
Peer-Reviewed Article

Od subkulturních uskupení až k aktérům hybridní války: Současné trendy východoevropských konfliktů

From Subcultural Groupings to Actors of Hybrid Warfare: Current Trends in Conflicts in Eastern Europe

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Abstrakt: Článek se zabývá proměnou několika vybraných subkulturních uskupení ve skutečné, případně potenciální aktéry hybridní války. Je založen na trendech a událostech vztahujících se k ukrajinské krizi a k aktuální projekci sil Ruské federace na území střední a východní Evropy, stejně tak jako na reakcích vlád a společností, které jsou tímto druhem války a politiky ohrožené. Koncepční rámec tohoto článku je založen na výzkumu subkultur a na zkoumání vojenských strategií. Autor analyzuje roli skupin vojenské historie, motorkářů, fotbalových hooligans a dalších mládežnických subkultur. Analýza rizik slouží k posouzení aktuálního dopadu a možného budoucího rozvoje výzkumu fenoménu.

Abstract: This article deals with transformation of several categories of subcultural groupings to real or potential actors of hybrid warfare. It is based on trends and events related to the Ukrainian crisis and to the new Russian power projection in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as on the reaction of governments and societies which are threatened by this way of warfare and politics. Research on subcultures and research on strategy and conflict form the conceptual framework of the article. The author analyses the role of military re-enactment groups, bikers, football hooligans and other youth subcultural groups. The risk analysis serves for an assessment of the current impact and a possible future development of the researched phenomenon.

Klíčová slova: Hybridní válka; subkultury; paramilitární skupiny; výzkum konfliktu; vojenské rekonstrukce; motorkářské gangy; fotbaloví hooligans, autonomní nacionalisté, střední a východní Evropa; ukrajinská krize.

Keywords: Hybrid War; Subcultures; Paramilitary Groups; Conflict Research; Military Re-Enactment; Motorcycle Gangs; Football Hooligans, Autonomous Nationalists, Central And Eastern Europe; Ukrainian Crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary forms of military conflicts in Eastern Europe are connected with a broad spectrum of actors who are involved in a direct military fight or in a broader scope of subversive activities. Recently we can observe a process of transformation of former subcultural groupings to actors of hybrid warfare. It has an impact on the assessment of risks and threats which accompany the growth of these groupings. The aim of this article is to identify the most important actors of current and possible future conflicts with subcultural roots in this area, to describe their turn to the "new level" of activities, and to assess their general impact on the security environment.

1. ANALYTICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The current situation in Central and European countries is characterized by the growing importance of activists with the potential to be engaged in a modern form of hybrid warfare¹. The preparedness for action - including propagandist activities, threatening, militant demonstrations, vigilantism or military combat, etc. - can be an important advantage for tactics and strategy in such a kind of warfare, as the experience from the conflict in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as well as the contemporary rise of paramilitary groupings in East Central Europe show.²

Recruitment of activists into military and paramilitary activities as well as for other actors of hybrid warfare (rioters in service of conflict parties, logistics structures with links to organized crime etc.) is carried out in various milieus. One of the milieus consists of specific subcultural scenes. The aim of this article is to analyse the process of transferring the original subcultural identity to a form of warriors or supporters of hybrid warfare.

The analytical framework requires a combination of concepts of hybrid warfare and concepts of subcultures. One of the possible concepts of hybrid warfare (elaborated by the prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies) includes three fundamental elements:

- "- the use of conventional and unconventional forces in combination with information operations to intimidate, coerce and foment ethnic conflict;*
- the use of conventional and unconventional forces to strike rapidly in combination with cyber attacks;*
- the establishment of new political structures, economic relationships and social structures to consolidate gains and prevent reverses".³*

¹ GONCHAR, M. - CHUBYK, A. - ISCHUK, O. Hybrid war in Eastern Europe. Non-military Dimension. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*. 2014 (3-4), pp. 27-36. ISSN: 1337-5482.

² LIEDERECKE, A., The rise of paramilitary groups in Central and Eastern Europe [on-line], 2016, New Eastern Europe Online Edition, 2016-01-18 [cit. 2016-06-12], ISSN 2084-400X, available at <http://neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1862-the-rise-of-paramilitary-groups-in-central-and-eastern-europe>

³ THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, *The Military Balance 2015*. London: Routledge, 2015, ISBN: 978-1-85743-766-9, p. 18.

The concept of subculture is based on a specific shared style and identity (by that part of society that is different from the hegemonic part of a societal culture⁴). Youth subcultures represent a specific type of subcultures, with the interconnection with the young generation being their typical characteristic. Subcultures serve as a social environment for peers⁵ (including political believes in many cases). Collectiveness, activism and shared self-confidence are important challenges from the point of view of the conflict parties of the hybrid warfare on the one hand. On the other hand, willingness, discipline and subordination are necessary conditions for a successful transfer of subcultural actors to the actors of hybrid warfare.

In this article several cases of such transformation are identified in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. The complexity of this issue should be demonstrated with the help of these cases. From the methodological point of view, the actor analysis, descriptive method and risk and threat analyses are used in this article. The identification of the most important subcultural groupings being transferred into "hybrid warriors" is based on the author's expert assumption.

2. MILITARY RE-ENACTMENT GROUPS

The interest in military history is typical of the military re-enactment groups. It is characterized by collecting historical uniforms, weapons (or their imitations), equipment, etc. and usually also by public performances (mostly "playing" historical battles). These groups exist in many countries (mostly in Europe, the USA and Western Commonwealth countries). They are focused on various historical periods - from ancient times to the 21st century. In many countries some of them are connected with specific historical periods important for the national history (for example, the Civil War groups in the USA). The re-enactment scene can be considered as a subculture,⁶ however, this is not a youth subculture. Men and women of all age categories are active within this scene.

In Russia the boom of military re-enactment started in the 1990s (first groups were established in 1980s) and this phenomenon is continuing in the first and second decades of the 21st century. Living history activities, public shows and other activities are realized.⁷ Its growth is partially connected with the return of Russian imperial ambitions under Putin's regime. Tsarist Russian army, the Red Army from the Second World War and many other eras of Russian military history were and are represented in the military re-enactment subculture in Russia and in the countries with strong Russian minority (Ukraine, Belarus, etc.). A lot of members of these nationalist military re-enactment groupings entered the separatist units after the start of the war in Eastern Ukraine.⁸

⁴ HEBDIGE, D., *Subculture. The Meaning of the Style*. London: Routledge, 1979, ISBN: 0-415-03949-5.

⁵ SMOLÍK, J. - PAPIEŽOVÁ-VEJVODOVÁ, P., Die faszinierende Welt der Jugendsubkulturen. Jugendsubkulturen in der Tschechischen Republik. *Kriminalistik*, 2014 (6), pp. 389-395. ISSN: 0023-4699.

⁶ MAREŠ, M. *Pravicový extremismus a radikalismus v České republice*. Brno: Barrister & Principal - Centrum strategických studií, 2003. ISBN: 80-86598-45-4.

⁷ CHABAROV, B., *Napravenia razvitiya voenno-istoricheskoy rekonstrukcii*. Rekonstruktor, 2006 (7), pp. 2-5. Without ISSN.

⁸ MEDVEDEV, S. *Uboinoe fentezi: ak istoricheskaya rekonstruktsiya stala zhanrom rossiiskoi politiki* [online], Argument 2014-07-13 [cit. 2016-06-15], available at <http://argumentua.com/stati/uboinoe-fentezi-kak-istoricheskaya-rekonstruktsiya-stala-zhanrom-rossiiskoi-politiki>

Igor Girkin - Strelkov was also active in one of these military re-enactment groups. He is a Russian veteran from the Transnistrian, Bosnian and Chechen wars and later leader of the separatist units in Crimea and Novorossia in 2014. His photos in uniforms of a tsarist officer and Red Army soldier and as a medieval fighter were published after he had become famous due to his engagement in the Donbass conflict. He was active in the "Moscow Dragoon Regiment" military re-enactment group. He participated among others in the events such as "War of 1916", "The memorial of the Civil War", or "The Valor and Death of the Russian Guard"⁹. Until 2012 he was also an officer of the Russian intelligence service FSB and since 2015 he has been a leader of the political movement "Novorossia". In June 2016 he expressed criticism against the Russian president Vladimir Putin.¹⁰ Girkin – Strelkov's career can be also observed as following the trajectory warrior - intelligence officer - military re-enactor - military leader - political activist.

On the Ukrainian side the role of such groupings was also important - and not only as a "recruitment pool". As Alexander Nieuwenhuis wrote in September 2014: "A military re-enactment group is playing a strangely important role for the Ukrainian army fighting in the east of the country. Led by a man named Maksym, the group, which used to meticulously recreate scenes from World War II and other historic conflicts, has rare expert knowledge of the decrepit Soviet equipment used by Ukrainian troops on the frontlines."¹¹

Military re-enactment groups are active also in East Central Europe. A specific role is played by some groups which are focused on the history of the Red Army or the military, paramilitary and police forces of former communist states. The ideological profile of some (not all!) of these groups reflects their interest in history. For example, in the Czech Republic one group often participates in memorials organized by the pro-Russian and communist patriotic spectrum¹², including the memorial act visited by members of the biker club Night Wolves (see below) in Brno in May 2016¹³. The existence of such groups could be a reason for their monitoring as potential actors of hybrid warfare.

⁹ POLIKARPOV, M., *Oborona Donbassa*. Igor Stelkov - uzhas banderovskoi chunty. Moskva: Knizhnyy Mir, ISBN: 978-5-8041-0715-5.

¹⁰ WALKER, S., Russia's 'valiant hero' in Ukraine turns his fire on Vladimir Putin [online], The Guardian, 2016-06-05 [cit. 2016-06-16], available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/05/russias-valiant-hero-in-ukraine-turns-his-fire-on-vladimir-putin>

¹¹ NIEUWENHUIS, A., Military Reenactment Group is Fixing the Ukrainian Army's Decrepit Soviet Equipment[online], VICE news, 2016-09-14 [cit 2016-06-16], available at <https://news.vice.com/article/a-military-reenactment-group-is-fixing-the-ukrainian-armys-decrepit-soviet-equipment>

¹² MARES, M. Observation, Brno Central Cemetry 2015-5-04 (report in author's archive).

¹³ MOTOKLUB NOCNYE VOLKI, V cseshskom Brno okolo 100 „notschnych volkov“ vstretili chlebom i soliu [online], 2016-05-06 [cit. 2016-06-16], available at https://vk.com/video-3519447_456239079?list=51dc23e1b8a8f540e3

2.1 Bikers

Bikers, especially members of “outlaw” motorcycle gangs, can be labelled as a specific subculture. Motorcycle gangs are hierarchically organized and they have a strong internal discipline.¹⁴ The roots of this specific subculture are in the United States in the post-WW2 period. The most important US gangs are called the “Big Four” - it consists of the clubs Hells Angels, Outlaws, Bandidos and Pagans. These clubs and their supporters are in a permanent “state of war”, mostly due to their involvement in organized crime structures. These wars expanded also overseas (Europe, Australia), where branches of the above mentioned clubs were established.¹⁵ Local gangs and scenes were created in various parts of the world.

Since the 1990s biker clubs and gangs have been established also in the Soviet Union, later in Russia. The club Night Wolves (Nochnye Volki) can be assessed as a specific actor of contemporary hybrid war and Russian imperial power projection. It was founded in 1989 as the first biker club in the Soviet Union. The first years of its existence were accompanied with hooligan incidents and crime. However, during the Putin’s era they have become supporters of the government politics, including the cooperation with a part of the Orthodox Church. Leader of the gang - Aleksandr Zaldostanov - is a friend of president Putin. Putin took part in rallies of the Night Wolves in the past. The Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov is also a member of the club. Branches of the gang exist in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Germany; they also have friendly relationship with clubs in Slovakia and Czech Republic (Red Eyed Crüe). The Night Wolves have around five thousand members.¹⁶ They have their own “protection forces” and links to private security agency Wolf Holding (Holding Volf), led by Gennady A. Nikunov.¹⁷

Transformation into hybrid warfare actors was typical of the Night Wolves’ engagement during the Crimea Crisis. The gang possesses a camp on the peninsula near Sevastopol. In January 2014, the Night Wolves organized a home guard from this place to protect Crimean separatist institutions against the so called “Euromaidan”.¹⁸ Later several members of this club joined the separatist forces in Donbass. The Night Wolves were engaged also in logistics and law and order activities (against pro-Ukrainian activists) in the regions of Donbass and Crimea.¹⁹

¹⁴ SHIELDS, D. The Infamous ‘One Percenters’: A Review of the Criminality, Subculture, and Structure of Modern Biker Gangs [online], Justice Policy Journal; 2012, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 1-33 [cit. 2016-06-17], ISSN 1530-3012, available at http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/The_Infamous.pdf

¹⁵ QUINN, J. F. - FORSYTH, C., The Tools, Tactics and Mentality of Outlaw Bikers War, American Journal Of Criminal Justice, Vol. 36, Issue 3, pp. 216-230. ISSN: 1066-2316

¹⁶ WRIGHT, W. The Rise of Russia’s Night Wolves [online], Russia! 2015-07-14, [cit. 2016-06-18], available at <http://readrussia.com/2015/07/14/the-rise-of-russias-night-wolves/>

¹⁷ MUCHA, W., Night Wolves, Putin’s Death Squad [online], New Eastern Europe 2015-04-24 [cit. 2016-06-18], ISSN 2084-400X, available at <http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1567-night-wolves-putin-s-death-squad>

¹⁸ PITALEV, I., Nochnye Volki vziali pod ochranu administrativu Sevastopola [online], Lenta 2014-01-27 [cit. 2016-06-18, available at <https://lenta.ru/news/2014/01/27/wolfs/>

¹⁹ SOUKUP, O., Noční vlci vyjí s Putinem. Na Krymu rozháněli Ukrajince [online], 2015-04-23, [cit. 2016-06-18] available at <http://zpravy.aktualne.cz/zahranici/nocni-vlk/r~cf2bff3ee99711e4994f002590604f2e/>

Due to these activities, the leader of the Night Wolves was blacklisted on the sanction list of the United States of America. The U. S. department of the treasury stated: *“Zaldostanov chairs the overall Night Wolves organization, and some of his responsibilities include the punishing of chapter groups and members for disloyalty to the Night Wolves organization. During the late-March storming of the Ukrainian Naval Forces Headquarters in Sevastopol, he coordinated the confiscation of Ukrainian weapons with the Russian forces. Zaldostanov is being designated for being a leader of a group, the Night Wolves, that is engaging in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine.”*²⁰

The new role for the Night Wolves came in spring 2015. They announced the “Paths of Glory Rally” to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Second World War. They had a plan to travel across Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria and to arrive in Berlin on the 9th May. However, members of the gang were denied entry to Poland and later Lithuania, despite protests from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²¹ Only a limited number of the Night Wolves were able to enter the EU territory. This situation repeated in 2016. At that time, some Night Wolves from Russia and Kazakhstan received bikes from members of the supporter clubs from Slovakia and Czech Republic. During their visit to Prague, rallies of supporters (a. o. from the Russian community) and protests of anti-Putin and Ukrainian activists accompanied this event.²²

“Paths” of Night Wolves are perceived by the pro-Western forces in East Central Europe as an expression of the Russian power projection. In 2015 framing as a reaction to the previous transport of US military convoys was typical. Supporters and opponents of contemporary Russian politics were mobilized for public demonstrations during the visits of the Night Wolves in the EU countries.²³ The risk of clashes with local branches of the US gangs (mostly Hells Angels) was eliminated up to now.²⁴ However, the engagement of the Night Wolves and their supporters for the purpose of hybrid warfare can be assessed as a threat for the future (in the case of growing tensions between Russia and the West).

²⁰ U. S. Department of Treasury, Treasury Targets Additional Ukrainian Separatists and Russian Individuals and Entities [online], 2014-12-19 [cit. 2014-06-18], available at <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl9729.aspx>

²¹ GESSEN, M., Putin and Night Wolves vs. Poland [online], New York Times, 2016-05-1 [cit. 2016-06-18], available at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/putin-and-the-night-wolves-vs-poland.html?_r=0

²² VLACH, T., Vlčí jízda Evropu, Týden, 2016-05-09, pp. 72-73.

²³ REDAKCE ONLINE, Je průjezd ruských motorkářů Noční vlci bezpečnostním rizikem? [online], Security magazín, 2015-04-24 [cit. 2016-06-18], available at <http://www.securitymagazin.cz/zpravy/hysterie-kolem-prujezdu-ruskych-motorkaru-nocni-vlci-evropou-vrcholi-1404044258.html>

²⁴ POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, information for the author, 2016-04-2.

2.2 Football hooligans

Football (or soccer) hooligans are a subcultural phenomenon with historical roots in England in the 1960s-1970s. Since 1980s the so called "British disease" has expanded to many countries. It was and is strong in Eastern Europe. Despite the fact that it is not correct to label the whole hooligan subculture as extremist,²⁵ many hooligans are under the influence of the right-wing extremist scene, among others in Central and Eastern Europe. They protect nationalist values at the club level as well as at the national level. The hooligan subculture in several Central and Eastern European countries grew into a dangerous violent threat.²⁶

Hooligans were active during the "Euromaidan riots" in Kiev at the turn of 2013-2014. At that time, they were active in fights against militant supporters (so called "titushky") of the pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich. They created self-defence units.²⁷ However, some of the hooligan gangs were more and more aggressive against the moderate part of demonstrators that opposed the extreme right streams of the Maidan. They were directly supported by foreign far right hooligans who travelled to Ukraine, a. o. from Czech Republic.²⁸

On the other side of the starting conflict, in Eastern Ukraine the pro-Russian local hooligans were engaged in separatist violence against Maidan supporters. In The Daily Beast from 20th March, 2014 a 26 year old supporter of the football team Shakhtar Donetsk Sasha was quoted: "One day Shakhtar will play (St. Petersburg's) Zenit in the Russian league."²⁹ Members of the hooligan gangs joined massively the military and paramilitary units on both sides, including foreign fighters interconnected with the hooligan scene in their home countries.

Photos of several such domestic or foreign fighters in the war zone were presented on the Ultras Tifo website. On the Ukrainian side there are documented: supporters of the FC Vorskla Poltava, Vorskla Ultras (they posed also with a flag of the far right Battalion Azov Regiment), FC Metalist Kharkiv, FC Krystal Kherson, Dynamo Kyiv, FC Karpaty Lviv, FC Kryvbas Kryvyi Rih, FC Obolon Kyiv, Tavria Simferopol, Volyn Lutsk, FC Sumy, Metalurg Zaporizhzhya, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk, Chornomorets Odesa, and Dynamo Zagreb (thanks to the friendship between Ukrainian and Croatian hooligans and fighters). On the separatist side there are documented: supporters of Spartak Moskva, CSKA Moskva and Serbian fans associated with FK Rad Beograd, Partizan Beograd (gang Grobari), Crvena Zvezda Beograd (gang Crazy North) and Vojvodina

²⁵ SMOLÍK, J., Football hooliganism from the standpoint of extremism [online], Central European Political Science Review, Vol. 4, No. 4 [cit. 2016-06-18], ISSN 1212-7817, available at <http://www.cepsr.com/clanek.php?ID=212>

²⁶ MAREŠ, M. - SMOLÍK, J. - SUCHÁNEK, M., Fotbaloví chuligáni. Evropská dimenze subkultury. Brno: Centrum strategických studií - Barrister & Principal, 2004, ISBN: 80-903333-0-3, pp. 95-128.

²⁷ SINDELAR, D., Who Are Ukraine's 'Ultras'? [online] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2014-01-27 [cit. 2016-06-19], available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-protests-sports-fans-euromaidan/25244357.html>

²⁸ MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, Report on extremism in the territory of the Czech Republic in the year 2014 [online], Prague, MVČR, 2015, available at <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/file/report-on-extremism-2015-pdf.aspx>

²⁹ DETTMER, J., Soccer Hooligans prep Ukraine for Putin [online], The Daily Beast 2014-03-20 [cit. 2016-06-19], available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/03/20/soccer-hooligans-prep-ukraine-for-putin.html>

(gang Firma).³⁰

Ukrainian hooligans, including hooligans from Eastern Ukraine, were engaged predominantly on the nationalist Ukrainian side. They ended inter-club hostilities and organized a common fight against the pro-separatist forces.³¹ Ukrainian hooligans played probably an important role also in the incident in Odessa on 2nd May 2014. Pro-separatist forces - consisting of fighters from Russia, Ukraine and allegedly diversion groups from Transnistria - occupied the Trade Union House in the city.³² The following development was described in a special report of the Council of Europe:

"On 2 May 2014, a demonstration for national unity was planned before the football match was to take place between FC Chornomorets Odessa and FC Metalist Kharkiv. A small contingent of Right Sector activists also participated in this demonstration, but, reportedly, the majority of demonstrators were ordinary citizens. This demonstration, estimated at 1500 persons, was met by a group of around 300 pro-Russia supporters who were armed with batons and shields. Reportedly, the police did not intervene when this group attacked the pro-unity demonstrators. The clashes escalated and shots were fired, reportedly killing at least five pro-unity supporters. Following the attack on the pro-unity demonstration, pro-unity supporters moved to Kulikovo Field with the intention of clearing the pro-Russia camp that had been set up there. Overwhelmed by the pro-unity supporters, the pro-Russia supporters fled into the Trade Union Building that is situated on Kulikovo Field. The exact sequence of events is unclear but it is clear that both sides were pelting each other with stones and Molotov cocktails. In the course of these clashes a fire broke out on the second floor of the Trade Union House that spread rapidly to the third floor. Fire brigades reportedly arrived very late and could not reach the fire due to the large number of people present outside. At the end of the day, at least 37 persons had died as a result of the fire, most of them from asphyxiation / carbon monoxide poisoning and several who leaped to their death to escape the fire".³³

The number of victims is usually estimated at 48. However, the incident has not been seriously officially explained up to now. The Czech diplomat Vladimír Bartuška commented the event in Odessa as an effective way how to stop Russian hybrid warfare. Due to this statement he was strongly criticized by political opponents.³⁴

³⁰ ULTRAS TIFO, Football supporters in the Ukraine war zone [online], 2015-01-25 [cit. 2016-06-19], available at <http://www.ultras-tifo.net/news/3217-football-supporters-in-the-ukrainerussia-war-zone.html>

³¹ VOLKAVA, E. – BARTKOWSKI, M., The Ukrainian soccer ultras: allies of the resistance [online], Open Democracy, 2014-06-24 [cit. 2016-06-20], available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/civilresistance/elena-volkava-maciej-bartkowski/ukrainian-soccer-ultras-allies-of-resistance>

³² 112UA, Ricnicia „2 travnia“ v Odesi: Pro tragediu v cifrách, 111UA, 2016-05-02 cit. 2016-06-21], available at <http://ua.112.ua/statji/richnytsia-2-travnia-v-odesi-pro-trahediiu-v-tsyfrakh-308269.html>

³³ Committee On The Honouring Of Obligations And Commitments By Member States Of The Council Of Europe (Monitoring Committee), Honouring of obligations and commitments by Ukraine, Information note by the co-rapporteurs on their fact-finding visit to Kyiv and Odessa (7 to 11 July 2014). Co-rapporteurs: Ms Mailis Reps (Estonia, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe), and Ms Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden, Group of the European People's Party) [online], Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe, 2016-08-25 [cit. 2016-06-21], available at <http://assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2014/amondoc16-2014.pdf>

³⁴ ŠVAMBERK, A. Upalování lidí v Oděse jsem nikdy nehájil, brání se diplomat Bartuška [online], Novinky, 2015-05-27 [cit. 2016-06-21], available at: <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/368127-upalovani-lidi-v-odese-jsem-nikdy-nehajil-brani-se-diplomat-bartuska.html>

Ukrainian hooligans with right-wing extremist background are still attacking the pro-separatist and leftist political activists.³⁵

On the other hand, Russian hooligans massively used violence during Euro 2016 in France. They were accused that they had links to Putin's regime. According to some sources they serve as a new instrument of hybrid warfare.³⁶ In fact, some Russian politicians expressed openly their sympathies for violence of "their boys".³⁷ However, the real background of the Russian violence during Euro 2016 is unclear and it is important to find more evidence in the future development to label these hooligan gangs as new actors of hybrid warfare.

2.3 Other subcultures and hybrid warfare

Former members of various subcultures can be found on Ukrainian battlefields and inside possible actors and counter-actors of hybrid warfare. Mostly they are connected with the right-wing extremist part of such subcultures. Many ex-skinheads joined nationalist groupings of the separatist and Ukrainian units, however, usually there is a long intermezzo in non-subcultural organizations between their youngster skinhead times and current battle engagement (an example can be found in former Russian neo-Nazi skinheads in Ukrainian units).³⁸

The Autonomous Nationalists represent a more recent phenomenon. They were important mostly on the Ukrainian side of the counter-separatist struggle during the war. The idea of autonomous nationalism came to Ukraine in the late 2000s and it won a significant position among the Ukrainian far right spectrum. During the war many of them fought in Ukrainian units (a. o. the Autonomous Nationalists from Zaporozhye or from Tiraspol). Currently they support far right military units, such as Regiment Azov, Karpatska Sich or Schidny Korpus.³⁹

The national socialist black metal plays a specific role. On the separatist side Team Vikernes was established in August 2014 from foreign volunteers (mostly of French and Brazil origin),⁴⁰ named after the Norwegian neo-Nazi pagan and black metal musician and political activist Varg Vikernes.⁴¹ On the Ukrainian side the local NSBM bands support nationalist military battalions, among others the most famous Ukrainian NSBM

³⁵ NEWS FRONT, Ukrainian 'heroes' attacked pensioners....old woman strikes back. Live Leak, 2016-03-17 [cit. 2016-06-21], available at http://edge.liveleak.com/80281E/u/u/II2/hd_video_icon.jpg

³⁶ BOFFEY, D., Whitehall fears Russian football hooligans had Kremlin links [online], The Guardian, 2016-06-18 cit. 2016-06-21], available at <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/jun/18/whitehall-suspects-kremlin-links-to-russian-euro-2016-hooligans-vladimir-putin>

³⁷ ASLAN, E. – SVOBODA, K., Ruští chuligáni na Euro: hybridní válka to není, jen další příběh o zlém Západu, Aktualne.cz, 2016-06-20 [cit. 2016-06-21], available at <http://nazory.aktualne.cz/komentare/rusti-chuligani-na-euro-hybridni-valka-to-neni-jen-dalsi-pri/r~dae4007036bb11e69d46002590604f2e/>

³⁸ MAREŠ, M. – LARYŠ, M. The Transnational Relations of the Contemporary Russian Extreme Right. *Europe -Asia Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 7, 2015, 1056-1078. ISSN 0966-8136. doi:10.1080/09668136.2015.1067673.

³⁹ AVTONOMNYE NACIONALISTI TERNOPOLA, Volja Ukraini Jako Smert [online], Vkontakte, 2016-05-22 [cit. 2016-06-22], available at http://vk.com/ternopil_avtonom

⁴⁰ TEAM VIKERNRES, About the Company [online], Vkontakte, 2015-05-07 [cit. 2016-06-22], available at <http://vk.com/public93628709>

⁴¹ SMOLÍK, J., *Subkultury mládeže. Uvedení do problematiky*. Praha: Grada, 2010, ISBN: 978-80-247-2907-7.

bands Sekira Peruna and Nokturnal Mortum.⁴² However, parts of the black metal scene from Russia and Ukraine cooperate. In April 2016 members of the NSBM bands Kroda from Ukraine and M8L8TH from Russia demonstrated East European Black metal brotherhood during a common event.⁴³

3. COMPARATIVE RISK ANALYSIS

If we identify the risks and threats connected with the presented categories of subcultures transformed into military actors, we can focus 1) on their scope of involvement in hybrid warfare and the potential of this involvement, 2) on their preparedness for military activities and other forms of involvement in hybrid warfare, and 3) on the propagandist effects of this involvement (because propaganda is an important element of hybrid warfare).

Military re-enactment groups are involved in real activities in the Ukrainian scope significantly, however, the number of members of this subculture is probably lower than the involvement of football hooligans. They are strongly motivated and they were able to show a high level of military discipline. Strong ideological motivation can be a risk criterion also in East Central European conditions in the case of extension of the armed conflict in this area. The involvement of bikers has been up to now limited mostly to the activities of the Night Wolves and their short organized paramilitary activity in Crimea, joining separatist forces in Donbass and predominantly to the propagandist activities associated with their rides in Central Europe. Their supporters in Central European area can be involved in various diversion activities in the future and in clashes with pro-American biker gangs, however, the scope of these activities will be limited.

The most numerous subcultural group with ties to the actors of Central and Eastern European hybrid warfare are the football hooligans. They were active in pre-military stages of the conflict on both sides. Later they were able to participate in military activities and they keep their subcultural identity. On the other hand, the level of their discipline was at least in several cases not very high (however, it is difficult to assess the whole hooligan involvement due to lack of sources). The preparedness for violence is an important risk factor from the point of view of the future use of hooligans in hybrid warfare. During the first phase of the conflict escalation they can play an important role. The importance of the Autonomous Nationalists generally declined in previous years and their future role will be probably very limited. On the other hand, the small, however, well organized and internationally interconnected National Socialist Black Metal Scene can be a relevant propagandist actor among specific parts of right-wing extremist militants in the future.

⁴² STEEL RAY OF FREEDOM - VOLUNTEERS, Tribute to Ukrainian Battalions of Freedom (Euromaidan Song Contest #1) [online], 2016-05-03 [cit. 2016-06-22], available at <http://clips9.com/files/2016/05/tribute-to-ukrainian-batt/bKKIzaoVfiQ.html>

⁴³ MILITANT ZONE, Kroda (Ukraine) and M8L8TH (Russia) [online], V Kontakte, 2016-05-13 [2016-06-14], available at http://vk.com/wotanjugend_militant

CONCLUSION

The previous analysis analyzes the process of “militarization” of several subcultural actors into the actors of hybrid warfare in Ukraine and in East Central Europe. Military re-enactment groups and football (soccer) hooligans seem to be the most influential examples of this development, however, the potential for the future growth can be identified also within other subcultures (as the public attention toward bikers has shown). The internationalization of conflict actors is an interesting element which accomplishes this subcultural-military transfer (for example Team Vikernes). This broad spectrum of real and potential hybrid warfare actors with subcultural roots is an important challenge to the strategies of countering hybrid warfare.

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