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## Capital Matters: Middle Class between Welcome Culture and Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

### *Abstract*

Confused between their insatiable hunger for ‘self-realization,’ their enjoyment of *petit bonheurs* of life and an aggressive will to preserve their welfare position, for not going downhill and joining the 50% of the world population who own nothing, today’s middle-class individual seems to choose one of two ‘fronts of worldviews,’ of which the attitude toward ‘refugees’ constitutes a new ‘battlefield.’ So, with the flow of Ukrainian refugees after the Russian aggression against Ukraine, one of the most worrying questions in Germany has been if the experience of the ‘welcome culture’ of 2015, that is a severe shift from hospitality to hostility, would repeat. Statistics show that so far, it has not been the case. This paper addresses the question of what might differ in the experience of ‘the Ukrainian refugee wave’ from the ‘welcome culture’ of 2015. Tracing both hospitality and then the shift to hostility in 2015 back to its middle-class dynamics, the paper tries to conceptualize a difference in attitudes within the middle-class toward both ‘refugee crises.’

**Key words:** capital, charity, disorientation of the world, hostility, hospitality, middle-class, self-realization, welcome culture, Ukrainian refugee crisis.

### **Introduction: From *welcome culture* in 2015 to the welcoming of Ukrainians<sup>1</sup>**

The summer of 2015 was one of the most critical phases of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis.’ The number of deaths on the ‘Balkan route’ to major European countries was ‘increasing the humanitarian pressure on governments,’ as it was framed in the journalistic narrative. Overall, things were flowing in their ‘natural course’; the mood was somewhere between mild indifference and officially repeated ‘humanitarian

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concern,' calling on the 'international community' – an enigmatic 'club' for which no one really knows who its members are – to stand together.

Toward the end of that summer, a picture showing the corpse of a child carried in the arms of a Turkish gendarme seemed to have changed that natural course drastically: it was the picture of Alan Kurdî, drowned in the Aegean Sea, which became the symbol of the beginning of a short period called 'welcome culture.'<sup>2</sup> After that incident, Angela Merkel announced an 'open door policy.' Suddenly a 'mood' emerged: people began to run to train stations with flowers and beverages, food and clothing. Thousands volunteered to work in NGOs to tackle the situation. It would not be wrong to name the mood of that time pure hospitality.

However, no later than New Year's Eve of that same 2015, the mood shifted drastically: allegedly, refugees sexually assaulted German women in Cologne. This was the beginning of the shift in the mood, from 'hospitality' to 'hostility.' Statistical data followed this mood shift, showing a high crime rate among refugees. Increasingly, movements like PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) and their gatherings found a far greater echo than ever before. The shift was crowned with the AfD (Alternative for Germany), previously a rather negligible new-right party, establishing itself as a power in the German parliament.

With the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Germany seems to have found itself in a second wave of 'welcome culture.' Yet, in contrast to 2015, when civic initiatives carried most of the burden, all state institutions have now been actively mobilized to assist Ukrainians.<sup>3</sup> This was a major, most noticeable difference.

However, there are some striking similarities as well: the most significant one is the over-excitement in 'social media' in the very first days and weeks of the Russian aggression. There was almost a 'race' in campaigns for hosting Ukrainians, picking them up from borders and for 'hosting' them. With the rising inflation and energy prices threatening the 'welfare' of a large part of the German middle class, one can state that

<sup>2</sup> The term "welcome culture" is a *German* concept. According to Trauner and Turton (2017), it first emerged in 2005 within the context of a shift in Germany's migration policy for encouraging the support of migrations, reminding that long-scale migration is a necessity for the country, rather than being a temporary phenomenon. It means that the term "welcome culture" "became first instrumental to pursue a specific political agenda, namely, to enhance the acceptance of German society to become a country of immigration" (Trauner and Turton, 2017: 35). However, the concept became popular and entered widespread use after the 2015 refugee crisis and Germany's open-door policy. On that also see Herbert et al. (2021).

<sup>3</sup> It must be emphasized here: mostly 'only Ukrainians' and not 'all people affected by the conflict in the region' living in Ukraine.

the euphoria has died down. However, in contrast to 2015, there has not been a sharp shift to ‘hostility’ following the dissolution of the euphoria.<sup>4</sup>

Claiming that in both ‘waves’ the initial over-excitement had a ‘middle-class’ quality,<sup>5</sup> in this paper I will address the following question: What differentiates the experience of the 2015 ‘welcome culture’ from the Ukrainian refugee wave of 2022 and 2023? This, indeed, is a rather important question which has global real-political, and overall conjunctural dimensions. All these dimensions being considered, this paper will frame the question from a social-philosophical perspective, as follows: What can the difference in middle-class attitude tell us about the relation between the logic of capital and the crisis of late-modern individuality, consisting today of an oscillation between a fear of social deprivation and an aspiration to an impactful, ‘sense-making’ life? So, in regard to both refugee crises: How can we think and conceptualize differences in ‘attitudes’ between ‘welcome culture’ and the current attitude to the Ukrainian refugee wave in reference to the economically narrowing middle class and its symbolic clash for belonging, which today articulates every relevant and irrelevant phenomenon with one another and renders them all symbols of belonging to a ‘front’?

## **A world of *Biden* as a weak negation of the world of *Trump***

In a previous paper that I published in *International Studies* I focused on the ‘middle-class’ dynamics of ‘political’ polarization during the pandemic, which I analyzed

<sup>4</sup> Recent studies in Germany also indicate that in contrast to 2015 there is no significant shift in the mood against Ukrainian refugees. (See Dollmann et al., 2023.) It is stated that in comparison to the refugee crisis of 2015, in which state institutions failed to manage the situation, they were quite effective in 2022 in the case of Ukrainian refugees (Denk, 2022). Of course, in these half-official reports and studies, a question remains: Why have the state institutions been fully mobilized in the Ukrainian case, whereas they were quite reluctant in 2015?

<sup>5</sup> Middle class – as it is called in the literature – is a ‘catch-all’ term, whose content is not necessarily self-evident. I elaborated extensively on the concept of the middle class in a recent paper (Akin, 2022), upon which my claims were built. However, I would like to emphasize that I mainly follow Alain Badiou’s “definition” and his approach to the middle class. Badiou approaches the middle class in terms of its ideological role in maintaining the dominant ideologies in Western democratic capitalist countries. Accordingly, the “middle-class” people, possessing 14% of world resources and constituting 40% of world population (10% are the ultra-rich, whom Badiou regards as a present-day “oligarchy”; whereas 60% are the extremely poor, mainly from Africa and Asia, whom Badiou calls “the destitute population”) are the “pillars of democracy” in Western advanced capitalist countries (Badiou, 2016: 25). The key moment to focus on is that according to Badiou, “a very important goal of the middle class”, making up 40% yet possessing only 14% of resources, is “not to be referred to or identified with the immense mass of the deprived” (Badiou, 2016: 25). In other words, what defines the middle class today is an *urge* to preserve its own position. On the competitive dimension of belonging to the middle class today, on its ‘losers’ and ‘winners,’ recent decades, also see: Akin, 2022; Reckwitz, 2020.

with a reference to the popular television series *Squid Game* (Akin, 2022). Based on the fact that the middle class of the Western world is narrowing economically, the paper conceptualized an insecurity of ‘belonging’ which renders ‘individual attitudes’ toward various previously non-political phenomena such as ‘vaccination’ a field of clashing symbols, as an effort to compensate for the non-fulfilled economic promise of pursuing an ideal middle-class life through the fastening of one’s ‘belonging’ to a front of a certain ‘worldview.’ There I determined ‘progressive’ and ‘reactionary’ fronts as two volatile and competing branches of the same middle class (Akin, 2022).

Leaning on that conceptual result, the argument that I unfold in this paper will be based on the following claim: The main difference between the two experiences of ‘welcoming’ is to be found within today’s dynamics of a “disorientated world”, to refer to Alain Badiou (Badiou, 2022). In the context of 2015 in contrast, the ‘fronts’ were not yet as apparent as they are today: the ‘clash of worldviews’ as ‘progressive’ (liberal, cosmopolitan, scientific etc.) and ‘reactionary’ (illiberal and nationalistic, superstitious etc.), which have *de facto* become the main political categories since the election of Trump, were first crystalized during and after the pandemic.

Yet, why would polarization mean a ‘disorientation’? Could we not say, on the contrary, that a sharp division into ‘worldviews’ would rather indicate a crystal-clear orientation?

This is the crux of the issue. For today’s ‘severe polarization’ is based on pseudo-differences, that is different modes of the same conviction that even in a constant crisis, the principle of capital is the only alternative to the mediation of human affairs and the basis of social order, ‘which must be saved and perpetuated.’ So, we are then confronted with two faces of the same principle of ‘capital,’ which comes into view through two proper names symbolizing two seemingly different ‘worlds’ with ‘opposing’ properties around which the Western middle classes all over the world gather. It is either the ‘world’ of Trump, with properties such as conservatism, conspiracy theories, denial of climate change, anti-LGBTQ, sympathy for ‘authoritarian regimes,’ old-middle-class resentment, or the ‘world’ of Biden, with properties such as liberalism, scientific rationality, pro-LGBTQ, new middle class, Silicon Valley activism, sentimental charity, green capitalism, sustainability etc. If a world symbolized by ‘Trump’ can be regarded as that of a naked, brutal conservative face of capital, then a world which is symbolized by Biden could only represent the same capital with a ‘humane face,’ if anything at all.

This juxtaposition itself is not a new ‘revelation.’ New in today’s conjuncture is the overall mood of confusion and a lack of any visible global emancipatory political orientation, which could de-mask this imposition as having to choose the same world, either in guise of its ‘progressive’ or its ‘reactionary’ facets. It is to be underlined here that the confusion and the overall disorientation do not stem from negating the worlds of ‘Trumps,’ or ‘Xi Pings’ or ‘Putins.’ The problem begins with the illusion that

a world symbolized by ‘Biden’ would be a true negation of a world of ‘Xi Ping,’ ‘Putin’ or ‘Trump.’ In other words, a world symbolized by the proper name of Biden can at best be a ‘weak negation’ (Badiou, 2022) of a world symbolized by the proper name of Trump.

Under these circumstances, it is not necessarily the Ukrainian civilians who have been victimized by the Russian aggression, but it is the ‘Ukrainian national cause’ that has become the condensation point; almost ‘the fetish’ of today’s seemingly ‘sharp’ clashes of worldviews. ‘Welcome culture’ of 2015, on the other hand, was a symbol of nothing more than a local – and perhaps a very specifically Protestant-German mood of charity.

So, apart from a dizzying polarization which can allow one to abstain from all the conspicuous incoherencies in the case of the ‘Ukrainian refugee crisis,’ there is a very significant dynamic, which was absent in 2015, and that is a successful articulation with ‘capital.’ We have witnessed that the support of Ukraine is quickly becoming an integrated part of the commodity exchange in the Western world, such that companies have been in a race for integrating it in their products and services, and a parallel race of expelling everything ‘Russian,’ from university professors to classical music concerts in the beginning, which would have been attributed in another conjuncture to the ‘authoritarian and anti-democratic’ worlds of Putins, Xi Pings and co.

### **Middle class as the condensation point of the *pathologies of the social***

We can find one of the clearest symptoms of current disorientation in the inversion of ‘peace’ and ‘war’<sup>6</sup> so that ‘demanding peace’ can easily be ‘turned into’ being on the side of the aggressor, authoritarianism and thus war. ‘Demanding an intensification of the war’ can be celebrated as a ‘true demand for peace’ and a clear standing for the ‘democratic,’ ‘liberal’ and ‘free world’ and its values.

In this juxtaposition, what could allow us to place the burden again on the ‘middle class,’ so why focus on the middle class again?

For the middle class is the condensation point of the clash of ‘fronts’ today. Thus, in the absence of any emancipatory orientation, that is renewed politics of equality on the global scale, the current “pathologies of the social” (Honneth, 2000) come into view most explicitly within the ‘middle class’ and become palpable. In the absence of any egalitarian maxim, it is either about preserving one’s position and not joining

<sup>6</sup> This of course reminds one of the most (in)famous and probably most frequently cited quotes from Orwell’s *1984*, that “war is peace” (Orwell, 2021: 2). This over-citation brings about such a weird elasticity that one should not be shocked by seeing that two authors using the same quote might be supporting opposite ‘fronts’ today, which also, in a very subtle irony, highlights the original strength of Orwell’s determination in the novel.

the majority who go downhill with the worsening global situation, gas crisis and high inflation, or about finding the right occasion to receive a share of what Badiou calls “occidental ease” (Badiou, 2019).

### **Falling in love with logical deductions: *You cannot say A without saying B, C, D...***

This is such a state of implicit competition that in a significant part of Western societies ‘dizzying’ articulations of individual attitudes to various social or even irrelevant natural-scientific phenomena take place in a ‘deductive’ way. It seems that both fronts have notoriously fallen in love with what Arendt once called “the principle of logical deduction” (Arendt, 2017). Yet, what is that principle?

Well, Hannah Arendt once determined it as a sign of the dissolution of any orientation and common sense in the world, and as such a perfect climate for a totalitarian rule-to-come. According to this principle, which always operates under the condition of absolute loneliness and a lack of any communication and ‘action,’ everything can be deduced from a main premise on which a statement is based, as this one statement entails everything else that must necessarily follow from it. The motto is the following: “Who says A must also say B” (Arendt, 2017: 1161).

So, applying that to our present context, it would mean this: If one is ‘against a bigger war through further intervention of NATO in Ukraine,’ one’s attitude in various other fields, which in fact do not have a direct connection with the above statement, can be automatically ‘deduced.’ For according to today’s principle of logical deduction, which is not concerned with any common experience of the world, in any communication with the other, one cannot be ‘against war’ without being pro-Putin, and also against democracy, against vaccination, against Western values, against LGBTQ, and for ‘alternative facts’ etc. All these properties are assumed to belong together, as if it were an ‘all-in-one package,’ and one must pick up all the other properties entailed if one wants to affirm any one of them. The contrary fictitious example is no better: If one is ‘for active military support of Ukraine,’ the other front will not wait to ‘deduce’ that this person also supports the ‘pharma lobby’ for imposing further vaccinations, and ‘imposing a non-binary LGBTQ world order,’ ‘legitimizing child pornography,’ ‘ruling the world through lies’ etc. It would not change anything if one took any other property from one of the ‘packages,’ for this one property would suffice to deduce all other ‘attitudes’ in all relevant and irrelevant subjects.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Here it is not to say that one cannot have this ‘package’ of attitudes at the same time. Empirically it is to be found, yet empirical evidence should not be turned into ‘self-evidence,’ bringing about the principle of the solitary logical deduction, which drives the whole Western world to collective insanity.

So, any differentiation through conceiving concrete positions in concrete subjects by thinking concretely is, given the current circumstances, an expectation in vain.

However, the task of philosophy, as Badiou once put it, is that if it comes to the 'intervention of actual problems,' it is not merely commenting on 'circulating opinions' by choosing one of them but rather framing the questions of our times by breaking the given narrow frames. So, it is about this 'philosophical' framing which will follow thereafter.

### **Short enthusiastic engagement for hospitality vs. long-lasting politics of hostility**

The 'political' 'humanitarian' engagement of the middle-class individual<sup>8</sup> does not recognize any notion of endurance and cannot institute politics. For as paradoxical as it may appear today, all 'political' engagements of the middle-class individual in reality have an a-political character. Why? Taking the word 'political' literally, simply because they entail nothing which truly concerns the *polis*. We can state that all public engagements of a middle-class person which seem to concern the *polis* are in fact directed to one end only, and that is realizing her unique 'self' by 'creating an impact in the world' and making sense of her individual existence.

So, leaning on this determination, I claim that after an initial euphoria, the 'progressive' engagement of the middle-class individual fades away. For with the hunger of realizing her 'unique' self, a point always comes at which the middle-class individual loses interest in her support of a particular 'cause' for which she hitherto might have been strongly enthusiastic. For unlike her appetite for making an impact, her engagements are volatile and temporary. What ultimately counts is that the intensity of her 'feeling good,' a public 'cause,' which may perhaps not appear in 'Twitter World Trends' anymore, will fail to fulfill that need. So, it is then quite probable that she will start to search for another, new temporary means, to get closer to the ultimate end, and that is her 'self-realization.'

Yet the 'reactionary' engagement, which usually takes up the stage a bit later, can be more long-lasting. This is the main reason why 'reactionary' motives could organize around hostility as politics in 2015, while the other branch of the middle class, that is the branch of hospitality, which could count as 'progressive,' already turned back to search for new daily *petit bonheurs* of life, in mild indifference *vis-à-vis* the faith of the ones whom they welcomed in an enthusiastic way in the beginning.

Yet, how can we understand this repetitive dynamic?

<sup>8</sup> It should be evident that I take 'middle-class individual' as an *idealtipe* and not as an empirical category.

In order to comprehend the ‘middle-class’ dynamic, let us make a retour for an ontological reflection to understand the relation between ‘hospitality’ and ‘hostility’ and make plausible what kind of role the relation of ‘others in need,’ coming from abroad, can have on the coherency of one’s own ‘identity,’ which is crucial for the ‘late-modern’ individuality embodied by the middle class today. This way we will be able to unfold the answer to the question of what it is really that has so far prevented any drastic shift in the mood of the middle class today, as opposed to 2015.

## The ambivalence of *hostis* oscillating between hospitality and hostility

In *Phenomenology of the Alien*, Bernhard Waldenfels notices an interesting detail, that the words “hostility” and “hospitality” have the same root, which is *hostis*. He says that this Latin word oscillates between “hospitality” and “hostility” (Waldenfels, 2013: 45). To emphasize the same ambivalence, Derrida even uses the term “hostipitalité” (Derrida and Doufourmantelle, 2005: 45). This ambivalence hints at a strange transitivity between the two terms. Here I will deliberate on that transitivity between hospitality and hostility with the claim that both have an identitarian root; they belong to the same identitarian logic.

In the set of relations between a ‘guest’ and a ‘host,’ or between the newcomer and the ‘native,’ not only the identity of the other constitutes a point of tension and ambivalence, but also the ‘host’ taken as ‘self.’ So, I claim that there is a crucial identitarian moment operating in the conception of hospitality which has a much more elusive character than in ‘hostility.’ The identitarian moment, on which I want to focus, is the ‘identity’ of the host which gains only a fictitious coherency by identifying the other *qua* other. I will unfold this seemingly confusing statement shortly. So, let us first turn for a moment to Derrida.

Derrida states a bizarre antinomy between what he calls *the law* of hospitality and *laws* of hospitality, that is between the unconditionality of the reception of the other and the sovereignty of the host. *The law* of hospitality commands the unconditional reception of the other, yet in order that this law can operate, we need *laws* of hospitality (Derrida and Doufourmantelle, 2005: 29).<sup>9</sup> The antinomy emerges for Derrida in the

<sup>9</sup> Derrida’s conception of hospitality has been studied and criticized through various perspectives. (To give just three recent examples relevant for our purposes: Naas, 2005; Leung and Stone, 2009; De Ville, 2011.) As it is linked with the approach and the main argument that I develop in the paper, I want to open Badiou’s critique of “identitarianism”: Badiou claims that Derrida’s ethics of hospitality cannot be universalized, as it is impossible to welcome just *anyone* who comes, without knowing the intention (Badiou, 2019). One should not misunderstand here that Badiou was himself against “foreigners.” His point is showing the immanent problems of Derrida’s approach.



“conditionality of unconditionality,” that is, in order for the other to be received unconditionally, the host must be the owner of the house, that is the host must be at his own home (Derrida and Doufourmantelle, 2005: 53). This condition entails that if it is ‘my’ home then ‘I’ can welcome ‘you.’ So, if it is my home, there must be certain laws which approve and attest to the fact that it is ‘my’ home.

My question here is: Does this conditionality not entail that only if ‘I’ am ‘me’; only if I can assure you and through you, myself, of my identity, then I can conceive of your ‘difference,’ recognize it and name you as ‘different’ and welcome you as the other? So, would this not mean that the difference of the other depends actually on the assumption of my identity? The naming of the other *qua* other: Does this not necessitate a consistent vantage point, that is my assumed identity?

In order to deepen our comprehension of the ‘inconsistency’ of the ‘identity’ and derive some points for our purposes, let us now briefly turn to Deleuze’s critique of primacy of identity and his conception of difference.

## Deleuze: Inversion of the primacy of identity

Deleuze thinks that since Plato, difference has been conceived of as being inferior to identity and has played a role just in reinforcing what he calls an ‘illusion of identity.’ The point here is that through the entire history of thought difference has been considered only in reference to a term, whose identity has been believed to be taken for granted. Following Nietzsche, who first started the tradition of attributing

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For “new-comers” may also come with the aim of conquering, or enslaving. It should just show that it is not possible to welcome *unconditionally*. The fact that in such a conception as Derrida’s there is in the and a *need* to determine an identity, proves, according to Badiou, that unconditional welcoming cannot be universalized as ethics of hospitality as there will always be “certain identities” which will be welcomed and certain others which will not (Badiou, 2019: 29). The problem stems from the basic fact that identity proves itself unknowingly as the operator of the relation in Derrida’s conception, concealed in *laws* of hospitality. Accordingly, Badiou sees in Derrida’s laws of hospitality an identitarian kernel which consists of very concrete laws of the dominant states accepting only those who are already prepared to obey the laws of “integration” and also to make themselves as invisible as possible, or as we can see in the case of Ukrainian migration wave clearly, those who were considered from the very outset culturally *more appropriate* than others (e.g. migrants from the Middle East). So, the laws to which Derrida refers turn out be the laws of integration or even assimilation, which must always presuppose a desired identity and prevention of the non-desired one. The ultimate point in Badiou’s critique is that Derrida’s claim of antinomy between *the law* of hospitality and *laws* of hospitality does not take into consideration the system of dialectical relations between the fact of coming, the conditions forcing one to come and the laws which regulate the acceptance or rejection of the arrival, which in guise of *ethics* ending up justifying identitarian policies, just like Kant’s void “categorical imperatives” as the basis of moral, if they lack concreteness, may end up creating immorality, as Hegel famously shows us with his critique of Kant. See Hegel, 1986: 286-287.

all the ‘original sins’ of the history of thought to Plato, Deleuze determines Plato’s *ιδέα* (idea) as the source of the primacy of identity over difference. To prove his statement, in *Difference and Repetition*, he shows a threefold constitution of Plato’s system, that is three units of which the system consists: the original (*ιδέα*), constituting the reference point of identity which itself never comes to appearance so that it leads the way to two opposed ‘copies,’ that is an accurate-copy of the original constituting the concept of ‘the similar,’ and a false-copy, or a bad image of the original constituting the concept of ‘simulacrum,’ which Deleuze determines as the source of inferiority of ‘difference’ before ‘identity’ (Deleuze, 1994: 129). So, the point of this juxtaposition is that ‘difference’ has always been conceived in regard to an assumed ‘originality’ of *ιδέα* (idea).

What Deleuze problematizes here is that it is the assumed and taken-for-granted identity of the *ιδέα* (idea) which distinguishes the simulacrum (the false-copy) from the accurate-copy and maintains the myth of the ‘identity’ of the ‘original.’ What he then reveals is the tricky role that the simulacrum plays in what he calls ‘Plato’s myth’ – he detects that in Plato’s system the ‘originality’ of the idea, that is its ‘identity,’ is only maintained by the mythical claim of a faithful production of a good copy. So, we assume that there is an originality, that is something identical to itself, only because it has ‘representations,’ that is it has bad or good ‘copies.’ Yet, since according to Deleuze there is nothing but the “claim” of a faithful reproduction of an original (for the original itself is never presented), it is in fact the simulacrum, the “other,” or the “inferior-different” which maintains and reinforces the “myth” of the identity of the original (Deleuze, 1994: 129).

What is to be derived from this analysis for our purposes is the following: What reinforces the identity of a term is another term which is ‘identified’ as ‘different.’ This is to say that according to Deleuze, we ‘traditionally’ think of ‘difference’ also as an ‘identity.’

If we apply it to our example: It is not the identity of the ‘host’ which determines the ‘otherness’ of the other and seals the status of the guest as culturally, ethnically ‘different,’ but the assumption of the ‘difference’ of the guest as an ‘identity’ that the other is supposed to have, which in reality only ‘reinforces’ the illusion of the identity of the host, that is the illusion that the host is identical to him- or herself so that they can determine a ‘difference.’ Yet, in fact both the ‘identity’ of the host which relates him- or herself to the ‘other’ and the ‘identity’ of the other assumed to be ‘different’ from the host, are illusions. To make the relation of this dynamic of ‘identification’ to hospitality more plausible, let us turn back to Derrida and to his conception of ‘being at home’ (*chez-soi*) as it is conceived as ‘the condition of being a host’ and welcoming a guest.

## The need of others to make a home *my* home: Dialectics of being at home

Derrida declares *chez-soi* (being at one's own home)<sup>10</sup> as the condition of talking about hospitality. To be able to be the host, one should be at one's own home. For Derrida, there is a link between the meaning of 'host' and *potestas*, that is possession, which he shows through a chain of meaning from *hostis* (host) to *potest* (owner and being powerful), signifying the host as the possessor of the house (Derrida and Doufurmantelle, 2005: 41). The question here concerns the condition of the possibility to claim to be at home: What allows one to claim to be at home if it is about a country into which one was haphazardly born?<sup>11</sup> This is in fact where we can again see the point of the Deleuzian inversion.

For perhaps it is not 'I' that is an 'I' who is always-already at home and who possesses it and thus can welcome 'you' as the other, but it is 'you' in the moment when I name you as the 'other' who helps me in the illusion that 'I am who I am' and that I am at 'my' home. This is to say that there can be no question of possession before relationality of 'host and guest,' that is before any arrival, without any encounter, which is a genuine experience, preceding the attributes of being 'host' and 'guest.'

So, must not the arrival of 'the other' itself first introduce the question of 'possession' and accordingly, the positions of being a 'host' and a 'guest'? Would not the rhetoric of hospitality in the first place help 'me' then, if I happen to be the host, to claim my identity? So in a radical sense, does not a 'newcomer' give me my wanted illusion of identity and reinforce my relations of possession and belonging?<sup>12</sup>

It is not that if I am a host, I assume this position on the basis of my identity, on the factuality that this place happened to be always-already 'my home' but the moment of this gesture, *assuming the position to welcome*, a fantasy, which perhaps renders this

<sup>10</sup> *Chez-soi* literally means 'at-oneself,' so it is a transfer of meaning of a state of emotional security and accordance of 'me' with 'myself' in a place in which 'I' find 'myself.'

<sup>11</sup> In his upcoming book Thomas Bedorf dedicates a whole chapter to this subject and shows why there can be no *chez-soi* and how it implies the (im)possibility of *having* a homeland (*Heimat*). See Thomas Bedorf, *Nicht-bei-sich-zu-Hause-sein (Not-being-at-home-at-yourself)*, Unpublished Manuscript.

<sup>12</sup> In a passage from Judith Butler's *Precarious Life*, one can detect a motif of thought, one of the most beautifully written passages on the relationality of 'you and I' revealing itself in the case of 'mourning,' which has a certain proximity to the mentioned role of the other in maintaining the identity of the self. Butler talks of 'the loss of the other' and what such a loss reveals about the identity of the 'self,' which perhaps could be read as a symmetry of the 'arrival' of the other, thus opening up another perspective about the illusion of the primacy of identity of the 'self.' Here is the passage: "It is not as if an 'I' exists independently over here and then simply loses a 'you' over there, especially if the attachment to 'you' is part of what composes who 'I' am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. Who 'am' I without you?" See Butler, 2004: 22.

place to be ‘my home’ and endows me with a necessary illusion of ‘identity,’ which I could not claim ‘before’ the other’s arrival.

To sum up the point, let us state then, in a metaphysical manner, the following: The condition of possibility for *possession* to exist is the being of the other. For how else could it make sense when I say that ‘this is mine,’ this is ‘my’ home, it is ‘my’ car, it is ‘my’ country, unless I can assume that there is the other, a ‘you’ which I can ‘exclude’ from the enjoyment of a ‘right’ over something, so that it can make any sense to call this or that ‘mine’?

If I were completely alone, that is if the others did not exist, any possessive pronoun like ‘mine,’ as well as the conception of ‘right’ would not make any sense, thus not even I could develop any coherent sense of my identity.

Through the completion of that discussion, we reach our first result, which will direct our query further: A transitivity between hospitality and hostility can ontologically only be comprehensible through an ‘original’ inconsistency of ‘identity,’ which can maintain its fictitious coherence only in its relation to the other. So, what one aspires to attain through the ‘difference’ of the other is only the confirmation of one’s own ‘identity.’ After having demonstrated the inconsistency of identity in an ontological manner, now we can state the following: If identity is an ‘original inconsistency,’ then it can be a first hint of what the relation to ‘other’ can serve, being a means of sustaining the coherency of a desired identity.

## **The crisis of (in)difference and search for liabilities in modernity**

I analyzed the tension between ‘equivalence and indifference,’ which I revealed as intrinsic to the modern principle of ‘equality’ in the previous essay (Akin, 2022). There, I argued that no matter how radical they might be, it is the capital in modernity which mediates every individual particularity and renders them equivalent. So, a fundamental promise of modern democracy, that is the ‘right to difference,’ which was given a particular emphasis in late modernity – since the ‘neo-liberal turn’ – is only possible owing to that mediation. For an ‘equal’ right to ‘difference’ can only be promised if there is an instance of mediation which can let you enjoy an unlimited room of subjectivity, but at the same time realize the equivalency of individual differences through dissolving any (social, ethnic, religious etc.) ‘difference’ in commodity exchange. Yet, an over-emphasis of the ‘right to difference’ in the late-modern “society of singularities” (Reckwitz, 2020) conditions a severe “pathology of the social” (Honneth, 1994) and challenges the principle of capital from within. For this over-emphasis promises a ‘dangerous’ illusion today based on the paradox of the late-capitalist logic: *as if* it were possible to attain a ‘unique’ difference by means of a ‘true,’ ‘impactful’ life-style, and the corresponding individual consumption choices, which could transcend the medi-

ation of capital and save one's individual differences from falling into 'indifference.' This comes into view as a 'pathology of the social' through a notorious competition for self-distinction.<sup>13</sup> *Vis-à-vis* the paradox of the promise that is 'transcending the mediation of capital again through the mediation of capital itself,' an aspiration to difference for attaining a 'unique' identity today can be regarded at best as a naive, and at worst as a brutal fantasy. In either case it is 'despair,' to refer to Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard, 1980), which characterizes the late-modern middle-class individual.

Having depicted the paradox in the promise of difference as 'despair' for the late-modern middle-class individual, I want to move on to the comprehension of the link of that despair in 'relation to others.'

### **Search for making an impact as a way of finding a sense in one's individual existence**

The absolute equivalency of differences in the unfoldment of modernity, that is the fact that no difference can really fulfill the aspiration to be 'genuine,' identity is at the same time that which gives dynamism to a constant search for binding 'causes' and liabilities. This is also what Heidegger refers to when he talks about a "search for new liabilities" in modern times in reference to Nietzsche's declaration of the 'death of God,' which results in modern 'nihilism.' In Heidegger's account, there is nothing which can fully replace the religious liability *vis-à-vis* God. Thus, what determines modernity is a search for a replacement, which cannot take an absolute form since with the 'death of God' the *absolute* of the metaphysics, that is god as the ultimate sufficient reason, has ceased to exist<sup>14</sup> (Heidegger, 1986: 185). In the absence of a fundamentally binding instance, everything takes on the fragmented form of an 'offer' that one can accept or reject, in which nothing has a 'transcending' value anymore.

<sup>13</sup> An important dimension of this 'crisis' is Alain Ehrenberg's analysis, which can today be called almost a 'classic' on that subject, in its elaboration of the "inadequacy" of the individual as "its tragedy of getting tired of the project of being an authentic self" (Ehrenberg, 2010: 11, 218).

<sup>14</sup> The famous French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has a remarkable dialectical point concerning the overcoming of 'the absolute of metaphysics' and its effects on 'superstitions' in our present. Meillassoux thinks that a mere critique of the metaphysical absolute, especially with Heidegger's de-absolutizing motif of thought, that is that the 'retreat from knowledge,' has discredited 'knowledge' and opened the field to 'faith' and superstitious beliefs. So, the remarkable point is that the overcoming of the 'absolute' as god, which has weakened religions and strengthened what he calls the 'religious' itself. That is why his appeal consists in thinking the absolute again, yet not the 'metaphysical' absolute, that is the absolute whose ultimate foundation is 'God' but a non-metaphysical 'absolute,' to overcome the impasse of the present times and the deliverance to superstitious beliefs. See Meillassoux, 2008.

It means that ‘indifference’ and ‘loss of sense’ have always been actual threats for the modern individual, since no matter how crucial and ‘authentic’ a deed, an interest, or an engagement pretend to be, nothing is really that binding for everything remains just an ‘offer’ that one can accept or reject; and one can always find ‘better offers.’ That is the reason why the appetite of the late-modern individual for ‘making an impact’ has been getting more and more insatiable. For if everything becomes ‘equivalent,’ just as different offers of life designs, all the ‘life designs’ then become just different means of the indifferent ends to ‘give sense to one’s individual existence.’ Yet, the aspiration to a genuine difference at the same time gets ever more assertive for giving ‘sense’ to one’s own life, as ‘sense’ means nothing more than enjoying one’s own ‘impact’ in the world to the late-modern individual. So ‘giving sense to one’s life’ being the life motto of the Western middle-class individual, one runs after possibilities of ‘making an impact’ so that a whole life constitutes itself latently around this quasi-religious ‘search.’

### **Middle class and the political: Happiness of the smallest superiority**

According to Andreas Reckwitz, it is the middle class which is mainly affected by the paradoxical maxim of “successful self-realization,” which directs the lives of countless late-modern individuals (Reckwitz, 2020: 210). He claims that almost all the features of life and the engagements of the newly educated urban middle classes are directed toward this desire. This is a crucial point which we need to complement for our stake here: *As persistent as this desire of self-realization can be, so volatile are the means to achieve it.* So, self-realization, giving sense to one’s own existence, creating an impact and making a difference – all these properties must be regarded as different expressions of the same aspiration, which can resort to any particular and temporary means if it serves this end.

This comes into clear view in the ‘tips of happiness experts’ of today: many of them suggest either going out and giving money to a homeless person, or leaving flowers on benches for unknown persons, helping the elderly, or being active in charity; ‘if one feels sad or depressed.’ The aspiration to ‘self-realization’ of the middle-class individual and their pursuit of individual ‘happiness’ are at such an extreme point that a collective act may easily dissolve itself in its developmental potentiality for the self and become just an indifferent means of self-realization. It means that the appetite for ‘making an impact’ and for giving to life and to one’s own existence ‘a sense’ can easily devour any seemingly ‘political’ activity.

It is striking that long before today’s ‘happiness experts’ explored ‘charity’ as a ‘cure for depression,’ Nietzsche was ridiculing the ‘cure.’ Calling it ‘the pleasure of giving a pleasure,’ Nietzsche attributes this tendency to a ‘moral’ suitable for ‘building a herd.’ Accordingly, the individual, seemingly devoting herself to ‘the other’ and their well-being,

in fact just tries to 'enjoy' her own existence desperately by giving sense to life through making an 'impact.' That is why Nietzsche baldly calls "charity" and "help" "the happiness of the smallest superiority" (Nietzsche, 2006: 100). The great wisdom behind this coining could give us an idea as to why 'charity activities' are so popular today.

If we think of the rush of 'campaigns' for donations, calls for help, hashtags and promptly adjusted profile pictures on social media; always 'up to date' according to incident – sometimes even just minutes after a 'traumatic' event – it is impossible not to have the impression that there was 'a herd of charity hunters' today, waiting 'over there' not to miss any possibility to engage again in some 'charity activity' through a trendy occasion, of course as visibly and impactfully as possible.

*Vis-à-vis* this reality of the Western middle class, it is so fast-paced that anything with a seemingly political character succumbs to charity, and after becoming a 'trendy topic' for a short period of time, exhausts itself quickly; of course, to be replaced with a new occasion, with another global 'trendy topic' to be engaged in.

If we consider this fact, it should not surprise us that a middle-class individual, who ran to railway stations in 2015 to welcome refugees in a manner of hospitality in the beginning, might not have shown up anymore after time passed. That may well be a reason why the excited mood of hospitality vanished, and the stage was opened to another brutal facet of the same 'identitarian desire,' that is the politics of hostility which has lasted longer.

## **The dialectic of occidental subjectivity and the desire of the occident**

It is symptomatic that in the case of the 2015 'welcome culture' both the politics of 'hostility' toward refugees and the call for 'hospitality' leaned on the same 'Europe' and its alleged 'identity': for the fraction of hostility, the 'true' Europe, its values and the European identity were under threat and Europe had to 'protect' itself from the barbaric invasion of the uncivilized. For the proponents of hospitality though, it was also necessary to defend the 'true' Europe, its moral values and universal claims of human rights, by welcoming others in a manner of hospitality. Those two sides constituted of course the different fractions of the same middle class. There is a common ground shared by both sides: for the hospitable fraction an implicit, for the hostile fraction an explicit conviction of superiority, attributed to 'European identity,' to its 'values' and 'lifestyle.' Regarding this 'conviction,' Badiou points out a dialectic between what he calls "occidental subjectivity" and "the desire of occident" (Badiou, 2016: 39).

Occidental subjectivity is based on a contradiction. According to Badiou, it is the subjectivity of the Western middle classes, who on the one hand are so content with themselves and their privileges but on the other fear losing their privileged position; whereas the desire of the occident is defined as the desire of getting a share from what

is propagated as the “occidental ease” (Badiou, 2016: 39; Akin, 2022). The desire of the occident brings about an immigratory flux, as it is the desire of quitting devastated zones in order to join the ‘prosperous’ occidental world, where it is supposed to be nice and everybody is swimming in modern ease (Badiou, 2016: 39).<sup>15</sup>

The attitude of ‘occidental subjectivity’ toward the ‘desire of the occident’ is determined according to Badiou by the question of welfare, such that “to say *defend our values!* today actually means to defend the life of the Western middle classes, that is the 14% possession of the global resources among middle-class people” (Badiou, 2016: 40). Thus, the volatility of the middle-class attitude depends on the question how secure one’s belonging is.

When Badiou says that the values which the European middle classes aspire to defend is a very specific way of ‘Western life,’ it is the basis of that welfare which leads the so-called ‘progressive’ side of the middle class to refer to a fictitious ‘real Europe’ and its humanitarian values. Whereas simultaneously it is the same basis which nourishes the ‘reactionary’ side by actualization of a fear, a threat of decline in the overall ‘life-quality.’

This dynamic and its clearly visible oscillations were at work in the 2015 ‘welcome culture.’

However, it is not the case of the Ukrainian refugee wave, although strikingly the inflation rate in Germany has never been this high since 1950s and a severe energy crisis is still ongoing and thus the insecure branch of the middle class, which has mostly been affected by price increases in food and other basic necessities, is getting poorer and experiencing a clear threat of social deprivation. So, whereas the threat of declining ‘welfare’ in 2015 was merely identitarian propaganda lacking a real basis, today it is a concrete reality, and yet there is no clear, at least no ‘visible’ shift in the mood from hospitality to hostility toward Ukrainian refugees.

How can we approach this ‘curiosity’? In the following, and final part, I will elaborate on that question in terms of the relation between state, ‘capital’ and different aspirations in the middle class affecting the current ‘attitude.’

## ***A capital difference between the attitude toward Ukrainian refugees and the refugees of 2015***

If we consider the fact that many companies have either directly included a promise of help to Ukraine in their products and services or turned the colors of their logos into the flag of Ukraine, a welcoming attitude toward Ukrainians refugees and the

<sup>15</sup> This ‘modern ease’ does not of course, as the ironic tone may already reveal, constitute the reality of the majority living in these Western countries.



support of the 'Ukrainian cause' have been merged into one thing. This merger has conditioned a necessity to choose the 'right front' from the very outset. I want to open this claim.

In contrast to the 2015 'welcome culture,' which we can regard within a classical 'humanitarian frame,' we cannot conceive the attitude toward the Ukrainian refugee crisis within the same frame.

A *capital* difference between the two 'refugee waves' would prevent us from doing so in terms of the role that *capital* plays in it. It is strange how we were able to observe a very quick capitalistic articulation of a welcoming attitude toward the 'Ukrainian refugees': within weeks, the support for Ukraine has become a well-integrated part of many commodities in circulation.<sup>16</sup>

Taken in itself, there is nothing 'new' in a certain tendency of the logic of capital in late-modern times that the economic always presents itself as absolutely extra-economic. So, it is overall not likely anymore to be buying a commodity without also buying its 'surplus promise,' be it a 'cause' that it supports, or another extra-economic promise that it entails. This is to say that today every commodity presents itself strictly *as if it were not a commodity*. So it either supports 'sustainability,' or the children of the world threatened by hunger, 'fair trade' for the support of the 'indigenous populations' somewhere in the world etc. Yet, no matter what a 'commodity' promises extra-economically, all the promises can take place within the frame of 'capital' only by affirming its principle, that is by subjugating the extra-economic 'cause' or 'support' to a necessity of a 'surplus value' for which a commodity is called a 'commodity.' In short, it means that there is no commodity in late-modern capitalism which reveals its condition of existence as 'commodity,' that is *its raison d'être as creating a surplus value and valuating capital*. This 'old solid principle of capital' remains intact in the late-modern 'innovative' capitalism with 'a human face.'

As I indicated in the previous paper, in the heated competition among absolutely 'equivalent' offers, commodities are obliged today to resort to the 'extra-economic' in order to boost the circulation of exchange and maintain the creation of surplus value.

As the popular German sociologist Gerhard Schulze determined quite early, with the extra-economic gaining primacy, a commodity does not appear anymore on the basis of fulfilling a function that it promises, but instead on the promise of a 'feeling' and a 'unique' experience (Schulze, 1994).

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<sup>16</sup> There is a list prepared by Boston College in which one can see the huge scope of support for the Ukrainian cause by all the prominent international companies all over the Western world. See Smith, 2022.

## **From rainbow flag to 1€ donations in each product: Symbols of belonging and latency protection**

So, in terms of ‘feelings,’ we must add that today a commodity also promises the feeling of belonging to a ‘front’ of a worldview. As a curious example of this, let us first take a look at several banks and supermarket chains in Germany which have started exhibiting rainbow flags on their doors in the recent years. It is quite remarkable, for in such cases the extra-economic is not even included in a specific product or service itself, but in a pure surplus promise which may boost the circulation of exchange in a latent and indirect way. If I buy products from a supermarket with such a ‘progressive message,’ e.g. a ‘rainbow flag’ on its door, it can give me a feeling of a bond, a belonging; and not only for the LGBTTT community, but also if I want to support a world in which LGBTTT people would feel welcome, because it is a world which promises a certain way of life which I would also like to have. So, when I buy something which supports a ‘cause’ with which I empathize, I would not only be buying something, but I would ‘feel’ good by doing it in ‘that’ specific supermarket, or taking my credit from ‘that’ specific bank which supports a world in which I would like to live. So, a supermarket with a rainbow flag on its door from which I buy ‘organic food’ does not only sell me a product but also a fantasy of belonging.

Also, the imagined clientele could reinforce the belonging, for through my choice of supermarket or bank I could assume that others who go there support the same ‘cause,’ and thus, share similar ‘worldviews’; people that I want to be around and be like.

This is to say: if an extra-economic ‘cause’ is integrated into a commodity, the joy of belonging and taking part in the support of that cause can help disguise the ‘commodity base’ of the whole relation quite effectively. Here I want to refer shortly to Niklas Luhmann and his term “latency protection.” It is used as a functional term in Luhmann’s system theory and it designates a means of protection of a structure in which the view of a certain content is blocked, if not directly prohibited from communication (Luhmann, 1991: 456–457). Take this example: If you are a salesperson selling clothes, you focus on how great the jacket fits the customer and leave the fact of the bonus you receive from each sale unmentioned. So, in that regard, my supermarket or my bank with a ‘rainbow flag’ could shift my focus to my ‘feeling of belonging’ and keep me from focusing on the conditions of my relation with them.

So, let me turn back to the articulation of capital with the ‘Ukrainian cause’ and give just one example for a better comprehension of how ‘support for Ukraine’ could fulfill a similar function. Flight companies such as Lufthansa profited from the euphoria of ‘Support Ukraine’ at the beginning of the Ukrainian refugee crisis in a remarkable way. Shortly after the beginning of the crisis, on every Lufthansa flight you

could hear the announcement that from each purchase 1€ goes to 'a project supporting Ukraine.' This 'engagement' might have played a role as it successfully helped disguise the fact that food and beverages which Lufthansa used to serve free of charge were now being charged to the customers.

### **State reluctance or State willingness - which matters**

In terms of 'individual mood,' there are significant differences between the overall conjuncture of the 2015 'welcome culture' and the 2022/2023 Ukrainian refugee crisis. The 'welcome culture' of 2015 did not emerge at the time of a 'new' division within the Western society, in which a hostile attitude or an attitude of hospitality could be linked with being either for the 'free democratic world' or the 'authoritarian enemies of the free world.' This was a very local engagement, somewhat Christian, even in its secular facets, a very German-Protestant excitement which was lacking a global echo, thus the 'effect' of the excitement could not last long in the beginning. The newcomers were from the Middle-Eastern context and their 'cultural difference' was attested rather quickly, either in an empathetic 'humanitarian' way by asking them to 'integrate' as quickly as possible, or by a typical conservative hostile fear of 'invasion by the barbaric cultures,' pushing them to leave the country. Yet, in either case, the 'welcome culture' remained within the frame of support for or reaction to 'humanitarian concern.'

The present conjuncture, in which Russian aggression against Ukraine and the following flux of refugees as the aftermath have taken place, can be seen in a dialectical relation to the 2015 refugee crisis. For the seeds of the 'fronts' of polarized worldviews within the Western world were sown in the 2015 refugee crisis. However, the fronts were not that 'global' yet and the polarization *within the Western middle class* did not exist in such intensity. This is an important conjunctural difference. For we find ourselves today in a context in which neither a hostile attitude nor a manner of hospitality can be conceived easily, without the huge baggage of articulations that a certain 'attitude' might bring about.

The result of the differing conjunctures reaches its peak in the attitude of the German state. The state had no interest in the 'refugee wave' of 2015; everything remained within individual initiatives of 'charity,' there was a clear lack of any real motivation in state institutions to 'accept' refugees and tackle the situation. So, bargaining with Tayyip Erdoğan ensued and soon there were no big efforts to counter the joy of 'hostility' which organized politics shortly after the euphoria of 'welcome culture' hospitality had died down. Yet since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis German state institutions have been actively mobilized.

## Conclusion

The Ukrainian refugee crisis is happening at a time of dangerous divisions among major world powers, which comes into view in the sharp division *within* the ‘Western world’ as well, which is quite new. The old Cold-war division of the ‘democratic’ world *here* and ‘totalitarian’ *over there* does not work anymore, for this ‘ideological’ division seems to have shifted from the ‘outside’ of the Western world to ‘within’ the Western world. In that regard, the current crisis cannot be conceived as a local crisis of Europe, but the whole ‘Western world,’ and its ‘values’ seem to be at stake. This alone brings about a very different mood than that of 2015 and a different dynamic for the middle class.

In terms of ‘belonging,’ one either has to prove loyalty to the principle of capital ‘with a humane face,’ which seems to propagate a mood of war, or one sides with the ‘capital with a brutal face.’ Today it seems that those two fronts are imposing themselves.

What we see this time, in contrast to 2015, is a government sponsorship by all major Western powers, by economic, political and extra-economic symbolic means, as the division is also within and there is fear that it may ‘weaken’ the Western world *vis-à-vis* the competitors. In this regard, from the very outset the attitude toward the Ukrainian refugee crisis could not be conceived solely on the hitherto mildly indifferent European ‘humanitarian concern,’ as it has always been operating in similar humanitarian crises and mobilizing the middle class for a short period of time, before it was forgotten in the daily journalist agenda.

Today, the Ukrainian crisis catalyzes the competition within the middle class itself. That is the reason why we are witnessing such a clash. So, the call for solidarity merging with a necessity for everyone who wishes to continue doing ‘business’ in the Western world to prove that their priorities too lie with the priorities of the major economic and political powers of the ‘Western democratic world.’ Yet this is the very point of disorientation, for within the given conjuncture the seemingly other front, which ‘opposes’ the first one, consists of nothing else than the same Western middle-class structure opposing the first front in the name of the same ‘interests’ of the Western world. The only ‘difference’ is the dose of ‘nationalism’ and of course the dose of ‘conspiracy theories.’

The only way out to break with this ‘disorientation’ is organizing and solidarizing on a universal basis with all the people who left their birth places with hope of finding a better life, regardless of ethnicity, religion and ‘temporary conjunctures’ and their ‘volatile excitements.’ What we need for that to happen is to reinvent politics of equality on a global scale, which will be able to open an affirmative path for a world in which there will be no ‘Putins,’ ‘Trumps’ or ‘Bidens.’

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## Do kapitala je – srednja klasa između kulture dobrodošlice i ukrajinske izbjegličke krize

### *Sažetak*

Zdvojni zbog svoje nezasitne želje za „samoostvarenjem”, uživanja u malim radostima života i žestoke volje za očuvanjem svoje dobrobiti, kako ne bi kliznuli nizbrdo i pridružili se 50 posto svjetske populacije koji ne posjeduju ništa, pojedinci koji pripadaju srednjoj klasi danas čini se moraju birati između dva svjetonazora, pri čemu odnos prema izbjeglicama predstavlja novo „bojište”. Stoga, s priljevom ukrajinskih izbjeglica nakon ruske agresije na Ukrajinu jedno od najtežih pitanja u Njemačkoj bilo je hoće li se ponoviti iskustvo tzv. „kulture dobrodošlice” iz 2015. godine, odnosno oštar zaokret od gostoprimstva do neprijateljstva. Statistike pokazuju da to zasad nije slučaj. Ovaj rad postavlja pitanje što je to što čini razliku između iskustva ukrajinskog vala izbjeglica u odnosu na kulturu dobrodošlice iz 2015. godine. Tragajući za uzrocima gostoprimstva i zatim zaokreta prema neprijateljstvu 2015. godine u dinamici srednje klase, rad pokušava analizirati i razumjeti različite stavove pripadnika srednje klase prema obje izbjegličke krize.

**ključne riječi:** kapital, dobrotvorni rad, dezorijentacija svijeta, neprijateljstvo, gostoprimstvo, srednja klasa, samoostvarenje, kultura dobrodošlice, ukrajinska izbjeglička kriza.