

State made war, and war made state – this paraphrasing of Charles Tilly’s famous aphorism could not be more important today. The 2022 Russian full-scale invasion defines the changes not only in Ukraine but globally. Poland, among all nations, arguably felt the largest impact of war across its border. War also impacts social movements - powerful loudspeakers of political voice in democracies. But how exactly and for how long does war impact social movements? To answer these questions, we will rely on existing theories about the impact of drastic exogenous shocks, such as wars, on social movement mobilization and on the broader environment in which they operate. Unlike most of the previous research, we will not only look at specific movements or issues. We will study the war’s impact on the entire social movement fields in Ukraine and in Poland. To do so, we will construct a dataset of organizations that engaged in street protests during 2021-2023. We will collect different characteristics of these organizations, such as their experience, main issues or their allies. With this anonymized dataset we will be able to test hypotheses about mobilization levels, protest alliances size and heterogeneity, or time when a protest organizer goes “dormant” and shifts to other activity. Importantly, we will also interview sampled organizations, as it is crucial to listen to actors’ perceptions of events following February 24, 2022, and understand their adaptive strategies. By doing so, we hope to build better theories of how war impacts civil society and develop tools other researchers could use. Moreover, this project can help researchers and public officials in Ukraine and Poland to understand what characteristics of collective actors come to the fore in the face of massive shock, and account for these aspects to help shape the future of democracy in these European nations when the war ends.