

Özgün Makale

Who Deserves to be Refugee? : The Instrumentalization of Art and Culture in the Solidarity Discourse of Ukrainian Refugees in Social Media¹

Mülteci Olmayı Kim Hak Eder? :
Ukraynalı Mültecilerin Sosyal Medyada
Dayanışma Söyleminde Sanat ve Kültürün
Araçsallaşması

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Abstract

This article explores the online display of artistic ability and cultural practice to express support for the resistance in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees while blaming the Russian attack on the country starting in February 2022. Social media engagement is essential in constructing discursive traits of belonging through bottom-up articulations of ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomies. Here, I question the distinguished characteristics of representation related to art, artistic practices, and abilities under solidarity social media posts in the case of Ukrainians fleeing their homes. Social media users who include art and culture concerning solidarity use a discourse of inclusion to depict refugees as parts of civilization and hence not reducible them to the *bare life* position. This study is guided by critical multimodal discourse analysis to understand better how social power is enacted, replicated, and resisted by social media content. I contend that these social media posts that convey specific art and culture-related representations serve to distinguish characteristics of war-torn Ukraine, people displacement, and Ukrainian refugees from the generic tendencies of otherization reflected on the ‘Southern’ refugee figure deprived of capability or motivation for *logos*.

Keywords: Refugee, Migration, Ukraine, Representation, Art, Social Media.

Öz

Bu makale; kültürel pratiklerin ve sanatsal yetenek gösteriminin, Rusya'nın 2022 Ukrayna saldırısına karşı Ukrayna direnişini desteklemek ve Ukraynalı mülteciler ile dayanışmak amacıyla

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kullanımını inceler. Aidiyet söylemi “biz” ve “onlar” ayrımları üzerinden kullanıcılar tarafından sosyal medyada başka bir araca gerek kalmaksızın inşa edilebilmektedir. Bu makale, Ukraynalıların haklı tanımlanan direnişlerini ve anavatanlarından ayrılma zorundalıklarının çevrimiçi dayanışma paylaşımları altında nasıl da sanat, sanatsal pratikler ve kültürel faaliyetler üzerinden temsil edildiğini analiz eder. Bu sosyal medya kullanıcıları, mültecileri medeniyetin bir parçası olarak göstermekte ve dolayısıyla mültecileri “çıplak yaşam” (*bare life*) konumuna indirgemek için özel bir aidiyet söylemi kullanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, sosyal tahakküm pratiklerinin sosyal medya içerikleri tarafından nasıl gösterildiğini, türetildiğini ve direnildiğini daha iyi anlamak için eleştirel çokludüzlem söylem analizini esas alır. Bu çevrimiçi temsiller, Ukraynalı mülteciliğini yoksul küresel güney dünya (“Global South”) kesiminden gelmesi alışlagelmiş göçmen ötekileştirmesinin dışına çıkarır. Çünkü bu dayanışma söyleminde Ukraynalı mülteci tahayyülü entellektüel aktivite (logos) ile özdeşleşir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mülteci, Göç, Ukrayna, Temsil, Sanat, Sosyal Medya.

Introduction

The war in Ukraine has once again awakened the humanitarian urge when millions of refugees from Ukraine crossed the borders. The number of individual refugees from Ukraine recorded until August 10, 2022, across Europe is 6,377,256 (Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation, n.d.) since “Russia started to invade Ukraine on February 24” (ABC News, 2022). The Pew Research Center announced that the Ukrainian population of refugees reached in one month to 3,7 million, which is the sixth-largest refugee outflow, with the first-ranked Syrian 2011 civil war provoking 6,8 million fleeing home over the past six plus years (Desilver, 2022). Hashtag campaigns such as #SupportUkraine, #UkraineCrisis, #HelpUkraine, and #StandwithUkraine across social media have collected and disseminated news about Ukrainian defense and resistance to invasion. Indeed, one of the high-rated online motivations for these posts is expressing solidarity for refugees fleeing their homes on the battlefield, attracting attention to the emergency, and connecting people for relief efforts.

The ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19 has kept the international agenda busy for so long. The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) immediately became active on March 4 to provide a clear legal status for up to three years to millions of Ukrainians (Ukraine Refugees, n.d.). Indeed, such welcoming policies were absent for asylum seekers from the Middle East, such as Syrian feeling the civil war or Afghans fleeing the Taliban (Augustová, 2022). Thus, the Ukrainian displacement emergency reminded the former humanitarian crisis of Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war starting in 2013 and offered an example of contrast in humanitarian capacities and discourse of relief collaboration. That is why many new reporters announced in astonishment that they are European refugees now that look like the “western” audience they are addressing (Bayoumi, 2022). While the humanitarian crisis of Syrian refugees seems to represent a usual outcome of the Middle Eastern landscape enclosing “war” and “atrocities”, “risk of sudden death”, and bare life (Agamben, 1998) situation, the Ukrainian example does not correspond with to what the refugee sigma corresponds.

Scholars affirmed in their studies that the concepts of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are represented in media as “others” (Baker et al., 2008). Indeed, other kinds of presupposed qualifications such as “criminality”, “posing threat,” or “opportunism for economic benefits” entangle in depicting refugees (Caviedes, 2015). Besides this, media representations of the refu-

gee have also been connected to discussing the spectacle of vulnerable others (Bozdog & Smets, 2017; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). Yet, I contend that online solidarity discourse for Ukraine supports a specific stereotypical contrast for a depiction that reveals itself explicitly in posts focusing on art and artistic ability regarding Ukrainian resistance and refugees. The generic spectacle of misfortune can convey suffering through wretched bodies to affect the sensibility of those who are more fortunate. Ukrainian refugees seen performing in social media posts reformulate the refugee figure to evoke empathy rather than pity, an equivalence between the viewer and the subject of the gaze.

In this article, I explore distinguished traits of representation related to art, artistic practices, and abilities of Ukrainian refugees in social media. I will approach the representation of Ukrainian refugees through the multimodal analysis of the art-related viral solidarity posts, popular art benefit examples, and event news. One of the famous examples studied is the viral video of a piano recital by the prospective refugee pianist Irina Maniukina, playing her piano for the last time before leaving her home in ruin due to the Russian invasion. The pianist's daughter captured this music play video, posted it to the TikTok social media platform then inter-posted it on diverse social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and also mass media channels. The study describes how solidarity discourse is imagined through art, the signifier of the humanity of citizens, and political logos, for Ukrainians fleeing their home country. I explore how such specific contextualization of solidarity discourse distinguishes from the narrative of humanitarian earlier Third World refugee flow. For this, I implement critical multimodal discourse analysis to explore how the social construction of hierarchies has been reproduced and contested via social media content productions. My research questions accentuate the role of social media in promoting the art-related solidarity discourse for the Ukrainian cause while exploring the instrumentalization of artistic skill and cultural competence. I argue that the solidarity discourse for the Ukrainian refugees constitutes a perfect counter-example that utterly demonstrates the construction of the discursive practices regarding the otherization of the generic figure of the refugee. By doing that, I deliberate on how such differentiation of refugee imagery coincides with the political imagination of subjectivity and its assigned sense of political community.

Worlds Comparison: Refugee, Logos, and Art

Positive self-presentation (in-group) and negative other-presentation (out-group) apply ideological constructions that emphasize negative traits for others, while positive ones are for self-portraying and discarding others (Dijk, 2008, p. 105). This group nomination in discourse can typically work to justify categorization and stereotyping (Wodak & Boukala, 2015). The overpopulation of art-related or displaying posts to support Ukrainian refugees signifies a specific connection between refugees, logos, and artistic ability. *Bare life* indicates the low capacity of human flourishing and part of animalistic instinct. However, *logos* expresses the fitting and unfitting of the just and unjust (Agamben, 1998, p. 7) to define and evaluate the respective merits of citizens (Boltanski, 1999, pp. 3–4).

As Jacques Rancière (2011) puts it, the victims are the “object of speech without themselves having a chance to speak” (p. 97). The critics of the spectacle of suffering (Sontag, 2004) urged art initiatives to overturn the hierarchical connection between the victims as objects and the viewers as subjects. That is why art focusing on the refugee situation is known to facilitate the expression of the refugees to claim agency for them to become part of the political community (Arda, 2019,

p. 321). Humanitarian associations such as UNHRC and UNICEF collaborated with artists and art groups to assist art projects providing channels for refugees to tell their own stories without the mediation of reporters and news media.

The process and communication of the Ukrainian refugee situation changed how we know about humanitarian action regarding the displacement of populations. The criteria regarding the management of asylum seekers used to follow a politics of *pity* (Arendt, 2019 [1958]) that develops from the designation of refugee to be *bare life* (Agamben, 1998), the fact of being just alive rather than *bios* meaning a social presence in the world. Didier Fassin (2005) contended that such humanitarianization in managing asylum seekers and illegal migrants provoked the discrediting of refugees. The strict discourse criminalizing refugees evolves from border management for “walling out more poor from less poor parts of the world” (Brown, 2010, p.113). In this equation, refugees are constructed as economically superfluous or biologically or politically dangerous to the national health and body (Arda, 2020). In a sense, anti-migrant discourse follows the ableist precept that “excludes or devalues some persons on account of their group attributes assumes an essentialist meaning of difference; it defines groups as having different natures” (Young, 2011, p.157)

Yet, the mediated visuality of Ukrainian refugees admits that they are relatively “European” situated on the East side of Europe, of the middle class with appropriate economic power, and “white” with light skin, hair, and eye color. Thus, refugeehood has been “racialized” and understood as a Third World reality (Malkki, 1995) rather than Europe’s. In fact, the case of the Ukrainian refugee situation reminds us of Amnesty International’s “When you don’t exist” (2012) campaign fictional short film that shows an alternative reality in which migration flows become reversed as if some violent unrests cause people to flee from Europe in mass and reach to an African country for their security. The perception of the Ukrainian refugee situation seems to reflect this Amnesty International’s makeover story that once aimed to remedy the interior frontiers between refugees and host communities (Arda, 2020). The figure of the refugee from the Global South as *bare life* is already being naturalized. Yet the Ukrainian case of refugeehood is disputable because of the old equation of the refugee with *bare life*.

Instead of displaying the survival risks of Ukrainian refugees, there is an emphasis on the merits based upon resemblances to the “citizen qualities” of the audience. The coverage of Ukrainian with European-looking, blond hair, blue eyes, and middle-class dresses by various well-known reporters on news channels such as BBC, NBC News, and even Al Jazeera have been announced with surprise (WION, 2022). The figure of the refugee in the dominant visual culture does not match the Ukrainian refugee looking like a First World citizen.

Content Production and Representation in Social Media

Social media representations engage with decentralized, diversified, and pluralized forms of content production. These online contents manifest media convergence of new and old media forms to convey various contextual relations and discursive connections. Online publics constitute news sources and vice versa (Ojala, Pantti, & Laaksonen, 2019). Social media platforms also are places to share art, cultural events, and news performances.

Art has become entangled with the current communication technologies, whether in its creation, dissemination, or referencing content. One does not need to be a professional artist to work on the social media posts that s/he/they generates. The user becomes trained in daily exercises

of socializing and sharing via high-speed multimodal communication and gets help from automatized templates of aesthetic measures. The convergence of old and new media is part of the contemporary visual culture condition (Jenkins, 2006, p. 12) and depends on the increasing interdependence of communication systems and mutual participatory culture. Images used in online information production are multimedia products as an example of convergence culture. These visual-based multimodal posts on social media consist of elements such as graphics, illustrations, videos, and films through popular culture and artistic references.

The active audience engagement as *produser* (Jenkins, 2006) in social media includes amplification with other mediums and medium-based works. Many multimodal social media posts increase their affective traits by intertextuality, referring to or containing elements of popular culture and well-known artworks on other mediums. The events we know and remember are primarily conveyed through visual-based multimodal culture (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017). Visuality plays a role in the participatory media's act of witnessing, especially in controversial media events (Scott, 2017, p. 374). For sure, referring to other media content and popular art culture activates users emotionally and boosts interactivity with which users quickly familiarize themselves. For social media posts to communicate their meaning, users must decode the integrated texts that the post contains. This can also condition convergence media to become another version of media power, narrowing down the range of stories and scripts from which audiences construct their worldviews (Bird, 2011). However, such connections to other mediums of art and popular culture, as well as cultural artifacts, can provoke divergent meanings, although referring to the dominant narratives and formal structures.

The representation of refugees through collectivizing framework disseminates either negative or positive perceptions on mass and social media. Both humanitarian victimization and dehumanizing criminalization (Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchison, & Nicholson, 2013) of refugees anonymize the refugee question (Bozdog & Smets, 2017, p. 4050). Imageries of collectivization disregard individual stories, diverse backgrounds, and different statuses of refugees and migrants. Such tendencies of collectivization also repeat on social media. Social media representations of the refugee figure also tend to circulate stereotypical categorizations of displaced people (Arda, 2021; Bozdog & Smets, 2017). Furthermore, the overrepresentation of polarized views is frequent in online public spheres. This lack of diversity in the migrant image also derives from the overpopulation of users in social media with a strict clear ideological leaning (Barberá & Rivero, 2015).

This study will explore how social media users construct their solidarity discourse for Ukrainian refugees through the artistic and cultural practices that Ukrainians exhibit. Social media posts on TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter that include keywords “refugee, Ukrainian, art, music, artists, musicians” concentrate on several actualizations of “*logos*” in contrast to “*bare life*” risking survival. Therefore, this study presents the Ukrainian case for diverging ways users frame the refugee issue to bring underneath discourse and clues for solutions to overcome negative portrayal.

Method

This research adopts qualitative study and small data in-depth analysis based on the critical study of multimodal discourses. Social media users generate “humor, irony, satire, and sincerity in ways that produce rabbit holes of potential meaning (Phillips & Milner, 2017, p. 202). These user-generated contents cannot readily be discerned through large-sample quantitative

approaches” (Hautea, Parks, Takahashi, & Zeng, 2021). My research questions accentuate how art and the act of cultural ability have been instrumentalized to appreciate the figure of the Ukrainian war-torn landscape, displaced persons, and refugees. This examination is based on the following specific questions:

- RQ1 - How does art and culture-related solidarity discourse in social media promote Ukrainian cause and support Ukrainian displaced people?
- RQ2 - How do this artistic skill and cultural competence in these social media depictions serve to justify and legitimize the differentiation of Ukrainian issue and refugee status?
- RQ3 - How do these discursive constructions of Ukrainian refugees differ from the generic figure of the refugee as “others”?

Data Collection

This research used purposeful sampling to collect information-rich cases (Patton, 2014, p. 466). It conducts an exploratory approach to identify the popular posts on the subject matter of art, Ukrainian, and refugeehood. The selected cases are collected from Instagram, Twitter and Tik-Tok with advanced search function under the popular posts section to search for the combinations of the keywords “refugee”, “Ukrainian”, “Ukraine”, “art”, “artists”, “artist”, “musician”, “music” and “solidarity”. Keywords inserted by the posting users do not necessarily include the word “refugee”, yet the image can present the situation of displacement. Therefore, the preliminary study has been conducted with the same platforms with the hashtag solidarity campaigns #SupportUkraine, #UkraineCrisis, #HelpUkraine, and #StandwithUkraine between the dates of March 1 – July 31 of, 2022.

I manually took screenshots and screen records of the posts for data collection. The screen-based data collection aligns with the purposive sampling strategy by theme used for this multimodal study. This screen-based record process has been followed by the specification of the exemplary post cases, which are viral or popular or typical genres on all platforms. Although these accounts are publicly available, account names have been anonymized to protect the privacy of users who may not be aware that their posts are being displayed beyond the motivation of their original posts. However, the professional particularity leaves celebrities, reporters, and writers’ names open without being anonymized.

Data Analysis

The analysis focused on how different users, host community members, sympathizers, and professional media outlets, use and position themselves concerning the displacement of Ukrainians through art and cultural references. I applied the critical multimodal discourse analysis method to examine the collected multimodal inventory. Posts consist of embedded images and videos, hashtags, emoticons, as well as tags. I consider images, sound, text together with post metadata and comments as part of the discursive engagement to be analyzed to understand the breakthroughs of refugee imagery. That is because “the organization of the ensemble is meaningful, and multimodal discourse analysis ‘provides tools for analyzing and describing the full repertoire of meaning-making resources which people use to communicate ... and how these are “organized” to make meaning (Jewitt, 2014, p. 15, as cited in Kreis, 2017, p. 503).

Discourse analysis aims to gather sufficient evidence from a population rather than obtaining a statistically representative sample from the population. As Bozdağ (2020) accentuated, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) differentiates itself from linguistic analysis with its

focus on the context and the issues of power, inequality, and domination (Dijk, 2008, p. 85). CDA emphasizes that contextual codes that run in the background allow communication to be processed. As Wodak and Boukala (2015) inserted in their studies of CDA, the institutional and mass media depiction of immigrants in Austria and Greece contribute to constructing national identities while representing immigrants and refugees as out-group members. Parallely, van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) applied CDA to deconstruct the historical roots of discursive practices of immigration control in Austria to reject family reunion applications of immigrants. Consequently, different kinds of connections with the refugee figure reflect discursive maneuvers of symbolic boundaries. These symbolic boundaries enable people to acquire status and monopolize resources by generating feelings of similarity and group membership (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). Wodak (2013) demonstrated that gatekeeping devices such as language proficiency for citizenship reintroduce the in-group of “us,” “European citizens,” and the out-group of “non-European others,” or “illegal,” “undocumented,” or “irregular” migrants. I contend that artistic expertise and cultural ability also work similarly to hosting language proficiency to distinguish “us” from “others”. As such, distinguishing traits of Ukrainian refugees demonstrate how identities, hierarchies among memberships, and stereotypes are formulated and deconstructed from the same yet entirely different figure of the refugee. I analyzed the characterization of the social context found in multimedia posts to reveal how multimodal content supports systematic hierarchies and constructions of inner and outer groups.

The results of this small data discourse analysis cannot be generalizable at the level of social media-enabled societies. Sampling by theme may not provide a complete account for ‘co-occurring discourse activities’ because of dismissing other topics discussed by the same users (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 238; Kreis, 2017, p. 504). Despite these limitations, the study is beneficial for projecting different discursive positions about the displacement and refugee figure through closely examining the particular context of art and cultural expertise and skills for in-group and out-group categorizing incoming populations.

Art and Solidarity with Ukrainian Refugees on Social Media

One of the viral posts was the video of professional pianist Iryna Manyukina (Ukrainian Pianist Plays A Final Rendition Of Chopin In The Ruins Of Her House, 2022), playing Chopin (Opus 25, No:1) with her piano fort the last time before leaving her home on 5 March 2022. The pianist’s daughter recorded her mother while playing and posted the footage on TikTok. The video became viral and shared on diverse social media platforms and mass media channels. The record starts with the pianist opening the case covered to protect from the ruins of the house. She cleans the keyboard fast, and after taking a deep breath, her hands play the Chopin piece pleasingly. Her daughter starts to move the camera around the house while showing the damage done. Their home is seen already in ashes because of Russian bombardments in Kyiv. The viewers see doors and windows, glass broken on the floor, cracks in the walls, carpet, and couch under the pieces of ruins of the ceiling damage while the piano sound at voiceover accompanies this moving picture of destruction. This video has been shared, commented on in diverse languages, and viewed many times. Appreciations for this video are expressed in the title and comments through emoticons, template effects that manifest liking, such as flowers, the addition of heart-shaped balloons, etc. Many of the reposting users emphasize the Ukrainian pianist’s talent seen in the footage through textual and visual statements. They also state their feelings about seeing a pianist say goodbye to her piano. Thus, the video also becomes a way of expressing users’ own

emotions and comporments regarding the sad event. This commiseration proceeds through the resemblances stated, such as the love of art, being also a musician or user's own flag to be placed in the post next to the Ukrainian flag. Some of the underneath text of the post also includes additional information about Polish composer Chopin exiled from his homeland, and how he was upset about the Russian attack on Poland in 1831.

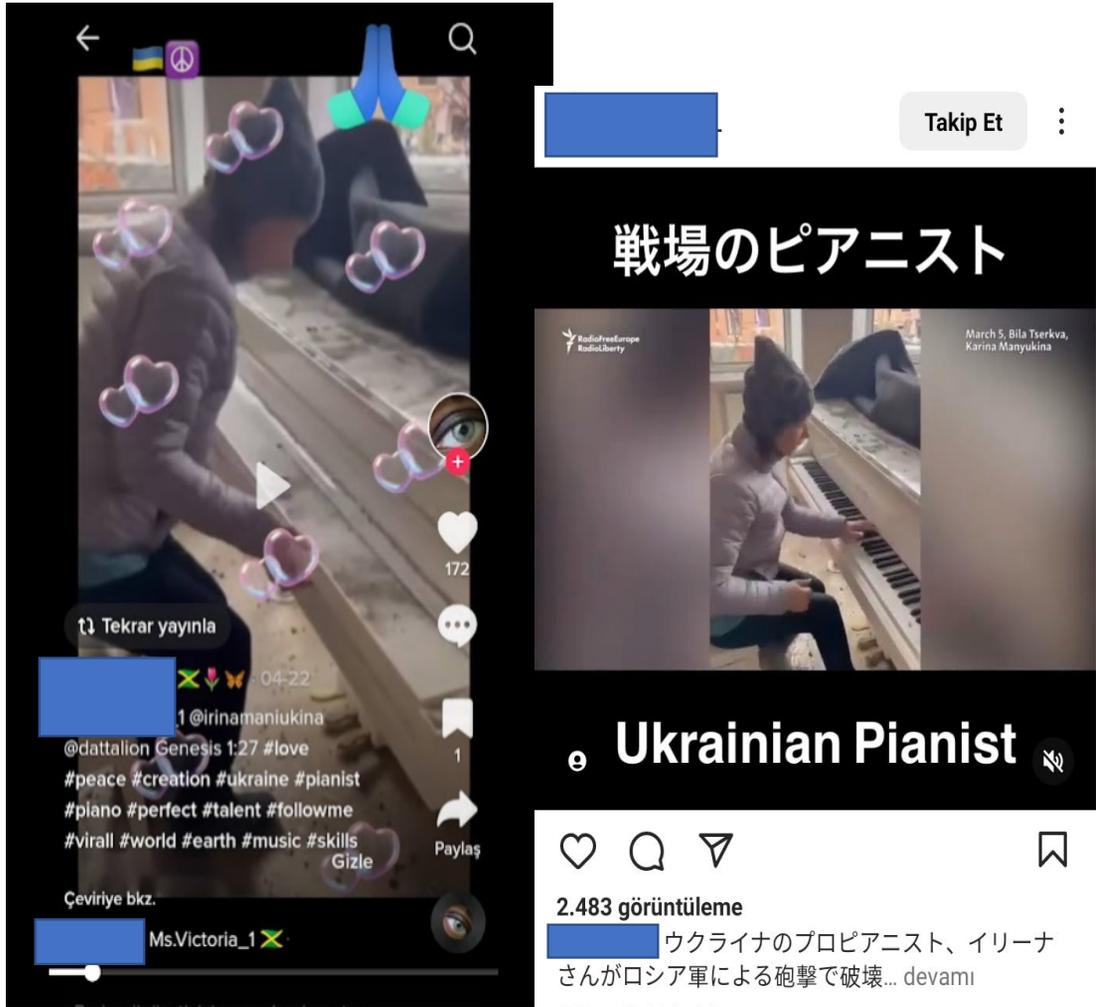


Figure 1 on the left: Screenshot of a TikTok Post of April 2022 reposting the Ukrainian pianist video [Video]. TikTok. Retrieved June 15, 2022 from the TikTok newsfeed by the author.

Figure 2 on the right: Screenshot of an Instagram Post of March 2022 reposting the Ukrainian pianist video from Radio Free Europe [Video]. Instagram. Retrieved July 18, 2022 from the Instagram newsfeed by the author.

Users also reacted to the Ukrainian pianist's post via similar artistic performances as a reply. One writer user posted a violin recital video as a reply that also states in text: "There is no comparison of our situation. Not one bit. Not even an ounce. But I wished to play for you. To know we hear you, see you, feel your music and each note you play. Where words fail, music speaks. There's a home in Ireland waiting for you. If you need it. Glory to Ukraine." This Tweet video of 13 March 2022 has been viewed 20.2B, commented on 24, retweeted 111, and liked 641 times in 1,5 months. One tweet reply to the violin video criticized the violinist for disregarding the unfair



Figure 3. Screenshot of Twitter discussion on unfair consideration of refugee case and border management Twitter. [Twitter moment] Retrieved April 10, 2022 from Twitter newsfeed of Dr. Jennifer Cassidy (@OxfordDiplomat [Twitter profile]) by the author.

identifies with the other, adopting somebody else's perspective" (de Waal, 2008, p. 281). Yet, sympathy means 'feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune' (Breyer, 2020, sec. Abstract). Indeed, the way that the Ukrainian pianist video post affects viewers is to make them refer to the shared love for art rather than pity for the other. Similar artistic compassion presented by the Piano Man also finds reciprocity with an actual Ukrainian refugee joining his joy of playing piano at the Poland border. Germany's The Piano Man, Davide Martello, is known to play piano to greet refugees from Ukraine. In one of his videos on social media, a Ukrainian refugee is seen playing 'We are the Champions' on Martello's piano. The refugee says that they have not slept for three days on their trip to reach the border (*Ukrainian Refugee Plays "We Are the Champions" on Piano on Polish Border*, 2022). Yet, her being a refugee does not mean she cannot engage with the Piano Man's state of action and actualization of logos.

Another popular discussion flow is about how this Ukrainian pianist record reminds of the movie scene of *The Pianist* (2002) by Roman Polanski. The Pianist focuses on the biographic story of another displaced person, Jewish Polish Wladyslaw Szpilman, who had to live under the Nazi government of invaded Poland. The scene referenced both in text and image in the movie

treatment of Palestinians that also had to flee their homes. To reply to such criticism, the violinist posted a video showing her playing violin in Gaza with her Palestinian students.

This comment flow highlights the requirement of an equalitarian "artistic act to repair the broken bonds of society" (Ranci re, 2010, p. 60). Ranci re (2010) defines this artistic duty as part of the ethical regime of art, seeking harmony between the constituents of society when politics does not accomplish its responsibility. In other words, art becomes politics, and politics becomes to be art. Yet, the two duties conducted by the same person even form a noticeable difference. That is because the violinist user taught playing the violin to Palestinian students and left some violins for them to enjoy playing music; however, the Ukrainian pianist is a colleague for whom the violinist plays in a "not comparable" way. Thus, the gift of art does not proceed similarly for the Palestinian and the Ukrainian cause. Empathy rather than sympathy is in charge in the Ukrainian case. Gerdes (2011) contends that a social worker's approach, preferably empathy, "means the capacity to be affected by and share the emotional state of another, assesses the reasons for the other's state, and

scene of Szpilman's encounter with a Nazi officer who makes him play the piano under his watch while his Nazi coat and cap are left on the piano. In this movie scene, Szpilman plays Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp minor ("Władysław Szpilman," n.d.). Indeed, another similarity consists of the contrast of humanity's best and worst doings together are portrayed in both Chopin scenes: Art, creative ability versus war as contrasting destructive power. The creative ability presented as music, the human destruction of a warm-art-loving house under ruins, or Szpilman in torn clothes, living off scraps to stay hidden from Nazis. As such, art resists such humiliation of talented human beings suffering from human evil. The tweet above (Figure 5) demonstrates Ukrainian art homes and cultural heritage under the Russian invasion. Such images displaying decaying buildings convey what the human-made evil of war left of civilization. In this context, civilization is under attack. Yet as the declaration of the prospective Ukrainian NFT museum (Figure 6) supports, culture and technology still promises to provide human happiness. Thus, rather than *ruin porn* (McNaughton, 2018), an incorrigible subjugation by the power of destruction, human art-based action pervades these depictions: the human spirit and its creative ability are destined to succeed.

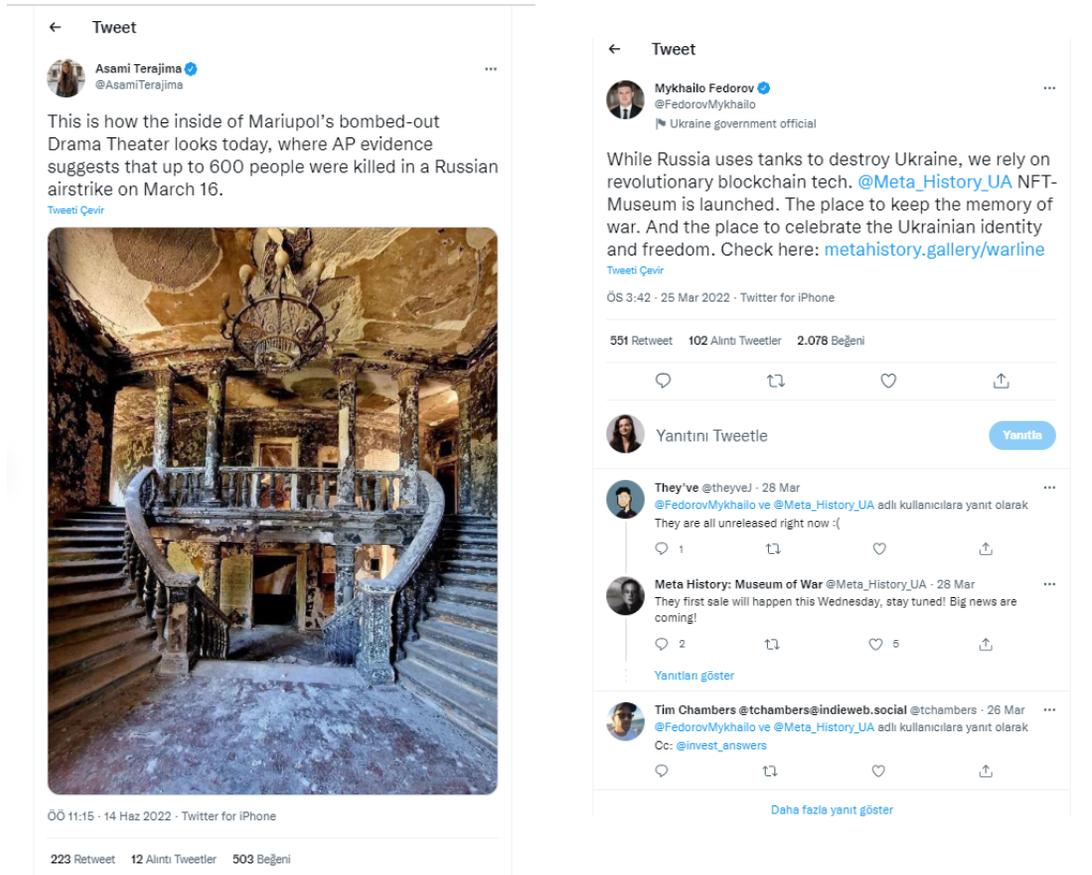


Figure 5. on the left: Screenshot of the Tweet by a local reporter, Asami Terajima (@AsamiTerajima [Twitter profile]), about the destruction of Drama Theater due to Russian bombardment on 14 June 2022 [Photo & Text] Retrieved August 11, 2022 from the Twitter newsfeed by the author

Figure 6. on the right: Screenshot of the Tweet by Mykhailo Fedorov (@FedorovMykhailo [Twitter profile]), Ukraine government officer, on 25 March 2022 about NFT Museum of Ukraine [Text]. Retrieved August 15, 2022 from the Twitter newsfeed by the author.

Another typical form of social media post was Ukrainian singers singing their national folk music with the hosting community members. The refugee singers here are trained or professional in their singing careers. The video's beginning focuses on the face of the singer, a Ukrainian refugee. Later on, the camera grows away from her. Thereby, the viewers see that the singing refugee is not alone singing the song, but the members of the hosting society crowded around her to accompany her. The accompanying hosting society members sing in these videos as a collaborated choir. In one of the similar posts, the title text states that the Ukrainian refugee Elizaveta sings together with 300 Lithuanians to support Ukraine.

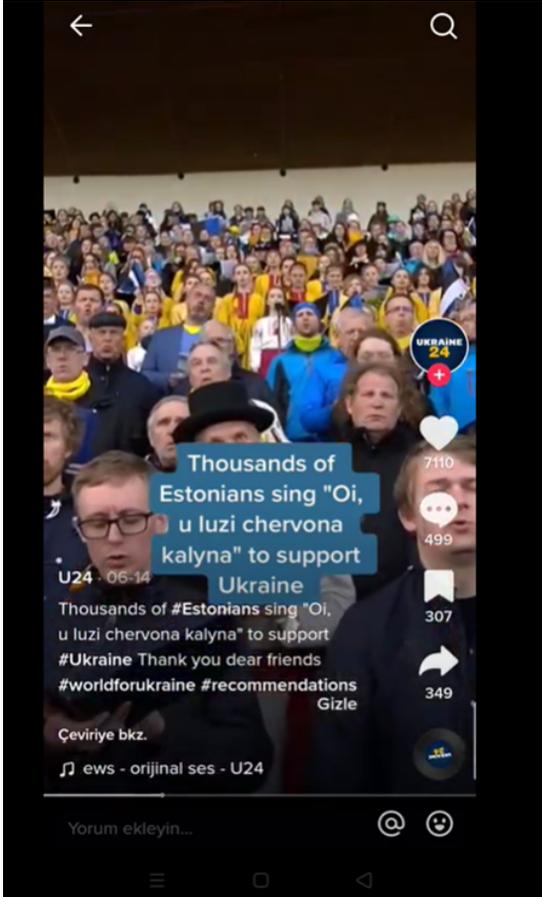


Figure 7 on the left: Screenshot of TikTok post displaying Estonians singing together with the Ukrainian refugee singer [Video] TikTok. Retrieved August 3, 2022 by the Tiktok newsfeed of U24 by the author.



Figure 8 on the right: Screenshot of Instagram post displaying Lithuanians singing together with the Ukrainian refugee singer [Video]. Instagram. Retrieved August 3, 2022 by the Instagram newsfeed of Egle Plytnikaite by the author.

The statement also mentions that these gathered 300 Lithuanians are answering Elizaveta's call to meet in Vilnius and sing this viral Ukrainian folk song. This post got 15.8 likes, with 374 comments and 692 saved times in 1.5 months. Another similar post by the Ukraine 24 account states that the video shows thousands of Estonians singing "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" to support Ukraine. The choir, led by the chef, performs the song with coordinated professionalism. The camera also shows the stadium the choir performs from a bird's eye view. At the heart of a giant chorus, Ukrainian folk dressed young girls in yellow with Lithuanians dressed in flag colors are seen singing. A donation link is attached to posts for those who want to help the Ukrainian cause.

For both examples of this type of solidarity performance, the Ukrainian refugees still own their nationality and sing with their traditional costumes and flags: They are not “sans-papiers”, stateless, without identity, “avoid being deported to a ‘homeland’ where they would be strangers” (Arendt, 1979, p. 278). Arendt (1979) states, the separation bare life and logos formulate that refugees are deprived of a political community, legal personhood, and a right to action, opinion, and speech. That is because refugees are “in the deprivation of a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective” (Arendt, 1979, p. 296). Such a definition for refugees does not correspond to Ukrainian refugees’ portrayal in these posts, as it is reclaimed. They have their state and government fighting against the Russian attacks, a political community endorsed by the hosting community members. In the case of Syrian or Afghan refugees, the fact that the displaced populations had to flee their homes was a civil war rather than a foreign invasion. Thus, the Ukrainian refugees are still tied to Ukraine’s Zelensky government, recognized by the international nation-state sphere, while the male citizens of their family members do not desert the homeland to fight against the enemy.

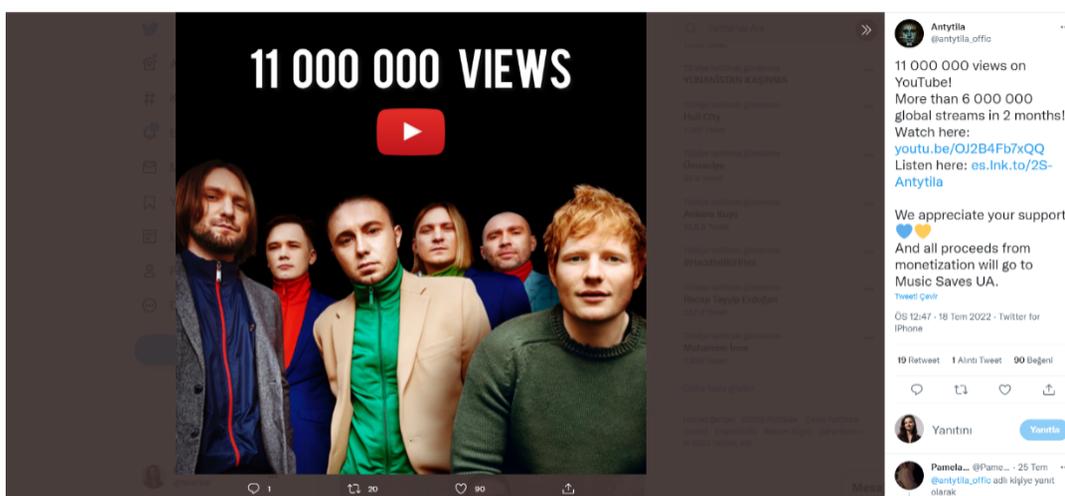
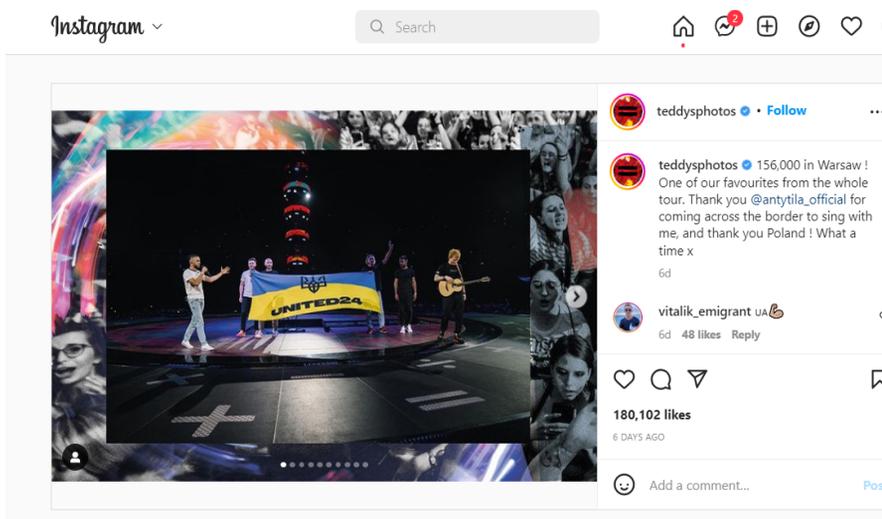


Figure 9: Screenshot of Ed Sheeran’s official Instagram account (@teddysphotos) post on the solidarity concert for the Ukrainian cause [Photo] Retrieved August 3, 2022 from the Instagram open account of the artist by the author

Figure 10: Screenshot of Antytila music group celebrating their collaboration with Sheeran and its view with high volume on Youtube in the Facebook platform [Photo Link to Video] Retrieved August 10, 2022 from the Facebook open account by the author.

More importantly, the Ukrainian refugees in these posts are not “speechless victims” who lost their expression ability. The music they deliver in these posts is understood, articulated, and enjoyed by host community members and fellow users who liked and shared these posts. Ukrainian refugees do not affirm such a “mere existence” (Arendt, 1979, p. 302). They act upon a common world. In that sense, they do not require “compassionate humanitarianism” (Gündoğdu, 2015, p. 59) to focus on their bare humanity to raise awareness of their suffering. In these video posts, Ukrainian refugees are not “dependent on others’ and their unreliable affects such as generosity or charity” (Gündoğdu, 2015, p. 59). Host community members respond and act upon refugee songs, thereby Ukrainians generate action and hence act on the political community.

Such collaborative art news are populated on social media. Benefit concert news, famous artists’ gestures of utterance for Ukrainian causes, exhibition announcements, and art performance shots were numerous on social media. The reworked version of famous British singer Ed Sheeran’s hit single “2step” with a verse by Ukrainian singer and Antytila frontman Taras Topolia has been released. Antytila members defending their homeland in military service joined Sheeran’s concert in Warsaw in Poland. Similarly, the posts of donation events by several Ukrainian-born artists educated in Ukraine were crowding, although not as popular as the worldwide celebrity Ed Sheeran collaboration event. Another event was the poster apparition of Ukrainian women in traditional folk costume at the façade of Moscow House in Vilnius, Lithuania. The post on this art protest states that the mural was organized by the collaborative artist group of Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine, funded by Lithuanians to raise €13.000 for expenses in just a few days. Parallely, “Visions of Home” exhibition curated by Ukrainian-born artist Ira Lupu has been presented at the urban space of Wembley Park’s 2022 Art Trail in the UK. For ‘Visions of Home,’ Wembley Park is declared to collaborating with the charity fund Tvoya Opora, to improve the refugee shelter in Lviv (Staffer, 2022). Thus, in such events, the Ukrainian is not a refugee or soldier at risk of life or death but a collaborator artist.

Thus, art witnesses *logos* at the expense of *bare life*. The art-related solidarity discourse of Ukrainian refugees and support for the Ukrainian cause reflect the inclusion of the in-group via the ability of *logos*. In these posts, refugees are described as similar to ‘us’, the social media users who write solidarity posts, displaying a clear connection between host communities’ members and Ukrainians. The construction of familiarity between in-group and out-group is achieved by using a demonstrative artistic ability, whether by the members of Ukrainians or the host communities. The positive characterizations are supported by the generation of actions within the common art realm, such as artistic replies or comments, including well-renowned popular art and culture references. Multimodal posts emphasize and prove the perceived enrichment granted by refugees still identified by their nationality, whether in their folk dresses or artistic practices that exceed the minimal motivations of *bare life*. In a parallel manner, one of the popular shared posts depicted the resilience of Ukrainians while they were gathering in Kyiv’s Shevchenko park to play chess under siege. This photo was shared first by a local reporter Asami Terajima and another journalist, Menekşe Tokyay (2022), a Turkish reporter and translator for Gazete Duvar of Turkey. The text of Terajima’s (2022) tweet states, “I find it astonishing how Ukrainians are grappling with the new reality of the war and trying to lead a normal life as much as possible even under extremely difficult circumstances”. They are the most resilient people I know.” Here, resilience derives from the Ukrainian people’s ability to engage in intellectual activities without interruption, even under risky life conditions.

The Figure of Refugee between Worlds

Thus who deserves to be a refugee? Welcoming refugees campaigns generically focused on the humanitarian aspect of the refugee situation. Therefore, the politics of pity (Boltanski, 1999) requires the exhibition of misfortune to demonstrate the sincerity of asylum demand (Fassin, 2005). These refugees deserve host community members' compassion as long as they are victims and not criminals who endanger the national body's wellbeing. As Bozdağ and Smets (2017) inserted, "among citizens, victim and threat representations are common, while representations of refugees as an opportunity for society or refugees as active agents are virtually absent" (p. 4056). Refugees have not been portrayed as individuals but as masses incapable of individualized thinking and acting. In the best scenario, this generic spectacle of misfortune awakens pity rather than hatred for host communities.

Deriving from the Aristotelian ontology, Agamben identifies that refugee camp as "a zone of indistinction between animality and humanity, where neither the animal nor the human potentialities are actualized" (Agamben, 2004, p. 38). In this diagram, to be included in the human community capability of actualizing the human potentiality of logos becomes necessary (Christiaens, 2018). Creative labor marks the difference between citizens and refugees. Ukrainian refugees are not stateless but, more importantly, are not without a political community in these depictions, although they are far away from their homeland. The art and cultural practice exhibition in these social media posts makes every citizen responsible for answering aid calls. That is because it simultaneously emphasizes in-group members' responsibility for positive actions for Ukrainians. In the Aristotelian sense, they still contribute to the search for "the good life in the polis" (Aristotle, 2017, bk. I). The art exhibited here constitutes Ukrainian speech and makes the host community members act on their behalf in artistic practices. That is a dialogue, a generation of artistic or cultural talk. The otherization, "the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' facilitating perspectivization" (Kreis, 2017, p. 509) exists for other refugees, such as the ones from the Middle East. But such out-group subscription does not exist for Ukrainian displaced individuals. Ukrainian migrants, refugees, or soldiers are competent in in-group signs of activity such as art and cultural know-how. This construction of Ukrainians disseminates empathy for a fellow human being rather than sympathy for the other.

Indeed, the differentiation of refugee imagination as the Second World and Third World is not a new phenomenon. In fact, the images of a defiant Soviet general or a graceful Russian dancer, or a proud Polish family used to dominate the Western public imagination of refugees after Second World War and during the Cold War when the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was written in 1951: Refugees fleeing from Soviet regime to live in freedom and democracy used to own individuality, history, political view (Johnson, 2011, p. 1015). Thus, the victimization of the refugee coincides with the racialization of the refugee in connection with the Global South. The social media user is more familiar with commenting and disseminating (as seen in Figure 11) with a worldwide Anglosaxone celebrity artist visiting the refugee and calling for help. Concerning oneself with shared affairs on behalf of others and discarding oneself's small suffering is a gesture of artistic politics familiar to intellectuals and social workers (Rancière, 2014, p. 50). Showing sympathy for those who are different than oneself does not involve action but a particular politics of humanitarianism that constructs itself from the hierarchical positioning of the fortunate and the unfortunate.

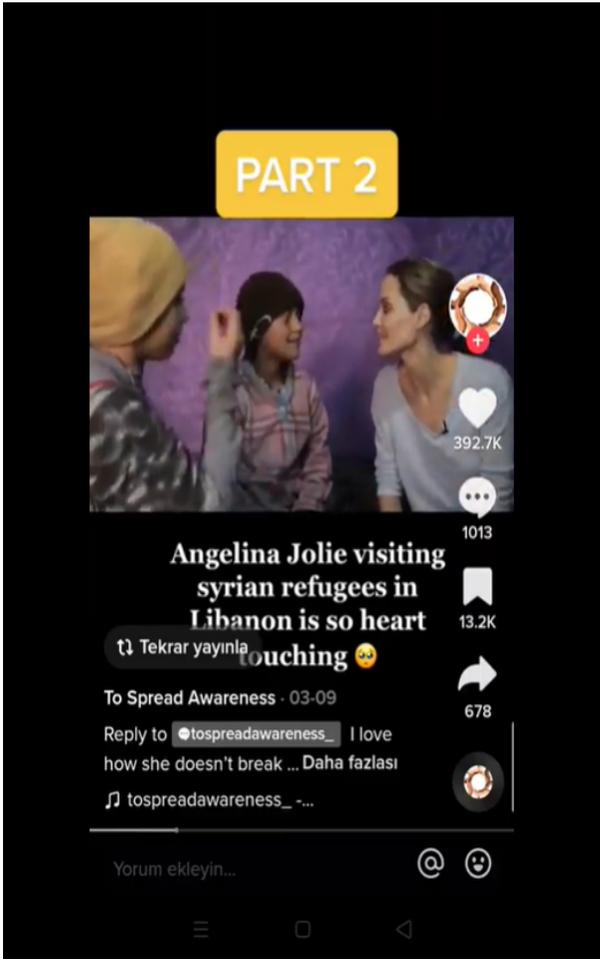


Figure 11: Screenshot of a TikTok post about worldwide celebrity Angelina Jolie talking with Syrian refugee children [Video] Retrieved from the TikTok newsfeed of “To Spread Awareness” by the author.

Figure 12: Screenshot of TikTok post by UNHCR about a Syrian guitarist singing and playing his song [Video] Retrieved from the TikTok newsfeed “We help refugees” by the author.

Indeed, similar art-related social media posts have also delivered a “Global Southern” warzone with artists and individuals practicing art (Figure 12), such as the case of Palestinian refugee Aeham Ahmad (Hernández, 2022), in the Syrian War of 2013. But the visibility of these performances does not generate a heroic posture that prioritizes first action, creative production, and intellectual endeavor only ahead of the bare existence to be rescued. Yet the “Southern” refugee can only disqualify the negative arguments that imagine “migrants from the South in terms of a mass movement, economic opportunism, and threat to security” (Johnson, 2011, p. 1023) but does not promote an equivalent action. Thereby, the image of a nameless mother refugee from the Global South just wants to keep her baby alive in the first place. Yet, Iryna Manyukina, a Ukrainian mother and daughter, enjoyed playing piano for the last time in their devastated home. It generates the actualization of potential for *logos* for herself and the host communities’ political community beyond her singular suffering.

Conclusion

The representations of Ukrainian refugees combined with traits ascribed and assumptions stated about them on their high abilities exemplify how the positive presentation of refugees and the inclusion of those who belong versus those who do not belong are constructed as online discourse. The rationale lies in distinguishing *bare life* from *logos* while users appreciate Ukrainians by sharing, liking, and recirculating events via multimodal content on social media. Such construction of Ukrainian refugees with art formulates *logos* (Agamben, 1998) with Ukrainians' art and cultural capital as proof of their being part of the political community and civilization. In that sense, art connection and artistic skill correspond to performative achievement that contrasts with generic refugee imagery. Representations of the refugee as active subjects rather than bare life contrast the media's mainstream portraiture of displaced populations. The social media representations demonstrate the actualization of *logos* for Ukrainian displaced persons and people risking life in the war zone.

Such instrumentation of artistic ability and cultural practices are used to reproduce existing political imagination, envisaging community in connection to state capabilities, nationality, cultural capital, and citizenship versus *bare life* at stake. Although this construction distinguishes itself from the refugee figure, the in-group subscription of Ukrainian displaced persons derives from the exact differentiation of the group identity of humanity as individuals versus the masses that it differs. Indeed, this discourse also corresponds to the naturalization of worldwide injustice. That is because it does not include and hence disregards a historical analysis of exploitation and global social disparities and economic inequalities between the First, Third World, and Second World.

The analysis of discursive strategies and multimodal contextual content of pro-Ukrainian refugee discourse on social media here is by no means exhaustive with these examples. Yet, social media users from different parts of the world connect with the contextualization of artistic ability and cultural practices. They affiliate through art appreciation before even supporting the Ukrainian cause. Future research may further investigate how social media use can express refugee solidarity versus hatred in another context rather than art and culture-related issues. This will contribute to social justice studies by exploring to what extent social media multimodal content is used to regenerate or resist inequality, to recirculate or challenge stereotypes while naturalizing/denaturalizing the otherization of the Global South.

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