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PAPER AND PANEL ABSTRACTS

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| INDIVIDUAL ABSTRACTS | 6 |
| <i>Organised by the speakers' names in alphabet order</i> | 6 |
| Nurlan Aliyev (University of Economics and Human Sciences, Warsaw) <i>Reassessing Russia's Security Policy</i> | 6 |
| Walid Al-Saqaf (Södertörn University) <i>Navigating Telegram's Information Dynamics during the Russian War on Ukraine</i> | 6 |
| Gifty Ann Babu (Jawaharlal Nehru University) <i>The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Women's Political Representation</i> | 8 |
| Mariana Barchuk-Halyk (independent scholar) <i>Enhancing Societal Preparedness: The Case Study of Ukraine</i> | 9 |
| Renat Bekkin (Södertörn University) <i>When History Matters Again: Challenged Identities of Crimean Tatars and Search for Lost Grounds after 2014</i> | 10 |
| Alexandra Brankova (Uppsala University) <i>Russian Digital Nationalism during 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War: Mapping Nationalist Mobilisation, Media Practices and Nationalist Discourses</i> | 11 |
| Radzhana Buyantueva (Université Libre de Bruxelles) <i>Queer visibility and conservative political turn in Russia</i> | 11 |
| Dmitrii Dorogov (Södertörn University) <i>"Traditional Values" as a Cure: Putinite Biopolitics of HIV/AIDS</i> | 13 |
| Andreas Fagerholm (Åbo Akademi University) <i>Explaining sympathy with Russia's 2022 offensive on Ukraine among European far left and far right parties</i> | 14 |
| Alexander Generalov (Independent researcher) <i>The concepts of anti-imperialism and decolonization in Russian exile protest movements</i> | 14 |
| Mette Ginnerskov-Dahlberg (Uppsala University/Södertörn University) <i>On the run. Student migrants' experiences of escaping inhospitable conditions in their home countries through the means of foreign education</i> | 15 |
| Yulia Gradsikova (Södertörn University) <i>"Traditional values", the Russian war on Ukraine, and state dependent women's organizations – Women's Union of Russia' anti-gender agenda</i> | 16 |
| Sebastian Graf (Lund University) <i>Remembering the present, imagining the future: Temporalities of Ukrainian virtual war museums</i> | 17 |
| Margalita Japaridze (Tampere University) <i>The Influence of Russia's War in Ukraine on Georgia</i> | 18 |
| Elena Johansson & Jenny Wiik (Gothenburg University) <i>Russian journalists in exile: rethinking of professional identity</i> | 19 |
| Sigrid Kaasik-Krogerus (University of Helsinki) <i>Change and continuity of European values: citizens' perspective</i> | 20 |
| Lisa Källström (Södertörn University) <i>Children as Motif: Murals as a rhetorical act</i> | 21 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Judith Kärn (Independent researcher) <i>Locked in forever? – An EU legal framework for short term exit strategies from energy suppliers’ violation of public International Law and Human Rights viewed from a legal perspective</i> | 21 |
| Tatiana Kasperski (Södertörn University) <i>"How We learned to Stop Worrying": Environmental and Safety Risks at Ukrainian Nuclear Facilities during Russia’s War ..</i> | 21 |
| Aliaksei Kazharski (Charles University) <i>An Authoritarian Spectacle: Visual biopolitics and the Dramaturgy of the Poland-Belarus Border Migration Crisis</i> | 22 |
| Alar Kilp (University of Tartu) <i>Securization of Orthodoxy in Baltic states after 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine</i> | 22 |
| Tatiana Kochubinska (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD)) <i>“Projects of the future” devoid of their present: Curatorial approach to uncomfortable heritage</i> | 24 |
| Nuri Korkmaz (Bursa Technical University) <i>Russian Assault on Ukraine and the Shifting Geopolitical Interests of Russia in the Black Sea Region.</i> | 24 |
| Natalia Konarzewska (Centre for Security Studies, War Studies University in Warsaw) <i>The war in Ukraine and its implications for the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.</i> | 25 |
| Olexandr Kravchuk (The University of Bristol) <i>The decolonization of the history of South Ukraine and Crimea in the last quarter of 18th – first half of 19th century: approaches and perspectives</i> | 27 |
| Yuliya Krylova-Grek (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy/Uppsala University) <i>Transformation of Russian Media Narratives in the Context of the War in Ukraine</i> | 28 |
| Hanna Kulahina-Stadnichenko (H.S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) and Liudmila Fylypovich (H.S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) <i>War as a trigger for the aggravation of inter-Orthodox relations in Ukraine</i> | 29 |
| Valeriia Lavrenko (Dmytro Yavornitskiy Dnipro National Historical Museum) <i>Ukrainian museums in the conditions of full-scale Russian aggression</i> | 30 |
| Alina Legeyda (VN Karazin Kharkiv National University) and Dmytro Legeyda (OM Beketova Kharkiv National University of Urban Economy) <i>The Phenomenon of Kharkiv</i> | 32 |
| Noela Mahmutaj (University of Tirana) <i>A New Geopolitical Order? The Ukraine War and the Western Balkans’ Prospects for EU Integration</i> | 33 |
| Aigerim Nurseitova (University of Tartu) <i>The Estonian Russophone Minority's Identity Development during the War in Ukraine</i> | 34 |
| Gunnar Nygren (Södertörn University), Andreas Widholm (Stockholm University) <i>Social media and war reporting from Ukraine</i> | 34 |
| Natalia Orłowska-Chyz (Centre for Security Studies, War Studies University, Warsaw) <i>Impact of the war on the Russian influence in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy</i> | 35 |
| Tetiana Perga (Institute of World History of National Academy of Science of Ukraine) <i>Russian war against Ukraine and nature: depicting the Ukrainian Military in adult and children’s narratives</i> | 37 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Vello Pettai (University of Tartu) <i>Minority educational reforms in Estonia and Latvia: the twilight of Russian-language education?</i> | 37 |
| Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University) <i>Tradition, Nation and Ecospiritual Utopia in the Light of Conceptualization of War among Ukrainian Anastasians</i> | 39 |
| Anna Ratecka (Jagiellonian University) <i>Fears, Risks, Threats – Rhetoric and Politics of Human Trafficking in the War in Ukraine</i> | 39 |
| Oleg Reut (University of Eastern Finland) <i>‘Even a Cemetery Is Affected by the War’</i> .. | 40 |
| Roman Romantsov (Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre, Lublin) <i>The Leninfall as Counter-revolutionary Iconoclasm in modern Ukraine 2014-2022</i> | 41 |
| Emma Rönngren (Uppsala University) <i>Navigating the news: Russophone youth’s reception of Russia’s strategic narratives in Latvia</i> | 42 |
| Sanita Rugina (Södertörn University) <i>The reconstruction of entrepreneurial identity among Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs</i> | 43 |
| Monica Quirico (Södertörn University) <i>Story of a failure? Baltic cooperation in the global controversy over Nord Stream 2</i> | 44 |
| Ieva Sakelaite (Vilnius University) <i>Aesthetics of Protest in Vilnius: A Study of Artistic Responses to the Russian War on Ukraine</i> | 46 |
| Anselm Schmidt (University of Tartu) <i>Ukrainian Struggle(s) for Agency: Emerging Historiography and a Multi-Level Approach</i> | 47 |
| Thomas Sedelius (Dalarna University / Södertörn University), Olga Mashtaler (National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” / Dalarna University), Jenny Åberg (Dalarna University / Södertörn University) <i>Executive Coordination and War: Semi-Presidential Leadership in Ukraine during Zelenskyi’s Presidency</i> | 48 |
| Anna-Karin Selberg (Södertörn University) <i>The war’s role in Russia’s political image-making</i> | 49 |
| Iryna Shuvalova (University of Oslo) <i>Manufacturing Russianness: Prosthetic Identities in the Occupied Ukrainian Territories</i> | 50 |
| Maria Silina (Södertörn University) <i>Assessing the Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Museums: History and Perspectives</i> | 51 |
| Sergii Slukhai and Nataliia Slukhai (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv) <i>Economic and Cognitive Foundations of Ukrainian Society’s Resistance to Russian Aggression</i> | 51 |
| Agnieszka Starczewska (University of Warsaw) <i>Business as usual or business unusual? A glance at the foreign direct investments protection situation on the Ukrainian territory</i> | 53 |
| Andrzej Szeptycki (University of Warsaw) <i>Poland and the Ukrainian refugee crisis</i> ... | 54 |
| Daria Taradai and Dariya Orlova (Mohyla School of Journalism, National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy) <i>No Rules Fighting: Telegram as the Game-Changer of the Media Landscape in Ukraine</i> | 55 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Tihomir Topuzovski (Skopje Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities) and Irina Seits (Södertörn University) <i>Migrant Art & Migration Crisis in Europe since 2015: Migrant Flows, Moving Images, and Mappings of Migration</i> | 56 |
| Olha Voznyuk (International Research Center for Cultural Studies, Vienna) <i>The role of literature as a war documentation tool in Ukraine after 2022</i> | 58 |
| Oksana Udovyk (INGENIO (CSIC-UPV)) <i>Imagining cities we would like to return. Crafting a displace-aware recovery strategy for Ukraine</i> | 58 |
| Aytac Yurukcu (Karelian Institute) <i>The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and Its Impact on Eastern Europe and the Baltic Region</i> | 58 |
| Galym Zhussipbek (Suleyman Demirel University), Zhanar Nagayeva (Independent scholar) <i>Catalyzed by the war in Ukraine unanticipated but necessary “Kazakh voice” in decolonial thinking</i> | 59 |
| PANEL ABSTRACTS | 61 |
| <i>Includes individual presentations within panels, organised in order following the conference program</i> | 61 |
| <i>Sustaining Action in Times of Crisis</i> (by Dominika Polanska, Elzbieta Korolczuk, Luca Sara Brody, Michaela Pixova) | 61 |
| <i>Negotiating Hegemony: Central Asia in a Multipolar World</i> (by Olena Podolian, Bo Petersson, Edward Lemon, Oleg Antonov) | 62 |
| <i>Why the Invasion of Ukraine Matters for the Caucasus</i> (by Sofie Bedford, Nurlan Aliyev, Sossi Tatikyan, George Mchedlishvili, Mairbek Vatchagaev) | 63 |
| <i>Legal Harmonization or Decolonization? Cases from Eurasia</i> (by Olena Podolian, Bo Petersson, Edward Lemon, Oleg Antonov) | 64 |
| Roundtable: <i>Exploring the Links Between the Culture War and the Actual War</i> (by Hansalbin Sältenberg, Elzbieta Korolczuk, Maria Brock, Emil Edenborg, Jenny Gunnarsson-Payne) | 64 |
| <i>Symbols and Narratives of Ukrainian Resistance in the Context of Russian-Ukrainian War</i> (by Yuliya Yurchuk, Tamara Martsenyuk, Nadiya Kiss, Daria Antsybor) | 65 |
| <i>Industries, Cultural Diplomacy, and War</i> (by Maria Silina, Yi Gu, Svetlana Gorshenina, Anya Kuteleva, Elisabeth Bishop) | 67 |
| <i>Information, Communication, and Russia’s War on Ukraine</i> (by Göran Bolin, Kateryna Boyko, Roman Horbyk, Dariya Orlova, Yuliya Yurchuk, Göran Bolin, Per Ståhlberg) | 67 |
| <i>Understanding the ideology of Putinism since 2022</i> (by Mikhail Suslov, Alicja Curanović, Matthew Blackburn) | 69 |

INDIVIDUAL ABSTRACTS

Organised by the speakers' names in alphabet order

Nurlan Aliyev (University of Economics and Human Sciences, Warsaw)
Reassessing Russia's Security Policy

The topic of the research is chosen for its significance as one of the main problems of contemporary international security — the evolution and function of contemporary Russia's security policy. The research covers several main areas of Russia's external security policy and its function. It covers the invasion of Ukraine as well. It discusses problems such as tactics, operational and strategic level developments, and focuses on their functions in the Russian security and foreign policy postures. That is, how such methods contribute to the implementation of Russia's security and foreign policies and how it affects them. The project emphasizes the necessity of asymmetry in the strategic interaction for the Russian security strategy. This is the main argument of this book project and it runs through every chapter. It aims to lead the readers into the main argument, with the book providing them with an introduction to the contexts in which asymmetry applies. Another argument of the research is that asymmetric approaches are preferable for Russia mainly because of its weaknesses and shortcomings, including in military (such as problems in military management, lack of troops preparations, logistical mess and shortcomings on the armament supply) which have been also reviling since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

Walid Al-Saqaf (Södertörn University) *Navigating Telegram's
Information Dynamics during the Russian War on Ukraine*

The rapid evolution of digital communication platforms has profoundly reshaped the way information is disseminated and consumed, especially during times of conflict. One such platform, Telegram, has emerged as a pivotal tool for news dissemination, particularly during the Russian war on Ukraine. Unlike traditional social media platforms, Telegram's architecture and design principles make it uniquely positioned to circumvent censorship, ensuring a more resilient flow of information. Yet, its role in shaping public sentiment during conflicts remains largely understudied.

The primary aim of this study is to delve into the intricate patterns of Telegram usage during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. By leveraging advanced AI, Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Social Network Analysis (SNA) techniques, this research seeks to understand how top Ukrainian Telegram channels disseminated content during this period, the nature of this content, and its broader societal implications. This becomes especially pertinent given Telegram's ascendancy as an information source in regions experiencing conflict or/and censorship.

This investigation is part of a larger project funded by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap (MSB)), focusing on the role of social media and instant messaging services in covering the war on Ukraine. Through the examination of over 300,000 messages extracted from the top 15 Ukrainian Telegram channels, the study offers important insights into the dynamics of digital communication during wartime.

Our analysis revealed several notable trends. Channels like V_Zelenskiy_official and UkraineNow played a pivotal role in the dissemination of official narratives. However, while the former, representing President Zelensky, largely broadcasted messages without significant interaction, the latter exhibited extensive inter-channel connectivity, suggesting a strategic approach to information dissemination. On the other end of the spectrum, channels like asupersharij and legitimniy displayed a discernible deviation from the governmental narrative, hinting at the platform's diverse range of voices.

Diving deeper into content analysis, distinct thematic clusters emerged. These ranged from discussions around defending freedom and military operations to the ramifications of the conflict on civilian life and transportation. The granularity of this data also allowed for a temporal analysis, shedding light on how messaging trends evolved in response to on-ground realities.

The broader implications of these findings are manifold. At one level, they underscore the resilience of digital platforms like Telegram in ensuring the flow of information during conflicts. Simultaneously, they highlight the platform's potential in shaping public sentiment, influencing decision-making, and potentially altering conflict dynamics.

In conclusion, as the world grapples with the ever-evolving landscape of digital communication, studies like these become crucial in understanding their multifaceted impacts. By offering a comprehensive analysis of Telegram's role during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, this research not only contributes to the academic discourse but also provides policymakers, activists, and communicators with invaluable insights to navigate the digital age.

Gifty Ann Babu (Jawaharlal Nehru University) *The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Women's Political Representation*

Gender equality is a necessary condition for the effective functioning of democracy. However, despite constituting half of the world's population, women are under-represented across national parliaments. Women experience discrimination due to structural inequality, patriarchy, and gender division of roles. The Ukrainian experience tells no different story. Since the formation of the independent Ukraine, women parliamentarians have been few in number, with slow advancement with each election. Though Ukrainian law upholds equal rights for men and women, gender stereotypes play a significant role in keeping women away from politics. Russia's war in Ukraine and the subsequent challenges its democracy face can put a question mark on the further development of women's access to political office in the country.

The war has increased women's participation in the public sphere, with many women joining the military and taking up jobs that used to be men's work. Though women play a vital role during wartime, many works go unnoticed. The masculinized nature of the military and war stands in the way of women and perpetuates gender roles. However, many women parliamentarians and ministers have been praised for their activities since the beginning of the war. Yet, this positive attitude towards women leaders can be at stake if the war continues for a longer time and the democratic nature of the country gets affected by it. Taking notes from other post-war societies, the nation-rebuilding process after the war will be difficult, and the empowerment of women or addressing women's issues may not be a priority to the government. That makes it necessary to continue bringing changes to traditional gender roles. This study, drawing examples from other post-war/post-colonial societies, tries to understand the state of women in politics in Ukraine since the Russian invasion. The discourse on the war and its impact on women in Ukraine will be explored in this study with the help of information largely collected from media reports, government reports, and reports of non-governmental organizations. The study also takes into account how the changed nature of gender roles impacts women's empowerment in politics. A picture of women's status in Ukrainian politics prior to the war is drawn from the available literature. This study is interdisciplinary in nature and outlines theoretical approaches from various fields with a specific focus on the feminist discourse on political representation.

Mariana Barchuk-Halyk (independent scholar) *Enhancing Societal Preparedness: The Case Study of Ukraine*

The Russian invasion on Ukraine significantly altered the security architecture in Europe. Until the conclusion of the Second World War, the sphere of the national and international security was largely dominated by states, governments, and international organizations. However, present-day international affairs feature non-state actors as ones of the key roles. The challenges countries and the international community have faced during the last decade like rising political conflicts, Covid-19, wars, natural disasters, climate changes impose hardships and shows new approaches throughout involving of non-state actors and in security fields.

Modern reality has confirmed that, in the case of an emergency, the role of non-state actors like NGOs, social campaigns and initiatives trying to have an impact in security dimension has been steadily growing. Depending on the scale of the emergency situation the threat can exceeds resources and capabilities and in those extremal circumstances multiple non-state actors by taking action in different dimensions could help states and governments deal with jeopardy. The one of approach is to maximize the engagement of civil society by the establishment of the effective preparedness system an enhance societal resilience.

Since 2014, Ukrainian civil society has established initiatives that played a pivotal role in safeguarding the country during the onset and subsequent years of hybrid Russian war against Ukraine. A noteworthy characteristic of the Ukrainian case study is the robust social activism and volunteering movement that emerged from the Revolution of Dignity. In 2014, Ukraine saw the emergence of nearly 7 million participants of the Revolution of Dignity, forming the bedrock of its civil society. During 2014-2015, Ukrainians took concerted action on two fronts: revitalizing the military and protecting the nation.

The volunteer movement, originating at the war's onset, emerged as a Ukrainian civil society initiative aimed at fostering societal resilience in the absence of leadership. Notably, some activists transitioned into soldiers within the newly established volunteer battalions, while others provided responsibilities for supply and support operations. This movement evolved in two primary directions: extending aid to the military (both the regular Armed Forces of Ukraine and volunteer battalions) and providing assistance to people who had been forcibly relocated from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

It is worth emphasizing that throughout 2014-2015, the military's sustenance relied on internal resources, particularly volunteers, the Ukrainian population, and domestic enterprises. In this context, from the Revolution of Dignity and during the years of Russian-Ukrainian war, volunteers emerged as one of the top-three most influential institutions in contemporary

Ukraine. Consequently, activists, military volunteer service, collectively established a robust non-state sector that not only serves the Ukrainian nation, but also contributes significantly to civil preparedness and societal resilience.

Such experience proved invaluable when the full-scale Russian invasion occurred on February, 2022. During the years of war, Ukrainian civil society spearheaded impactful initiatives that played an important role in safeguarding the nation amidst full-scale war, especially during 2022. Notable among these are the “Povernys zhyvym” (Come Back Alive) Foundation, vested with the authority to procure weaponry; “Aerorozvidka” which provides drones, and the medical volunteer movement “Hospitaliers”. These organizations enjoy the trust of Ukrainians, who wholeheartedly contribute through donations.

The case study of Ukraine serves as an example how representatives of the civic space adopted a new leadership model in times of emergency and developed new human security concept and societal resilience since 2014.

Renat Bekkin (Södertörn University) *When History Matters Again: Challenged Identities of Crimean Tatars and Search for Lost Grounds after 2014*

The so-called “Russian spring” in March 2014 changed the fate of the inhabitants of Crimea. This event was especially painful for the Crimean Tatars and still creates both internal and international political reactions. New political realities called for the revision of the Muslim Crimean Tatars’ strategy for preserving their religious, linguistic, cultural and national identities.

The attitude towards Russian policy in Crimea after 2014 became a powerful factor that negatively influenced the unity of the Crimean Tatars in the face of the emerging threats. In the Soviet era there was a consensus among the Crimean Tatars that they should seek to return to Crimea. Today the same consensus among the majority of Crimean Tatars could be found in generally a negative assessment of the events of May 2014. However, as in the 1960–1980s among the Crimean Tatars, there are fundamental differences on the issue of the strategy and tactics of interaction with the Russian authorities in the new conditions. The presentation analyses modern relationships and issues related to the identity, image of Self and the Other of the Crimean Tatars and their adaptation to new political realities after 2014.

Alexandra Brankova (Uppsala University) *Russian Digital Nationalism during 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War: Mapping Nationalist Mobilisation, Media Practices and Nationalist Discourses*

The changing legal environment affects the Russian media landscape by controlling the framing of the war and the Russian armed forces whilst suppressing independent or more liberal media outlets. The neo-authoritarian processes have shaped the position of nationalist media and their channels by both increasing the salience of nationalist discourses but also responding quickly to reactionary and critical nationalist voices. Digital media appears key in the process of communicating otherness in times of war and mobilising audiences in different ways. The paper presents how four different Russian nationalist actors (Tsargrad, Patriot Media Group, the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), and the Club of Angry Patriots) utilise digital media to construct competing nationalist discourses and mobilise (both in their efforts to participate in the Russo-Ukrainian war and their response to the regime's war strategies or current domestic events). Nationalist actors are promoting new alternative sources to state-owned sources of information or are aligning with the state-promoted narratives. Private actors such as Konstantin Malofeev or Yevgeny Prigozhin fund their own digital media production, respectively Tsargrad online television and the former Patriot Media Group. After Prigozhin and Wagner's mutiny, the Patriot Media Group was banned and all their outlets shut down. Both the Russian Imperial Movement and the newly established Club of Angry Patriots represent nationalist groups organised from below supportive of the war effort against Ukraine but having a more complex relationship with the regime and the Ministry of Defence. By adopting the theory of media ecology, the paper explores hyperconnectivity among discourses and actors as well as focuses on their wartime media practices. Critical discourse analysis (discourse-historic approach) and digital ethnography are applied when exploring the shifts in Russian nationalism discourses and the communication of otherness. Theoretically, the paper is aligned with the discursive and cultural turn in theories of nationalism, media ecology, and representation theory. Tsargrad aligns more with the state-promoted narratives similar to the former Patriot media group. Both the RIM and the Club of Angry Patriots to a greater extent are critical to the regime, especially during Russian military drawbacks.

Radzhana Buyantueva (Université Libre de Bruxelles) *Queer visibility and conservative political turn in Russia*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an apogee of the underlying conflict between Western liberal ideals and anti-Western traditionalist discourses. From the Kremlin's standpoint, the invasion

aims to prevent the expansion of the European Union and NATO and the spread of liberal values, including the ideas of universal human rights, tolerance, and LGBT rights. For Russia, the diffusion of Western liberal norms is a hidden sign of imperialism aiming for global dominance. At the same time, the war in Ukraine shows Russia's imperialist aspirations. Gender and LGBTQ+ rights have become central points of contention in cultural and geopolitical struggles between the West and Russia. LGBTQ+ identities are portrayed by the Kremlin as a foreign phenomenon imported from the West. In that respect, as the Kremlin's propaganda claims, LGBTQ+ visibility poses a threat to Russia's national integrity and morals.

Following the growing hostility towards the West combined with an assault on Ukraine, the norms concerning gender and sexuality have become increasingly restrictive in Russia. This paper explores the implications of adopting Western identity politics in hostile non-democratic settings such as Russia. Putin's Russia is one of the leading forces, promoting patriarchy and 'traditional values' on the national and international levels. Since Vladimir Putin's reelection in 2012, the Russian state has displayed growing authoritarianism, conservatism, and anti-Westernism, which manifests in the promotion of masculinity and heteronormativity. LGBTQ+ rights have become not only an issue of civil rights but an important geopolitical standpoint. The Kremlin portrays LGBTQ+ rights as the Western imposition incompatible with 'Russian traditional values.' Because of that, the LGBTQ+ community experienced increasing repression, becoming a convenient target for the state.

Russia has adopted a range of policies to curb queer visibility and limit LGBTQ+ rights (e.g., the 2013 law banning propaganda of nontraditional sexual behavior, the 2020 amendments to the Constitution to obstruct the possibility of same-sex unions). The Kremlin's active promotion of 'traditional values' and depiction of LGBTQ+ rights as a 'threat' to society have facilitated significant growth of public homophobia and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. As a result, queer Russians are in a tough position when public visibility becomes dangerous, invoking censorship, discrimination, and even violence. The paper discusses how these developments have negatively affected the LGBTQ+ community in Russia. It examines the issues and dilemmas faced by the Russian LGBTQ+ community in the light of political and economic tenuousness caused by strengthening conservative authoritarianism.

Dmitrii Dorogov (Södertörn University) *“Traditional Values” as a Cure: Putinite Biopolitics of HIV/AIDS*

The paper fills a gap in literature by examining Putinite biopolitics of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in present-day Russia in the aftermath of the turn to “traditional values” in the early 2010s as well as the full-scale war waged by Russia against Ukraine in 2022. On the basis of a discourse analysis of dominant narratives on HIV/AIDS advanced by the Russian state over the decade, the paper offers a critical account of the ways the increasing traditionalism and the effects of the war tell on Russia’s most disenfranchised and vulnerable social groups that often exist at the intersection of multiple stigmas further reinforced by the massive economic, ideological, and social transformations the Russian society is undergoing.

Ever since the first case of HIV was documented in the Soviet Union in 1986, the epidemic has been expanding and the authorities’ response to it has been largely delayed and inefficient. In the 1990s, the disease mainly affected the traditional high risks groups: intravenous drug users, MSM, and sex workers. However, throughout the 2000s and 2010s, the epidemic transcended those, and as of 2021, the country found itself in the top 5 nations for the speed of HIV spread. As of the beginning of 2022, 1.137 million of the country's 144 million population were living with the virus. However, many specialists believe that the true number of HIV-positive individuals is substantially greater, qualifying for a “generalized epidemic”.

I argue that this deterioration is to a vast degree due to the increasingly conservative state ideology that has been promoted by the state. The crackdown on LGBT+ as well as the increasingly moralizing and responsabilizing tendencies in the discourses around drug use and sex work, along with the outlawing of the few service NGOs that practiced harm reduction approaches restrict the provision of medical and social services. Furthermore, due to the perpetual lack of financing and the strong HIV-stigma less than a third of enrolled patients were receiving HIV medications as of 2021.

In the wake of Russia’s full-scale attack on Ukraine, the problem has only grown worse. The lack of state funding and the annexation of Ukrainian territories with sizable HIV-positive populations have resulted in major shortages of anti-HIV medications across Russia (and especially in the occupied territories of Ukraine).

Examining in particular the official discourse on HIV/AIDS promoted by the medical authorities of the city of Moscow over the decade which has in many respects forestalled and exemplified the country-wise ideological trend, the paper lays out the ways internationally proven policies aimed at preventing and treating HIV/AIDS are constructed in these communications as a sinister political strategy aimed at “destroying Russia” through

undermining the traditional foundations of its morality, family life, and social cohesion. Extending the recent securitizing tendencies onto healthcare and further thematizing sexuality as an issue of nation-building, this discourse at the same time conceals its own political investments by naturalizing a version of authoritarian biopolitics founded on moralizing, exclusionary, while at the same time essentially neoliberal state ideology.

Andreas Fagerholm (Åbo Akademi University) *Explaining sympathy with Russia's 2022 offensive on Ukraine among European far left and far right parties*

When Russia launched its offensive on neighboring Ukraine in February 2022 it was (more or less) unanimously condemned in the West. Most states swiftly denounced the aggression, as did leading intergovernmental organizations. The vast majority of European political parties also aligned with the dominant narrative, showing nothing but deep disdain for Russia's invasion. Several studies indicate, however, that a diverse group of 'Russia-sympathizing' parties is emerging throughout the continent. As observed by Braghiroli and Makarychev (2016) and Golosov (2020), these parties are generally (but, of course, not always) found outside of the political mainstream; on a conventional left–right continuum, they tend, in other words, to be located rather far to the left, or rather far to the right. The present study sheds further light on the Russia-sympathizing tendencies within the two above-mentioned party families. Inspired by previous observations pointing to very different reactions within both families (Fagerholm *fc*), the study seeks to answer the following research question: How can we explain the diverging views on Russia's military offensive within the European far left and far right? To answer this question, the study uses both cross-sectional quantitative and case-based qualitative data. It aims at contributing to three different strands of research: (a) to our understanding of the foreign policy profiles of non-mainstream parties, (b) to scholarship on Russia-sympathizing tendencies in European politics and (c) to research on the ongoing Ukraine conflict and the related heightening of tensions between the West and Russia.

Alexander Generalov (Independent researcher) *The concepts of anti-imperialism and decolonization in Russian exile protest movements*

In this presentation I would like to summarize the evolution of the agendas of anti-imperialism and decolonization in Russian protest movements which have been established abroad since the full-scale invasion triggered the political dissidents' exodus from the country. The war against Ukraine has brought the Russian protest movement around the world to the

acknowledgment of empire ideology and colonialism as core problems of the society, state and collapse of the transition – something that had been ignored by the Russian opposition before the 24th of February, 2022.

In my presentation I explore how different opposition organizations, movements and sole activists understand the ideas of “decolonization” and “anti-imperialism” and how they use them in their political, social and cultural work.

The review pays an attention to the dynamics of how the agenda of decolonization and anti-imperialism has taken a part of the discourse in the exile movements. This agenda was not accepted at once and is still not being accepted by some groups and major activists. However, it is a result of progressive outside criticism against the Russian opposition and welcoming of the most radical thoughts through democratic cooperation and horizontal connections inherent to the abroad Russian oppositional communities of new type. This development covers the period from the beginning of the invasion to nowadays.

The more reason why the concepts are worth being subject to a research is that they more and more constitutes a serious bone of contention for different oppositional groups in exile and is one of the reasons why the abroad dissident movement may not just pragmatically unite against the Putin regime and Russia’s war against Ukraine (see, for example, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/07/world/europe/russia-putin-opposition-ukraine-war.html>). The divergency of views on decolonization and anti-imperialism is about the future of post-Putin’s / post-war Russia and thus, the future of the Eurasian continent as a whole. The discussion will determine whether a new impending transition will finally fulfill the goals which failed to be obtained after 1991 – peace, security, social justice and democracy to this part of the Globe.

The presentation will be based on the Russian exile political declarations, documents available on Internet, posts in social media and many other similar open sources. A brief scientific introduction will be presented for a comparison between the theoretical and practical aspects.

Mette Ginnerskov-Dahlberg (Uppsala University/Södertörn University)
On the run. Student migrants’ experiences of escaping inhospitable conditions in their home countries through the means of foreign education

During the past four decades, international student mobility has grown phenomenally along with the general expansion of higher education throughout the world. In 2016, there were

almost 5 million students enrolled in higher education programmes outside their home country – 5 times more than in 1975 (UNESCO, 2015).

The accumulation of foreign academic credentials has for some social groups become a tool for distinction to (re)produce their privileged positions in society (Waters, 2006) and a career enhancing investment to better compete in the domestic labour market (King and Sondhi, 2018). International student migration has often been depicted as an activity involving privileged individuals in search of social and cultural capital accumulation, entailing the inherent assumption that a degree abroad is linked to a longer term strategy to return to the country of origin after graduation. There has in line with this been a tendency to understand educational mobility as a ‘light’ and privileged variant of migration – something which relates to a more general perception of youth in affluent Western countries, where youth travelling is identified with the supposed extension of youth and delayed transition into adulthood (Amit, 2011).

This presentation, however, discusses how educational migration, for some individuals, constitutes an opportunity to escape certain conditions in their home countries that they deem inhospitable and, in some cases, even life threatening. Drawing on 30 qualitative interviews with students from various post-Soviet countries pursuing education in Sweden (2021-2023) through a scholarship from the Swedish Institute, I will discuss some of the ways in which the Russian assault on Ukraine has affected student migration in Europe. Indeed, many of the interviewees were drawn to Sweden because the Scandinavian study destination, in their eyes, offered a safe haven. I will particularly discuss the narratives of Russian young men who were eager to flee Russia because of fears related to being enrolled in the army and having to fight in the war against their will and believes. Hence, their arrival to Sweden was experienced as an enormous relief and many had hopes of more long-term migration to Sweden rather than a desire to return to their home countries upon graduation.

More generally, the presentation elucidates how student migration for some students involves much more than educational ambitions but how a education abroad sometimes emerges as a cherished escape route away from dangerous and unbearable situations.

Yulia Gradskova (Södertörn University) “Traditional values”, the Russian war on Ukraine, and state dependent women’s organizations – Women’s Union of Russia’ anti-gender agenda

What is the ideology of “traditional values” propagated by the Russian authoritarian state at home and abroad? Putin’s government presents “traditional values” as a genuine value system

based on social cohesion that can save Russia (and the “West” from itself), while the Western “gender politics” is declared to be destroying the “natural order.” With the Russian Orthodox Church getting a lot of attention as the main promulgator, several other, state and non-state, actors spread this ideology. Among the vocal institutional supporters of “traditional values,” there are several women’s organizations, including the Women’s Union of Russia (WUOR), which has deep roots in Soviet history and that become a so-called “state-social” organization in 2018. How WUOR uses anti-gender politics in its activities and how and why these politics go against women’s rights is the focus of my presentation. In particular, I explore the WUOR’s politics that lobby to prevent abortion, promote patriotic upbringing of children and in support of Russia’s war against Ukraine. I explore the hybridization of discourse in the organization’s rhetoric that brings together ideas in support for women as mothers while also reducing or eliminating their reproductive and citizens’ rights. Applying Sara Farris’ theory of femonationalism, I show how women speaking in the name of women’s empowerment can lead to anti-feminist politics. Analyzing WUOR website and reports of its chapters’ events in various geographical regions of the Russian Federation illustrate how and why the official anti-gender campaign does not meet enough resistance in Russia.

Sebastian Graf (Lund University) *Remembering the present, imagining the future: Temporalities of Ukrainian virtual war museums*

This paper focuses on how Ukrainian virtual museums are mediating, archiving, and memorializing the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine. In their multiple modes and forms, virtual museums are one of the actors involved in processes and practices of memory production. Over the last decades, technological developments have further increased the possibilities to mediate and engage with war, enabling new forms of memory-making. As part of their embeddedness in connectivity, digital spaces, such as virtual museums have thus become sites of conflict, and thus part of today’s conduct of war.

Applying an ecological understanding of war that foregrounds the crucial interplay between human and non-human actors in our post-digital world, this study attends to one facet of memorialization: How do virtual museums envision the future of Ukraine while mediating and remembering the full-scale invasion? More precisely, I explore the ways the spatiotemporal figure of ‘the future’ is present in the assemblages that compose the virtual museums of war. Since assemblages do have potentialities for action, by ‘virtual’ or ‘virtuality’, I refer to both a digital entity and something which might be actualized in the future (Deleuze and Guattari

1987). This assumption thus implies a potential future-oriented direction in both assemblages and virtuality.

This study takes up recent discussions of thinking about futurity and its multiple relations with perceptions of the past and present in history (Tamm and Simon 2021), memory studies (Gutman et al. 2010; Szpunar and Szpunar 2016), and anthropology (Pink and Salazar 2017) focusing on practices of anticipation while paying close attention to the production of memory in an unfolding war.

In this respect, this study analyzes four virtual museums: Meta History: Museum of War, Virtual Museum of the Russian Aggression, War Up Close, and the War Fragments Museum. All museums are virtual only with a focus on exhibiting and rendering war, and they can be seen as a direct response to the Russian invasion. Applying digital ethnography and digital methods, I illustrate the entanglement between the museums' infrastructures and their exhibitions to grasp the complex interactions between past, and present. This encompasses 'anticipatory practices' (Tamm and Simon 2021; Anderson 2010) such as building archives, production of memory, processes of heritage, collection of donations, coping mechanisms with trauma, and visions of the future, to ultimately counter the Russian invasion. The analysis draws on online observation, networked content analysis, interview data, and social media analysis to shed light on the relation of engagement with war, memory production, and the imaginations of the future. By focusing on the use of temporalities in virtual museums of war, this paper provides valuable insights into how virtuality is employed in the present to shape the future.

Margalita Japaridze (Tampere University) *The Influence of Russia's War in Ukraine on Georgia*

The research project explores how the war in Ukraine echoes in Georgia. Specifically, how the war affects the identity and geopolitical vision of Georgians. It tackles the issues of societal polarization and to what extent long-lasting contestation over Georgia's European identity has evolved amid the war.

Literature on identity and historical institutionalism illuminates that crisis events, also called critical junctures, can affect identities and instigate change in identity discourse. The high influx of Russian migrants in Georgia in the past two years, the resumed direct flights between Georgia and Russia, and, generally, the Georgian government's ameliorated relations with Russia create a sense of economic instability, social insecurity, and ambiguity about Georgia's geopolitical aspirations and mobilizes people to protest. Thus, in line with the ongoing war in

Ukraine, the debates over Georgia's geopolitical course, relations with Russia, and European aspirations became more prominent in Georgia.

The research will utilize the concept of conflict spillover, according to which the conflicts cluster in time and space. It acts as a conflict contagion in which a conflict in one country has a causal link to a conflict erupting in another country. The research will be based on studying local queer and feminist organizations, initiative groups, and activists who actively took part in protests as well as those who abstained from public discussions. The primary data will be extracted and analyzed from their petition texts and online communication channels. Additionally, in-depth interviews with the representatives of Georgian queer and feminist organizations will be conducted.

Elena Johansson & Jenny Wiik (Gothenburg University) *Russian journalists in exile: rethinking of professional identity*

In recent years, the oppressive political and legal climate in Russia has forced independent journalists and media actors into exile, significantly impacting the country's media landscape. This paper aims to investigate the professional identity of Russian journalists in exile and their ability to maintain their journalistic values and credibility in a new cultural and political context. The research question guiding this study is: How does exile affect the professional identity of Russian journalists, and how do they navigate the challenges associated with upholding their journalistic values and credibility?

The study utilizes empirical data obtained from a survey administered to 150 Russian journalists in European exile during 2023. The survey questionnaire explores various dimensions of professional identity, including professional values, journalistic roles, ethical considerations, and perceived credibility. Open-ended questions are also incorporated to gather nuanced insights into the experiences, motivations, and aspirations of Russian journalists in exile.

By employing professional theory from a journalism studies perspective, the analysis contributes to a broader understanding of the interplay between media repression and exile. It highlights the resilience and determination of Russian journalists in their continued pursuit of journalism despite facing significant obstacles. Moreover, the findings of this research endeavour to raise awareness, encourage dialogue, and provide support for the professional development and integration of Russian journalists in exile within their host countries and the global media community.

Sigrid Kaasik-Krogerus (University of Helsinki) *Change and continuity of European values: citizens' perspective.*

Russia's imperial war in Ukraine has been approached in public discussion from various perspectives, European values being one of them. Value conflict is seen as one aspect on the background of Russia's full-scale attack: the attempts of Ukraine to distance itself from the Soviet legacy with an aim to get closer to the Western alliances like the EU and NATO has been used as an excuse by Russia to start and justify the imperial war. Accordingly, it has been argued in the EU countries that Ukraine is the one fighting for and protecting European values like democracy and freedom. This claim is based on an assumption that European values or more concretely the values the EU (officially) represents are threatened and in danger. The EU has stated its aims and values in the Lisbon Treaty on a rather abstract and general level. These values consist of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights. In practice these values are constructed, interpreted and implemented on a daily basis by various actors like the EU institutions, member countries, their political and cultural institutions as well as the citizens. On European, national and local level as well as in different parts of the Union the values can be constructed and interpreted in different and possibly controversial ways. This makes values an ongoing controversial and political process instead of a stable and a static thing. In this presentation I will analyse how the EU and non-EU citizens construct European values as part of European cultural heritage and how they possibly engage with these values. As an empirical data, a large interview data set is used. The interviews have been conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2023 with the visitors of the European Heritage Label sites in different EU countries. The European Heritage Label is the flagship heritage action of the EU and its aim is to promote the European narratives and to facilitate citizens' sense of belonging to the Union. For analyzing the interviews, close reading and critical discourse analysis is used. As a result of the study, I am able to draw conclusions about how citizens construct European values in the framework of the European Heritage Label and what are the similarities and differences between the citizens' perspectives and the official EU discourse. Since the empirical data is gathered during different years, I am also able to discuss if and how Russia's full-scale attack to Ukraine is visible in people's understanding concerning European values. The results of the analysis are interpreted in the framework of the current public discussion concerning European values in the context of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Lisa Källström (Södertörn University) *Children as Motif: Murals as a rhetorical act*

Street artists have demonstrated their discontent with Russia's invasion of a neighbour with murals, both in Ukraine and abroad. The most famous of these is Banksy. On a wall of what was once a kindergarten, he has sprayed the image of a child in a judo match overcoming a seemingly overwhelming opponent (an adult with some resemblance to the Russian leader). Although such works of street artist in Ukraine sometimes also show Putin, children are a common theme - often a girl with two stiff braids. In this essay, I present some of these works while considering the role of the child in them, seeking to understand the role of art in protest as an appropriation and reconfiguration of public space.

Judith Kärn (Independent researcher) *Locked in forever? – An EU legal framework for short term exit strategies from energy suppliers' violation of public International Law and Human Rights viewed from a legal perspective.*

The war of aggression launched by Russia on Ukraine on February 24 has caused horror around the world. Economic energy relations have long been seen as a guarantor of peace, this position has been overthrown. Even though economic sanctions have been put into place, an EU-wide (gas) energy import embargo as a sanction has been deliberately refrained from. But if individual member states or the EU as a whole wanted to impose such an embargo, would the EU member states be legally equipped to do so? How can a legal framework be created in which violations of international law, such as a war of aggression but also Human Rights violations, can be punished in energy relations?

This paper addresses three particularly relevant aspects in order to address the questions raised above: a) Possibilities of suspending certification procedures of energy infrastructure projects in EU law, b) The possibility of contractual design of sanctioning options in case of violations of public international law (international agreements, private company agreements, re-regulation), c) A proper EU solidarity mechanism in case of import embargoes.

Tatiana Kasperski (Södertörn University) *"How We learned to Stop Worrying": Environmental and Safety Risks at Ukrainian Nuclear Facilities during Russia's War*

From the first days of Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the world watched in horror how Ukrainian nuclear sites, and first of all Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plants,

became the stage of military battles. Almost two years later this Zaporizhzhе Plant is still occupied by Russian troops, the situation with nuclear safety have further deteriorated as did environmental consequences of the war. However, a part from potential explosion, accidental or otherwise, at the Zaporizhzhа nuclear power plant, the nuclear risks related to the Russia’s military invasion currently rarely grab international headlines.

In my presentation I will talk about complex and interconnected nature of different nuclear risks heightened by the current war, from energy security to nuclear safety and nuclear proliferation. I will do so using as a backdrop Ukraine’s nuclear history which dates to the Soviet atomic bomb project, and long predates the Chornobyl disaster. I will analyze what types of facilities developed during that history became most vulnerable in the context of Russian aggression and what it might entail. Finally I will argue that the frequently offered distinction between peaceful and military regimes in the nuclear enterprise is clearly inoperative. As historian Robert Jacobs put it “nuclear power was born violent: it was invented as part of the manufacturing process of nuclear weaponry”. First nuclear reactors had the sole purpose to produce plutonium for the bomb. And Russia’s war in Ukraine just opened a new chapter in the history of this close connection, that of weaponization of civilian nuclear installations.

Aliaksei Kazharski (Charles University) *An Authoritarian Spectacle: Visual biopolitics and the Dramaturgy of the Poland-Belarus Border Migration Crisis*

The article analyzes the 2021-2022 migration crisis at the EU-Belarus border through the conceptual lens of visual biopolitics. Based on data available from regime-run media in Belarus it demonstrates how the engineered crisis was a case of authoritarian dramaturgy relying on numerous visual representations of migrants. The carefully staged authoritarian spectacle exploits both the vulnerability and grievability of refugee life and the regime’s role as a self-appointed sovereign exercising comprehensive biopolitical care and protection over the population of migrants stranded at the border between Belarus and Poland.

Alar Kilp (University of Tartu) *Securization of Orthodoxy in Baltic states after 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine*

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus has endorsed Russian invasion not by mentioning absolution of sins (for soldiers dying in battle), but for a decades long cultivation of a culture of sacrifice for the imperial nation (Kilp, Pankhurst 2023). In his Ukraine-related messages, it is historic (imperial) Rus that is holy, not war. During periods of increased popular mobilization

for war, such as during September 2022, Patriarch Kirill referred in his sermons more often to “(self-)sacrifice” than even to “holy Russia”.

Correspondingly, in all three Baltic states, local Orthodox Church (of Moscow Patriarchy) has been seen as a security risk, if it does not denounce war of aggression by the Russian Federation that is endorsed by the Patriarch of Moscow.

The status of Orthodoxy in Baltic states varies – least autonomous from Moscow Patriarchy is the Orthodox Church in Lithuania; ethnic cleavage is strongly present in Latvian and Estonian politics, but not in Lithuania; before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine two Orthodox Churches – one an independent church operating under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, the other under the jurisdiction of Patriarch of Constantinople.

The paper describes comparatively the securitization of Orthodoxy in Baltic states during a year and a half since February 2022. In Autumn 2022, Latvian parliament (President and Ministry of Justice) changed preemptively a law of Latvian Orthodox Church (which from 2019 required a degree of residency in Latvia for its local leader) to strengthen its legal (not exactly religious or dogmatic) independence from Patriarch of Moscow. Similarly, political leaders in Lithuania have lobbied Patriarch of Constantinople to disentangle Orthodox Church in Lithuania from Patriarch of Moscow and to support and recognize those Orthodox priests who disagree with Patriarch Kirill on Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The loyalty to Estonian state of the local leader of the Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchy, Metropolitan Eugeni, has been questioned and tested several times, particularly after the September 25, 2022, sermon of Patriarch Kirill (which included the message about absolution of sins for soldiers dying in battle), Metropolitan Eugeni was asked by the Minister of Interior to disagree publicly with Patriarch Kirill. Shortly afterwards Eugeni emphatically disagreed with the Patriarch about the specific message in one sentence of the sermon of Patriarch Kirill. That settled the issue for Estonian political establishment. But in fact it was a case of “straw man” argument, because main contribution of Patriarch Kirill to the contribution to Russian war effort has never been a theology of absolution of sins for those who serve in the army. Instead, the real test of loyalty should deal with the religious version of the Russian World and its peace-related (sic!) content that sets „the unity of brothers“ or brotherly peoples as a prerequisite for peace. The political securitization of Orthodoxy in Estonia, however, has constructed otherwise the security threat and has not focused on the themes that most likely will be tackled in post-war future when the contribution of (leaders of the) Russian Orthodox Church to the Russian war of aggression will be assessed.

Tatiana Kochubinska (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD))
“Projects of the future” devoid of their present: Curatorial approach to uncomfortable heritage

The main goal of this paper is to demonstrate curatorial approach as a possibility to withstand complexities of uncomfortable heritage and to overcome it by the means of subtle artistic gestures.

The war ruins regimes of stability. In a completely different way, it highlights notions of care, solidarity, tension, and aggression. At war these notions acquire special attention and people load them with different meanings demanding more accuracy and sensitivity of the language. Care with its extreme ambivalence —as a practice of solidarity and that of repressive manipulation— underlie the conceptual framework of the exhibition “I Was Approaching the City I Had Not Known Yet” that took place in September-October 2021 in the city of Dnipro*. Time and place take on special significance. Dnipro is the huge industrial city in the South-East of Ukraine with a complex history relating to the Russian Empire, Western European colonization, and a conditionally closed city in the Soviet Union with its secret rocket industry. Since 2014, when the war broke out in Ukraine, Dnipro was the largest city in its proximity to the frontline. For years, a feeling of anxiety was in the air, and danger alerts became a part of daily reality. After the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Dnipro borders on three partly occupied regions of Ukraine.

In my paper proposal, I would like to retrospectively address the exhibition realized just shortly before the great war. I would like to emphasize “imaginary building” as part of an uncomfortable heritage being destroyed by aging “flavored” with incapacity of a complex view on Soviet heritage, now endangered with ongoing Russian shelling.

Nuri Korkmaz (Bursa Technical University) *Russian Assault on Ukraine and the Shifting Geopolitical Interests of Russia in the Black Sea Region.*

Russian aggression in Ukraine created huge tension not only in Eastern Europe but also all around the world due to the potential for the escalation of the conflict. Russian motivations for the war are accepted as a dangerous precedent to wage war against other countries. The map of occupied areas of Ukraine shows the direction of Russian changing geopolitical understandings. The search of Russia in the post-Soviet space is still under process. The southwestern part of the country is perceived as relatively more vulnerable to attacks from outside due to naval bases and the access it provides to the internal parts of Russia. The status of the Turkish straits has been one of the top priorities of Russia as during World War I it was

attacked by German ships through the Black Sea coast. Moreover, the closure of the Turkish Straits was accepted as a reason to prevent the access of material aid to Russia. The Montreaux Convention of 1936 on the status of the Turkish Straits had always attracted criticism from the Soviet Union. There were demands to revise it. However, beginning with the war launched on Georgia in 2008 Russia showed support for the protection of the status of the straits. The main motivation in doing so was the limitation of the weight of ships that would enter the Black Sea. The war in Ukraine brought this understanding that although there are NATO member states Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the main goal of Russia is to prevent the access of American ships. By tackling the Russian war in Ukraine, this paper aims to analyze the changing concept of Russian geopolitics. The current map of occupied land shows that Russia aims to cut off Ukraine's access to the sea. Referring to the ideas of Mackinder on the geopolitical interests of Russia, this work will examine how the war has affected the Black Sea region and Ukraine's strategic position. Russian understanding of geopolitics will be compared with its historical changes. Eventually, this will be connected to the strategy and the direction of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Because the invaded areas include all strategic positions of Ukraine that lie behind the Sevastopol base. Russia's strategy will be evaluated vis a vis its relations with the West. Because the prospect of European and Transatlantic integration is being accepted as a threat not only to the territory of Russia but also to the values of the Russian state.

Natalia Konarzewska (Centre for Security Studies, War Studies University in Warsaw) *The war in Ukraine and its implications for the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 not only affected their close neighborhood but also created geopolitical risks and exacerbated existing ones in the hotspots across the Eurasia. This includes regions of strategic importance for Russia which Moscow regards as its sole sphere of influence, and where it is directly involved in the local conflicts or holds a mediator position. One of these regions is South Caucasus over which still looms conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Second Karabakh war ended in November 2020 with Azerbaijan's decisive victory, but relations between the two conflicted South Caucasus neighbors are far from being peaceful, and situation on the ground in Nagorno Karabakh is still very tense. Against this background, there are ongoing negotiation efforts sponsored by the U.S. and the EU on the one hand, and Russia on the other hand to conclude a peace treaty and normalize relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The main aim of this paper is to unpack how Russia's war in Ukraine affected a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the second Karabakh war and in months afterwards Russia was a power broker. Moscow mediated a 9/10 November 2020 ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan that ceased hostilities, and deployed peacekeeping forces in Nagorno Karabakh as the only external actor. The following peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan were also dominated by Russia while the West remained on the sidelines. This situation has changed after Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022. Moscow's preoccupation with war in Ukraine resulted in declining capabilities and loss of interest to upkeep its engagement in Nagorno Karabakh. Russia transferred substantial numbers of experienced personnel and military hardware to the Ukrainian front which sharply decreased capabilities of its peacekeeping mission on the ground. As a result, Russian mirotvorcy have not been able to prevent armed clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in Nagorno-Karabakh or to protect local Armenian population. This emboldened Azerbaijan which has increasingly employed coercive diplomacy and military tactics against Armenia and Armenians inhabiting Nagorno-Karabakh. Also, Russia's temporary departure from the South Caucasus created new opportunities for Azerbaijani-Turkish tandem to increase its clout in the region as Baku and Ankara have strengthened joint military-technical cooperation.

This paper will also discuss how the war in Ukraine has influenced peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and normalization of their relations. Moscow's temporary exit from the mediatory position in Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has opened up new opportunities for the EU and the U.S. to engage in the peace process. So far, both Western mediators organized numerous meetings between representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan, including their leaders, and tried to facilitate a dialogue between Azerbaijan and de facto authorities of the internationally unrecognized Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Nevertheless, Russia has recently become more active in the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace negotiations. This is because, Azerbaijan and Armenia are important in Moscow's plans to find alternative export and import routes, and in efforts to circumvent Western sanctions. Russia also wants to retain its waning clout in the South Caucasus. Russia's 'return to the game' means that peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are now being conducted in the three separate tracks. Additionally, Moscow often criticizes Western mediators or sabotages their efforts on the ground. This creates another set of problems because the peace process becomes overshadowed by geopolitical competition between Russia and the West which can impede peaceful resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

Olexandr Kravchuk (The University of Bristol) *The decolonization of the history of South Ukraine and Crimea in the last quarter of 18th – first half of 19th century: approaches and perspectives*

The decolonization of Russian history has become a significant challenge for historians nowadays. This process should cover primarily the history of the Russian empire. Simultaneously we need to single out different aspects of regional history because the Empire was heterogeneous. This will enable historians to shift from a “colonization but” stance to a “colonization and” framework as Susan Smith-Peter has already mentioned. In parallel we need to avoid the arbitrary assignment of belonging to a “national group” but also not overlook the significance of religious and ethnic self-definitions. The population in different parts of the empire consisted of dynamic groups with their own behavioural strategies. The history of imperial institutions should be on the sidelines, while the history of regions, cities, different social and religious groups, and interaction within and between them should be the primary focus of historians.

My presentation will be devoted to the key trends in the study of the history of South Ukraine and Crimea, from the annexation of these territories by the Russian empire to the Crimean War, and looking how we can rethink these trends and map future research fields. The history of this region was under historians' review, especially in connection to the Russian empire's expansion to the South, the Crimean annexation, and Catherine the Great's activities. Also, historians have studied Crimean Tatar's past. The recent surge of interest in this region occurred after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. In Russia, for example, historians have published a couple of complex works about the region's past. These works were created for justifying the annexation and to stake new claims for Ukrainian territories. In contrast, Ukrainian historians concentrated on studying the different links between Crimea and Ukrainian lands. Meanwhile Western historians, more removed from the political situation, tried to adopt varying concepts for this region's history. Nowadays these works require rethinking in the context of the development of historical methodology and concepts.

The history of this macroregion is significant for a couple of reasons. First of all, the current political situation requires to investigating the past of this region to dispel the myth that it is Russian-native territory. Secondly, there is still a scarcity of comprehensive works on the history of the region. Furthermore, much of the existing historiography is dominated by Russian imperial concepts which have a significant influence on public consciousness. The revaluation of this region's past will make a significant contribution to the decolonization of Russian history because it takes a special place in the imperial narratives.

Yuliya Krylova-Grek (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy/Uppsala University) *Transformation of Russian Media Narratives in the Context of the War in Ukraine.*

In the research, media is considered as an important tool for shaping public opinion through the dissemination of certain political narratives. The research covers the narratives disseminated by Russian media before and after the invasion of Ukraine and observes the gradual shift from a traditional Soviet narrative of "we are brothers" to "liberating Ukraine from fascists" after 2014 and then to "denazification, deUkrainisation and demonisation of Ukrainians" after February 24, 2022.

In the research the following methods were used: 1) Content-analysis that was applied to monitor and select information; 2) The author's psycholinguistic media text analysis that was employed to identify methods and tools that are used by journalists to influence the audience's world view and behaviour.

The research of Russian media (2014–2022) revealed that media outlets systematically disseminated narratives that created a negative and dehumanized image of Ukraine. The study found that Russian media actively employed hate speech narratives before the military intervention. It is important to note that prior to the invasion Russian media predominantly used indirect and manipulative hate speech in 97% of analysed publications, avoiding direct calls for destruction, which could have created the illusion of compliance with journalistic standards.

After February 24, 2022, Russian journalists not only continue to actively spread hatred towards Ukrainians but also call for incitement to commit genocide and crimes against humanity. In their narratives they began to use new concepts to justify aggression, for example, "desatanization of Ukraine" (meaning "destruction of Satan" represented by Ukrainians) and "war against absolute evil", which the Russian journalist V. Solovyov associates with Ukraine and NATO.

While considering the narratives spread in Russian media, special attention is given to the analysis of the statements of some journalists who openly call for crimes against humanity and genocide. For example, journalist Anton Krasovsky, suggested that children complaining about the Russian occupation should be destroyed, "drown in the Tysyna (river)" or "burn up".

These statements are examined from legal and psycholinguistic perspectives using the author's methods of psycholinguistic text analysis. The research results will be used as

additional evidence in charges related to incitement to commit genocide and crimes against humanity.

Hanna Kulahina-Stadnichenko (H.S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) and **Liudmila Fylypovich** (H.S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) *War as a trigger for the aggravation of inter-Orthodox relations in Ukraine*

Religious life in modern Ukraine is very dynamic. However, the biggest problem for Ukrainian society, the state, and the church is the Orthodox division, which has been only partially overcome in the 32 years of Ukraine's independence. The cause of this unrest is once again Moscow, with its imperialistic appetites, which seeks to revive the USSR at any cost, even at the cost of thousands of human lives in a military confrontation, at the cost of destroying Ukraine as a state and Ukrainians as a nation.

To do this, Moscow, in addition to military weapons (missiles, tanks, airplanes, soldiers), is using religious weapons, and is controlling the largest Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

Unlike Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church, which have a unified strategy for the spiritual colonization of Ukrainians, Ukrainian society, the state, and the Church do not have a unified strategy for overcoming the Orthodox crisis. The development of such a strategy is hampered by internal factors of Orthodox life, in particular the slowness of transitions and the accession of parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Conservatism and paternalism of a large number of believers oriented toward Moscow (Russia) are still strong. In general, the Orthodox environment demonstrates inertia in its ability to reorient to the new paradigm of "open Orthodoxy." At the same time, new trends have emerged: the confrontation between the two Orthodox Churches has shifted to the "state-Moscow Patriarchate" plane, as the latter does not want to perceive itself as part of Ukraine, on whose territory it operates.

The expert community seeks to accumulate the interests of all players in the religious field, looking for a way out of the situation, but firmly defends the idea of a purely legal solution to the problem. We are convinced that the contradictions in the Orthodox issue lie not only between those who are for or against a particular church. Orthodoxy in Ukraine has created many problems, both internal and external to Ukraine.

It is obvious that today the interests of Rome, Constantinople and Moscow have once again converged in the Orthodox field of Ukraine, which has manifested itself in the escalation of the

following contradictions: 1) between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Moscow Orthodoxy; 2) between pro-Ukrainian Greek Catholics and pro-Moscow Orthodox; 3) between Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics. We are witnessing Moscow's resolute opposition to the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate not only in the matter of establishing an independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine, but also in its strategic desire to "reformat" world Orthodoxy in accordance with its own imperial interests. The granting/receipt of the Tomos-2019 led to the Russian Orthodox Church becoming a catalyst for the intra-Orthodox conflict in Ukraine, putting the Orthodox Christians before a choice between Constantinople and Moscow, without hope for a quick resolution of this conflict.

In addition, under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox Ukraine has become an arena for the spread of anti-Ukrainian secular and religious ideologies and theories (e.g., "Russian world," "Holy Rus," "historical Rus," "God-bearing Russian people," "the universal mission of Great Russia," Eurasianism, and Pan-Slavism). Ukraine has become an object of ideological aggression, when aggressive stereotypes are imposed from outside, such as: Greek Catholics are "Uniates", "supporters of the Vatican", believers of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine are "schismatics", "apostates"; Protestants are "sectarians", etc.

Interference in religious affairs by political centers (Washington, Moscow, Warsaw, Ankara, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Beijing, etc.), which demonstrate their interest in the religious orientations of Ukrainians, does not improve the conflict situation.

Today there is a situation where Orthodox Christians remember Jesus Christ's instructions "that all may be one," believe in a single, conciliar, Orthodox church, and therefore perceive the existence of several Orthodox jurisdictions as an abnormal state. However, in order to achieve the Orthodox unity of the Ukrainian people, the formation of one local autocephalous church, Orthodox believers have a difficult and seemingly long way to go.

Valeriia Lavrenko (Dmytro Yavornitskiy Dnipro National Historical Museum) *Ukrainian museums in the conditions of full-scale Russian aggression*

In my report, I would like to combine several scientific genres. On the one hand - traditional research based on historical sources, on the other hand - personal testimonies, as I represent the museum community of Ukraine and from February 24, 2022 I am at my workplace, performing official duties, including protection of cultural heritage.

Despite the fact that hybrid Russian aggression has been ongoing in Ukraine since 2014, the field of museum management proved to be completely unprepared for the full-scale Russian aggression that began on February 24, 2022.

A few months before February 2022, museum workers of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv regions appealed to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine to authorize the evacuation and were refused. The plan to evacuate museum treasures by rail, recommended in the first days of the war, turned out to be a failure. A large number of women and children who left the country, traveling for more than a day in the corridor, would hardly allow to occupy a few compartments for cultural heritage.

A large number of museum buildings and collections were damaged as a result of hostilities, for example, the local history museum in the town of Okhtyrka, the memorial museum in the village of Skovorodinivka. Some were completely destroyed, for example, the museum in Izyum. After the missile hit the building, two museum employees - the director and the chief custodian - were killed. Many Ukrainian collections were looted by the occupiers, for example, exhibits from the "Stone Tomb" national reserve are exhibited in Crimea.

Museums located in the rear also suffered – as a result of missile attacks, the windows of the Khanenki museum were broken, and the ceiling in the hall of archeology fell at Dmytro Yavornitskiy Dnipro National Historical Museum.

But which is indicative, the vast majority of museum workers remained at their workplaces. In Dnipro we dismantled a huge exposition of over 30,000 objects over two days. We tried to disguise the external exposition of military equipment, which could be perceived by aviation as a legal military objective. Museum workers and students of the Faculty of History covered the external exposition of stone sculptures and the grave of D. Yavornytskyi with sandbags. This could potentially protect exhibits from bullet damage and debris in the event of street fighting. Before establishing the front line, we expected the worst-case scenarios and prepared for the defense. Time passed. It became clear that the Armed Forces of Ukraine are restraining the enemy and will not allow him to enter our city in the near future. Nevertheless, Dnipro was and still is a target for missile attacks. Therefore, heritage protection is still our first priority. Thanks to international humanitarian aid, we were able to pack the collection properly. We were also able to protect items from potential glass shards by using OSB plates on the windows. During the war, the social functions of the museum were transformed to a great extent. Since the first days of the war, the museum has turned into a humanitarian hub for internally displaced persons. After Ukraine lost the cities of Syverodonetsk and Lysychansk, the request for humanitarian aid in the Dnipro became a record.

The war was not only a period of survival for the museum. The museum had an intensive scientific life. In 2022, we held 5 scientific conferences and had two expeditions. In July 2022, we had archaeological excavations at the archaeological site "Balka Kantserka", dating from the 7th-8th centuries AD. These were the closest excavations to the front line in Ukraine.

Alina Legeyda (VN Karazin Kharkiv National University) and **Dmytro Legeyda** (OM Beketova Kharkiv National University of Urban Economy)
The Phenomenon of Kharkiv

This study focuses on the phenomenon of the city of Kharkiv and its inhabitants and the unique nature of their behaviour starting with 24 February 2022 up to the present day during the war initiated by Russia against Ukraine. During the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kharkiv remains a free unoccupied city, situated 40 kilometres away from the Russian border, which makes Kharkiv a frontline city from the first days of the war, with the front line running literally along the borders of the city itself. This makes Kharkiv vulnerable to artillery shelling, air strikes and C300 missiles, unlike many other more remote Ukrainian cities. The Kharkiv citizen syndrome - this is how we will refer to the described behaviour of Kharkiv city residents - demonstrates quite clear prototypical characteristics and differences from the behaviour of residents of other Ukrainian cities in military conditions.

From the moment Kharkiv acquired the status of a frontline city, its residents can be divided into two classes: those who stayed in the city in spite of everything and those who left the city, fleeing from such a close neighbourhood with the aggressor and war.

Information is of great importance in human life, and under the conditions of war its importance has increased significantly: if for the residents who remained in the city the information, they exchanged in chat rooms was a way of survival, for the residents who left the city the information in chat rooms became an invisible bridge linking them to their hometown and the life they used to have. Residents who remained in the city formed a strong community of Kharkivites, which, despite the war, unlike residents of other cities of Ukraine, continue to use Russian for communication in chat rooms, because for them the Russian language is not associated with the aggressor. Kharkiv schools working online did not exclude Russian language and literature from their curriculum during the 2022-2023 academic school year either. Thus, values of inhabitants of Kharkiv city were and remain utterly Ukrainian.

Conditionally, the period from February 24, 2022 till today can be divided into three stages in relation to the behavior of Kharkiv citizens: the period of being in Kharkiv in the first days of the war, forced emigration and acquisition of refugee status, the period of mass return of

Kharkiv citizens back home (spring-summer 2023). One of the greatest fears for the residents of the city was to find themselves under Russian occupation, which at the first stage forced many residents to make decisions to leave the city, saving the most valuable they had in life - their children. From this point, the second stage began, when these people tried to live in other cities in Ukraine or in other countries. In the course of the research we focused our attention on people who decide to return to the city despite the ongoing war and permanent shelling of the city and keep interviewing them.

Most of them are people of creative, intellectual professions (doctors, teachers, architects, engineers, photo artists, ballet schoolteachers, etc.), who, it would seem, could realise themselves in any country of the world. But the phenomenon of Kharkiv citizens is that they return to their native frontline city during the ongoing war.

Noela Mahmutaj (University of Tirana) *A New Geopolitical Order? The Ukraine War and the Western Balkans' Prospects for EU Integration*

The already strained relationship between the EU and Russia has reached a new low due to the war in Ukraine, which has created a new East-West division. It is a crucial conflict for the future of Europe and the relations between states in a new geopolitical environment. However, Brussels and Moscow continue to engage in their own ideological and political conflicts, which unquestionably influence their interactions in the sectors of politics, trade, and economics as well as their positions on the global stage.

At the same time, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 had a mixed impact on the entire geopolitical order and the complex international system, affecting the relationship between Moscow and the Western Balkan countries and the Western Balkans' approach to the EU's policies. Since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, the Western Balkans have been repeatedly asked to act diplomatically and economically against Russia, whether by implementing sanctions. Nonetheless, the sanctions taken against the Kremlin were not performed equally by all Western Balkan countries, then and now. In light of this, the war in Ukraine has brought a division into two groups in the region: pro-Western and pro-Russian. Thus, the pro-western countries have imposed tough sanctions on Russia. In response to this policy, the Kremlin added them to its list of 'enemy' states after they joined EU sanctions against Russia. However, the conflict has also created new challenges for EU integration. The Brussels relationship with the Kremlin has become more strained, making it more difficult for the EU to engage with Russia on issues of mutual concern. Regarding their current relationship, it has impacted the integration process of the Western Balkan countries and the EU integration is a particularly

important issue in the region. The paper aims to analyse the current position of the Western Balkans and Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a strong catalyst that is directly affecting the relationship of the Western Balkan countries with the EU and Russia, as well as to present the possible scenarios for the region's integration into the EU.

Aigerim Nurseitova (University of Tartu) *The Estonian Russophone Minority's Identity Development during the War in Ukraine*

In the 2010-2020s as the war in Ukraine added societal relevance to studies of linguistic and ethnic minorities in the former Soviet states, I began questioning the relationship between the minorities and the “homeland” Russia since the last took on a neo-imperialist route. In this paper I aim to understand the relationship between Estonian Russophones and Russia (through Russian (rossiyskaya) popular culture representations) as a Significant Other and monitor whether there has been any change in Estonian Russophones' identity discourses in media in reaction to Russia's war in Ukraine. The paper's research question is formulated as follows: How have the Russian popular culture representations changed in Russian-language Estonian media as a result of the crisis in Russia-West relations starting from 2014? I conducted discourse analysis of a Russian-language Estonian news outlet articles, Delfi, throughout 2010, 2014, 2020, and 2022. The main findings of this paper are the following. First, the Estonian Russophones are not a homogenous group, and therefore their relationship with Russia and its popular culture differs. Second, after the war in Ukraine began in 2014 the “othering” between Russophone citizens of Estonia and Russian citizens living in Estonia, as well as the “othering” of the Russophones in Estonia and ethnic Estonians, have increased due to differing views on the Russian invasion of Ukrainian territories and the Soviet past. The fact that parts of Russian popular culture began equating the victory in the Great Patriotic War, which Estonian Russophones attach positive sentiment to, to the war in Ukraine and using Soviet symbols as also symbols of the war in Ukraine, caused a high level of contestation in the Estonian Russophones' identity.

Gunnar Nygren (Södertörn University), **Andreas Widholm** (Stockholm University) *Social media and war reporting from Ukraine*

The year of 2022 brought about significant changes in the way Ukrainians consume news with the majority finding themselves “in the constant information flow” in order to feel safe, one of the recent studies has shown. According to the survey, Ukrainians have been relying on social media platforms (SMP) as sources of news during the full-scale Russia's invasion more than

ever before, with the use of SMP for news consumption reaching 74%. And this trend is surprisingly stable during the second year of the full scale war. Strikingly, Telegram turned out to be a major platform in this respect (60% of the respondents getting news on SMP read it on Telegram)[1]. Not only is it popular among Ukrainians as the well-designed messenger, it has become a critical source of news for people and for other news media in Ukraine. However, the platform represents a realm of almost absolute freedom, without strict rules or moderation. Obviously propagandistic Telegram channels cannot be restricted by any of the war sides. War content, graphic images, fake news banned or censored on other SMPs can be easily found on Telegram. During the war verification became an especially urgent and critical necessity for the audience, however, our analysis shows that a large bulk of news content published on Telegram is neither verified nor verifiable as such. At the same time, all key actors of the war in Russia and Ukraine, both state and non-state ones, are present on Telegram, which has turned into one more battlefield in Russia's war against Ukraine. All sides are fighting for the Telegram audience and its attention using all available resources.

In our research we are analyzing the most shared content of the most popular Telegram channels in Ukraine during the period from November 2021 till November 2022. At the second stage of the research, we are doing in-depth interviews with Ukrainian Telegram readers about how they consume information from this platform and how they assess it. We managed to overview and categorize very diverse content of the most popular Ukrainian Telegram channels, as well as to describe the recent trends in Telegram consumption. In our conclusions, we address the most critical issues of Telegram consumption in Ukraine and discuss how they impact information consumption among Ukrainians and the media sphere at large.

Natalia Orlowska-Chyz (Centre for Security Studies, War Studies University, Warsaw) *Impact of the war on the Russian influence in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy*

Defending the idea of the "Russian world" has become one of the justifications of the aggression on Ukraine used by Russia. Religion occupies an essential place in this concept by recognizing Ukraine as the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodoxy as one of the elements making Ukrainians and Russians one nation in opposition to the "Catholic world." Moscow's refusal to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church after the dissolution of the Soviet Union had not only a religious but also a political dimension. It expressed the reluctance to recognize Ukraine as an independent state and has been part of

the Kremlin's imperialist project of undermining Ukraine's right to function as an independent state with a separate nation.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church with its ties to the Moscow Patriarchate, enjoyed a privileged position in Ukraine after 1991. The situation began to change after 2014, when cases of collaboration with pro-Russian forces came to light. Moreover, the Orthodox hierarchy took the ambiguous attitude towards Russian aggression in Crimea and the Donbas. This caused the Ukrainian authorities to initiate a process of gaining independence from Russia for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Obtaining the decree establishing the autocephalous Orthodox Church, from the hands of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople did not lead to the unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. It was boycotted by the vast majority of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church representatives but the process of a bottom-up transition of individual parishes has begun.

The full-scale invasion has had an impact on the social attitudes towards Russian influence on religious life in Ukraine. Involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church in the war propaganda used by the Kremlin has led to a growing support among Ukrainian society and political elite for breaking any ties with Russia also in religious sphere. But the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has undertaken an inconsistent attempt to break with Moscow. The mood of Ukrainian society gives the authorities permission to act decisively and the ban on religious organisations which have ties with Russia is supported by the majority of the population, sociological surveys show.

The authorities initially advocated for individual responsibility of the representatives of the Orthodox Church for the violations of Ukrainian law. Faced with a lack of action within the Orthodox Church to completely sever ties with Moscow, the authorities took steps in December 2022 to put more pressure on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. A government bill was introduced to ban religious organizations with a leadership center in the aggressor state. How to enforce this ban remains an open question. Thus Ukraine still faces the challenge to prevent Russia from playing on the religious divisions in Ukrainian society, though the war has limited the possibility to do so. The prospect of unification of Orthodox churches in Ukraine seems remote, but there will continue to be a bottom-up transition of individual parishes, which will probably be lengthy and may be accompanied by disputes over the use of church facilities.

Tetiana Perga (Institute of World History of National Academy of Science of Ukraine) *Russian war against Ukraine and nature: depicting the Ukrainian Military in adult and children's narratives*

Violence against nature during armed conflicts is often overlooked by researchers. Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine demonstrates colossal violence against nature, which researchers and politicians have called ecocide. Quite often masculinity is associated with violence.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the emergence of a new dimension of masculinity in Ukraine – the portrayal of male rescue workers and military personnel as defenders of nature, flora, and fauna.

We view the Ukrainian society's request for such an expansion of masculinity as a response to the horrors of war, extreme aggression and brutality shown by Russian military forces against the Ukrainian population and the environment. Such actions include the killing and cruel treatment of animals, as well as the deliberate provocation of natural and man-made disasters, such as the sabotage of the Kakhovka dam. In addition, they are also involved in the threat of a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which could lead to the contamination of large areas with radioactive elements. In contrast, Ukrainian military personnel and rescuers constantly demonstrate cases of rescuing various animals and clearing forests and agricultural land of unexploded ordnance and mines, and so on.

Our analysis will focus on two aspects: the formation of a new image of Ukrainian military and rescue representatives among Ukrainian adults and children. To confirm our thesis, we will analyze popular social networks, messengers, and media platforms in Ukraine, as well as a Ukrainian project based in Estonia. Based on real stories from the conflict zone, participants of this project write fairy tales for children, in which they explain the nature of war, its consequences, the role of the military in protecting nature, and promote values such as love for nature, kindness, humanism, compassion and more. By exploring this aspect, our research sheds light on how acts of environmental violence intersect with societal notions of gender and masculinity.

Vello Pettai (University of Tartu) *Minority educational reforms in Estonia and Latvia: the twilight of Russian-language education?*

For more than a decade, Estonia and Latvia have been moving through a series of reforms aiming to increase the level of titular-language instruction in previously Russian-language schools. Largely seen as a measure to boost minority integration and expand professional opportunity for Russian-speaking young people, the reforms were meant to be a gradual

process whilst maintaining respect for minority-language educational rights and international standards. For example, in many Russian-language schools, the proportion of titular-language instruction has been raised up to 50% depending on the subject and the availability of teachers.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, however, both Estonia and Latvia have suddenly given much greater impetus to these changes. A full-scale transition to only titular-language instruction throughout the primary and secondary school system is set to begin in Latvia in 2023 and in Estonia 2024. Politicians and administrative officials have pledged more money and resources than ever before in order to make sure there are enough teachers, materials and other organizational needs for this transformation.

Yet, the reforms face two important challenges. Implementing instruction only in Estonian or Latvian puts a burden not only on teachers, but also students in terms of being prepared to follow all subjects in the national language. These difficulties are particularly variegated across the country, with more heavily Russian-speaking areas in northeast Estonia and eastern Latvia having to undertake more strenuous efforts to have pupils ready for the change. And it remains a question how education only in the national language will operate in areas that are 80-90% Russian-speaking.

Additionally, the almost complete banishment of Russian-language education (including in private schools in the case of Latvia) raises serious questions about conformity with European and international standards on minority-language education. While there is no hard international law with regard to these issues, the two countries will clearly face scrutiny if Russian-language education is barely available in any form despite the sizeable Russian-speaking communities. Having merely options for voluntary study of minority culture and language outside the main school curriculum will look increasingly like a façade in the stead of real minority accommodation.

This paper will provide background to the overall question of minority educational reform in Estonia and Latvia and will critically examine the implication of the current policy development. In this respect, the paper fits very directly into the conference's focus on examining reverberation from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That is, how is the invasion impacting Russian-speaking minorities in neighboring countries?

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University) *Tradition, Nation and Ecospiritual Utopia in the Light of Conceptualization of War among Ukrainian Anastasians*

The Anastasia “spiritual” movement, classifiable as New Age, emerged in Russia in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and since has spread to East-Central Europe and beyond. It is related with the implementation of environmental and spiritual ideas of alternative communitarian movements during the establishing of quickly spreading nature-based spirituality communities and their settlements in the East-Central European region.

Anastasian negotiation, interpretation and presentation of nationalistic and traditionalistic ideas serve as a basis for a visualization of (trans)local prehistoric and local national pasts, nationalistic moods and attempts to reconstruct variously perceived tradition, as well as a development of utopian visions of prospective heaven on Earth – intended to spread widely future social projects in Eastern Europe. Intensification (or in some cases, decline) of these ideas took a visible step since February 2022, together with a conceptualization of war in Anastasian daily lives.

There have been previously established Anastasian networks among Russia and other countries (Ukraine, the Baltic countries, etc.). Nevertheless, the situation started to get changing (fragmentation of networks, self-closure and silence, etc.) since 2014 with the seizure of Crimea by the troops of the Russian Federation and stays under continuing transformations since the intense phase of the war from February 2022. The research previously has been done in 2005-2021, by making fieldwork including participant observation and interviews with respondents in the Baltic countries, Russia, and Ukraine. The current research, by using tools of interviewing and ethnography, seeks to map out the situation of Ukrainian Anastasians – staying at home; fleeing dangerous locations, moving deep into Ukraine, or leaving abroad; organizing a help line for refugees, for them to move from the zone of war via ecosettlements, to receive support, etc.; or joining a number of (pro)Russian communities, which through their subordinate media, have exalted and justified the Russia’s war in Ukraine – as well as their reflections on (previously) existentially crucial worldview understandings and today’s disruptive realities.

Anna Ratecka (Jagiellonian University) *Fears, Risks, Threats – Rhetoric and Politics of Human Trafficking in the War in Ukraine*

The war in Ukraine and the subsequent flow of migrants, mostly women and children, from Ukraine to neighbouring countries and then further into Europe has raised fears of possible

abuse of migrants. One of the well-known fears is the risk of human trafficking of refugee women, especially sex trafficking and forcing refugee women to work in the sex industry.

The media both in Poland and in Europe published alarming news about the numerous risks of becoming a victim of human trafficking. However, cases of sex trafficking or sexual abuse of refugee women were lacking. On the other hand, no mainstream media or NGO seemed to care about the thousands of sex workers from Ukraine who either stayed in the country or migrated to protect their lives and the lives of their children. The organisations that tried to bring such initiatives to public attention were accused of promoting sex trafficking. In my presentation I would like to discuss the recurring theme of sex trafficking of Slavic women and the invisibility of sex workers from Ukraine in public discourse in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Oleg Reut (University of Eastern Finland) *‘Even a Cemetery Is Affected by the War’*

In Orthodox tradition, soldiers who experienced a ‘bad’ death (violent, sudden, unprepared, without witnesses, or surrounded by strangers) were believed to be unable to find peace and posed a threat to the living. Consequently, they were intentionally buried outside the community cemetery through a distinct procedure. Dying on the battlefield and being interred in a mass grave were regarded as equally existentially perilous for the fate of the deceased, leading to their separation from the community cemetery.

In Russia’s unnamed and unhonored war, traditional concepts of death and the handling of the deceased undergo fundamental challenges. The sheer number of deaths on the battlefields and the burial of the dead in mass graves contribute to the desacralization of death and the reduction of burial rites, particularly in terms of their emotional significance. The emerging cult of fallen soldiers behind the front lines, characterized by official burial rituals meant to symbolically compensate for the practices on the front, undergoes a process of deprivatization and mediatization. Consequently, the war contributes to the shift of death from the private, familial, and communal spheres to the public sphere.

Disorder in the funeral industry, including corruption in land allocation for burials, insufficient availability of specialized vehicles and staff, inadequate provision of monuments and funeral equipment, and resulting black market activities, along with violations of sanitary regulations and occasional careless registration of graves, has become a common occurrence in the current reality. Consequently, the responsibility for resolving burial-related issues falls on the deceased’s relatives, who must mobilize their own resources and efforts or seek

assistance from the enterprises and organizations where the deceased or their relatives were employed.

Cemeteries play a significant role in the construction and regulation of social and political hierarchies. When private military companies assume symbolic power, they start designating specific resting places for individuals deemed heroes. These corporate-designated areas emerge in various regions across the country, occupying privileged sections situated in a central, honorary position along the central alley, typically near the entrance area and the 'zone of mourning ceremonies'. Concurrently, new symbols emerge within the cemetery space, including state and PMC flags, hybrid tombstones, emblems, and commemorative markers.

Considering that mass mortal practices and burial culture largely maintain traditional elements rooted in pre-revolutionary religious customs, albeit with adaptations to certain innovations during the Soviet period, the cemetery becomes a highly contradictory 'text'. – What does death tell us about society? What does death in the continuing war in Ukraine tell us about the contemporary Russian society? What does death tell us about the future?

Roman Romantsov (Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre, Lublin) *The Leninfall as Counter-revolutionary Iconoclasm in modern Ukraine 2014-2022*

The events of the winter of 2013-2014 determined a further radical departure from the old symbols and the gradual creation of new ones, which are gradually included in the canon of the new postmodern Ukrainian identity. The consequence of the "Revolution of Dignity" was a change in the "landscapes of memory" in the Ukrainian space, the components of which were, using the concept introduced by the French researcher Pierre Nora - "places of memory". It is these symbolic places/objects/spaces of memory that have experienced changes as a result of the stormy and ambiguous activities of various politicians and activists - which can be characterized as iconoclasm - mass dismantling - destruction - liquidation - iconic symbols from the previous era. Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine since 2022 has fundamentally changed the cultural landscape of Ukrainian cities and villages. At the epicentre of symbolic changes, which had place in the period from 2014 to 2022 was the farewell to the Soviet totalitarian past, especially the demolition of monuments to the Bolshevik leader of the events of 1917-1921 - Vladimir Lenin. This demolition gave the informal name "Leninopad". In my presentation, I will try to analyze the removal of monuments to Vladimir Lenin using the categories of desacralization, the concept of René Girard's "scapegoat" and Pierre Bourdieu's "symbolic violence". With the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian army in Ukraine, the "Leninofall" continued in the overthrow of monuments to figures of Russian

culture and politics from the later period of the 14th, 18th, and 19th centuries - which I called the "Russofall". The "Russofall" we can understand as a symbolic liberation from the Russian-Soviet colonial and imperial past.

Emma Rönngren (Uppsala University) *Navigating the news: Russophone youth's reception of Russia's strategic narratives in Latvia*

This conference paper will present the findings of a PhD project studying the reception of Russia's strategic narratives among Russophone youth in Latvia. Latvia's Russian-speaking minority is often seen as vulnerable to Russian information influence as they often rely on Russian media channels for news and are considered a target group of pro-Russian messages and a tool for influencing public opinion in Latvia. Young Russian speakers have, until recently, not received much attention from scholars and analysts. The difference in the views of different generations in Latvia is, in principle, little studied, and as for the Russian-speaking youth, practically nothing is known about them. They are often involuntarily politicized, instrumentalized and securitized by their home country and Russia. Since 24 February 2022, several Russian media outlets have been banned in Latvia, and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has accelerated various changes in Latvian society. Both Western observers and policymakers seem to assume that Russian media campaigns have a significant impact, but whether and to what extent this is actually the case remains underexplored – especially among a younger audience who has grown up in independent Latvia and mainly consumes news online and through social media. What media do young Russian speakers in Latvia use? How do they decide what to think and what to believe? How do they experience being a young Russian speaker in Latvia? This conference paper asks how the strategic narratives Russia wants to project are interpreted, understood and perceived by a target audience and is based on focus group interviews conducted with young Russian speakers living in Latvia, where three articles from Sputnik Latvia were used as discussion material. Using a qualitative research approach, this conference paper seeks to further our knowledge of the sensemaking process of how we perceive strategic narratives as well as further our understanding of what makes strategic narratives resonate (or not) with a foreign audience. As such, it challenges the focus on output, indicating a direct effect and an indirect passive audience in favor of outcomes and the impact of such communication efforts. It also problematizes the weaponization of information, which not only exaggerates the degree of control that an actor can exert over the communication process but also leads to the downplay and exclusion of the audience's lifeworld. Censorship, as a result, furthermore, disempowers citizens and diminishes the agency of audiences.

Sanita Rugina (Södertörn University) *The reconstruction of entrepreneurial identity among Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs*

More than 5 million Ukrainians left their home country after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. They arrived to many European countries that provided shelter, financial assistance, legal protection and eased legislative barriers that allowed Ukrainian refugees to find work and even start businesses. Refugees often experience significant losses in various aspects of their lives due to being forced to leave their homes and seek safety in other countries. That can result in damaging imprints on their individual, social, and entrepreneurial identities. The interest of this research is to understand the reconstruction process of entrepreneurial identity of Ukrainian entrepreneurs who lost their businesses in their home country and started a new venture in their host country. The study of entrepreneurial identity constitutes a promising area of research. Identity has been found to influence entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions including, how they evaluate opportunities (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011) and how they respond to adversity (Powell and Baker, 2014) as they prepare to launch and run their organizations. This study will use the lens of identity work to follow the identity loss and reconstruction process of 32 Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs who left Ukraine after the full - scale invasion to answer the following research questions: what is the process of identity reconstruction after identity loss of refugee entrepreneurs and what behaviour strategies Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs employ.

The current research in refugee entrepreneurship mostly focuses on explanation why refugees engage in entrepreneurship in their host countries by highlighting the various factors that confer advantages or pose disadvantages. However, these studies reveal the factors that influence refugees' entrepreneurial motivations, strategies, and outcomes but do not explain how they actively orchestrate their journey toward entrepreneurship and what actions they take to create new ventures (Abebe, 2023). Therefore, there is a call for studies that focus on investigating the journey through which refugees emerge as entrepreneurs or create new ventures. Scholars argue that the phenomenon of new venture creation, which entails the entrepreneurial journey leading to organizational emergence, should be a core focus in entrepreneurship research (Wiklund et al., 2011).

Research on identities suggests that the way entrepreneurs define themselves plays a critical role throughout the entrepreneurial process (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020) by informing entrepreneurs' decisions, actions, and feelings (Alsos et al., 2016). Therefore, the study of entrepreneurial roles and identities offers tremendous potential for understanding entrepreneurial processes and outcomes (Navis & Glynn, 2011).

As the primary data source, this study relies on 32 semi-structured interviews with refugee entrepreneurs who left Ukraine after the Russian invasion, and have registered or plan to register their business in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Czechia. This result of the study is an identity reconstruction model that illuminates three different levels of identity reconstruction: reconstruction of home - land identity, building host country identity and coping strategies. Each level is a complex psychological and emotional process that addresses both personal and professional aspects and motivates the conscious choice of situated behaviours that can result in reconstruction of entrepreneurial identity and creation of a new business. This study finds that the identity reconstruction is not a linear process but is a reiterative, conscious practice based on the past experiences, context, motivations, and goals. Based on the findings we theorize the dynamic process view of refugee construction of entrepreneurial identity.

Monica Quirico (Södertörn University) *Story of a failure? Baltic cooperation in the global controversy over Nord Stream 2*

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian Federation reaffirmed the importance to maintain the Baltic Sea cooperation outside geopolitical calculations. The then Swedish and German Foreign Ministers agreed on the need for a bottom-up approach with Russia in the social, cultural and economic field; in 2016 the Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen called for lifting the EU sanctions against Russia and increased cooperation as a means to avoid a geopolitical and even military competition between Russia and NATO in the region. However, the announcement in 2015 by the Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom of a second pipeline to double the capacity of Nord Stream 1 (inaugurated in 2011) eventually revealed all the fragility of Baltic intergovernmental cooperation.

Whereas much has been said about the security threats posed by Nord Stream 2, the role that environmental and climate issues played in the related controversy has been overlooked. This paper presents the preliminary findings of a research project funded by the Åke Wiberg Foundation (Stockholm), aiming to cast light on the way in which states as well as civil society actors in the Baltic sea region tackled at transnational level the environmental and climate challenges issued by NS2. How came that a project which, in addition to increasing Putin's influence, was incompatible with climate action was in the end granted permit by the three Nordic countries concerned (Sweden, Finland, and Denmark)? And how did environmental and climate movements of the Baltic sea region mobilize?

Apart from Germany, which, being the recipient of the energy supplied by the Russian pipelines, ran alone, the Baltic Sea region was split into two camps. Whereas Ukraine, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Lithuania warned against the security risks connected to the project, Sweden, Denmark and Finland found themselves in-between geopolitical concerns, on the one hand, and international law, partnership with Germany as well as economic benefits of the pipeline, on the other hand. Did environmental and climate concerns play any role in the discussion between these countries? Were these issues sacrificed on the altar of geopolitics or on the contrary raised to prevent the construction of NS2?

As to environmental NGOs and climate movements, they tried to halt the project mostly through the transnational network founded in 1990, the Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), which gathers ENGOs from all the countries bordering the Baltic Sea as well as the WWF. The junction point of the governmental and civil society responses to the NS2 project can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which every concerned state had to conduct. The EU's EIA Directive provides in fact that the procedure should allow the public to actively engage. How did Baltic ENGOs utilize this tool? What notions of security did ENGOs put forward? How could they overcome geopolitical and cultural divisions?

After tracing the background of the controversy back to environmental cooperation/conflict between Eastern and Western Baltic countries in the post-1991 age (including the construction of NS1), this study covers the period from the announcement of the pipeline to the outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine.

This paper aims to contribute to a critique of international relations and transnational governance by highlighting the gap between transboundary challenges and national final say and to a renewed notion of security: has Europe learnt anything all from this controversy when it comes to the trade-off between energy, democracy and sustainability? The sources are official documents, materials produced by ENGOs and climate movements, and media (both traditional and social).

Ieva Sakelaite (Vilnius University) *Aesthetics of Protest in Vilnius: A Study of Artistic Responses to the Russian War on Ukraine*

When the war in Ukraine started, Lithuanian capital Vilnius has seen a major surge of artistic protests in public spaces. Some of these protests against the Russian invasion of Ukraine were labeled as performances, some as public actions. Whatever the label, it was obvious that all of them had a pronounced aesthetic aspect – for instance, by excessively using theatrical blood, the protesters were imitating both the suffering Ukrainians and passive Europeans. In Lithuania, such directly political artistic actions in public spaces were relatively rare before, associated mostly with a set of artists whose strategies involved publicly addressing the national politics in such issues as women and LGBTQ rights, or questioning the neoliberal agenda in restructuring the city. The wave of new performances was, however, mostly carried out by people outside of the institutionalized art world. In the paper, I try to map this new wave of artistic protests as they are interesting in several aspects. Firstly, artistic protests are usually theorized as practices that oppose the hegemonic order in which they appear – for instance, Chantal Mouffe claims that critical art is an agonistic practice that is supposed to question the hegemonic culture. These events have all claimed to be protests against the war in Ukraine, but the intended audience remains ambiguous. Even prior to the war's onset, the Lithuanian government had unequivocally positioned itself regarding the perpetrator in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, fostering a dominant discourse supportive of Ukraine and its people. The topography of the new protests can also be inquired. They were mostly held in places that do not correspond to the city spaces that are chosen by the politically active artists. A major site of the new protesting was obviously the ponds by the Russian embassy in Vilnius. The actions have also taken place next to French and German embassies. This spatial configuration represents a new topography, as these areas have hitherto not been encoded as protest spaces. Finally, the new protests interest me as a liminal artistic practice – not all the protests have involved established artists, but they had a clear aesthetic dimension. Some of the organisers even claimed these events to be performances which has resulted in criticism by renown Lithuanian performance artists. This raises such fundamental questions as who is to decide which practices can be called “real art” and what role a researcher plays in categorizing such events.

Anselm Schmidt (University of Tartu) *Ukrainian Struggle(s) for Agency: Emerging Historiography and a Multi-Level Approach*

With Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine well within its second year, an international historiography is emerging that narrates the ongoing war since 2014. Despite limited access and thus primarily based on journalistic sources, monographs such as Serhii Plokhy's "The Russo- Ukrainian War" tell a compelling story of Russia's war against the country, including the initial phase of its all-out invasion since February 2022. This early historiography contextualizes recent events in a long-lasting strife for Ukrainian agency and will profoundly impact future historiographic work about the war. It usually frames Ukrainian struggles for agency in national terms. The Ukrainian state fights for its right to exist and to determine its own future. Nevertheless, national agency is only one level of agency that Russian aggression tries to suppress. This paper argues that understanding the motivation and successes of Ukrainian resistance requires a multi- level approach. Beyond the national struggle for state survival and territorial integrity, the study incorporates Ukrainian struggles for individual, transnational, and counter-hegemonic agency. Based on journalistic accounts from the past year of conflict, the study demonstrates how different levels of agency have been fundamental to the fight against the invaders – both militarily and through civil society. This exploratory study investigates two research questions: (1) How is agency framed in accounts of those initial battles in Russia's all-out invasion that ended with Ukrainian victories? (2) How is agency framed for participants with identities beneath and beyond the nation state who are usually not part of hegemonic accounts of these battles? The first part analyzes descriptions of two decisive Ukrainian victories of 2022 – the Battle for Kyiv, focusing on its north- western suburbs, and the Battle for Mykolaiv, including engagements in Bashtanka and Voznesensk. The second part analyzes specific groups of actors who took up arms and their struggles for agency against the Russian invasion and within society: transnational anarchists, Ukrainian Roma, and Ukrainian LGBT soldiers. Contrasting the Battle for Kyiv with the Battle for Mykolaiv uncovers the potential substitution of the state through non-state actors. The paper also analyzes the agency of participants in these battles with identities beneath and beyond the nation state. It utilizes a deductive approach to frame analysis, identifying pre-selected assertions of individual and collective agency on the international, transnational, and sub-state levels. Analyzing agency beneath and beyond the nation state requires the definition of frames representing different levels of agency. First, we separate state from non-state agency, introducing frames on the individual, local, and national level. Second, additional frames

include whether agency is being asserted against an external other or within one's own society. Finally, frames about the future of these struggles are introduced to analyze the views among different counter-hegemonic groups regarding the post-war order. They indicate whether the discourse surrounding their actions in Ukraine is more optimistic or pessimistic when it comes to their future. The study thus incorporates counter-hegemonic struggles for agency against the external threat of the Russian invasion but also for emancipation and against marginalization domestically. It highlights how they are embedded in but also differ from the early historiography of the all-out invasion, which will have a lasting impact on how the war will be remembered. The paper concludes that non-state actors played a decisive role in the initial defeat of Russia's full-scale invasion. Chasing off the invader became a new front in counter-hegemonic struggles for emancipation and equal rights by marginalized groups. It thereby contributes to the discussion on de-centering East European Studies away from the aggressor and towards a more detailed understanding of Ukrainian resistance. Moreover, it lays the groundwork for a more inclusive future historiography of the war.

Thomas Sedelius (Dalarna University / Södertörn University), **Olga Mashtaler** (National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" / Dalarna University), **Jenny Åberg** (Dalarna University / Södertörn University)
Executive Coordination and War: Semi-Presidential Leadership in Ukraine during Zelenskyi's Presidency

Following Russia's brutal invasion in February 2022, Ukraine provides an unsolicited case of executive leadership during a full-scale war. Studies on semi-presidentialism in the context of crisis are few and virtually non-existent in the context of war. From presidential regimes, in particular the United States, we know that in times of war, the president's power increases significantly through a rally-round-the-flag effect of citizen support and the centralisation of power as extraordinary procedures and emergency powers come into effect. Similarly, crises and war in parliamentary systems tend to concentrate powers in the hands of the prime minister and the government. In semi-presidential regimes, however, where a popularly elected president shares executive power with a prime minister, the situation is less obvious.

Alongside Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine changed its post-Soviet constitution in the wake of popular uprisings (2004 and 2013), shifting from a president-parliamentary model of extensive presidential powers and a government accountable to both the president and the parliament, to premier-presidentialism where a directly elected but weaker president shares executive power with a cabinet exclusively dependent on parliament for survival. It is

also during the formally weaker presidency (2006-2010 and 2014-onwards) that Ukraine has experienced some significant improvements in the level of democracy. Since independence, Ukrainian politics has faced several key challenges including presidents that have, frequently, fallen prey to autocratic tendencies; a fragmented and weak party system that has undermined the capacity of the legislature to act coherently; and a weak constitutional culture, manifested by irregular, politically motivated changes to the constitution. Many of these challenges have surfaced in recurring political infightings between president, parliament, and government.

Our study examines how executive coordination in Ukraine has been (re-)organised during the full-scale war and how this has influenced the balance of power between President Zelenskyi and the government. In addition to analysing formal changes in institutional structures and procedures, it uncovers internal dynamics of interaction between key actors within the president's office – an institution of substantial influence already prior to the war – and its relation to other executive units. The study draws on media sources, expert insights, and official data spanning Zelenskyi's mid-2019 election to the February 2022 - June 2023 war period.

We find that the war has accelerated centralisation of powers around the president clearly subordinating the prime minister. However, the overwhelming demands on the presidency have also necessitated a stricter division of labour, particularly evident in areas of domestic policy. Our findings underscore the influential role of the presidential office as the main centre of executive power in Ukraine. Our study contributes to an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of executive power and decision-making during times of crisis in a semi-presidential regime. It investigates how political leadership works during the most pressuring circumstances and adds to the literature on public administration, particularly crisis management and executive coordination, by identifying conditions that may facilitate successful coordination during times of crisis, not limited to the Ukrainian case alone.

Anna-Karin Selberg (Södertörn University) *The war's role in Russia's political image-making*

Probably inspired by the growing literature on propaganda in the 20's, Hannah Arendt identified a form of political lie that she saw as a key element in the establishment of totalitarian regimes. Whereas a traditional lie is a statement that intentionally covers over or distorts facts in order to deceive, this version of lying makes use of media and modern techniques for mass communication for transforming fictions into reality. As such, however, it can appear also in non-totalitarian forms and under non-totalitarian conditions, for example in democracies and

authoritarian regimes. By combining Arendt's concept of lying with Daniel Boorstin's notions of "image-making" and "pseudo-events", the present paper investigates how an organized version of the political lie appears in Russia today. The examples that will be analyzed are Russian influence operations on social media that targets the war in Ukraine, PR events such as Putin's televised meeting with soldier's mothers in 2022 and finally the war itself. They show how the version of lying Arendt identified can appear in the form of political image-making, where propaganda narratives are realized through the staging of crisis and media spectacles.

Iryna Shuvalova (University of Oslo) *Manufacturing Russianness: Prosthetic Identities in the Occupied Ukrainian Territories*

Even before the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2014, Russia has pursued its neo-imperial ambitions in Ukraine not only through military actions but also through disinformation and propaganda. In the context of these efforts aimed at conquering territory through controlling the minds, culture has become a particularly prominent medium ensuring the establishment of symbolic Russianness in addition to the attempted permanent re-drawing of political borders in the occupied Ukrainian territories by military means.

In the Russia-controlled parts of Ukraine, culture is actively used to construct and popularize new ready-made identities intended to substitute the sense of Ukrainianness in local people. These symbolic constructs, while all positioned as Russian in their essence, at the same time, aim to retain ties with the regional microhistories, drawing their strength and influence from those. Some of such propaganda initiatives have been more successful than others. For instance, the 'Novorossia' project that, in 2014, attempted to promote a shared identity in the Donbas (and, potentially, in the southern regions of Ukraine) has failed to take off. However, instead, the symbolic construct of 'Opolchenie' (literally, 'the Insurgence' – a heroic image based on fake history and imagining what is purported to be a grassroots rebellion of the people of Donbas against the 'fascist junta' in Kyiv) has become a relatively popular rallying point, helpful for generating pro-Russian sentiment in the region. By examining the logic that governs the creation and dissemination of such prosthetic identities, we can not only gain a better understanding of the dynamics in the occupied parts of Ukraine but also come up with more effective strategies for countering Russian propaganda in Ukraine and beyond.

In my paper, I will attempt to trace some of the cultural strategies used to construct the symbolic space of Russianness in Ukrainian territories. My survey will largely focus on the Donbas region where such strategies have been promoted by the pro-Russian puppet regimes

of the self-proclaimed ‘republics’ since 2014. I will pinpoint the most popular cultural mediums used to construct and promote prosthetic identities for occupied Ukraine, with a special focus on popular music as a tool of propaganda; identify the key narratives communicated through those mediums; and briefly highlight their reception by the target audiences. By examining the use of cultural weapons in the Russo-Ukrainian war, I aim to emphasize the importance of studying the cultural dimension of this conflict for a full understanding of its geopolitical implications, as well as for the post-war decolonization efforts.

Maria Silina (Södertörn University) *Assessing the Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Museums: History and Perspectives*

In this talk, I would like to address the current state of affairs in the museum domain and scholarship in the context of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war (2014-present).

Russia is actively involved in cultural crimes in Ukraine, including direct looting and destruction of cultural property and museum collections. These crimes also manifest in hidden forms, such as emergency evacuations to temporarily occupied territories or directly to Russia as a result of collateral damage from technological catastrophes created in Ukraine. The damage inflicted by Russia on museums during the war is still ongoing and immeasurable. Nevertheless, observations collected over the past 18 months have allowed me to identify and assess certain patterns and forms of damage caused by Russia. The aim of this discussion is to explore future conceptual and legal perspectives on achieving justice for Ukraine in the context of this war, as well as addressing the centuries-long history of imperialist and asymmetric relations between the two countries.

Sergii Slukhai and Nataliia Slukhai (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv) *Economic and Cognitive Foundations of Ukrainian Society’s Resistance to Russian Aggression*

The modern phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine is characterized by expressive intentions of Russia to destroy not only the Ukrainian state but also the Ukrainian people as such; in particular, to destroy the economic basis of the Ukrainian society and to stimulate its disintegration. In response, extensive mobilization of society has taken place to repel the aggressor, which can serve as an example for other nations and, thus, deserves a special study.

Ukraine has borne unprecedented economic losses, which resulted in the substantial decline of welfare of society as a result of destruction of production capital, physical and social infrastructure, housing fund, degradation of human capital through the decline of quality of life

and migration, also by force of circumstance, of a considerable part of the country's human resources. According to the estimations of experts, renewal of the national economy can take substantially longer than in other countries which experienced military aggression. GDP as an index of economic welfare fell by 29% in 2022, inflation was 27%, causing the real incomes of the population to fall by 25%. The prospects of 2023 do not look too optimistic.

Without regard to such negative tendencies, which must have considerable public consequences, sociological surveys show that Ukrainians appeared to be optimistic as concerns the development of economy, demonstrating the determination to overcome economic setbacks and to garner support for the Ukrainian state, without regard for the imperfection of its specific institutes.

Thus, the danger of societal disintegration, which could be war-induced with an enemy that has prevailing military and economic force, to a great extent looks to be neutralized. What was it that made this phenomenon possible?

According to the authors, the answer is to be found in the peculiarities of the Ukrainian mentality. The content of Ukrainians' cognitive map (such as vitality, cardio-centrism), concept form and content (derussification, deoccupation, decolonization etc.) are reflected in information tactics and strategies. As the study showed, in Ukrainian media nowadays two strategies dominate: the strategy of survival in terms of maintaining the ethno-code and nation-code, and the strategy of a victorious trajectory. The first one is furthered through 13 tactics, among which tactics of providing co-citizens with detailed information about dangers and survival options (Kyiv-info, Krayina-info); tactics of optimism (GoodNewsforUkraine); tactics of glorifying society (our strong and perfect people). The second one is furthered through six tactics including creating trust for the Ukrainian Armed Forces; tactics of expressing gratitude to leaders and nations of the world for their support. New discourses and narratives are also observed (such as the dominant discourse of self-presentation of Ukraine, introduced through the grand narrative "Ukraine is a democratic European nation that is fighting for its identity, land, ethnic code and gene pool, as well as for global values").

The study concludes that Ukraine counteracted the high suggestivity of Russian information-analytical content through a respective system of counter-suggestion defense. The most valuable achievements of practical counter-suggestion are, first of all, new media-related forms of counter-suggestion such as "formulae of optimism" ("From now on, each Sunday we will collect for you the top positives of the week"), involving Ukrainians into a massive "cyber-army", various forms of help for the military; therapeutic content of "Ukrainianness code" in TikTok, among others. Secondly, the forms of counter-suggestion of the civil society: creating

numerous patriotic murals, installations, graffiti, professional and amateur small creative art pieces, memes etc.

Agnieszka Starczewska (University of Warsaw) *Business as usual or business unusual? A glance at the foreign direct investments protection situation on the Ukrainian territory.*

While many researchers primarily focus on the humanitarian aspects of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which is certainly justified, there are also significant economic dimensions to consider. One of these dimensions is the "regime nouveau" concerning the protection of foreign direct investments, particularly within the occupied regions of Ukraine where the stability of protective measures is uncertain.

The issue presents various evident facets. Firstly, there's the potential risk of damage and destruction to investments due to ongoing military operations. However, there are additional substantial risks, such as the expropriation and nationalization of businesses, a trend that is currently prevalent in Russia when it comes to foreign-owned properties and investments. An important question arises about the alignment of the seizure of assets belonging to Russian investors, by the Ukrainian authorities, with international investment law. Furthermore, there's a concern regarding the possibility of investments being destroyed during the armed conflict, under the principle of military necessity, as well as proportionality.

Adding to these complexities are legal concerns related to potential state responsibility for investment destruction. While it's widely agreed that Ukraine shouldn't face repercussions from the war, given that it was subjected to an unlawful attack and invasion by Russia, contractual obligations emerge from both investment contracts between investors and Ukraine, as well as the Bilateral Investment Treaty between the sending state and Ukraine. Should Ukraine be considered responsible raises inquiries into the wrongful nature of the actions based on the ARSIWA (Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts), possibly rooted in territorial control issues, as even though the investments destroyed may have been placed on the Ukrainian territory but fully destroyed by Russians. The application of specific investment treaties to the matter is another challenge, especially pronounced in the context of occupied territories.

The challenges are most pronounced in the occupied areas. Moreover, the question of whether Russia can be brought before arbitration tribunals based on Ukrainian Bilateral Investment Treaties remains a significant query.

Presently, the international legal framework, key investment arbitration institutions, and even the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have yet to provide clear guidance. Around 6 or 7 disputes have been resolved through arbitration thus far, and there is an ongoing ICJ case – Ukraine v. Russia – being adjudicated under the "litigation clause" within the Genocide Prevention Convention. Nevertheless, it's uncertain whether these disputes will offer solutions to the complexities surrounding the treatment of foreign investors or if they will further convolute the matter.

That is why, I would like to focus on the situation of the foreign investors in Ukraine, as they tend to be forgotten in the studies, despite the fact, that they are going to be crucial for the rebuilding Ukrainian territory.

Andrzej Szeptycki (University of Warsaw) *Poland and the Ukrainian refugee crisis*

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian war in Ukraine, some 11 million Ukrainian refugees crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border. Poland has accepted the largest number of Ukrainian refugees in the world. Currently a million of them stay in Poland.

This unprecedented refugee crisis was faced jointly by the Polish non-governmental organizations, the society, and the Polish state. From the first days of the war, NGOs and other entities, such as enterprises, universities or political parties were involved in helping refugees - primarily on the border and in its immediate vicinity, providing refugees with food and other necessities, organizing transport from the border to larger cities, accommodation, psychological aid, childcare etc.

The refugees from Ukraine were supported by residents of Poland, who went to the border to pick up refugees, provided their apartments, and helped them find their way in the new reality. According to public opinion polls, some 69% of respondents declared that they had supported Ukrainians – mainly financially.

On the state level the most instrument was the special act on assistance to Ukrainian refugees in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine adopted by the Sejm on March 12, 2022. The act recognized all Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland from February 24 as persons enjoying temporary protection in Poland, allowed them to stay temporarily in Poland for up to 18 months, granted them the right to work without a permit etc. Ukrainian refugees were covered by the most important social assistance programs. The hosts received financial support from the state for a period of two (and then three) months.

While the initiatives of the state authorities, especially the special law of 12 March, as well as the situation of the Ukrainian refugees in Poland and the attitude of the Polish population towards the refugees have been already studied, the assistance at the local level has been relatively poorly described, as it was both massive, bottom-up and rather uncoordinated, especially during the first days of the conflict. The proposed paper aims to fill this gap, at least partially, by mapping out the main forms of Poles' aid to Ukraine, pointing out those which have been already studied and those which were not.

One year and half after the beginning of the war, a majority of the refugees went back to Ukraine. Those who remained in Poland face considerable challenges, like the language barrier or the unemployment. The accommodation places have become hardly available. The NGO aid is declining due to volunteer burnout. The Polish education system may be too rigid to facilitate the integration of the Ukrainian refugees (several thousand Ukrainian children in Poland do not attend either Polish or Ukrainian schools).

Besides, until now there was a wide consensus in Poland about the need to help the Ukrainians. This is changing, however. First, the "Ukraine fatigue" is negatively affecting the situation of the refugees. Second, they may be blamed for the deterioration of economic situation, partially due to the war in Ukraine. Third, the Polish government clearly favors a homogenous state and an ethnic concept of the nation; in that context the presence of a growing Ukrainian community may become a problematic, highly politicized issue, especially in the context of upcoming elections (parliamentary elections in Autumn 2023, European and local elections in 2024, presidential elections in 2025).

Daria Taradai and Dariya Orlova (Mohyla School of Journalism, National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy) *No Rules Fighting: Telegram as the Game-Changer of the Media Landscape in Ukraine*

The year of 2022 brought about significant changes in the way Ukrainians consume news with the majority finding themselves "in the constant information flow" in order to feel safe, one of the recent studies has shown. According to the survey, Ukrainians have been relying on social media platforms (SMP) as sources of news during the full-scale Russia's invasion more than ever before, with the use of SMP for news consumption reaching 74%. And this trend is surprisingly stable during the second year of the full scale war. Strikingly, Telegram turned out to be a major platform in this respect (60% of the respondents getting news on SMP read it on Telegram)[1]. Not only is it popular among Ukrainians as the well-designed messenger, it has become a critical source of news for people and for other news media in Ukraine. However,

the platform represents a realm of almost absolute freedom, without strict rules or moderation. Obviously propagandistic Telegram channels cannot be restricted by any of the war sides. War content, graphic images, fake news banned or censored on other SMPs can be easily found on Telegram. During the war verification became an especially urgent and critical necessity for the audience, however, our analysis shows that a large bulk of news content published on Telegram is neither verified nor verifiable as such. At the same time, all key actors of the war in Russia and Ukraine, both state and non-state ones, are present on Telegram, which has turned into one more battlefield in Russia's war against Ukraine. All sides are fighting for the Telegram audience and its attention using all available resources.

In our research we are analyzing the most shared content of the most popular Telegram channels in Ukraine during the period from November 2021 till November 2022. At the second stage of the research, we are doing in-depth interviews with Ukrainian Telegram readers about how they consume information from this platform and how they assess it. We managed to overview and categorize very diverse content of the most popular Ukrainian Telegram channels, as well as to describe the recent trends in Telegram consumption. In our conclusions, we address the most critical issues of Telegram consumption in Ukraine and discuss how they impact information consumption among Ukrainians and the media sphere at large.

Tihomir Topuzovski (Skopje Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities) and **Irina Seits** (Södertörn University) *Migrant Art & Migration Crisis in Europe since 2015: Migrant Flows, Moving Images, and Mappings of Migration*

This presentation focuses on the migration crisis that has been unfolding in Europe since 2015 and escalated in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The war is fueling another migration flow, giving impetus to the development of new migrant art that is altering the cultural and artistic landscapes of Europe no less than the social and political ones.

At a theoretical level, this paper explores the concept and phenomena of migration through the study of human flows in specific geographical, social, and historical circumstances as reflected in artistic representations and images that can be called "Migrant Art". "Migrant Art" is art that draws on, or records, and maps lived experiences of migrants and refugees to critically describe how migrants and migratory flows are woven into various cultural, economic, political, and military processes. The study of migration as a reflection of global cultural dynamics has gained momentum since the mid-2000s when researchers and artists began to study the art of immigrants and refugees more systematically.

During the presentation, we will turn to the works of political theorists, philosophers, and authors who have written about migration and art, such as Walter Benjamin (1927; 1933; 1935), Thomas Nail (2015; 2016), – to analyse the theoretical approaches to understanding migrant art and responses to modern crises.

By engaging with the ongoing migrant and refugee crisis, this paper explores how moving images and migrant art can serve as evidence of the journey of migrants and refugees and contribute to a new understanding of human migratory flows and their lived mobility. We will analyse exhibitions of migrant art, activist projects, and representations of migration, the life experiences of migrants and refugees as represented in museums, urban spaces, as well as in the media, and social networks.

The main part of the presentation will look at the main aspects of migrant art in relation to the recent migration and refugee crisis that was caused by the Russia's war on Ukraine, and which has already been presented through various artistic techniques, photography, painting, and art, with many spontaneous exhibitions, grass-root initiatives, and events taking place in Ukraine, Eastern, and Northern Europe. Among most recent events in Stockholm that we address in our presentation are the exhibition 'Ukrainian War Archive: Invasion' at the Center for Photography (2023), which featured images of war and destruction; an open-air exhibition of works by Ukrainian photographer Evgeniy Maloletka 'The War. Mode on' at Kungsträdgården park (2023); and exhibition of images of Kyiv suburbs at the Stockholm National Archives and the Royal Library (2022).

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Olha Voznyuk (International Research Center for Cultural Studies, Vienna) *The role of literature as a war documentation tool in Ukraine after 2022*

After the beginning of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian literature and art became a tool in a process of recording the war crimes. In some cases, it is the only source to keep in the memory of society the spirit of cities and their cultures, which are erased from the earth like Mariupol. The idea that war and culture usually neglect each other is actively challenged by Ukrainian literature through the involvement of Ukrainian artists in the process of reflecting the war and documenting it.

Oksana Udovyk (INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) *Imagining cities we would like to return. Crafting a displace-aware recovery strategy for Ukraine*

The ongoing war has given rise to a substantial exodus of its citizens, resulting in a mass migration with millions seeking asylum in Europe. This significant movement of people has cast a profound impact on Ukraine's demographic landscape, which had already been grappling with a dwindling birth rate and a population reduction of 10 million over the past three decades.

Notwithstanding the enormity of this situation, the viewpoints and necessities of Ukrainian migrants are frequently excluded from conversations pertaining to Ukraine's resurgence.

To bridge this informational void, this research initiative engaged directly with Ukrainian migrants in three European Union nations: Spain, Poland, and Sweden. The objective was to comprehend their viewpoints on potential return and their unique perspectives on Ukraine's recovery journey (with new knowledge gained). This exploration was conducted through a combination of interviews, focus groups, and innovative photovoice techniques.

Aytac Yurukcu (Karelian Institute) *The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and Its Impact on Eastern Europe and the Baltic Region*

Wars are not solely fought with military means. Influenced by the media and journalists, war news draws a large audience and frequently deeply engages people emotionally and intellectually. My study looks into the Russian-Ottoman War (1877–78) and its repercussions on minorities within the Russian Empire, as well as connected effects that had far-reaching consequences in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Baltic region. The current study seeks to comprehend the identification phases of Estonians and Finns at the local, national, and imperial levels. It drew from a wide range of identity literature, particularly Brubaker's (1996) concept of "nation as an event." The event in question is the War of 1877–1878. It extends a previous

study on the emergence and modification of identity during wartime (Anderson 1991; Hastings 1997; Colley 2009) by analyzing the influence of conflict on local identities, cultural milieus, and the intelligentsia.

The Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire's Eastern Orthodox-Pan-Slavic coalition (which included a number of Balkan minorities such as Bulgarians, Bosnians, Serbians, and Montenegrins) had a significant impact on the formation of national identities, rising nationalism, and ethnic boundaries in the Balkans. The war, on the other hand, had a considerable impact on the Russian Empire's ethnic minorities who served in the Russian imperial army, such as Finns, Estonians, Prussians, and Latvians (Greene, 1879). Most scholars have ignored the question of how local identities and media are linked to national patriotism and imperial mobilizations during wartime, and the research promises to unearth significant general and specific findings, as well as contribute to a better understanding of the local, military, and media histories of the Russo-Turkish war in Estonia, Finland, and the Baltic region. I gathered pertinent research resources for this conference paper, including diaries, letters, news, and war reports from Estonian and Finnish soldiers. This study tries to address the following questions based on the research objectives: How did war news, soldiers' diaries, and war reports in various countries show and convey the war to the general reader and public? Why do these countries deploy rhetorical/illustrative, propagandistic, and persuasive arguments, and how can contextual representations influence readers and public opinion?

This distinctive conference and experience will be an excellent opportunity for me to gain and build skills, receive feedback, expand my network, and raise my exposure among development researchers and scholars. Additionally, the conference will be a special opportunity for me to present my research as an INREES network visiting fellow in Estonia, where I am working on the project "Minorities in the Russian Imperial Army: Soldiers' Participation from the Baltic Region in the Russian-Ottoman War 1877–1878 and Its Effects on the War and the Baltic Community."

Galym Zhussipbek (Suleyman Demirel University), **Zhanar Nagayeva** (Independent scholar) *Catalyzed by the war in Ukraine unanticipated but necessary "Kazakh voice" in decolonial thinking*

In the Central Asian region, not only are demands for decolonization more evident in Kazakhstan, but condemnation of aggression and general solidarity with and empathy for the Ukrainian people are louder and stronger in Kazakhstan, especially among the ethnic Kazakh community. In the entire Eurasian region, only Kazakhstan has numerous historical, political,

economic and cultural similarities with Ukraine. The most notable are: being on the vanguard of Russian- imperial and Soviet colonial projects due to its large population, its proximity to the expanding colonial power, its dynamic and distinct culture and language, and its long history of anti-colonial struggle and strong cohort of anti-colonial thinkers, scholars, and local leaders. Last but not least, Ukrainians and Kazakhs are united by their firm will to survive all hardships and continue to be a distinct community and nation contributing to the betterment of humanity.

Overall, we can argue about the emergence of the “Kazakh decolonial wave” catalyzed by the war in Ukraine, but it did not emerge in a vacuum. Various anti-colonial and decolonial discourses never disappeared in the Kazakh-speaking parts of Kazakhstan’s society. At least since the late 1980s, they gradually became part of public discussions, academic thought, and the public psyche. They were the continuation of the ideas of the “Jadids” and “Alash” intellectuals” purged by the Soviet regime, as well as dissidents and exiled Kazakhs living in Turkey, Germany and other countries. However, the decolonial discourse was primarily local and did not resonate with the relative majority, especially Russian-speaking Kazakhs. The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 awakened and even catalyzed scholarly and especially public awareness and demands for decolonization in Kazakhstan. Paradoxically, the problem of considering the Kazakh language as a “lesser”, or “underdeveloped” and letting it get marginalized (as a manifestation of coloniality) was naturally resolved. The long-awaited calls by Kazakh intellectuals to develop a Kazakh version of decoloniality based on the legacy of the anti-colonial liberal Alash Orda intellectuals and reformist Jadids started to resonate with many, especially younger generations. This research will analyze the factors reinforcing the call for decolonization in post-Nazarbayev Kazakhstan that bear similarities to Ukraine, such as the critical reassessment of the recent past when the development of native language and culture was denied, the great famine of the 1930s (which wiped out about one-third of the entire ethnic Kazakh population, “Asharshylyq” in Kazakh), racialized interpretations of history and culture in general. A central claim of this article is that the Kazakh voice, or the Kazakh wave, is indispensable to contemporary decolonial thought.

Overall, this article seeks to add a Kazakh voice to conceptual discussions of decoloniality that can make a useful and timely contribution given the intellectual paralysis of many decolonial scholars in the so-called “global North” and “global South”. The global community needs a more thoughtful discussion of decoloniality and decolonization when it comes to the implications of the war in Ukraine, especially when many Western decolonial and critical scholars have shown not only intellectual myopia but also blindness in the aftermath of

February 24, 2022, because of their obsession with criticizing NATO and capitalism. In other words, this research argues that the “Kazakh wave” (alongside and in support of the Ukrainian decolonial push) will give decolonial thinking a more humanistic, comprehensive approach by exposing one of the most chameleonic and intrusive powers which generate colonialism and coloniality, but which is still largely overlooked in decolonial thought, whether in the “global North” or the “global South”.

PANEL ABSTRACTS

Includes individual presentations within panels, organised in order following the conference program

Sustaining Action in Times of Crisis (by Dominika Polanska, Elzbieta Korolczuk, Luca Sara Brody, Michaela Pixova)

War, global neoliberal advancement, de-democratization, state capture, political polarization, religious fundamentalism, distrust towards state institutions or “depoliticizing” tendencies are not only deepening the multitude of existing social and environmental crises (housing, climate, pandemic), but also hinder the societal response to them and pose significant threats to collective action. Crisis upon crisis pile up in Europe and require action. But how do people act together to counter some of these crises? What are the responses from civil societies across Central and Eastern Europe? How is civic action sustained over time, and how is solidarity built, given the threats and the repression faced by activists?

Panelists will talk about how civic actors in Poland, Hungary, and Czechia act collectively in receiving refugees, counteracting food, energy and wider economic crises, and engaging in climate issues. Much of this activism is done outside of institutions and established organizations. Informal activism is seen as an expression of citizens’ desire to operate in ways that are non-hierarchical, non-conformist, unbureaucratic, innovative, independent, and better suited to local-specific contexts. Elzbieta Korolczuk, sociologist from Poland, will discuss the transformations that the feminist organizations and networks underwent in Poland in the context of de-democratization and the crisis related to the war on Ukraine. She will show how feminist activists managed to shift the

thematic focus and organizational forms of engagement responding to the new challenges in recent years. Luca Sára Bródy, sociologist from Hungary, will talk about structural limitations and gendered hierarchies in the Hungarian food sovereignty movement, examining the intersections of green, women's, solidarity and care issues. She brings to the fore the insights of less visible actors in the green movement space and their profound role in sustaining solidarities in times of crisis. Michaela Pixóva, human geographer from Czechia, will explore alliance building between the Czech climate, environmental and housing movement under the banner of a mutual campaign *Energie lidem* [Energy for People] aimed at tackling the ongoing energy crisis catalyzed by Russian aggression against Ukraine. Bringing practical insights from the field, she will show the limits and opportunities of mutual cooperation and coalition in the context of so far underexplored differences between organizations' and groups' agendas, objectives, style of work, level of in/formality and politicization, and other internal barriers.

The panel will be chaired by Dominika V. Polanska, sociologist from Poland and Sweden and Principal Investigator of SustainAction research programme (www.sustainaction.org). At the end of the session there will be room for questions from and discussions with the public.

Negotiating Hegemony: Central Asia in a Multipolar World (by Olena Podolian, Bo Petersson, Edward Lemon, Oleg Antonov)

With the relative decline of the United States, the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and the strengthening of new regional powers such as India and Turkey, the world is becoming more multipolar. Surrounded by China, Russia, Iran, Turkey and India, Central Asia is a key site to study the implications of burgeoning multipolarity for global politics. Central Asia's domestic politics and international relations are in a state of flux. In Central Asia, local governments have been faced with unprecedented instability from revolution and illiberal populism in Kyrgyzstan, regime destabilization in January 2022 in Kazakhstan, an escalating border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the return to power of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shaken confidence in it as a security guarantor. Great powers are trying to capitalize on this vulnerability. Having colonized the region for over 150 years, Russia still considers the Central Asian region as within its sphere of influence. At the same time, Beijing is taking advantage of the war in Ukraine to strengthen its position. China is confidently and intensively building up comprehensive political and strategic partnerships in the region through regional organizations, its Belt and Road Initiative, security assistance and trade. The United States has labelled both Russia and China as its long-term rivals, re-focusing foreign policy on "great power competition." Amid

heightened tensions between East and West, Central Asia is precariously trying to maintain its position as a Eurasian bridge with a balanced portfolio of external partners, a term Central Asia's government call "multivectorism." Panelists will examine how Central Asia's foreign relations are changing and what is driving these changes. This panel will explore Central Asia's position in a multipolar world characterized by disparities in power between great powers, middle powers and smaller states. Panelists will focus on the role of great powers, particularly Russia and China, in imposing their interests on their former colonies. But they will also address the ways in which Central Asia's peoples and governments exercise agency, either in demanding more patronage, using their strategic position as leverage or in pushing back and decolonizing relations in certain spheres such as language and education.

Why the Invasion of Ukraine Matters for the Caucasus (by Sofie Bedford, Nurlan Aliyev, Sossi Tatikyan, George Mchedlishvili, Mairbek Vatchagaev)

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has affected developments in many of the individual countries of the Caucasus, as well as contributed to changing the regional dynamics. The decrease of Russia's capabilities and Turkey's increasing involvement is one of the most important geopolitical implications to this end. On the one hand, this development has seemingly caused an escalation of violence, as observers largely link the intensification of clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan to Russian peacekeeping troops being assigned elsewhere. On the other hand, there might be increasing opportunities to achieve a final peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan brokered by the West. Meanwhile, Armenia and Georgia are struggling with the societal impact the large influx of Russian fleeing the war, and in many republics of the North Caucasus the war is re-igniting grievances against the local and federal governments. The proposed panel looks closer at these processes as it aims to explore how the governments and societies in the larger Caucasus region perceive and react to the war, what kind of challenges they face, what kind of lessons they are learning, and what opportunities may be arising for them as a result of the new development. The panel aims to cover the impact of the war in Ukraine on societies and governments of the Caucasus, specifically discussing developments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the North Caucasus. Through their individual papers the panelists will give a comprehensive overview of the effects of the war on a range of issues such as internal politics, regional security, migration, identity, and mobilization. They will also provide insights into how the life of various groups in these societies have been affected by the conflict.

Legal Harmonization or Decolonization? Cases from Eurasia (by Olena Podolian, Bo Petersson, Edward Lemon, Oleg Antonov)

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many post-Soviet republics adopted legal systems that transplanted legal norms and articles from Soviet laws into their new legislative system. Laws on issues ranging from youth to civil society and elections were in many cases copied verbatim from Soviet-era laws. Over time, governments have adopted new laws in these areas. Yet Russia, primarily through the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, is seeking to harmonize laws and establish common autocratic standards in the region. Most research on processes of diffusion and policy transfer, or the way ideas travel, have focused on successful cases where countries have adopted similar policies either due to the innovator promoting them or the adopter seeking them out. Fewer studies have examined cases where policy transfer was attempted did not succeed. This panel will examine the extent to which governments in Eurasia are de-colonizing their legal systems and adopting new norms. Panelists will examine which sectors this is taking place, to what extent levels of legal harmonization have changed over time and potential drivers for this. The latter includes both common threat perceptions that drive convergence, such as the colored revolutions, and developments that drive divergence, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Roundtable: *Exploring the Links Between the Culture War and the Actual War* (by Hansalbin Sältenberg, Elżbieta Korolczuk, Maria Brock, Emil Edenberg, Jenny Gunnarsson-Payne)

The aim is to discuss the links between "culture war" understood as ongoing struggles around gender equality and minority rights, and the violent re-shifting of global order related to the war on Ukraine. In her contribution, Maria Brock will reflect on how the figure of the 'innocent, vulnerable' child became a symbol in whose name 'traditional values' are often being advocated by anti-gender actors, and by Russia as both state policy and as geopolitics. She argues that the war on Ukraine has revealed the biopolitical core of 'traditional values' starkly: Ukrainian children are displaced, killed and kidnapped, while Russian children are being re-educated in the spirit of Russian patriotism, and that this biopolitical aspect is the unavowed underside of transnational anti-gender politics. Emil Edenberg will analyze how the environment for queer people in the Russian Federation has become increasingly repressive in the context of the full-scale aggression on Ukraine. In government rhetoric, gender and sexual minorities became identified as national security threats, LGBT+ organizations and individual activists were listed as "foreign agents", and

any open dissent was brutally crushed. On top of domestic repression, Western economic sanctions and international isolation of Russia contributed to the fragile situation of Russian LGBT+ activism, which was heavily dependent on international funding. His paper will shed light on the consequences of Russia's war for LGBT+ activists' work in transnational advocacy networks and opportunities of international funding. Elżbieta Korolczuk will discuss the role of gender and sexuality in the Russian campaign against the European Union and the West. By opposing the supposed moral dissolution and degeneration of the West as betokened by the English word 'gender,' Russia is exerting a soft power all its own and in Russian media, the West is portrayed not only as a political adversary, but also as an 'upside-down world' that is heading for self-annihilation and defying common sense. This narrative portrays the war on Ukraine as both necessary and just, as a way to oppose Western colonialism and to protect Ukrainians from foreign influences. Jenny Gunnarsson-Payne investigates contemporary Swedish media representations and debates of “the victims of ‘the Culture War’”, focusing on the representations of LGBTQ+-migrants from Russia and Uganda. Both countries are well-known as strong proponents of the so-called “politics of traditional values” and the Swedish migration politics has long been characterised by clear homo- and femo-nationalist tendencies, rhetorically positioning the country as a liberal and open-minded protector of women and LGBTQ+-people, saving them from “the Muslim Other”. At the same time Sweden is practicing a restrictive migration policy, in practice preventing the very people deemed worthy of protection from entering or staying in the country. Maryna Svetsova will also look at the rights of the LGBTQ+ community feature in the context of migration resulting from the ongoing war. She examined the lived experiences of more than 40 LGBTQ+ Ukrainians who fled Ukraine after February 24, 2022, and ended up living in such countries as Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia. The study questions the 'Inclusive Rainbow Europe' myth highlighting some of the policy gaps and problematic issues related to the ways in which host countries in the EU dealing with the forced migration from Ukraine large.

Symbols and Narratives of Ukrainian Resistance in the Context of Russian-Ukrainian War (by Yuliya Yurchuk, Tamara Martsenyuk, Nadiya Kiss, Daria Antsybor)

Ukrainian resistance against Russia's unprovoked war came as a surprise for many international commentators in the wake of the full-scale invasion in February 2022. In Ukraine, though, people were surprised not by their own resistance but by the reaction of those commentators who did not believe in Ukrainian readiness to fight back. While it is very difficult, or even impossible, to

measure people's spirit, the panel approaches resistance through the analysis of narratives and symbols that help us better understand societal attitudes in the context of war. The panel brings together scholars from different disciplines who approach different aspects of resistance focusing on gender, songs, humour, animal-human connection.

Yuliya Yurchuk, *Non-human symbols of resistance: biopolitics and biopoetics of care*

The paper approaches the use of non-human actors, mainly animals, as they appear in the imagery and symbolic representations of resistance in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the images of animals have been circulated throughout the media creating a cluster of meanings that reveal the relation not only to the animals but to life itself. These images show approaches to life that go beyond the dichotomy human/non-human. Indeed, under the context of war when each life is threatened the understanding of life transforms. Theoretically, the paper proposes to approach the use of the non-human symbols through the concepts of biopolitics and biopoetics of care.

Tamara Martsenyuk, *"Girls, let's close the sky": women's resistance in Russia's war in Ukraine*

Since 1991, Ukraine has achieved considerable progress in establishing gender equality in the different spheres of Ukrainian society, including the military. Three large sociological studies called "Invisible Battalion" demonstrate the successes and challenges of gender equality implementation in the Ukrainian armed forces, the status of female veterans, and the problem of sexual harassment in the military. Women's involvement in war could be analyzed from two major perspectives – agency and victimhood. In response to Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, women remain active: results of a public opinion survey (January 2023) demonstrate that most Ukrainian women are willing to resist with arms. The successes and challenges of gender equality implementation in the Ukrainian armed forces over the last nine years are examined.

Nadiya Kiss, *How pop culture responds to the war: self-images in Russia's war against Ukraine*

The presentation is based on the methods of multimodal discourse analysis and an emerging field of sociolinguistics of pop culture. It tackles the issues of self and enemy image construction in various genres of pop culture, such as memes, songs, dances, graffiti, and posters. With the full-scale war, the need for new heroes became especially vivid and brought into pop culture field heroization of not only military leaders and politicians (such as President Volodymyr Zelensky or

General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi), but also representatives of the general public (militaries, volunteers, and civilians). The presentation will shed light on how the visual and narrative language of resistance.

Daria Antsybor, *Food as resistance in Ukrainian memes about the war*

The presentation focuses on the various aspects of how the Ukrainians use gastronomic memes. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, the food has often been represented as a means of resistance in different ways (like Melitopol cherries, Kherson watermelons and crayfish, Azov gobies etc). The paper aims to analyze how gastronomic humour is shaping the new reality, what language it chooses and how it creates the new context in respect to defining who the Ukrainians are and how they mark and express a sense of personal identity at wartime.

Industries, Cultural Diplomacy, and War (by Maria Silina, Yi Gu, Svetlana Gorshenina, Anya Kuteleva, Elisabeth Bishop)

This panel wants to explore large infrastructures that made themselves visible through cultural diplomacy globally in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war (2014-). We are particularly interested in extractive industries such as oil production, large-scale energy infrastructures, the mass production of new technologies, and hidden and grey markets that are supervised by ruling elites. These industries serve as hubs that accumulate the most interests of those who lead wars and engage in military expansions. Cultural diplomacy serves as one of the most ubiquitous and complex means of extending markets, exerting influence through intercontinental collaborations, and enhancing the image of prestige. Meticulously created as a conduit of corporate interests, cultural diplomacy enables and hides the distribution of resources and accelerated profits, often used in the pursuit of war and the continuous division into political blocs to generate more power. By employing an intersectional approach encompassing media studies, art and cultural history, political studies, and economics, speakers will demonstrate the close interconnection between political interests, warfare, and culture in the public sphere.

Information, Communication, and Russia's War on Ukraine (by Göran Bolin, Kateryna Boyko, Roman Horbyk, Dariya Orlova, Yuliya Yurchuk, Göran Bolin, Per Ståhlberg)

The panel thematizes Ukrainian communication from the Euromaidan revolution through the full-scale Russian invasion in early 2022. Bringing together an interdisciplinary group of scholars who

have studied the evolving situation in Ukraine for more than ten years, the panel aims to develop a nuanced picture of communication efforts during times of war.

Kateryna Boyko & Roman Horbyk, *Towards the Concept of Swarm Communication: Media Infrastructures, Actors and Practices in Ukraine during the 2022 Russian Invasion*

Since the full-scale Russian invasion, the Ukrainian resistance has fascinated external observers, not least its successful communication. This paper gives an overview of shifts in the Ukrainian mediascape since February 2022, focusing on media infrastructures, actors, practices. We observe collaborative communication between actors with the synergy of top-down, bottom-up and horizontal actions, where hyperlocal reporting, social media lobbying, media activism, folklore, art played important roles. Ukraine compensated for its lack of resources with media and communication equivalent of mass mobilization—yet in a decentralized way based on swarm communication, paralleling swarming tactic used by the Ukrainian military.

Dariya Orlova, *Between Fatigue and Justice Seeking: Ukrainian Journalists after Russia's Invasion*

Russia's full-scale invasion has put massive pressure on Ukrainian journalists, resulting in alarming stress levels. Fatigue and stress have also surfaced as primary concerns in interviews conducted for this study. Exhaustion, however, seems to be compensated by the new meaning and purpose of journalistic work. This pattern is particularly prominent among journalists engaged in war crimes documentation and investigation. The paper discusses motivations driving Ukrainian journalists to continue their work during ongoing war. It seeks to explain how ethos of journalism might be challenged and reconsidered under external aggression.

Yuliya Yurchuk, *Uses of religious imagery in the memetic communication in the context of Russo-Ukrainian war*

The paper analyses the application of religious imagery and symbols in the secular context of Russo-Ukrainian war. The main argument is that secular actors use well recognizable images in their communication to convey messages of hope and resistance to broader audiences which cross cultures, nations, and languages. At the same time, these images cross the temporal dimension of the war and blur boundaries of the temporal axis positioning the war as the eternal struggle between the good and the evil. On the one hand, these imagery mixes secular and religious symbols in the assemblages that reveal traces of specifically Ukrainian past and present. On the other hand, these traces become transnationally recognizable thanks to religious symbolism. The paper approaches these images as examples of the “postsecular sacred” which is produced by the specific condition

of postmodernity that erases boundaries between secular and religious, and between sacred and the profane. Methodologically the paper is based on the semiotic analysis of the images circulated through social media.

Göran Bolin & Per Ståhlberg, *The rise of the informational state: Managing meaning in Ukraine*

Although wars have been affiliated with media technologies before, Russia's war on Ukraine has integrated the media to an elevated extent. Since early 2022 there has been growing fascination with the images stemming from Ukraine. Memes, video clips, frontline reports, and governmental information mix, and varies between fact-based reporting, irony, and internet 'trolling'. Content with high production values accompanies President Zelensky in parliaments and cultural events around the world. The paper analyses the implications of these ways of managing meaning for our understanding of the state as a unified entity, and as an example of a new form of informational state.

Understanding the ideology of Putinism since 2022 (by Mikhail Suslov, Alicja Curanović, Matthew Blackburn)

Mikhail Suslov, *Regime ideology in post-Soviet Russia*

This paper lays out the conceptual apparatus for understanding Putinism as a present-day regime ideology in Russia and maintains that this ideology is a new and consequential phenomenon, which is larger than merely Putin's undemocratic regime. The paper places Putinism into the ideological niche, already inhabited by organic populism, right-wing communitarianism and identitarian conservatism. Putinism's key message is criticism of mimetic Westernisation. For this end, Putinism argues that imitation is suicidal for Russia because of its unchangeable collective identity, unbreakable historical continuity, civilisational uniqueness and messianic role in the world. It is further argued that Putinism rests on the broad consensus among the population about the importance of such values as justice, order and national pride, while it is also accepted that Putinism is not Russia's fate, because a different ideological articulation, for example, individual-oriented social-democracy can resonate even better among the Russians. If the ideational foundation of Putinism might not be the best fit for Russia, it surely has a good historical chance to make itself attractive to the vast masses of the people from the so-called "developing countries," which can easily relate to such claims of Putinism as anti-Western, anti-colonial rhetoric, appeals to justice and ecology, respect for traditions and national identities.

Alicja Curanović, *The 'Weimar Syndrome' and the Role of Ideology in post-Soviet Russia*

Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine accompanied by tightening screws in the Russian Federation raised questions about the nature of the current regime ruling in the Kremlin. Some argue that it's an electoral autocracy (Gelman), others - already a totalitarian system (Gudkov), while still others talk about fascism (Motyl). The debate triggered by the aggression of 2022 has brought to the attention the earlier discussion about the 'Weimer Syndrome' of Russia which appeared for this first time in the 90s heralded by publications by Starovoytova (1993), Yanov (1995), Hanson& Kopstein (1997) or Ryavec (1998) and then occasionally resurfaced in the 2000s. The goal of this paper is to critically assess the argument about the 'Weimer Syndrome' and use it to evaluate the role of ideology in facilitating the Kremlin's return to the revisionist policy in the post-Soviet area. Stephen Hanson's seminal work on post-imperial democracies and the crucial role of ideology in the successful democratization serves as the point of departure for the analysis presented in this paper.

Matthew Blackburn, *The thickening of Kremlin ideology: The culturalization and securitisation of the Statist core before and after 24 Feb 2022*

In previous literature, Kremlin ideology has been both overplayed as a comprehensive and extreme "ism" and underplayed as either mere "code" or "mentality". I argue Kremlin ideology began with a limited, statist morphological core that, from 2012 expanded through three 'thickening' or 'segmenting' processes: discursive closure, culturalization and securitisation. A chain of associations has been forged between Russia's national identity, the geopolitical struggle with the West and the very existence of the Russian Federation. In launching its "Special Military Operation" in February 2022, Kremlin ideology has not been transformed. The legitimization of the war in Ukraine merely uses harsher language to repeat ideological convictions established in the previous decade (2012–2022). While the radical decision to invade Ukraine has resolved some old ideological contradictions, it has produced new ones causing tension between the Kremlin and those advocating more extreme measures to prosecute the war.