of such events in the book, however, some attempt to represent alternative points of view. For instance, according to sociological surveys from that time, the Maidan was supported by approximately 50% of Ukraine's citizens,¹ which means that the other half of

¹ There were at least four sociological surveys on the issue, conducted at different times, for instance: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%84%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD#%D0%A1%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F_%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F

Ukrainians had a different opinion. What were the attitudes of the Just orthodox? In Wanner's book, we can read about the Just Orthodox who supported the Maidan but not about those who were against it. That lacuna moves me to ask: How do we select people to interview or observe? Who do these insiders represent? Although the reader will not find the author speculating on this problem, there are other issues that she reflects on, like the weaponisation of religion, the integration of religion into everyday life, the affective atmosphere of religiosity, etc.

In the book, a reader will find some historical flashbacks to Soviet times and comparisons between Ukraine and Russia. The latter has not been popular for decades in Ukraine, but Wanner demonstrates that it can still be productive to make some comparisons because findings of similarities and differences in behaviour and beliefs can lead us to understand them better. I am glad that Western readers now have Catherine Wanner's book as a good source for explaining crucial aspects of religious and political life in Ukraine. It shows us how to combine fieldwork with theoretical interpretation and be attentive to factual details and the use of concepts. As such, it is an excellent example of a qualitative study of Ukrainians' spiritual lives and vernacular religiosity.

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Review of:

Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski, *Ukraińskie Rewolucje [Eng. Ukrainian Revolutions]*, Instytut Wydawniczy Książka i Prasa, Warsaw 2022.

According to the cover description, this book provides the basis for a broader discussion about the different faces of Russian imperialism and the nation-building processes within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. These processes tend to intersect with class struggles and social revolutions, and Ukraine is no exception in this regard. As stated in the introduction, “Russian imperialism, two key episodes of Ukrainian revolution in 1917 and following years [...] and the Revolution of Dignity and the oligarchic counterrevolution in Donbas in 2014 – this is what this book is about” (p. 21). Focusing on the said period, the Author does not avoid the longer historical context and refers to the history of the Cossackdom and Zaporizhska Sich. The book is divided into eight chapters, two of which (“Russian imperialism” and “The conquest of Ukraine against the background of the history of Russian imperialism”) are, as one can surmise from their titles, devoted to Russian imperialism (in its different political forms), territorial conquests, suppression of national sentiments of the conquered and colonized peoples, and the national-liberation struggles. The following two chapters (“Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian revolution. March 1917 – March 1918” and “Bolsheviks in Ukraine. The catastrophic year of 1919”) describe the turbulent years of (post-) 1917 revolutions in Russia and the revolutionary processes in Ukraine. Three chapters (“Maidan, the spring of the peoples reached Europe”, “Russian white guards in Donbas”, “Donbas’ oligarchic rebellion”) are devoted to the 2013/2014 Revolution of Dignity, the occupation of Crimea and the war in Donbas.

The author, Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski, somewhat an anthropological outsider, independent researcher and essayist. He was active in the Polish ethnological milieu in the late 1960s and 1970s, and his name is more associated with the early “Solidarność” movement in Poland, of which he was an active member in the early 1980s. Kowalewski’s interest in the Ukrainian national-liberation movement also dates back to the 1980s and until this publication, his studies on Ukrainian issues have tended to appear in hard-to-reach journals and conference volumes. Some of his more recent essays about the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas, however, have appeared in the Polish edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* monthly

(and are republished online). Author's intellectual and political autobiography is reflected upon in the last chapter ("A long journey with Russian imperialism in my backpack"), which presents the a his memories from his life in Poland in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, his travels to Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, emigration to France in the 1980s and his "discovery" of Ukrainian issues having emigrated. He also positions Ukraine with the anti-colonial resistance of 1950s Cuba and Vietnam in the 1950s to 1970s.

The first four chapters present an excellent historical study with characteristics of the political essay. Between 1917 and 1920, Ukraine (particularly its Central and Southern regions, with respect to its contemporary borders) faced a multitude of radical peasants' and workers' protests resulting in the establishment of peasant, workers' and soldiers' councils. It was a period of verbal, written and armed clashes between different political currents, whose leaders often failed to keep up with the course of events and their grassroots dynamics. Towns and villages passed from hand to hand, and fragile, short-lasting alliances were made. Everyone made mistake after mistake, most were objectively on the same side – the side of social revolution and national self-determination. For complex reasons, they were unable or unwilling to come to an agreement.

The author skilfully guides the reader through the hodgepodge of the politics of the Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian socialist-revolutionaries (Ukrainian Party of Socialists-Revolutionaries), social-democrats (Ukrainian Social-democratic Workers Party), anarchists, nationalist-statists (who were willing to support anyone, including the Communists, on the road to the creation of a Ukrainian state), and the Petlurovists. The establishment of the Ukrainian Communist Party (UCP or UKP) (formed out of the factions of the social-democratic and socialist-revolutionary parties) appears crucial to the author's reasoning, as he tracks the independence of the UCP from the Ukrainian Bolsheviks and Moscow, and the significant differences among the Bolsheviks themselves regarding their perception of the national and language questions and the degree of de/centralization of the nascent socialist state. Kowalewski's historical narrative is built on secondary but hard-to-reach sources published in Ukraine or in the Ukrainian language abroad – be it 1920s and 1930s Austria and Czechoslovakia or Canada after the second world war. This part of the book thus presents a well-researched and well-grounded exploration of the period in question.

In contrast, chapters 5-8, dealing with contemporary Ukraine, can be characterised more as political essays and journalism than academic research but are nevertheless worth reading. Readers interested in Ukrainian issues or those living in or originating from Ukraine, will find nothing factually new here. However, Kowalewski's perspective on the events between 2014–2022 are refreshing and thought-provoking. Here, the author places the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity in the context of the events of the Arab Spring in 2010–2012 and points to the fact that Maidan was the first in many years case of European governments being overthrown by protesters. Interestingly, and perhaps debatably, he treats the events of 2014 as a "final" stage of the long process of Ukrainian nation-building, which he dates back to the 17th century.

Unsurprisingly, the war in Donbas is presented as a consequence of interference from the Russian state-security apparatus in concert with certain Russian and Ukrainian business lobbies, “Great Russian” chauvinists and the direct involvement of the Russian army. Kowalewski leaves his readers with no doubt about the authoritarian and anti-social nature of the so-called “uprising in Donbas” and its “peoples’ republics”.

I am somewhat disappointed with a sudden “jump” from 1920 straight to 2014. While the book is about the revolutions and not about the history of Ukraine, the lack of attention to the processes of “sovietisation” (in its various meanings) and resistance to it, the further history of Ukrainian left-wing opposition in the USSR, the post-WWII workers’ protests (e.g. in Krivyi Rih in 1963), leaves the reader somewhat unfulfilled. Neither is one convinced by the author’s overlooking the processes taking place in the Habsburg Empire (Galicia, Bukovyna, Transcarpathia) or after its collapse, in the Second Polish Republic. He focusses exclusively on what is now Central, Southern and Eastern Ukraine, which results in an elision of Western Ukraine from his analysis. The processes observed in Galicia (before and after the First World War), and the Ukrainian nationalism which emerged there, had their historical momentum in the 1940s and 1950s national-liberation struggle against the Russian/Soviet/Stalinist imperialism by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). These processes were focused in Western Ukraine but were also largely informed by the developments in the country’s East and South (which contemporary commentators seem to forget). Kowalewski is the author of several, quite innovative studies of the evolution of Ukrainian nationalist thought, the split within Ukrainian insurgents and the activity of Petro “Poltava” Fedun (1919–1951), whose name is often associated with the left wing of the UPA and Ukrainian Nationalists Organisation (OUN). While rejecting socialism and communism, Fedun and his faction advocated for the classless society and cooperation with other nations oppressed by the Soviet system, including Russia itself. It is a great pity that the contribution this evolution had on Ukrainian history was not reflected upon in *Ukrainian Revolutions*. One can only hope for future publications on this topic.

Not being a historian, I shall still risk a conclusion that the book retains some historical value as it contributes to the study of nation- and state-building in Ukraine, as well as the turbulent social and political processes of 1917–1920. It speaks convincingly too to the area of Ukrainian studies by acknowledging the different traditions of Ukrainian political thought and attempts to build a state by different leaders throughout history (from Zaporizhska Sich to present-day Ukraine). Kowalewski presents some doubtless cultural gains of the 1920s, in the framework of the Soviet *korenizatsiia* policy: Soviet Ukraine as an entity that was possible, despite Moscow leadership and not thanks to it. He points to the lack of consistency of the Bolsheviks towards the national issues as already present in the pre-revolutionary period, “Bolsheviks were the Russian party – the party of the ruling nation’s workers’ movement – to the extent that they did not understand the questions of the nations suppressed by Russia” (p. 13). The author places Kyiv *Centralna Rada* (the Supreme Council) at the core of the Ukrainian national-liberation movement and does a remarkable job

describing its different political currents and related contradictions and antagonisms within and around this political body.

Looking at Ukraine through a revolutionary lenses and locating Ukrainians' struggles among worldwide national-liberation movements and post-colonial state-building efforts undermines modern anti-Ukrainian narratives, such as Ukraine being a "Russian sphere of influence" or the insidious "Ukrainian Nazis persecuting the Russian minority". It also presents an alternative to some of the pro-Ukrainian narratives perceiving current Russia-waged war as a "clash of civilisations" where Ukraine represents the forces of "European values" and "Western civilisation" against the "Eastern", "Asian" and "barbaric" forces of evil. Sympathising with the Ukrainian cause, Kowalewski equally points to the lack of understanding *of* and the lack of interest *in* Ukraine in the "West", which results in the recurring spread of anti-Ukrainian myths.

In the end, this is not conceptually or analytically an anthropological book; it draws much more from history, philosophy and political science than anthropology. Nevertheless, it is absolutely worth reading for anthropologists. The author's autobiographical chapter carries some hint of autoethnography and shows how a long-lasting research agenda intersects with personal experiences and family background. Kowalewski's remarks on the political pseudo-philosophy of Alexander Dugin also criticises the legacy of Lev Gumilov's concept of ethnos, "the biological nature of ethnos with its superethnoses, subethnoses" (p. 8) and the attempts undertaken in Russia to present Gumilov as a founding father of ethnology. It is clear that the concept of "ethnos" still echoes in anthropological studies, not only in Russia but also in other Central and Eastern European countries (including Ukraine). As a whole, the book presents a stimulating account of the long (in the author's own opinion only recently finished) nation-building process and the intersection of the national revolution and the social one. It points to the importance of understanding oppression based on ethno-national belonging and one's mother tongue within the systems of economic and class-based exploitation. It also contributes to the debates around notions of empire and imperialism.

In short, the book is recommended, to be both read and discussed. It also deserves a translation into English (and other languages).

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ZMIANY W KULTURZE RELIGIJNEJ MNIEJSZOŚCI KATOLICKICH
W POLSCE I UKRAINIE

Analiza odmiennych przypadków, szukanie wspólnej płaszczyzny do porównań, badanie podobieństw i różnic stanowi ważną część etnologii i jest nieustającą inspiracją dla antropologii społecznej. W tym nurcie utrzymana jest książka *Katolickie mniejszości wyznaniowe w Polsce i Ukrainie. Studia porównawcze* pod redakcją naukową Magdaleny Zowczak (Warszawa 2021). Publikacja wpisuje się w szerszy kontekst badań z zakresu antropologii religii, prowadzonych na pograniczach religijnych: polsko-ukraińskim oraz rzymsko-grekokatolickim-prawosławnym (Baraniecka-Olszewska 2016; Buyskykh 2016; Halemba 2015; Lubańska red. 2007; Zowczak 1998; 2003; 2015; Zowczak red. 2010).

Książka może być inspiracją do rozważań na temat antropologii religii, zmiany pola zainteresowań w dziedzinie studiów religijnych oraz metodologii etnograficznej. Omawianej publikacji nie traktuję jako autonomicznej pracy dotyczącej współczesnych zjawisk, ale jako część wieloletniego projektu badawczego. Moim celem jest przedstawienie problematyki książki *Katolickie mniejszości...* w szerszym kontekście badań prowadzonych przez redaktorkę tomu w Europie Wschodniej. Na początku artykułu przedstawię teksty prezentowane w tomie, następnie odniosę ich tematykę do wcześniejszych badań Zowczak w Litwie, Białorusi i Ukrainie. Pokażę, jak na przestrzeni ostatnich 30 lat zmieniały się wektory badań nad kulturą religijną na pograniczu. Dzięki takiemu zabiegowi można lepiej dostrzec dynamikę zmian. Na zakończenie odniosę się do współczesnej sytuacji w Ukrainie i jej wpływu na projekty badawcze w przyszłości.

Publikacja jest porównaniem dwóch odmiennych i oddalonych przestrzennie od siebie społeczności: rzymskich katolików na Podolu (wsie Murafa i Klekotyna) oraz grekokatolików na Pomorzu Zachodnim (miasteczko Biały Bór)¹. Wszystko wydaje się różnić obydwie grupy: geografia, status, historia, wyznanie, pochodzenie.

¹ Badania były prowadzone w Murafie i Klekotynie w latach 2012–2014, a w Białym Borze 2015–2016. W skład zespołów badawczych kierowanych przez Magdalenę Zowczak wchodziłi studenci i doktoranci Instytutu Etnologii i Antropologii UW. W Białym Borze do zespołu dołączyła Julia Buyskykh z Kijowa.

Rzymskich katolików w Murafie cechują zachowania wskazujące na ich długie trwanie na Podolu – mają poczucie tutejszości, są przekonani, że mieszkają u siebie, mimo otaczającej większości ludności ukraińskiej wyznania prawosławnego. Grekokatolicy w Białym Borze są mniejszością narodową i wyznaniową, wśród których trudno szukać tego rodzaju identyfikacji z miejscem i przeszłością. Mimo że od deportacji w ramach Akcji Wisła w 1947 r. minęło już 70 lat, Ukraińcy na Pomorzu nadal nie czują się u siebie. Ich tożsamość – mimo dorastania kolejnych pokoleń – jest określona przez niepewność charakterystyczną dla przesiedleńców, pozbawiona zakorzenienia w miejscu zamieszkania. Magdalena Zowczak znajduje wiele płaszczyzn dla porównań sytuacji i postaw członków obydwu wspólnot. Jednym z tematów, w obrębie którego prowadzi szeroko zakrojone studia porównawcze, jest „język symboli tradycji chrześcijańskiej”, stanowiący ważne źródło dyskursu moralnego. Książka, mimo polaryzacji tematów i porównań z różnych obszarów, jest dobrze przemyślanym i skonstruowanym tekstem antropologicznym, uzupełnionym dużą dawką refleksyjnej autoetnografii (rozdziały autorstwa Julii Buyskykh i Tomasza Kośka), która ma bezpośrednie przełożenie na język opisu etnograficznego. Konieczne trzeba podkreślić, że tom jest wynikiem pracy studenckiego zespołu badawczego kierowanego przez redaktorkę tomu w ramach laboratorium etnograficznego². Również wcześniej publikowane prace, do których będę się odwoływał w dalszej części artykułu, opierały się na badaniach kierowanych przez Magdalenę Zowczak.

MURAFI I BIAŁY BÓR –
PORÓWNANIE KULTUR RELIGIJNYCH NA PODOLU I POMORZU ZACHODNIM

Książka *Katolickie mniejszości...* składa się z dwóch części. Część pierwszą, zatytułowaną „Kultura religijna w perspektywie porównawczej”, rozpoczyna wprowadzenie autorstwa Magdaleny Zowczak (s. 13–76). Oprócz szerokiego rysu historycznego, redaktorka naukowa opisuje teren badań etnograficznych w Murafie i Białym Borze, przedstawia inspiracje teoretyczne z zakresu antropologii religii, obszernie omawia cele książki i stawia pytania badawcze. Dotyczą one rozpoznania znaczenia religii w konstruowaniu tożsamości obydwu mniejszości katolickich, pamięci i dziedzictwa, związanymi z nimi formami ekspresji religijnej, roli języka i liturgii, pozycji duchownych i religii w przestrzeni publicznej. Pytania te nabierają szczególnego wydźwięku w czasach, kiedy ideologia narodowa zakładająca homogenizację stanowi ważny aspekt polityki wewnętrznej Polski i Ukrainy (s. 43). Zowczak podkreśla niejednorodność zachowań wiernych, zniuansowane postawy względem liturgii, pozycji księży, kreśli szeroką panoramę zmian instytucjonalnych w Kościele katolickim w Polsce i Ukrainie.

² Jest to przedmiot związany z programem kształcenia studentów w Instytucie Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej UW. W ramach laboratorium studenci przez dwa lata prowadzą badania etnograficzne pod opieką pracownika naukowego, których wyniki są przedstawiane w pracach licencjackich (dawniej laboratoryjnych). Prace studentów należących do zespołów Magdaleny Zowczak ukazywały się drukiem w postaci artykułów w czasopismach naukowych lub jako rozdziały w monografiach tematycznych.

Redaktorka tomu uznała za niezbędne zarysowanie także ogólniejszej perspektywy, charakterystycznej dla religioznawstwa. Z tego względu w rozdziale drugim Elżbieta Przybył-Sadowska zajmuje się „Termin[em] «kultura ludowa» w badaniach religioznawczych w Polsce” (s. 77–94). Autorka śledzi trajektorię tytułowego pojęcia, wskazując na brak religioznawczej metodologii badań. W związku z tym religioznawcy korzystają z metod i teorii zapożyczonych z innych dziedzin, w tym z antropologii. Autorka zapoznaje czytelników z historycznymi kontekstami stosowania pojęcia „kultura religijna” – odnosząc się do Stefana Czarnowskiego (1956), jak również do tych antropologów, którzy pisali o religii rozumianej jako system kulturowy zwrócony ku lokalności (Geertz 2005). Przedstawia również ujęcie Talala Asada (1983), krytykującego koncepcję Geertza.

Kolejny rozdział, Magdaleny Zatorskiej, „Porównanie we współczesnej praktyce antropologicznej” (s. 95–119) traktuje komparację jako ważne narzędzie antropologiczne, które musi zostać sproblematyzowane w wymiarze epistemologicznym. Stanowi metodologiczne uzasadnienie studiów komparatystycznych zawartych w tomie wokół tak zróżnicowanych tematów i odległych obszarów geograficznych. „Praktyka porównawcza, to nie tylko refleksja i metodologia badań, ale także odpowiednio przemyślane i świadome konstruowanie tekstu antropologicznego” (s. 117). Publikacja nie jest zatem zlepkiem przypadkowych wątków (jak to często zdarza się w pracach zbiorowych), ale świadomym prowadzeniem czytelnika przez meandry różnych przejawów kultur religijnych katolików w Polsce i w Ukrainie oraz związanym z tym kontekstów.

Przedstawione powyżej założenia zaaplikował Marcin Skupiński w rozdziale „Religia a tożsamość w postsocjalistycznym pejzażu. Perspektywa porównawcza” (s. 120–151). Autor zajmuje się problematyką religii i wyznania w lokalnych światopoglądach mieszkańców Murafy i Białego Boru. Problem badawczy odnosi do szerszego kontekstu historycznego obydwu grup (mocno różnicującego analizowane przypadki), ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli miejscowych proboszczów, którzy w lokalnych narracjach urastają do roli księży bohaterów (niemal ludowych, o których pisała Zowczak [1991a]). Autor zauważa, że relacje między tożsamością a organizacją religijną w obydwu wspólnotach mają odmienny charakter. Społeczność rzymskich katolików w Murafie nie ma charakteru narodowego, ale eklezjalny. Ukraińcy w Białym Borze w dużym stopniu organizowali wspólnotę mniejszości narodowej wokół Cerkwi Grekokatolickiej – wyznanie jest kluczowe dla ich identyfikacji, zgodnie z nowoczesnymi konstruktami tożsamości narodowej.

Część druga nosi tytuł „Mniejszości wyznaniowe Murafy i Białego Boru. Studia przypadków”. Składają się na nią dwa bloki tekstów – „W ogródku Matki Boskiej Murachowskiej” (s. 153–285) stanowi relację etnograficzną z Podola; „Lud bez ojczyzny. Matko wygnańców nie daj nam zginać!” (s. 287–426) – to opowieść o mniejszości ukraińskiej w Polsce. Tę część książki również rozpoczyna Marcin Skupiński artykułem „Czerez nasze selo iszła Boża Matir. Religia publiczna i zaczarowanie świata we współczesnej Ukrainie (wsie Murafa i Klekotyna, obwód winnicki)” (s. 155–178). Tytułowe zaczarowanie autor odnosi do koncepcji „odczarowania” rzeczywistości

Maxa Webera (1946), według którego nowoczesny sposób myślenia, rozwój nauki oraz racjonalnego kapitalizmu osłabiły znaczenie czynników transcendentnych w życiu ludzi. Skupiński uważa, że Weberowska teza jest problematyczna. Autor, odwołując się do kategorii teodycei Geertza (2005) oraz Michaela Herzfelda (2004), twierdzi, że religia czy „zaczarowanie” świata nie stoi w sprzeczności z myślą racjonalną, dyskursem nowoczesności i „zachodnim postoświeceniowym racjonalizmem (s. 178)” – jest raczej jego komplementarną częścią.

Kwestią języka narodowego i tożsamości w kontekście polityki Kościoła Rzymsko-Katolickiego w Ukrainie zajmuje się Maria Sokołowska w rozdziale „Język a tożsamość. Społeczność katolicka Murafy wobec zmian językowych w kościele” (s. 179–198). Autorka wbrew potocznym stereotypom Polaka-katolika w Ukrainie, zwraca uwagę na bardziej zniuansowany problem złożoności językowej. Uważa, wbrew obiegowym podziałom w obrębie samych mieszkańców Murafy na Polaków i Ruskich (odpowiadających katolikom i prawosławnym), że tożsamość katolicka wcale nie jest jednoznaczna z polską identyfikacją. W ramach refleksyjnego projektu tożsamości pokazuje, że zdecydowana większość murafskich katolików nie uważa się za Polaków. Dużą w tym zasługą polityki kościelnej, która wraz z uzyskaniem niepodległości przez Ukrainę wprowadziła do nabożeństw język ukraiński jako język liturgii. Obecnie tylko najstarsza grupa mieszkańców uważa się za Polaków. Co prawda młodzież uczy się języka polskiego, ale wiąże się to obecnie z użytecznością praktyczną ułatwiającą codzienne życie (np. znajomość języka umożliwia wyjazd na naukę do Polski), a nie liturgią czy modlitwą. Świadomość polskich korzeni w tej części Podola wcale nie przekłada się na poczucie polskiej identyfikacji.

Tę samą tezę dobrze ilustruje artykuł Katarzyny Kaczmarskiej „Narracje na temat Karty Polaka i jej wpływ na tożsamość mieszkańców Murafy” (s. 199–221). W przypadku Podola duża liczba aplikantów ubiegających się o ten dokument wcale nie oznacza dużej liczby ukraińskich Polaków. Choć w założeniu Karta miała pomóc w integracji osobom polskiego pochodzenia z macierzą, w praktyce stanowi dobre narzędzie w lokalnych strategiach działania. Wiele osób ubiega się o ten dokument, ponieważ ułatwia praktyczną stronę wyjazdów ekonomicznych do Polski (np. na tzw. zarobitki). Na marginesie można podkreślić, że tekst Kaczmarskiej pokazuje także, jak rozległa jest przestrzeń między ustawodawcą, kreującym stereotypową wizję Polaka-katolika na wschodzie, a lokalnymi sposobami wykorzystania dokumentu państwowego, wbrew jego założeniom i ideom. Szkoda, że ten wątek nie został bardziej rozwinięty.

Relacje między językiem, tożsamością i liturgią są tematem rozdziału „Odgłosy chaosu – sytuacja muzyki liturgicznej w środowisku murafskich «rzymsko-katolików»”, autorstwa Jana Wawrzyńca Lecha (s. 222–246). Należy podkreślić, że autor ma wykształcenie nie tylko etnologiczne, ale również muzykologiczne, dające innego rodzaju możliwości interpretacyjne muzyki w kościele. Jan Lech próbuje rozplątać niewidoczne dla zewnętrznego obserwatora sieci debaty estetycznej wśród parafialnej wspólnoty Murafy. Pokazuje, jak postawy estetyczne wiernych są skorelowane z szerokimi kategoriami tożsamości narodowej, religii, przestrzeni, ciała i sacrum;

jak „kosmologiczne porządki wyrażane przez postawy estetyczne w Murafie wcale nie dają poczucia bezpieczeństwa i wprowadzają więcej chaosu niż spokoju” (s. 227). Zwraca uwagę, że w konflikt wokół języka liturgicznego uwikłane są przede wszystkim najbardziej wpływowe postaci: ksiądz i organista, wokół których aktywnie tworzą się określone grupy wsparcia. Natomiast ogół wiernych jest raczej świadkiem muzycznego starcia w czasie nabożeństw.

Podolską część książki zamyka artykuł Magdaleny Zatorskiej „Relacje chrześcijańsko-żydowskie w modelu antagonistycznej tolerancji. Od wspólnoty religijnej do wspólnoty pamięci” (s. 247–285). Rozważania wcześniejszych autorów oscylowały wokół osi – Polacy – Ukraińcy – rzymscy katolicy – prawosławni. Zatorska przełamuje ten schemat i wprowadza do rozważań tematykę żydowską. Autorka śledzi trajektorię dwóch różnych przypadków dotyczących współczesnych relacji żydowsko-chrześcijańskich, na przykładzie Szarogrodu i Humania. Analizuje sytuacje konfliktowe w obu lokalizacjach, w których przedmiotem sporu jest dominacja symboli chrześcijańskich: kaplicy kalwaryjskiej zbudowanej na terenie szarogrodzkiego cmentarza żydowskiego oraz krzyża ustawionego obok grobu Nachmana w Humaniu. Rozpatruje oba konflikty z wykorzystaniem kategorii religioobrazów, obejmujących zarówno artefakty, jak i ludzi. Tytułowa antagonistyczna tolerancja opiera się na oporze stosowanym wobec widoczności i dominacji danej grupy religijnej.

Druga część książki opowiada o badaniach etnograficznych wśród społeczności ukraińskiej w Polsce. W rozdziale „Cerkiew Jerzego Nowosielskiego w Białym Borze – recepcja i konteksty kulturowe” Jacek Wajszczak umieścił w centrum swojego zainteresowania świątynię autorstwa tego wybitnego artysty (s. 289–340). Analizuje jej znaczenie w kontekście krajobrazu kulturowego tytułowej miejscowości. Autor śledzi lokalny dyskurs dotyczący wyobrażenia architektury cerkwi grekokatolickiej. Dla pewnej grupy Ukraińców, których można nazwać tradycjonalistami, cerkiew Nowosielskiego – pozbawiona bani i klasycznego wyglądu – jest zbyt nowoczesna i nie sprzyja modlitwemu nastrojowi. Z kolei grupa zwolenników bardziej nowoczesnych form architektonicznych zaufała miejscowemu proboszczowi jeszcze na poziomie akceptacji projektu, otwierając się na postmodernistyczną bryłę i wewnątrz zaprojektowane przez artystę, odbiegające od klasycznych cerkwi. Wajszczak traktuje cerkiew w Białym Borze jako „miejsce praktykowane”, nawiązuje tym samym do koncepcji miejsca i przestrzeni w ujęciu Michela de Certeau (2008).

Kolejny artykuł, „Wspólnoty wyznaniowe jako wspólnoty pamięci: grekokatolicy Białego Boru i prawosławni Włodawy”, autorstwa Julii Buyskykh (s. 341–375) znakomicie wpisuje się w główną ideę książki związaną z metodą porównawczą. Autorka wskazuje na zbliżone konteksty funkcjonowania obydwu grup: obie stanowią mniejszości etniczne i wyznaniowe w Polsce, są nieco zmarginalizowane, znajdują się w „peryferyjnym” obszarze, oddalonym od szeroko rozumianych centrów administracyjnych. Kluczem interpretacyjnym stosowanym przez Buyskykh jest kategoria postpamięci, która okazała się pamięcią drugiego i trzeciego pokolenia, od traumatycznych wydarzeń związanych z przesiedleniami i prześladowaniami ludności ukraińskiej. Obie grupy tworzą wspólnotę pamięci opartą na poczuciu zbiorowej

krzywdy doznanej w przeszłości. Różnią się natomiast sposobami konstruowania tożsamości. W Białym Borze silna jest identyfikacja ukraińska, we Włodawie dominuje tożsamość prawosławna i „tutejsza”. Artykuł jest także ciekawy ze względu na obecność w tekście autoetnografii. Buyskykh potraktowała siebie jako narzędzie badawcze, reprezentując podejście określane mianem refleksyjności zwrotnej (Hastrup 2004). Pokazuje, jakie znaczenie miał w badaniach etnograficznych jej status jako osoby narodowości ukraińskiej z Kijowa oraz w jaki sposób jej narodowość i wyznanie prawosławne wpływało na narracje rozmówców w obydwu społecznościach.

Relacje między religią a kulturą religijną na podobnych obszarach porównuje Urszula Rukat w rozdziale „Rola księży w kształtowaniu kultury religijnej parafii unickich w Kostomłotach i Białym Borze” (s. 376–395). Autorka w centrum swoich zainteresowań umieściła religię przeżywaną związaną z indywidualnymi i zbiorowymi praktykami w obrębie kultur religijnych (Niedźwiedź 2014). Przygląda się obydwu liturgiom, ich oprawom wizualnym i wystrojowi cerkwi. Podkreśla również rolę charyzmatycznych proboszczów obydwu obrządków, mających wpływ zarówno na charakter nabożeństw, jak i stosunek do latynizacji (np. rezygnacja ze stacji drogi krzyżowej w cerkwi zaprojektowanej przez Nowosielskiego). Autorka zauważa, że księża w Kostomłotach starali się kultywować pamięć o męczennikach unickich i bliska im była idea pojednania chrześcijan różnych wyznań, podczas gdy duchowni z Białego Boru w dużym stopniu byli zaangażowani w podtrzymywanie ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej wśród wiernych.

Artykuł Tomasza Kośka „Gdy inny staje się bliskim... Etnologiczne autorefleksje o funkcjonowaniu w grupie ukraińskiej w Białym Borze” (s. 396–426) jest ciekawym przykładem autoetnografii, niewynikającej z prowadzenia badań terenowych. Antropolog przedstawia osobiste doświadczenie „wchodzenia” w społeczność ukraińską, mające jednak inne przesłanki niż badania naukowe. Autor, z polskim habitusem kulturowym, opisuje kolejne swoje pobyty w Białym Borze, które po kilku latach doprowadziły do zawarcia małżeństwa mieszanego. Píše, że jako profesjonalny etnograf nie zawsze był w stanie zawiesić swoją zawodową tożsamość, z drugiej strony udało mu się doświadczyć zażyłości kulturowej praktycznie niedostępnej dla antropologa w sytuacji badań.

W ostatnim rozdziale „«Tutejsi» i przesiedleńcy. Modernizacja kultury religijnej w etnograficznym kolażu” (s. 427–490), mającym charakter podsumowania, Magdalena Zowczak spleta wszystkie wątki i porównuje kultury religijne rzymskich katolików na Podolu oraz grekokatolików w Polsce. Uważa, że „kultura religijna tworzy kontekst dramatu społecznego (transformacji politycznej i gospodarczej) oraz dostarcza mu symboli i wzorów działania” (s. 432). Procesy zachodzące w obydwu grupach antropolożka lokuje między posoborową modernizacją (otwarcie na inne tradycje, podmiotowość jednostki, adaptacja do codziennych warunków życia) a partykularyzmem i zwrotem do przedsoborowej przeszłości. Kluczowe dla transformacji omawianych społeczności są pamięć (a raczej religijny wymiar pamięci) i stosunek do tradycji.

BADANIA KULTUR RELIGIJNYCH W UJĘCIU DIACHRONICZNYM
(LITWA, BIAŁORUŚ, UKRAINA)

Tytułowy termin „kultura religijna” jest jednym z najważniejszych tematów, które Magdalena Zowczak podejmuje od wielu lat, kierując kolejnymi zespołami studenczkimi. Chciałbym teraz przyrzeć się temu pojęciu w szerszym kontekście badań nad religią, prowadzonych przez nią od 1990 r. w Litwie, Białorusi i Ukrainie. Interesuje mnie, jak zmieniały się zakres pojęciowy i semantyka kultury religijnej, ale także jej związek z tożsamością. Zdaję sobie sprawę, że jest to rozległa perspektywa historyczna, nieoczywista dla etnografii. Sądzę jednak, że przedstawienie tak szerokiego zakresu tematycznego i terytorialnego wcześniejszych badań ma duże znaczenie dla percepcji zjawisk opisanych w *Katolickich mniejszościach*.... Daje również możliwość porównywania różnych przypadków, co jest szczególnie przydatne w analizie książki opartej na komparatyście. Diachroniczne ujęcie lepiej pokazuje skalę zmian kontekstów zjawisk o charakterze religijnym na poradzieckich obszarach Europy Wschodniej, nawet jeżeli forma religijna wydaje się pozostawać niezmienną.

Badania były prowadzone przez Zowczak i jej studentów wśród mieszkańców społeczności wiejskich Wileńszczyzny (1991–1993), w okolicach Widz na Białorusi (1996–97) oraz w obwodzie winnickim (Gródek i okolice) w Ukrainie (1998–2000). W przypadku badań litewskich większość rozmówców stanowili rzymskokatolicy Polacy, choć młodzi etnografowie rozmawiali także z Litwinami, przedstawicielami społeczności prawosławnych (Białorusini, *tutejsi*), staroobrzędowcami i muzułmanami (Tatarzy Wileńscy). Badania w okolicach Widz w większym stopniu obejmowały wyznawców prawosławia, mówiących gwarami języka białoruskiego (*po prostemu*), ale również staroobrzędowców oraz katolików (Polacy). Jeszcze inny komponent wyznaniowy reprezentowali bohaterowie badań podolskich końca zeszłego wieku – dominowała tam ludność prawosławna, wśród której znajdowały się wyspy rzymskich katolików pochodzenia polskiego: potomkowie rodzin szlacheckich od dawna zamieszkujących obszar historycznego Podola oraz potomkowie Mazurów, kolonizujących tę część Ukrainy w XIX wieku. Odniesienie wyników badań z Murafy i Klekotyny do wcześniejszych prac pokazuje nie tylko, jak zmieniał się przedmiot badań w obrębie studiów religijnych, ale również jak w warunkach poradzieckich problematyczne stało się określenie „Polak” czy „polska wieś”.

Badania prowadzone w Litwie zaraz po otwarciu granic państwowych (1990/1991) były czymś w rodzaju podróży do nieznanego kraju. Wciąż istniał Związek Radziecki, nieutralony był kształt transformacji ustrojowych, a przede wszystkim niewiele było wiadomo na temat ówczesnej sytuacji religii za naszą wschodnią granicą. Uczestnicy badań rejestrowali stan kultury religijnej, porównując ją z wątkami i zwyczajami religijnymi w Polsce. Nieprzypadkowo podsumowanie rekonesansowego wyjazdu do Wilna i okolicznych wsi zamieszkałych przez mniejszość polską miało charakter raportu (Zowczak 1991b). Opracowanie bardziej przypominało zapis morfologii kultury religijnej niż teoretyczne studia na jej temat. Zowczak zwracała uwagę na słabość instytucjonalną Kościoła Rzymsko-Katolickiego, skutkującą pustką doktrynalną

w postawach polskich mieszkańców Wileńszczyzny (np. nieprzestrzeganie uczestnictwa w niedzielnych mszach), istnienie wielu praktyk przedsoborowych, a także zaskakująco dużą liczbę starych druków i dawnej literatury religijnej. Ważną częścią kultury religijnej badanej społeczności były rozpowszechnione praktyki magiczne (powszechne używanie chleba św. Agaty jako apotropeionu, chroniącego zarówno przed pożarem, jak i celnikami na granicy) i liczne zamowy, obecne w codziennych sytuacjach życiowych mieszkańców Wileńszczyzny. Cechą miejscowej kultury religijnej były pomysłowe reinterpretacje Biblii, kontaminacje różnych wątków oraz wariacje na tematy biblijne (Zowczak 1991b, s. 530 i n.). Obejmowały one zarówno odniesienia do archaicznych wątków wierzeniowych (np. interpretacja grzechu pierworodnego jako pierwszego aktu seksualnego, a nie konsekwencja zjedzenia jabłka z drzewa), jak również zaskakujące wplatanie postaci jednoznacznie kojarzonych z historią ZSRR – Lenina, Chruszczowa czy Gagarina (Zowczak 1991b, s. 543–544; 1993a, s. 94).

Włodzimierz Ilicz niejednokrotnie pojawiał się w wypowiedziach rozmówców w kontekście religijnym. Bynajmniej nie jako zagorzały przeciwnik religii i twórca ateistycznego państwa, ale jako postać kojarzona z cudami. Zowczak przytacza rozmowę z mieszkanką podwileńskiej wsi, która modliła się za Lenina, ponieważ „tylu ludzi się przez niego zmarnowało”. Pewnego razu, idąc do autobusu, znalazła na ulicy „rubel z Leninem. To cud. Do dziś go chowam” (Zowczak 1993a, s. 94). To ciekawy przypadek kontaminacji dwóch odległych światów, które złożyły się rozmówczyni w jedną całość. Modlitwa za Lenina zmaterializowała się w postaci cudu znalezienia monety z wizerunkiem wodza rewolucji. Łączenie Lenina z cudem i modlitwą w lokalnej narracji świadczy o tym, że różne języki nie wykluczają się wzajemnie, ale krzyżują w różnych układach, tworząc nowe jakości.

Sądzę, że dobrze koresponduje z tą egzemplifikacją przykład pochodzący z *Katolickich mniejszości...* z rozdziału dotyczącego modernizacji kultury religijnej i kolażu etnograficznego. Zowczak przytacza zasłyszane w terenie historie na temat proboszcza z Murafy, który w czasach radzieckiego ateizmu zainspirował parafian do publicznego odmawiania modlitw do Lenina. Brali w nich udział głównie emeryci, nieobawiający się represji ze strony aparatu państwowego.

Klęcząc całą grupą wokół pomnika wodza rewolucji odmawiali różaniec, kierując swoje głośne prośby w konkretnych intencjach do „św. Lenina”. A że jego pomniki zdobyły centrum niemal każdej miejscowości, historia ta zrobiła karierę na Podolu, wpisana w dzieje wielu miejsc i opowiadana raz jako anegdota, to znowu jako świadectwo heroicznej walki z komunistyczną władzą (s. 461).

Autorka interpretuje działania ks. Chomickiego jako charakterystyczne dla trickstera, ludowego bohatera, który nie przemocą, ale sprytem potrafił w niebezpiecznych okolicznościach osiągnąć cel. Porównując obydwa przypadki, możemy zauważyć, że w narracji na temat cudu z rublem Lenin stał się postacią apokryficzną związaną z ludową formą religii, łączącej wątki z różnych porządków. W drugim przypadku na pierwszy plan wysuwa się akcja zaplanowana i skutecznie zrealizowana przez proboszcza, mająca na celu wsparcie wspólnoty parafialnej. Oba przykłady dobrze

ilustrują zmiany w podejściu do tematyki religijnej – od analizy treści narracji do taktów oporu wiernych i działania o charakterze instytucjonalnym, jednoczącym daną społeczność rzymskich katolików.

Powyższe przykłady pokazują, jak na przestrzeni lat zmienił się przedmiot badań dotyczących kultury religijnej, a także język antropologicznej analizy. W pierwszym przypadku przedmiotem analizy była miejscowa kosmologia i treść wątków apokryficznych. W drugim modlitwy do Lenina analizowane są już w kategoriach świadomych taktów oporu stosowanych wobec władzy radzieckiej. Zatem ewoluowały z wyobraźni religijnej ujmowanej w kategoriach myślenia symbolicznego w stronę wynajdywania codzienności, logiki zbiorowych praktyk i działań tworzących więzi, a zarazem stanowiących taktyki działania określonej społeczności (zob. de Certeau 2008). Podobnie jak zbiorowe modlitwy przy pomniku Lenina w czasach ZSRR można potraktować bardziej współczesne zachowania z Murafy, polegające na śpiewaniu psalmów przez „stary” chór w języku polskim, mimo intonacji księdza w języku ukraińskim (zob. Lech 2021, s. 231–232), bądź celowym nieodpowiadaniem części wiernych podczas mszy na proklamacje kapłana wygłaszane w języku ukraińskim. Milcząc, konsekwentnie wymuszają na celebransie intonowanie modlitw w języku polskim (Zowczak 2021, s. 468). Takie działanie stanowi taktykę oporu stosowaną przez najstarszą grupę rzymskich katolików opowiadających się za używaniem języka polskiego w liturgii nabożeństw.

Ważnym tematem badawczym, podejmowanym na przestrzeni lat przez Zowczak, były wątki apokryficzne³. Apokryfy stanowiły dobre źródło „do opisu ludowej postaci religii; dostarczając wiedzy na temat duchowej rzeczywistości wspólnoty, wiążą się z pojęciem ojczyzny lokalnej w sferze interpretacji uniwersalnych symboli i wartościowania” (Zowczak 1993a, s. 94). I właśnie sploty różnych wątków biblijnych, apokryficznych i lokalnych historii na Wileńszczyźnie stanowiły przedmiot badań kolejnego zespołu. Liczne narracje dotyczące końca świata, potopu, raju czy kary bożej pozwalały umiejscowić wiedzę religijną pomiędzy mitologią lokalną a Biblią (Zowczak 1993b). Uniwersalne dla chrześcijaństwa wydarzenia biblijne działały w dobrze znanej przestrzeni codzienności: Pan Bóg chodził po okolicznych wioskach, biblijny potop miał miejsce w pobliżu Mejszagoły nad jeziorem Korwie, a wielka woda po potopie zatrzymała się w majątku Głinciszki (Zowczak 1993b, s. 100). Tego rodzaju światopogląd uzupełniały powszechnie stosowane praktyki magiczne i zamowy (Zowczak 1994). Zarówno jedno, jak i drugie mocno wiążą się z lokalną formą katolicyzmu. Rozpowszechniony jest np. zwyczaj składania ofiary pieniężnej Matce Boskiej Ostrobramskiej, aby np. ściągnąć karę na uciążliwego sąsiada (Zowczak 1994, s. 104). Połączenie, a przede wszystkim umiejscowienie wydarzeń z Pisma Świętego w realiach życia wiejskiego w okolicach Wilna, swoboda interpretacyjna historii biblijnych było czymś w rodzaju ludowej teologii (Zowczak 1993b, s. 106).

Wszystkie opisywane aspekty przewijały się konsekwentnie także w późniejszych badaniach, jednak na przestrzeni kolejnych lat zmieniał się ich kontekst. Wpływ na

³ Apokryfy zgromadzone w czasie badań w Litwie i Białorusi stanowiły część podstawy źródłowej książki *Biblia ludowa...* (Zowczak 2000).

to miało odrodzenie religijne związane ze wzmocnieniem instytucji kościelnych, a także większa dostępność technologii informacyjnych, racjonalizujących tego rodzaju poglądy. W badaniach w Litwie w latach 90. XX w. narracje na temat kary bożej dotyczyły w dużym stopniu przeszłości radzieckiej i działań o charakterze antyreligijnym (np. dotyczyła przewodniczącego kołchozu, wydającego nakaz zniszczenia krzyża przydrożnego). W okolicach Braśławia na Białorusi mieszkańcy wsi oczekiwali na bliski koniec świata. Upatrywali zagrożenia w pobliskiej elektrowni jądrowej w Ignalinie (po litewskiej stronie granicy), a poczucie lęku wywoływała nieodległa w czasie katastrofa w Czarnobylu (Zowczak 1998, s. 27). W badaniach w Ukrainie opisywanych w recenzowanej książce kara boska pojawiła się w jeszcze szerszym, zupełnie pozamiejscowym kontekście. W jednej z narracji okazało się, że huragan Katrina w Nowym Orleanie był karą boską dla mieszkańców miasta za zorganizowanie parady homoseksualistów (Skupiński 2021, s. 177). W pierwszym przypadku kara bezpośrednio wiązała się z lokalnym kontekstem życia i wydarzeniem związanym z życiem miejscowej społeczności. W drugim wyszła poza bezpośrednie otoczenie wsi i była wyrazem lęków związanych z obawą przed niedoskonałością radzieckich sztabowych instytucji przemysłowych, ale również doświadczeniem życia w kraju, w którym doszło do radioaktywnego skażenia terenu. W trzecim przypadku kara boska oderwała się od lokalnego kontekstu i za sprawą środków masowego przekazu stała się wyrazem uniwersalnej sprawiedliwości w świecie.

Ciekawe dla omawianej książki jest porównanie niektórych jej wątków z wynikami prac innego zespołu badawczego kierowanego przez Zowczak, prowadzącego badania etnograficzne pod koniec XX wieku w innej części Podola (Smyrski, Zowczak red. 2003). Możliwość zestawienia diachronicznego wyników badań wydaje się szczególnie dobrze obrazować charakter przemian religijnych wśród polskiej społeczności za Zbruczem. Pokazuje, że nie jest możliwy statyczny opis kultury religijnej jako jednolitej kategorii, ogólnego modelu lokalnych postaw względem religii, jak również jednorodnej organizacji kościelnej, bez zróżnicowania polaryzacji postaw. Trudno również wyprowadzać ogólne wnioski dotyczące tożsamości narodowej i jej przenikania się z tożsamością religijną. W odróżnieniu do Murafy i Klekotyny, w Gródku i okolicach w obwodzie chmielnickim tożsamość polska wydawała się dominować wśród rzymskokatolickich obywateli Ukrainy. Była to sytuacja trochę podobna do pozycji grekokatolików w Polsce, gdzie wyznanie unickie określa przynależność do świata symboli narodu ukraińskiego.

Należy dodać, że poczucie wspólnoty narodowej w obwodzie chmielnickim nie było jednorodne; podolska polskość – choć silna – nie była kategorią uniwersalną. Katolicy z Gródka mieli silną identyfikację szlachecką, poczucie wolności, które odróżniało ich od sąsiadów. „Dziś gródecy Polacy przyznają się do tradycji szlacheckiej. Wielu ich przodków pochodziło z okolicznych miejscowości, zamieszkałych przez jednodworców”⁴ (Zowczak 2003, s. 22). Zowczak pokazuje też aktywność tej

⁴ Określenie zdegradowanej po powstaniu listopadowym szlachty herbowej, zachowującej wolność, lecz na poziomie czystszy i podatku zrównanej z chłopami i pozbawionej prawa do posiadania ziemi.

wspólnoty w warunkach niepodległej Ukrainy – np. ulokowanie w Gródku seminarium duchownego⁵, Instytutu Katechetycznego i polskiej szkoły. Z kolei w pobliskich Oleszkowcach korzenie polskość są innego rodzaju. Mieszkańcy wsi deklarowali swoje pochodzenie od Mazurów, chłopskich kolonistów z Mazowsza, przybyłych na ziemię prawobrzeżnej Ukrainy w XIX wieku. Choć stereotyp w dawnej Polsce identyfikował Mazura jako przedstawiciela drobnej, podupadłej szlachty, to „w XIX stuleciu na terenie Ukrainy Mazur oznacza już jednak wyłącznie włościanina-katolika, choć jego charakterystyka wydaje się zawierać cechy podobne” (Zowczak 2003, s. 30). Autorka dodaje, że język polski używany przez Mazurów w modlitwie w dużym stopniu przyczynił się do zachowania przez nich polskiej tożsamości, dzięki czemu możliwe było funkcjonowanie polskich szkółek w czasie I wojny światowej, a w latach 20. XX wieku, w czasie leninowskiej polityki korenizacji utworzenie polskiego samorządu, szkolnictwa i prasy (Zowczak 2003, s. 32).

Niezależnie od rodowodu szlacheckiego bądź włościańskiego podolskich Polaków, Zowczak określała ich także – odrębnym od etnonimu – mianem „wspólnoty cmentarza”. Zarówno w Gródku, jak i w Oleszkowcach w ramach represji zostały zniszczone świątynie rzymskokatolickie. Centrum życia religijnego stały się miejscowe nekropolie. Autorka wspomina nawet o walorach estetycznych zbiorowych modlitw na cmentarzach. Świeckie formy liturgii sprawowane pośród grobów bez udziału kapłanów i zbiorowe modlitwy były czymś w rodzaju teatru w szarych realiach codziennego życia w systemie kołchozowym. Obecnie w obydwu miejscowościach znajdują się świątynie, wokół których skupia się wiele aktywności miejscowych Polaków.

Poszukiwania języka „symbolicznego uniwersum opisywanych wspólnot” (Zowczak 2003, s. 15) skłaniały do tego, żeby użyć kategorii Fernanda Braudela. Nieprzypadkowo Zowczak zatytułowała swoje wprowadzenie do książki „O długim trwaniu Polaków na Podolu. Imponderabilia tożsamości”, nawiązując tym samym do koncepcji wspomnianego historyka. Z badań wynikało, że w obwodzie chmielnickim źródłem polskiej identyfikacji była głównie tradycja religijna, tworząca się wokół języka modlitwy. Istotne było również poczucie odrębności, identyfikacja z polską przeszłością, a raczej jej idealnym obrazem⁶. Przykre, że owe wyobrażone poczucie

⁵ W ostatnim rozdziale *Katolickich mniejszości...* Zowczak wspominała o istotnej zmianie, jaka na przestrzeni lat zaszła w profilu kształcenia młodych księży w seminarium w Gródku. Język polski został zastąpiony językiem ukraińskim, co z widocznym zadowoleniem komentował jeden z miejscowych kapłanów (s. 450).

⁶ Mniej więcej w tym samym czasie (1996–1997), na Polesiu Wołyńskim w pobliżu Żytomierza, na obszarze przedwojennego Polskiego Okręgu Autonomicznego Marchlewszczyzna, postawy wobec polskość i religii były dużo bardziej zniuansowane. O ile wielu mieszkańców miasteczka Dowbysz, a na pewno część z nich deklarowało polskie pochodzenie, a część z tych jasno określała siebie mianem Polaków (nie bez znaczenia była budowa kościoła rzymskokatolickiego w Dowbyszu), o tyle sytuacja w okolicznych wsiach nie była już tak klarowna. Słowo „Polak” dla miejscowych „Polaków” mieszkających w dawnych kołchozach nie niesło oczywistej treści związanej z identyfikacją. Dla ich tożsamości kluczowe było zlanie się narodowości z wyznaniem tworzące wspólną kategorię wyznaniowo-narodowościową. „Polska nacja” często wynikała z przyjęcia chrztu w kościele, podczas gdy tożsamość ukraińska z przyjęcia chrztu w cerkwi prawosławnej. Podstawowymi wyznacznikami były „wiera katolicka” albo „prawosławna”

polskiej wspólnoty często było burzone po wizycie w Polsce, kiedy okazywało się, że nie byli traktowani jak „Polacy”, tylko jak *Ruscy* handlarze przyjeżdżający ze wschodu, gorsza kategoria osób sprowadzona do roli taniej siły roboczej (Zowczak 2003, s. 14–15). Często po takiej wizycie ich związki z wyobrażoną polsnością słabły. Dokładnie odwrotny trend opisała Katarzyna Kaczmarska w kontekście starań o otrzymanie Karty Polaka w Murafie. Osoby niemające polskiej identyfikacji ubiegały się o polski dokument stwierdzający ich polską tożsamość. Kluczowe w tym aspekcie były względy praktyczne – umożliwienie podjęcia legalnej pracy (często właśnie jako tania siła robocza) lub bezpłatnej nauki w Unii Europejskiej, a nie poczucie przynależności do wspólnoty narodowej.

Jak pokazują badania prowadzone w ostatnich trzech dekadach w różnych częściach centralnej Ukrainy (Gut 2003; Lipiński 2003; Zowczak 2003; 2021), współcześnie niemożliwe jest utrzymywanie stereotypowego obrazu polskości jako kategorii stałej, niezmiennej. Prosty schemat, powielany zwłaszcza w środowiskach pravicowych i nacjonalistycznych, utożsamiający rzymskich katolików w różnych częściach Ukrainy z narodowością polską, lekceważy zjawiska, jakie dokonały się w sferze identyfikacji religijnej od uzyskania niepodległości przez ten kraj. W dużym stopniu przyczynili się do tego księża rzymskokatolickiego młodego i średniego pokolenia (często polskiego pochodzenia lub przybyłych z Polski), którzy starali się realizować politykę Watykanu, zmierzającą do tego, żeby język państwa narodowego był zarazem językiem liturgicznym (zob. Gut 2003, s. 231; Lipiński 2003, s. 250–252). Proces ten wskazuje na pogłębiające się podziały w obrębie katolików – najstarsi, siłą rzeczy należący do coraz mniej licznej grupy, określają się jako Polacy i jednoznacznie opowiadają się za językiem polskim w liturgii nabożeństw. Młode i średnie pokolenie często określa się jako rzymscy katolicy narodowości ukraińskiej, pochodzenia polskiego. „Polskość” staje się dla nich wspomnieniem rodzinnym, dalekim echem kraju pochodzenia, a nie źródłem identyfikacji. Przedstawiciele tej grupy rozmawiają i modlą się w języku ukraińskim, identyfikują się jednoznacznie z państwem ukraińskim.

W Litwie w latach 90. XX wieku Zowczak i jej współpracowników interesowały kwestie dotyczące stanu wiedzy religijnej, lokalne interpretacje Biblii, znajomość apokryfów, interpretacje uniwersalnych symboli w poszczególnych społecznościach, myślenie magiczne i jego związki z religijnością, związki sposobów leczenia z modlitwą, połączone magicznym rytuałem (Zowczak 1991b; 1993a). Przedmiotem analiz było określenie tego, w co ludzie wierzą, oraz towarzysząca temu obrzędowość. Gdy zestawi się powyższe pola badań z tematyką recenzowanej książki, wyraźnie widać zmianę podejścia. Badaczy w mniejszym stopniu interesowało zagadnienie przedmiotu wiary i próby jej rekonstrukcji, a bardziej skupiali się na sposobach organizacji wspólnot katolickich i instytucjach religijnych. Na takie rozróżnienie wskazywała wcześniej Agnieszka Halemba (2015) w książce na temat polityki kościelnej i zarządzania kultem Matki Boskiej na ukraińskim Zakarpaciu. W przypadku organizacji religijnych

(Gut 2003, s. 234–235). Przypomina to poziomy identyfikacji na mieszanym katolicko-prawosławnym obszarach zachodniej Białorusi (Engelking 1996; Waszczyńska 1999).

chodzi o strategię stosowane przez Kościół i państwo, w przypadku instytucji przejawia się z kolei kultura religijna. Między nimi zachodzi kolizja. Zowczak w *Katolickich mniejszościach...* dobrze wychwytuje to rozróżnienie na poziomie lokalnym, pokazując, jak strategię Kościoła stoją w sprzeczności z kulturą religijną. Podaje konkretny przykład praktyk eschatologicznych mieszkańców Murafy gromadzących w 2011 roku zapasy świec i konserw na przepowiadany koniec świata (12.12.2012 r.), zestawiając je z krytyką takich postaw, wygłaszanych przez księdza w trakcie kazania na niedzielnej mszy świętej. Jest to nie tylko przykład napięcia w obrębie jednego kościoła narodowego, ale także egemplifikacja szerszego zjawiska starcia dwóch potężnych nurtów w Kościele Rzymsko-Katolickim – tradycjonalizmu i modernizmu, postaw regresyjnych odwołujących się do porządku przedsoborowego i kościoła otwartego na wpływy zewnętrzne i zmieniającego się pod wpływem zmian zachodzących we współczesności.

Trudno zatem mówić o jednym modelu tożsamości wyznania rzymskokatolickiego w Ukrainie. Każdy z przypadków różni się kontekstami i lokalnymi uwarunkowaniami. Otwiera się tutaj szczególnie pole dla metody etnograficznej, wyczulonej na szczegóły i przypadki, uwzględniające towarzyszące im okoliczności. Koreponduje to z propozycją metodologiczną Magdaleny Zatorskiej, żeby rozwijać teorię kontekstu, w której istotną rolę odgrywa metoda porównawcza jako ważne narzędzie antropologiczne. Konteksty są tym, co pozwala antropologom porównywać różne przypadki. Wiąże się to oczywiście z etnografią refleksyjną, w której kluczowa jest osoba antropolożki lub antropologa. Nie ulega bowiem wątpliwości, że we wszystkich omawianych przykładach, dotyczących kwestii polskiej tożsamości i kultury religijnej, ważne role odgrywały osoby badaczy – Polaków z Polski, którzy przez własny filtr postrzegali zjawiska zachodzące w Ukrainie. To stały problem towarzyszący tzw. badaniom wschodnim. Wspominam o tym z tego względu, że siłą rzeczy sposób przedstawiania lokalnych realiów był wywołany obecnością badaczy, co miało znaczenie dla wyników badań, tekstualizacji etnografii, a na końcowym etapie wytwarzania wiedzy.

KATOLICKIE MNIEJSZOŚCI... W KONTEKŚCIE WOJNY W UKRAINIE

Książka pod redakcją Magdaleny Zowczak ukazała się w 2021 roku. Kilka miesięcy później zdarzyło się coś, co trudno było sobie wówczas wyobrazić (mimo trwających od 2014 roku działań wojennych we wschodnich województwach Ukrainy) – nastąpiła otwarta agresja Rosji na państwo ukraińskie i rozpoczęła się pełnowymiarowa wojna. Rodzi to oczywiście pytania etyczne dotyczące statusu badań naukowych i dociekań teoretycznych, polemik w sytuacji tragedii ludzi związanych z wojną. Myślę, że przede wszystkim z tego względu dyskusja nad kwestiami omawianymi w książce uległa pewnemu zawieszeniu. Z drugiej strony narodziły się pytania: jak i czy w ogóle w sytuacji wojennej można dyskutować o tematach naukowych?

Wydarzenia wojenne z pewnością wpłynęły na odbiór książki *Katolickie mniejszości...* Można odnieść wrażenie, że świat opisywany w części ukraińskiej tomu

gwałtownie się skończył i nie ma do niego powrotu. Jest to opis sytuacji sprzed „wielkiego wybuchu”. Z drugiej strony, sytuacja wojny siłą rzeczy rodzi nowe pytania – zarówno w skali mikro, jak i makro. Z książki dowiadujemy się o rozpowszechnionym lokalnym kulcie Matki Boskiej Murafskiej. Czy w czasie wojny kult ten nasilił się, czy zmienił swój charakter? Czy wierni byli świadkami jakiś cudownych wydarzeń związanych z Matką Boską? Czy Matka Boska w szczególny sposób otacza opieką mieszkańców wsi w czasie wojny? Zapewne uwydatniły się także wątki apokaliptyczne czy tematy związane z karą bożą. Nowym zagadnieniem jest sytuacja międzyreligijna na polu instytucjonalnym – np. likwidacja Cerkwi Patriarchatu Moskiewskiego i przejście wiernych do Kijowskiej Cerkwi Autokefalicznej. Większość prawosławnych mieszkańców Klekotyny i Murafy należało właśnie do Cerkwi Patriarchatu Moskiewskiego.

Wojna wpłynęła nie tylko na sytuację religijną w Ukrainie, ale także z pewnością odcisnęła swoje piętno na mniejszości grekokatolickiej w Białym Borze. Na stronach książki wielokrotnie było napisane, że Ukraińcy na Pomorzu identyfikują się z tożsamością ukraińską charakterystyczną dla Ukrainy zachodniej, w której tożsamość wyznania grekokatolickiego jest skorelowana z narodowością. Kilkumilionowa grupa uchodźców wojennych z Ukrainy, z których zdecydowana większość pochodzi z centralnej i wschodniej części kraju, zapewne w jakiś sposób przełożyła się na opinie grekokatolików dotyczące ukraińskiego uniwersum narodowego jako bardziej złożonego i niejednorodnego. Z książki dowiadujemy się o ich dużej niechęci do wyznania prawosławnego. Czy ich opinie na temat prawosławnych Ukraińców złagodniały, czy też może przyczyniły się do jeszcze większej integracji zachodniej „ukraińkości”, opartej na wyznaniu grekokatolickim? To tylko część pytań i potencjalnych problemów badawczych, możliwych do realizacji w przyszłości.

Myślę, że warto zastanowić się nad kolejnymi wspólnymi projektami i możliwościami stworzenia polsko-ukraińskiego zespołu badawczego. W książce *Katolickie mniejszości...* autorzy i autorki otwarci są na różne postawy i problemy, podchodzą krytycznie do dominujących liczebnie większości. Przeciwwstawiają się także współczesnym dyskursom nacjonalistycznym i stereotypom. Jednak wydaje mi, że znaczącą zaletą przyszłych badań byłoby uwzględnienie w większym zakresie ukraińskiego habitusu badaczy, siłą rzeczy mających inną optykę na wiele zjawisk i problemów – zarówno w Ukrainie, jak i w Polsce. Świadczą o tym konstatacje Julii Buyskykh, które stanowią dużą wartość recenzowanej książki. Doświadczenie antropolożki z Kijowa, prowadzącej badania w Polsce, także wśród mniejszości ukraińskiej, znacząco różniło się od doświadczeń polskich badaczy w tym samym środowisku. A zatem, żeby uzyskać jeszcze bardziej kompletny obraz studiów porównawczych, wydaje się, że w przyszłości cenne byłoby włączenie większej ilości naukowych głosów ukraińskich badaczek i badaczy, w celu poszerzenia perspektywy i ujęcia całości problemu. Nie mam wątpliwości, że Magdalena Zowczak i jej studenci będą ważnymi uczestnikami takiego zespołu.

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CHANGES IN THE RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF CATHOLIC MINORITIES IN POLAND AND UKRAINE

Key words: Ukraine, Poland, Catholic minorities, religion, religious culture, post-Soviet religious life, comparative studies

The article discusses the most critical aspects of the book “Catholic Religious Minorities in Poland and Ukraine.” The research is analyzed in the broader context of religious studies conducted by Polish anthropologists in Lithuania and Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I am interested in how religious culture’s conceptual scope and semantics and the contexts of religious phenomena in Eastern Europe have changed in current studies. Research in the last decade of the twentieth century included religious knowledge, local interpretations of the Bible, knowledge of the Apocrypha, magical thinking, and its relationship to religiosity. The study aimed to determine what people believe in and the rituals accompanying it. The approach has changed, as studies published in the book show. Scholars were less interested in faith and its reconstruction and more in how Catholic communities and religious institutions were organized.

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ETNOGRAFIE/ETNOLOGIE/ANTROPOLOGIE NARODOWE

Potrzeba stosowania terminów zbiorczych oznaczających części tego, co składa się na naukę w skali świata, pojawiała się od dawna. Należące do nich określenie „dyscyplina narodowa” powstało wraz z pojawieniem się kwestii narodowej w XIX wieku. Podejmę próbę przedstawienia sposobu jego formułowania w etnografii/etnologii/antropologii oraz przypisywanego mu znaczenia i użyteczności w czasie globalizacji nauki i powszechności studiów interdyscyplinarnych.

Stosuję w tym tekście triadę nazewniczą: etnografia/etnologia/antropologia, oznaczającą jedną dyscyplinę, triadę, która z jednej strony wskazuje, w jej historii i terażniejszości, na wymienialność nazw i zmiany sposobów jej uprawiania, a z drugiej na zakres i stopień koherencji z nauką nurtu światowego. Triada ta jest bliska doświadczeniu autora, który był etnografem, jest etnologiem i niekiedy próbuje być antropologiem.

CZYM JEST DYSCYPLINA NARODOWA

Dyscyplina narodowa jest jednym z tych określeń, które służą wyróżnianiu i odróżnianiu zespołów badaczy oraz rezultatów ich prac, wiążą naukę z grupą ludzi ją tworzących i nią się posługujących oraz terenem, uważanym za narodowe. Wymaga kontekstu, w którym obok jednej dyscypliny narodowej są inne, i stosunku do nauki, która jest transnarodowa i dąży do tego, aby stać się globalna. Sugeruje ideowe połączenie dyscypliny z kwestiami narodowymi i przekonaniai ją uprawiających, patriotycznymi lub nacjonalistycznymi. Może stanowić element ideologii. Jednocześnie może być stosowana w sposób, który uwzględnia neutralność światopoglądową badaczy, realizujących cele poznawcze i ponadnarodowe zadania społeczne. Posługuję się nim z wielu powodów, znając określenia bardziej neutralne: „krajowe systemy nauki”, „nauka krajowa”, „nauka państwa narodowego” (por. Kwiek 2021, s. 37 i n.) oraz wiedząc o sceptycyzmie wobec niego, wyrażanym m.in. przez Michała Buchowskiego, biorącego w cudzysłów określenie „narodowe” antropologie (2019a, s. 5). Pierwszy z tych powodów to moje uczestnictwo w etnografii/etnologii/antropologii polskiej,

jednej z dyscyplin naukowych Europy Środkowej, zaangażowanej, bezpośrednio lub pośrednio, w tworzenie nowoczesnego narodu polskiego i jego obronę lub umacnianie w czasach, kiedy brakowało państwa polskiego, i także wówczas, kiedy państwo to istniało. Kolejny to charakter dyscypliny, w poważnej mierze skoncentrowanej na sprawach dotyczących grup etnicznych i narodowych, a także obecność określenia „nauka narodowa”, „dyscyplina narodowa” lub podobnych w polskim i zagranicznym piśmiennictwie naukowym.

Uczeni od dawna zastanawiali się, także w ramach etnografii/etnologii/antropologii polskiej, nad relacją uprawianych przez siebie badań do tych podejmowanych poza granicami ich terytorium narodowego lub państwowego. Oskar Kolberg stwierdził: „u nas samych nauka etnografii, jak i antropologii, zaledwie kiełkować poczyna” (1971, s. 23). Izidor Kopernicki, uwzględniając realia swojego czasu, wydzielił „etnologię ojczystą, słowiańską i powszechną” (1885, s. 21), jednocześnie podkreślając ich łączność. Jan Karłowicz określił okoliczności, w jakich nauka angażuje się w sprawy narodowe:

Naród spokojny o swój byt polityczny, może spokojnie też badać ludoznawstwo swoje ze strony czysto naukowej; ale plemiona, wyrzute z samoistności, wystawione na nieustanną groźbę pogńebienia i zatraty, gdy się zastanawiają nad naturą i warunkami bytu swojego skupienia narodowego, muszą do badań takich koniecznie mieszać pytania praktyczne (1906, s. 213).

Czynnik narodowy w nauce i relacje między nauką narodową a światową, w odbudowywanym po zaborach państwie polskim, oraz różnice w tym zakresie między ich dziedzinami, przedstawił Jan Karol Kochanowski, nie etnolog, a historyk, socjolog i filozof dziejów:

Nauka czysta, jak wszelka twórczość, stojąca w zasadzie na szczyblu najwyższym myśli ludzkiej [...] zdaje się wyłączać (pozornie) ze swego składu pierwiastki narodowe. [...] nauka powszechna, uprawiana w różnych środowiskach narodowych, pomnaża dorobek umysłowy ludzkości nie tylko ilościowo, ale i jakościowo. Posiadamy też wszyscy odczucie nauki: francuskiej a niemieckiej, angielskiej a włoskiej – i to nie tylko w dziedzinie humanistyki, ale we wszystkich na ogół gałęziach wiedzy (1919, s. 444, 447).

Zajęty rozważaniami nad psychiką narodów i szczególnymi cechami w tym zakresie narodu polskiego, wyznając mesjanizm narodowy, autor ten przyjął skrajnie nacjonalistyczną koncepcję nauki:

[...] że tylko narodowość nauki zdolna jest wzbogacić najistotniejszą polifonię, a wraz z nią i głębię wiedzy wszechludzkiej (1919, s. 448).

Pojęcia „ludoznawstwo narodowe” użył Jan Stanisław Bystroń, określając zakres podejmowanych w jego ramach badań, wskazując jednocześnie na związek ludoznawstwa polskiego z przede wszystkim „ludoznawstwem ruskim czy litewskim” (1926, s. 11). O „etnografiach narodowych”, uprawianych w krajach europejskich, odwołując się do doświadczeń także własnego czasu, pisał Józef Burszta. Etnografie

te wiązały się z różnymi nurtami umysłowymi, a także z kierunkami ideologii i polityki, z narodowym szowinizmem włącznie, czego przykładem była niemiecka *Volkskunde* (Burszta 1974, s. 13).

Zamiennikiem terminu „dyscyplina narodowa” jest oznaczanie środowisk naukowych, wyników i narzędzi ich działalności przymiotnikami związanymi z grupą narodową lub z państwem. Wydawane od roku 1958 czasopismo nosi nazwę „Etnografia Polska”, a inne, ukazujące się od roku 1975, „Ethnologia Polona”. Istnieje wiele opinii na temat etnografii/etnologii polskiej. Jej specyfikę, a nawet istnienie „polskiej szkoły etnografii powojennej” podkreślała Anna Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa (1976, s. 15), która stwierdziła też:

Etnografia polska wyrosła z doświadczeń historii własnego kraju i narodu. Odpowiadała na potrzeby społeczeństwa. Była – zwłaszcza w początkach – instrumentem polityki narodowościowej, walki społecznej i solidaryzmu narodowego. Wyrażała troskę o dorobek narodowy i zachowanie wiedzy o przeszłości. Przenosząc na grunt rodzimy pytania badawcze czerpane z nauki obcej, reagowała równocześnie żywo na problemy bieżącej chwili historycznej i powiązania teorii z praktyką (1977, s. 12).

Wiele lat później Buchowski uzasadniał stosowanie określenia „polska antropologia”:

[...] bez względu na to, jak niejasne we współczesnej nauce jest to pojęcie i jak jej granice są rozmyte (2019a, s. 1).

Dyscypliny narodowe różnią się także w ich relacjach z innymi dyscyplinami i kierunkami badań. Zbigniew Benedyktowicz prowokacyjnie, a jednocześnie w sposób zmuszający do myślenia, widział etnografię jako:

[...] naukę bez granic i naukę poruszającą się na marginesach innych dyscyplin. Tak, etnografia to marginesowa nauka bez granic (1981, s. 70).

Wyrażeniem niezgody na dotychczasowy sposób uprawiania naszej dyscypliny i pochwałą interdyscyplinarności jest także Zespół Antropologii Niezdyscyplinowanej ZAND, działający przy Ośrodku Etnologii i Antropologii Współczesności Instytutu Archeologii i Etnologii PAN. Nazwa informuje, choć nie wprost, nie tylko o celach Zespołu, mówi także o jego twórcach, mających do siebie dystans i którym nieobcy jest uśmiech.

Wskazywanie na dyscyplinę oznaczoną nazwą kraju jest powszechne. Mamy etnologię/antropologię amerykańską, brytyjską, chińską, niemiecką, rosyjską i inne. Informacji dostarcza m.in. *Encyklopedia antropologii społeczno-kulturowej* pod redakcją Alana Barnarda i Jonathana Spencera (2008) zawierająca tego rodzaju hasła. Ze względu zapewne z podkreślanym we *Wstępie do Encyklopedii...* pluralizmem antropologii (2008, s. 9), redaktorzy nie wprowadzili do niej hasła „antropologia społeczno-kulturowa”, przedstawiającego dyscyplinę jako całość. Zróżnicowanie dyscypliny zaznaczone zostało także w książce zredagowanej przez Chrisa Hanna zatytułowanej *Antropologia. Jedna dyscyplina, cztery tradycje: brytyjska, niemiecka,*

francuska i amerykańska (2007). Określenie „dyscyplina narodowa” i jego zamienniki nabrało znaczenia wraz z zacieśnieniem więzi międzynarodowych w nauce, nielikwidujących jednakże środowisk naukowych pracujących w granicach państw lub połączonych związkami inne niż polityczne. Zaczęło pojawiać się częściej również w naszej etnografii/etnologii/antropologii wraz z otwarciem się nauki polskiej związanym z przemianami ustrojowymi po roku 1989 (m.in. Jasiewicz 1996, s. 27; Buchowski 2019b, s. 29). Znaczenie i skutki istnienia etnografii/etnologii/antropologii narodowych dostrzega obecnie wielu autorów opracowań zarówno dokonywujących w szerokich ramach przeglądu jej stanu, problemowych i encyklopedycznych (por. wymienione już *Hann red.*, 2007; Barnard i Spencer red. 2008), jak i w studiach przestrzeni jednego kraju (por. np. Buchowski 2012). Gustavo L. Ribeiro i Arturo Escobar stwierdzili: „idea jedynej i powszechnej antropologii jest podana w wątpliwość” (2006, s. 1). „Powszechnie myśli się o antropologii w kategoriach tradycji narodowych”, zauważył też Barnard (2006, s. 239). Narodowe „tradycje”, „drogi”, „umiejscowienia” miały i mają podkreślić różnice w sposobach uprawiania etnografii/etnologii/antropologii w odrębnych środowiskach narodowych, pozostawiając miejsce na naukę ponadnarodową. Określenia te odpowiadają charakterowi naszej dyscypliny, szczególnie wrażliwej na lokalne uwarunkowania, na całokształt społecznej, gospodarczej i politycznej sytuacji w kraju, w którym jest uprawiana, ideologie, w tym także na tradycje, poprzez które przekazywane są doświadczenia z przeszłości, stan narodowych instytucji, pozycję języka, w którym publikowane są przygotowane w ich ramach prace. Utrzymuje ona swoją specyfikę, korzystając m.in. z wytworzonych w jej ramach materiałów, także tych dawnych, reinterpretując je z perspektywy współczesnego stanu nauki (por. Węglarz 2010, s. 7). Reaguje również na bodźce płynące z zewnątrz, oczywiście jeśli nie jest izolowana, na teorie i metody rozwijane w ramach nauki za granicą. Stanowi syntezę cech jej właściwych, orzekających o jej odrębności, a jednocześnie wyraża napięcie między tym, co swoiste, szczególnie na jej terenie, a tym, co w dyscyplinie uniwersalne (Jasiewicz 1998, s. 39).

Z określeniem dyscypliny za pomocą przymiotnika oznaczającego naród lub państwo konkurują, niekiedy wchodzące z nim w konflikt, nazwy posługujące się formą rzeczownika w dopełniaczu: „etnografia/etnologia/antropologia Polski”, „antropologia Chin” itp., wskazujące na sumę wiedzy o danym kraju w zakresie dyscypliny, bez uwzględnienia narodowej przynależności badaczy ją tworzących. Określeniem „antropologia Polski” posługuje się Buchowski, wymieniając długą listę antropologów z Anglii, Stanów Zjednoczonych i Niemiec podejmujących, poczynając od lat 70. XIX wieku, badania na terenie Polski (2019b, s. 33–34). Polska i materiały z ziem polskich były przedmiotem zainteresowań etnologów/antropologów spoza Polski, także rosyjskich, już wcześniej. André Béteille, autor hasła *Antropologia indyjska*, proponuje, aby antropologię z przymiotnikową formą kraju stosować bez względu na przynależność narodowościową uprawiających ją badaczy (Barnard i Spencer red. 2008, s. 88).

Niejednoznaczność terminu „dyscyplina narodowa” związana jest z niejednoznacznością nazwy „naród”. Może oznaczać naukę tworzoną i użytą przez naród etniczny lub polityczny, ten ostatni niekiedy obejmujący wiele mniejszości

narodowych i etnicznych, połączonych w ramach wspólnego organizmu państwowego. Wieloetniczna jest antropologia brytyjska i w kilku innych państwach europejskich. Badacze z mniejszości narodowych pracowali i pracują na euroazjatyckim terenie w ramach etnografii Rosji carskiej, radzieckiej i obecnej Federacji Rosyjskiej. Wiele narodowych tradycji składa się na antropologię w Stanach Zjednoczonych. W narodzie politycznym wchodzący w jego skład przedstawiciele mniejszości narodowych przyjmują niekiedy w swoich badaniach, szczególnie w sytuacjach konfliktów etnicznych, w miarę istniejących możliwości, perspektywę właściwą swojej grupie, sprzyjającą tworzeniu własnej dyscypliny narodowej. W pracach etnografii/etnologii polskiej, działającej na terenie wieloetnicznym, przede wszystkim w okresie zaborów, także później, uczestniczyło wielu badaczy spośród mniejszości narodowych: etnografowie/etnologowie Żydzi lub pochodzenia żydowskiego, np. Sula Benet, Regina Lilientalowa, Daniel Fajnsztejn, Giza Frenkel, Henryk Perls czy Joachim (Chaim) Chajes, oraz Ukraińcy, m.in. Iwan Franko i Wołodomyr Szuchewycz. Badacze ci, szczególnie wówczas kiedy mieli oparcie we własnych instytucjach naukowych, tworzyli jednocześnie odrębne narodowe dyscypliny naukowe.

Sytuacja etnografii/etnologii związanych z mniejszościami narodowymi w państwie wieloetnicznym była różna, zależna od charakteru tego państwa: autorytarnego, totalitarnego czy demokratycznego. Warunki uprawiania naszej dyscypliny w czasie zaborów zależne były od polityki państw zaborczych. Z kolei w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej polityka państwa określała możliwości działania etnografii/etnologii tworzonych przez mniejszości narodowe. Zróżnicowanie etnografii/etnologii/antropologii narodowych działających w ramach jednego państwa, będące odbiciem różnej sytuacji narodów i grup etnicznych w nim pozostających, z ich różnym potencjałem i uwarunkowaniami wewnętrznymi i zewnętrznymi, może stanowić interesujący przedmiot badań. W wieloetnicznym Związku Radzieckim występowały uderzające różnice między zakresem i możliwościami działania etnografii w centrum i poza nim, na terenach europejskich lub bliskich Europie, w Ukrainie, Białorusi, Litwie, Łotwie, Estonii, Gruzji i Armenii, a położonymi w Azji, w Uzbekistanie, Kazachstanie, Turkmenii, Kirgizji, Jakucji, Buriacji i innych. Jako mające znaczny potencjał i właściwe sobie cechy traktowane były m.in. etnografia/etnologia w Ukrainie, krajach bałtyckich i także gruzińska, wiązana ze szkołą prof. Georgija Czitaji, dysponująca jedynym poza Moskwą i ówczesnym Leningradem kierunkiem etnograficznych studiów uniwersyteckich (Gasitaszwili, Jasiewicz 1965, s. 467 i n.). Różnice w charakterze dyscypliny, w jej odmianach związanych z terytorium i narodową oraz instytucjonalną przynależnością uprawiających ją badaczy, nadal występują na wieloetnicznym terenie stanowiącym obecnie Federację Rosyjską.

UNARODOWIENIE I UMIĘDZYNARODOWIENIE DYSCYPLIN NAUKOWYCH

Nie wszystkie dyscypliny naukowe, a w ich ramach nie wszystkie kierunki badań, w jednakowym stopniu podlegają unarodowieniu i związane są z kręgiem spraw

narodowych lub/i dążą do zacieśnienia kontaktów międzynarodowych. Stopień ich unarodowienia lub umiędzynarodowienia zależy od przedmiotu badań, metod i teorii naukowych, jakimi się posługują, funkcji społecznych, także osobowości badaczy. Kazimierz Moszyński scharakteryzował etnografię jako bliższą historii, a etnologię jako bardziej związaną z socjologią (1958, s. 61). Pierwsza z nich jest bardziej nauką humanistyczną, a druga społeczną. Zdaniem Marka Kwieka uderzającą cechą współczesnej nauki jest to, że rola współpracy międzynarodowej w naukach humanistycznych jest marginalna, natomiast w naukach społecznych rośnie, wzorem nauk przyrodniczych. Badacz w związku z tym oponuje przeciwko stosowaniu zbitki „nauki społeczno-humanistyczne” (2021, s. 49 i in.). Spostrzeżenie naukoznawcy znajduje potwierdzenie w historii naszej dyscypliny. Moszyński pisał:

O ile etnografia ogólna i ogólna etnologia, operujące z samej natury rzeczy materiałem pochodzącym z krajów egzotycznych, były i są par excellence międzynarodowymi, o tyle ludoznawstwo, o jakim mówimy, jest bardziej zamknięte: francuskie, niemieckie, polskie itd. [...] A „ludoznawcy” [...] kontaktują się między sobą znacznie słabiej niż fachowcy z zakresu ogólnej etnologii czy takiejże etnografii (1958, s. 62).

Studia uznawane za etnograficzne, w pewnej swej odmianie nazywane dawniej ludoznawczymi, skoncentrowane na badaniu kultury warstw tzw. ludowych w obrębie własnego narodu i realizacji zadania demokratyzacji społeczeństwa oraz budzenia przywiązania do lokalnych i narodowych tradycji, mniej potrzebowały kontaktów międzynarodowych i mniej były i są w nie zaangażowane w porównaniu z kierunkami badań określanymi jako etnologiczne lub antropologiczne. Przyczynę powstania „etnografii narodowych” Burszta widzi w pojawieniu się problemu kultur ludowych w krajach europejskich (1974, s. 13).

Dyscyplina narodowa nie musi i nie powinna być izolowana. Trudności w utrzymywaniu kontaktów międzynarodowych i podkreślanie jej odrębności, mające niejednokrotnie miejsce w historii nauki, może prowadzić do osłabienia czy nawet okresowego zerwania tych kontaktów, mogącego przeciwstawiać dyscyplinę narodową lub określonego kręgu kulturowego nauce głównego nurtu. Miało to miejsce w naukach humanistycznych i społecznych, w tym w naszej dyscyplinie, w hitlerowskich Niemczech oraz w ZSRR i podległych mu państwach. Nigdy nie było ono zupełne i kontakty utrzymywane były choćby poprzez krytykę nauki głównego nurtu i nawiązywanie do wybranych z niej koncepcji. Nie uniemożliwiały powrotu dyscypliny narodowej do przerwanych związków.

Istnieją inne niż narodowe sposoby wyróżniania dyscyplin naukowych. Są nimi różnice związane z odmienną kulturą, w tym z religią. Mówiono i nadal mówi się o nauce świata starożytnego, Zachodu i Wschodu, chrześcijańskiej i związanej z islamem. Innych, poza narodem i grupą etniczną podstaw do wyróżniania dyscyplin naukowych, czasami stosowanych zamiennie, dostarcza także język. Badaczy posługujących się tym samym językiem gromadzi np. etnologia/antropologia niemieckiego obszaru językowego. Bliskość języków może tworzyć jednostki taksonomiczne

obejmującej wiele ludów, kiedy dyscyplina angażuje się w badania ludów należących do tej samej rodziny językowej, np. słowiańskiej. W historii etnografii polskiej silne było zainteresowanie Słowiańszczyzną. Kolberg wiele swoich dzieł, od tomu 2 *Sandomierskie* z roku 1865 do tomu 11 *Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie* z roku 1877, opatrzył podtytułem *Materiały do etnografii słowiańskiej*. Zorganizowano w Polsce II Zjazd Słowiańskich Geografów i Etnografów w roku 1927. Moszyński opublikował monumentalną *Kulturę ludową Słowian* (t. 1, 1929; t. 2, 1934; t. 3, 1939). Wydawano pismo o charakterze międzynarodowym „Lud Słowiański” (1929–1938). Bystron konkludował: „Ludoznawstwo nie może zamykać się w obrębie jednej grupy narodowej” (1926, s. 95).

Wspólnota nie tylko języka, ale także bliskie więzi kulturowe, w tym naukowe, powodują, że wyodrębniamy antropologię anglo-amerykańską. Jeszcze innej podstawy wyróżnienia dostarcza, na użytek badaczy i czytelników ich publikacji, odpowiednio nazwana przestrzeń, w której dyscyplina ma swoje instytucje, a uczeni teren badań i gabinety. W piśmiennictwie polskim przełomu XIX i XX wieku często stosowane było określenie „etnografia krajowa”, „antropologia krajowa”, użyte m.in. przez Romana Zawilińskiego w artykule *Z etnografii krajowej* z „Przeglądu Literackiego” (1882) oraz potwierdzone w tytule czasopisma „Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Krajowej” (1877–1895). Dyscyplinie nadaje się czasem nazwę kontynentu lub jego części, w której jest uprawiana, np. etnologia/antropologia europejska, niekiedy wyłączana z niej europejska kontynentalna, afrykańska i południowoamerykańska. Azja jest zbyt wielka i zróżnicowana, by udzielić swojej nazwy dyscyplinom tam rozwijającym. Usytuowanie badacza w konkretnym miejscu na mapie świata pozwala mu stosować określenia związane ze jego stronami, np. antropologia zachodnia (por. Buchowski 2008).

Nauka pozostaje w związkach z innymi sferami życia społecznego i kultury, potrzebuje twórców, ale również nią się posługujących i ją wspierających. Rozwija się przede wszystkim w społecznościach o dużym kapitale, w tym intelektualnym. To tam w naukach narodowych powstawały ważne teorie i metody naukowe. W dziejach etnologii/antropologii i tworzenia się jej ośrodków lub nurtów, przekraczających granice państw i kontynentów, ważne było przyjęcie idei monogenezy gatunku ludzkiego, sformułowanej ostatecznie w Anglii w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku, oraz koncepcji kultury, jej jedności i zmienności, zapoczątkowane w końcu XVIII wieku w Niemczech. Idee te stawały się wzorcami powtarzanymi dzięki językom, przekraczającym granice narodowe, w których je formułowano, przez badaczy z innych obszarów narodowych. Ponadlokalny i ponadnarodowy sposób uprawiania nauki kształtował się i nadal kształtuje się w miarę poszerzających się możliwości kontaktowania. Komunikowanie się, współpraca, zrozumienie celów nauki, uznanie infrastruktury naukowej i języka stosowanego w tej komunikacji jako użytecznego narzędzia, a nie środka dominacji, może prowadzić i prowadzi do rozwinięcia „trudnego dialogu” – użyję określenia z tytułu artykułu Buchowskiego (2008) – między etnologami/antropologami z odmiennych środowisk narodowych, również tych kształtujących globalny obieg idei naukowych. Dialog ten, toczony w różny sposób i na różnych

płaszczyznach, ze zmienną dynamiką, umacnia i poszerza obszar dyscypliny o charakterze przekraczającym ramy narodowe. Jego wyrazem i jednocześnie środkami prowadzącymi do niego są międzynarodowe stowarzyszenia naukowców, wspólne projekty, spotkania, czasopisma mające szeroki zakres oddziaływania oraz publikacje o współautorstwie międzynarodowym, w tym dotyczące historii dyscypliny pomyślanej jako obejmująca osiągnięcia wielu ośrodków narodowych.

Twórcami nauki są uczeni uwarunkowani własnymi środowiskami. Barnard napisał:

[...] każdy etap rozwoju [antropologii – Z] jest oczywiście wytworem myślenia jednostkowego, ale także, w dużym stopniu okoliczności, w jakich znajduje się ten, kto myśli (2006, s. 239).

Tworzący naukę zdolni są jednak przekraczać granice myślenia jednostkowego i myślenia własnego środowiska oraz dostarczać idei możliwych do przyjęcia i atrakcyjnych w wielu środowiskach narodowych. Ma rację Kwiek dostrzegający rosnącą rolę indywidualnych naukowców, kierowanych chęcią poznania i ambicjami, w tworzeniu globalnych sieci naukowych (2021, s. 60). Przeszkodę w tym procesie stanowi jednak nie tylko zakorzeniona lojalność wobec środowisk narodowych, ale także ograniczenia w państwach totalitarnych, np. w Rosji i w Chinach.

Fenomenu nauki nie tłumaczy obraz ze strumieniami, krzyżującymi się, niekiedy zanikającymi i znów się pojawiającymi, z których jeden lub kilka stają się nurtem głównym. Ta „hydrologiczna” metafora natomiast nieźle, moim zdaniem, przedstawia sposób funkcjonowania dyscyplin narodowych, wskazując na ich wzajemne relacje i drogi prowadzące do dominacji. Nie wyjaśnia jednak zjawiska współistnienia tego, co narodowe, i tego o zasięgu szerszym. Nauki światowej nie tłumaczy również obraz archipelagu z jedną lub kilkoma wyspami głównymi. Jest statyczny, utrwala wyobrażenie centrum i peryferii. Teorie i metody nauki przekraczające granice narodowe, tworzone w ramach określonych dyscyplin narodowych, aby być przyjęte w innych, muszą być akceptowane, znaleźć w nich odpowiedni grunt. Powstają przede wszystkim w silnych środowiskach naukowych, jednakże badacze z dyscyplin narodowych o mniejszych możliwościach upowszechnienia swego dorobku także uczestniczą we wprowadzaniu do nauki nurtu ponadnarodowego wypracowanych przez siebie idei. Lepiej sobie radzą wówczas, kiedy mają dostęp do środków komunikowania ważnych w obiegu międzynarodowym. Przekaz informacji, stających się własnością szerszą niż narodowa czy z określonego kręgu kulturowego, dotyczy nie tylko każdorazowej teraźniejszości, ale sięga również w przeszłość. Od dawna już włączono do światowej historii myśli etnologicznej analizy procesów społecznych Ibn Chalduna, arabskiego uczonego z XIV wieku (por. Voget 1975, s. 29 i n.). Nadal odkrywane są dawne teksty z kultur innych niż euro-amerykańska, np. chińskiej lub indyjskiej, interesujące dla antropologii, i upowszechnia się współczesne prace badaczy z tych obszarów. Nadal również poszerzana jest wiedza o nieznanych dotąd pracach z kręgu nauki europejskiej, cennych dla naszej dyscypliny. Na pomijanie w zachodnich opracowaniach i wykazach bibliograficznych prac z Europy Wschodniej zwracano uwagę od dawna. Kopernicki domagał się uwzględnienia w nich tekstów w językach słowiańskich

i węgierskim (1885, s. 16). O potrzebie korzystania z prac badaczy z Europy środkowej i wschodniej, w tym polskich, pisał Maksym Kowalewski, etnolog i socjolog rosyjski (1903, s. 5). Hann, w haśle *Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia*, stwierdził:

zagraniczni antropolodzy w tym regionie powinni brać pod uwagę bogate tradycje lokalnej wiedzy i pracować z lokalnymi badaczami, tam gdzie tylko jest to możliwe (2008, s. 222).

Poszerzany obszar nauki, przekraczającej granice narodowe, nie stanowi repliki jednej z dyscyplin narodowych, staje się selektywnym wyborem idei przejmowanych z różnych z nich, terenem zbliżania się, konwergencji. W ten proces zaangażowany jest Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung w Halle:

Nasz instytut respektuje różnice w tradycjach naukowych, tak samo jak respektuje je w innych dziedzinach. Nie mamy zamiaru sprzyjać anglosaskiej dominacji albo bezbarwnej jednolitości stylu [...] chcielibyśmy sprzyjać kosmopolityzmowi w obrębie dyscypliny, która, ogólnie rzecz biorąc, była do niedawna jedną z najmniej kosmopolitycznych dziedzin wiedzy (Hann 2007, s. 9).

Współczesne działanie kosmopolitycznej, umiędzynarodowionej postaci nauki można przedstawić jako wir porywający elementy wiedzy z różnych dyscyplin narodowych i wyrzucający na powierzchnię te, które są akceptowane, w danym czasie, na szerszym niż narodowy obszarze. Porównanie to nie zakłada jednakże bezwzględnej apoteozy ruchu i równych szans. Możliwość znalezienia się w obiegu międzynarodowym zdobywają obecnie przede wszystkim teksty pisane lub tłumaczone na język angielski. Niektóre idee i postacie badaczy z ich pracami, które raz wydobyły się na zewnątrz, utrzymują się na szczycie długo, długo też utrzymuje się znaczenie poszczególnych ośrodków naukowych i pracujących w nich uczonych, prowadzonych przez nie wydawnictw i inicjatyw organizacyjnych. Zastosowane porównanie nie zakłada również prymatu mechanizmu bezosobowego ruchu nad działaniami badaczy. Potrafią oni, swoim wysiłkiem i zdolnościami, mimo pozostawania w środowiskach narodowych, wprowadzać do obiegu międzynarodowego nowe wartości. Decydującym kryterium pozwalającym zaliczyć uczonego do konkretnej dyscypliny narodowej nie jest jednak jego przynależność etniczna i publikowanie w określonym języku. Ważna jest działalność w ramach i na rzecz narodowego środowiska naukowego. Uczestnictwo w dyscyplinie narodowej nie wyklucza udziału w nauce innych krajów i o zasięgu światowym, może ono działać na jej korzyść. Uczeni nie są zobowiązani do składania deklaracji dotyczących przynależności narodowej czy etnicznej, a składane deklaracje nie mają znaczenia, określają się swymi działaniami, wynikami swoich prac. W historii etnologii/antropologii polskiej dobrym przykładem badacza transnarodowego jest Jan Czekanowski, pracujący w ramach nauki rosyjskiej i niemieckiej, zasłużony dla nauki polskiej, obecny swego czasu jako wiceprzewodniczący Międzynarodowej Unii Nauk Antropologicznych i Etnologicznych w organizacjach o zakresie światowym. Poszerzanie zakresu antropologii o zasięgu międzynarodowym nie pozbawia sensu istnienia antropologii narodowych. Różnicuje je jednak pod względem ich stosunku do antropologii nurtu światowego.

Dyscypliny narodowe, jak wszystkie zjawiska z otaczającego nas świata, związane są z czasem. Potrafimy określić ich początek na podstawie opartego na umowie wyznaczonego momentu lub okresu ich przekształcenia się z zainteresowań daną dziedziną rzeczywistości w naukę. Początki polskiej etnografii/etnologii/antropologii datowane są na drugą połowę XIX i pierwsze dekady XX wieku (Jasiewicz 2011, s. 23; Posern-Zieliński 1973, s. 70; Sokolewicz 1987, s. 862). Wyznaczają je, moim zdaniem, dwa wydarzenia: wykłady Wincentego Pola na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w roku akademickim 1850/51 i 1851/52, w których pojawia się etnografia, oraz powstanie Komisji Antropologicznej Akademii Umiejętności z Sekcją Etnologiczną ukonstytuowaną w roku 1874. Już powstałe i działające przedstawiamy najczęściej w ramach chronologii przyjętej dla historii narodu, w którym są uprawiane. Najczęściej, bo stosowane są inne jeszcze sposoby porządkowania dziejów nauki, w tym dyscyplin narodowych, oparte na wydarzeniach związanych z działalnością wybitnych uczonych czy przyjmowaniem nowych teorii. Całościowy obraz dyscypliny narodowej obejmuje wszystkie okresy jej uprawiania. Następujące po sobie okresy ważne dla nauki korzystały z poprzednich zarówno na zasadzie kontynuacji i rozwijania przekazanych z nich idei, jak i poprzez ich negację. Najważniejszy jest okres ostatni, współczesność. Nie stanowi syntezy treści z czasów poprzednich, ale jest, o czym już napisałem, selektywnym wyborem pochodzących z nich elementów, kierowanym obecnym kształtem rzeczywistości i potrzebami, uzupełnionym nowymi wyobrażeniami o zakresie i metodologii dyscypliny, także poglądami na jej historię. Współczesność jest różna dla różnych ludzi, istotna jest intersubiektywna terażniejszość, bo w niej mają miejsce działania określające ostatecznie charakter naszego odbioru i przedstawiania rzeczywistości, w tym dyscypliny, którą uprawiamy. To wówczas dokonujemy także ocen przeszłości zmiennych w czasie. Ten okres ostatni, nasza terażniejszość, jest jednocześnie trudny do pogłębionego i obiektywnego przedstawienia, co wynika nie tylko z jego zmienności i różnorodności, ale także z tego, że w nim uczestniczymy i go współtworzymy. Rzeczywistość dyscypliny narodowej i jej obrazy to nie to samo. W jednym z nich staje się, jest, zgodnie z określeniem Buchowskiego, „polską, kosmopolityczną antropologią narodową”, także w tekście jego autora wzięte w cudzysłów (2019a, s. 7).

Określenie „dyscyplina narodowa”, również w czasach zwiększającego swój zasięg umiędzynarodowienia nauki, kiedy wiele tematów i praktyk badawczych ma charakter interdyscyplinarny, moim zdaniem broni się w obydwu swoich członach. Stosujemy termin „dyscyplina” nie tylko dlatego, że jest tradycyjnym i wygodnym narzędziem administrowania nauką, w tym jej ewaluacji i finansowania. Dyscyplina pozostaje także podstawowym elementem klasyfikacji nauki, jest tworem dłuższej lub krótszej historii, wymaga akceptacji środowiska naukowego. Jest przezeń broniona w sytuacji zagrożenia, co było wielokroć udziałem etnografii/etnologii/antropologii polskiej, także ostatnio, oraz informuje społeczeństwo o prowadzonych w jej ramach badaniach. Umożliwia identyfikację z określonym środowiskiem, policzenie się, stwarza pole dyskusji i sporów, pozwala na porównanie obecnie prowadzonych prac z tymi z przeszłości, na ułożenie sensownego programu dydaktycznego. Przyjmowane

rozumienie dyscypliny nie zakłada jej izolacji od innych dyscyplin, nie pozwala na to zresztą historia etnografii/etnologii/antropologii, a także teraźniejsze jej działania. Nie może też sprzyjać pojawieniu się rozbudowanej tożsamości uprawiających dyscyplinę, stawiania interesu grupy przed zadaniami poznawczymi. Nasza dyscyplina pozostaje również narodową. Odsuwamy od tej nazwy konotacje nacjonalistyczne, uznajemy ją za wskazującą na kraj, w którym jest uprawiana i z którego kontaktuje się i uczestniczy w tworzeniu nauki światowej.

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ZBIGNIEW JASIEWICZ

NATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIES/ETHNOLOGIES/ANTHROPOLOGIES

Key words: national discipline, Polish ethnography, ethnology, anthropology, global science, disciplinary identity

This article highlights how the term “national discipline” is defined and used in ethnography/ethnology/anthropology. The author uses a terminological triad: ethnography/ethnology/anthropology, which relates to the same discipline. It indicates interchangeability of these terms and changes of approaching this discipline, but equally, the scope and degree of its coherence with the global science.

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STRATEGIE RADZENIA SOBIE NA RYNKU PRACY WŚRÓD OSÓB ZMARGINALIZOWANYCH

WSTĘP

W ostatnich latach na polskim rynku pracy nastąpił znaczny spadek poziomu bezrobocia, które przez większość lat po transformacji ustrojowej miało charakter masowy, szczególnie w latach 2003–2004, kiedy co piąta osoba pozostawała bez zatrudnienia (GUS 2020). Od 2015 roku rejestrowana stopa bezrobocia stale spada, pomimo kryzysu związanego z pandemią koronawirusa i napływu do Polski uchodźczyń i uchodźców z ogarniętej wojną Ukrainy. W dyskursie publicznym pojawiają się twierdzenia, jakoby efektem spadku bezrobocia i tym samym wzmocnienia siły przetargowej pracowników względem pracodawców było przejście z tak zwanego rynku pracodawcy do rynku pracownika, co oznacza, że pracownik może relatywnie swobodnie negocjować z pracodawcą warunki swojego zatrudnienia. Niemniej należy pamiętać, że na tle krajów należących do Unii Europejskiej polski rynek pracy cały czas należy do rynków charakteryzujących się niskimi kosztami pracy, zderegulowanym kodeksem pracy, słabością związków zawodowych czy znacznym poziomem ubóstwa wśród osób pracujących (np. Eurostat 2020a; Eurostat 2020b; EU-SiLC 2020). Na obecne osłabienie sytuacji pracowników i pracownic wpływa także wzrost cen wywołany inflacją. Ponadto rynek pracy jest wewnętrznie zróżnicowany, dzieli się na segmenty, w których oferowane są dobre warunki pracy i zatrudnienia oraz takie, gdzie te warunki są niskiej jakości.

Celem artykułu jest analiza rynku pracy z perspektywy osób w jego ramach zmarginalizowanych, czyli bezrobotnych oraz pracowników świadczących niskopłatną pracę i jednocześnie doświadczających ubóstwa (tzw. pracujących ubogich¹). Interesują mnie strategie radzenia sobie (*coping strategies*), jakie badani_e wypracowują i stosują w codziennym życiu w odniesieniu do swojego położenia na rynku pracy.

¹ W tym artykule pracujący ubodzy są rozumiani jako pracownicy, których ekwiwalentny dochód gospodarstwa domowego jest niższy niż 60% krajowej mediany zarobków.

Pokazują, że wbrew obiegowym opiniom osoby zmarginalizowane podejmują liczne wysiłki w celu poprawy lub utrzymania swojej pozycji zawodowej i materialnej.

Artykuł jest oparty na wynikach jakościowych badań terenowych prowadzonych w latach 2013–2016 wśród osób zarejestrowanych w powiatowych urzędach pracy jako bezrobotni oraz pracujących ubogich².

Koncepcja strategii umożliwia skoncentrowanie się na działaniach aktorów społecznych z oddolnej perspektywy, to znaczy z perspektywy ich codziennego życia i trudności, z jakimi na co dzień się oni zmagają (Wallance 2002, s. 276). Zastosowanie tej koncepcji ułatwia także kierowanie uwagi badawczej na sprawstwo ludzi, a jak pisze Ruth Lister, osoby zmarginalizowane, szczególnie te doświadczające ubóstwa, często są postrzegane jako ludzie bierni, o ograniczonym potencjalnie sprawczym (Lister 2007, s. 153; Lister 2015, s. 145). Sprawstwo osób doświadczających ubóstwa jest zawoalowane i mało widoczne, gdyż zazwyczaj koncentruje się ono na życiu codziennym (Lister 2007, s. 153–155; Lister 2015, s. 145–154; zob. też Urbańska 2021). W literaturze przedmiotu zwraca się również uwagę na sprawstwo i strategię podejmowane przez osoby zmarginalizowane i doświadczające biedy jako bazujące na „życiu z dnia na dzień”, „wiązaniu końca z końcem” oraz przetrwaniu (np. Lister 2015, s. 145–154; Kubisa 2017b, s. 181–214). Charakterystyczne dla tych grup ludzi jest wycofanie się w życie prywatne (np. refleksyjność skoncentrowana na prywatności – Mrozowicki 2011, s. 205–210) i doświadczenie samotności (Kubisa 2017b, s. 213).

RAMA TEORETYCZNA

W naukach społecznych koncepcja strategii jest znana i szeroko stosowana (np. Crow 1989; Knights, Morgan 1990; Wallance 2002). W socjologii wykorzystuje się ją najczęściej do badania sprawstwa jednostek i grup społecznych działających w ramach swoich gospodarstw domowych i na rynku pracy (np. Binder 2014; Hyman, Scholarios, Baldry 2005a, 2005b; Archer 2007; Mrozowicki 2011). Koncepcja sprawstwa sytuuje się pomiędzy stanowiskiem strukturalnym, w którym podkreślany jest wpływ struktur determinujących wybory i działania jednostek, a stanowiskiem indywidualnym, w którym ich działania są postrzegane jako ich własny wybór (Kubisa 2017a, s. 55). W teoriach sprawstwa kładzie się nacisk na ludzi jako działające podmioty potrafiące wpływać na otaczającą ich rzeczywistość.

² Badania zostały zrealizowane w ramach: 1) międzynarodowego projektu badawczego The Local Governance of Social Cohesion (Localise); kierownik polskiego zespołu – dr hab. Sławomir Mandes, WS UW, 2) międzynarodowego projektu badawczego Combating Poverty in Europe (COPE); kierowniczka polskiego zespołu prof. Wiesława Kozek, WS UW, 3) dotacji celowej na prowadzenie badań naukowych dla młodych naukowców (DSM 105200/23), kierowniczka – dr Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska, IFiS PAN, 4) dotacji celowej na prowadzenie badań naukowych dla młodych naukowców (DSM 110400), kierowniczka – dr Justyna Zielińska, IFiS APS.

Strategie radzenia sobie definiuję jako wybory i strukturyzowanie swoich działań przez ludzi w perspektywie długo- i krótkoterminowej w celu rozwiązywania ekonomicznych, bytowych oraz zawodowych problemów i osiągnięcia pożądanego sposobu życia. Tak rozumiane strategie radzenia sobie obejmują zarówno świadome (tj. przemyślane i zaplanowane), jak i nie w pełni uświadamiane przez ludzi wybory i sposoby działania podejmowane przez nich w codziennym życiu. Stosowanie konkretnych strategii radzenia sobie zależy od uwarunkowań strukturalnych, społecznych i kulturowych, takich jak: aktualna koniunktura gospodarcza, dostęp do różnego rodzaju zasobów, sposób uspołecznienia, oczekiwania społeczne, a także od kreatywności ludzi (Burawoy, Krotov, Lytkina 2000, s. 47; Mrozowicki 2011, s. 14; Rakodi 2002, s. 8).

Formułując powyższą definicję, inspirowałam się podejściem badaczy z Wielkiej Brytanii, którzy analizowali strategie radzenia sobie wśród pracowników zatrudnionych w sektorze usługowym (Hyman, Scholarios, Baldry 2005a) oraz definicją strategii życiowych stosowaną przez Margaret Archer (2007). Jeff Hyman, Dora Scholarios i Chris Baldry rozumieją strategie radzenia sobie jako strukturyzowanie swoich działań przez pracowników w perspektywie zarówno długo-, jak i krótkoterminowej, ukierunkowane na osiąganie celów (2005a, s. 707). Strategie to dla nich rodzaj „przepisu na działanie”, w którego realizacji ważną rolę odgrywają zasoby, jakie ludzie posiadają. Jak pisze Archer, ludzie mają wizję pożądanego przez siebie sposobu życia i starają się ją zrealizować, uwzględniając przy tym strukturalne i kulturowe uwarunkowania, z którymi się konfrontują (2007, s. 88). Ważnym pojęciem dla Archer jest refleksyjność, dzięki której ludzie w wyborze swoich sposobów działania mają pewną autonomię od czynników zewnętrznych, takich jak na przykład pochodzenie klasowe (2007, s. 14, s. 25–61). Strategie radzenia sobie mogą przyjmować postać indywidualną, kiedy są one realizowane samodzielnie przez jednostki, oraz zbiorową, gdy są realizowane wspólnie przez grupy osób.

W latach 70.–90. XX wieku koncepcja strategii (a dokładnie strategii gospodarstw domowych) była stosowana do badania grup społecznych znajdujących się w trudnej sytuacji i walczących o przetrwanie w ryzykownym środowisku: ludzi zepchniętych na margines życia społecznego, rolników, drobnych przedsiębiorców, migrantów itd. (Wallance 2002, s. 276). Badaczy interesowało, jak ludzie radzą sobie w trudnych warunkach. Tematyka strategii, szczególnie adaptacyjnych, i radzenia sobie ze zmianą społeczną stała się też istotnym zagadnieniem w badaniach prowadzonych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, w tym w Polsce, od okresu transformacji systemowej (np. Burawoy, Verdery 1999; Marody 2002; Mrozowicki 2011; Urbanik 2018). Analizie poddawano wpływ przemian społeczno-gospodarczych na sytuację różnych grup społecznych i ich reakcje. Ciekawe wyniki przyniosło badanie strategii przetrwania robotnic i ich rodzin w potransformacyjnej Rosji, w warunkach deindustrializacji, masowego bezrobocia, inflacji i rosnącej roli mafii (Burawoy, Krotov, Lytkina 2000). Badacze wyróżnili dwojakiemu rodzaju strategie stosowane przez robotnice. Po pierwsze strategie defensywne, polegające na bronienu się wszelkimi dostępnymi sposobami przed popadnięciem w nędzę (np. podejmowanie jakiegokolwiek pracy, w tym prac okazjonalnych i na nieformalnym rynku, produkowanie

żywności i dóbr na własny użytek, staranie się o zasiłki dla bezrobotnych itd.). Po drugie strategie przedsiębiorcze, polegające na próbach dopasowania się do nowej rzeczywistości społeczno-gospodarczej przez podjęcie działalności na rynku (handel, drobna produkcja towarów). Badania pokazują, że strategie przedsiębiorcze dla rodzin z klasy robotniczej mogą być ryzykowne z powodu braku wystarczających zasobów materialnych i społecznych oraz przeszkód instytucjonalnych (przymus ułożenia sobie odpowiednich stosunków z przedstawicielami nomenklatury i mafii). Okazuje się, że często to strategie defensywne (szczególnie jeśli dywersyfikuje się je, minimalizując w ten sposób ryzyko porażki) stwarzają lepsze warunki na przetrwanie niż strategie przedsiębiorcze. Powyższe badanie pokazuje, że popularny w socjologii podział na strategie aktywne (przedsiębiorcze) i bierne (defensywne), gdzie te pierwsze uznaje się za lepsze, bo wskazują na udział w grze rynkowej, jest nieuprawomocniony i powierzchowny. Piotr Binder, który badał strategie radzenia sobie wśród społeczności wiejskich w Polsce i Rosji, podkreśla, że należy odrzucić podział na strategie aktywne i bierne także dlatego, że prowadzi on do interpretowania działań osób doświadczających biedy jako pasywnych oraz może je stygmatyzować (2014, s. 41–45, 159). Ponadto podział ten utrudnia śledzenie funkcjonowania ludzi w ramach ekonomii nieformalnej, która bywa istotną sferą działania dla osób doświadczających ubóstwa (Binder 2014, s. 44, 159).

METODOLOGIA BADAŃ

Artykuł jest oparty na badaniach terenowych prowadzonych w latach 2013–2016 w Radomiu i Toruniu wśród pracujących ubogich oraz osób zarejestrowanych w powiatowych urzędach pracy jako bezrobotni. Badania podjęto w okresie, kiedy świat pracy doświadczał konsekwencji globalnego kryzysu finansowego z lat 2007–2009, czyli, jak pisze Mateusz Karolak, podczas „trzeciej fali prekaryzacji” charakteryzującej się głównie masowym uelastycznianiem zatrudnienia (2020, s. 55). Polegało ono przede wszystkim na deregulacji kodeksu pracy oraz umasowieniu stosowania umów tymczasowych przez pracodawców, szczególnie umów cywilnoprawnych (Karolak 2020, s. 55–56). Od 2015 roku w wyniku wzmożonej krytyki społecznej rządzący wprowadzili częściową poprawę jakości warunków zatrudnienia, w tym ułatwiono dostęp do zabezpieczeń społecznych, uregulowano i zredukowano możliwości podpisywania umów tymczasowych, wprowadzono systematyczne podnoszenie płacy minimalnej, przyjęto minimalne stawki godzinowe dla umów zleceń oraz umożliwiono wstępowanie do związków zawodowych pracownikom zatrudnionym na umowach cywilnoprawnych i samozatrudnionym (Karolak 2020, s. 56). Z kolei w 2016 roku rząd wprowadził świadczenia wychowawcze dla rodzin z niepełnoletnimi dziećmi w ramach programu „Rodzina 500 Plus”, co wpłynęło na spadek poziomu ubóstwa skrajnego i relatywnego (GUS 2019).

Radom i Toruń, gdzie były prowadzone badania, to miasta na prawach powiatu o średniej wielkości pod względem liczby mieszkańców (rzędu 200 000 osób),

reprezentujące dwa odmienne typy rynków pracy (Kozek 2013, s. 121–123). Radom można określić jako płytki rynek, który w okresie PRL był oparty na monokulturze przemysłowej. Rezultatem likwidacji fabryk w Radomiu było wieloletnie wysokie bezrobocie w mieście i powiecie oraz migracje jego mieszkańców za pracą na inne lokalne rynki (szczególnie do Warszawy). Z kolei Toruń ma cechy głębokiego rynku pracy, gdyż jego struktura gospodarcza jest zróżnicowana, w następstwie czego poziom bezrobocia jest tam znacznie niższy niż w Radomiu. Niemniej w obu miastach widać długofalowe skutki deindustrializacji, co znajduje odzwierciedlenie w wypowiedziach rozmówców i rozmówczyń biorących udział w badaniu – szczególnie tych, którzy przez wiele lat pracowali w dużych zakładach produkcyjnych (takich jak Zakłady Metalowe „Łucznik”, Zakłady Włókien Chemicznych „Elana” czy Toruńska Przędzalnia Czesankowa „Merinotex”) zlikwidowanych po zmianie systemu gospodarczego. W trakcie prowadzenia badań poziom bezrobocia w Radomiu, jak i w całej Polsce, stopniowo spadał – od 21,5% w latach 2013–2014 do 16% w 2016 (BDL GUS 2020). W Toruniu w latach 2013–2014 stopa bezrobocia oscylowała wokół 10%, a następnie spadła do 6% w 2016 roku (BDL GUS 2020). Poziom bezrobocia w powiatach radomskim i toruńskim był znacznie wyższy niż w samych miastach i przykładowo w 2013 roku wynosił 28% w powiecie radomskim, a 21% w toruńskim, co zapewne miało wpływ na zwiększoną konkurencję o miejsca pracy między pracownikami w badanych miastach.

Rozmówcy_czynie byli rekrutowani do badań za pośrednictwem lokalnych powiatowych urzędów pracy i ośrodków pomocy społecznej, których pracownice wskazywały osoby mogące wziąć udział w wywiadach. Łącznie przeprowadzono rozmowy z 46 kobietami i mężczyznami w wieku od 25 do 59 lat. Podstawową metodą badawczą były wywiady indywidualne (10 wywiadów skoncentrowanych na problemie, 15 indywidualnych wywiadów pogłębionych oraz 13 wywiadów półnarracyjnych) oraz dwa zogniskowane wywiady grupowe. Większość rozmówców_czyni korzystała z zasiłków z ośrodków pomocy społecznej (35 osób).

Badania zostały przeprowadzone zgodnie ze standardami etycznymi przyjętymi w naukach społecznych (KEN PAN 2001, Polskie Towarzystwo Socjologiczne 2012). Rozmówcy_czynie z kategorii pracujących ubogich i bezrobotnych należą do szczególnej grupy badanych, tj. osób wrażliwych (*vulnerable*), gdyż doświadczających trudnych sytuacji życiowych, takich jak brak (legalnej) pracy i ubóstwo, a także stygmatyzacji społecznej. Dlatego podczas badań zwracano szczególną uwagę na dobrostan rozmówców_czyni, na przykład przez stosowanie się do wytycznych zgodnych z „empatycznym prowadzeniem wywiadu”, gdzie przyjmuje się, że wywiad jest wspólnie tworzoną opowieścią powstającą dzięki współpracy i partnerskiej relacji między badaczami i rozmówcami (Fontanna, Frey 2009, s. 82–84).

Analiza zebranych materiałów przebiegała stopniowo: poprzez czytanie transkrypcji wywiadów i notatek z wyjazdów terenowych, sporządzanie notatek interpretacyjnych i baz danych, analizowanie materiałów w wiązkach (ze względu na status na rynku pracy, płeć, przynależność do grupy wiekowej itd.) oraz prezentację i dyskusję wyników badań na konferencjach i seminariach naukowych.

POŁOŻENIE BEZROBOTNYCH I PRACUJĄCYCH UBOGICH

Bezrobotni i pracujący ubodzy, z którymi przeprowadzono wywiady, to grupy o podobnym profilu socjologicznym, tj. pochodzące z rodzin robotniczych i rolniczych, na ogół mające wykształcenie średnie (zawodowe lub ogólnokształcące) lub zasadnicze zawodowe, wykonujące prace fizyczne (nisko i średnio wykwalifikowane). Znajdują oni zatrudnienie na budowach, przy remontach, naprawach, w ogrodnictwie, jako brukarze, sprzątaczkę, ochroniarze, sprzedawczynie, opiekunki itp. Sporadycznie wykonują prace biurowe, jak wpisywanie danych do komputera i archiwizowanie dokumentów. Pracujący ubodzy są bliżej rynku pracy niż bezrobotni. W badanej grupie były to na ogół osoby pracujące przez cały rok – na formalnym i/lub nieformalnym rynku pracy, ale zdarzały się też osoby podejmujące zatrudnienie sezonowo – wiosną, latem i jesienią przy budowie dróg, zbiorach w rolnictwie i ogrodnictwie. Zimą, kiedy miały przerwę w zarabkowaniu, przeważnie rejestrowały się w urzędach pracy.

Status bezrobotnego_{ej} przysługuje osobom niemającym zatrudnienia, a głównymi powodami, dla których badani_e rejestrują się w urzędach pracy, jest dostęp do ubezpieczenia zdrowotnego oraz wymóg statusu bezrobotnego_{ej} w celu otrzymania wsparcia z ośrodków pomocy społecznej. Jednak bezrobotni_e niejednokrotnie pracują – na nieformalnym rynku pracy oraz w ramach kursów i staży oferowanych im przez instytucje i organizacje zajmujące się osobami bezrobotnymi i doświadczającymi ubóstwa. Co najmniej połowa rozmówców_{czyń} (23 osoby) z obu kategorii badanych miała doświadczenie pracy niesformalizowanej. Zarabkowanie „na czarno” jest dla nich często życiową koniecznością, wynikającą z braku dostępu do zasiłków dla bezrobotnych oraz z powodu niskich kwot zasiłków otrzymywanych z pomocy społecznej, co ilustruje wypowiedź Włodzimierza³:

Ja dostaję 260 złotych. Ja jestem ciekaw, kto by z tego przeżył?! Jeszcze płacąc za prąd, nie? Ja, żeby nie butelki, żeby nie puszki [rozmówca zbiera butelki i puszki, które potem sprzedaje – JZ], to bym kurde zdechl. [...] A jak ja dostałem, kurde, w zeszłym miesiącu, kurde, rachunek 260 zł, a 261 z MOPS-u dostałem, tak? To z czego ja mam żyć? Za złotówkę? (58 lat, bezrobotny)

Ścieżki zawodowe kobiet i mężczyzn w badanych grupach są wyraźnie odmienne, co wynika z uwarunkowań związanych z podziałem prac opartym na płci kulturowej, mającym tu spore znaczenie. Są one dość typowe dla osób ze środowisk robotniczych, gdzie kobieta jest głównie odpowiedzialna za pracę w gospodarstwie domowym i opiekę nad dziećmi, a mężczyzna za finansowe utrzymanie rodziny. Ten podział powoduje, że kobiety mające dzieci rezygnują czasowo lub na stałe z pracy zarobkowej lub wykonują ją w ograniczonym zakresie⁴.

³ Wszystkie imiona rozmówców_{czyń} pojawiające się w artykule są zanonimizowane.

⁴ Więcej o podziale pracy ze względu na płeć w środowiskach marginalizowanych można przeczytać np. w: Potoczna, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2009; Golczyńska-Grondas 2004.

Sporo nie pracuję, sporo. Zdarzały się jakieś prace, powiedzmy na czarno, tak, więc to był gdzieś okres tak dwa czy trzy lata wstecz, ale taka oficjalna praca to co najmniej z dziesięć lat temu. Dzieci były małe, więc troszeczkę też nie było szans, powiedzmy gdzieś na podjęcie takiej normalnej pracy (Agnieszka, 43 lata, bezrobotna).

Na ogół badani_e mają złą sytuację materialną, co oznacza, że brakuje im i ich rodzinom środków na zaspokojenie podstawowych potrzeb, takich jak: kupno jedzenia, lekarstw, odzieży, mebli i sprzętów gospodarstwa domowego, opłacanie czynszu i rachunków za mieszkanie, przeprowadzenie remontu w mieszkaniu, dbanie o zdrowie, edukację itd. Ponadto nie stać ich na finansowanie przyjemności, w tym wyjazdów wypoczynkowych poza miasto. Poważnym utrudnieniem dla rozmówców_czyn jest deficyt środków finansowych służących poprawie swojej sytuacji zawodowej, na przykład brak pieniędzy na wymianę prawa jazdy i odnowienie uprawnień zawodowych. Jak wspomniałam powyżej, nikomu z badanych zarejestrowanych w powiatowych urzędach pracy nie przysługiwało prawo do zasiłku dla bezrobotnych, a zasiłki otrzymywane z ośrodków pomocy społecznej są niskie, rzędu od 250 zł (gospodarstwo jednoosobowe) do 1300 zł (gospodarstwo pięcioosobowe) miesięcznie. Nie pozwalają one na wyjście z ubóstwa, a jedynie na zaspokojenie najbardziej bieżących potrzeb.

Trudna sytuacja materialna powoduje, że rozmówcy_czynie szukają różnych sposobów, aby zwiększyć dochody w swoich gospodarstwach domowych – podejmują się prac najemnych na rynku formalnym i nieformalnym, zbierają i sprzedają puszki, butelki, złom, makulaturę, aluminium, zastawiają biżuterię i sprzęty AGD, pożyczają pieniądze od rodziny i znajomych, czasem w parabankach itd. Problemem są długi zaciągane przez bezrobotnych i pracujących ubogich, z których nie są oni w stanie się wy dostać. W tym kontekście dobrze wypada świadczenie „Rodzina 500 plus”, które poprawiło sytuację w gospodarstwach domowych z niepełnoletnimi dziećmi, co pokazuje poniższa wypowiedź:

Można powiedzieć, że śpiemy troszeczkę spokojniej. Śpiemy spokojniej, dlatego że na przykład nie martwię się, idąc spać, czy jutro będę miała z czego obiad zrobić. Czy moje dziecko będzie głodne, czy nie (Patrycja, 36 lat, pracująca uboga).

Podstawowymi trudnościami, z którymi borykają się pracujący ubodzy, są brak stałej, czasem legalnej pracy oraz niskie płace. Brak stałego zatrudnienia oznacza pracę o charakterze sezonowym lub dorywczym, gdzie często nie wiadomo, ile i kiedy będzie się pracowało w danym miesiącu, a stawki rozmówców_czyn w czasie, kiedy prowadzono badanie, na ogół wahały się od czterech–sześciu do dziesięciu zł netto za godzinę pracy. Pracodawcy oferujący umowy najczęściej zatrudniają na umowy cywilnoprawne, sporadycznie zdarza się zatrudnianie na umowy o pracę. Niskie zarobki to przede wszystkim rezultat niskich stawek oferowanych przez pracodawców, ale niejednokrotnie także pracy w niepełnym wymiarze godzin. Mało kto z rozmówców_czyn z kategorii pracujących ubogich pracuje 160 godzin miesięcznie. Z kolei zarobkowanie w „szarej strefie” praktykowane przez część

pracujących ubogich i bezrobotnych pociąga za sobą różnorodne zagrożenia, jak brak bezpiecznych i higienicznych warunków pracy, brak dostępu do ubezpieczeń społecznych, wypłacanie wynagrodzenia w ratach lub brak zapłaty za pracę wskutek nieuczciwości pracodawców, co obrazują poniższe wypowiedzi:

Po prostu człowiek, jak pracuje na czarno, wiadomo same były problemy, że pensje się dostawało w zaliczkach (Marek, 36 lat, pracujący ubogi).

Pracowałam w sklepie całodobowym, ale też nas pan wykręcił, nie płacił (Aldona, 45 lat, bezrobotna).

Rezultatem braku środków do życia jest doświadczanie chronicznej niepewności i poczucia zagrożenia opisywanych przez jednego z rozmówców jako „ciągłe poje-dynkowanie się o przetrwanie i dżungla”. Badani_e są zmuszeni do życia z dnia na dzień i nie wiedzą, jak będzie wyglądała ich najbliższa przyszłość. Z prezentowa-nych badań wyłania się obraz ludzi wysoce sprekaryzowanych, o czym świadczą ich niskie i nieregularne dochody, niepewność pracy, brak lub ograniczony dostęp do zabezpieczeń społecznych i brak reprezentacji interesów zbiorowych (Mrozowicki, Czarzasty 2020, s. 26). Wysoki stopień prekaryzacji powoduje, że w ich przypadku ryzyko prekarności, czyli doświadczania kruchości istnienia i cierpienia, jest wyjąt-kowo wysokie (Butler 2009, cyt. za: Mrozowicki, Czarzasty 2020, s. 24).

STRATEGIE RADZENIA SOBIE STOSOWANE PRZEZ BEZROBOTNYCH I PRACUJĄCYCH UBOGICH

Realizowane przez rozmówców_czynie strategie można porównać do wzorów, w jakie układają się wybory i codzienne działania ludzi; są one nakierowane na codzienne przetrwanie, a część z nich na poprawę swojego położenia. W toku analizy opracowałam typologię tych strategii, obejmującą różnego rodzaju prace świadczone przez pracujących ubogich i bezrobotnych: najemne i nienajemne, formalne i nie-formalne oraz te świadczone w ramach kursów i staży.

Wyodrębnione przeze mnie strategie to: „chwytanie okazji”, „trwanie w pracy wykonywanej”, „budowanie i odbudowywanie pozycji zawodowej” oraz „nastawienie na nienajemną pracę domową”. Dla jasności wyводу przedstawiam każdą strategię z osobna, choć można zaobserwować typy hybrydalne, to znaczy występowanie w tym samym czasie dwóch typów strategii u jednej osoby. Strategie stosowane przez badanych_e ulegają zmianie na przestrzeni czasu, w zależności od zmieniających się okoliczności, a ich rezultatem może być polepszenie sytuacji osoby na rynku pracy, jej pogorszenie bądź brak zmian (por. Domecka, Mrozowicki 2008, s. 138).

Chwywanie okazji

Pierwszy typ strategii nazywałam chwywaniem okazji. Jest to rodzaj działań polegających na ciągłym poszukiwaniu i podejmowaniu różnych prac i aktywności przynoszących zarobek. Są to na ogół prace dorywcze, krótkotrwałe, najczęściej wykonywane bez jakiegokolwiek umowy, np. zajęcia przy remontach bądź też prace sezonowe w rolnictwie, ogrodnictwie czy budownictwie. To także prace wykonywane w ramach płatnych staży i szkoleń oferowanych przez instytucje i NGO-sy zajmujące się osobami bezrobotnymi i doświadczającymi ubóstwa. W skrajnych przypadkach chwywanie okazji polega na zbieraniu puszek, butelek i aluminium w celu ich spieniężenia (por. strategię ekologiczną – Rakowski 2009, s. 59; Tilly 1998, s. 154). Ten typ strategii okazuje się rozpowszechniony (zaobserwowałam go u około 16 osób) i dominuje wśród mężczyzn, którzy nie mogą znaleźć stałego zatrudnienia, szczególnie mających dzieci na utrzymaniu. Dotyczy także mężczyzn w wieku ponad 50 lat, którym nie udaje się znaleźć legalnej i stałej pracy. Mężczyźni mówią o „chodzeniu za pracą, szukaniu jakiegokolwiek pracy, łapaniu każdej pracy, braniu się za wszystko, lawirowaniu, kombinowaniu oraz o pojedynkowaniu się ciągle o przetrwanie”. W terminie „chwywanie” zawarty jest aspekt aktywności ludzi, którzy regularnie muszą ponawiać swoje wysiłki, aby zapewnić sobie ciągłość zarobkowania, co pokazuje fragment wypowiedzi Radosława: „to nie to, że ja siedzę pod telefonem, ktoś zadzwoni i lecę. Ja też chodzę, szukam, pytam znajomych, różnie” (58 lat, pracujący ubogi).

Pracujący, którzy stosują tę strategię, zazwyczaj są zarejestrowani jako bezrobotni w urzędach pracy bez prawa do zasiłku. Większość z nich jest członkami gospodarstw domowych, w których pobierane są świadczenia z ośrodków pomocy społecznej lub, jak w przypadku Romana, otrzymują rentę:

Znaczy, bo ja jestem tak... nie lubię siedzieć – raz, a dwa – mam zasiłek, mam rentę płatną, ale wiadomo, jakie są dzisiaj renty... No, nie utrzymam się. No, dlatego łapię każdą pracę, jaka była, gdzie było. I na portierni siedziałem, i prace budowlane, chodziłem, biegałem nawet z miotłą jako porządkowy również. Wszystkiego się już brałem, żeby tylko dorobić sobie do renty (Roman, 44 lata, bezrobotny).

Zatem chwywanie okazji polega na dążeniu do osiągnięcia jak najdłuższej ciągłości przychodów finansowych, które pozwolą się utrzymać. Ponadto wykonywanie prac, nawet niestałych, wypełnia czas i daje poczucie przynależności do świata pracujących. Rozmówcy są gotowi na podjęcie wielu różnych zajęć, choć pojawiają się głosy, że nie przyjmują prac zbyt ciężkich dla nich fizycznie (to mówią osoby z problemami zdrowotnymi) oraz prac zdecydowanie powyżej ich kwalifikacji, wymagających specjalistycznej wiedzy i uprawnień. Uważają, że podjęcie takich zajęć mogłoby zniszczyć ich opinię na lokalnym rynku, gdzie często zlecenia zdobywają dzięki zbudowanym przez siebie nieformalnym sieciom kontaktów. Chwywanie okazji obejmuje również wyjazdy zagraniczne do pracy (lub do dużego miasta na terenie Polski) i podejmowanie tam prac fizycznych, głównie przez mężczyzn w młodym

i średnim wieku. Jednak rozłąka z rodziną i trudności z adaptacją do obcej kultury często wpływają na rezygnację z migracji zarobkowych.

Strategia chwywania okazji jest z konieczności nakierowana głównie na codzienne przetrwanie, ale w dłuższej perspektywie też na głębsze „zaczepienie się” na rynku pracy. Celem osób realizujących tę strategię jest ustabilizowanie swojej sytuacji poprzez znalezienie stałej i legalnej – nawet jeśli niskopłatnej – pracy. Rozmówcy stosujący tę strategię mają szczególnie słabą siłę przetargową, dlatego starają się być cały czas aktywni oraz rozwijać swoje sieci znajomości umożliwiające im zarobkowanie, dzięki którym liczą na ewentualną poprawę swojego położenia. Szczególną barierę stanowi dla nich struktura lokalnych rynków pracy, która osłabia ich siłę przetargową. Im płytszy rynek pracy i im wyższe bezrobocie, tym niższa jest jakość oferowanych prac.

Trwanie w pracy wykonywanej

Drugą wyróżnioną przeze mnie strategią jest trwanie w pracy wykonywanej. Dotyczy ona pracujących ubogich, ale także części osób, które są formalnie bezrobotne, ale pracują na nieformalnym rynku pracy. „Trwanie” odnosi się do kobiet i mężczyzn wykonujących stałą pracę (także w ramach projektów oferowanych przez NGO-sy) lub pracę, którą świadczą przez dłuższy okres (tj. co najmniej kilka miesięcy) i w międzyczasie nie szukają innych źródeł zarobkowania. Zaobserwowałam ją około dziewięciu razy. Strategia ta polega na trzymaniu się pracy, którą się ma, gdyż daje ona na ogół – mniejszą lub większą – ciągłość pracy i zarobków, co w połączeniu z pobieranymi zasiłkami umożliwia gospodarstwu domowemu minimalną stabilizację.

Na ogół rozmówcy_czynie nie są zadowoleni z wykonywanych przez siebie prac, gdyż są to niskopłatne i niejednokrotnie wyczerpujące oraz monotonne prace fizyczne, bez większych szans na awans (por. *dead-end careers* – Mrozowicki 2011, s. 163–164). Tak Krzysztof opowiada o swojej pracy polegającej na sprzątaniu pociągów:

Niezadowolony to jestem z tej pracy, bo bym chciał robić coś innego. Ale trzeba robić to, co się ma, nie? No i zarobki [niskie – JZ]. [...] Się idzie do pracy i na dzień dobry zaraz szczoty, ten kwas i się myje te pudła [wagony – JZ]. Zimno, nie zimno, póki myka nie zamarznie, tak jak teraz jest, to w tej wodzie i 12 godzin na dworzu. Da się zamarznąć. Nieraz śnieg jest... to nie ma, że boli (46 lat, pracujący ubogi).

Mimo to pracownicy trzymają się swoich prac, sądząc, iż nic lepszego nie znajdują ze względu na wysokie bezrobocie (Radom), swoje niskie wykształcenie i kwalifikacje, obowiązki opiekuńcze, stan zdrowia, wiek ponad 50 lat, niepełnosprawność czy przeszłość kryminalną. Wyjątek wśród badanych stosujących tę strategię stanowi Zofia (41 lat, wykształcenie średnie ogólnokształcące, samodzielna matka dwójki nastoletnich dzieci), która pracuje na ponad połowę etatu z dziećmi w świetlicy środowiskowej i twierdzi, że dzięki tej pracy „znalazła swoje miejsce na ziemi”. Przypadek Zofii jest szczególnie ciekawy i paradoksalny, gdyż jest ona terapeutką

zajęciową i pracownicą socjalną, która sama musi zgłaszać się po pomoc finansową do pomocy społecznej, co przypomina niedawne protesty środowiska pracowników socjalnych w sprawie podniesienia ich wynagrodzeń.

Pracownicy_e stosujący strategię trwania w pracy wykonywanej często nie czują się zakorzeniemi w swojej pracy – mają poczucie, że łatwo mogą ją stracić ze względu na trudną sytuację na rynku i swoje niskie kwalifikacje, a także ze względu na brak umowy o pracę lub jakiegokolwiek umowy. Nawet wspomniana Zofia nie jest do końca pewna swojej pozycji i tego czy utrzyma pracę – jej plan to „nie dać się wywalić”. Innym aspektem braku zakorzenienia jest nieidentyfikowanie się z pracą, którą się wykonuje, czyli niebudowanie swojej tożsamości na niej – przykład wyżej cytowanego Krzysztofa. Ponadto osoby stosujące tę strategię na ogół deklarują, że chciałyby poprawić swoje położenie na rynku pracy, ale często – przynajmniej w najbliższej przyszłości – nie widzą na to szans. Obawiają się podejmować inicjatyw, żeby nie zburzyć kruchej stabilizacji, którą udało im się osiągnąć.

Budowanie i odbudowywanie pozycji zawodowej

Kolejną strategią jest budowanie i odbudowywanie pozycji zawodowej (por. kariera typu konstrukcja – Domecka, Mrozowicki 2008; strategii inwestowania – Drozdowski 2002, s. 313–314). „Budowanie” polega na planowaniu swojej aktywności zawodowej i rozważaniu, jakiego rodzaju pracę chciałoby się podjąć, a jakiej nie, i na zmierzaniu do wyznaczonego celu. Inną wersją „budowania” jest „odbudowywanie”, czyli planowanie i dążenie do odzyskania utraconej wcześniej pozycji i rodzaju pracy.

W grupie pracujących ubogich i bezrobotnych strategię budowania i odbudowywania zaobserwowałam tylko u czterech osób, są to kobiety w młodym lub średnim wieku (od 26 do 46 lat). Kobiety stosujące tę strategię szukają pracy w sektorze usługowym, szczególnie biurowej, która jest mniej obciążająca dla organizmu niż praca fizyczna. Jednocześnie uczestniczą one w kursach i stażach w celu znalezienia odpowiedniej pracy. W realizacji tej strategii szczególnie użyteczne są zasoby materialne, w tym finansowe, które umożliwiają długotrwałe szukanie pracy zgodnej ze swoimi oczekiwaniami lub pracowanie na część etatu w nadziei na jego zwiększenie przez pracodawcę⁵. W stosowaniu budowania istotne okazują się także zasoby indywidualne, takie jak zaradność i umiejętność nawiązywania kontaktów społecznych.

Działania podejmowane w ramach tej strategii przybierają różną dynamikę – od prężnych, przez bardziej spokojne, do przygaszonych i naznaczonych frustracją oraz niewiarą, że uda się odmienić swoją sytuację. Wypowiedzi niektórych kobiet świadczą o tym, że patrzą one z pewnym optymizmem w przyszłość, a wśród innych pojawia się frustracja i coraz większy brak nadziei na odmianę sytuacji, co ilustrują słowa

⁵ Wyróżniam typy zasobów za Lister, która zwraca szczególną uwagę na kwestie dostępności do różnego rodzaju zasobów w procesie gromadzenia środków do życia. Lister wymienia zasoby osobiste, materialne, społeczne i kulturowe (2007, s. 161).

bezrobotnej, 46-letniej Ewy: „po każdej rozmowie kwalifikacyjnej jest po prostu dół... do niczego się nie nadaję, znowu mnie nie chcieli. Niestety”.

Niemniej, niezależnie od tego jak rozmówczynie odbierają swoje położenie i szanse powodzenia, należy zaznaczyć, że stosowanie strategii budowania i odbudowywania pozycji zawodowej jest dla wielu badanych wyraźnie naznaczone ryzykiem niepowodzenia. W sytuacji ograniczeń strukturalnych szansa na zrealizowanie tej strategii z powodzeniem zwiększa się wraz z posiadaniem odpowiednich zasobów, których część rozmówczyń nie ma lub ma je w ograniczonym zakresie (zob. podobnie Grotowska-Leder 2011, s. 197; Kozek 2017, s. 215–245). Kluczowe są przede wszystkim zasoby materialne i społeczne (odpowiednie kontakty na lokalnych rynkach pracy). Użyteczna okazuje się też mobilność przestrzenna, umożliwiająca migracje za pracą. Jednak mobilność przestrzenna jest dość niska wśród badanych.

Nastawienie na nienajemną pracę domową

Ostatnią wyróżnioną przeze mnie strategią stosowaną w odniesieniu do sfery pracy jest nastawienie na nienajemną pracę domową, którą zaobserwowałam u 17 kobiet. Polega ona na stałym lub czasowym wyjściu z rynku pracy, czyli na niepodejmowaniu żadnej pracy najemnej lub podejmowaniu jej sporadycznie bądź w bardzo ograniczonym zakresie. Strategia ta odnosi się do kobiet, szczególnie matek, które wykonują czaso- i energochłonne prace opiekuńcze, tj. przede wszystkim zajmują się swoimi niepełnoletnimi dziećmi, gospodarstwem domowym, a czasem także innymi dorosłymi członkami rodziny (np. przewlekle chorymi). Ponadto stosują one męczące, czasochłonne, a czasem także poniżające sposoby radzenia sobie z biedą, stąd określane są w literaturze przedmiotu „menedżerkami ubóstwa” (Tarkowska 2002, s. 121–124).

Na ogół kobiety realizujące tę strategię zwracają dużą uwagę na kwestie związane z edukacją swoich dzieci. Kobiety nie tylko szykują je do szkoły, ale też motywują i pomagają im w nauce, mając nadzieję, że dzięki temu ich dzieci będą miały lepszą przyszłość. W tym aspekcie realizację tej strategii można potraktować jako inwestycję związaną z rynkiem pracy, a ulokowaną w dzieciach, co można nazwać strategią „wspierania przyszłości zawodowej dzieci”.

Nastawienie na nienajemną pracę domową różnie wygląda – część kobiet nie pracowała najemnie, reszta pracowała mniej lub bardziej regularnie do momentu urodzenia dziecka(ci). Często rozmówczynie deklarowały, że chciałyby wrócić na rynek pracy, gdy tylko dzieci będą starsze i bardziej samodzielne, ale podobnie jak wielu innych rozmówców_czyń nie wiedzą, co mogłyby i co powinny zrobić, żeby znaleźć pracę najemną – najlepiej legalną i stałą. Czują się zdezorientowane – rozważają dalszą edukację, ukończenie kursów i staży, ale brakuje im wiedzy, jakie konkretnie kroki powinny podjąć, żeby tę pracę znaleźć. Ponadto, analogicznie do mężczyzn stosujących strategię chwytania okazji, kobiety często nie mają zasobów, aby dokonać zmian i zrealizować swoje pomysły. Brakuje im czasu, pieniędzy i innych środków materialnych, a czasem też wsparcia ze strony rodziny.

Urzędy pracy i ośrodki pomocy społecznej starają się przybliżyć kobietom rynek pracy, zmotywować je do wejścia na niego i przekształcić je w pracownice najemne. Ta motywacja jest budowana w ramach spotkań z pracownicami tych instytucji i kursów organizowanych przez nie. Reakcje rozmówczyń na kursy są zróżnicowane. Czasem czują, że tracą czas, który mogłyby poświęcić dzieciom, oraz czują się infantylizowane poprzez wykonywanie różnych zadań i ćwiczeń, których celu nie rozumieją, polegających na przykład na rysowaniu, oglądaniu filmów, rozmowach o planowaniu dnia. Jednak pojawiają się też wypowiedzi, że kursy podnoszą na duchu, dodają wiary we własne możliwości oraz pomagają radzić sobie ze stresem, konfliktami w rodzinie oraz nierównym podziałem obowiązków domowych.

Jak pokazują badania, problemem jest niepostrzeżenie przez decydentów polityk publicznych pracy opiekuńczej jako pracy oraz „wypychanie” kobiet do pracy najemnej lub na staże, gdzie często są one wyzyskiwane. Na przykład pracują w zbyt dużym wymiarze czasu pracy niż obowiązujący, zbyt ciężko fizycznie, w warunkach niezgodnych z przepisami BHP, za bardzo niskie wynagrodzenie bądź po odbytych stażu nie zostają zatrudnione przez pracodawcę, a w ich miejsce przyjmowane są kolejne stażystki (zob. podobnie Sztandar-Sztanderska 2016, s. 119–121). Ponadto niepostrzeżenie przez decydentów i w dyskursie publicznym pracy opiekuńczej jako pracy powoduje, że kobiety czują się niepełnowartościowymi członkiniami społeczeństwa i nazywają swoje codzienne obowiązki „siedzeniem w domu, lataniem ze szmatą czy byciem kurą domową”. Można zastanowić się, na ile praktykowanie strategii nastawienia na nienajemną pracę domową jest życiową koniecznością związaną z podziałem pracy ze względu na płeć wśród badanych grup, a na ile jest ono pewnego rodzaju ucieczką z rynku pracy przed niskopłatnymi, ciężkimi i niesatysfakcjonującymi zajęciami.

WNIOSKI

Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań wyróżniłam cztery rodzaje strategii radzenia sobie stosowanych przez pracownice_ków doświadczających ubóstwa i bezrobotnych. Wszystkie z nich są strategiami indywidualnymi i zostały zaobserwowane w określonych kontekstach ekonomicznych (wysokie bezrobocie i masowe uelastycznianie zatrudnienia), a także instytucjonalno-prawnych i społeczno-kulturowych.

Strategie „chwytania okazji” i „trwania w pracy wykonywanej” są ukierunkowane przede wszystkim na codzienne radzenie sobie, choć ta pierwsza ma też na celu zmianę własnego położenia. Można uznać, że obie strategie mają charakter defensywny, to znaczy są wymuszone przez bariery strukturalne i słabą pozycję pracujących na rynku pracy. Podobnie jak kariera typu *patchwork*, opisywana przez Markietę Domecką i Adama Mrozowickiego, ukazują one chaotyczność i przypadkowość przebiegu własnej ścieżki zawodowej i ograniczoną kontrolę nad nią (Domecka, Mrozowicki 2008, s. 144). Jedynie strategia „budowania i odbudowywania pozycji zawodowej” wyraźnie jest przejawem długofalowego planowania swojej ścieżki zawodowej i poprawy na

rynku pracy. Jednak efekty stosowania tej strategii są nieznane, tj. w czasie prowadzenia badań nie przynosiły one widocznych rezultatów, co może wskazywać na ich nieskuteczność. Dlatego trudno mówić, aby któraś ze strategii była lepsza bądź gorsza. Może okazać się, podobnie jak w badaniach prowadzonych przez Michaela Burawoya i zespół rosyjskich badaczy (Burawoy, Krotov, Lytkina 2000), że „defensywna” strategia „trwanie w pracy wykonywanej” przyniesie lepszy skutek w sensie zawodowym i materialnym niż „przedsiębiorcza”, czyli „budowanie i odbudowywanie pozycji zawodowej”. Szczególnie dotyczy to osób mających wyjątkowo słabą pozycję na rynku pracy.

Jak wynika z badań, istotnymi czynnikami ułatwiającymi radzenie sobie na rynku pracy w sytuacji wysokiego bezrobocia są zasoby, jakimi dysponują pracujący_e. Kluczowe są zasoby materialne umożliwiające działanie w perspektywie długookresowej. Dzięki nim można kształcić się, poświęcić czas na szukanie pracy zgodnej ze swoimi oczekiwaniami czy migrować na inny lokalny rynek pracy. Widoczny deficyt wśród rozmówców i rozmówczyń stanowi brak odpowiednich zasobów społecznych, które mogłyby być dla nich cenne na rynku pracy. Nieformalne sieci społeczne, które mają badani, są na ogół słabe – pomagają im w codziennym radzeniu sobie, ale są niewystarczające, żeby odmienić swoją sytuację. Innymi ważnymi zasobami wśród badanych są zasoby osobiste, jak pracowitość, gospodarność czy komunikatywność, a także zdrowie, które umożliwia podjęcie różnych prac, szczególnie fizycznych.

Dużym utrudnieniem dla bezrobotnych i pracujących ubogich jest nieprzejrzystość rynku pracy polegająca na niemożności dostrzeżenia reguł panujących na nim, a których znajomość ułatwiałaby podejmowanie odpowiednich decyzji. Badani stosujący wszystkie wymienione w tym artykule strategie nie są pewni swoich działań i nie wiedzą, co konkretnie powinni robić, żeby osiągnąć stabilizację i zarobki umożliwiające godne i satysfakcjonujące życie. Wywołuje to w nich poczucie zagubienia, przygnębienia i niepewności, zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do własnej przyszłości.

Jak wynika z przeprowadzonych badań, podejmowanie konkretnych strategii zależy od posiadanych zasobów, ale też od lokalnego rynku pracy, na jakim się funkcjonuje, sposobów uspołecznienia i podziału pracy ze względu na płęć kulturową. Badania te potwierdzają, że sprawstwo osób bezrobotnych i pracujących ubogich jest zawoalowane, często niewidoczne, gdyż jest skupione na codziennym przetrwaniu. Niemniej zarówno wśród bezrobotnych, jak i pracujących ubogich widać dużą aktywność. Osoby realizujące strategię chwytania okazji cały czas starają się być aktywne na rynku pracy, aby regularnie znajdować źródło zarobkowania, próbują także „chwycić” lepszą, to znaczy przede wszystkim stabilną pracę. Pracownicy_e stosujący strategię trwania w pracy wykonywanej regularnie chodzą do pracy, gdzie często pracują ciężko i w trudnych warunkach. Osoby budujące lub odbudowujące swoją pozycję zawodową dążą do kreowania swojej ścieżki zawodowej, zgłaszają się na kursy i staże oraz regularnie biorą udział w rozmowach rekrutacyjnych. W końcu kobiety nastawione na nieodpłatną pracę najemną nie są aktywne na rynku pracy, ale wykonują czasochłonne prace opiekuńcze oraz wiele innych czynności, aby „wiązać koniec z końcem” w sytuacji niedoborów materialnych doświadczanych przez rodzinę.

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JUSTYNA ZIELIŃSKA

COPING STRATEGIES ON THE LABOUR MARKET
AMONG MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

Keywords: sociology of work, poverty, unemployment, coping strategies, agency, Poland

The aim of this article is to present coping strategies used by people registered in Public Employment Services as unemployed and workers for whom experiencing poverty is characteristic. These strategies are practiced in the absence of adequate support from public institutions and non-governmental organizations dealing with the unemployed and working poor. They are an expression of everyday efforts to stabilize and improve one's own situation. The results of the presented research are based on qualitative field research conducted between 2013–2016 in Radom and Toruń. The typology of coping strategies presented in this article is part of the stream of research on agency and strategies used by people in their everyday lives.

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MARIAN POKROPEK – PROFESOR, KTÓREGO ZAPAMIĘTAM

(1932–2023)

Pierwsze kadry filmu *Podróż z Profesorem Pokropkiem* w reżyserii Marii Małanicz-Przybylskiej i Poli Rożek (Warszawa 2008)¹ przedstawiają odbitą w samochodowym lusterku część twarzy profesora Mariana Pokropka. Widać krzaczaste brwi – jeden z Jego znaków rozpoznawczych. Słysząc również jego komentarz do pokonywanej trasy, a z głosu przebija zniecierpliwienie. Widz orientuje się, że Profesor utknął przed opuszczonym szlabanem na przejeździe kolejowym...; chwilę potem pada profesorskie: „nareszcie!”. W kolejnych scenach widać biegającego i robiącego zdjęcia Profesora. Film, o którym mowa, opowiada o wyjeździe do Spycimierza (wsi w województwie łódzkim), którego celem była dokumentacja układania dywanów kwiatnych i przechodzącej po nich procesji podczas Bożego Ciała w 2007 roku.

Wspomniane krzaczaste brwi, szybkość w ruchach, czasem granicząca z nerwowością, nieustanne poszukiwanie obiektów do fotografowania, połączone z ciekawością wszystkiego i wszystkich, to wizerunek prof. Mariana Pokropka – etnografa-dokumentalisty. Należy do niego dodać jeszcze drugi, charakterystyczny dla Profesora: mówcy i wykładowcy – lekko pochylona sylwetka, ekspresja „grających” dłoni i wzrok utkwiony w jakimś punkcie. Niektórzy (szczególnie studenci) sądzili, że w takim momencie

¹ https://youtu.be/X_6R4ZNLBko?si=kA59bUjx8WH-tBEI (dostęp: 26.10.2023).

Profesor nie rejestruje tego, co się wokół niego dzieje. Tak jednak nie było, co udowadniał trafnymi komentarzami skierowanymi do np. rozgadanych czy nieuważnych słuchaczy.

Profesor Marian Pokropek chętnie dzielił się swoją wiedzą na temat szeroko rozumianej kultury tradycyjnej². Wykorzystywał do tego literaturę, ale przede wszystkim opierał się na tym, co sam zobaczył, przeżył, czego doświadczył w trakcie prowadzonych badań i dokumentacji. Profesor cenił konkret i szczególnie etnograficzny, co wynikało z przyjętej postawy „etnografa – historyka”, rejestrującego odchodzący świat (Pokropek 2019, s. 20). Z czasem poszerzył zakres swoich działań i stał się również kustoszem (opiekunem) oraz propagatorem zgromadzonej wiedzy etnograficznej. I choć to ona była najważniejsza, starał się, by pokazywać ją na szerszym tle. Stąd w swoich wypowiedziach odwoływał się do archeologii, historii, literatury. Łatwość, z jaką to robił, dowodziła jego erudycji i pozwalała określić go jako humanistę. Ciekawość świata i potrzeba wiedzy wynikały z charakteru Profesora, ale wpływ na ich kształtowanie miał również dom rodzinny i starsi bracia.

Najstarszy brat Władysław [...] zachęcał mnie do nauki, kupując mi co tydzień jakąś książkę. Następnie sprawdzał, czy je czytałem i czy zrozumiałem treść i przesłanie płynące z ich lektury (Kosiński 2016, s. 5).

Rolę formacyjną odegrało zapewne także działanie w ramach 23. Warszawskiej Drużyny Harcerskiej, a dyscypliny i cierpliwości uczyło trenowane kolarstwo (Pokropek 2020, s. 1). Bazą dla jego wiedzy była obszerna, licząca kilka tysięcy tomów biblioteka rodzinna (Kosiński 2016, s. 5). O jej zasobach mogłam przekonać się nie raz. W pamięci pozostaną mi chwile związane z pracą nad ostatnią książką Profesora *Etnografia. Materialna kultura ludowa Polski na tle porównawczym* (2019). Kiedy pojawiały się jakieś wątpliwości czy pytania, Profesor najpierw cierpliwie tłumaczył, a następnie biegł do księgozbioru i przynosił niezbędną pozycję. Dotyczyło to prac publikowanych na przełomie XIX i XX wieku, różnych okresów XX, ale także XXI wieku.

Jeszcze inną postawę Marian Pokropek przyjmował, kiedy był gospodarzem. Starał się wówczas przede wszystkim być uważny w stosunku do osób, które go odwiedzały. Nawet jeśli wizyta okazywała się „nie w porę”, nie okazywał zniecierpliwienia, choć potrafił jasno określić granicę czasową takiego spotkania. Należy dodać, że Profesor, jego dom w Otrębusach, a z czasem również prowadzone przez niego muzeum przyciągały wiele osób: sąsiadów, osoby przyjeżdżające z Warszawy i z różnych miejsc w Polsce, gości z zagranicy (m.in. z Białorusi, Litwy, Ukrainy). Każdy był witany z życzliwością, o co dbała wspierająca Profesora żona – Stanisława.

² Profesor nie miałby nic przeciwko, by użyć tu określenia „kultura ludowa”, ale w swoich pracach dostrzegał problematyczność tego pojęcia. Jedyną przestrzenią, w której wykorzystywał przymiotnik „ludowy”, w zasadzie bezkrytycznie, była „sztuka ludowa”, która stała się jedną z Jego pasji kolekcjonerskich.

MARIAN POKROPEK – O SOBIE

Nie pamiętam, w jaki sposób trafił do mnie sporządzony na maszynie do pisania³ życiorys prof. Pokropka. Liczy on cztery strony, a datowany jest pismem odręcznym na 20.IX.2020, choć ma też adnotację, że jest to: „Curriculum vitae wg. tekstu z dnia 10.XI.2003 r. z uzupełnieniami za okres 2003–2020 r.”. Tekst jest opatrzony charakterystycznym profesorskim podpisem. Korzystając z tego dokumentu, warto przywołać kilka najważniejszych faktów z życia Profesora. Rozpoczyna on tak:

Urodziłem się 7 września 1932 r. w Maryjance, w woj. mazowieckim. Od 1934 r. do chwili obecnej mieszkam w Otrębusach odziedziczając, dziś już okrojoną ojcowiznę w postaci działki o powierzchni niespełna 2000 m² z budynkiem mieszkalnym i pawilonem muzealnym pobudowanym już własnymi rękoma (Pokropek 2020, s. 1).

Już w tym pierwszym zdaniu odnotowane zostały trzy istotne fakty: pierwszy związany z wiekiem Profesora, drugi – mówiący o jego przywiązaniu do rodzinnych stron, wreszcie trzeci o ważnym dla niego miejscu, czyli muzeum.

Kolejne akapity zawierają informacje o wykształceniu: ukończonej w 1946 roku szkole podstawowej w Brwinowie, uczęszczaniu do Gimnazjum im. Stefana Batorego w Warszawie⁴ i zdanej maturze⁵, a także podjęciu w 1952 roku studiów na Wydziale Historycznym Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Od tego momentu rozpoczyna zdobywanie wiedzy etnograficznej. Podaje też, że:

już na II roku studiów [rozpocząłem] pracę jako dokumentalista w Instytucie Historii Kultury Materialnej PAN, by w roku następnym objąć stanowisko p.o. asystenta w Zakładzie Etnografii U.W. W 1956 r. obroniłem pracę magisterską⁶ (Pokropek 2020, s. 1).

Jak widać, studiowanie w latach 50. XX wieku różniło się od współczesnego, choćby tym, że szybciej włączano studentów w prace naukowe i dydaktyczne.

Kariera naukowa i badawcza Mariana Pokropka była związana z Zakładem Etnografii UW, przekształconym w Katedrę Etnografii, potem Katedrę Etnologii i Antropologii

³ Warto dodać, że Profesor był wiernym użytkownikiem maszyny do pisania. Dotyczyło to krótkich tekstów, np. dostałam tak napisany tekst o jednej z wystaw, jak i dłuższych, np. fragmentów książki *Etnografia...*, czy też korekty do kolejnych rozdziałów (ich wydruku komputerowego). Czasem maszynopis był korygowany, a uwagi wpisywane ręcznie. Można powiedzieć, że tak przygotowywany tekst pokazywał techniczną stronę warsztatu pisarskiego Profesora, ale też dowodził, że czytał On swoje teksty po napisaniu.

⁴ Gimnazjum to po II wojnie światowej nosiło nazwę Państwowe Gimnazjum i Liceum im. Stefana Batorego, od 1952 r. zaś przemianowano je na X Szkołę Ogólnokształcącą Stopnia Licealnego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci. Do swojej nazwy II Liceum im. Stefana Batorego wróciło w 1958 r. (<https://batory.edu.pl/historia>, dostęp: 29.10.2023).

⁵ Marian Pokropek zdał maturę w Gimnazjum im. Tadeusza Czackiego, bo jak napisał, jego gimnazjum zostało zamknięte (Pokropek 2020, s. 1).

⁶ Praca magisterska dotyczyła architektury drewnianej z terenów Kurpiów Puszczy Zielonej. Została ona opublikowana w 1962 r., a także, z uzupełnieniami, w 2016 r.; por. przyp. 13 i 14.

Kulturowej, a następnie w Instytut Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej. To w tej jednostce obronił doktorat w 1964 roku⁷, a po otrzymaniu w 1978 roku stopnia doktora habilitowanego w zakresie etnografii Słowiańszczyzny⁸ został kierownikiem Zakładu Etnografii Polski i Słowiańszczyzny. W 1991 roku został mianowany na stanowisko profesora nadzwyczajnego, a później – profesora zwyczajnego. Cały czas był zaangażowany w proces dydaktyczny, prowadził zajęcia m.in. z Etnografii Słowian, Etnografii regionalnej Polski, Historii etnografii Polski, Kultury materialnej, Architektury drewnianej, Muzeów na wolnym powietrzu itd. W latach 1956–1981 czynnie uczestniczył w Międzyuczelnianych Obozach Etnograficznych, kształcąc wielu młodych etnografów z różnych ośrodków w Polsce⁹. Prowadził też badania etnograficzne: w Polsce (w ramach Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego), a także w Bułgarii, Serbii, Macedonii, Chorwacji, Słowenii, Białorusi, Litwie, Ukrainie (Pokropek 2020, s. 2). Z każdego miejsca przywoził bogatą dokumentację fotograficzną. Po latach okazało się, że w ten sposób powstało unikalne archiwum fotograficzne, liczące „kilkadziesiąt tysięcy negatywów dokumentujących zjawiska kultury różnych kategorii, czasu i miejsca” (Pokropek 2019, s. 22).

Z innych aktywności Mariana Pokropka należy wymienić jego zaangażowanie w powoływanie i organizację jednostek muzealnych. Wśród nich znalazły się: Muzeum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego¹⁰, a także muzea na wolnym powietrzu, m.in. w Ciechanowcu¹¹, Sierpcu i Wasilkowie.

W 2002 roku Profesor przeszedł na emeryturę, ale nie zakończył swojej aktywności naukowej, badawczej i dokumentacyjnej. Marek Arpad Kowalski konstatował: „mimo, nazwijmy tak, dojrzałego wieku, ciągle chce się [Mu – KW] jeździć, zbierać, gromadzić, inwentaryzować, rejestrować” (2005, s. 429).

PUBLIKACJE

Profesor Marian Pokropek był autorem wielu artykułów, recenzji, katalogów wystaw, a także kilkunastu książek. Ich tematyka koncentruje się przede wszystkim na trzech zagadnieniach: architekturze drewnianej, muzealnictwie i sztuce ludowej. Wszystkie powstały na podstawie prowadzonych badań, czasem wieloletnich, jak np. *Atlas sztuki ludowej i folkloru w Polsce* (1978) czy *Przewodnik po izbach regionalnych w Polsce* (1980)¹². Warto dodać, że do dzisiaj nie przygotowano publikacji o podobnej tematyce.

⁷ Praca doktorska „Rozwój osadnictwa i budownictwa wiejskiego na Podlasiu”.

⁸ Podstawą była praca „Budownictwo ludowe w Polsce, geneza, rozwój, zróżnicowanie regionalne”.

⁹ O tym okresie można przeczytać w tekście Grażyny Czerwińskiej *Mr Jekyll i pan Hyde – czyli podwójne życie Pokropka* (2005).

¹⁰ „W latach 1980–91 brałem udział w pracach nad organizacją i powołaniem Muzeum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Przez kilka lat pełniłem funkcję kierownika t.zw. «Zakładu Badawczo-Naukowego pod nazwą Muzeum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego». Ze względu na liczne obowiązki dydaktyczne i naukowo-badawcze rezygnuję z funkcji kierownika zasiadając jedynie przez dwie kadencje w Radzie Naukowej Muzeum U.W.” (Pokropek 2020, s. 3).

¹¹ Patrz Mosiewicz, Uszyński 2005.

¹² Twórczość pisarską Profesora opisuje w swoim artykule Marek Arpad Kowalski (2005).

Profesor często wracał do swoich wcześniejszych opracowań, a zachęta w postaci możliwości weryfikowania zawartych w nich informacji i ich uzupełniania sprawiały, że podejmował się takiej pracy. Jednym z takich przykładów może być książka o kurpiowskiej architekturze drewnianej, która po raz pierwszy ukazała się w 1962 roku¹³. Współpraca z Muzeum Kurpiowskim w Ostrołęce zaowocowała drugim, poszerzonym wydaniem w 2016 roku (Pokropek 2016a). Innym przykładem może być nieduża publikacja poświęcona wytwórczości i sztuce ludowej Pojezierza Suwalsko-Augustowskiego, wydana w 1979 roku (Pokropek 1979). W 2010 roku zyskała ona swoją nową, zdecydowanie obszerniejszą odsłonę w książce *Ludowe tradycje Suwalszczyzny*.

Ja z kolei miałam szansę współpracować z prof. Marianem Pokropkiem przy wspomnianej już *Etnografii. Materialnej kulturze ludowej Polski na tle porównawczym* (2019) – określanej jako *opus magnum*. Pierwotnie miał to być podręcznik o kulturze materialnej dawnej wsi, przeznaczony dla osób studiujących archeologię. Podczas prac nad tekstem stało się jednak jasne, że książka będzie czymś więcej. Tak powstała ponad sześciusetstronicowa synteza wiedzy o tradycyjnej kulturze materialnej Polski z odniesieniami do kultur społeczności z obszaru Słowiańszczyzny – swoista kontynuacja pierwszego tomu *Kultury ludowej Słowian* Kazimierza Moszyńskiego (1929) i dialog z tym dziełem.

Większość książek Mariana Pokropka znajduje się w mojej bibliotece. Niektóre z nich otrzymałam od Profesora, inne kupiłam (co czasem wymagało przeszukania rynku antykwarycznego). W pierwszym przypadku starałam się uzyskać dedykację Autora. Nie było to łatwe, bo prof. Pokropek, choć cieszył się z zainteresowania swoimi publikacjami, to unikał (jak mógł) ostantacyjnego chwalenia się nimi, a za takie uznawał podpisywanie książek. Z tego powodu nie mam wiele wpisów, ale zwracają one uwagę ze względu na osobisty charakter:

Pani Katarzynie Waszczyńskiej, mojej sympatii etnograficznej za Jej wkład w badanie Suwalszczyzny od M. Pokropka, luty 2017 r.

Dla Kasi Waszczyńskiej z podziękowaniem za współpracę podręcznikową – M. Pokropek, Otrębusy, 15.1.2019.

Wyrazy przyjaźni czy sympatii były wyrażane przez Profesora także w wysyłanych życzeniach świątecznych. Ostatnie przywiozłam z Otrębusów w grudniu 2022 roku. Profesor bardzo przepraszał, że tylko je podpisuje...

JAKIE TO PIĘKNE! MUZEUM SZTUKI LUDOWEJ W OTRĘBUSACH

Muzeum Sztuki Ludowej w Otrębusach powstało w wyniku wieloletniej pracy badawczej Mariana Pokropka, związanej z przedstawieniem

¹³ *Materiały do historii budownictwa ludowego z terenu Kurpiowskiej Puszczy Zielonej*, Warszawa: IHKM PAN, nr 5, 1962.

stanu kultury i sztuki ludowej, obejmującego zabytki architektury i budownictwa drewnianego, muzea, zespoły i imprezy folklorystyczne i przede wszystkim wykaz twórców ludowych ze wszystkich dziedzin twórczości: rzeźby, malarstwa, tkactwa, garncarstwa, wycinankarstwa, plastyki obrzędowej itd. (Pokropek 2016b, s. 8).

Prace te stały się impulsem dla zainteresowań naukowych, ale również kolekcjonerskich. Te ostatnie ugruntowała znajomość i współpraca z Ludwigiem Zimmererem – niemieckim dziennikarzem i kolekcjonerem sztuki ludowej. Dzięki nim powstał pomysł powołania muzeum, które ostatecznie zostało zbudowane i zorganizowane przez Mariana Pokropka na terenie jego działki, za zdobyte przez niego pieniądze i jego rękoma (Pokropek 2016b, s. 10–12). Charakter zbiorów dookreśliły natomiast prace twórców ludowych (oraz nieprofesjonalnych) o tematyce religijnej i historyczno-patriotycznej. Ich pozyskiwania nie zakończyło otwarcie muzeum w 1996 roku¹⁴. Kolekcja rozrasta się, przekroczyła już 10 tysięcy eksponatów (Pokropek 2020, s. 4), prezentowanych na licznie organizowanych wystawach.

Po przejściu prof. Pokropka na emeryturę muzeum stało się jednym z ważniejszych miejsc jego aktywności: cały czas coś ulepszał, reperował, dobudowywał, porządkował. Przede wszystkim jednak przygotowywał wystawy. Zapraszał na nie głównie telefonicznie, prosząc o przekazanie informacji dalej. Nie przyjmował odmowy. Podobnie więc jak wiele innych osób, przyjeżdżałam posłuchać kolejnej opowieści, zarazić się energią i ciekawością świata, którą nieustannie zaskakiwał. Zdarzało się, że podczas takich spotkań ktoś przynosił nowy „zabytek”. Profesor oglądał wnikliwie, ale ocenę chował dla siebie, ukrywając ją za pełnym zachwytem okrzykiem „jaki to pięknie!”. Dopiero potem, o ile się jeszcze o tym pamiętało, będąc pod wpływem innych wrażeń, można było stwierdzić, na ile dar był wartościowy. Bo choć eksponowanie nie było łatwe, to ciekawsze prace były widoczne.

Muzeum stawało się również platformą reagowania na rzeczywistość społeczno-polityczną. Tak było z wystawą popierającą protestujących Białorusinów w 2020 roku¹⁵ czy Ukraińców walczących z agresją rosyjską – w 2022 roku¹⁶. To był sposób Profesora na wyrażenie zdania i zmuszenie do refleksji.

JUBILEUSZE, UHONOROWANIA

W swoim długim życiu prof. Marian Pokropek obchodził kilka jubileuszy związanych z aktywnością zawodową czy osiąganym wiekiem. Jednym z nich były 90. urodziny Profesora obchodzone podczas wernisażu wystawy prac Jana Chodary – rzeźbiarza

¹⁴ Warto dodać, że Muzeum Sztuki Ludowej w Otrębusach otrzymało statut od Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego i znajduje się w ministerialnym spisie muzeów prywatnych.

¹⁵ „Sztuka ludowa Białorusi w zbiorach Muzeum Sztuki Ludowe w Otrębusach, wystawa okolicznościowa w imię solidarności z Narodem Białoruskim w walce o jego stanowienie” – wernisaż odbył się 12.09.2020 r.

¹⁶ „Ukraińska sztuka ludowa w zbiorach Muzeum Sztuki Ludowe w Otrębusach” – wernisaż odbył się 22.05.2022 r.

z Roztocza (17.09.2022 r., Otrębusy). Jednym z prezentów, które otrzymał, był t-shirt, nawiązujący do piłkarskich koszulek reprezentacji Polski – miał na plecach nazwisko i numer (w tym wypadku wiek), a z przodu, na piersi – orzełka w koronie (odwołanie sportowe, ale też do postawy patriotycznej, która wyróżniała jubilata). Profesor, pokazując zgromadzonym podarunek, śmiał się szczerze i zaraźliwie...

W grudniu tego samego roku otrzymał złoty medal „Zasłużony Kulturze Gloria Artis”¹⁷. Uroczystość była kameralna. Kilka dni później rozmawialiśmy o tym wydarzeniu. Profesor wydawał się zadowolony – odebrał to jako dowód uznania Jego wieloletniej działalności naukowej, badawczej, popularyzatorskiej. Ostatnim uhonorowaniem Profesora, niestety już pośmiertnym, było przekazanie na ręce żony i córki pamiątkowego medalu honorowego obywatela¹⁸ Gminy Brwinów. Pani Stanisława zdradziła, że Profesor przez lata odmawiał jego przyjęcia, mimo że czuł się bardzo związany z miejscem zamieszkania i tutejszą społecznością. Ostatecznie jednak, namówiony przez nią – wyraził zgodę. Uroczystość odbyła się 9 września 2023 roku w Muzeum w Otrębusach, a towarzyszyło jej otwarcie wystawy „Wizerunki Matki Boskiej w sztuce ludowej” przygotowanej przez córkę – Agnieszkę.

* * *

Profesor Marian Pokropek zmarł 13 stycznia 2023 roku¹⁹. Wraz z Jego odejściem kończy się zapamiętałe uprawianie etnografii, takiej, którą traktuje się jako sens życia i podejmowanych działań. Etnografii nastawionej na ciekawość drugiego człowieka, jego wiedzy, umiejętności, wrażliwości. Tego uczył i wymagał.

Katarzyna Waszczyńska

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¹⁷ We wcześniejszych latach Profesor otrzymał też inne nagrody i wyróżnienia, m.in. był laureatem nagrody „Za zasługi dla kultury ludowej” im. Oskara Kolberga (1993), został też odznaczony m.in. Krzyżem Kawalerskim Orderu Odrodzenia Polski (2003).

¹⁸ Warto dodać, że prof. Pokropek posiadał już jedno honorowe obywatelstwo – gminy Kadzidło, nadane Mu w 2013 r.

¹⁹ Został pochowany w grobie rodzinnym na cmentarzu w Brwinowie.

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www.iaepan.edu.pl (Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN), (dostęp 04.10.2007).

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