

The Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: An Imperial, Neoliberal Limbo

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Abstract : The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought about a wave of decolonisation throughout the Soviet space in the 1990s. While this emancipation ushered in an era of reform in the newly independent states, it also opened up the opportunity for countries such as Ukraine to be (re)colonised by a different ruling power: the European Union. Ukraine's relationship with the EU has been further complicated by the fact that the country's political leadership has aligned itself with a Western agenda of democratisation. This article challenges the neoliberal belief that the global market can spurn democratisation by analysing the way in which market privatisation in Ukraine has allowed for mass corruption to flourish. I submit that neoliberalism, or the sheer force of the global market, is just as colonising as modern-day imperialism has proven to be by providing an analytical synthesis of Russia and Ukraine's century-old conflict. The EU's demonstrated inability to mediate cross-border conflict in the region foreshadows that Ukraine may have been economically colonised by another failing state.

Keywords : neoliberalism, imperialism, Russian-Ukrainian conflict, democratisation, colonisation

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