# Who moved, where, and why, when war came to Ukraine?

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**
people, Ukraine, move, war, migration, job, optimism, surveys, migrants, trust, scholars, internally displaced people, conflict, society, live, invasion, work, Ukrainian, logistics, findings

**SPEAKERS**
Lucinda Platt, Tymofii Brik

**Lucinda Platt** 00:03
Welcome to  Migration, Conflict & Crisis, a podcast investigating what leads people caught up in conflicts around the world to stay put, or to move to a different country. I'm Professor Lucinda Platt from the London School of Economics and Political Science. And from my own recent research on those caught up in the war in Ukraine, I'm interested in finding out more about how migrants fleeing conflict fare, how people in different countries respond to them, and what policy responses have been. In this first episode, I'm delighted to be joined by Tymofii Brik, Rector of the Kyiv School of Economics. Together, Tymofii and I have been researching migration patterns since the start of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. And I'm going to be talking to Tymofii about his understanding of the war in Ukraine, and its impact on migration. So Tymofii, the impact of the invasion of the Ukraine on 24th, February 2022, has been characterised as the largest and fastest movement of refugees since the end of World War Two, what do we know about who has moved and where to in the period since then?

**Tymofii Brik** 01:06
The war with Russia started in 2014. So we have quite a lot of data that goes back before 2022. And we can compare the extent to which the war affected different social groups in Ukraine back then in 2014, and 2022, and onwards. So what we know first of all, that the Ukrainian society is now very much affected by the war with no exception. Almost everyone in surveys, from 80 to 90% of people say that they are affected by the war, meaning that they were displaced, or that something is damaged like a house, or they lost someone, a relative or significant other. It is a very huge increase. Before 2022, according to different surveys from 20 to 30%, said that they were affected now it's from 80 to 90. Damage is significant to the society. The first internally displaced people emerged after 2014. And most of them migrated to large cities, which was difficult to them. But nevertheless, they had access to education to labour markets, to jobs. But now in 2022, most of the people migrated either to another countries like Poland, or Germany, or they became internally displaced people. However, now they live not in big urban areas, they live in the central Ukraine or Western Ukraine, in rural areas, in urban areas, and even in special camps that were built just to these people. So approximately, the numbers are changing very rapidly. According to different evaluations, about 6 million people migrated outside of Ukraine, and about 8 million people are internally displaced people.

**Lucinda Platt** 03:05
So what do we know then about those who moved?


Transcribed by https://otter.ai

**Tymofii Brik** 03:07
When we're talking about those people who are outside of Ukraine, many of them are females, people who are a bit older, and also children. So basically, females, grandmas, granddads and their children and grandchildren, they emigrated outside seeking safety. And many males stayed in Ukraine for various reasons, either, because, you know, it's logistically difficult to travel or even because of the legal restrictions during the martial law, males are not allowed to travel outside of Ukraine. Many of them have high level of human capital. So they have a lot of them from according to different estimates, from 40 to 60% of respondents usually say that they have higher education, they had decent jobs before the war started. So it means that their profile is different from profiles of other migrants who were forced to leave their countries due to civil wars or worse before in history.

**Lucinda Platt** 04:14
That's really interesting. I mean you've drawn out the comparison there between the differences in the moves of of 2014 compared to those since 2022. And you said that people are moving not just to big cities, but all sorts of areas. So what's shaping where they move to internally? Why are they not just concentrating in big cities? Can you say a bit more about that?

**Tymofii Brik** 04:34
It's an issue of what is available and it is also an issue of logistics and, and routes. So when the invasion just started, a lot of people were looking for safety. Logistics played a crucial role. I'll share an interesting observation that these years were kind of resurrection of faith in state public services specifically railways. For many years, Ukrainians were not happy with the railway system in Ukraine, because it was perceived to be a bit outdated kind of technologies and logistics that were inherited from the Soviet era that do not match high level standard itself, you know, Western societies, that was the general perception. But during the war, our railways worked perfectly, you know, to either deliver humanitarian aid, or to deliver people from one place to another place, or even to deliver international diplomats and weapons. So the railway system works very well now. And a lot of the mechanics how they arranged, they also facilitate moves of people. So basically, if there is a train from eastern Ukraine, let's say from somewhere from Kharkiv to Western Ukraine to Kyiv , this means that people will migrate from one station to another station.

**Lucinda Platt** 06:00
That's really interesting. So people increasingly or have been using trains much more than cars to move.

**Tymofii Brik** 06:06
It was a crucial factor. Yes, one of my colleagues, he's a behavioural economist, his name is Volodymyr Vakhitov. And he conducted a survey in the very early months of the invasion, asking questions like Why did you move, what were the factors that influenced your decision to move. One of the significant variables was actually availability of transport, and availability of cars as well. So meaning that in these difficult times, people were affected by infrastructure, if you have a car, if you have a train station, where other people are moving, if you have social networks, you know, and you have friends who travel somewhere, they will pick you up. So it was very simple. So at the very


Transcribed by https://otter.ai

beginning, the movements were constrained on logistics, and on the movements of other people. Now the situation has changed, two years have passed. So now people make more rational strategic decisions, one of the very crucial variables, which influence decisions for people is safety. Or I would rather say perception of safety. Some places have more security in case of air attacks in case of attacks by drones, or attacks by missiles. Some cities have better air defence systems, for instance, Kyiv is a capital city, it is quite close to Russian borders, and it is under frequent attacks. At the same time, it has very nice defence system, which influences decision of people to move in Kyiv, or to live around key if so it's not exactly about jobs..

**Lucinda Platt** 07:53
So you're saying that in the initial phase, people were just moving wherever they could. And that was a lot about transport options, whether that was cars, friends with cars, or where there was a train station, now they're making decisions based on where they think is a good place to go. And so does that mean a lot of people have moved for a second time is that what's happening? We're seeing quite a lot, I think, quite a lot of churn, quite a lot of movement in and out of the country quite a lot of movement back and forth. So is, is that as people are changing their decisions?

**Tymofii Brik** 08:24
Yes. So there are moves in both groups of people, internal displaced people, and people who were forced to migrate. Both of these groups move around, even you know, I know that we're scholars and we have to use data. But for this conversation, I can also give you a lot of anecdotal evidence. As an insider, a person who lives in Ukraine, almost all my friends and relatives, were moving frequently. So the first stages of the war, let's say someone, you go to village because you have a relative there, after some time you move to a bigger city, because you need a more decent apartment to live with your kids. And then you realise that maybe it's time to get a better job, because the war is not going anywhere, and you need to save, you need a feeling of security. And also a lot of people they you know, they donate, they volunteer. So maybe people are now ready to secure a better job and move to another city where the labour market is more developed. So people make these decisions all the time, and they move from one place to another. And the same is about migrants, you know, people are divided. Let's say a very typical situation is that a household is divided because males are not able to travel outside of Ukraine, but females and kids can do it. So eventually, you know, they miss each other so they want to see each other. So it is very often that females travel to Ukraine, you know, to meet their family, and then they go back. Sometimes they come back and they realise that they see that there is a job, there is a sense of security. And some people make a decision to come back to Ukraine even during the war.

**Lucinda Platt** 10:15
So yeah, so we're seeing both sort of circular migration sort of, for families to keep together but also some actual return migration as people make a make a positive choice to return. Then related to that, I'm interested in something you said earlier about the fact that we've what we've seen is a lot of women moving a lot of women with children, sometimes with grandparents as well. I mean, this presumably raises particular issues about where they settle in relation, for example, to the education of children, is that something that's shaping people's moves, either their onward moves or their return moves?

**Tymofii Brik** 10:47



Transcribed by https://otter.ai

Yes, it's still debated, the findings we have are mixed. Because usually when people respond to surveys on the surface, especially in the very first six months and 12 months of the war, people showed a lot of optimism. So people who migrated outside of Ukraine, according to different surveys, from 60, to 70%, of people said that they will return to Ukraine, whenever they have an option to return, whenever there is a possibility they're going to return. So this optimism overshadowed everything else, a lot of scholars and policymakers were focused on this optimistic answers. But then, you know, after some time passed, we see that people are now more careful in giving their answers. So optimism disappears. Most likely, because people are now settled, you know, their kids, maybe are in kindergartens or schools in Poland and Germany, they don't know how long the war is going to take. So that's why people are now giving more conscious answers. And usually what we see that there are such factors as housing, do we have a place to leave either a house in Ukraine, it is a question of jobs, if we are going to return are we going to have some stable job with money? And then public services, and public services include kindergartens and schools? So right now, in the answers of the respondents, I would say it is kind of number three. But we see that it is growing.

**Lucinda Platt** 12:24
Yes. So initially, they were just moving somewhere where it's practical to move to and then over time, people are thinking a bit more in the long term. And then they have to plan for their families. And also think about, as you say, jobs and housing. Related to that earlier, you were mentioning how the people who move are often fairly highly educated. These are people who therefore might normally expect to get decent jobs. To what extent is that happening? Are we seeing the migrants getting good jobs getting work at all? Or are they very constrained in terms of their work opportunities?

**Tymofii Brik** 12:55
Yeah, this is actually an area which has, again, mixed findings. And I think one of the reasons for that is the quality of data. There are so many independent NGOs or scholars who try to address this question. And you know some groups of people they work in Poland, some groups are working on Germany, and there is no one big source of data that you can refer to. So that's why the findings, at least I'm aware of are quite mixed. What I can say is that people do find positions abroad, usually, it's not a rapid process, because people have to either pass some language tests or the diplomas, you know, they have to be verified. But it actually happens that people go to a local civil servant, some sort of local Bureau where they can be registered and be verified. And after six months, after eight months, they can have their first job. So this is happening, because many people who migrated from south and eastern Ukraine, they're engineers, for instance, or they're doctors, or they're people who worked in civil service before, so these people are more educated and they have skills. So it's not so difficult for them to find a job if they want to find a job. It's more a matter of motivation, and it's a matter of language efficiency. At the same time, there is another factor is that, you know, we live in the period of time, after COVID after the World pandemic. And also in Ukraine, as I mentioned before, we count that the word started in 2014. So there were quite a lot of infrastructure and Institute's institutional change implemented after 2014. In simple words, what I'm trying to say is that there is a lot of remote work. People started to explore remote work many years ago in Ukraine. So right now, a lot of people have necessary knowledge and skills and infrastructure, how to work remotely, how to exchange finances remotely, how to pay salary, how to sign contracts remotely. So it is not such a big issue for people to live in Poland and Germany, and at the same time work for some projects in Ukraine. Especially we're talking about finances,

logistics, IT. And even education. You know, a lot of people now study online, including high schools and secondary schools. So we have quite a lot of teachers who can stay in, in Prague, and they teach online to kids in Kharkiv.

**Lucinda Platt** 13:21
That's fascinating. So what we're seeing is not just people moving and getting work where they move, but actually, they're, they 're taking their jobs with them. And so we're seeing the sort of separation of where they live from, from where they work that started, as you say back that since 2014, and and exacerbated, I suppose, during the, during the pandemic, when people became more habituated to that.

**Tymofii Brik** 16:06
It's also about finances and taxes. So, in Ukraine, we have this rapid, fast moving reform of digitalization, millions of people have installed a special application called DEA, which can be translated as action. And this is an app which was developed by government. So basically, almost all Ukrainians have their passports, they IDs on this application, and they can pay taxes using these applications. And during the COVID, a lot of people used it to receive funds from the state, people are both skilled in using this app. But also the whole institutional system is designed in a way that you can find a job and pay taxes remotely. So this is very helpful to people now during the war.

**Lucinda Platt** 17:01
So in terms of national finances, even if people are living abroad, they may be contributing their taxes still to Ukraine,

**Tymofii Brik** 17:09
Yet, yeah, there are many legal, you know, legal and tax rules are always complicated. But yes, if you are a citizen of Ukraine who work for an entity in Ukraine, you can pay taxes remotely,

**Lucinda Platt** 17:24
I wanted to come back to an earlier point you made about this changes in optimism, and then how that shapes people's trajectories. Because we looked at people and how their attitudes changed over time. And we saw that they became increasingly less optimistic as we surveyed them over the 3 turn points approximately a year from February 22. I was wondering what you think this tells us? Is this, perhaps you know, just about how people start to adapt and adjust to a long term, complex situation and optimism necessarily decreases? Or does it tell us something more about how people are feeling about the progress of the war? Do you think what what can we take away from these findings?

**Tymofii Brik** 18:05
So it's a general observation, we see it in many different surveys related to other attitudes, the most famous example would be trust, trust to government trust President. When the invasion started, there was an unprecedented increase in trust to formal institutions. Ukraine is known in the scholarship as a society with low trust. Usually people do not trust the president and Parliament, and at the same time, people trust to their peers and friends. However, during the invasion, the trust to President was unprecedentedly high, like from 80 to 90%, said that they trust the president, now we observe a decline.


Transcribed by https://otter.ai

Now it is from 60 to 70%. People trust the president, which is still high, even though there is a drop, it is still very high, according to Ukrainian, you know, baseline to any other year in the history of Ukraine. At the same time, the trust to volunteers and trust to Army remains very high. There was no drop in this trust, it is still very high about 90% of people trust to volunteers into army. So my interpretation would be that there is indeed a feeling of stress and disappointment and fatigue, when it is related to formal institutions. You know, there was a certain rally around the flag effect. There was a national mobilisation process. The government made a lot of successful moves supporting people. There were also local communities and councils who accepted IDPs the government was very proactive and successful in public communication and international diplomacy. So all that contributed to, to optimism and support by people. Lately, unfortunately, the military situation was very difficult. Ukraine witnessed and experienced significant military losses. Basically, there was no victory for a very long time. And I think this has really influenced the attitudes of people. And on top of that, we have to discuss the process of military draft mobilisation, as people call it here. Right now we are in the situation with no rotation. So quite a lot of volunteers, quite a lot of people volunteer to serve in army. And they have been fighting, you know, for two years, with no rest and with no rotation, more people must be drafted. But the question is, how to execute this, what policy would be the best one to draft people. And this is a you know, in terms of social science, this is a very, very, very well known problem of common good and freeriding. We all want security. All citizens of Ukraine would like the war to end, and they all want security. But at the same time, not everyone want to go to serve to army, how do you solve this problem. And the government is responsible for solving this problem. And they're not doing quite well now. And I think this has really affected attitudes of people and the sense of optimism. So we see a decline in many variables, including trust, and also subjective perceptions, whether the country is going to the right direction or not. But also optimism in terms of going home has declined. So I would say that this is a universal kind of phenomena, that what this drop is just a manifestation of a general trend of fatigue and, and, and lack of success in the past six months.

**Lucinda Platt** 22:14
Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. You've obviously been been yourself involved in sort of mobilising support. And you talked a bit about that, that you're the flag effect, you've been trying to get support for the educational mission of Kyiv School of Economics as the Rector and in your role. I wanted to talk though a little bit about finally, to wrap up almost to think about what your own research agenda might be in this area. You're clearly very, very knowledgeable about what's been happening in Ukraine, in in migration, in people's responses to the war, what do you think are the kind of key areas that we should be researching or you or you would like to research in relation to conflict migration? Should you have the have the opportunity and the capacity to do so going forward,

**Tymofii Brik** 22:58
My life has changed dramatically. I'm a researcher and a scholar. But also, you know, I'm a citizen of, my country, and I live in Ukraine now during the war. So I wear many hats, and I'm very biased. So I know that I, I have to think as a scholar and as a researcher, but at the same time, you know, I'm thinking also as a citizen, and I want my country to thrive. And I want to solve a lot of social policies and challenges to our society. So my motivation now is not so much academically driven, but policy driven. And I think that there is a huge gap now in Ukraine, because we don't have a lot of capacity to study to investigate crucial social issues. One of them is growing social inequality. I know that migration studies


Transcribed by https://otter.ai

are connected to social inequality studies. And this second part is not explored in Ukraine. So we have people and new generations of people who have huge variation in access to resources now. For many years, Ukraine was, you know, not very well developed post Soviet society, with fragile democracy, but it was on the trajectory of becoming a more successful and democratic society. And there was not a huge issue of social inequality. social inequality was present, but not, you know, at this tremendous level. But now we might have a real segregation effects. We might have generations of people who grew up living in these refugee camps. We might have generations of kids who lost their parents, as you know, as soldiers, we might have generations of people who grew up outside of Ukraine as migrants. These are completely new challenges that were never experienced by Ukrainian policymakers and scholars before, which means that we are not very well equipped, even to think about it to conceptualise it, to collect data about it, you know, and to create smart policies. So I think this is a huge gap. And we definitely need more smart people in studying all aspects of social inequality, meaning, education, household, gender, age, skills, digital skills, geographic segregation, urban rural development. So basically, if you take a sociological textbook, and you read about all these classics, aspects of inequality, you can take any aspect and apply it to Ukraine now. So we need to study all these subjects.

**Lucinda Platt** 25:54
That's yeah, that's really I mean, it's really interesting highlighting that the impact of the of the conflict, we've often think in terms of the very immediate impacts, but actually, these are long standing potential intergenerational effects that will create divide in the society for a long time to come, as well as the sort of geographical divides, you highlight. So yes, the sort of the stratification of societies is being enhanced.

**Tymofii Brik** 26:17
Exactly. And these words like sociologists trained. And usually in sociology, we frequently use this word as intergenerational mobility, or social stratification. And I can tell that these words, this discourse, is not very well known in Ukraine in realm of Ukrainian academia and policymakers. We have generations of scholars who never studied these subjects, because we never had to. But now it's, it's a huge gap. And we need to fill this gap.

**Lucinda Platt** 26:58
Thank you so much for all your contributions and your observations here. And what I think you highlighted very much is that we often think about conflict in relation to the immediate effects, and see that immediate effects, including on migration, but what we're seeing now is and having to think about more is some of these longer term effects and how people how people plan how they organise their lives, but also what the issues are for the future, and the need for the sorts of sociological research speaking to the interests of sociologists like you and me that will be needed in the future to fully inform and develop appropriate policies for Ukraine in the future. So thanks again to our guest, Tymofii Brik, and to all of you out there for listening. In the next episode of Migration, Conflict and Crisis. I'll be in conversation with Karolina Czerska-Shaw from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and with Dr. Luke Cooper from the Conflict and Civicnessness Research Group at the London School of Economics. We'll be talking about the concept of Civicness, which was developed in relation to other conflict settings and how it's been applied to Ukrainian refugees in Poland. And I'll be asking what


Transcribed by https://otter.ai

forms of support civil society organisations have generated, both for refugees, and for those remaining in Ukraine, so do join me for that. Meanwhile, thanks very much to my producer, Chris Garrington of Research Podcasts, and to the LSE for their support. Don't forget to subscribe wherever you discover your podcasts and get all our forthcoming episodes.



Transcribed by https://otter.ai