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Demography of War

An analysis of the demographic context of
Russia's invasion of Ukraine

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Executive Summary

Aidan Gorman

This public report provides an in-depth analysis of Russian demographics regarding the invasion of Ukraine; the report answers four major questions, each of which will be addressed within a section of this report:

- **First**, 'Who in Russia supports the invasion?'. This section details who does and does not support Russia's self-declared 'special operation' in Ukraine. Analysing demographics along the lines of age, gender, and other factors – dissecting their attitudes and thoughts regarding Russia's 'operation'. This section will also give an overview of any noticeable trends within the section question. Discrepancies on the support for the war are uncovered; for example, young people tend to be less likely to support the war compared to the elderly. Similarly, there is a split in sex groups, with women being less likely to support the war than men. The difference in demographics and their support are found to be due to their exposure to different types of media.

- **Second**, 'Who is fighting on behalf of Russia?'. This section is an analysis on what demographics are fighting on behalf of the Russian military in Ukraine; whether it be poor, rich, young, or old, and will discover if the invasion has affected Russia's population in the short term. Russian forces consist heavily of just the Russian military, however there are a reported 20,000 foreign fighters supporting Russia. Similarly, to the previous two world wars, the Russian military continues to rely on conscription service.

- **Third**, 'Who is funding Russia's war?'. This section will delve into which nations or corporations are still conducting business with Russia, such as gas and oil supply chains. This section also will uncover who has truly stopped funding Russia; researching which companies and countries have ceased operations within Russia and purchasing Russian goods. Much of the European Union for example, still purchases Russian oil and gas, but they are attempting to alleviate their reliance on it. Many companies, especially banks, have pulled out of the region and no longer operate there.

- **Fourth**, 'How has the war affected Europe's demographics?'. As the final section of the report, it will look into whether the invasion has changed Europe, and if this will affect their emergency visa and refugee intakes for the year from other nations. Throughout the war, there has been forced assimilation of Ukrainians to Russia, as refugees are being forced through Russian filtration camps. When compared to other conflicts, Ukrainian refugees have been looked on more favourably than non-Ukrainian refugees.

Section 1: Who in Russia supports the invasion?

Alessia Mazuelos and Yann Guillaume

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, various Western media outlets have highlighted the dissenting voices emerging within the country, portraying the war as being unpopular and imposed on the Russian people. This narrative has been supported by the unprecedented severity with which the authorities have responded to the anti-war protests in the country. The latter is undeniable, as more than 15,000 dissenters had been arrested in such demonstrations by the end of March according to the Russian non-governmental organization OVD-Info. It is also true that many Russians have fled the country because of their sheer opposition to the conflict.

Section 1.1: Demographic Data Analysis: Age and Sex

Alessia Mazuelos

A significant Russian majority have embraced and ultimately supported the Kremlin's "public statements and foreign policy goals" surrounding Ukraine. Although the measurement of Russian support for the invasion can be measured in different ways by a wide variety of organisations, it was primarily reflected in Vladimir Putin's approval rating rising. Putin's approval rating was at a 'multi-year high', reaching 70%-71% as of February 27th, according to the state pollster VTsIOM and pollster FOM, the same week the special military operation took place.

Do you support or not support the decision to conduct Russia's special military operation in Ukraine? (closed-ended question one answer, % of total respondents)

	Total respondents		
	25.II	**27.II**	**03.III**
Likely to support	65	68	71
Unlikely to support	25	22	21
Don't know	10	10	8

(Figure 1: Russian support for "special military operation in Ukraine", 5 March 2022, Source: VCIOM)

Nonetheless, the most direct measuring data is the approval and disapproval of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia from the Russian population, which has been collected through surveys and polls. Although the general Russian population's approval of the invasion of Ukraine is 58% and the opposition is just 23% when asked for their support of "the Russian military operation on Ukrainian territory". Even if it is biased, the survey conducted by the government-owned pollster WCIOM diverges with an increasing number of 65% on February 25th to 71% on March 3rd on Russians' support of the special military operation (Figure 1).

Do people in Russia support the military operation in Ukraine?

VTsIOM: "Do you support the military operation?"

FOM: "Was the decision to engage in the military operation the right one?"

Data source: VTsIOM (The Russian Public Opinion Research Center), FOM (Public Opinion Fund), (25–27 February)
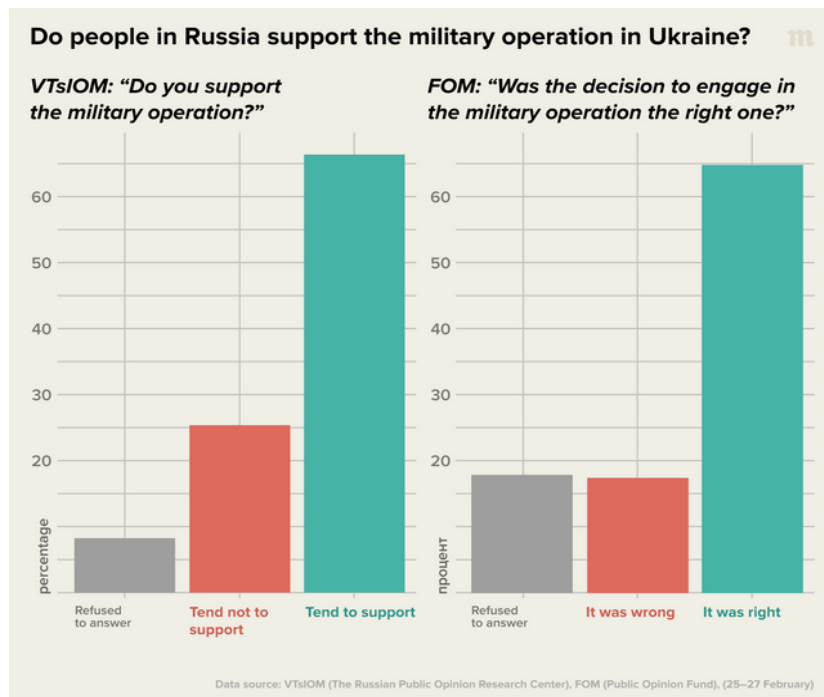
(Figure 2: Do people in Russia support the military operation in Ukraine, 25-27 February 2022, Source: VTsIOM)

Similarly, the governmental opinion poll VTsIOM and FOM conducted between 25-27 February were very close to the WCIOM poll, displaying almost identical results. VTsIOM and FOM reported approximately 65% of support for the military operation or belief that the decision of engaging in the military operation was the right one among people in Russia (Figure 2).

Once this number, which reflects the general Russian population, is analysed in terms of demographics to deepen on the groups' perception of the invasion of Ukraine, there are notorious trends and divisions by group including: age, sex, nationalities, regional affiliations, and conscripts.

Concerning age groups there has been a clear division between old and young groups about the support and opposition to the Russo-Ukrainian war. While the older Russian
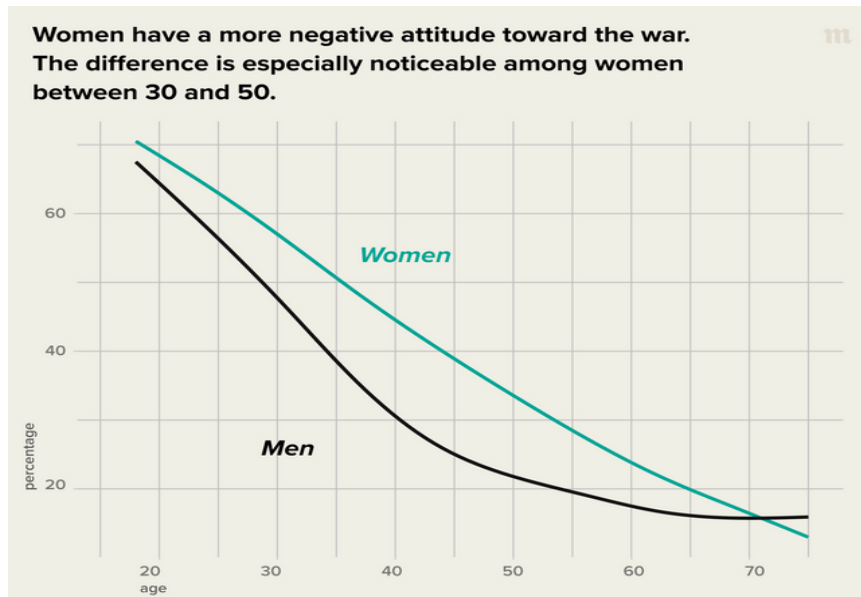
population from ages 66 and above displayed a strong support for the war with 75%, the younger age group from ages 18 to 24 accounted for the significantly lower 29% in support for the war. As described by the University of Exeter sociologist Alexey Bessudnov in his socio-demographic analysis for Meduza: "the most important socio-demographic characteristic that determines people's attitudes toward the military operation in Ukraine is age" drawing on the VTsIOM polling results between the 25-27 February where nine out of ten people older than 70 support the 'special military operation' and approximately half of those who are younger than 30 are against it (Figure 3).
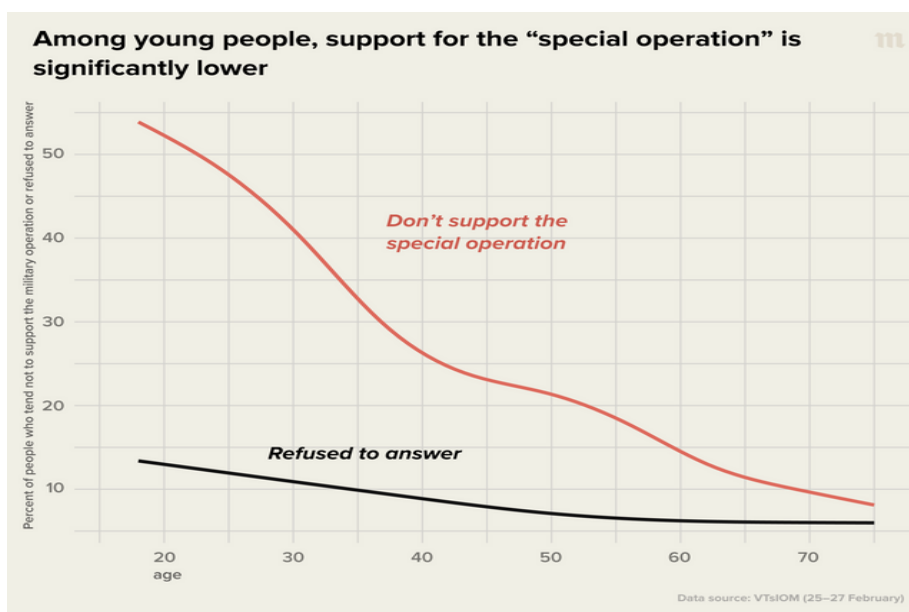
(Figure 3: Support for the "special operation" among young people, 25-27 February 2022, Source: VTsIOM)

Likewise, Political commentator Valery Solovei published in his social media a demographic analysis breaking down the public attitude in Russia towards the Russia-Ukraine war. He disclosed very close results with 75% of young people between ages 23-25 feeling negatively towards the 'special military operation' and just 22% of those aged 60 years old and above feeling negatively towards it by using reliable sociological sources. However, Solovei highlighted at the end that even though Russia is split by age when it comes to their opinions towards the war, "the predominant mass emotion is fear" even if the fear differs on its root-cause between the older and younger generations.

Women have a more negative attitude toward the war.
The difference is especially noticeable among women
between 30 and 50.

(Figure 4: Support for the "special operation" by gender, 25-27 February 2022, Source: VTsIOM)

Moreover, the sex groups uncovered an additional trend divided between men and women, in which men tended to support the military operation more than women. For instance, in the WCIOM poll between February 25th to 27th it is revealed how from ages 20 to 70, women consistently have a more negative attitude towards the war compared to men with ages 30-50 having the most prominent gap between males and females (Figure 4). But the decrease in negative attitude towards war decreases non-exponentially as the group's age increases (Figure 4).

Finally, the volatility of the Russian population's stance on the war is undoubtedly dependent on the development and unfolding of the war, its effects and Russia's performance for which a measurement of the support of the war while it is ongoing that reviews its increase or decline can be beneficial. For instance, even though there can still be general majority for the public support for the invasion of Ukraine among Russians as the war unravels, when it comes to the shifts in backing or opposing this, it can change into becoming concealed as "the absence of widespread criticism" or refusal to state an opinion in front of global disapproval and villainisation of Russian war actions. However, as illustrated in Figure 3 the socio-demographic trend of age applies for those who refuse to answer decreasing as their age increases which can confirm that the socio-demographic variable to consider when assessing Russians perception of the war is vital to understanding it.

Additionally, the reliability and accuracy of the results and the opinion polls controlled or owned by the Russian state can uncover a different picture when it comes to Russia's position on the Russo-Ukrainian war since the "framing of the polling questions" uses devious word

choice, such as asking on the 'military operation' rather than 'war,'. The general population is influenced by the fear of repression that leads to preference falsification, or for the dominant narrative of the reasons why Russia invaded Ukraine being a propaganda construct by the Kremlin are some examples of how the truth behind Russians support for the war against Ukraine can be manipulated, altered, and obscured. Nonetheless, as the Atlantic Council emphasized, it is intellectually dishonest to infantilise the Russian public and simplify the explanations for the Russian support reducing it to the media control and censorship that deprives them from accurate information because the 'chilling truth' is that the majority of the Russian population merely accept the fabricated maneuvered 'Orwellian lies' displayed by the Kremlin TV or voiced by Putin and share the pro-war sentiments.

Section 1.2: Explanation for Data: Different Sources of Information

Yann Guillaume

A compelling explanation behind the divide between the younger and older age groups is their different sources of information. Since Putin's rise to power, the overwhelming majority of traditional media have become strictly controlled by the state, becoming instruments of propaganda spreading misinformation. This practical absence of press freedom is illustrated by Russia ranking as the 150th lowest country in the Reporters Without Borders' 2021 Press Freedom Index. This effective control of media, and especially of the most popular TV channels, has allowed the government to cultivate the narratives behind the invasion of Ukraine – e.g. NATO's aim is the downfall of Russia, the Russian culture is endangered by the West, Russia's primary goal is to defeat fascism, etc. – for many years before the war. This treatment has preconditioned a large segment of the Russian population to support Putin's decision to invade Ukraine based on a reasoning reflecting the propaganda that they have been fed with. Putin's control over the press is now even tighter as a new law has been passed, which makes journalists reporting military information considered false by the state subject to serve a 15-year prison sentence.

However, groups in the Russian population have been exposed to the state's propaganda at different levels. Whilst a majority of Russian adults, and especially those belonging to older generations, rely almost only exclusively on TV to inform themselves and form their opinions on political issues, many young Russians have managed to bypass the censorship by using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access international news. The demand for such devices has actually spiked since the beginning of the conflict, as an increasingly high number of Russians have begun to seriously doubt the veracity of state-provided news. This exposure to a more diverse set of sources has undoubtedly contributed to instill doubt vis-à-vis the reliability of media coverage in their country within young Russians'

minds. The political scientists Kseniya Kizlova and Pippa Norris have found, after controlling for standard background characteristics, that "watching TV news was positively linked with Russian trust in Putin, and positive perceptions of Russia's role in the world" whilst the use of the internet and social media in the country produced the reverse pattern. This greater diversity of sources of information may therefore explain the Russian youth's higher propensity to disapprove of the invasion of Ukraine compared to other age groups.

Section 2: Which demographics are fighting for Russia?

Ryan Hoi Kit Leung and Steven Hogberg

Months before the invasion, the Russian military mobilised its troops for a military drill on its border. More than 100,000 soldiers were stationed across the border, along with the countries of Belarus, Crimea, and Moldova. Soon after days of speculation, with intelligence predictions from the West, the Russian army entered Ukraine on the 24th of February. Now, with a total of 190,000 Russian-affiliated personnel in the region, many seek to investigate the demography of its military. This section will examine the regional affiliation, nationality, and conscription system of its military, and how this affects the war in Ukraine.

Section 2.1: Nationality, Regionality, and Ethnicity

There are many nationalities roped into the Russian invasion force. As Russia is a federation composed of many autonomous republics, counting who is fighting as a Russian national must be done carefully. Widely known racial and ethnic discrimination is practiced when it comes to the use of non-ethnic Russian nationals on the front lines in Ukraine. While a majority of the 190,000 troops involved in the invasion of Ukraine are ethnic Russians, up to a third of the known military fatalities on the Russian side are comprised of soldiers from the Muslim majority Caucasus republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan, or the Buddhist majority republic of Buryatia located in Siberia. These numbers reflect a latent, if not intentional racism active in Putin himself – who has been accused of using soldiers from ethnic minority republics in the most dangerous areas of Ukraine, instead of ethnic Russians.

Section 2.2: Foreign Fighters

Russian forces are the most prevalent in the region, however, the participation of foreign fighters should not be overlooked. As for the Ukrainian side, its armed forces have incorporated volunteer foreign fighters into its military since the conflict broke out, massing to a total of 20,000 in the first month of the conflict. When Putin's strategy to capture Kyiv failed and was followed by a gruelling battle costing thousands of lives, Russian officials began to turn to a similar approach. In a Security Council meeting between President Putin and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu on the 11th of March, the minister claimed there were over 16,000 requests from middle east fighters to join the war on Russia's side, and he suggested granting these requests; Putin later approved the plan. Besides international volunteers, the population

in the Donbas region, namely in the breakaway states of Luhansk and Donetsk, have also been subjected to a universal conscription policy.

Russia's ability to recruit foreign fighters comes from its successful campaign in the Middle East and Africa. The Wagner Group, a private military company, acted as the state's unofficial reach to overseas security affairs. In the Middle East, Russia supports the Syrian authoritarian regime; when the dictator Assad faced opposition upheavals, Russia provided aid and personnel to reinforce his role. In Africa, Russia also stepped in to provide security for businesses and to fill up the power vacuum left behind after civil conflicts. Wagner appeared in Libya after the country collapsed into anarchy. The most recent engagement saw Wagner battling Islamic extremists in Mali. After years of military cooperation in the two regions, Russia could now easily secure militants' support. Records have shown Syrian fighters' participation in Russian security operations in the Central African Republic. As the state calls for foreign fighters to Ukraine, it is expected to see the Wagner Group as the mediator and recruiter for international mercenaries.

Section 2.3: Conscription

It is vital to research the conscription structure of the Russian military, as it reflects the source of its manpower, and how the social demography affects its combat capabilities. The Russian military has heavily relied on conscription to fuel its conquests throughout history. During the two world wars, many had to be conscripted to replace the high number of casualties on the frontline, caused by military inadequacy. The Kremlin still uses this practice to date. Each year, there are two conscription seasons, where men aged between 18 to 27 will need to enlist for the mandatory services, lasting 12 months. Over a third of Russian men have completed the conscription and are part of the 2 million-strong reserve of Russia's Armed Forces. However, many Russians have managed to dodge compulsory service. Whilst poor health and alcoholism limited the number of available bodies to join, the remaining are deterred by the low pay, harsh environments, and limited prospects in the military. Hence, despite having a large force, the quality of Russia's military is questionable.

According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, 31,700 Russian personnel have been killed since the war broke out in February. Suffering the climbing rate of casualties in light of the escalation on all fronts, Russian officials could possibly look to conscripts to fill the gap. Civil rights groups and Western reports have speculated the involvement of conscripts in the offensive where troops were mobilized for training near the borders, and later forced to sign contracts to volunteer in the campaign. Though Putin has repeatedly declined the allegation, even with mounting evidence, the Russian President remained committed to removing conscription from the frontline and punished officers who did so. On the other hand, Russia's

Defence Ministry has acknowledged the presence of conscripts. The conflicting information along with draconian wartime legislation, only makes it harder to investigate an accurate number of conscripts in Ukraine.

Other than conscripts, Russian officials have sought to recruit people within the country, as mobile recruitment stations can be seen throughout cities. The administration also removed the age limit for enlistment, allowing people above 40 to join the military, which could further expand civilian participation in the conflict. Similarly, these civilian soldiers will enter the war as contracted personnel. In Russia, the military comprises of one million active troops, with 400,000 of those being contracted soldiers. Seeing the introduction of contracted conscripts, and civilian recruits, the ratio could be higher on the frontline.

Nonetheless, the use of conscripts and temporary contracted soldiers in war could very likely weaken the already collapsing invader. The practice of conscription is highly unpopular among the population. Dedovshchina, or hazing, refers to the internal violence within the Russian army, where senior officers physically abuse, bully and even torture fresh recruits. Such notorious culture leads to an ill-disciplined, low-motivated, and uncooperating military. Furthermore, suffering from corruption, resources available for training purposes are severely limited. Tanks lack diesel to conduct training runs, whilst rations are of poor quality, often expire, and with portions smaller than those for prisoners. Conscription is already highly unpopular in Russia. If conscripts realize the likelihood to be sent for war, the situation will only deteriorate within Russia and see more adults dodging the service.

Section 3: Who is funding Russia's war?

Aidan Gorman and Louise Masson

3.1 Introduction

Aidan Gorman

Russia's invasion has split the world, with parts condemning and placing sanctions on those in Russia, and others planning to continue supporting the country. Thousands of companies have pulled out of the region, closing down and selling their properties to local companies. While some countries have placed sanctions, they are so reliant on Russian oil and gas exports, that they have been unable to stop purchasing it. This section will investigate who has continued to fund Russia's invasion and who has stopped.

3.2 The Funders of Russia's Invasion

Louise Masson

As Svitlana Krakovska, a leading Ukrainian climate scientist said, the war in Ukraine is a "fossil fuel war". Despite international sanctions put in place by the Western world to shrink Russia's economy, international dependence on Russia's oil and gas funds the Kremlin's war. Russia earned 93 billion euros in fossil fuel export revenues in the first 100 days of its war against Ukraine; energy trade accounted for 28% of the country's federal budget in 2020. Moreover, the hike in fossil fuel prices following the invasion (around $120 a barrel in June 2022) is providing Russia with additional revenues to fund its war in Ukraine.

European Union's reliance on Russian oil and gas

European countries' reliance on Russian oil and gas has been Russia's main source of income. According to the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air, the European Union has accounted for around 61% of fossil imports from Russia, or around 60 billion euros since the beginning of the war. Indeed, European countries rely on Russia for around 1/3 of their oil and 40% of their gas, making Russia Europe's first supplier of oil and gas. Germany is particularly dependent on Russian energy resources, being the largest importer of Russian fossil fuel behind China since the beginning of the war with 65% of Germany's gas being imported from Russia.

Despite major dependence on Russian oil and gas, on June 3rd, the European Union adopted a partial embargo on Russian oil, excepting provisions from the Druzhba pipeline, which according to Charles Michel will cut off "a huge source of financing" for the Russian "war machine". However, Europe is even more dependent on Russia for gas than for oil. Therefore, political disparities prevent the Union from making a deal to boycott Russian gas, as Hungary, Italy and Romania are majorly dependent on it (Russia supplies 85% of Hungary's gas supplies). Hungary's Foreign Minister, Peter Szijjarto, rejected the prospect of a boycott of Russian gas, as it was impossible for the country to diminish its reliance on it.

The role of China and India

While Western countries are trying to curb Russia's invasion by reducing its reliance on Russian energy resources, Russia is turning to two major players, China and India, to boost its energy exports as a way to further finance its war in Ukraine. Since the start of the war, India has purchased over 34 million barrels of Russian oil, increasing its Russian oil imports due to considerably discounted prices. The Indian government defended its choice by arguing that discounted oil drives the price of oil down for Indian customers.

China's economic relations with Russia since the invasion began have also increased. Overall trade between Russia and China increased by 12% in March 2022 from March 2021. Particularly, China is one of the biggest importers of Russian oil, gas and coal; it imported 13,7 billion euros worth of fossil fuels from Russia since the start of the war.

3.3 Who has pulled out of the region?

Aidan Gorman

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused nations around the world and fortune 500 companies to stop taking part in their market. Countries have stopped purchasing Russian goods, and companies have stopped selling their own goods in Russia. Australia, Britain, America, and other countries have imposed bans on purchasing Russian crude oil. Companies such as Starbucks have ceased operations in Russia – closing down stores and halting shipments.

One of the biggest blows to Russia has been in the finance sector. In combination with the sanctions imposed on them, and the dozens of major world-wide banks closing their stores down in there, extreme damage has been done. Mastercard and Visa, American financial services, said they would "suspend operations" in Russia – they will stop Russian-issued cards from working outside of Russia, and not allow those who were issued cards elsewhere to

purchase goods from Russia. The debit and credit cards possessed by Russians that are under Visa and Mastercard will work within the country for now, however once they expire, Russians will be unable to order and use a new one. Two payment services used by many, Apple Pay and Google Pay, have also stopped working in Russia, as they are US-based. All of this will lead to a surge in Russia's card system led by 'Mir', and the damage may not be substantial, as over half the population already possessed and used a Mir card as of September 2021. However, this card is only accepted in a small number of countries. While the withdrawal of major financial institutions will temporarily affect Russian citizens, it may end up subsiding quite quickly.

A result of the many sanctions being imposed on Russia is the slow decrease in value of the Russia ruble. In order to curb this, the Central Bank instituted measures to "prop up its value". The government and companies have also demanded that all foreign payments to Russia be made in rubles. The Netherlands have refused to pay for gas in rubles, as doing so would allow Russia to "side-step" the sanctions imposed on them. Gazprom then announced that as they were not going to be paid in rubles, they would simply stop supplying the Netherlands with gas.

In the United Kingdom and other countries, Russian products have been removed from shelves – some companies have even replaced certain Russian products with Ukrainian ones. In solidarity with Ukraine, some brands have renamed items, such as UK's Sainsbury's changing chicken kiev to kyiv. An example of replacing products can be seen in nightclubs, where Russian-made vodka is being replaced by Ukrainian-made vodka. Not only do these actions display a company's solidarity with Ukraine, but it damages Russian-made goods in addition to sanctions already placed on them.

Section 4: How has the war affected Europe's demographics?

Matthew Johnson and Vikram Sairam

4.1 Introduction

Matthew Johnson

One of the outcomes to war is the expected mass influx of refugees fleeing war-torn areas. Since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainians have increasingly become victims to the genocidal acts committed by Russia's military. As of the 29th of May, according to data collected by the UNHCR, the Russian war in Ukraine has resulted in an outflow of almost 5 million people across Europe. Almost more than half of those escaping have fled to Poland, while other countries including Romania, Slovakia, Belarus, Hungary, Moldova and Russia have accepted over 3 million combined. The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) implemented as a result of the influx of refugees offers temporary protection status visas for individuals coming from non-EU member states. The TPD allows for Ukrainian refugees to bypass a country's asylum processes, however, the TPD does not require states to accept "other citizens fleeing the conflict", such as third-country refugees – an alteration that was "made at the request of Poland and several other countries."

Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the TPD has only been implemented once as a response to the Balkans refugee crisis that arrived in the aftermath of the Yugoslav conflicts in the 1990s. The TPD and current refugee crisis has opened the discussion on the future EU membership for Ukraine. President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated on the 8th of April that "Ukraine belongs in the European family", and has resulted in President Zelensky submitting a request to join. The process of gaining membership could take as long as 5-10 years, in addition to the fact that the Ukrainian government must remain in place and not be overtaken by Russian forces until then. Therefore, the refugees will remain dependent on the TPD within the EU in addition to the migration policies of non-EU Member States such as the UK. Additionally, it is important to track the future effects their membership will have on the wider economy, especially since they will be in a state in need of rebuilding.

The current challenges for countries and refugees include both economic and/or humanitarian issues. Cases of human trafficking, discrimination against third-country refugees, the effects on the receiving country's economy, or provision of necessities for refugees are some of the many issues analysed in this section. The next section provides a brief overview of the relationship specific countries have had in the past with accepting refugees, focusing on their responses to the 2015 refugee crisis. Section 4.3 provides deeper context into the current

situation, analysing varying policies and the visa response of the EU. Section 4.4 then reviews some of the risks and challenges observed that must be given continued attention by countries and NGOs. Section 4.5 analyses a developing concern of humanitarian violations regarding Russia's bid to "filter" individuals who are connected with the Ukrainian government via "filtration camps", similar to those established immediately after WWII. In the final section, the challenges faced by Poland, the country who has accepted the majority of refugees, are observed more closely, specifically analysing the case of Poland accepting refugees and their willingness and/or capacity to sustainably support the refugees crossing their borders.

4.2 Pre-War: Refugees and Europe

Over the past two decades, immigration policy has only grown more contentious amongst EU Member States. According to data reported by Frontex, the number of refugees who entered the EU went from an annual 200,000 in 2014 to 1,000,000+ in 2015. It was during 2015 when a mass influx of refugees made their way towards Europe, fleeing war-torn countries of Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The refugee crisis of 2015 revealed how EU countries were either ill-prepared or highly-unwilling to accept refugees. A core policy for those seeking asylum was the Dublin III Regulation, entered into force in July 2013, with goals "to ensure quick access to the asylum procedures and the examination of an application on the merits by a single, clearly determined EU country." Since its reformation, the EU has ensured that burden sharing between EU Member States is included, allowing Member States to relocate refugees due to a rejection of their asylum application. However, the Dublin Regulation still requires refugees to apply for asylum at the first country in which they arrived, or the "first-country principle", which has led to massive delays in asylum processing in countries such as Italy and Greece due to overflow. Additionally, the principle has been met with a great deal of criticism, as refugees are often left in "legal limbo" for years until they receive a response. The TPD has allowed for Ukrainian refugees to bypass this processing and remain in the country in which they arrived for up to three years, however, those who are non-Ukrainian have not received similar treatment.

It is well understood that prior to the invasion of Ukraine, certain EU countries generally demonstrated reluctance when accepting refugees affected by war. Refugees fleeing, such as Syrians or Afghans, were treated in a manner opposite of what Ukrainians are receiving at present. While Germany is often viewed as highly welcoming to refugees, regardless of their origins, countries such as Poland and Hungary have historically maintained a strict policy of rejecting immigrants who are non-white. In the case of Hungary, it was only in 2021 when the government violated the Geneva Convention on Refugees with the practice of "escorting undocumented immigrants back across the border to Serbia without due process", with an estimated 5,000 refugees having been deported in between December 2020 and January 2021. In the case of Poland, one Syrian refugee recounted the brutality he experienced at the Poland-

Belarus border in 2021, explaining how not only did the government make it illegal for people to provide assistance to them, but to not provide them with basic necessities, such as "soup, clothes, and medicine", in addition to how they were essentially forced into exile:

> *"We hid from the Polish army in a swampy forest and had to sneak across a small bridge in the middle of the night so villagers would not see us and report us. If we tried to turn back, the Belarusian soldiers beat us. We were stuck, not knowing where to go."*

4.3 Post-War: Refugees of Ukraine

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) continues to provide weekly reports on the amount of asylum applications in the context of the crisis in Ukraine, with the week of the invasion (week 8) having received the highest level of applications from individuals seeking international protection (Figure 5).
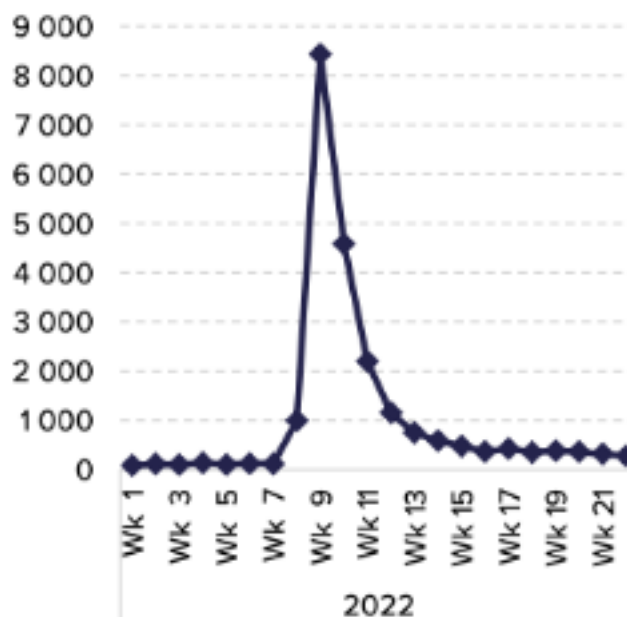
(Figure 5: Weekly Ukrainian asylum applications in the EU+ in week 1-22 2022, 8 June 2022, Source: EUAA EPS)

Since the introduction of the TPD, EU Member States continue to accept Ukrainian refugees with greater ease. As mentioned above, the TPD activated by the European Commission on March 4th allows refugees from Ukraine to bypass EU Member States' standard asylum processing. While the majority of EU Member States have accepted the TPD, Poland and Hungary have demonstrated an unwillingness to fully adopt the directive. The decision of opting for only partial adoption stems from rejection of Article 2(2) requesting non-

Ukrainian individuals who were under the Ukrainian government protection prior to 24 February also be considered under the TPD. However, the majority of individuals fleeing Ukraine are Ukrainians, and therefore remain the primary group of refugees fleeing Ukraine.

According to the UNHCR, there is a rising estimate of 4.9 million refugees recorded across Europe as of June, with 3.2 million of that estimates having "registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe." The countries that have accepted the majority of Ukrainian refugees between May and June 2022 include Poland (1,152,364); Russia (1,136,243); Germany (780,000); Czech Republic (366,632); Türkiye (145,000); Italy (125,907); and Spain (118,199). However, the current challenges both the Member States and the refugees face are wide ranging. For Poland, the number of refugees appears to have already begun affecting individual cities, leading the Polish government to request for increased financial assistance from the EU. For Hungary, the government has begun charging Ukrainians for petrol at much higher prices rather than the fixed rates its citizens pay due to the "petrol tourism" it is experiencing. In the case of Russia, who has received the second most refugees, it is likely the most dangerous destination for refugees. While the true effects against the Russian Federation remain unclear due to a lack of government transparency, refugees are reportedly being sent through a filtration process, facing harsh interrogations and their end destination unclear, all of which increases each individual's sense of instability and overall safety.

4.4 Risks and Challenges

There has been an overall mixed reception of refugees from Ukraine across the EU and other countries, with some such as Romania having generally open borders for ease of entry, while others such as the United Kingdom have implemented policies which tend to greatly limit refugee entry. Additionally, cases of human trafficking along the borders of Ukraine as well as discrimination against those who are considered third-country refugees arriving from Ukraine are of growing concern.

Housing

A critical issue the majority of those fleeing Ukraine face is access to basic necessities including food, medication, and housing. In terms of the latter, governments and other individuals have become more creative as a consequence. Romania, for instance, has shown a willingness amongst the people to support their Ukrainian neighbors. For instance, Romanian orthodox monks have allowed Ukrainians to seek refuge at the 15th century monastery in Putna, while a four-star hotel in Sucleava has accepted approximately 2,000 Ukrainians where they can sleep inside the hotel's large ballroom. While the cases in Romania are both admirable and supportive, they cannot accept everyone who comes to their doors. Similarly, Poland has

provided housing where it can, and where Ukrainians who have minimal financial support cannot afford hotel rooms, people from around the world booked an estimated 61,000 nights on AirBnB in Ukraine to support Ukrainian hosts, equating to about $1.9 million USD.

In terms of government policies, the United Kingdom has implemented a "no-cap" visa scheme which allows households in the UK to host Ukrainian families while receiving a £350 stipend per month. While the policy is highly assistive, the government is placing much of the burden upon UK households.

The European Parliament has taken action on a much greater scale to support countries sheltering Ukrainian refugees, releasing funds equating to "€420 million…to be spent on accommodation, food, healthcare or extra staff." Additionally, the United Nations has announced a call for $1.1 billion USD to support the internally displaced peoples in the affected regions of Ukraine, highlighting the needs of those in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, "with the 2022 HRP funded with less than $18 million (9.2 percent of requirements as of 26 February 2022)." Funding therefore remains highly critical in order to support the growing humanitarian crisis.

Discrimination

Cases of discrimination continue to be another developing issue, affecting those who are typically non-Ukrainian. Groups who have been affected include (but are not limited to) Roma, Syrian, Nigerian, Afghan, and Iraqi refugees. When Russia first began the invasion of Ukraine, many foreign nationals, including students from India, as well as third-country refugees faced immense difficulty in their attempts to escape, many of whom were unable to leave without understanding the reasoning behind the measures. As mentioned above, Poland's reluctance to accept refugees other than those which are Ukrainian reveals the racial discrimination of the government. Another primary group that has been affected is the Roma people who have their origins in India. For those who were successful in entering Poland, issues of paying for housing is a growing issue in addition to landlords rejecting them based on their non-Ukrainian identity.

Human Trafficking

Due to the primary demographics fleeing Ukraine being women and children, human traffickers have been reportedly standing by train stations at the Medyka border in Poland. The UNHCR responded to the crisis of predatory individuals, stating that governments "must prevent predatory individuals and criminal networks from exploiting the situation." The traffickers are often disguised as other volunteers, offering to assist those with their bags and offering them a ride to a hotel. It is therefore important to have a strong system put in place by governments to ensure those fleeing Ukraine do no fall victim to human trafficking.

4.5 Russian Filtration Camps

As the majority of Ukrainian refugees have made their way to European countries, others have made their way to Russia, either by freely visiting extended family or via forced deportation by the Russian military. The major challenges they face involve the filtration camps, forced assimilation, as well as a lack of support for necessities. We are able to observe evidence of filtration camps starting before the invasion. According to Ukrainian intelligence services, it was revealed that "Russia [already] had plans in place for filtration camps and resettlement areas weeks before the invasion." One of the documents, dated February 26, further revealed that Russia had "36 locations across Russian territory" with the capacity to hold over 33,000 individuals.

The widespread locations of the camps, specifically those in the more rural areas of Siberia and the Far East, allows comparisons of policy to be drawn with the period of Stalin. The policy in question is in regards to the Soviet Nationalization policy, when Russian individuals were sent to "Russify" other non-Russian nationalities, essentially to erase their identities in order to create a universal Russian identity. In other words, the attempt to send Ukrainian refugees into far away and rural areas, unable to support themselves financially, can be understood as an attempt to erase their Ukrainian identity. One primary example being prior to the Russian siege on 16 May, 2022, of Mariupol, Ukrainians were already being directed by Russian military as well as other individuals to board buses to build a new life in Russia, with the promise of job and housing in Russia's Far East (approximately 4,500 miles from Mariupol). Captured in March via satellite imagery by Maxar Technologies, we are able to view one the filtration camps located in the village of Bezimenne near Mariupol. The Mayor of Mariupol confirmed that "it is one of four "filtration camps" operated by the DPR [Donetsk People's Republic] and Russia around the city."

(Figure 6: A filtration camp located in the village of Bezimenne near Mariupol, 3 May 2022, Source: Maxar Technologies)

At present, many of the promises made by Russian authorities remain unfulfilled, with the case of approximately 300 peoples from Mariupol now struggling to afford basic necessities such as food or medication due to unemployment or low wages. What is clear is that the majority of those who have been deported and sent through the filtration camps claim it was forced rather than voluntary, in addition most not knowing where they will end up. In one account from an escapee of Mariupol:

> *"The filtration camps are like ghettos," she said. "Russians divide people into groups. Those who were suspected of having connections with the Ukrainian army, territorial defense, journalists, workers from the government – it's very dangerous for them. They take those people to prisons to Donetsk, torture them."*

Russia therefore remains an unsafe region for refugees coming from Ukraine, and it is more than necessary for the EU as well as others such as the United States to prevent these developments from progressing further. Measures which can be taken are of course limited considering any form of intervention by great powers such as the United States that prevent "willing" refugees entering Russia could be interpreted as an act of aggression. However, in looking back at the period of Stalin and the "Russification" measures that were put in place, it is important to not forget those who have been sent to distant areas such as Siberia, the Northern Caucasus, or the Far East and to create a long-term strategy to help those wanting to leave and hold onto their cultural identity.

4.6 Poland

Vikram Sairam

The one aspect of the Russian-Ukraine Crisis that has gained major coverage, is the role of the European Union, and its response to two major changes that were precipitated by Russian actions. Firstly, how would they collectively respond to Russia's action financially in terms of oil and gas embargoes, which would have severe economic and geopolitical consequences. Secondly, this invasion caused the second refugee crisis this continent has seen in the last decade.

Europe has responded in a much more efficient manner in the latter, despite multiple underlying situations and economical constraints that prevented them from effectively responding to the crisis, with multiple European countries such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, taking in sizable amounts of refugees. The EU has also granted Ukrainians the right to stay and work within any of its 27 members, and has been giving sweeping amounts of rights such as the right to housing, education, and even healthcare, which stands in contrast to the EU's actions five years ago.

Poland in particular, has received the largest number of refugees in Europe and hosts the fourth-largest refugee population in the world. What is particularly impressive about this, is the U-turn in policy. Poland had one of the most anti-immigrant policies amongst European countries. Their policy was so strict, that in 2015, when Germany instituted their open door-policy and took in more than one million refugees, Poland refused to take in 7000. In 2021, Poland declared a state of emergency in response to Belarus's effort to funnel immigrants from the middle east through Poland. The government of Poland was content with letting children immigrants die due to starvation and the freezing weather, rather than providing them with amnesty. What was even more telling was that the majority of the public agreed with said action.

This stands in contrast to the reaction now: All refugees accepted from Ukraine were authorized to stay in Poland for 18 months, with the opportunity of receiving an extension. The government has allowed health-care to cover refugees, provided them with monetary assistance offers and a children's allowance of €120 ($132) per month (the same as Poles acquire), exempted them from paying for public transportation, and supplied them with Work Visas. More than 50,000 child refugees have been enrolled in Polish Schools. However, is there a small sense of security in this seemingly unsustainable situation? Multiple European political observers suggest this could force the Polish Government and its prime minister Mateusz to be more pro-immigration for better relationship with the West especially the EU and the United States.

However, this only scratches the surface, as the situation is far more unsustainable than it seems. Firstly, there is the assumption that Poland is only the entry point, and the refugees would dissipate further into Europe, such as Germany. However, due to the proximity to the border with Ukraine, and the familiarity of the refugees with the culture, language and some of them have family in Poland. If the men who stayed in Ukraine to combat Russian forces join their families later, Poland's new 10% Ukrainian minority could turn out to be permanent and possibly rise.

After Romania, which also received an influx of Ukrainian refugees, Poland has the lowest ratio of housing space per capita in Europe (29 square meters, compared to the EU average of 40). And, owing to already high inflation and the knock-on effects of sanctions (and Belarusian and Russian counter-sanctions), the Polish economy is heading into a period of slow growth and high unemployment. Polish citizens may start to attribute these problems to the refugees, even though refugees take jobs that aging societies like Poland's often struggle to fill.

Likewise, the welcome given to the refugees is motivated as much by Poles' fear of Russia as by their compassion for Ukrainians. Their current willingness to help could quickly turn into resentment when the cost of supporting refugees becomes more apparent. In countries with violent, bitter histories, constituencies that feel harmed or neglected often direct their rage at even weaker and more marginalized groups.

The stream of Ukrainian refugees into Poland has slowed in recent weeks — 28,908 entered on April 9, compared to nearly 141,000 on March 6, according to the U.N. But many more could come if hostilities in Ukraine escalate. Speaking alongside President Joe Biden during his visit to Poland last month, Polish President Andrzej Duda warned that if the Russian aggression continues, the numbers of refugees will continue to grow, presenting a "huge challenge" to Poland. Some Polish mayors have already sounded the alarm about their cities' getting overwhelmed, and residents in Rzeszów, close to the border, also said they had concerns.