

War and dependent state formation in Ukraine

Volodymyr Artiukh and Taras Fedirko

Abstract: This article examines the relationship between war-making and state-making in post-invasion Ukraine drawing on research among Ukrainian forced migrants in Romania and with Ukrainian military crowdfunding organizations. We argue that Ukraine is undergoing a process of dependent state formation. In the context of the war, the Ukrainian state has significantly expanded its military and political power while remaining economically dependent on foreign aid. The need to generate revenues for the war has pushed the state to become more extractive, in turn undermining its legitimacy and ideological power vis-à-vis its citizens domestically and abroad. In this way, even over a relatively short period of time, the war has become a site of institutional transformations in Ukraine.

Keywords: dependence, migration, state formation, Ukraine, war

Katia,¹ a young woman from Odesa, had to leave her city days after Russia invaded Ukraine. The nearest country across the border, Romania, became her second home for the following two years of the war. She had barely settled before she got enthusiastically involved in helping her compatriots fleeing the war: apart from volunteering at a train station, she offered handicraft in exchange for donations to the Ukrainian military. At an exhibition of her work, visitors could acquire what they liked by using a QR code under each piece to donate money to Come Back Alive, a renowned Ukrainian charity supplying Ukraine's defense forces. Volodymyr Artiukh learned that a few months after his first meeting with Katia, she managed to bring her boyfriend, an IT specialist, out of Ukraine. Her father, a seafarer, would join them soon in Bucharest. Both men were under 60, and being liable for

military conscription, banned from leaving the country during martial law.

Katia is one of several million Ukrainians displaced into the EU and residing there under EU's Temporary Protection Directive rules in 2022–24. Displaced Ukrainians have made use of other countries' legal protection and refugee regimes yet often insisted on being intermediaries rather than targets of humanitarian efforts; have been temporarily settled outside of their country of citizenship yet are still committed to it politically; and like many of their compatriots, have volunteered time and labor to raise money for military activists, yet remained ambivalent about Ukraine's military mobilization and often supported their male relatives in avoiding the draft.

Take another example: Pavlo, in his 50s, from Khmelnyts'kyi. An ardent nationalist once closely connected to activists responsible for resurrect-



ing the legacy of the interwar Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in the late 1990s, Pavlo had a small consultancy business in accounting. Having lost clients because of the war and changing state regulations of his sector, he found his previous middle-class economic security gone. He unequivocally opposed the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and sometimes donated to the military, but as the war went on, he grew skeptical of the military draft: talking to Taras Fedirko, Pavlo referred to “orderless” press-ganging of civilian men, which had “turned Ukraine into the ‘Donetsk People’s Republic.’” He felt personally threatened by this approach to mobilization and did not trust the draft authorities to follow proper procedures or respect his chronic health condition that he thought should exempt him from military service. He railed against corruption in the corridors of power that saps Ukraine of much-needed resources and criticized government efforts to raise taxes for entrepreneurs like him in order to fund the war. When pressed, however, he admitted he saw no other way out of the debacle of the war than mass mobilization and a stronger state.

These stylized stories of Katia and Pavlo, with their trajectories of forced migration, civic engagement, draft avoidance, and military activism, register the contradictions of citizenship and state formation in wartime Ukraine. Ukrainians’ ambivalence about the state is the common place of accounts of Ukraine’s political culture, institutions, and political economy before 2022. While some scholars emphasize mistrust of the public institutions and “politics” in response to the dispossession experienced as a result of Ukraine’s uneven integration into global capitalism (Gorbach 2022, 2024; Yurchenko 2018), others celebrate collective effervescence and resilience manifest in civic self-organization that seeks to make up for the “absent” state (Channell-Justice 2022; Onuch and Hale 2022).

Each of us encountered this ambivalence in his own way: Artiukh, during his long-term fieldwork among Ukrainian forced migrants in Romania; and Fedirko, when studying civic elites’ mobilization for Ukraine’s war economy.

Building on these two lines of inquiry, in this article, we take such ambivalence toward the state² as an entry point for exploring the contradictions of war-making and state-making in Ukraine after 2022.

War and dependent state formation

The weak legitimacy of the Ukrainian state before 2022 traces its roots to the transformation of the Soviet patronal structures after 1991. As the Soviet developmental state disintegrated, Ukraine’s elites reconstructed the apparatus they had inherited along rent-seeking and predatory lines (Derluguian 2016: 214; Hale 2015). In the context of relative geopolitical stability in the 1990s and 2000s, this set Ukraine on a “reverse” path of state development because there was “no need for real armies and armaments industries, and no need for effective administration and therefore little need for domestic political bargaining over taxation and personnel recruitment” (Derluguian 2016: 216).

Similarly to other post-Soviet countries, in Ukraine, elites’ privatization of state resources contributed to a hegemonic crisis in which rulers consistently failed to enlist significant portions of the population into their projects of rule (Artiukh 2022; Gorbach 2024: 19–64; Ishchenko 2024). Elite predation also sped up Ukraine’s integration into the periphery of the capitalist world-system, putting the newly independent country on a path to dependent development. Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas did not challenge this pattern of state formation because they did not immediately endanger the state and its elites as such.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, however, was a moment of rupture. It introduced a new logic of institutional transformation driven by unprecedented challenges of a much-expanded war. The war initially bolstered the legitimacy of the Ukrainian state and its patronal elites, so long as they were perceived to be effective at coordinating national defense. It forced them to reorient an unprecedented pro-

portion of national resources to the task of combating the enemy; made them construct a war economy based on coercive extraction of social resources; and deepened their dependence on foreign grants, loans, and military aid. The war and martial law also insulated the incumbents from political competition, allowing them to claim greater autonomy from the “old” interest groups in the name of supporting the war effort. This has resulted in a more centralized state that is more inclined to penetrate the lives of its citizens than before, and coercively mobilizes resources and recruits to offset shortfalls of foreign aid.

These transformations made many Ukrainians wary of their government for a new reason. If earlier weak state legitimacy had reflected elites’ hegemonic failure, now it also resulted from the state’s increased coercive power. These contradictions of wartime state transformation manifest differently for different social groups. In this article, we focus predominantly on war migrants from Ukraine, who are unlikely to be directly benefiting from the Ukrainian state’s delivery of the public good of defense, yet are increasingly feeling the state’s attempts to impose war costs on them and their families and networks within Ukraine.

To examine the relations between warfare and political and economic organization in Ukraine, we need to distinguish between different aspects of state power or state capacity.³ The state’s capacity to maintain political order correlates with, but is not the same as, its capacity for raising revenues and implementing policies, mobilizing recruits for successful wars, or ensuring citizens’ consent to legitimate rule (for overview, see Centeno et al. 2017; Hanson and Sigman 2021). In Ukraine, we observe an unevenness or “incoherence” (Mann 2005) between the state’s increased military and political power in wartime and its tortured efforts to maintain economic and ideological power.

For the past half-century, historical sociologists examining the relation between wars and political and economic organization have worked with Charles Tilly’s “bellicist thesis” postulat-

ing that in early modern Europe, “war made the state and the state made war” (Tilly 1975: 42). Most turned it into an empirical question (“Does war make states?” [Centeno 1997; also Kaspersen and Strandbjerg 2017]) and examined evidence from different historical periods and parts of the world, seeking to qualify or update Tilly’s model. Modern European states emerged in response to military and fiscal challenges of a violent and competitive geopolitical environment on a politically fragmented continent (Tilly 1975). Wars thus functioned as “a great stimulus to centralizing state power and building institutional capacity” (Thies 2005: 451). Under some conditions, increased wartime spending and resource extraction could become institutionalized, leading to higher-capacity states, particularly where populations could expect greater provision of public goods by the state in exchange for wartime sacrifices. As Tilly (1990) well understood, postcolonial and other contemporary state formation in an already-formed and relatively stable international system with complex relations of political and economic dependence was a challenge to his account of state formation, developed for early modern Europe (Feinstein and Wimmer 2023: 197, 213). Still, his theory has become the central organizing point of what by now is a rich program of comparative research that has explored different pathways of state formation across the world.

In this article, we adopt this research program’s core heuristic and explore war as a site of institutional innovation and transformation in Ukraine. We examine early evidence of war’s impact on the consolidation of the fiscal state in Ukraine, a central feature of the state-formation path described by Tilly, and relate it to dependence on foreign aid and tensions between coercion and state legitimacy (for similar approaches, see Benson 2024; Feinstein and Wimmer 2023). Predominantly studied in retrospect, state formation has been typically understood as a long-term process. However, its constitutive forces and dynamics can be observed *in vivo* over the short term in “minute changes at the level of state institutions, or the rules and procedures that struc-

ture behavior within core government policy arenas” (Schwartz 2023: 9). We therefore argue that in 2022–24, Russia’s invasion put Ukraine firmly on the path of dependent state formation, in which dependence on foreign aid and political decisions shape the (trans)formation of the dependent state. In Ukraine’s case, the government’s war policies and civilians’ responses to them have become linked both to battlefield developments and to political dynamics in far-flung locations where aid to Ukraine is disbursed and contested, arms and munitions are produced, and strategy of their application is discussed.

The focus on the incoherence of the different forms of state power in Ukraine demonstrates the nonlinear character of wartime institutional transformation over 2022–24. War destruction and the voraciousness of the war machine have deepened the Ukrainian state’s dependence on foreign powers. This has exposed Ukraine’s domestic politics and state legitimacy to external volatility and forced the state to rely on coercion more than consent to mobilize resources and recruits domestically in order to compensate for instability or shortfalls of foreign aid. Greater coercion has undermined the legitimacy of wartime state rule, which in the longer term might erode the war effort, for instance through tax and draft evasion and low battlefield morale.

The rest of this article is structured as follows. The third and fourth sections sketch out Ukraine’s changing state capacity and dependence since 2022. The fifth section discusses the flow of forced migrants from Ukraine and their ambivalent attitude to their status and the Ukrainian state. The sixth section relates Ukrainian migrants’ and military activists’ experiences of the state to the incoherence between different forms of power that becomes more pronounced the more the state seeks to expand its reach in the war.

Ukraine’s war economy and the state

This theme section explores the role of warfare “in societies’ political and economic organiza-

tion” (Caglar and Yuksel, this issue). One way to explore this is through the notion of war economy, which focuses attention on how political economies are structured for the purpose of war-making, namely how belligerents mobilize “labor, material and finance”; how they use economic instruments to damage their enemies; and how they legitimize the “imposition of hardship, including depriving people of the necessities of life” (de Waal 2025: 4–7). In their introduction, Ayse Caglar and Ayse Seda Yuksel draw attention to processes of value creation and accumulation characteristic of two kinds of war economies. On the one hand, there is the war economy of the US empire, in which wars fought by a globally hegemonic state on imperial peripheries are financed by borrowing facilitated by the global dominance of the dollar, and war rents are captured by private defense contractors supplying the state. On the other hand, there are protracted conflicts or “new wars” (Kaldor 1999), in which acts of violence serve direct profiteering in a kind of predatory accumulation by dispossession.

We analyze a war economy that is related to but different from those explored in other contributions to the theme section. In the three years after the invasion, Ukraine became more deeply integrated, on dependent terms, into the Pax Americana (to the point that the second Trump administration sought to radically leverage that dependence). At the same time, Ukraine had constructed a war economy in which the state assumed a central role, bolstered by a social movement in support of defense efforts. The Russo–Ukrainian war at once shrank Ukraine’s economy and forced the state to drastically increase its expenditure. Ukraine’s GDP plummeted, stabilizing at roughly 70 percent of its pre-invasion levels toward the end of 2023. In 2023, defense expenditure was 11 times that of 2021, reaching 68 billion dollars (from 2.4 percent of the GDP in 2021 to 38 percent in 2023 [Myronenko and Repko 2024: 5]), and remained at a similar level in 2024.

In this context, expenditures of the Consolidated Budget of Ukraine increased by 80 per-

cent from 2021 to 2023, to 121.4 billion dollars (33.8 percent of GDP in 2021 to 70 percent in 2023), dramatically raising the state's influence on the national economy. Public spending on the purchase of goods went up 2.6 times and labor remuneration 2.1 times, reflecting increased military procurement and military salaries. As a result, "in its current state, the Ukrainian economy cannot generate enough funds to cover [the state's] expenditures. In fact, all budget revenues from the Ukrainian economy are absorbed by defense spending" (Vlasiuk et al. 2024: 12). Of the US\$106 billion of central state expenditure in 2023, over 61 percent, was covered externally through grants, loans, and bonds. Foreign aid freed up domestic revenues to be spent on defense, creating a fragile balance that could be upset by any variation in aid flows. About one-half of the 89.5 billion dollars of centrally budgeted expenditures for 2024 was covered by state revenues, most of it going to defense. In the first half of 2024, both donor funding and military assistance to Ukraine from the United States and the EU were delayed, having become a stake of internal political conflicts in these polities. This led to unintended political consequences within Ukraine (more below). In sum, the war made the Ukrainian state assume a much greater role in society than before and at the same time made it much more dependent on external finance as well as military aid for its capacity to carry out this role. This led some commentators to suggest that by 2023, the government had abandoned its erstwhile small-state approach (for an overview, see Cooper 2022). But the increase of government spending on defense went hand in hand with cuts redirecting funding from other sectors. Ukraine's fledgling national security state grew at the expense of the civilian state, which did not shrink as much as it could have over 2022–24 only because of foreign financing.

Unable to control the amount or timing of foreign assistance, the approval of which increasingly became a stake in political struggles in the United States and the EU, the Ukrainian government tried to systematically increase do-

mestic revenues. War needs combined with donor pressure, as the IMF made the expansion of tax revenues one of the benchmarks of its program in Ukraine (IMF 2023). In the second half of 2023, the government moved to increase tax and customs revenues and redistribute expenditure across several domains. It suspended tax breaks introduced in 2022; raised regular income tax and introduced a one-off windfall tax for banks; and adopted a National Revenue Strategy 2024–30 that envisages a return to a progressive income tax scheme (Vinokurov 2023). Import tax increases for non-critical imports are also under consideration. The government has initiated significant increases of excise taxes on fuel, intended to bring in an additional €1.6 billion (Ukrainian hryvnia) per month into state coffers (Vолокита 2024), and raised the "war tax" on income from 1.5 to 5 percent, and considered raising VAT (value added tax) by 2–3 percent points to finance its additional military draft (Krytska and Kalashnyk 2024).

The government also reformed elements of the defense procurement process to reduce corruption and waste, while reversing an earlier reform of corporate governance of the state-owned oil company to maximize its payouts into the state budget. It redirected income tax revenues generated from military salaries and normally flowing into local authorities' budgets toward national war spending, and imposed personal income tax on crowdfunding donations received via private bank accounts (rather than registered charity accounts). Finally, law enforcement intensified investigations into large businesses' tax affairs, and the government stepped up its efforts to regulate the informal economy, for instance increasing 13-fold intake from gambling businesses and proposing to legalize and tax cryptocurrency. Many of the revenue mobilization measures in 2024 responded directly to shortages and delays of foreign financial aid that year.

These concerted efforts to increase central government revenues for war spending would indicate an increased state capacity, if narrowly measured by the government's share of the economy (Feinstein and Wimmer 2023). However, in-

creased tax intake remained insufficient to fund core state functions in wartime. In 2023, domestic revenues covered military salaries and welfare payments, but were enough to fund only a small portion of the necessary weapons procurement.

These persistent constraints on the state-led war economy in turn frame the relative social power of civic crowdfunders, a social movement mobilizing for the public good of national defense. In 2022 and 2023, Ukraine's three largest fundraising organizations (United24, Come Back Alive, and Serhii Prytula Foundation), raised ₪53.13 billion (UAH), equivalent to some €1.405 billion (euros), in donations (Opendatobot 2024). Donations slowed down, but in monetary terms, they amounted to more than Spain's total allocation of €1.221 billion in military, financial, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine from January 2022 to September 2024, or to the sum of Estonia and Lithuania's aid (€1.454 billion) in the same period (IFW 2024). For a cash-strapped state, crowdfunding provided a relief on certain forms of defense spending, and a way to tap into resources beyond the reach of the tax authorities. Networks of elite crowdfunders became partners in the exercise of the "infrastructural power" (Mann 1986) of the centralized state, supporting efforts to mobilize resources and recruits for war.

Dependence and instability

In many respects, crowdfunding coexists and extends state provision to the frontline, in a kind of uneven and combined transnational economy of war that is itself articulated with the war economy of the US empire. Early on in the war, Ukraine requested and adopted artillery of a new caliber, 155 mm, which are standard in NATO countries but differ from those inherited from the Soviet Union. Thus, Ukraine became dependent on shell supplies from the United States and its allies, which have struggled to meet Ukraine's demand without depleting their own stockpiles. Anthropologist Darryl Li (2024) argues that the shell shortage in the United States

reflects the country's "priorities over the past quarter-century of unipolar hegemony, namely a focus on making precision-guided missiles more suited for aerial manhunting in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq." Ukraine's war economy therefore became integrated with that of a transnational empire that had over the previous three decades become re-organized around fighting "small wars" on its imperial peripheries.

Dependence on foreign supplies from a war economy not geared to the kind of war Ukraine is fighting has had dire consequences for Ukraine's forces, which have been significantly outgunned, leading to increased losses of lives and territory and resulting in political tensions in the government. Shortages of artillery shells of all calibers pushed the Ukrainian military to begin adapting small drones provided by crowdfunders into guided kamikaze weapons. Throughout 2023, an increasing number of crowdfunding campaigns re-orientated to the provision of the so-called FPV (first person view) drones, and new drone assembly workshops spawned to meet crowdfunders' and units' demand for drones. By the end of 2023, the government directed some ₪43 billion, or almost US\$1 billion, of funds taken from local authorities' budgets, to a centralized program of drone procurement, leading to protests from local authorities. Building on the foundations set by the crowdfunding movement, the state dramatically expanded its demand for domestically produced drones over the course of 2024, cementing the military's reliance on weaponized drones to mitigate shortages of munitions.

Shortages of military labor, however, were more difficult to resolve. As the 2023 spring-summer counteroffensive failed, Ukraine's military and their Western counterparts raised the prospect of a protracted war. They stressed the need to mobilize more men and at a younger age (*The Economist* 2023; Wallace 2023). The government came up with a doubled-pronged initiative of toughening conscription and involving private contractors tasked with recruiting a qualified labor force to specific positions in the military before launching new state recruit-

ment centers outside of the regular military draft institutions. However, attesting to the increasing reliance on what Michael Mann called the “despotic” mode of power,⁴ the new mobilization law of May 2024 contained several punitive provisions that had likely been copied from the corresponding Russian and Belarusian legislation. The voluntary recruitment campaign was much less successful than planned (more on this below).

Shortfalls in Western aid between late 2023 and the first half of 2024 combined with questionable strategic decisions and degradation of the Defense Force organization (Tatarigami 2025) caused a series of military setbacks for Ukraine. This resulted in troops and equipment losses and ultimately increased the cost of the war, requiring further resource and recruit mobilization. In spring 2024, Russia exploited Ukraine’s “artillery hunger” to advance in the Donetsk and Kharkiv regions, thus upending financial calculations of war costs that had assumed a more stable frontline (Gaidai 2024) and, probably, lower draft figures. The result was an unforeseen US\$ five billion gap in Ukraine’s war financing in summer 2024. Military setbacks of 2023 and early 2024 ultimately pushed the government to intensify military draft, which in the situation of unstable foreign aid, led to further plans for new taxes and borrowing.

As we argue in what follows, the efforts to increase military and political power of the state through extension of economic power and intensification of military recruitment met resistance from citizens and undermined the state’s wartime legitimacy and its ideological power. The following two sections consider the resulting incoherence between the different types of state power from the point of view of Ukrainian migrants abroad, and military crowdfunding activists in the country.

Citizens or refugees?

Ukraine’s demographic situation has acquired an international political dimension as significant as Western aid. Forced migrants from

Ukraine are at the core of the contradictions inherent in the country’s dependence: interpellated as citizens of a victim nation, they are treated as an economic and military resource both by Ukraine and by host states.

Ukrainian war migrants in Romania and elsewhere have avoided calling themselves “refugees” (*bizhentsi/bezhentsy*). Indeed, they did not have a corresponding legal status and do not live in camps, thus falling outside of the legible figure of “refugee” (Malkki 1997). The majority have kept and reshaped their ties to the country of origin: under the temporary protection they have not been restricted in their movements to Ukraine or elsewhere. Thus, for those not liable for conscription, trips to Ukraine have been a usual practice, which created an informal infrastructure of mobility. However, this flexibility has come at the expense of security. Over 2022–24, the legal protection status remained temporary: it was renewed annually assuming that its beneficiaries would eventually return home. They were displaced on the condition of being emplaced, and the Ukrainian state had a claim on their destiny as much as the host countries.

This ambiguity of status allowed researchers access to the social processes discussed by migrants with lesser pressure to conform to a socially acceptable narrative of a nation-in-arms, thus helping detect changes not immediately captured by polls or media inside Ukraine. Moreover, Ukrainian migrants in Romania are strategically located to study the contradictions of Ukrainian society. First, Romania was a major transit and destination country: although only 125,000 claimed temporary protection in Romania, two million Ukrainians passed through the country. Second, Romania was the main destination for the people from the war zone: Artiukh’s experience shows that the majority of migrants there came from the south and east of Ukraine. Finally, the Ukrainian-Romanian border was most popular among the men who attempt to leave the country despite the ban (Verschwele 2024).

Ukrainian authorities have watched the trajectory of forced migrants with anxiety: depop-

ulation had become a concern before 2022, as the number of people living in the government-controlled territory declined from almost 52 million in 1991 to 45.4 million on the eve of war in the Donbass region, subsequently falling to 37.4 million before the invasion. Optimistic projections (Kulu et al. 2023) predict that in 20 years Ukraine's population may decline to 33.7 million if most forced migrants return or to 24.3 million if only 10 percent return. Moreover, the record low fertility rate could reduce the working age population from ca. 67 to 60 percent of the total population, increasing economic pressure on workers. Even in the best-case scenario, Ukrainian demographics might suffer more than during World War II.

This damages the economy against the background of shrinking Western support. The Ukrainian government has cited concerns that taxes from official employment are not enough to sustain the army, while employers have complained about labor shortages. Migrants have been blamed for both. Remittances have historically been a major source of foreign currency and people's livelihood in Ukraine. Before the Russian invasion, the total value of remittances reached US\$18 billion annually, more than twice the value of foreign direct investment into Ukraine. This was comparable to institutional financial foreign aid, which stood at US\$25.23 billion in 2022 (World Bank 2023). During the first year of the war, remittances fell to US\$16.71 billion. At the same time, Ukrainians abroad spend more using their Ukrainian bank cards than they send back home: to be more precise, US\$20 billion in 2022 and US\$18 billion in 2023 according to the National Bank of Ukraine (Dilova Odesa 2024). According to the ILO (International Labour Organization), the Ukrainian government faces the prospect of not only a net outflow of hard currency, but also shortages of labor (IOM 2023).

Citing these concerns, the Ukrainian government has launched an aggressive campaign targeting Ukrainians abroad. As EU officials started discussing the Temporary Protection Directive set to expire in March 2025, Ukrainian officials

signaled they wanted to return Ukrainian citizens, especially males, before the end of the war (Moens and Barigazzi 2024). In his New Year's address on 31 December 2023, Volodymyr Zelensky introduced an ominous opposition between citizens and refugees (Zelensky 2023), which was followed by an effective suspension of key consular services for, and what seems like a coordinated campaign against, male Ukrainians of draftable age (18 to 60 years old) residing abroad. This group was stigmatized by the Ukrainian authorities (Rose 2024) and the conservatives in Poland and Germany. Combined with an internal propaganda campaign against emigrants, this has stirred anxiety and alienation among the migrants (Babakova 2024).

In this respect, the interests of the Ukrainian government contradict those of the migrants as well as, to some extent, those of the host countries. In the first months of the war, assistance to Ukrainian refugees aimed at sustaining the social reproduction of the Ukrainian population. Welfare payments to Ukrainian migrants in the EU reduced the burden of managing displacement for the Ukrainian government. As the war entered its second year, European countries revised their migration policy toward Ukrainians, laying more emphasis on labor market integration. Romania is a good example of this shift from social reproduction to proletarianization. During the first year of the war, the Romanian government channeled EU funds to Romanian landlords, incentivizing them to host Ukrainian families. But in April 2023, the program was discontinued in favor of a German-style employment-based welfare support (Cosciug et al. 2023).

There is, however, a contradiction between labor demand and securitization of migration in the European countries most invested in military and in hosting migrants. As Artiukh (2023) hypothesized, investment in social reproduction of Ukrainian women supplemented the provision of weapons to Ukrainian men on the frontlines. Popular hospitality toward forced migrants from Ukraine was determined by sociocultural as well as geopolitical pref-

ferences of Europeans: young professional females were preferred by a large margin to older people, males, and those with less prestigious professions, while Ukrainian origin added to the welcoming attitude, especially among Euro-optimists (Bansak et al. 2023). This has been exploited by conservatives in Germany, Poland, and the Baltic countries, where a moral panic over male Ukrainian migrants, labeled “deserters,” has fueled plans to cut welfare support (Decker 2024). A compromise between securitization of male migration and business interests may yet lead to precarization of Ukrainian migrants and thus devaluation of their labor power (Gorbach et al. 2024).

Tensions and ambivalences in the moral economy of the war

The contradictions of the state’s growing powers and deepening dependence have driven social tensions in Ukraine. These have come to the surface in the form of debates over the legitimacy of the main forms of extractive state policies: mobilization of recruits and control over population movements, and increased pressure on businesses to mobilize revenues for the state. In this section, we zoom in on these tensions as manifest in our interviews with forced migrants, military draftees, and representatives of civil society.

Katia and her male kin, whose story opened this article, were among the last to have benefited from an informal arrangement regarding the military conscription that thrived in Odesa before Zelensky ordered a crackdown on corruption in recruitment offices. In spring 2023, social media publics circulated numerous videos of men being detained on the streets of Odesa and other cities by military draft patrols. Extralegal detention of prospective recruits and informal deals regarding exemption from the draft coexisted since the start of the war and reinforced each other. Stricter control over the conscription process only exacerbated both trends, as it became increasingly hard to acquire

exemption papers legally, and the price for informal arrangements rose from hundreds to thousands of dollars (Verschwele 2024).

In an informal discussion about corruption in Ukraine at one of Bucharest’s cafés, in which Artiukh participated, female migrants shared the experience of their husbands and relatives serving in the army. Mixing witness accounts and information drawn from Telegram, which has been the main means of communication among the migrants while those who stayed in Ukraine still watched the state-run TV marathon, they agreed that the state “did not care about the soldiers” and the army itself was “corrupt.” Soldiers, they said, must buy their own equipment and bribe their officers. As if injecting a streak of optimism, a woman from Kyiv whose husband worked in the defense industry boasted about transporting cars from Sweden with the help of the Prytula Foundation, which she described as the most honest and dedicated. From these migrants’ perspective, the official anti-corruption campaigns served to cover up wide-spread power abuse by state and military officials, while civic activism retained an aura of hope.

This reflected the skepticism over the government’s anti-oligarchic and anti-corruption campaigns that, as many in the political opposition and civil society alleged, camouflaged monopolization of power within the presidential office. Even before Russia’s invasion, the Venice Commission criticized Zelensky’s anti-oligarch bill as not compatible with rule-of-law principles. Zelensky’s office came under criticism for their use of discretionary sanctions against select individuals. An anti-corruption campaign in the military recruitment system led to a drastic fall in the number of recruits mobilized, according to senior military officials (Romaniuk and Kravets 2023). Some politicians quoted a 70 percent fall in mobilization numbers (Sereda 2023). Newly assigned recruitment chiefs struggled to learn the bureaucratic procedures and cooperate with local authorities, resorting instead to coercive (and sometimes extralegal) military draft. Thus, the central government’s intervention into regional power networks or-

ganizing mobilization, seems to have exacerbated the problem of military coercion. More broadly, this demonstrates how the Ukrainian state's (despotic) power to rule *over* society is in tension with its (infrastructural) power to rule *through* society. Military power networks' reliance on extralegal coercion to compensate for bureaucratic incapacity and weakness of ideological mobilization, has had adverse effects for trust in state institutions. In turn, the leaders of the military crowdfunding movement have found it more difficult to justify calls for the civic mobilization in the face of these contradictions and in some cases have withdrawn their cooperation with state authorities.

Katia and other refugees from Odesa discussed these tendencies in terms of a conspiracy theory: recruitment officers unleashed terror on the streets of Odesa to raise the prices of bribes. This theory betrayed a moral attempt to reconcile deep distrust of the state with the injunction to defend the nation, which remained a "necessary illusion" for those who stayed and those who left in the first two years of the war. These migrants justified their decision to leave the country in terms of moral economy (Gorbach 2024: 110): if the state represented by the military officials broke the rules, then the people were entitled to do the same.

Of course, tensions simmered between the women whose husbands and relatives served in the army and those whose husbands were exempt or escaped. "I cannot give you an interview," one respondent said after having initially agreed to talk, "I am too angry with all those who avoid service, whose mothers say that they hadn't given life to their little precious ones so that they go to war." The women whose relatives were not in the army either stressed that they were exempt temporarily or, in rarer cases when they challenged the opponents, appealed to the need to provide for the family, which the state would not do either in the case of victory or defeat. This tension emanated from the sense of injustice shared by many soldiers on the frontline. One infantryman told Fedirko that he "thought his joining up would give time to other men to

prepare for war, but it only gave them time to escape the country." Another complained of civilians in the rear who, by donating to military activists, felt they bought themselves the right not to serve. These "sofa soldiers of the economic front," as he put it, established impermissible equivalences between donating from the rear, and putting one's life at risk on the frontline.

This sense of unfairness was exploited by the government to deflect grievances over abuses of power and failed promises of the 2023 counter-offensive. A case in point was the mobilization amendments passed in April 2024 and justified by the plummeting mobilization rates, frontline losses, and partially the instability of foreign aid. Public debates over the bill were accompanied by a campaign against the so-called draft dodgers (*ukhlyianty*) (Rose 2024) with a slogan "we need to change our boys," which appealed to a sense of justice for soldiers who had served for two years without a break. This campaign helped suppress concerns over human rights violations and the breach of the social contract, according to which political docility was exchanged for individual freedoms.

As the parliament was about to vote on the amendments under pressure of Western politicians and the presidential office, the section of the bill concerning demobilization was withdrawn seemingly at the military commanders' insistence. Moreover, General Zaluzhny was removed from his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, declared unfit for service and then dismissed from the military. To deflect disappointment of the soldiers with the failed demobilization promise and replacement of Zaluzhny with the unpopular General Syrsky, the government launched a campaign against Ukrainians abroad, starting with suspension of consular services to men of conscription age.

The men who avoided conscription or fled the country justify themselves by pointing to unfair draft procedures and informality within the army, which they associate with a "Soviet legacy." This reflects the overwhelming (70 percent) rejection of forced conscription registered in polls (Active Group 2023) and a tolerance to-

ward draft evasion as compared to corruption (Lytvynova 2023). At first, the moral imperative to defend the nation was reconciled with the distrust of the state by a proposed bargaining deal: we will not serve as soldiers, but we will collect money for defense in a private capacity. Serhiy Prytula, the founder of a large military charity, formulated this sense of defensive consolidation in his testimony to the US Helsinki Commission in December 2022. “It is difficult to divide Ukrainian society into civilians and military during this war,” he said. “It is more accurate to divide it into people who defend the country, and people who bring them the bullets.”

After the failed counteroffensive of summer–autumn 2023, however, the state pursued the campaign against draft evasion resorting to ever more incendiary rhetoric and violent measures, as well as to harsher legal punishments. Figures for draft evasion increased alongside the proportion of draft evasion trials resulting in prison sentences. The number of registered criminal cases on draft evasion increased from 108 per month in 2022 to 385 per month in 2024 on average, while the share of real prison sentences rose from 4 percent to 40 percent correspondingly.⁵ In response, the opposition to the mobilization procedures turned into a counter-campaign in social media, notably by Ukrainians abroad. The divide and rule strategy backfired. Campaigners referred to ever more frequent cases of illegal detentions, beatings, and occasional deaths in enlistment centers, criminal negligence at medical commissions, lack of training, and lack of accountability of the commanders in the army, rhetorically equating Ukraine with Belarus or North Korea.⁶ An increasing number of videos documenting press-ganging also reveal growing resistance to enlistment officers, not only from the friends and relatives of those detained but also from bystanders. From a sign of weakness to be atoned for with monetary donations, draft evasion turned into a fight for the rule of law. In one survey in February 2025, nearly 80 percent of respondents called the state’s approach to mobilization “inadmissible” (Drabkina 2025).

This distrust of the state unites draft avoiders, deserters, soldiers, and their female relatives despite the mutual bitterness they might otherwise feel. In numerous discussions observed by one of the authors in the spring of 2023—during the height of optimistic expectations surrounding the Ukrainian counteroffensive—women, regardless of the status of their male relatives, voiced complaints about corruption, the inefficiency of state agencies, and even the perceived malevolence of both civilian and military authorities. By the end of 2023, polls started registering a drop in trust in all state institutions except for the military, sometimes by more than half, across all regions of Ukraine (KIIS 2023). This included the presidential office; the overwhelming majority blamed the president for corruption (Burkovskiy 2023). The influence of the state-controlled media, such as the United TV marathon, plummeted likewise, as audiences shifted to social media and messaging applications. People remain united in the fear of Russian occupation but grow increasingly disoriented as to the goals of the fighting. By the end of 2024, polls registered that over 50 percent of respondents supported a compromise deal on ending the war with the involvement of foreign leaders and security guarantees, while nearly 20 percent supported freezing the war along the current line of the front (Romaniuk and Mazurenko 2025). The messaging of the Ukrainian government oscillated between a willingness to negotiate and the insistence on de-occupation of the country’s whole territory.

Ambivalent attitude to the state, distrust in state institutions, informality, and other “weapons of the weak” are accompanied by the lack of an alternative coherent ideology capable of articulating the grievances expressed by our research participants. They resort to “hidden transcripts” (Scott 1990) that combine legal formalism, conspiracy theories, folk geopolitics, superstitions, rumors, and ruses. The ideology of national liberation is relegated to Scott’s “open transcript” that is increasingly taken with a grain of salt. This decoupling of people’s individual survival strategies and the state’s demands signals the

absence of hegemony in a strict sense of “intellectual and moral leadership” (Gramsci 1971: 57). In the fourth year of the war, Ukrainian society, trapped between contradictions of dependent development and challenges of the war, returned to the pattern of failed hegemonic projects where interstate and intrastate naked domination takes center stage.

Conclusion

The geometry of Russian military and Western political-economic forces have reshaped Ukraine’s state in a contradictory fashion. The conditionality of Western aid combined with the need to mobilize economic resources for the war effort led to the drastic decrease in the power of established oligarchic groups and centralization of political power in the executive. At the same time, Zelensky’s administration concentrated power in a way that strengthened him personally rather than the formal institutional structures. Different Ukrainian government institutions have responded to the challenge of raising war finances by proposing and implementing revenue mobilization measures while also constructing a state-led war economy that stopped short of direct, centralized administration, leveraging open markets and social movements for public needs instead. Yet these measures often responded to situational, short-term problems, at times undermining each other. The war has deepened Ukraine’s integration into the US-led security empire, leaving it dependent on incoherent aid and political strategy. This has had material consequences for Ukraine’s defensive campaign and domestic politics even before the election of Donald Trump. The apparent lack of long-term war strategy within Zelensky’s office and among Western allies and the irregularity and volatility of Western assistance have favored ad hoc interventions and extralegal measures to extract local resources and military recruits. Consequently, the state’s effort to increase efficiency

have resembled a whack-a-mole game, where discretionary coercion in mass anti-corruption and mobilization campaigns creates a cascade of adverse consequences including mass informal practices from draft evasion and informal work to various volunteer initiatives.

As the post-invasion affective unity dissipated over 2022–24, these contradictions have eroded the government’s political legitimacy and weakening the state’s ideological power. Ukrainian society has shifted from one unstable equilibrium to another: while in the immediate aftermath of the invasion the state exercised political power in an ‘infrastructural’ mode—relying on the voluntary collaboration of citizens and civil associations—by the fourth year of the war, the balance had tilted toward a more despotic form of power, exerting dominance over both the economy and society.

Examining “the mutually constitutive relations between wars and the processes of value creation and accumulation” (Caglar and Yuksel, this issue), other contributors to this theme section focus on contexts of “new wars” and intractable violence in which accumulation by dispossession emerges as the key analytic (Caglar and Yuksel, this issue). Famously, “new wars” are often characterized by violent pursuit of plunder in the context of fragmented or weak state authority (Kaldor 1999). This scenario is distinct from Ukraine’s war economy in 2022–24. Spurred by the war’s existential challenge, the Ukrainian state has sought to consolidate its powers, albeit incoherently. But it has also grown more dependent on foreign powers for aid and the means of war, which has only exacerbated the contradictions between the power of the state to mobilize domestic resources and recruits and its capacity to ensure ideological consent for resource extraction and fighting. This process of dependent state formation might yet make a “new war” and imperialist dispossession Ukraine’s worst nightmare, given how vulnerable it has made Ukraine to abrupt global political shifts, such as the geopolitical rebalancing of Donald Trump’s administration.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Luke Cooper, Mary Kaldor, Egor Lazarev, Yulia Yurchenko, and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions. Volodymyr Artiukh acknowledges funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement no. 865976). Taras Fedirko's research for this article was supported by the British Academy (grant no. PF20/100094) and the Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep), funded by UK International Development from the UK government. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

Volodymyr Artiukh is a Postdoctoral Researcher at COMPAS, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford, UK. He studies forced migration from Ukraine with the ERC-funded project EMPTINESS: Living Capitalism and Democracy after (Post)Socialism.

Email: volodymyr.artiukh@compas.ox.ac.uk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5340-6651>

Taras Fedirko is a political and economic anthropologist studying war, oligarchy, and media in Ukraine. He is Lecturer in Organized Crime and Corruption at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow, UK, and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna.

Email: taras.fedirko@glasgow.ac.uk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9597-550X>

Notes

1. This is a pseudonym as are other names of interlocutors. Secondary details of the life story have been changed to protect anonymity.
2. We stylize the state here as a more or less coherent entity but acknowledge that this would not be adequate for other kinds of analysis where the actual heterogeneity of state institutions would be of greater importance.
3. We are inspired by Michael Mann's (1986) distinction between four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political (the "IEMP model").
4. In Michael Mann's (1986: introduction, chapter 5) formulation, despotic political power is the power of the state to coerce and impose its rule *on* society; while infrastructural power is the power to rule *through* society.
5. Artiukh's calculations based on General Prosecutor's Office data (Hromadske 2024) and the Unified Register of Court Decisions (<https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/>).
6. Some of the notable representatives of this trend are blogger Andrii Luhanskyi (<https://www.facebook.com/luganskiy2/>), lawyer Rostyslav Kravets, and an MP from the Servant of the People party Heorhii Mazurashu (<https://www.facebook.com/sportbuk>).

References

- Active Group. 2023. "Dovira, krytyka i nadiya: Stavlennia ukrayintyv do politychnoho i viyskovoho kerivnytstva ta mobilizatsiyi" [Trust, criticism, and hope: Ukrainians' attitudes to political and military leadership and mobilization]. *Active Group*, 19 December. <https://activegroup.com.ua/2023/12/19/dovira-krytyka-i-nadiya-stavlennya-ukrainciv-do-politichnogo-i-vijskovogo-kerivnytstva-ta-mobilizaci/>.
- Artiukh, Volodymyr. 2022. "The political logic of Russia's imperialism." *Focaalblog*, 9 June. <https://www.focaalblog.com/2022/06/09/volodymyr-artiukh-the-political-logic-of-russias-imperialism/>.
- Artiukh, Volodymyr. 2023. "Racial affinity or selective securitisation?" (A contribution to Forum: Russia's invasion of Ukraine). *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 31 (2): 119–156.
- Babakova, Olena. 2024. "Ukraina nie rozumie swojej diaspori" [Ukraine does not understand its diaspora]. *Wiadomości*, 28 April. <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/ukraina-nie-rozumie-swojej-diaspori-opinia-7021800402922400a>.

- Bansak, Kirk, Jens Hainmueller, and Dominik Hangartner. 2023. "Europeans' support for refugees of varying background is stable over time." *Nature* 620: 849–854.
- Benson, Matthew Sterling. 2024. "Of rule not revenue: South Sudan's revenue complex from colonial, rebel, to independent rule, 1899 to 2023." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* First View: 1–27.
- Burkovskiy, Petro. 2023. "Shcho dumaiut' ukrain-tsi pro problemy v sectori oborony ta viys'ku" [What Ukrainians think about the problems in defense sector and in the army]. *New Voice*, 5 September. <https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/viyna-v-ukrajini-shcho-dumayut-ukrajinci-pro-problemi-u-viysku-opituvannya-50343929.html>.
- Centeno, Miguel Angel. 1997. "Blood and debt: War and taxation in nineteenth-century Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (6): 1565–1605.
- Centeno, Miguel A., Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar. 2017. "Unpacking states in the developing world: Capacity, performance, and politics." In *States in the developing world*, ed. Miguel A. Centeno, Atul Kohli, Deborah J. Yashar, and Dinsha Mistree, 1–34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Channell-Justice, Emily. 2022. *Without the state: Self-organization and political activism in Ukraine*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Cooper, Luke. 2022. *Market economics in an all-out-war? Assessing economic and political risks to the Ukrainian war effort*. London: LSE Ideas.
- Cosciug, Andriana, Anatolie Coşciug, Alexandra Porumbescu, and Viktoriia Kyrychenko. 2023. *Labour market assessment on Ukrainian refugees in Romania*. Bucharest: HIAS.
- Decker, Markus. 2024. "Streit über wehrfähige ukrainische Flüchtlinge: Unionspolitiker wollen sie zur Heimkehr drängen" [Debates over Ukrainian refugees liable for military service: CSU politicians want to force them return home]. *RND*, 26 April. <https://www.rnd.de/politik/fluechtlinge-aus-der-ukraine-wehrfaehige-maenner-sollen-laut-union-heimkehren-4EMHX6BYWZCRHAX2VFNNWLPPLPU.html>.
- Derluigan, Georgi. 2016. "Missing the China exit: A world-systems perspective on the Ukrainian state." In *Beyond the Euromaidan: Comparative perspectives on advancing reform in Ukraine*, ed. Henry E. Hale and Robert W. Ortung, 204–218. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
- de Waal, Alex. 2025. "Hunger in global war economies: Understanding the decline and return of famines." *Disasters* 49 (1): e12661.
- Dilova Odesa. 2024. "Ukrainci vytrachaiut za kordonom po 35 milioniv dolariv shchodnia" [Ukrainians spend 35 million dollars a day abroad]. *Dilova Odesa*, 29 January. <https://dilova.com.ua/ekonomika/ukrainci-vitrachaiut-za-kordonom-po-35-miljoniv-dolariv-shhodnya/>.
- Drabkina, Ielyzaveta. 2025. "Ukrayintsi vidpovily, iak stavliatsia do zmeshennia mobilizatsiinoho viku ta TTsK" [Ukrainians responded on their attitudes to lower mobilization age and TRC]. *New Voice*, 27 February. <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/zmeshennya-mobilizatsiy-nogo-viku-pidtrimuyut-ukrajinci-chi-ni-opituvannya-50493299.html>.
- Feinstein, Yuval, and Andreas Wimmer. 2023. "Consent and legitimacy: A revised bellicose theory of state-building with evidence from around the world, 1500–2000." *World Politics* 75 (1): 188–232.
- Gaidai, Yurii. 2024. "Viina za novymy stavkamy: Yakyi efekt dast pidvyshchennia podatktiv" [War at new rates. What effect will the tax increase have]. *Ekonomichna Pravda*, 28 May. <https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2024/05/28/714339/>.
- Gorbach, Denys. 2022. "Ukrainian identity map in wartime: Thesis-antithesis-synthesis?" *Focaal blog*, 13 June. <https://www.focaalblog.com/2022/06/13/denys-gorbach-ukrainian-identity-map-in-wartime-thesis-antithesis-synthesis/>.
- Gorbach, Denys. 2024. *The making and unmaking of the Ukrainian working class: Everyday politics and moral economy in a post-soviet city*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Gorbach, Denys, Yevheniia Polishchukova, and Anastasiya Ryabchuk. 2024. "Elusive privilege: Class, race and gender in Ukrainian war migrants' (un)employment in France." *Dialect Anthropology* November. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-024-09754-8>.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the prison notebooks*. Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- Hale, Henry E. 2015. *Patronal politics: Eurasian regime dynamics in comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanson, Jonathan K., and Rachel Sigman. 2021. "Leviathan's latent dimensions: Measuring state

- capacity for comparative political research.” *The Journal of Politics* 83 (4): 1495–1510.
- Hromadske. 2024. “Za dva roky v Ukraïyni vidkryly mayzhe 11 tysiach sprav shchodo imovirnykh ukhyliantiv – Ofis henprokurorva” [In two years, eleven thousand legal cases against suspected draft evaders were initiated in Ukraine – General Prosecutor’s Office]. *Hromadske*, 29 April. <https://hromadske.ua/suspilstvo/223135-za-dva-roky-v-ukrayini-vidkryly-mayze-11-tysiach-sprav-shchodo-ukhyliantiv-ofis-henprokurora>.
- IFW. 2024. “Ukraine support tracker.” *Institute for World Economy Kiel*, 6 August. <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker>.
- IMF. 2023. *Ukraine: IMF country report No. 2023/399*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2023/12/11/Ukraine-2023-Article-IV-Consultation-Second-Review-Under-the-Extended-Arrangement-Under-the-542297?cid=em-COM-123-47597>.
- IOM. 2023. “The Ministry of Economy, ILO and IOM continue to lay the foundation for a strong and productive post-war labour market in Ukraine.” *International Organization for Migration*, 8 December. <https://ukraine.iom.int/news/ministry-economy-ilo-and-iom-continue-lay-foundation-strong-and-productive-post-war-labour-market-ukraine>.
- Ishchenko, Volodymyr. 2024. “Class or regional cleavage? The Russian invasion and Ukraine’s ‘East/West’ divide.” *European Societies* 26 (2): 297–322.
- Kaldor, Mary. 1999. *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kaspersen, Lars Bo, and Jeppe Strandsbjerg, eds. 2017. *Does war make states?: Investigations of Charles Tilly’s historical sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KIIS. 2023. “Dynamics of trust in social institutions in 2021–2023.” *Kyiv International Institute of Sociology*, 18 December. <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1335&page=1>.
- Krytska, Iryna, and Pavlo Kalashnyk. 2024. “Rishenia problemy na sotni miliardiv” [A solution to a problem worth hundreds of billions]. *Forbes Ukraine*, 23 May. [https://forbes.ua/money/rishenya-problemi-na-sotni-milyardiv-forbes-diznavya-pro-plani-uryadu-pidvishchiti-pdv-ta-viysko](https://forbes.ua/money/rishenya-problemi-na-sotni-milyardiv-forbes-diznavya-pro-plani-uryadu-pidvishchiti-pdv-ta-viysko-viy-zbir-koli-tse-stanetsya-ta-skilki-groshey-mozhe-prinesti-byudzhetu-23052024-21316)
- he-prinesti-byudzhetu-23052024-21316.
- Kulu, Hill, Sarah Christison, Chia Liu, and Júlia Mikolai. 2023. “The war, refugees, and the future of Ukraine’s population.” *Population, Space and Place* 29 (4): e2656.
- Li, Darryl. 2024. “Imperialism’s shell game.” *Law & Political Economy*, 29 April. <https://lpeproject.org/blog/imperialisms-shell-game/>.
- Luhanskyi, Andrii (Андрей Луганский). Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/luganskiy2/> (accessed 9 April 2025).
- Lytvynova, Lesia. 2023. “Ukhylianty, korupsionery . . . tse – ne ia” [Draft dodgers, corruptioners . . . are not me]. *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia*, 4 November. <https://zn.ua/ukr/war/ukhiljanti-korupsioneri-tse-ne-ja.html>.
- Malkki, Liisa. 1997. “National geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees.” In *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 52–74. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mann, Michael. 1986. *The sources of social power. Volume 1: A history of power from the beginning to AD 1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mann, Michael. 2005. *Incoherent empire*. London: Verso.
- Mazurashu, Heorhii (Георгій Мазурашу (Sport-Buk)). Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/sportbuk> (accessed 9 April 2025).
- Moens, Barbara, and Jacopo Barigazzi. 2024. “Ukraine wants EU’s next migration rules to encourage returns.” *Politico*, 24 January. <https://www.politico.eu/article/kyiv-puts-pressure-to-tighten-rules-as-eu-mulls-future-of-ukrainian-refugees/>.
- Myronenko, Oleksandra, and Mariia Repko. 2024. “Ukraine’s needs and funding sources: Budget review 2023.” *Centre for Economic Strategy*, 15 May. https://ces.org.ua/en/budget_review_2023/.
- Onuch, Olga, and Henry E. Hale. 2022. *The Zelensky effect*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Opendatabot. 2024. “Ukrainci maizhe vdvich men-she zadonatly u 2023 rotsi nizh na pochatku velykoi viiny” [In 2023 Ukrainians donated almost half of what they did at the start of the war]. *Opendatabot*, 19 February. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/donation-2023>.
- Romaniuk, Roman, and Roman Kravets. 2023. “Viina proty polityky: Shcho naspravdi vidbu-

- vaietsia mizh Zelenskym i Zaluzhnyym” [War against politics: What is really going on between Zelensky and Zaluzhny]. *Ukrainska Pravda*, 4 December. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2023/12/4/7431489/>.
- Romaniuk, Roman, and Aliona Mazurenko. 2025. “Opytuvannia, nadane UP: 50 percent ukraiintsiv skhyliayutsia do kompromisu zadlia prypynennia viyny” [A poll see by UP: 50 percent of Ukrainians favor a compromise for stopping the war]. *Ukrainska Pravda*, 27 January. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2025/01/27/7495451/>.
- Rose, Sofie. 2024. “Nation of heroes: State stigmatisation of Ukrainian men who flee the war.” *Critical Studies on Security* (September): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2024.2398848>.
- Sereda, Sofia. 2023. “Serhii Rakhmanin: Zaraz TTsK ne mozhut chitko porakhuvaty liudei, yaki pidlihaiut mobilizatsii” [Serhiy Rakhmanin: Currently, military draft commissions cannot accurately count people who are subject to mobilization]. *Ukrainska Pravda*, 25 October. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2023/10/25/7425712/>.
- Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schwartz, Rachel A. 2023. *Undermining the state from within: The institutional legacies of Civil War in Central America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tatarigami. 2025. “Why is Ukraine losing ground? Mobilization crisis and command failures exposed.” *Euromaidan Press*, 3 January. <https://euromaidanpress.com/2025/01/03/why-is-ukraine-losing-ground-deep-analysis-of-military-problems-in-2025/>.
- The Economist*. 2023. “The commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s armed forces on how to win the war.” *The Economist*, 1 November. <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2023/11/01/the-commander-in-chief-of-ukraines-armed-forces-on-how-to-win-the-war>.
- Thies, Cameron. 2005. “War, rivalry and state building in Latin America.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 451–465.
- Tilly, Charles. 1975. “Reflections on the History of European State-Making.” In: Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly, 3–83. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1992*. Studies in Social Discontinuity. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Verschwele, Lena. 2024. “Ich habe keine Angst, jemanden zu töten. Ich will einfach nicht sterben” [I am not afraid to kill someone. I just don’t want to die]. *Spiegel*, 21 February. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/ukrainische-maenner-im-ausland-ich-habe-keine-angst-jemanden-zu-toeten-ich-will-einfach-nicht-sterben-a-9ecbef9a-9484-4a1d-8a04-76c1c343993a>.
- Vinokurov, Yaroslav. 2023. “Vyshchi podatky dlia FOPiv ta peretvorennia mytnykyv na slidchykh” [Higher taxes for self-employed and transformation of customs officers into detectives]. *Ekonomichna Pravda*, 27 December. <https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2023/12/27/708168/>.
- Vlasiuk, Volodymyr, Luke Cooper, and Brian Milakovsky. 2024. *A state-led war economy in an open market: Investigating state-market relations in Ukraine 2021–2023*. Research report. London: LSE Ideas.
- Volokita, Viktor. 2024. “Parlament v pershomu chytanni proholosuvav za pidvyshchennia aktsyziv na palne” [The Parliament voted in favor of raising excise taxes on fuel in the first reading]. *Ekonomichna Pravda*, 4 June. <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2024/06/4/714679/>.
- Wallace, Ben. 2023. “Ukraine is winning. Now let’s finish the job.” *The Telegraph*, 1 October. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/10/01/ben-wallace-ukraine-counteroffensive-succeeding/>.
- World Bank. 2023. “The World Bank data.” <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=UA>.
- Yurchenko, Yuliya. 2018. *Ukraine and the empire of capital: From marketisation to armed conflict*. London: Pluto.
- Zelenskyy, Volodymyr. 2023. “New Year address by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy.” *President of Ukraine, Official Website*, 31 December. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/novo-richne-privitannya-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskyy-88037>.