



FORUM CURRENT CONFLICTS

Ukraine, One Year On

Listening to Ukrainian Anthropologists

*Volodymyr Artiukh, Taras Fedirko, Maryna Hrymych,
Tina Polek, and Ana Ivasiuc*

The following conversation took place as an online round table organized by the Anthropology of Peace, Conflict, and Security research network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists on 14 March 2023. The aim of the round table was to create a space where Ukrainian anthropologists would reflect collectively on the anthropological approach to the invasion of Ukraine one year on. We asked them: What kinds of debates, narratives, imaginaries, and forms of activism have emerged under the invasion, and how have they shifted with time? How does an anthropological lens complicate some of the debates that have perhaps been posed in too simplistic terms? What is the view “from below” in Ukraine regarding life under the invasion, prospects for peace, solidarity, hope, and resistance? And last, but not least: how can we—anthropologists, non-Ukrainians—support them?

The transcription and final editing of the conversation were carried out by Jessica Love and Ana Ivasiuc.

Ana Ivasiuc: What are your thoughts on the invasion of Ukraine, one year after?

Maryna Hrymych: I thought it would be appropriate to start with what I was doing last year as an ethnographer, as an anthropologist, and as a member of the Ukrainian diplomatic community. This will shed light on my personal position toward the implications of the Russian war in Ukraine. The war caught me and my husband in Beirut, Lebanon, at our diplomatic posting site. As a member of the Embassy team, I worked on informing Arab society through media and social media about the Russian aggression. For this purpose, I was just a consumer of information from international headlines and news agencies such as the Ukrainian Ukrinform. To be a diplomat in the Middle East is to work in the political space where the Russian lobby traditionally is very strong; but our diplomatic endeavor was successful, and Lebanon became the first Arab country to condemn the Russian aggression. At the same time, I have continued my ethnographic research of digital media, digital platforms and the social media practices which I started seven years before. I try to look at this digital field through the lens of William Merrin's notion of participatory warfare. Digital social media is quite a different source of data. We are



dealing with narratives, with imaginary stuff, with reflections, with emotions. In my intellectual bubble of digital media, the narrative is metaphorical, witty, inventive, symbolic, and creative, but still, it is an intellectual construct. Participatory warfare is enlarging the scope of participation in war, but still, we are dealing with the reinvention of war, with battles of opinions, of visions, of propaganda; the offline battlefield is different. I knew that exactly because I spent six years in the Middle East, and besides Lebanon, our embassy also covered the consulate issues in Syria, and I was ethnographically attached to the participatory warfare and offline narrative in this region. That is why, in May 2022, I came to Ukraine for a few months and started my ethnographic research.

In the beginning, it was more than just one strand of research. I had been taking soundings about the possibility of deeper research. Later on, I started to conduct a very serious ethnography at the Northern borderlands of Ukraine (Sumska and Chernihivska oblast). I still work with people who experienced severe conditions of occupation, missile and bomb attacks, and captivity. These people have their own stories and narratives, but their oral texts are down to earth, based on a real, not imaginary, war experience. These people prefer face-to-face communication or communication in different closed message groups but not in social media. These narratives often are not contemplated with digital mediation and intellectual constructs. So last year, I dealt with these three types of war representation and perception. All of this is reflected in my position as a researcher.

Taras Fedirko: As an anthropologist based at a British institution, I would like to reflect on the challenges that this war presents to our research on Ukraine. It is encouraging that Maryna has been able to do ethnographic fieldwork. Yet this is—and I am afraid will increasingly be—a unique position, especially for those of us based at institutions that have been increasingly regulating research labor through actuarial practices of ethics and risk assessments. I am not speaking against substantive ethics or risk considerations that help conduct research safely for ourselves and research participants. What I have in mind, rather, is that because the war has made *some* forms of in-person fieldwork in Ukraine quite dangerous, *all* such research, even when risks of undertaking it are far outweighed by potential benefits, might be considered too risky to be insurable or fundable—and therefore will not be allowed. This, in turn, puts the future of anthropological research on Ukraine into question.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that, at least in British social anthropology, Ukraine has always been on the margins of disciplinary attention. In anthropology's hierarchies, Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans have been far below classic field sites or, as sociologist Monika Krause calls it, "model cases": Melanesia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa. Within our broad region, perhaps because of the influence of area studies and language training, Western Balkans were always better studied than, say, Bulgaria; and Russia, than Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova. This is of course exacerbated by the sheer state of the academic job market. I know several early-career anthropologists who, having written PhD dissertations on Ukraine, had to switch to studying other societies to get postdoctoral jobs.

We have now moved from very little interest in Ukraine to a situation where, as a discipline, we are forced to recognize the significance of the Russo-Ukrainian war for social transformations—the rearrangement of global power structures, security infrastructure in Eurasia, food market and energy shocks, migration flows and so on—that will keep reverberating globally. Being blind to the global importance of social processes in Ukraine is no longer an option. Our universities are only too keen to appropriate the symbolic value of research on Ukraine that has suddenly become so "topical." And yet, there is a danger that these same universities, at least in Britain, will do nothing to enable and de-risk vital fieldwork in the country, or worse. Perhaps

the one good consequence of this is that we might have to begin collaborating with researchers who are already based in Ukraine. This will create new opportunities for Ukrainian anthropologists, which is good.

The war, and the way it has been mediated, is an opportunity to rethink ethnography as a method. For instance, I had started a second field project in Kyiv four months before the invasion. I worked with ex-combatants and activists involved in crowdfunding networks supplying Ukrainian forces in Donbas since 2014. This was, in a sense, a study of a classic topic of East European ethnography—an informal economy—with a twist. I left my field site in early February 2022 (for, I thought, a temporary break). When, after the initial shock of the invasion and flurry of humanitarian work that made any scholarly engagement unthinkable, I could return to research, I had to re-design that study. Using what I had learned from fieldwork in Kyiv, and drawing on abundant open-source information, I worked with a small team of research assistants to set up a social network analysis and mapping project that has so far tracked about two billion US dollars of crowdfunded military aid flows in Ukraine, and networks among some three thousand actors involved in channeling this aid. My fieldwork in Kyiv generated questions, and some parts of the method that informed this exercise. It would not have been possible to study a group so large ethnographically, at least for one person, nor to track the flows of matériel to the front. In turn, having mapped out some crowdfunding networks, I can return to interview the actors involved in them. At a higher level of abstraction, this leads me to a related question: What kind of anthropology of war should we be doing? How should we be collaborating—with research assistants, research partners in Ukraine, and anthropologists elsewhere studying the global echoes of this war? As a Ukrainian citizen, I am all the more wary of the danger of methodological nationalism: limiting the study of this war to the territory of Ukraine.

Tina Polek: Being an anthropologist inside the war means that every day I make a choice about how to perceive events around me: as a Ukrainian or as an anthropologist. Do I have the right to be biased, or do I have to be always empathetic and understand others in every situation? It is a very hard choice. One year after the invasion, I do not have an answer to this question because every day is a different day. The second point is, what is the field when you are doing an anthropology of war? Where does this field end? And where does it start? Where is the place for ethics in this field? Ethics is also changing all the time, together with the whole situation. Maybe it is mostly a reflection about Western scholars: when Western scholars came to Ukraine in 2014 to study the war, did they look for an exotic country, different from their everyday life? Did they study Ukraine because there is a war in Ukraine, and it is a nice topic to study? I have so many questions about these ethical issues. Another question is: would there be any interest in Ukraine without the war? We have to talk about these questions also. When we are studying the war in Ukraine, what methods are we using, and what theories are we using? A lot of theories of nationalism were just pasted onto the Ukrainian situation, without considering the Ukrainian context. There were concepts from books that were put into this field without any connection to it. My point is very short: I want to encourage you to study Ukraine, not only because of the war. And if you are studying the Ukrainian war, it is important to create new theories based firstly on the field research from the inside, rather than theories from outside just pasted onto Ukraine. This path is very important right now for those in solidarity with Ukraine.

Volodymyr Artiukh: One year ago, the war started unexpectedly for many. Most dangerously for the civilians, of course, for Ukrainians, but also for the academic community. After the 24th of February, the scramble for expertise started on anthropological fora, with conferences mushrooming—and of course that is understandable. But I noticed some patterns. We had two

approaches in looking for this expertise. First, we have the global top-down approach: people who were the “big names,” who were into “big theories” were invited to speak out: people like David Harvey or Noam Chomsky expressed their assessment of the war from the perspective of the long history of the twentieth century and raised the notions of imperialism and capitalism that centered on the US and had little to do with Ukraine. And that was fine in the beginning; it is always useful to start with the “big” things. The problem is that this abstract approach was scarcely concretized over the year that passed. Maybe one year is a short time to work out a coherent global perspective on the war, on the conjunction under which it started, taking into account local history, the development of the longer war in Donbas, the development of Ukraine–Russia relations. Largely all this has been ignored in these global and abstract accounts that still reoccur without a significant progress in explanatory value.

The other trend was to look for the stories of individual people, narrow topics in this village or in this city, like refugees, language use on social networks, reproductive work, volunteer mobilization. Sometimes anthropologists who never worked with Ukraine scrambled to say something from their corners on very singular topics that are traditionally anthropological, as if war never happened. Of course, researchers can contribute to constructing a history of this conflict, documenting it, making some kind of assessments and predictions. But this, again, was not a concerted effort or an organic merger of the local singular accounts with the global perspective. We remain without a synthetic and systematic research base or program for studying this war anthropologically, and the empirical studies that appeared do not feed into a systematic and globally scaled account of this war in anthropology.

This is quite a sad conclusion; anthropology had little to say or little substantial to say on its own. What we have instead is a return to area studies, and we have all sorts of quarrels around that driven by identity politics: how we must restructure area studies, how we must increase the sound of some voices and tone down the sounds of others. The rationale for this volume adjustment has not always been epistemologically sound. People care more about who should speak rather than whether he or she has anything to say. It has been based on some sort of, again, pre-existing crude ideas about how globalization and decoloniality work. It seemed to me a bit mechanical that you prescribe a certain pre-existing identity, and then kind of turn the volume up, and you pick the other identity that you do not particularly like, or to which you assign guilt, and then you turn the volume down. As Taras mentioned in his previous introduction, this event, the war, is definitely not something that can be described in a satisfactory manner through methodological nationalism or through methodological ethnicism. It is a globalized and an internationalized war. It has a dangerous potential for upscaling even further. It should be studied as a phenomenon that has global reverberations. The collaboration of scholars that should work on it, and that I hope will eventually work on it, should not be limited to only parochial, particularistic topics. I think the collaboration should also include work on the effect of the war on other countries, sometimes far-away countries. Some countries have become essentially participants in this war: countries in Middle Asia, through migration from Russia, but also countries like Poland or Germany that are de facto hosting the social reproduction of Ukrainians by hosting single mother refugees. They are supplying weapons, and they are helping with social reproduction. All of these processes are one assemblage, and they should be perceived as one. The collaboration with scholars who have been studying Russia and various aspects of Russian society should be included as a central part. I would call for a research program to measure up to the phenomenon itself.

AI: Some of the debates that have surged on social media at the beginning of the invasion, and then in newspapers and various forums, were sometimes posited in very simplistic terms: you’re

either with Putin or with Zelenskyy; you're either with NATO or with Russia, and so on. Some of these simplistic oppositions still surface in debates today. How can an anthropological lens complicate some of the debates about the war that have been posited in such unsophisticated, binary terms?

MH: I spent most of my professional life in a routine of translating some statements from the language of anthropology to the general language of intellectuals and from this language to the language of ordinary people. During this year, I used different languages, communicating with people representing online and offline battlefields. I think all the academics doing ethnography have the same challenges. For example, I do not use the expression *state monopoly on legal violence* while speaking with people outside the circle of anthropologists or sociologists. This term can harm your interlocutor. Another term or notion I would mention today is *cultural appropriation*, which we use when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in a stereotypical way. I guess many of you, while monitoring Ukrainian digital media, noticed this scandal that erupted in late 2022, when TV Channel 5 presented a calendar for 2023 with 12 naked female journalists. In the photo, the intimate parts of their bodies are covered by weapons, but their faces are not visible. This media product divided Ukrainian society into two camps. Some liked this media product; some hated and rejected it, but still, the discussion revolved around nudity. But anthropologists would rather focus on the issue of using weapons in this media product. It could be disrespectful to hundreds of women that joined the armed forces. This year, I also faced a very special challenge. In my ethnographic field, I work with very vulnerable subjects, those that have been captured or live under occupation. I do not have the right to articulate some issues so far. That is why I will use a metaphor. As you know, there are army-framed symbols that are used to depict units, equipment, and activities. In this frame of symbols, color plays a role in identity qualifiers. Blue depicts friendly units. Red—hostile, yellow—unknown or pending, and green is used to determine neutral units. Even more, there are also assumed friendly and assumed hostile identities. For my ethnography, I used this palette to qualify the actors of communication patterns between Russians and Ukrainians in these circumstances of occupation or captivity. This is just a technique that helps me to avoid simplifying this situation. But usually, when I speak to my colleagues from non-anthropological circles, and even inside such circles, I am faced with the tendency to qualify identities in black and white, or at best red and blue, blue and red. All the attempts to explain my position, my multicolored approach causes confusion and even condemnation.

TF: Similarly to many of my colleagues, I have aspired to a kind of public anthropology. But I could have never imagined that the occasion for this would be a total war at home that would assign people into involuntary communities of allies and enemies. I would be honest about what we, as anthropologists, have to offer our different publics. For many of us who firmly stand in opposition to the Russian aggression—which does not mean that we identify as people supporting the Ukrainian government—the most consequential political debate has been over what kind of war this is. Defining it as a just war of liberation has been important for rallying support that has made further resistance to the invasion possible. Those who kept insisting that it is only a proxy war between rival imperialisms seemed to miss this point.

At the same time, the public debate to which we could contribute since the invasion as *scholars*, often bypassed the granular, difficult knowledge that anthropologists hold dear. Yet at the opposite side of the spectrum of our analytical work, we have so far failed to produce a synthetic account of this war. What are the causalities at multiple scales? How do we, as scholars, move beyond the binary of proxy war versus war of liberation without losing sight of the political,

human stakes of our accounts? There is a role for a longer-term engagement that will look into the way in which the war has been unfolding and the damage that has been done. But this could only ever be a collective project dependent upon a shared—which is not to say unanimous—reflexive understanding of the war as a social process that brings together people across multiple locations across the globe. This war is much larger than my or anyone else’s field site. We are forced to deal with the global reality of the war, and we must be able to say something about it. Finally, within anthropology itself there have not been many debates about the war; at least none of consequence. Instead of such debates, there has been a showdown of political position-takings. Perhaps a couple of articles by senior academics who have done no research on the country yet had an ego and editorial connections to flaunt; some exchanges over whether EASA should voice collective solidarity with the people of Ukraine, opposed by self-described anti-imperialists denouncing “NATO anthropologists,” that kind of thing. We should be able to do better collectively; to tolerate disagreements, accept when we are wrong; transcend disagreements toward something that potentially could be a better understanding of the war, including with contributions from colleagues who diverge from mainstream takes on the war. It will take time and an awareness of common points of reference for this more serious discussion to emerge.

TP: First of all, when we are talking about research during the war, we have to understand that maybe not all the information can be appropriate. The second point is that not all the reflections can be public. I do not know where the line is. I do not know what is totally appropriate and what is inappropriate. I am not sure whether “pure science” is actually possible inside the war. Maybe outside in Western journals, it is possible, but I am not sure whether it is possible inside Ukraine. I am also not sure that all the information has to be censored or self-censored. We can see Ukrainians right now as a nation and feel huge solidarity with all these incredible things going on. But when we zoom in, when we use our anthropological lens, we see a not-so-clear picture. We see all the pixels, and these pixels can ruin the whole picture, and do we want this picture to be ruined? Do we have the right to talk about these pixels when we are fighting for Ukraine in our academic fields? I do not know. So maybe it is a big question about science during the war and science inside the war. What can be told and what cannot? Do we have to be silent about certain things, or is silence not a good idea because in five years all these things that were not told will play a negative role? I really do not know; these are questions without answers, but I think that it is important to ask these questions.

VA: There is an awkward and uneasy return of some sort of reified ideas about communities or nations, which I thought had been purged from anthropology quite a while ago. The talk about “they, Ukrainians” as one community, as a nation that is more or less homogeneous, having some sort of common consciousness. This is something that is used more for political than for epistemological reasons. I would caution against this, although that could be tricky to articulate in this political environment. In my work with refugees from the south of Ukraine, it is obvious that there are no simple binaries for them. We hear—and even some anthropologists say publicly—that there are united Ukrainian communities, and of course, it is much more complex than that. The complexities that existed in Ukraine before the invasion still remain, although Ukrainians seem united by an affective unity both as victims of the invasion and as those participating in resistance. So, of course, there is this over-encompassing affective unity, but beneath it we have people who still speak Russian among themselves, and among their friends, and who do not want to abandon this language. Although they use Ukrainian more often: for many it is a symbol, more of a sign of unity rather than a practical tool. Ukrainian refugees in Europe develop hierarchies among themselves—for example, by excluding the Roma Ukrainians—and

strive to underline their superiority over refugees from other countries. We see Ukrainians who say that they are going back to Ukraine after the war ends but who make practical steps to remain and pursue careers abroad, which they probably dreamed of before that. We need to be faithful to the complexity that is always inherent in the reality we study as anthropologists and not gloss it over out of political necessity or for the politics of the moment.

AI: The last part of your answer invites the next set of questions: what is the view from below in Ukraine regarding life under the invasion? How is the war currently transforming Ukrainian society? Are there new or revived social cleavages, or new alliances, maybe new emerging subjectivities? Are there new voices or resistances?

MH: I spent a lot of time out of Ukraine, and when I returned, I felt that Ukrainian society became united like never before. We have different types of citizens and civic mobilization, real offline mobilization, ritual, or in terms of social media practices, digital mobilization for participatory war. The second dynamic is the modification of social roles, and not only in a sense of professions and responsibilities, but also in the sense of voluntary and involuntary leadership. Third, the Ukrainian landscape has changed. Russians turned many cities, towns, and villages, especially at the Eastern borders, into piles of rubble and smoke. Even peaceful and relatively secure cities changed their landscape. The cemeteries became huge, dimensionless. Many landscape objects and cities changed their functions. For example, parks and recreation zones in their occupied cities became cemeteries with collective graves of unrecognized people. We can no longer safely go to the forests, go hiking or gathering mushrooms, because they are mined. Living in Kyiv, we know where there are safe places, and where not. Also, Ukrainian society is very mobile today in terms of internal and external migrations. Some experts estimated this phenomenon as a potential risk of social cleavage. Others treat it as a temporary misunderstanding between those who left the country and those who stayed. One can notice this sense of identity crisis in terms of a sense of belonging, from a sense of home to a sense of national and even transnational belonging. Migration, either immigration or emigration, has changed from desirable in pre-war times to urgently required and even forced. Losing a home, being a refugee, or a temporarily displaced person, the downshifting of social status and many other factors became a critical point for identity changes.

There is another very important marker for changes currently taking place in Ukrainian society: the “cancel culture” practice, entailing the boycott of Russians and Russian culture. *Pushkinisty* (Пушкіністи) is a hot topic and one of the mainstream narratives of cancel culture. Ukrainian writer and blogger Anton Sanchenko, who is supposed to be the author of this notion, said in an interview that he used an already existing concept and incorporated it into the wider world narrative. On the one hand, *pushkinisty* (пушкіністи) is a euphemism for identifying all Russians, and this term is an alternative to *rusnia* (русня), *orky* (орки) and so on. On the other hand, it is a marker for the fifth column (in jargon *ждуни*, originated from the word *ждати*—to wait)—people who quietly made it for the arrival of Russians. *Pushkinisty* were also termed the lovers of Russian culture; in the severe conditions of war, not only were secret sympathizers of the enemy qualified as *pushkinisty* but also people who violated the “cancel culture” silent rules of wartime.

Several scandals took place during the last year. The first one revolved around the writer Mikhail Bulgakov and his museum in Kyiv. Another scandal erupted after one prominent Ukrainian writer violated the basic agreement of intellectuals not to communicate with Russian professionals during the war. The discussion around *pushkinisty* and the boycott of Russian culture in Ukraine went out of Ukraine, too: the *New Yorker* published in January 2020 the article

by Elif Batuman “Rereading Russian classics in the Shadow of the Ukrainian war.” One can also notice the crisis of language identity. It started from the meme *паляниця, Укрзалізниця* (words which are difficult for non-Ukrainians to pronounce) and are finished by the powerful Ukrainization of the society and the massive switch to the Ukrainian language. “*Як ми перейшли на українську мову? Дуже просто. Легли мы как-то спать 23 февраля, а прокинулись 24 лютого.*” The humor of this meme is based on balancing between Ukrainian and Russian texts: “How did we switch to the Ukrainian language? It’s easy. Once, we went to bed on February 23—and this phrase is written in Russian—and woke up on February 24”—and this phrase is written in Ukrainian. Language as a marker of social changes encompasses different reference points: language, preferences, hate speech, and obscene vocabulary. All this is about a new identity discourse. For example, the famous expression *Русский корабль, иди на . . .*¹ has changed the language behavior of millions of Facebook users and their attitude toward obscene vocabulary, which is a part of the vocabulary of war, not only in Ukraine but everywhere. In terms of anthroponyms: many *Yelenas*. *Alyonas* changed their profile name in social media to *Olena*. *Alexanders* became *Olexanders*, and one can provide countless such examples. This is not a mechanistic replacement of names; we are dealing with the acceptance, if not of a totally new identity, at least of a renewed identity.

The next question must be a key point of our discussion. I have a strong feeling that we, including me, exaggerate the impact of digital practices and social media narratives in the representation of what is going on in Ukraine. I don’t mean to reduce the quantity of social media representation research. I think it is very productive. I mean, we have increased the quantity of grounded on offline practices research activities. War is what is going on Ukrainian terrains, and this must be shown ethnographically. First of all, I would like to name the projects of my colleagues who already started an ethnography of offline battlefields. Ethnologist Kateryna Lytvyn from Chernihiv, together with the culture manager Olexander Shevchuk, arranged a set of expeditions to the occupied regions Chernihiv and Chernihiv Oblast, thinking about logistics and ensuring the security of ethnographers. She herself, together with her teenage son, found herself in the hell of events from the first days of the war. She has her own experience. But as soon as the occupation ended, she came out of the cellar and helped people to clear the ruins of their houses, and at the same time, she collected stories and firsthand testimonies. It was a great team that worked in Chernihiv Oblast: Olena Boriak, Olga Vorobey, Anastasia Pankova, Olga Berezovska. Nobody paid them for their work. It was a voluntary project. This series of expeditions were followed by the roundtable “Science and Emotions: New and Not New Concepts and Approaches,” which took place on February 21, 2022, in Chernihiv. The authors of the idea and implementers of this idea are Svitlana Makhovska and Kateryna Lytvyn. I called this round table the academic event of the year. Svitlana and Kateryna gathered academics who worked in difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions of the ethnographic field in order to professionally record key moments of our history and evidence of the crimes. The institutions which arranged this event are the Department of culture and tourism of the Chernihiv City Council and the Center of Applied Anthropology. I would like to mention one more project which was carried out in parallel to the previous one, also in the Chernihiv region: the project by the Lazarevsky National Institute of History and Social Humanitarian Sciences. Imagine: it was just a students’ ethnographic fieldwork practice and training. But valuable material was collected in the occupied villages. These two projects mentioned earlier focused on survival strategies in conditions of occupation. This topic lies on the surface of the informal narrative of people from below. As I mentioned before, I have my own ethnography of offline battlefield experiences in North Ukraine and in the borderlands. I have been immersed in different fringe or frontier aspects, for example: first, communicating strategies between Ukrainians and Russians in situation of cap-

tivity; second, the laws and the customs of law: how do they work? Why don't they work? Third, non-state actors and collectives and mediation between them and legal systems. My interviewees are civilians and former servicemen. What is interesting about this category of people is that they are 90 percent indifferent to and even ignorant of what is going on in the so-called *диванна війна*—"the war from the sofa"—on social media. And this is not about digital illiteracy; they are normal users of information and communication technologies, but at the same time, they are not consumers of participatory warfare products.

As I mentioned before, I spent six years in the Middle East. I worked on issues of Lebanese and Syrian resistance and perceptions of war. One of the differences between non-governmental resistance in Ukraine and the Middle East is based on different types of social institutions of the family. In Lebanon and Syria, neighborhoods are formed by family-based communities. All types of securitizations, starting from watching out for the neighborhoods and finishing their warfare offensive, have the family dimension based more or less on blood kinship. In Ukraine's case, we would say a fictive kinship where terms like *нобратим* (sworn brothers) represent a new, or rather a revival of an old type of social kinship. In times of war, in a situation of occupation, your neighbors become your relatives. Resistance is based on social, fictive kinship solidarity. Moreover, speaking of borderlands as locality, we must take into account that members of the borderland families found themselves on different sides of the conflict.

TF: You ask how the war has transformed the Ukrainian society. I would reply, how has it not? The impact of the war is all-encompassing, and warfare itself is a potent motor of change in the rear. Speaking from my own research, I have been studying civic networks that channel crowdfunded or donated support to the Ukrainian troops. There has been a broad mobilization of what we could call a militarized civil society. Civic networks that emerged in 2004, in the context of the Orange Revolution, and that extended in the context of the 2013–2014 Maidan and subsequent civic response to the start of the war in Donbas, have developed a repertoire of collective action that has been taken up en masse by people and groups not previously involved in supporting the troops. To a much larger extent than after 2014, following the Russian invasion, personal ties, but also structures such as political parties, become the conduits for financial donations, flows of matériel to the frontline, logistical and other support to the military, but also to displaced and other people in need. One interesting thing to watch out for about these networks is whether they will underpin new collective mobilizations over time, whether to do with the war or not. In addition, the participation of close to one million men and women in the armed forces, will have profound transformative effects.² We can put some numbers on it: a 30 percent drop in the GDP in 2022, ten million people displaced one way or another, one million people involved directly in fighting and more indirectly supporting the troops, 60 percent in the last year supporting IDP, refugees, and the combatants financially or in-kind. There are close to one hundred thousand Ukrainian combatants and civilians dead and more than two hundred thousand non-fatally wounded.³ Overall, for the Ukrainian people this is a calamity comparable only to the Second World War in the character of warfare and its transformative force. This is very difficult to comprehend, especially as there also is some form of "normality" in the rear. On the first anniversary of the invasion, *Financial Times* published an interesting essay by Adam Tooze³ that compares the scale of transformation in Ukraine and the effect on the Ukrainian society, with the levels of support from the West. Tooze writes that despite the increased support from Ukraine's allies, it pales compared to what the US, UK, and other countries committed to their imperialist ventures in Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, while Ukrainians are fighting a total war, the volume, timing and organization of allied support is constraining

Ukraine's ability to fight back, costing lives and territory. Volodya has recently made a similar point.⁴

TP: The war is not static, and its influence is not static. The transformation is still ongoing. For example, right now Ukrainians produce a lot of hate. This hate has become an important part of everyday life, and I don't know how it will change Ukrainians as a nation, and how it will be theorized in the future. This is the first point; the second is about solidarity. Ukrainian solidarity looks really inspiring, but it is not so black and white when we look closer. We have already had several explosions of solidarity during revolutions in 2004 and 2013–2014. So, we know how quickly this feeling can be replaced by individual interests. But maybe this time it is the real long-term solidarity that will change us? I have no answer.

VA: I will just point out a couple of aspects of the transformation that I myself focus on. What happened after the start of the war was rather paradoxical. On the one hand, we have democratization, the introduction of top-down rule, and centralization under the conditions of martial law. It structures the nation as a vertical top-down machine, a war machine that closes the borders for those who are defined as those who must follow orders. On the other hand, it has been a year of tremendous self-organization and trans-nationalization of Ukrainian society. Some Ukrainians have become temporary citizens of the EU, in a way that leads to changes in many European countries. Ukrainians changed in their own perception of their identity, of their political dispositions, and of the way they build strategies of survival. This huge and contradictory transformation is one of the processes that you can study anthropologically. These are the decisions to leave or to stay, the gendered division between mobility and immobility, the patterns of return and further migration, familiar and pecuniary connections across countries. There are also changes in labor and informality within Ukraine, which has also been part of this contradiction I mentioned earlier. Normally, under martial law, you are not supposed to hold demonstrations, organize strikes, and so on. And indeed, it has been extremely difficult to challenge policy changes that have been introduced under martial law, where politics essentially does not exist. But nevertheless, campaigning and organizing, some forms of protests have been happening, and labor organization survived, including due to transnational solidarity. This is the form of resistance that is not talked about. In wartime conditions, we tend to focus on soldiers, on those who matter in existential terms. But labor is, of course, something that sustains the war effort. No matter how much money and weapons you ship to Ukraine, if it does not have the working infrastructure, if it does not have industrial capacity, nothing is going to work. This aspect of the transformations of Ukraine's society will have a significant impact on this country and on this area after the end of the war.

AI: One last question: what can we, as non-Ukrainians, and as anthropologists, do to support you?

MH: The international anthropological community can help us in terms of methodology. It would be great to have workshops or seminars on what is going on in the anthropology of warfare, the anthropology of peace, conflict, and security, the anthropology of digital media, and so on. You have a very strong school and great publications; we are interested in getting acquainted with them. Of course, most of us follow the trends of European and American anthropology, but still, we need more systematic self-education. The second point is that we have a strong ethnographic school. I think our ethnographic experience is sometimes excellent, but we are curious about how European anthropologists conduct an ethnography of warfare, of peace, conflict, and security.

TF: There are many different ways in which we can help as private citizens and as anthropologists. For instance, donate to the cause. Money is a great help; we should not underestimate its material and symbolic importance in the construction of transnational solidarities. As anthropologists, an equitable inclusion of Ukrainian academics into the discussion would also be extremely meaningful. This often means uncomfortable accommodation toward the realities of working with people who may not be proficient in the language of potential host countries, or who work in Ukrainian academic institutions that might not be readable for or receptive toward European grant bureaucracies, and so on. Solidarity here means going against the grain—and that is difficult for those of us who are overworked, on precarious contracts, or have to struggle otherwise against the institutions in which we work. Inclusion means going beyond our own zone of comfort as people holding some institutional power in our universities or the discipline, and building up institutional connections, dividing grants in an equitable manner. For instance, breaking the current tendency to divide grants where as much as 90 percent must stay in a British university, contributing to its overheads, and 10 percent may be paid out by the hour to a researcher who produces the data in Ukraine. Or creating research projects that incorporate Ukrainian colleagues who can do the research that many of us cannot do, or who can do it much better than we could do it if we went to Ukraine. I think that would be an immediate, direct help; I am afraid merely verbal claims to solidarity, and the symbolic performance of virtue they imply, no longer make the cut.

In addition, professional organizations could assist those of us who still have a hope of doing in-person fieldwork in Ukraine. EASA should lobby against incredibly taxing research bureaucracies that prevent researchers from doing work in Ukraine. Risks of working in Ukraine can be mitigated with proper hostile environment training, planning, and insurance. Ukraine is a large country and most of its territory is safer than many other places where ethnographers routinely do fieldwork. Unfortunately, since the Russian invasion, our universities have only been too keen to capture the value derived from our “topical” research; yet have become reluctant to actually do much for sustaining the infrastructure that makes this research possible in the new wartime conditions. If we want to actually show solidarity with Ukrainian researchers, we must walk the walk as a profession. We ought to collectively try to influence our employers to that end.

TP: I think it is really a good idea not only to have some assistants in Ukraine who collect data but also to have common works with both European and Ukrainian theories and Europeans working in the Ukrainian field, as well as Ukrainians working in Ukrainian fields, helping to understand the context better to avoid some scandalous works about nationalists, for example. Secondly, there are a lot of works already published about the war in Ukraine with a clear pro-Russian lobby. I think that the reaction of the anthropological community to these works is really important. Third, not so many works of Ukrainians are published in English. I think that these publications can transform academia in Ukraine and can help Europeans to understand the Ukrainian context better. Having the opportunity to translate works of Ukrainian academics into English and publish them would be a good idea, but also to have some publications translated into Ukrainian. And the last point is about education. The situation of anthropology in Ukraine is not ideal, to say the least. Collaborating with European anthropologists would help strengthen the position of anthropology in Ukraine in the future. It is important to have a strong anthropological community in Ukraine as a part of the European anthropological community.

VA: First, it cannot be emphasized enough how cumbersome and unhelpful the fieldwork-related bureaucracy has become in the UK universities but also in many European universities.

We all know that this serves to protect the university, rather than to help the researcher with anything in case of necessity. There needs to be some kind of petition or some kind of proposal about anthropology's specific insurance coverage, and rules that would apply to foreign research. This not only concerns Ukraine, of course, but this also concerns people who study Russia or other war-affected areas. I think this is something that we should organize as a discussion group. I myself face these, and our whole team of the Emptiness project faces similar challenges. It is only by some miracle and by the ingenuity of our project manager and our PI that we manage to do anything. But the war is not going away, and wars are probably going to be even more widespread, and we, as anthropologists, will need to have the ability to study them. That we can do only one way: by actually going to such places, being able to see them. We need to do something about it. Also, Ukrainian anthropologists need to be given more recognition: there are excellent anthropologists in Ukraine and its diaspora. It is important to encourage them and to support their grant applications, but also to facilitate their interaction with colleagues around the world.

■ **VOLODYMYR ARTIUKH** is a postdoctoral researcher on the ERC-funded project “Emptiness: Living Capitalism and Democracy After (Post) Socialism” at the University of Oxford. He completed his PhD in sociology and social anthropology at the Central European University in 2020. His dissertation is an historically informed analysis of labor in Belarus centered on workers' agency in the context of bureaucratic labor control. Volodymyr is currently studying migration in the context of war-induced destruction in Ukraine. His project situates laboral and migratory experiences in the changing political and economic situation in Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. His research interests include the anthropology of work and labor organizations in post-Soviet countries, the anthropology of populism, and the comparative study of hegemonic practices in Eastern Europe.

■ **TARAS FEDIRKO** is lecturer in organized crime and corruption at the University of Glasgow. He is a political and economic anthropologist researching the new elites and political alliances that emerged from the war in Donbas and are currently leading the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. His earlier work explored middle-class professionals involved in promoting or opposing political liberalism at the core (Britain) and semi-periphery (Ukraine) of global capitalism.

■ **MARYNA HRYMYCH** is a Ukrainian academician and writer. Her research interests include anthropology of war, anthropology of space and site, diaspora studies, traditional and digital folklore, customary law. She obtained a PhD in Filology (1991) and PhD in History (specialization Ethnology, 2005). Professor, PEN Ukraine member. Monographs: 2017 *Anthropology of War. Case Study: The Division Halychyna*; 2016 *The Life under the Pineiros: The Cultural Landscape of Ukrainian Settlements in Brazil*; 2006 *The Civil Customary Law of Ukrainians*; 2000 *The Ukrainian Traditional Worldview*; she is an editor of 15 volumes and an author of 150 articles. She conducted fieldwork research in Ukraine, Canada, Brazil and Middle East. She works at The Ivan Honchar Museum National Centre of Folk Culture.

■ **TINA POLEK** is an anthropologist at the NGO “Centre for Applied Anthropology” and a member of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. For the last five years, she worked as an applied anthropologist in non-commercial projects and as business anthropologist for Ukrainian companies. Among her last research projects are “The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children’s everyday practices” (2021), “Balcony space: Anthropological and sociological study” (2021). Her research interests are urban and applied anthropology. She remained in Ukraine after the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022. Right now, she is on maternity leave.

■ **ANA IVASIUC** is lecturer in the anthropology of crime and security at Maynooth University, Ireland, a co-convenor of the Anthropology of Peace, Conflict, and Security research network, and currently president of the European Association of Social Anthropologists.

■ NOTES

1. The by now famous injunction “Russian war ship, go to hell.”
2. Small Arms Survey. 2023. ‘Russia’s War: Weighing the Human Cost in Ukraine’. *Medium* (blog). 15 May 2023. <https://smallarmssurvey.medium.com/russias-war-weighing-the-human-cost-in-ukraine-9ecc73a41987>.
3. Tooze, Adam. 2023. ‘The West’s Limited Support for Ukraine Fails to Measure up’. *Financial Times*, 24 February 2023. <https://www.ft.com/content/46d8ddd6-ff6b-4560-96a6-bf795b9fe986>.
4. Artiukh, Volodymyr, and Jana Tsoneva. 2023. ‘Over a Year of War with No End in Sight’. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. 19 May 2023. <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/50451/over-a-year-of-war-with-no-end-in-sight>.