3

War, cities and migration-driven diversity: unravelling a complex relationship

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, a growing critical literature in the social sciences and security studies has explored the connections between cities and war (Graham 2004, 2011; Weizman 2007; Fregonese 2020; Kaldor and Sassen 2020; King 2021). Scholars have highlighted the increasingly pivotal role of cities in armed conflict against the backdrop of intensified globalisation, the end of Cold War bipolarity and the rise of asymmetrical warfare. The city is never merely a site of armed conflict but plays a constitutive part in its goals and outcomes. Conversely, war not only brings devastation and death to cities, but also intervenes in and reconfigures the organisation of urban space. The violence associated with war is never simply an act of brute force: it is also always strategic, instrumental and practical.

A recurring theme in the debate on the urbanisation of warfare is 'urbicide': the deliberate wrecking of cities, from individual buildings to entire urban environments, alongside the selective or indiscriminate elimination or displacement of local populations. Originally coined by the architect and former mayor of Belgrade Bogdan Bogdanovic in the early 1990s in response to the Yugoslav National Army's attack on the Croat-Serb town of Vukovar, the term was subsequently applied to the cleansing of ethnic groups and symbolic spaces in cities such as Sarajevo and Mostar. As Martin Coward, one of the first scholars to develop the concept, has astutely suggested, urbicide can be understood

as violence that removes 'a condition of possibility of being-with-others' (Coward 2009, 14), and thus represents a denial of the very essence of urbanity. However, urbicide does not take a fixed form: it is context specific and multiscalar in that it can involve a range of different actors depending on the time and place, and can simultaneously pursue local, national and global ambitions (Fregonese 2009). Furthermore, urbicide is not unique to war, but continues to be enacted in peacetime, for example, in urban restructuring programmes that dispossess communities and disrupt local ways of life (Carrión et al. 2023).

Beyond its destructive bent, urbicide, like war itself, reshapes cities. It envisages the creation of new spaces on the terms of the assailant. Reporting on the assault of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Gaza in January 2024, Kate Wagner, writing in *The Nation*, noted that the destruction of the ancient Great Omari Mosque in Gaza City was not simply a 'crime against cultural heritage [but] a tactic used to make sure there is nothing left to return to, nothing that can be cherished or latched on to. Its goal is a total colonization of the landscape that erases whatever used to be' (Wagner 2024). By resorting to the classic colonial tactic of imagining empty territories, it is possible to plan for alternative urban futures and for the extraction of value – precisely what some Israeli settlers and the son-in-law of US President Donald Trump have in mind for Gaza's Mediterranean seafront (Guerin 2024; Wintour 2024). Moreover, the viral image of an IDF soldier raising a rainbow flag with the words 'in the name of love' in front of a bombed-out landscape in November 2023 reminds us that even the language of diversity can sometimes be introduced to justify carnage (Dabbous 2023). Meanwhile, at the time of writing in late 2024, Gaza had become a hermetically sealed urban ruin where the entire population, largely made up of Palestinian refugees and their descendants, was subject to constant displacement. The perpetual, often circular, exodus of Gaza's inhabitants – exacerbated by their inability to flee the territory – points to a particular set of conditions of (im)mobility forged by Israel's blockade and intermittent bombing campaigns after 2007, and rapidly transfigured by the post 7 October onslaught (Procter 2024).

The theoretical forays into the realm of urban warfare over the past two decades have paralleled a renewed interest in the urban dimension of migration (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009). Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the impact of war on human mobility and the consequences of this mobility for urban life in general have received only cursory attention in the literature on war and cities, and have often been collapsed into tropes of forced movement and loss of cultural diversity. In her essay on the city as a 'technology of war', Saskia Sassen (2010, 37), for example,

briefly notes that contemporary conflicts involve 'forced urbanisation or de-urbanisation', which in turn 'has a profound impact on the cosmopolitan character of cities'. Without underestimating these two dimensions, the goal of this chapter is to develop a broader and more critical understanding of the nexus between war and cities by analysing some of the unexpected, generative effects of war on human mobility at the urban scale. In other words, the chapter seeks to build on recent scholarly interest in the urbanisation of warfare by placing migration at the centre of reflection. To do so, it focuses on two armed conflicts – the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62) and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022–present) – and three cities – Algiers, Paris and Odessa. The chapter combines my own longstanding research on the intersections between migration and cities (Dines 2012, 2022, 2023) with primary and secondary literature on the two conflicts to address the neglected consequences of urban warfare not only for migration itself, but also for how migration is understood and managed at the local level. I am particularly interested in how urban warfare has affected, and continues to affect, the idea of the city as a privileged site of diversity. Is it really the case, as Sassen suggests, that war always threatens 'the cosmopolitan character' of cities? To what extent does war enhance or diminish our capacity to acknowledge and interpret diversity? Before addressing such questions, I briefly outline how the notoriously nebulous idea of 'diversity' is used in this chapter and how war has been approached from the perspective of migration studies.

Urban diversity, war and migration studies

Scholarship on urban warfare over the past two decades has been paralleled by a renewed interest in the urban dimension of migration. In part, this is a consequence of the rejection of the methodological nationalism that had previously dominated migration studies (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009), as well as the increasingly influential role of cities in relation to international migration and the global economy (Dines 2023). Intertwined with this growing interest is the rise in popularity of the term 'diversity', understood as capturing the dynamic and plural nature of the city in contrast to a putatively static and homogeneous nation, and often used as a synonym for migration itself (Matejskova and Antonsich 2015).

I use diversity here to mean two things. Firstly, in its simplest form, diversity describes the co-presence of different cultural, linguistic, religious, national and 'ethnic' groups in a given place as a result of successive instances of human movement. This diversity may be built up over

a long period of time, reflecting the changing attractiveness and accessibility of a particular city, for example the 'superdiverse' population of contemporary London (Vertovec 2007). Or it may be the result of a rapid process occurring in specific circumstances: consider the multinational and multilingual societies of Raqqa and Mosul that de facto existed following the influx of foreign fighters during the ISIS occupation of parts of Syria and Iraq between 2014 and 2017. Although diversity is often used as a neutral demographic descriptor in migration studies, it is never simply the aggregate of different groups of people, but conceals within it the divergent opportunities and constraints that people face as they move, which are structured by, among other things, international mobility regimes, racial hierarchies and the unequal distribution of resources.

Secondly, diversity refers to the ways in which the presence of difference is understood. In recent decades, diversity has become a dominant conceptual framework for articulating the relationship between migration and cities and associated forms of urban life, especially in the Anglophone world. But diversity is also very much a protean, contested idea. It can be at once an everyday discourse tied to real-life experiences of difference and thus attentive to the vicissitudes and injustices that diversity can entail; a policy euphemism that distances itself from the politically discredited paradigm of multiculturalism by embracing a wider range of differences including physical ability and gender (Schiller 2017); a neoliberal dispositif for promoting creative economies and improving organisational performance (Raco 2018); or the lodestar of liberal antiracists seeking to mitigate individual racial prejudice (Kundnani 2023).

If the meaning and purpose of diversity is already contested by different constituencies and underpinned by everyday forms of structural violence, what happens when we add war to the equation? Defining the horrors of ISIS-occupied Raqqa and Mosul in terms of 'diversity' may sound absurd. And yet, such a proposition seems to suggest that war exposes both the conditions and the limits under which diversity is recognised in the west. This makes it particularly compelling to consider how war affects the composition, spatial ordering and conceptualisation of diverse populations in cities.

Just as the literature on urban warfare has paid little attention to issues of mobility and diversity, migration scholars likewise have rarely addressed the question of war, and when they have, it has largely been through a focus on conflict-induced displacement (Adhikari 2013; Karimi and Byelikova 2024) or on the bellicose metaphors – such as 'the invasion of foreigners', 'the fight against illegal migration' – that permeate public discourse (Maneri 2010). At the same time, certain wars play a key, albeit

largely unspoken, structuring role in historiographies of international migration. This is particularly the case with the Second World War, which continues to function as a powerful framing device in migration studies – a kind of watershed moment in which old diversities were wiped out by a combination of the Holocaust and population transfers (Thum 2011), and new ones were set in motion as a result of the dissolution of colonial empires, economic reconstruction and mass labour migration (Geddes and Scholten 2016). However, the idea of the Second World War as a turning point not only blots out historical continuities, such as the pre-existing presence of non-white populations in British cities (Hammond Perry 2015), but also propagates a Eurocentric vision of human mobility and the war itself. In other parts of the world, the global conflict had very different effects on the configuration of urban diversity. For example, in Singapore, which fell under Japanese occupation after the surrender of the British Army in 1942, the war was a catalyst for eventual decolonisation, but was also experienced very differently by the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian communities (Blackburn and Hack 2012). Following full independence in 1965, the city-state sought to build national unity around a vision of a harmonious multiracial society and so uncomfortable histories that risked reigniting intergroup animosities, such as the 1942 anti-Chinese Sook Ching massacre and Malay nationalist collaboration with the Japanese occupiers, were downplayed in favour of a public narrative of shared suffering (Muzaini and Yeoh 2016). It was not until the 1990s that different community memories were openly commemorated, by which time cultural diversity had become a key asset contributing to Singapore's position in the upper echelons of the global economy (Molho 2020).

Interrogating the relationship between war and migration can therefore help to unsettle the temporal, geographical and conceptual frames through which knowledge of both is conventionally produced. Colonialism, a major driver of war over the last two centuries but long overlooked in European migration studies (Mayblin and Turner 2021), offers an important entry point for developing a more critical understanding of how war affects the migration–city nexus.

The Algerian War of Independence: the colonial foundations of urban diversity?

> The colonialist's sector is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers.

> [It's] a white folk's sector, a sector of foreigners. The colonized's sector, or at least the 'native' quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people … It's a world with no space, people are piled one on top of the other, the shacks squeezed tightly together. (Fanon 2001 [1961], 5)

Decolonisation, as Frantz Fanon explained at the beginning of *The Wretched of the Earth*, is always a violent phenomenon, precisely because its aim is 'to change the order of the world … it cannot be accomplished by the wave of a magic wand, a natural cataclysm, or a gentleman's agreement' (Fanon 2001 [1961], 2). The urban denouement of the Algerian War of Independence – not only in Algeria but also in mainland France – is a case in point.

The anti-colonial struggle in Algiers was pitted against a colonial violence that had been crystallised in the city's segregation. In the early 1950s, Algiers was a city of over a half a million inhabitants, just under half of whom were *pieds-noirs*,[1] people of European descent born in Algeria during French colonial rule from 1830 to 1962. The modern, airy city centre where the 'natives' went to sell their labour during the day was, as Fanon notes, the 'sector of foreigners', the destination of north–south migration from France, Spain, Italy and Malta, but also Switzerland and Germany, for more than a century. Only a third of the *pieds-noirs* were actually of French origin, and while most regarded the 'natives' as inferior, many also despised the metropolitan French for their sense of superiority (Bourdieu 1962, 130). Meanwhile, the Casbah at the heart of the 'colonised's sector' and the shantytowns on the outskirts of the city swelled as they became magnets for rural migrants fleeing war and poverty (Hadjri and Osmani 2004), with the Algerian Muslim population of Algiers soaring from 295,000 in 1954 to 558,000 in 1960 (Bourdieu 1962, 63). The intensification of internal migration during the conflict brought Arab and Amazigh (Berber) populations into ever closer contact and, in the specific case of the Casbah, added new layers to the historical settlement of Andalusian Moors, Turks, Black Africans and Sephardic Jews (Bourdieu 1962, 63).

As vividly depicted in Gillo Pontecorvo's epic film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), the two sectors became opposing fronts in the early stages of the war and, after the imposition of French military rule in the city in 1957, were separated by a *cordon sanitaire* of barbed-wire checkpoints. While the Fronte de Libération Nationale (FLN) made the Casbah its strategic stronghold, its bombing campaign literally burst the bubble of the ersatz cosmopolitan café society that graced the streets of the European

city. French colonialism generated an inherently contradictory form of cosmopolitanism (Go 2013): in the name of a universal but racially exclusive modernity, the nineteenth-century colonisers had ripped out the city's ancient core to make way for spaces and infrastructures that would make the new Algiers resemble, and be consumed as, an African Marseille (Clancy-Smith 2018, 147). The war of liberation was not against the white diversity that occupied the European city per se, but against the colonial order that produced it. As the Algerian nationalist writer Mohammed Dibb explained in an interview with a foreign journalist in 1959: 'It is the system in its entirety that we wish to be rid of, not only these [racist] looks' (quoted in Bourdieu 1962, 148).

Denigrated and partially demolished by the French during the colonial period, the Casbah would later emerge as a sacred landmark and symbol of solidarity for its role in the war of liberation (Djiar 2009). When the divided city was finally reunited after independence, the FLN sought to 'liquidate' the legacy of colonialism and its European cosmopolitanism through the immediate renaming of streets, the toppling of statues and the reappropriation of bars, shops and apartments, although the French architectural imprint of central Algiers ultimately remained intact, and the poverty and dilapidated conditions of the Casbah persisted (Grabar 2014).

Two other developments after 1962 underscore the need to think carefully about the implications of urban diversity in postcolonial contexts. Firstly, through its policy of Arabisation, Algeria moved quickly to reinstate the Arabic language in public life and affirm the Arab identity of the new nation. While this made sense as a decolonising strategy, it came at the expense of the country's (and Algiers') ethnic and linguistic pluralism, particularly that of the various Amazigh groups, and it would take some four decades and a series of popular uprisings before the Algerian state began to officially recognise the nation's cultural diversity (Yezza 2013; Sour 2024). Secondly, in the fervour that followed national liberation, the Algerian government fashioned Algiers as a haven for freedom fighters and anti-colonial movements, transforming the city, albeit briefly, into a global revolutionary Mecca. In 1969, the Algerian capital hosted the first ever pan-African cultural festival, which attracted 5,000 participants and 200,000 spectators (Tolan-Szkilnik 2016). Reviewing the event, a US visitor enthused:

> For ten days, the ancient and battered citadel of Algiers was turned into a cosmopolitan center of Africa, with Touareg horsemen charging down the streets firing off their rifles, the rhythmic beat of drums,

> beautiful black dancers from Mali and Senegal delighting their predominantly Moslem hosts, and throngs from all over the world struggling to get into overcrowded exhibitions … giving the impression that Algeria had turned its back upon Europe and was looking toward the heart of the African continent. (Shepherd 1969, 1)

The celebration of the city's pan-African credentials, however, sat uneasily with the delegates' clashes over how best to liberate the continent (Tolan-Szkilnik 2016) and with the creeping signs of neocolonialism, as the African American scholar and activist Nathan Hare wryly observed: '[By daylight] Esso service stations appeared, and Shell, and Hertz, and Pepsi Cola' (Hare 1969, 4). In other words, diversity in postcolonial Algiers was politically significant only insofar as it underscored a united stand against imperialism and its racial divisions, but turning 'its back upon Europe' simultaneously raised the question of how this could be achieved in the face of ideological differences and an increasingly predatory global capitalism.

In recent years, French historians have begun to analyse the impact of the Algerian War of Independence on urban policy in metropolitan France (Blanchard 2011; Cohen and David 2012; Gilbert and Vorms 2012). The war led to high levels of migration across the Mediterranean – Muslim Algerian workers and, towards the end of the conflict, *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* (Algerian Muslims who had supported the French during the war). This forced authorities to address the question of managing the incorporation of these groups into French society, particularly the thousands of Algerian immigrants who had settled in bidonvilles on the outskirts of major cities. Some of the larger shantytowns around Paris were reminiscent of the overcrowded, labyrinthine environment of the Algiers Medina and were seen by the French state as crime-ridden, no-go areas and FLN recruiting grounds. The growing anxiety surrounding the bidonvilles led to the development of *cités de transit* – temporary camps consisting of prefabricated huts – that were designed to house Algerian families prior to their permanent relocation. Their institution allowed for the clearance of informal settlements, the renovation of local neighbourhoods and the planning and building of new public housing blocks. The transit camps, however, were not simply designed to meet the social needs of migrants but were also conceived as a security response to the perceived Algerian nationalist threat on French soil. In other words, they functioned as a means of controlling the activities of the former inhabitants of the bidonvilles and assimilating them into mainland life, albeit in a subordinate capacity (Cohen and David 2012).

This emergency resettlement policy would become a standard procedure applied to all migrants, not just Algerians. In the Paris region alone, it was estimated that there were more than 350 bidonvilles in the mid-1960s, housing nearly 40,000 migrants from North Africa and southern Europe (Castles and Kosack 1973, 294). Long after the end of the anti-colonial struggle, the *cités de transit* remained the preferred method for planning slum clearance and channelling residents into social housing, as in the demolition of Portuguese shantytowns around Paris in the late 1960s. It was because these informal settlements were, from the outset, populated mainly by Algerians rather than the fact that they were considered a sign of urban blight in the modern city that active measures were taken to eradicate them (Gilbert and Vorms 2012). If the Algerian War of Independence was a crucial factor in shaping French housing policy at the time, it also left a lasting legacy on the overall design and governance of postcolonial cities in France, particularly the suburban banlieues, which from the 1970s became home to large numbers of non-white and immigrant working classes. The colonial imprint of these urban peripheries would extend to the quota systems limiting the number of foreign-born families in housing estates (a policy first implemented during the war itself; Blanc-Chaléard 2012); the heavy-handed policing of young residents, including random identity checks and vehicle searches that were reminiscent of what happened on the streets of Algiers in the late 1950s (Dikeç 2007); and the territorial stigmatisation of the banlieues as segregated from mainstream society and in need of rehabilitation, not unlike the fate that had befallen the Casbah during the colonial era (Kipfer 2016).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine: sacrificing cosmopolitan imaginaries?

> In the streets one hears Russian, English, Italian, German, [Jewish], Tartar, Polish, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Moldavian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Dalmatian, French, Swedish, and Spanish, and these are not spoken merely by passing strangers, but by the regular inhabitants. (Kohl 1844, 420)[2]

The above words are part of a detailed description by the German travel writer Johann Georg Kohl of the Black Sea port of Odessa, which had a population of around 70,000 when he visited in 1838. The 'confusion of tongues' found throughout Russia at the time was considered particularly

remarkable in Odessa, which had only existed for four decades, having been founded in 1794 as a new southern outpost of the Russian Empire. During the nineteenth century, merchants, peasants and dockworkers from across Europe and the Black Sea basin flocked to the port city to take advantage of the relative freedoms and booming economy that had developed around the export of grain from the surrounding steppes.

Odessa's rapid urbanisation and multilingual diversity was marked by violence. The city suffered five major anti-Jewish pogroms between 1821 and 1905. Yet its internationalist and Jewish identity continued to resonate among Odessans and outsiders alike, long after most of the city's Jews were deported to extermination camps during the brutal German–Romanian occupation between 1941 and 1944, and regardless of its status under the Russian Empire and Soviet Union (King 2012). With the end of the Cold War, the collective memory of Odessa's cosmopolitan past became increasingly fragmented, until it was completely shattered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

The 2022 invasion reaffirmed the strategic place of cities in war (Ljungkvist 2022). Towns and cities in northern and eastern Ukraine were immediately bombarded by the Russian military, leading to a massive exodus of inhabitants to the west of the country and abroad. Much of the initial media attention, at least in the west, focused on the humanitarian consequences of the war: the crowds at train and bus stations, the gridlock on motorways, the desperate experiences of those without sufficient means to flee, but also the difficulties in accessing transport faced by non-white evacuees, mainly foreign students. In the first two months of the war, 3 million refugees left Ukraine for neighbouring countries (UNHCR 2024). 'Post-cosmopolitan' cities (Humphrey and Skvirskaja 2012) in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Warsaw, now found themselves at the forefront of the integration of foreign newcomers. While the war amplified pre-existing migration aspirations and social cleavages among Ukrainians (Karimi and Byelikova 2024), it also highlighted the systemic racism embedded in European immigration policies which now favoured Ukrainians over other nationals. The UK issued 238,562 visas to Ukrainians in 2022 alone, almost five times the total number of Afghans and Syrians it had accepted through its resettlement programmes in the previous eight years (Kundnani 2023), while the Danish government waived its restrictions on the clustering of immigrants in social housing, allowing Ukrainian refugees to settle in accommodation that had been emptied of 'non-westerners' (Boffey 2022).

Beyond military and legal concerns, western support for Ukraine since 2022 has often been couched in terms of the defence of liberal

nationalism and democracy against the aggression of an authoritarian state. This dominant interpretive framework, both inside and outside Ukraine, has altered the way in which the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country's cities has been contemplated (or not). This was especially true in the case of Odessa. In the early stages of the war, Odessa remained largely unscathed by Russia's bombardment of Ukraine, but following the expiry of the Black Sea Grain Initiative on 17 July 2023, the city and its port increasingly became the target of Russian attacks, with the Transfiguration Cathedral partially destroyed by a missile a few days later. The escalating bombardment of Odessa came in the wake of UNESCO's emergency decision to inscribe the city on both its World Heritage List and its List of World Heritage in Danger. Among its reasons, UNESCO stated that 'the site bears witness to the city's highly diverse ethnic and religious communities, representing an outstanding example of intercultural exchanges and the growth of multicultural and multi-ethnic Eastern European cities of the 19th century' (UNESCO 2023). It added that 'the city was founded in 1794 by a strategic decision of the Empress Catherine II to build a warm-water port following the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish war of 1787–1792' (UNESCO 2023). No other reference is made to the city's historic links with Russia.

After Ukrainian independence in 1991, Odessa's reputation as cosmopolitan, tolerant and – despite the Holocaust and pogroms – idiosyncratically Jewish was perpetuated by locals and outsiders, despite the fact that most of the remaining Jews, Germans and Greeks left the city soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, while new non-European migrants such as Afghans and the native Roma minority often faced discrimination (Skvirskaja 2012). After 1991, Odessa's history of multiple migrations and cultural pluralism would serve different interests. It was invoked by Ukrainian officials as a means to de-Sovietise and de-Russify the city, from replacing street names (out with 'Karl Liebknecht' and (Isaac) 'Babel' and in with 'Greek' and 'Jewish') to highlighting the Ottoman-era settlement of Khadjibey, which predated the founding of Odessa in order to disprove the city's Russian roots (Richardson 2008). Other local cultural and political actors evoked Odessa's cosmopolitan identity to counter a perceived Ukrainisation and thereby reaffirm the city's ties to Russia or, more commonly, to celebrate its distinctive diversity that transcended allegiance to any one nation state. In her ethnography of everyday heritage practices in Odessa, Tanya Richardson (2008) shows how some residents responded to the geopolitical turn of events in a more pluralistic way. For example, some supported both Ukrainian statehood and the erection of a monument to Catherine the Great while

at the same time expressing their appreciation of the foreign influences that had shaped local history.

Such a perspective became increasingly difficult to maintain following the violent clashes between the city's Ukrainian and Russian-speaking populations that followed in the wake of the Euromaidan protests against pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych in early 2014. Since the Russian invasion of February 2022, Odessa's internationalist past and present have been further overshadowed by the outbreak of armed conflict. De-Russification has accelerated. The statue of Catherine the Great was removed in late 2022 and replaced with a Ukrainian flag (Gormezano 2023). Although the city remains predominantly Russophone, the Ukrainian language is increasingly spoken in public. Anti-Russian sentiment is, unsurprisingly, high.

Since the start of the war, a number of English-language media organisations and flag bearers of liberal cosmopolitan values, such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and the BBC, have adopted the transliteration of the Ukrainian name Odesa.[3] Although no specific explanation was given for this new spelling, it was clear that the sudden change was an expression of support for Ukraine. A short article in the online edition of *The Guardian* on how to pronounce and write 'Kyiv', published the day after the Russian invasion, declared: 'With Ukraine's capital under siege from Russian forces it's only fair that we outsiders get our language right' (Rice-Oxley 2022). This is not, therefore, a matter of linguistic etiquette or xenophilic concern for accuracy; indeed, the same media outlets continue to use Anglicised spellings for most other cities around the world and routinely employ imprecise terminology, euphemisms and the passive voice to frame the mass death and destruction wrought by Israel's onslaught on Gaza (Osman 2023; Krishnan 2024). On the contrary, the choice of words in the Ukrainian context patently has political and symbolic resonance (Polese and Wylegala 2008). 'Odessa' is not only the city's original name, derived from the nearby ancient Greek settlement of Odessos on the Black Sea coast, but also a globally recognised metonym for internationalism and diasporic connections (think Little Odessa on Coney Island). 'Odesa', on the other hand, is the Ukrainian word for a city that did not exist on paper before 2022, at least not in the aforementioned British and US broadsheets. And although officially sanctioned by Ukrainian state institutions, 'Odesa' continues to be rejected by some pro-Ukrainian Odessans as both etymologically incorrect and insensitive to the city's distinctive history (De Waal 2023).

Whether the switch to *Odesa* in the case of Ukraine marks the de facto nationalisation of the city's identity remains to be seen. The city's

complex heritage was already highly contested before 2022, and remains so. What is clear, however, is that in a nation at war, there is less room for recognising urban diversity. It reminds us that the violence of war not only displaces and eliminates particular groups in cities and silences the histories of those who remain or arrive, but also severely disrupts the very possibility of the cosmopolitan imagination (Fine 2006).

Conclusion

Recent discussions of war and cities have paid little attention to the issue of human mobility, and when they have, they have tended to point to displacement and the elimination of cosmopolitan life as the principal outcomes of war's violence. Similarly, the field of migration studies has rarely interrogated the relationship between war and migration, over and beyond the same processes of forced movement and the destruction of cultural diversity. Indicative of the lack of critical nexus thinking is the way in which the Second World War continues to be commonly construed as a watershed moment in genealogies of urban multiculturalism in Europe. Attention to the intersections between warfare and the historical layers of urban diversity helps to reveal the temporal frameworks that structure public memory and knowledge of migration in cities, and to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about the 'beginning' and 'end' of eras.

If the theatres, targets and technologies of contemporary warfare have become increasingly urbanised, this should, by extension, encourage us to think more carefully about the impact of war on the corresponding interrelationships between urbanisation and migration. Just as urbicide not only destroys but also reshapes cities, war is generative of new sets of conditions for mobility and for thinking about its consequences at the urban scale.

The two cases considered in this chapter – the Algerian War of Independence and the war in Ukraine – aim to complicate unidirectional narratives of displacement and destruction by highlighting the constitutive role of war and violence in the production and reproduction of urban diversities, as well as the ways in which these diversities are conceived, disregarded and/or contested in public discourse. The relationship between war and urban diversity is thus highly ambivalent. War eliminates urban dwellers and forces them to flee, but it also draws people into cities as combatants, refugees and workers. It mutilates the built environment, but it also reorganises urban space, sometimes in order to accommodate and discipline the very people who are on the move. It can

influence urban planning policies, as it did in Paris during the Algerian War of Independence, and redefine the boundaries of urban identity, as the recent renaming of 'Odesa' in the western Anglophone media illustrates. The first speaks to the persistence of colonialism in the management of diversity; the second to the symbolic violence and irreconcilable contradictions that underlie liberal democratic nationalism.

Foregrounding the multi-sited nature of armed conflict, but also the past and present global power relations that structure war and our understanding of it, can serve to disrupt and provincialise the positioned ways in which armed conflict, migration and cities are conventionally interpreted. The Algerian War of Independence and the segregated sectors of colonial Algiers continue to haunt the configuration of the contemporary French city. Revisiting this tumultuous period also connects and contributes to the recent efforts to rethink the production of knowledge about migration and diversity through the lens of colonialism (Mayblin and Turner 2021). Meanwhile, the Russian invasion of Ukraine revives the spectre of war in Europe but also reaffirms the marginal place of the Eastern European city in liberal imaginaries of urban cosmopolitanism, suggesting that the latter is always in danger of being trumped by nationalist righteousness. Western media paeans to the cultural diversity of global metropolises like London or Paris were rarely extended to Odessa in peacetime, and even less so now that it has become Odesa at war.

Notes

1. The origins of the term *pieds-noirs* (literally 'black feet') are uncertain. Its first recorded use was in the early twentieth century as a slang expression for Arab Algerians who worked in the engine rooms of steamships, while in Arabic the equivalent word typically referred to the black footwear worn by Europeans. What is important is that the term entered common usage during the early stages of the Algerian War of Independence to describe the European population and was eventually adopted by members of the same group to distinguish themselves from the metropolitan French (Assante and Plaisante 1992).
2. The English translation of Kohl's travelogue leaves out the word 'Jewish' which was present, in the indicated position, in the original 1840 German text.
3. Equivalent media organisations in other Western countries, such as *Le Monde*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *El Pais* and *Corriere della Sera* all continue to use the spelling 'Odessa' (although the English-language version of *Le Monde* has used 'Odesa' since 2022).

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