

CFP: War in Ukraine: Situating mobilities and migration in times of multiple crises

Neue Kulturgeographie 2023 MLU Halle-Wittenberg, 26.-28. January 2023

Call for special session at Neue Kulturgeographie 2023 conference sponsored by EEGA Research Area 1 "Mobilities and Migration Regimes in Eastern Europe under the Global Condition"

The Russian war against Ukraine has led to millions of internally displaced people and refugees. Fleeing war-torn cities and towns, refugees still face the threat of becoming targets of bombardment. Arriving in allegedly safe spaces, they run the risk of being trapped by traffickers or get stuck in the grinding wheels of migration bureaucracies. However, there are more issues at stake than the dynamics of migration spurred by the atrocities against Ukraine. First, this particular migration regime is gendered, since martial law does not allow male Ukrainians between the age of 18 and 60 to leave the Ukraine. Second, earlier dynamics such as the "migration crisis" of 2015 should not be forgotten since it is connected to the Russian war in Syria, while its destabilising effects for European democracies have been duly noted by the aggressor (and politically exploited at the border of Belarus in 2021). Third, not only people from Ukraine are fleeing. A large number of people are also leaving Russia, going towards countries such as Georgia or Azerbaijan. Fourth, while many are leaving the Ukraine, we observe re-migration flows, e.g. after unsuccessful migration experiences, to accompany humanitarian convoys, to join army ranks or to contribute to the resumption of civil life in the country, e.g., at universities or in agriculture. Finally, refugees and migrants from Ukraine are diverse in terms of national and ethnic as well as linguistic or religious background, they include international students and residents from other world regions.

Even though it is very challenging to find time to reflect this new European reality while the killing continues with no end in sight, we argue that it is important to re-introduce perspectives into the academic as well as public debate that acknowledge relational aspects for a better understanding of the complexities of our current predicaments. While transregional and globalisation studies have demonstrated the importance of networks, diasporas, and transnational identities, we are now facing a tendency of falling back into nationalistic accounts of countries, people and nationalities. Closely connected with that renationalisation is the new emphasis on geopolitics as the most pressing issue. At the same time, European and global debates have been shaped over the last years by a multiplicity of experiences of crises and efforts to manage these. We are not arguing for a hierarchy that would clarify if climate change, the pandemic, or geopolitics is the most important issue to address. Instead, we suggest studying those crises as overlapping and interconnected, thus shedding light on the re-configuration of migration and mobility under these volatile conditions.

With this call we are inviting scholars of geography and related disciplines (including anthropology, history, or sociology) to consider one or more of the following questions:

- How can we (empirically) study migration and mobilities in the context of the war against Ukraine? How are research agendas as well as methodological repertoires impacted?
- How can we explore broader historical and transregional trajectories, e.g., to 2015 Syria, 2021 Belarus and beyond to situate current dynamics of migration and mobility?
- Which roles do networks and diasporas play in the emergence of new mobility regimes in times of interconnected crises?
- How are the various renationalisations in public and academic discourses related to broader global dynamics? How can we address and avoid the pitfalls of earlier conceptualisations, i.e. escape the territorial trap in our research?
- What do we empirically gain with perspectives focusing on interconnectedness, intersectionality and complexity?

Please submit abstracts of not more than 300 words including title of the presentation, name and institutional affiliation of the author to the coordinators of EEGAs Research Area 1 “Mobilities and Migration Regimes” Jonathan Everts (jonathan.everts@geo.uni-halle.de), Steffi Marung (marung@uni-leipzig.de), Wladimir Sgibnev (W_Sgibnev@leibniz-ifl.de) by 30 Sept 2022 (please note that this is also the deadline for submitting abstracts to the NKG conference – if the deadline for general submissions to the conference is extended, so will the deadline for the special session; please do also note that you do not have to submit your abstract to the conference organisers, this will be done by the convenors of this special session).

For more information about EEGA and Research Area 1, go to <https://www.leibniz-eeга.de>
The call for the Neue Kulturgeographie conference and further information can be found here: <https://kulturgeographie.org>



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