

Research Group (ed.)

# War, Migration, Memory

Program and Members



PRISMA UKRAÏNA

Forum Transregionale Studien e.V.

Wallotstr. 14

14193 Berlin

T: +49 (30) 89001-430

office@trafo-berlin.de

prisma@trafo-berlin.de

www.forum-transregionale-studien.de

www.prisma-ukraina.de

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PRISMA UKRAÏNA, Research Group *War, Migration, Memory*:

Olha Haidamachuk, Mykola Homanyuk, Lidia Kuzemska,

Olha Labur, Alina Mozolevska, Taisiia Ratushna,

Viktoria Sereda, Denys Shatalov, Yuliia Soroka,

Natalia Zaitseva-Chipak

Design: Plural | Severin Wucher

Editorial team: Tamara Beresh, Georges Khalil, Lidia Kuzemska,

Natasha Klimenko, Simon Kötschau, Sophie Schmäing

Cover image: Sasha Kurmaz

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# **War, Migration, Memory**

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**PRISMA UKRAÏNA**

PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory* is an interdisciplinary research group of Ukrainian scholars in Ukraine and Germany that developed out of a project which started in 2022 under the direction of Viktoria Sereda at the Forum Transregionale Studien. The research group currently consists of Olha Haidamachuk, Mykola Homanyuk, Lidia Kuzemska (academic coordination), Olha Labur, Alina Mozolevska, Taisiia Ratushna, Viktoria Sereda, Denys Shatalov, Yuliia Soroka, and Natalia Zaitseva-Chipak. This publication introduces these ten members. Through short interviews, each member shares personal and professional reflections, offering concise academic biographies and opinions on the role of humanities and social sciences amid upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian challenges.

Since the beginning of the project, several members of the Forum staff have supported the establishment of the research group: Karin Casanova, Georges Khalil, Jessica Metz, and Claudia Pfitzner. Since its inception, the PRISMA UKRAÏNA project team has consisted of Tamara Beresh, Natasha Klimenko, Simon Kötschau, Gesine Rodewald and Sophie Schmäing.

PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory* has been realized with funding from the Berlin Senate Department for Higher Education and Research, Health, and Long-Term Care. The ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS and the Marga and Kurt Möllgaard Foundation provided funding for non-resident fellowships for scientists in Ukraine affected by the war. In the second phase of the project, the Gerda Henkel Foundation supports the research group with individual stipends for the Ukrainian researchers and additional funds for workshops and project-accompanying science communication while the Land Berlin provides personnel costs for the administration and science communication at the Forum.

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# Introduction

## Profile of the Research Group

### Who we are?

PRISMA UKRAÏNA—Research Network Eastern Europe was initiated by Dr Andrii Portnov (Professor of Entangled History of Ukraine, European University Viadrina) as a research program at the Forum Transregionale Studien in 2015. The goal of the program is to look at regional and transregional issues through the prism of Ukraine. In a cooperation of scholars and institutions of East European Studies in Berlin and Brandenburg<sup>1</sup> it offers a comprehensive platform to foster academic research with researchers from Eastern Europe, facilitate transregional exchange, and promote communication on issues of common concern, all through various means including fellowships, workshops, transregional academies, panel discussions, seminars, lectures, and science communication initiatives.

Based on the legacy of the inception phase, and in reaction to Russia's full-scale invasion a new interdisciplinary research group of Ukrainian scholars in Ukraine and Germany PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory* has been constituted in 2022 under the direction of Dr Viktoria Sereda, Senior Fellow of the Forum Transregionale Studien. The research group

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1 Members of the collegium of PRISMA UKRAÏNA include scholars from the Centre Marc Bloch, Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZFF) Potsdam, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), Universität Potsdam, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde (DGO), German Historical Institute Warsaw (DHI), and Leibniz-Zentrum für Literaturforschung (ZfL).

investigates the transformational effects of war and dislocation on people's memory, history, and sense of belonging. The group emerged through an open call for applications that was met with great interest emphasizing the pressing need for research in this field. It currently consists of ten Ukrainian academics in Ukraine and at places of their flight in Germany and Switzerland. The Academic Coordinator of the project, Dr Lidia Kuzemska, is located in Berlin, just like Viktoria Sereda, who will remain connected to the project as a member of the research group and as a Senior Advisor also in her new function as coordinator and head of the scientific activities of the Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study.

In the first phase (2022–2023), *PRISMA UKRAÏNA: War, Migration, Memory* has been realized with funding from the Berlin Senate Department for Higher Education and Research, Health, and Long-Term Care. The ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS and the Marga and Kurt Möllgaard Foundation provided funding for sur-place or non-resident fellowships for scientists in Ukraine affected by the war. In the second phase of the project (2024–2025), the Gerda Henkel Foundation supports the research group with individual stipends for the Ukrainian researchers and additional funds for workshops and project-accompanying science communication while the Berlin Senate provides personnel costs for the administration and science communication at the Forum.

### **How do we work remotely?**

From the beginning, science communication and networks have been conceived as an important complementary support of the research group. It facilitates decentralized forms of academic cooperation across borders. An essential feature of the *PRISMA UKRAÏNA* project is its flexibility in structure, horizontal collaborative model, peer-driven content creation and dissemination, and English and Ukrainian working languages, which facilitate non-hierarchical, open interactions between scholars within and beyond the research group. The collaboration landscape of *PRISMA UKRAÏNA* research

group consists of a range of tools: from co-working using digital platforms, such as TrafoHub, to weekly research group meetings, specialized seminars and teatime conversations with invited guest speakers, workshops, and book talk discussions. We stay connected thanks to secure multifunctional online interface provided by our science communication team at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

Our research group is partnering with a growing number of Ukraine-related research and cultural institutions and initiatives, such as the Centre for the East European Studies (UNET HUB ZOiS, Berlin), the BMBF-funded research project *European Times/Europäische Zeiten—A Transregional Approach to the Societies of Central and Eastern Europe*, *Deutsche-Ukrainische Akademische Gesellschaft*, the Fulbright Ukraine Initiative, *Ukraine in a Changing Europe* research centre in Prague, and with other organisations that support refugee-scholars, for instance, with the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE, Brussels), and the European Academic Refugee Interdisciplinary Network (EARIN, Geneva). Several fellows joined the international research cluster “Forced Migrants From Ukraine in Transnational Europe: Between Personal Agency, Civil Society And The State (FORUM)” coordinated jointly by the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) and the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM e.V.) and with participating scholars from Germany, Sweden, Poland, Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Norway, and the UK, as well as the “Flucht- und Flüchtlingsforschung: Vernetzung und Transfer” project set up by the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), the Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN, University of Erlangen Nuremberg), the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), and the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS, University of Osnabrück). The research group *War, Migration, Memory* will be connected to the newly created Viadrina Center of Polish and Ukrainian Studies at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), co-directed by Andrii Portnov, and to the recently inaugurated Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (VUIAS), headed by Viktoria Sereda.



## What we do?

Our research group investigates the transformational effects of war and displacement on people's memory, history, and sense of belonging. *"Everything is unfolding in front of us, and it is important to record and understand it"*—one of the Fellows of PRISMA UKRAÏNA: War, Migration, Memory research group described the core purpose of our academic and public activity. We have been documenting the war and its effects as they unfold at home and in exile; we record oral, written, and visual testimonies of people affected by the invasion; we analyse and reflect on our findings shaped by our positionality as researchers and citizens; we share and compare our results with colleagues from other regions; we aim to better inform domestic and international public about dynamic changes in Ukraine that will have an impact beyond the country.

During the first stage of the project, our interdisciplinary research group has mapped a range of themes that address current gaps in Eastern European studies in general and bring attention to insufficient research on Ukraine specifically. The group's research has focused on the displacement resulting from Russia's war on Ukraine as well as the related effects on history, memory, belonging and questions of cohesion of plural societies in and outside Ukraine. The data collected by our research group, consisting of interviews, observations, newspaper articles and social and digital media data, represent an essential contribution to the documentation of the ongoing war against Ukraine.

Our initial research findings were published as thematic series on the TRAFO—Blog for Transregional Research and were later developed into longer essays and articles that constitute the core of the two open-access dossiers: "War, Migration and Memory" (edited by Dr Viktoriia Sereda) and "Images and Objects at War: Visual and Material Culture during the Russian War in Ukraine" (edited by Natasha Klimenko and Miglè Bareikytė).

This brochure invites you to get to know us through a unique combination of our personal and professional reflections. Based on the Forum's *Sin10* format (where five questions are answered in writing, resulting in

a text that takes about ten minutes to read) we share brief versions of our academic biographies and our opinions on the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions.

### **What's Next?**

In the next two years (2024–2025) we want to further conceptualise our findings and investigate them from a temporal perspective by comparing pre-war, war and possible post-war transformations. Working together, we aim to explore these topics through an interdisciplinary approach (sociology, linguistics, history, media studies, cultural studies, human geography), where we triangulate qualitative and quantitative research methods, produce multi-modal research outputs, disseminate our results to various publics in Ukraine and abroad, and consider policy implications of the results. We decided to focus on three themes:

1. Memory *of* War, Memory *during* War, Memory *as* War
2. Diversity of Displacement, Diversity of Returns
3. Rethinking Eastern European Studies, and the Humanities and Social Sciences in Eastern Europe

In addition, being part of the Forum Transregionale Studien helps us to reflect our empirical results in comparison with developments in other regions of the world. The Forum's consolidated integration into national and international academic and research networks also ensures that the study results are linked back to current research debates. In the second phase of the project, we plan to complement and conceptualise the research data collected and to make it accessible to various target groups in further publications.



## Olha Haidamachuk The Tonality of the Archives of the Displaced Ukrainians' Memory

Olha Haidamachuk received her PhD in Philosophy from the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University in 2021. Her dissertation is titled “Intonation in a Philosophical Text: The Philosophical-Culturological Dimension”. Her background is in philology. In 2006–2023, she worked at the National Technical University “Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute”. Since 2019, she is a member of the Kharkiv Historical and Philological Society. Her research interests include the philosophy of culture, philosophical anthropology, Ukrainian studies, Ukrainian and European culture, the philosophy of language, the history of philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics. Olha Haidamachuk has been a member of the PRISMA UKRAİNA War, Migration, Memory research group since 2022.



**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?** Just imagine that one morning you and your children wake up to explosions outside your win-

dow and right after the sky catches fire. You know that there were people you knew and your children's classmates got caught in that fire. Then there is silence. Then you hear

more explosions, now even closer. And then, silence again. A moment later, a powerful blast roars so close, that the entire house shakes and the glass rattles in the windows. At the same time, one news agency reports that a full-scale invasion of a neighboring state has begun. Another news agency says that it's a special operation. A third expresses concern over the explosions in the east. All three agencies report on the same events related to the explosions outside your window, but the tone that this information is presented in is completely different. To what extent does the form of presenting the information affect the content? How sensitive are we to the tone of information? And how aware are we that the tone appealing to our emotions can significantly change the content of the message? My research investigates how tonality can affect our perception. It addresses the very fact of us reacting to *how*, rather than *what* has been said.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?** When I was studying at the Philological Faculty of

Kharkiv University, I had to select my focus when graduation approached. I remember facing the choice of which major to choose: language or literature? It was a difficult decision, but in the end I chose linguistics, because it's from language that both humans and human culture began. After making that decision, an even more difficult question arose: what in language interests me the most? This decision determined the choice of my thesis supervisor and the topic of the thesis itself. From here, my attention was drawn to the issue of intonation, because it interacts with all levels of language, but at the same time it is the least studied—which is why back in 1958 it was called 'Cinderella of linguistics. At later stages, I was fascinated by philosophy, which was undergoing a linguistic turn and which allowed me to approach the study of intonation in a philosophical way. At this time, I read the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *De la grammatology* and was drawn in by the deep embeddedness of philosophy in intonation. The archaeologist and anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan defines the process of the phoneticization of the Greek alphabet and linearization of writing as the

‘primary causes’ of the emergence of philosophy. Derrida, meanwhile, by deconstructing Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “Essay on the Origin of Languages”, reveals a complex network of relationships in the cultures of speaking and writing, as well as in intonation and articulation. I found it astonishing that most of the languages known in the world are tonal (as is reflected in the map of modern tonal languages), but that Western philosophy originated in intonational languages (most European languages, including Ukrainian, German, and English, are intonational). In contrast to tonal languages, a fluent speaker of an intonational language is not required to have absolute pitch. Therefore, in a society where not everyone is able to adequately hear and decipher the speech, there is a need for a philosopher to interpret the intonations and tonalities that, for various reasons, are inaudible or unheard. Thus, in the Western European tradition overgrowing with philosophical texts, one can trace the history of appeals to an ear trained to differentiate intonation. But it’s an ear capable of perceiving

*In time of war, memory  
becomes a powerful  
resource*

not only intonations and articulations, but all other nuances as well, including tonalities, accents, detonations, dissonances, and resonances, among other things.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?**

A full-scale war with Russia affected not only me, although I always realized that it was inevitable, but all Ukrainians. It deprived many people of their life and future. For a long time, as I understand now, I was in a state of mute shock, and, in fact, scientific activity helped me get out of it. Everyone has to do their part, making every effort for our common victory. Under peaceful circumstances, I worked mainly in the theoretical field of studying intonation. I planned to investigate the intonational diversity of the works of Ukrainian artists from the period of the Executed Renaissance at the beginning of the 20th century, with a focus on the intonations of resistance. This plan is currently on hold, but I will find time later to fulfil it. Now, having been directly impacted

by the war, my research has a more applied nature: the main material of the research is not philosophical texts, but media discourses and testimonies of Ukrainians on the impact of the war on their life, worldviews, and memories. News articles and headlines usually go through several levels of proofreading and editing before they are published. An editorial board weighs the risks, calculates the impact on the target audience, and predicts the reaction. On the contrary, like in live communication, the interviews I'm conducting offer a great variety of intonations, tonalities, and modes. This is a new experience for me. It's extremely interesting and, at the same time, important to record the voices of Ukrainians telling their stories for future generations.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** It's

easy to be humane in comfortable conditions, when neither you nor your loved ones are in danger, you are protected from the smallest risks everywhere, and the future seems cloudless. But the real test of

humanity begins when, due to various circumstances, you find yourself in inhumane conditions, when it is so easy to blame everything on weak human nature and the insurmountable force of the situation. Remaining human in inhumane conditions is a powerful challenge to all theoretical knowledge acquired during life. How does one not just survive, but remain a human being, having endured confinement, hard labor, famine, war, a concentration camp, the loss of loved ones, or even long-term seclusion on a deserted island or a plane crash? In addition to the fact that all these are challenges, they are also lessons.

The experiences that someone has had, and then told, reinterpreted, and recorded for future generations give rise to the phenomenon of 'historical immortality'. When answering to the question of "what does it mean to be human?", everyone responds with actions, rather than with words. I believe that human beings are designed in such a way that they mostly long for what they don't have, instead of enjoying what they possess. They also begin to appreciate what they once had as soon as they lose it. All this is characteristic of human nature, the study of which

the humanities are dedicated to. The humanities, based on other people's stories, allow us to feel someone else's experience as our own, so that, little by little, we can nurture the need to remain human despite everything. The role of the humanities cannot be overestimated at any time. In my opinion, the contemporary Ukrainian writer Lina Kostenko accurately described her role as a cultural figure in a national context: „When the Americans once launched, from Cape Canaveral, a research station with a particularly powerful telescope that had a precision mirror system, they, having discovered at the last moment a defect in the main mirror, suspended the launch, eliminated the defect, and only then relaunched this telescope into orbit. In a figurative sense, such a telescope, with such a system of mirrors, should be in every nation, in every society, in the whole spectrum of the humanities, with literature, education, art, and in the complex spectrum of these mirrors and reflections, society can get an objective picture of itself and provide the world undistorted information about itself, focused in this main mirror.”

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?**

It's impossible to prepare for war, even when you understand that it is inevitable. War suddenly bursts into your life in a whirlwind of chaotic actions and thoughts. It is ruthless! The war tests everything that you thought was valuable, priceless, or unnecessary, and it does this thoroughly. It's impossible to hide, escape, or deny it. It's impossible to say “this is not our war”, and continue to live peacefully. This delusion culminates in a painful revelation: the war came both to those who read the news every day and to those who ignored the ‘negativity’ and lived in their own world, where there was no coronavirus, no global warming, and, moreover, no war. It came to the rich and the poor, the young and the old, to the East and to the West, without understanding where the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ Ukrainians were, just as it does not care where and how the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ Germans, French, Italians, Spaniards, or Romanians live. War is one of those moments of truth when you have to answer a number of questions with your actions: “What does it mean to be a person?”; “What



does it mean to be Ukrainian/German/Polish/etc.?"; "What does it mean to be independent?"; "What does homeland mean?"; and "What is worth living for?"

By exacerbating all these questions, the war addresses not only your

personal experience, but also the historical trajectory of your ancestors and the entire nation. Memory becomes a powerful resource of strength, nurturing resilience, the will to win, and the ability to remain human.

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## Mykola Homanyuk Hybrid Memory: Syncretic Memorials in Ukraine after 2022

**M**ykola Homanyuk was born in Kakhovka, Ukraine, in 1974. He graduated from Kherson State Pedagogical Institute in 1996 and defended his PhD thesis in sociology at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University in 2008. Currently, he is an associate professor in the Department of Geography and Ecology at Kherson State University, where he teaches human geography. He is also a chairperson of the NGO Kherson Entity of the Sociological Association of Ukraine and runs the independent theater company Kherson Theatre Lab. In 2003/2004, he was a



fellow of the Lane Kirkland's Fellowship in M. Curie-Skłodowska University (Poland). In 2018, he won the ADAMI Media Prize for Cultural Diversity in Eastern Europe. In 2022, Homanyuk got the Virtual Visitorship Grant from Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs (USA). His current research is dedicated to ethnic minorities (Roma and Meskhetian Turks), the transformation of war memorials, symbolic space, and modern toponymic practices. He has been a non-resident Fellow and member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA *War, Migration, Memory* research group since 2022.

**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?**

The same way I'd explain it to any expert in my field. Many concepts and terms from the field of ethno-sociology transfer not only into related disciplines, but also into journalism, social networks, and even everyday communication. I deal with ethnic groups in Ukraine, who are officially called 'national minorities'. I don't, however, like this definition, because the concept of 'national minority' implicitly builds a hierarchy, even at the lexical level. In any case, my research shows that the war didn't spare anyone. There are victims, refugees, unemployed people, and separated families across all ethnic groups in Ukraine. Likewise, among all groups there is an intense rethinking of who they are, who they are with, where their land is, what their culture is, and so on. The war

did not only make these questions more acute, but also formed a number of new ones. Specifically, I work with two ethnic groups: the Roma and Meskhetian Turks. I aim to find out how the war and forced migration affected the answers to the questions above among Ukrainian Turks and Roma.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?**

Meskhetian Turks or Akhiska Turks are one of the inhabitants of the Kherson region. The largest community of Ukrainian Turks from the Meskheta region of Georgia used to live here. I worked as an interviewer in the 1990s. During one of the interviews, I happened to visit the house of some Meskhetian Turks. The history and fate of these people really moved me. Meskhetian

Turks are an ethnic group that has been on the move for a long time and became refugees five times over the past 80 years. In 1944, Stalin's regime deported the Meskhetian Turks from their historical homeland in Georgia to the Central Asian republics of the USSR. In 1988, they were forced to flee from their new home after the conflict in Uzbekistan. In 2004, Meskhetian Turks were resettled from the Krasnodar region of Russia to the United States through an initiative of the US government. In 2014, they were also evacuated from the Donetsk region in Ukraine to Turkey. And, in 2022, Meskhetian Turks from the occupied regions of Ukraine were forced to seek refuge in other regions of Ukraine and countries around the world. In all five cases, they were victims of the internal politics and external aggression of the USSR and the Russian Federation. Deportation from and the return to their homeland are the central plots of the ethnic myths of modern Meskhetian Turks. The countries and regions that they associate with their lost homeland affect their values, memories, identities, and visions for the future.

*War pushes the trivial out of memory*

Working with a group where all this happens in real time offers significant insight into these processes. The second ethnic group I work with is the Roma. To be precise, I use Roma as an umbrella name for ethnic or sub-ethnic groups that speak different languages and dialects, practice different religions, and have different levels of integration into the lives of their territorial communities.

The city I was born in, for example, has a large community of Serbs—who speak Romani and Ukrainian and practice Orthodox Christianity—and Crimeans—Romani Muslims, whose Romani language is saturated with Turkisms, and whose second language is Russian. This latter group supposedly stole a tank from the Russians at the very beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. It was a very widely covered event. My interest in the Roma arose under these conditions of the war.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?** Primarily, my previous interests that were on a back burner re-emerged, and I felt

increased confidence in the relevance of the research work I carried out before the February invasion. In addition to ethnic groups, I work with the politics of memory, war memorials, and toponymy in the context of the production of space and the identity of spatial objects. After having found myself in occupied Kherson, I had a chance to conduct field research and record everything that was happening in the occupied territories and within society. I spent seven months there and collected empirical data that will take years to process.

**What do you consider the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** Without exaggerating, I think their role is huge. And often, it expands beyond its primary tasks. For example, I have been car-

rying out three collaborative projects for different institutions in the form of series of in-depth interviews with refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and victims of Russian persecution. The interlocutors received compensation for taking part in these studies and this was humanitarian aid that they urgently needed. I should also mention scholars from Kherson who did not cooperate with the occupiers despite threats, violence, or attempts to bribe them into collaboration. This meant that the occupiers simply had no one to rely on. Last but not least, I believe that an understanding of current events informed by intellectual ideas can lead humanity to a better level of social existence and organization. Thinkers in the social sciences and humanities can propose something radically new, and even lay the groundwork for a new social contract.

## Lidia Kuzemska War-Displaced Ukrainians in Russia: Current Reception, Future Options

**L**idia Kuzemska is a sociologist with an interdisciplinary interest in forced migration, internal displacement, borders, and citizenship. In 2022, she received her PhD from Lancaster University (UK). Her dissertation was entitled “‘Don’t Be Afraid of Our Citizens’: Internally Displaced People Encounter Bordering and Othering in Ukraine” and it focused on the counter-hegemonic citizenship practices of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2014–2016. Lidia also holds an MA in Economy and Society from Lancaster University (UK), an MA in European Studies from the College of Europe (Belgium and Poland), and an MA in Sociology from Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine). Lidia is a co-managing editor of the *Refugee Review* journal (part of the Emerging Scholars and Practitioners on Migration Issues network). She is also a research affiliate at the Internal Displacement Research Programme (SOAS University of London) and a peer-reviewer for the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub (UN Network on Migration). She is academic coordinator of the *PRISMA UKRAÏNA War, Migration, Memory* research group, of which she has been a member since 2022.



**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?** In short, migration and borders are my two main research interests.

Why people move, or, rather, why some move and others stay always intrigued me. Why has this historically natural process that helped humanity to settle around the world become so politically controversial? What's worse—why does forcing people to move become an almost inevitable part of the war, either before, during, or after it?

On the one hand, we know that expulsions, deportations, exchanges of populations, taking hostages, or, bluntly, exterminating 'others' has been part of warfare. On the other hand, allowing people to settle in a new country, practice their craft or profession, and establish connections with other parts of the world has always been a strategy for development and success. So, what is the formula for balanced migration that would benefit both 'us' (locals) and 'them' (migrants)? And is it even realistic?

*Why people move, or, rather, why some move and others stay always intrigued me*

As a sociologist who is now looking at war displacement as a particular kind of migration, I try to understand how these experiences affect displaced persons, their close ones who remain at home, and their new hosting community. What could make newcomers part of 'us' and why are those who move mostly perceived as 'others'? I can't say that I've found the answers,

but it seems to me that this question goes very deep into human history. Our ancestors needed to move to find new resources to survive, however, caution towards newcomers from other tribes and places was necessary for protection. We live in a very different world now, where we can learn—if we want to, of course—about various 'others'. However, in my view, many of these early precautions about human migration still exist today, especially when we look at sophisticated and heavily guarded state borders that aim to allow only 'desirable' people to come.

My first encounter with a border was when I was five or six years old. My parents took me on a day trip to Przemyśl—a town at the

Polish-Ukrainian border—for what we called ‘an ice-cream trip’. I was both excited and terrified when a Polish border guard asked me simple questions about my name, where I’m going, and why. Not fully aware of what the meaning of this small talk was, I remember a feeling of uneasiness. I didn’t do anything wrong, I was safe with my parents, but this encounter with a border procedure has stuck with me to this day. At that time, Poland was not an EU member state, but the border between the two states still looked quite ‘serious’—a fence with razor wire, long queues of cars and busses, visa checks, and people in uniforms. I was fascinated by how a few meters on the ground marked a visible change in state emblems, road signs, currency, language, and even a different time zone.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?** In 2013, I was

interested in the transformation of Ukrainian migration and asylum policies under the influence of the EU and its impact on refugees in Ukraine. I wanted to understand how the

Russia-Ukraine-EU migration corridor was changing after Ukraine’s southern and western neighbors joined the EU in 2004. However, after the occupation of Crimea and the start of the first phase of the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2014, I understood that we were facing a completely new challenge—a large-scale internal displacement in Ukraine from the Donbas and Crimea. So, instead of focusing on how Ukraine hosts foreign migrants, I started analyzing the developments of state policies towards citizens forced to move inside our country. I was surprised that people moving within the borders of their own state encountered problems similar to issues other migrants face, e.g., difficulties with residence registration, schooling, and job search. On top, internally displaced persons experienced similar cautious attitudes from the host communities and authorities. Once again, it brought me back to the question: what makes someone part of ‘us’ or ‘them’—even within the same country?

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions**

**or approaches?** Over the last few years, I was following the developments on the ‘contact line’ between Ukraine and its temporarily occupied territories in the Donbas. It was a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens who regularly travelled across the ‘contact line’ to keep in touch with their relatives, sort out their social payments, or buy necessary supplies. COVID-19 restrictions became a useful pretext to close the ‘contact line’, which never fully reopened from the side of the temporarily occupied territories. This link with Ukraine was almost broken for people who remained in the occupied territories of the Donbas. It was congruent with the other policies of the occupying Russian administrations aimed to fully integrate these territories into the Russian political, economic, social, and cultural space.

In mid-February 2022—a week before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine—when Russia started its so-called ‘evacuation’ of civilians from the temporarily occupied territories of the Donbas to Russia, I thought this was a sign that the full-scale escalation is approaching. Ukrainian officials were calling on people to cross to the Ukrainian-con-

trolled territory instead, but, as I mentioned earlier, the passage through the checkpoints was limited and difficult. After 24 February, Ukraine experienced a huge wave of internal displacement and refugee outflow. The whole country was on the move (or considering whether to move) at different levels as people were trying to find ways to stay safe, evacuate their close ones, flee the invading army or, conversely, join the defence and supply Ukrainian armed forces, thereby moving closer to the battlefields. In a matter of days, Ukraine became the country with the highest number of people on the move in the world.

In mid-March, the Russian Ministry of Defence reported that they received 2.5 million (!) “requests from Ukrainians to be evacuated to Russia”, which was another sign of preparation for a massive forced displacement of civilians from the newly occupied territories of Ukraine. Unfortunately, similarly to what happened to the ‘contact line’ in 2020–21, Russia quickly closed the humanitarian corridors for Ukrainian civilians who wanted to leave the newly occupied territories. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens



had to flee the war through the Russian territory and many had to remain there. An unknown number of adults and children were deported.

Information about the experiences of war-displaced Ukrainian citizens in Russia is limited. We don't have an exact number of how many stayed in different regions of Russia, how many moved on to other countries, what kind of status or help they received and from whom, and what awaits them in Russia. Was this a planned action or a side effect of war? These are some of the questions that I am trying to answer. We need to gather this information to be able to understand the situation of these people, their experiences, and their expectations. Knowing this is essential for planning a potential Ukrainian policy strategy towards war-displaced Ukrainian citizens in Russia: Will the Ukrainian government encourage all of them to come back? How? When? Where to? And what can they expect after they return, especially considering politically sensitive issues of possible dual citizenship or (suspected) collaboration?

**What do you consider the role of the humanities and social**

**sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** In my view, the blessing and curse of social life are its messiness, chaos, and complexity. People always find ways to challenge either democratic rules or the strict barriers established by authoritarian regimes. We, as social scientists, have only partial answers to why things work or don't work in a particular context. We disagree with each other and propose different explanations. In my view, our role is to keep asking questions about the 'default' and 'natural' order of things, promote critical thinking without hastily rushing to black-or-white conclusions, guard freedoms that are existential for our profession and, most importantly, keep learning from and supporting colleagues at home and in other countries.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?** I think we can look at different levels. On the individual level, people re-evaluate their social roles and priorities in extreme situations and must decide what takes precedence in their competing

obligations as family members, professionals, and citizens in a situation of war. Our individual, family, and collective memories can facilitate or complicate such choices.

On the family level, many of us remember the stories told by older relatives who experienced war or displacement before. This includes strategies on how to keep warm and safe, what to have in your storage of essential supplies, what should or shouldn't be packed in your emergency suitcase, and how to stay in touch when communication lines are broken. After the war, new family stories and memories will be passed on

to new generations. In addition, millions of people now form war-related identities as they experience internal displacement or being refugees, soldiers, volunteers, fundraisers, and survivors.

On the national level, we will remember victories and mourn losses. There will be an official story told by the state about how Ukraine won the war, yet everyone will have more nuances and side stories to tell. These individual, nonlinear, messy, and complicated stories of war-displaced Ukrainians are what I find most important—individual gazes on a shared historical event.

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## Olha Labur Women's initiatives in the sphere of oncology in wartime

**O**lha Labur is a historian from Kyiv who researches women's experiences in the 20th century. She works as an associate professor in the Department of History of Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. Since 2017, she teaches the post-graduate course "The Gender History of Ukraine". She is a member of the Ukrainian Association of Women's History Researchers and of the Gender Center at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. In the spring of 2022, she received a scholarship from the Free University in Berlin. Previously, Olha was on the organizing committee and a participant of the fifth

and sixth International Scientific and Practical Conferences, “Women in Science and in Education: The Past, the Present, the Future” (2010 and 2011). She also taught the online course “The History of Ukraine, 1917”. Of the ten lectures, one of the topics was “Interesting Women” during the revolutionary year 1917. In 2016, as a part of the screening of the film *The Right to a Woman* (1930), directed by Oleksiy Kapler, Olha gave the lecture “The Right to a Woman—The Right to a Burqa” in cooperation with Maryna Voronina. Olha Labur has been a member of the PRISMA UKRAİNA *War, Migration, Memory* research group since 2022.



**How would you explain your research to someone who’s not an expert?** I’m interested in the female dimension of history—history based on the voices of women, and their experiences and opinions. We’ve all heard about the Amazons, the ancient Greek myth about a tribe of free and brave warrior women. And we know about the Kyiv princesses Olga, Anna, Maria, and Elyzaveta, the Nobel laureate Maria Skłodowska-Curie, and Queen Victoria, Maria-Teresa,

and Elizaveta, who were outstanding figures of the last century.

But we know very little about ‘ordinary’ women—peaceful and revolutionary women, women who were scientists or housewives. What were they thinking, dreaming of, doing? How did they see the world? What were their expectations and desires? I was fascinated by these questions even in my student years. I was drawn to researching my female ancestors: my mother, grandmothers,

and great-grandmothers. And the further I moved in search of answers, the more intriguing their stories became for me: their victories and defeats, their protests and agreements, their everyday and their celebrations. They created an incredible kaleidoscope of the past that every inquisitive historian would want to understand and learn more about.

Understanding the stories of women, I began to look differently at the ‘other stories’—those of men, of families and children, of people of different ethnicities, of masters and slaves, of rulers and the conquered. The hidden sides of the past were revealed to me: discriminations, inequalities, emancipations, and egalitarianism. Finally, I became more sensitive to the future, to the perspectives, to the possibilities, and to understanding what I wanted to change for the better. And now I work on research that is new for me, which can reveal the hidden stories of migrant women, especially in the unprecedented times of war.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?** I’ve been lucky to

meet many interesting and extraordinary personalities. But I want to describe one particular experience. It was a turning point for me in many regards, from the human to the scientific. In 2010, I arrived in Lviv, with my husband Borys and my 6-month-old daughter Victoria, for an international conference. There were many researchers there studying the past of women. It’s impossible to forget the way we passionately talked, discussed, and shared our thoughts about our research topics. It was as if we all spoke the same language and used the same words; we even easily understood each other almost nonverbally.

All this happened despite the fact that most of us met for the first time. Through our conversations, the idea arose to create an organization of female researchers that would help us coordinate our efforts, spread our research, and advance women’s history in Ukraine. So, I became involved in the creation of the Ukrainian Association of Women’s History Researchers. We were supported and inspired by colleagues from the International Federation for Research in Women’s History.

But this story is not only about the creation of a scientific society of like-minded people, but primarily about sisterhood, solidarity, and human values. We helped and motivated each other, shared experiences and ideas, created research projects, and produced monographs. During the Russo-Ukrainian War, we became even closer—not just as colleagues, but almost as if we were real sisters. I can only say warm words of gratitude to the researchers Kateryna Kobchenko and Oksana Kis, who supported me and encouraged me to take action during the difficult times of the war.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?** This is quite an interesting question for a historian who found herself as a witness to the war and a citizen of the country that is attacked. For me, the war brought a lot of changes, including in research. It made me reconsider myself, my professional activities, and my research practices. An unknown sense of space suddenly opened

before me, consisting of many ‘fronts’: the historical, informational, and cultural. Interdisciplinary and international research communication became more visible.

During this period, I made many new acquaintances with researchers from Ukraine and Germany, encountered new literature, had

*It's necessary for researchers, driven by ethical values, to establish historical perspective in times of crisis*

new thoughts, and engaged in new creative endeavors. My research has been enriched with novel methodological approaches and

tools, particularly from the history of emotions and medical anthropology. In parallel with these opportunities, I've also faced serious challenges. I began to understand, more acutely, the value of freedom in research and the pluralism of opinions, as well as the risks of the politicization and falsification of history. For me, as a historian of the Soviet era, the problems of identifying the ‘Soviet’ and the need for its legacy in independent Ukraine have become more sensitive than ever.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social**

**sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** It all starts with a distortion of the past—this is how I would like to frame the role of the humanities and social sciences during times of war and rise of authoritarianism. Through the prism of today's war, I see two possible roles for the researcher, one positive and one negative. This is determined by the individual choosing freedom, conscience, and knowledge—or their opposites.

Here I mean, first of all, the negative possibility of selecting 'one true story', without variations and hypotheses—a clear ideological matrix created by the authorities to justify their violent actions. This produces the 'illusion of uniqueness' and a 'mission' for a community, society, or state, one that is selectively chosen from a past that has been tampered with. In this case, other interpretations are rejected, or even made taboo. Each researcher must make their choice, and define their role and their understanding of 'professionalism'. The values and positive qualities of the humanities and social sciences are formed based on the activities of those who choose conscience,

freedom, dignity, human values, and professionalism as the basis of their research practice. It's necessary for researchers, driven by ethical values, to establish historical perspective in times of crisis.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?**

This is perhaps the most difficult question for me, because this issue is currently transforming and being reconceptualized. But war definitely affects the memory and identity of both those who attack and those who defend—and it influences these topics heavily. In the case of Ukrainians, who defend their right to exist and the right to statehood, this impact is transformative.

Historical memory is malleable: the old 'Soviet' identity is cut off and a new idea of the 'national' is born, with new heroes, and new significant places and 'memoryscapes' (e.g., in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol). The role of your own involvement in the future and your responsibility for the fate of the state acquires new meaning. This is probably the most radical format of memory change. It not only changes the old, by radically cutting

off unnecessary and outdated social constructs, but also allows for new ideas, conceptions of national ideals, and values to emerge.

My research examines these transformations through the lens of the lived experiences of migrant women, focusing on those with cancer. I assume that all the above-described processes are more sensitive

and tangible in their circles. They, like no one else, feel the importance of (in)dependence in life and the freedom of action, of the right to choose and decide their own destiny. To some extent, they create their own heroic pantheon and their own fronts of war, survival, and memory—which are woven into the general processes of social transformations.

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## Alina Mozolevska Discursive Power of Digital Culture in Times of Crisis: Russo-Ukrainian War and its Symbolic Representations

**A**lina Mozolevska is a professor in the Faculty of Philology at Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Mykolaiv, Ukraine). In 2015, she received a PhD in Linguistics with a major in romance languages from Taras Shevchenko National University (Kyiv, Ukraine). Her research interests include media studies, discourse analysis, and border studies, and she has published on borders and identity in literary and political discourses. Her most recent article, “Construction of Borders and Walls in Contemporary Ukrainian Literature (Analysis of Oleksandr Irvanets’ and Taras Antypovych Novels)”, was published in 2021 in *Altre Modernita*. Alina Mozolevska was a visiting professor at the UniGR-Center for Border Studies at Saarland University (Germany). She is ZOIS Ukraine-based fellow and has been a member

of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA War, Migration, Memory research group since 2022.

**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?**

I guess it is quite easy to explain my research to the average person on the street: I analyze how social media users talk about today's war against Ukraine by means of various images - maps, photos, drawings, memes, cartoons, etc. Visuals are the core element of information warfare because apart from conveying certain information, they absorb the expressions of ideas, symbols, and narratives. The comparative aspect of my research is equally important, as I am resorting both to the content in Ukrainian and Russian social media.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey?**

**What were formative encounters or challenges?**

I have been lucky to meet and work with intriguing and extremely talented personalities. For many years I have been working at the university, where I graduated, Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University. Over the years, my mentors have become my colleagues, very



close colleagues, and I am delighted to discuss pretty much everything with them: from everyday life to the specific scientific topics. This environment spurred my interest in scientific activities. Another important element of my development was taking part in the seminars and academic events organized in partnership with the Center for Border Studies at Saarland University and in the research visits to European educational institutions we have been collaborating with through the Erasmus program. In the end, these factors seem to have unveiled how international academic



institutions work and inspired me for further achievements

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?**

Just like for most Ukrainians, I must admit that both my life and the research interests have changed dramatically since the full-scale invasion. Ever since the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014, I have been working my colleagues on the research about borders and identity. We considered these issues to be the key to understanding what is happening in the country. As an example, just before the full-scale invasion we finalized the international student project Borderland Stories <sup>1</sup>, dedicated to expanding our understanding of borders in Europe and Ukraine. After the date of invasion, 24.02.2022, I developed one more academic interest: what is the visual discourse of the war as a way of expressing identity, memory, and

*We need humanities to deal with processes, which are not instantly visible, but call for the in-depth analyses to understand them*

reflecting on the transformation of physical borders.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?**

It seems that modern societies often neglect the humanities and social sciences, considering them less important

than mathematics, physics, etc., where one can achieve the immediate and precise result. In my opinion, the humanities deal with processes and

phenomena, which are not instantly physically visible. However, the upheavals mentioned in the question lead to significant shifts in society, calling for the in-depth analyses to understand them before either stopping or facilitating development of some of them. This, in my opinion, is the role played by the social sciences and humanities.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your**

1 <http://borderland.online/>

**research?** War is a traumatic experience for everyone involved. Any war provokes to re-determine the understanding of oneself and another both in the synchronic and diachronic realities. Yesterday's enemies become allies, and the other way around, "good" neighbors become bitter enemies. The Russian war is not an exception; it catalyzes numerous changes in the nation's self-identification. One can trace how it changed the Ukrainians' self-awareness against the backdrop of a full-scale invasion; how it sharpened the sense

of historical justice, and galvanized their sense of belonging to larger European history. In this sense, the Russian war is not only an act of aggression against a sovereign state, it is also a war of memory, a war between the past and the present. Therefore, Russia denies the existence of Ukraine as an independent state, its history, the very existence of Ukrainians as a distinctive nation, and attempts to erase the collective consciousness. As a researcher, I am mostly interested in this information warfare and how it is unfolding itself.

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## Taisiia Ratushna Digital Bridges: Exploring Changing Relationships with Family and Homeland in the Context of Ukrainian Forced Migration

**T**aisiia Ratushna is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at Zaporizhzhia National University. In 2010, she received her PhD in Sociology from the Classical Private University (Zaporizhzhia). Since then, she has been working in the Department of Sociology at the Zaporizhzhia National University and conducts research on communication processes in urban space and in virtual environments. In 2020, she received an MA in

Psychology. In the academic year 2022/23, Taisiia was a scholarship holder at the University of Tübingen. She also cooperates with NGOs and advises them on conducting sociological research. Her current research interests are digitalization and the impact of the internet and social media on modern society. Specifically, Taisiia investigates how certain groups use social media content and deal with different types of information in virtual space. Since the internet is self-regulating, and almost uncontrollable, useful and important information coexists with disinformation and manipulative materials that can spread quickly and have a detrimental effect on public opinion. In modern society, people consume large amounts of information. Thus, a problem arises: from this flow of information, useful and not misleading elements must be selected. Taisiia Ratushna has been a member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA *War, Migration, Memory* research group since 2022.



**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?** In general, I'm interested in how individuals communicate and (re)present themselves in virtual space, how they consume media, and how they use information from the internet. I also examine how certain groups screen media content and process different types of

information. Given the fact that the internet is a self-regulated, almost uncontrolled environment, fake news, manipulative material, and disinformation can spread in a very short time and have a significant impact on public opinion.

If earlier you had a problem finding relevant information, now it's a challenge to choose useful and

non-misleading material from the huge flow of it. It's not enough to know how to use digital technology and consume content from social networks, you need to be able to approach them critically.

Primarily, I'm interested in exploring how social networks and new media influence and change our daily lives. Currently, I focus on studying the role of social networks in migration processes. Through my research, I want to find out whether social networks help migrants find necessary information, enable them to get in touch with people in similar situations, and allow them to share emotions and experiences and feel supported. Or, on the contrary, are these media a kind of 'time sink', producing information noise that escalates stress and confusion?

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?** This is quite a difficult question, because I cannot remember any specific event or inter-

*If earlier you had a problem finding relevant information, now it's a challenge to choose useful and non-misleading material from the huge flow of it*

action that affected me. It seems that at earlier stages of my scientific activity, my attention was mostly drawn to

the complexity of social processes and the variety of approaches to study them. In addition, I was intrigued by how you can leverage the social sciences to examine personal life experiences in the context of larger historical

and social events.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?**

The Russo-Ukrainian War somewhat changed the research questions I dealt with earlier. Now, I still research communication in virtual space and via social networks, but specifically from the point of view of migrants. Also, like most sociologists in Ukraine, I encounter the problem of conducting field research and getting in touch with respondents in wartime conditions. Currently I'm trying to find the most optimal framework to enable me to continue my research under these new circumstances.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** The modern world is characterized by a large number of problems and challenges, which cannot be overcome without understanding the basic premises of societal development, studying lessons from history, and using research methods to attempt to forecast the future. The humanities and social sciences can give a society the chance to examine itself—reflecting its problems as if in a mirror.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?** War mobilizes people, increases social solidarity, and makes it clear that the history of a people, and their language, memory, and culture, is worth fighting for. The war forces you to reconsider your attitude

towards many things—memory, for instance, often wanders back to the times of ‘before’ and compares them with ‘now’—and this pushes you to reevaluate your life and disentangle what’s important from what’s not. The issue of identity becomes more acute, whether in its preservation or in the construction of a new one. My research can show the role of social networks in this context, considering specifically people who were forced to migrate. Social networks are filled with memories of the past, constructed by circles of friends and acquaintances, and offer information about what is happening, functioning almost like ‘bridges’ that connect you to your native country, with its socio-cultural space and values. But, they can also help establish new social ties and networks of cooperation with other migrants or with representatives of the host society, which is an essential factor for the process of forging new identities.

## Viktoria Sereda War, Migration, Memory

Viktoria Sereda is a sociologist, head coordinator of the Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (VUIAS) and academic senior advisor to the project “PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory*”. She has been a member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA *War, Migration, Memory* research group since 2022. Prior to this, she was a fellow at the Imre Kertesz Kolleg at the University of Jena. Since 2020, she has also been a senior research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and a professor in the department of Sociology at the



Ukrainian Catholic University. In the spring semester of 2021, she was a visiting lecturer at the University of Basel. Sereda has either led or participated in over 30 sociological research projects on Ukrainian society and its regional dimensions. From 2011 to 2017, she was the head of the sociological team for the project “Region, Nation and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine”, organized by the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. In 2016/17 and 2019/20 she was the MAPA Research Fellow at the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, where she developed a digital atlas of social changes in Ukraine after the Euromaidan. Her latest publications include *Displacement in War-Torn Ukraine* (2023, Cambridge University Press).

**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?** I have a wide variety of interests. My research agenda lies at the intersection of urban studies, migration and displacement studies, memory, nationalism and identity studies. On one hand, my research delves into the everyday, where official and unofficial spheres interact. This focus on mundane activities unveils undercurrent processes, portraying people as active participants in society. On the other hand, I focus on locality that helps to uncover interplay between global, national, regional or local phenomena and their impact on people's everyday experiences.

Local everyday practices play a very important role in the process of identity shaping and historical memory reproduction. It is locality and local community that makes people feel that they belong here. Our experiences of belonging are dynamic and sensitive to changes. Moving to a new location, whether as a labor migrant, internally displaced person, or refugee, inevitably prompts a reexamination of one's sense of belonging.. My question is what cultural markers make them feel home or alienated?

What social groups they see as 'us', 'them' or 'other'? Individuals are, to a certain extent, free to choose among a set of many different options. While the act of choice is a personal decision, belonging also depends on acknowledgement by other members of the locality.

In my current research, I focus mostly on different groups of displaced. How do they negotiate their positioning within the receiving communities? What strategies do they use to claim successfully that they belong to the local community? What are the main lines of inclusion and exclusion along which they narrate their belonging? What does it mean to be integrated to feel part of the community? Is it to speak a language, to have a job (these are the key markers that are often used in many reports about successful integration of migrants) or something completely different? It is also important to look at how communities change under the influence of the displaced and what the role of civil society is in those processes.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey?**  
**What were formative encounters**

**or challenges?** My first degree was in history. During my undergraduate studies, I researched two student organizations formed around 1870s by Ukrainian students, who at that time were a minority group in the Lviv University. I was curious about their identity choices and conducted a prosopography to understand the social background of the group. I planned to continue examining this subject in a doctoral program and forge a career of a historian, but the community of sociologists was more open, inclusive and less patriarchal. However, I discovered new challenging issues in sociology that had just emerged as a new discipline in post-1991 in Ukraine and I went to study it abroad, first in Hungary and later in Scotland. Shifting disciplines and studying at the competitive and discipline's top leading programs abroad was a formative challenge for me, but my international and interdisciplinary training gave me a lot. Initially, I gleaned the understanding that explaining contemporary social phenomena is challenging without profound knowledge of the past. History, in particular, taught me not only to think empathetically but also to understand the significant influence

of time and cultural context. Additionally, sociology equipped me with the ability to contemplate universal patterns and fostered a heightened awareness of the importance of research methodology. This way, I gained insights into various academic cultures and learned how to navigate within them. My interdisciplinary training in history and sociology facilitated seamless communication with researchers from other social and humanities fields, and provided me with the opportunity to integrate different disciplinary approaches into my research. This approach allows me to address social phenomena in a more nuanced and complex manner, offering greater creative latitude in my academic pursuits.

Another important lesson that I have learned from my academic journeys abroad is the challenge of inbetweenness. This state creates situations where I am often perceived as the "other" in both systems. However, it adds an additional layer of reflexivity, helping to realize the specificities of each society that is often taken for granted by locals. The inbetweenness also facilitates sensitivity. For me it is important to alternate the "insider" role with the "outsider"



one. This is true not only when I travel to another country, but when I go to the countryside or to another region and talk to people there. I believe one cannot be a good sociologist without talking to people and learning about their everyday experiences in their communities. Finally, I also acquired an appreciation for and placed significant value on collaborating with heterogeneous teams. This sentiment extends to my collaborative efforts with scholars from diverse disciplines, regions and countries. I attribute much of my intellectual growth to many of these collaborative endeavours.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?**

It did not. First, the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine reignited discussions in both the media and academic circles regarding identity and language divisions within the country. To comprehensively grasp the dynamics of identity and language

*War and war-induced displacement create ruptures in people's sense-making narratives that are at the core of their identities and understanding of the past*

in Ukraine, it is essential to examine the prevailing situation in Ukrainian society, specifically in the regional perspective since 1991. This aligns precisely with my expertise. Since the 1990s, I have been involved in a longitudinal research project comparing the regional differences of Lviv and Donetsk, and later in an interdisciplinary study of regionalism challenging simplistic conceptualizations and generalizations. It focused on intraregional and cross-regional differences and similarities in the hierarchies of identities and historical memories, language and religious landscapes in Ukraine. Russia's aggression in 2014 provoked a political and academic debate about the nature of the conflict: Ukrainian scholars were often confronted with the interpretation of the conflict as an identity war based on polarized identities and memory projects as the main factor of escalation. The evidence I uncovered during my fieldwork made it evident that the war was not a result of internal processes but rather imposed on the people of

the Donbas region. They found themselves thrown into the military conflict and a social reality experiment that manipulated loyalties and identities. Understanding the complexities of what transpired demanded more intricate and nuanced answers.

Second is the ‘invisibility’ of Ukrainian internally displaced people (IDP) for European migration research, as it has mostly considered migration as a cross-border phenomenon. Traditionally, migration and the IDP phenomenon have been associated with the Global South, not with Eastern Europe. Since 2014, discussions about the crisis in Ukraine have repeatedly come to the fore, particularly with regard to peacekeeping and foreign policy agendas. By 2016, Ukraine had the largest number of IDPs in Europe and the fifth largest in the world, yet European media did not consider Ukraine in their debates about the ‘migrant threat’ in their respective countries. Equally imperceptible to many outsiders was the response of Ukraine’s civil society to war and displacement. The transformative changes happening within the society, testing its resilience and forging new lines of cohesion and

inclusion, underscored the depth of its response.

In October 2021, I came to Germany to the Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena to finish a book describing all these phenomena. I researched how war (re)shaped narratives of belonging of IDPs and the local receiving communities in Ukraine. I submitted the manuscript in February 2022, a time when the entire World was stunned by Russia’s massive military aggression against Ukraine. Many issues discussed in the book gained even greater relevance after February 2022. This includes the evolving roles of the state and civil society in assisting IDPs and refugees, as well as the increasing weaponisation of refugee policies in the region. Many trends outlined in the book contribute to a better understanding of the specifics of the new displacement crisis, encompassing both internal and cross-border issues. In July 2022, the Forum Transregionale Studien invited me to constitute the research group “PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory*”.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval,**

**fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** I think that the role of any academic discipline is to produce new knowledge about society, explain and possibly predict effects. However, they often feed into policy-oriented and problem-solving discourses or ideological narratives which creates tensions. Scholars are often expected to function as ideological warriors, facing pressure from social and political groups that seek to censor information. Such groups may insist on classifying certain subjects as sensitive or potentially dangerous for the people, state security, or inappropriate public debate.

Yet, scholars from humanities and social sciences are also expected to comment and explain ongoing events. Their professional codes require the researcher to demonstrate objectivity by maintaining distance from the conflict and non-involvement in the discourses of the conflicting sides. This involves upholding a high level of neutrality during assessments, using adequate vocabulary (which itself can be a battleground for discursive conflicts), and putting aside own traumas, emotions or empathy for any particular side.

All this, in general, creates a complex internal conflict for the researcher, who is expected to monitor the situation in all its complexity, but also is torn between a role of the 'researcher' and the 'citizen,' and many other personal roles.

It is crucial to recognize the existence of internalized imperial frameworks and prevailing power structures and inequalities in the sphere of knowledge production. This environment tends to marginalize certain regions (or regional studies), perceiving them as least important, peripheral and consequently least trustful. Research conducted by scholars or institutions from these regions is often automatically deemed less objective, restricting their roles primarily to data collection or narration of their personal stories. In contrast, scholars external to the conflict or affiliated with academic institutions in the core are regularly perceived as inherently more neutral and trustworthy.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?** Extreme events such as war and war-induced displace-

ment create ruptures in people's sense-making narratives that are at the core of their identities and understanding of the past. Sense-making is intricately tied to individual and collective memories; we explain phenomena by building causal relationships based on our personal or collective past experiences. In this process, history and the past emerge as vital interpretive resources shaping our sense of attachment, alienation and identity building.

The memory of recently experienced events (e.g., 'after the beginning of the war'), is later connected to selected symbolic markers, events, or figures from the past. These serve to explain current events or legitimize individual or collective actions.

The study of memory changes take place in various contexts, including the local, regional, national, and global levels. At the macro-level, war and war-induced migration influence discussions on the politics of memory and identity. Questions

arise about what should or should not be commemorated, in what forms, and whether school curricula should be changed. These changes affect national or global narratives about specific events, subjects thoroughly examined and discussed in academia.

While I follow the discussions about Ukraine, my main focus is on the individual and community levels. I explore the role of shifting collective memories in refugees' adaptations and the reactions of receiving communities to their arrival. I also investigate historical narratives and symbolic markers present in the public space (or retained within families), examining how these contribute to a sense of belonging to a community. These elements are crucial factors of social exclusion and othering and possibly provoke conflicts. Last, but not least, the historical past can become a component of social activism, fostering new lines of solidarities.

## Denys Shatalov The Entanglement and Interaction of Imagination, Commemoration and Memory of World War II and the Ongoing War in Ukraine. Case of Kryvyi Rih

**D**enys Shatalov obtained his PhD in History in 2016 from Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine, with a thesis on Ukrainian Cossacks in public discourse from the second half of the 18th to the first half of the 19th century. From 2015 until 2021, Denys was a Research Fellow at the “Tkuma” Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies and the Jewish Memory and Holocaust in Ukraine Museum; now he is an independent scholar. He has been a PRISMA UKRAÏNA visiting fellow in 2019/20. Along with his engagement in memory and memory politics studies, he also conducts research on the history of the ‘Cossack Myth’. Denys Shatalov has been a non-resident Fellow and member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA *War, Migration, Memory* research group since 2022.



**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?**

My research project is called “‘That War’ and ‘This War’: The Entanglement and Interaction of the Imagination, Commemoration and Memory of World War II and the Ongoing War in Ukraine”. World War II (or the Great Patriotic War) is still one of the key events of the past for Ukrainians. Both the personal trauma of older generations and the mythology of the war formed in Soviet times influenced this. Annual large-scale commemorative events and meetings with veterans have taken place, and hundreds of films, songs, books, and even children’s toys about that war exist. Dozens of memorials dedicated to the war and streets named after its heroes fill towns and cities. In villages, often the only memorial objects are monuments on the graves of Soviet soldiers. One way or another, everybody has some knowledge and ideas about WWII. In fact, even the very words ‘war’, ‘pre-war’ and ‘post-war’ didn’t need to be clarified until recently: it was clear that it was about WWII/the Great Patriotic War and 1939/1941–45.

Since 24 February 2022, Ukrainians have experienced war directly.

Things that they previously only heard or read about have become reality. Ukrainians going through the war, meanwhile, have a tradition of remembering another war that ended 80 years ago. So, the core of my project is an attempt to find an answer to the following questions: How do the existing knowledge and ideas about WWII interact with the personal experience of this war? How do they shape the perception of this war? And how do previously formed ideas about that war change through personal experiences of the new war?

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?**

The questions that became the basis of my research arose as a reaction to my personal experience of the overlapping notions of the two wars. On 24 February, I was in Kyiv. In the morning, realizing what had happened, I got ready and went to the Independence Square—the Maidan. Perhaps, at that moment, I needed to feel support. I remembered that on 22 June 1941, rallies were held in all Soviet cities as a reaction to the start of the war by the Third Reich. In the back of my

mind, I was sure that now I would see a crowd on the Maidan—but no, it was empty; there were only a few foreign journalists doing live broadcasts.

The next day I went to the central station to leave for my hometown of Kryvyi Rih. For me, the scenes there were like a WWII newsreel come to life: a crowd of confused people with children, suitcases, and pets; many did not know where to go and what to do. I saw reservists in military uniform, touching scenes of farewells, and massive queues to board overcrowded trains. All this was very, very reminiscent of what I had read and seen in films about the summer of 1941 and the evacuations that happened then. So, when I was already on the platform and the air raid sirens started sounding, I unconsciously expected to see Junkers of the Luftwaffe in the sky. The same is true for many other scenes and phenomena of this war that I witnessed over the next days. Somewhere on a subconscious level, I continued to evaluate and perceive the outbreak of the war through analogies with WWII.

*Somewhere on a subconscious level, I continued to evaluate and perceive the outbreak of the war through analogies with WWII*

I believe that I finally outlined the contours of this project in the spring of 2022. Then, passing by the Soviet WWII monument called “Victory” in Kryvyi Rih—around which the memorial of the Anti-Terrorist Operation aroused since 2014—I realized that there was physically no place left for the other war that has been going since February. I wondered

what would happen to this place in the future and, more broadly, how this war would shape not only the space, but also the memory of the past among Ukrainians. Vice versa, I wondered how the perception of the past will determine the perception of the wartime present.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?** My research wouldn’t have been possible without the outbreak of this war, regrettably. I already mentioned what influenced the questions of my project. One of the subjects that I’ve been interested in for a long time is Soviet war memoirs, which began to be published

massively in the late 1950s. Their used copies, especially when it comes to the memoirs of senior military leadership, often contain traces of intensive reading: underlining, marks in the margins, and other such things. Since the start of the current war, I haven't so much understood as felt why, 15 years after the end of WWII, people were so interested in it. Everyone wanted to know what actually happened. Although that entire generation—literally everyone—had personally experienced the war, this experience was very atomized. That is, it was based only on what you saw from your own trench or window, or heard from the laconic official reports of the Information Bureau. You may have survived the war, but you didn't know what had happened as a whole, you hadn't a coherent picture of the war. The ongoing war is much more saturated with information. It's almost available in an online format. At the same time, this doesn't form a complete picture. Therefore, I can already imagine the huge demand there will be for the first editions of memoirs by Valerii Zaluzhnyi (the Chief Commander of the Ukrainian Armed Forces) or Serhiy Shaptala

(the Chief of the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces).

Similarly, the experience of this war also allowed me, again, to feel rather than understand that the Soviet pacifism of the 1950s and 1960s was not just a campaign forced from above. Slogans like “Miru—mir” (“Peace to the world”), so widespread at that time, fully resonated with the desires of that generation. And the bomb shelters built in almost every neighborhood were not only a sign of the Soviet Union's preparations for a possible nuclear World War III, but also a manifestation of the generation of survivors' longing for safety, a consequence of their psychological trauma. That is, to conclude, the experience of war—even for a bystander—affects the understanding of those who survived wars in the past.

But I hope that the scientific approach of my research has not been influenced by the full-scale war, I hope that I'll be able to conduct the research as meticulously as if it were done in peacetime. The ongoing war, of course, is a challenge for a historian in the sense that there is no distance to the events and no array of sources have been formed. Rather,



a historian must create their own sources right now—for example, in the form of interview records. But, this is just a change in methodology. As for some deeper impact of the war on me as a researcher, it will take more time for me to notice this.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** I would say the humanities play the role of a stopper, a safeguard. Shocks, especially those related to war, can lead to the rejection of a ‘cultural super-structure’ and people might slide toward more basic instincts, leading to a simplification of society. War is a time of searching and finding simple answers to often very complicated questions that, in fact, require much more subtle approaches. And the role of humanities is to allow complexity to remain. However, it’s another thing altogether how successfully the humanities cope with this challenge...

No matter how skeptical one may be about the prognostic function of the humanities, nothing is new: when passing through a crisis, a society knows about and can use the

experience of the past. In a certain sense, there is also a therapeutic function: studying and talking about trauma is a way to treat it.

If we talk about the role of a humanities researcher in times of turmoil, then I personally assume the role of ‘going and seeing’—that is, of documenting and observing. Of course, I’m not suggesting that one should completely self-isolate or reduce one’s role to just that of an observer. Rather, I mean what is called ‘engaged observation’. This seems to be a kind of professional instinct: many of my colleagues have started to collect sources for the history of this war, to form interview collections, or at least to write diaries. They also stock up on impressions. No matter how scary this may sound, war is also a time of unique opportunities for feeling and experiencing, which allows us to better understand aspects of the histories of past wars, as I mentioned above.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?**

My research is largely about answering this question. War transforms identities. On the one

hand, it requires a clearer self-identification and the need to determine 'who you are with' and who is a 'friend' or a 'foe'. The context of this war shaped strongly the identification of oneself as 'Ukrainian'. At the same time, war is a time of creating new identities with an uncertain hierarchy. Identities depend on one's the role in the war: a combatant, a volunteer, a refugee, a bystander. Identities also hinge on the place where one is located and its remoteness from the frontline or on experiences like that of being under occupation, among other things.

The war also reformats memory and amnesia. It becomes a central place of the past; the whole perception of history now passes through it. Therefore, we have a reassessment of the importance of the pre-war period and its reinterpretation, and this is especially true when it comes to such

complex phenomena like Ukrainian-Russian relations, or to a war as full of historical parallels as this one is.

One illustrative example, in my opinion, is the change of the attitudes of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Polls conducted after the beginning of the full-scale war showed a significant increase in those who have positive or neutral views about the activities of nationalists during WWII. Of course, this isn't the result of studying the subject and a sharp increase in knowledge among the population, but a consequence of reassessment in connection with the ongoing war and a projection of the events of the Second World War onto the current situation. In this case, contemporary Russia is identified with the USSR, which the UPA opposed.

## **Yuliia Soroka** People under occupation during the war in Ukraine: media representations, everyday life, and the perspective of postwar conflict transformation

**Y**uliia Soroka is a sociologist of culture. She holds a PhD in Sociology, and is Professor of Sociology at the N.V. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine) and a senior researcher in the Human Geography Unit of the Department of Geosciences at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). Her research considers symbolic spaces of Ukrainian society in different empirical fields. Previously, she looked at new independent media from the middle of 1990s, post-Soviet sociocultural transformations, social attitudes toward material wealth, the past, and the recognition of heroes, popular culture and films, and changes in urban symbolic space (i.e., toponyms), among other things. Currently, she focuses on culture and power relations. She asks, how does culture ‘work’ in the reproduction of power relationships in society? She has already empirically applied and justified the concept of ‘cultural mechanisms of power’ in prior research, including that



on discourses on Muslims in Ukrainian media, social theater, hate speech, dialog, collective identities in pro-Euromaidan discourses, hostility towards internally displaced persons (IDPs), and standing greeting rituals. Located in Fribourg, Switzerland, Yuliia Soroka has been a member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA War, Migration, Memory research group since 2022.

**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?**

My research is about people who are in the occupied territories during Russia's war against Ukraine. They survived the enemy troops' capture of the territory and partially or completely lost contact with the territories held by Ukraine.

Their lives are constantly in danger due to the loss of property and jobs, the destruction of vital infrastructure, and limited resources (from electricity and water to food). They are under constant threat of violence by the occupation authorities. But what does society know about these people under occupation? What both Ukraine and the world generally know comes largely from media reports. These reports mostly mention collaborators, people who managed to escape occupation, or dead local residents, whose graves were found after the return of Ukrainian state control to

*This is a significant time for the social sciences and humanities, which explore the world of ideas and beliefs*

the territory. Based on these reports, an image of the people under occupation forms, which after victory and the end of the war, will become a cause of tension and conflicts. This situation is dangerous not only for people under occupation but also for society in general. Therefore, it is necessary

to investigate media discourses during the war: how they function, what remains outside of their representation, and how this lack of representation affects

the view of a certain category of people in society.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?**

In the late 1980s, the time when I chose the focus of my studies, sociology had just appeared as a university discipline in the country. My teachers faced the challenge of understanding society

while eliminating the empty abstractions of Soviet social sciences and instead investigating it using scientific methods. Figures such as Olena Yakuba in Kharkiv and Iryna Popova in Odesa founded local sociological scientific schools, created educational programs, and established new traditions. Later, the task of developing a socio-cultural approach in Ukrainian sociology, which was supposed to take into account the cultural aspects of the formation of Ukrainian society, became an inspiring impetus for me. The sociology of culture, which I've been teaching since the beginning of 2000, became a path to the subjects of media, memory, identity, symbolic spaces, and the possibilities of interdisciplinary connections with history, anthropology, and linguistics. Now, my central research question is how culture 'works' to reproduce power relations in society. In other words, how do the meanings, values, and norms of a certain socio-cultural space cause and reproduce the specificity of human life in different countries. In this discipline, you can also find answers to the questions of the differences between Ukraine and Russia as well as the sources of authoritarianism and how to prevent it in Ukraine.

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?**

I was born in Mariupol, have family there, and, although I live permanently in Kharkiv, spent the first three weeks of the war in the city. Being in a war zone, under shelling and bombing, with the gradual disappearance of life support and communication resources, was the most difficult experience of my life. This experience also influenced my perception of how occupation is represented in public discourses. I decided to research the discourses of people under occupation. As for my scholarly approaches, they have generally not changed but have been refined. I'm applying approaches from postcolonial studies to complement my critical methodology. Similarly, I now use methods from discourse analysis, which I previously used to study groups who had limited possibilities to create a public discourse about themselves (such as Muslims or queer women in Ukraine <sup>1</sup>), to analyze

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1 The mentioned studies were done in collaboration with Olga Dzyuba. In studying the discourses of Muslims in Ukraine,

the discourses of people under Russian occupation.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?**

During the war, people experience destruction, ruination, and death. The material supports of life—residential buildings and businesses, shops and museums, government buildings—are being destroyed or are at risk of this. Personal belongings, possessions, or a favorite tree in a park or a spot on the beach with which memories are associated can also disappear. People close to you, with whom you shared your life, home, and past, are in danger. In such conditions, people can feel the importance of something that cannot be physically grasped—the words that they believe in. Words, confidence in their meaning, and the value of this meaning are, perhaps, the only thing that is not afraid of enemy missiles. This is a significant

time for the social sciences and humanities, which explore the world of ideas and beliefs. This time can be effective from the point of view of research into the symbolic spaces of society. Also, this is a time for meeting and getting closer to people and communities that are in great need of support now. Who, if not scholars in the social sciences and humanities, will help people in these difficult times have confidence in the existence of values that cannot be destroyed?

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?**

The war and the trials it causes evoke the experiences of previous generations. Accessible through family histories, which were mostly not publicly represented, they help people to survive, to accumulate material and psychological resources, and to make decisions. The Russian war against Ukraine raises many questions for people of my generation who were born in the Soviet Union and were nurtured in films about war and victory. It prompts us to reevaluate such concepts as ‘liberation’, ‘protection’, ‘brotherhood’, and ‘justice’.

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I was the scientific supervisor of Olga's dissertation. We coauthored the study on the discourses of queer women.

The war also invokes a comparison of the actions of the Russian Federation's political regime with the actions of the Soviet government throughout its existence. All this contributes to the awareness of the importance and value of the independent state of

Ukraine and the feeling of belonging to Ukrainian society. The numerous initiatives to dismantle monuments and change the names of streets associated with the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union exemplify these processes of shifting perceptions.

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## Natalia Zaitseva-Chipak The Migration Strategies of Ukrainians

**N**atalia Zaitseva-Chipak is a sociologist and a professor in the Department of Sociology at the Ukrainian Catholic University. Prior to this position, she was a professor in the Department of Sociology at the Lviv Ivan Franko National University. In 2002, she graduated from the Lviv Ivan Franko National University, and in 2007, she completed her PhD at the Classic Private University. Since 2007, she has also worked as an analyst at the Socioinform Ukrainian Center for Public Opinion Research. She has either participated in or managed more than 20 sociological studies of Ukrainian society. Her scientific interests focus on problems of modern



Ukrainian society and individual social groups, such as youths or internally displaced persons (IDPs). Natalia Zaitseva-Chipak has been a non-resident Fellow and member of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA War, Migration, Memory research group since 2022.

**How would you explain your research to someone who's not an expert?**

The war caused massive displacement of Ukrainians, both within and outside the country. In addition to the personal tragedies and stories of Ukrainians, we can also talk about the impact of these phenomena on society in general. Among other things, the Ukrainian state has faced a loss of human resources, which could potentially deepen the country's demographic crisis in the future. In contrast, EU countries are facing the problem of ensuring social security and integration of millions of Ukrainians today and most probably in the foreseeable future.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the situation with emigration will unfold in the future. Whether the flow of refugees to the EU will increase, or on the contrary, Ukrainians will start gradually returning home. I intend to identify the factors informing these decisions and strategies that assist both temporary displaced individuals coming to

Europe and internally displaced people in Ukraine (IDPs) in relocating to a new place of residence. This research aims to facilitate the development of policies for effectively working with IDPs and refugees, benefiting both these populations and the host country.

Another important aspect of the study is the constant change of the social roles and positions in which Ukrainians fleeing the war find themselves. In official reports, we meet well-established groups (IDPs, refugees, and those with temporary protection status), but our previous research shows that these categories are often mixed in real life. The same person can move around within the country (whether registered as an IDP or not). They may live part of the time as an IDP and part of the time as a displaced person abroad. In one family, its individual members may have very different statuses (refugee/IDP/regular citizen), and may or may not want to officially register themselves. Quantitative research used by most international monitoring orga-



nizations does not provide an understanding of transnational families, capture the fluidity of their roles and multi-vector strategies of displacement and survival. Furthermore, it is rarely discussed or explored how displaced people talk about their sense of belonging in such fluid situations and what factors or markers influence its configuration; how all these factors can influence the decision to stay or return. This research is based on a qualitative methodology that will allow us to study in depth their strategies of migration, self-description and adaptation, capturing all the nuances.

**What intrigued you when you started your academic journey? What were formative encounters or challenges?** The beginning

of my academic career was driven by a keen interest in the paradoxes of social reality. Ukrainian society is intriguing in this sense, because whenever I read how it is perceived from the outside, it is often a simplistic binary picture (East versus West, Ukrainian versus Soviet, pro-European or pro-Russian). There was a constant feeling that all its complexity, diversity, and sometimes ambivalence are ignored. For example, I was interested

in understanding how it was possible that religious Ukrainians could simultaneously recognize the importance of the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” and support the preservation of the death penalty in the country. Or how the same event (e.g., the Revolution of Dignity) could be remembered by Ukrainians as two antagonistic narratives. These questions led me to study the mechanisms of motivation, memory, and social behavior. In addition, there was a feeling that society was actively changing, many things were being rethought, discussed, and acquired new meanings. It was interesting to follow these changes and discover new aspects of it.

Over time, the practical aspect of research has become equally important to me. Ideally, when research not only explains social reality, but also helps to form it through the recommendations (e.g., when it lays the ground for developing strategies and policies for NGOs, politicians and organizations).

**How, if at all, has the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine influenced your research questions or approaches?** It has indeed influenced my research, primarily due

to changing the focus of my research interest to the area of migration intentions and adaptation of migrants. Given the scale of the processes and the significance of the social consequences, it is important for me to understand how these changes will affect the Ukrainian state and host countries. On the practical side, I faced new questions about how to mitigate the adaptation of displaced persons and how to motivate them to return to Ukraine after the war.

**What do you consider to be the role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval, fragmented publics, and authoritarian transgressions?** The role of the humanities and social sciences in times of upheaval and change is of critical importance. The fact is that a person acts out of habit in much of their everyday life “on autopilot”, and societies in a state of calm have thousands of optimal strategies of existence that do not require extra reflections, because they have been forged by experience and time.

In times of upheaval, the social fabric is eroded. Familiar algorithms stop being relevant. New problems and challenges emerge, and contra-

dictions become more acute. New structures of social relations are being formed. The social sciences and humanities help producing the reflections on the new reality: to comprehensively comprehend it, understand it, identify trends that will shape the situation, and offer tactical and strategic tools for its correction.

Today, we are witnessing all three challenges listed in the question: upheaval (war, interruption of food and energy supply, threat of recession), fragmentation (growing popularity of right-wing forces in Europe, Brexit), and challenges of authoritarianism (growing power of regimes in China, Iran, Russia, and others). These processes have the potential of triggering the Third World War. Today, the role of the social sciences and humanities is to identify and neutralize the triggers of this process.

It is within the competence of these sciences to counteract propaganda, any form of intolerance and imperial thinking. It is for the humanities and social sciences to advocate for the values of sustainable development: conscious consumption, tolerance, environmental protection, etc.

These field of studies are instrumental for levelling the consequences

of the negative processes taking place in the country and the world. For instance, today psychologists who provide psychological support because of the horrors of war, loss of health, home and family for millions of people in need, and sociologists who identify the most acute problems and provide timely information to the authorities and public/charitable organizations, are appreciated more than ever.

**How do you think war affects memory or identity? And how does this connect to your research?**

I believe that war encourages thinking people to start reflecting back in time, to search for the reasons that led to horrors and tragedy. The main actors in the warfare are states, so people are becoming more interested in the history and politics of their country. In Ukraine, the real history has been silenced for decades. More than half of Ukrainians (all over the age of 45) studied with textbooks written in the USSR, learning the history written for them by the invader. Although Ukrainian

youth studied history in Ukrainian textbooks, they were exposed to the pro-Russian version of history at

*In times of upheaval, the social fabric is eroded and the social sciences help producing reflections on the new reality*

home and in Russian propaganda. It was not easy for an ordinary person to understand where the truth was.

The war forced millions of Ukrainians to rapidly reconsider their identity. Reality made them realize the selectivity and ideological biases of the imposed versions of history, and pushed them to think about a new, authentic, unaltered history, where they see themselves and their place in a new way. In particular, in the European context. This process partly began in 2014 and accelerated significantly in 2022. Ukrainians are massively abandoning the use of the Russian language in everyday life and Russian identity. Interest in historical literature has grown in Ukraine as well.

My research deals with the issues of memory and identity as well. In particular, we will investigate whether the perception of Ukraine and its history has changed among people affected by the war; as well as the impact of migration and war on the identity of Ukrainians.

## Science Communication

### **TRAFO—Blog for Transregional Research series**

TRAFO—Blog for Transregional Research is a platform for scholars in the humanities and social sciences who are interested in transregional exchange and research on current issues. TRAFO is the blog of the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin) and the Max Weber Stiftung—Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland (Bonn). The TRAFO Blog serves as a discussion and information platform for scholars, who are interested in transregional research. It presents research results and contributions from the field of transregional and area studies.

### **Memory of War, Memory *during* War, Memory as War**

The unprecedented Russian full-scale attack on Ukraine brought the recent conflicts over memory in East Central Europe and in Ukraine to the attention of an international audience. Mass displacement also exposed millions of Ukrainians to new challenges that triggered intensive reinterpretations of the past—both the distant and the very recent—and a reevaluation of their memory through new experiences. This series aims to reach beyond the dimension of the politics of history and examine how cultural, collective, and individual memories are reshaped when used for interpreting the shocking realities of the current war. Additionally, it intends to study how memory is mobilized on a personal and collective level to deal with the ruptures and threats posed by this war and in an attempt to explain what is happening. This series stems from the research project “War, Migration, Memory” directed by Viktoria Sereda and conducted through the Prisma Ukraina program at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin. Contributions will include texts written by the project’s fellows. We also invite further con-

tributions that touch on these issues, or open them up from a comparative perspective. Please send proposals to [prisma@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:prisma@trafo-berlin.de).

### **Diversity of Displacement, Diversity of Returns**

The Russian full-scale invasion against Ukraine triggered mass internal and external displacement of its residents – one of the biggest forced migrations in Europe since the World War II. Ukrainian citizens and foreigners alike had diverse experiences along their displacement journeys depending on their family, economic, or health situation, their route of escape and country of destination, their networks of support in the new place, their obligations, and “anchors” back in Ukraine. All these factors also affect return aspirations of the displaced or the lack of thereof as the level of uncertainty about when and how the war will end—the “waiting loop”—continues. In this series of blog posts, we invite authors to reflect on the heterogeneous displacement experiences that take place in Europe: not only Ukrainians, but also citizens of other countries forced to flee their homelands. We are interested in contributions that analyse mid and long-term consequences of Ukrainian and other forced migration on social cohesion within the EU, its’ impact on the displaced themselves, host communities, and a wider region. The questions of return, circular migration, diaspora politics, secondary movements within the EU and integration are also in our focus as we need to understand points of synergy and points of potential conflicts between different migrant and diaspora groups, between the newcomers and the host communities.

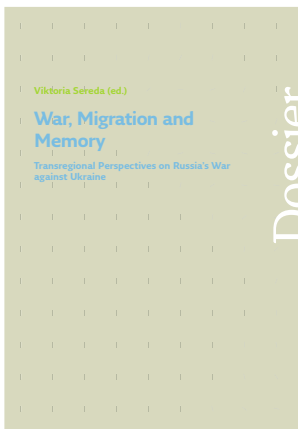
This series stems from the second phase of the project “War, Migration, Memory” directed by Viktoria Sereda and coordinated by Lidia Kuzemska. It is conducted through the Prisma Ukraïna program at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin. Contributions will include texts written by members of the research group and we also invite further contributions that touch on these issues, or open them up from a comparative perspective. Please send proposals to [prisma@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:prisma@trafo-berlin.de).

## **Rethinking Eastern European Studies and the Humanities and Social Sciences in Eastern Europe**

This TRAFO Blog series runs in parallel to the monthly online seminars held under the same name, conceived and chaired by Andrii Portnov, Professor of Entangled History of Ukraine at the European University Viadrina. In both, researchers discuss the issues and concerns of East European studies in times of change and upheaval – in the context of Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine, and beyond. Contributions to this blog series can touch upon the most current issues of and in the region, like nationalism, pluralism, the uses and misuses of history and identity, war, resilience, displacement, and destruction and re-construction. Meanwhile, we invite looking into more neglected topics as well, such as new approaches to the Jewish and Muslim pasts of Eastern Europe, or comparisons of experiences in Eastern Europe with those in other regions of the world. Additionally, contributions can address questions on the state and future of East European studies, including their potential decolonization and what this might mean. Texts in this series need not connect to only Ukraine but can be situated in Eastern Europe. We also encourage a transregional approach through comparative perspectives, for example, those on former Yugoslavia, the Arab Spring, Latin American revolutions, or other case studies. Please send proposals to [prisma@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:prisma@trafo-berlin.de).

## Upcoming Dossiers

Dossiers of the Forum Transregionale Studien are bundles of essays, texts, audio- or visual contributions that address a common theme or project. Dossiers allow quick and open access publication of edited volumes. They are a flexible format that facilitates publications and re-publications of contributions with a collective-peer-review. Two Dossiers have been prepared in the first phase of the research project “War, Migration, Memory”.

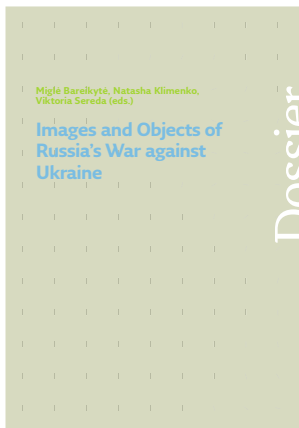


### **Viktoria Sereda (ed.): War, Migration and Memory. Transregional Perspectives on Russia's War against Ukraine**

This edited volume tackles the familiar research question in humanities, sociology, and history: “How does war and displacement reshape memory?” It utilizes the current Ukrainian context as a foundation for a thorough re-examination. Scholars have historically simplified the complex transformations in Ukrainian society post-1991 and post-2014 into dichotomies, such as East-West divisions or conflicting identities and historical memories. The unprecedented

Russian attack on Ukraine has brought conflicts over memory into international focus, prompting an exploration of how collective and individual memories reshape in interpreting current war realities. The mass displacement of millions of Ukrainians has led to a reevaluation of cultural memory, triggering a complex reaction from Ukrainian society. This publication aims to explore the intricacies of nation-building models, the impact of decolonization and decolonization discourses, and changes in memory within various contexts and temporalities, from local to global levels. Emphasizing the Dossier's aim to engage a wider critically thinking audience, contributors are encouraged to move beyond providing empirical data and to outline new

conceptual ideas, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The study delves into personal-level memory changes, examining how individuals navigate time disruptions and employ cultural memories to redefine identities and cope with present traumas. Ultimately, the volume seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the interplay between war, displacement, and memory and experience of religious groups and minorities in the Ukrainian context, with implications for the broader international community.



**Miglė Bareikytė, Natasha Klimenko,  
Viktorija Sereda (ed.): Images and Objects  
of Russia's War against Ukraine**

The edited volume explores the visual and material aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian War and their regional and transregional reverberations. Specifically, the contributions in the volume ask: Beyond “images of war”, how does documentation or propaganda become a “war of images”, and what are its interpretations? What role is played by the algorithmic drives of social media platforms and the users and publics on them?

Do images accompany textual discourses, create new narratives, or act as mediums for translation? Who produces images, and what are the terms of and audiences for their circulation and reception? How have artists responded to this war, and how do historic artistic practices relate to the present? How is “heritage”—either architectural, monumental, or that stored in museums—reconsidered or problematised in the context of the war, and can this be called iconoclasm or decolonisation? And how do memoryscapes or symbolic markers affect a sense of belonging?







### **PRISMA UKRAÏNA—Research Network Eastern Europe**

is a research program at the Forum Transregionale Studien that opens up new regional and transregional perspectives on and from the East of Europe through the prism of Ukraine. Initiated in 2015 and directed by Andrii Portnov, PRISMA UKRAÏNA provides scope for academic research, transregional exchange and communication through fellowships, workshops, panel discussions, seminars, lectures and science communication.

PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *War, Migration, Memory* is an interdisciplinary research group of Ukrainian scholars in Ukraine and Germany that has been constituted in 2022 under the direction of Viktoriia Sereda. The research group investigates the transformational effects of war and dislocation on people's memory, history, and sense of belonging. The complementary project PRISMA UKRAÏNA: *Science Communication and Networks* offers research-related, participatory and multilingual communication on Ukraine-related topics. It facilitates decentralized forms of academic cooperation.

