Central European University, Department of International Relations &
Invisible University for Ukraine

The politics of knowledge production and the Russo-Ukrainian War

The conference seeks to address the question of how we know about the Russo-Ukrainian War, and to explore the conditions under which processes of knowledge production about the war have been taking place. Much has been said about the perceived lack of knowledge that took the world by surprise on the 24th of February 2022. We seek to challenge such a perception by approaching the question of knowledge as mediated by dominant epistemologies, global inequalities in knowledge making, as well as performance of expertise and positionalities in international politics. The conference places centre stage the production, circulation, and contestation of knowledge to discuss who gets to speak about the war, what kind of speech gains traction, and what perspectives and why tend to be ignored. The event is co-organized by CEU’s Department of International Relations and the Invisible University for Ukraine (IUFU).

Thursday, 30 November (room D002)

9.00 Welcome and introduction

9.30-12.45 Panel I: International Relations Theory

Olga Burlyuk, University of Amsterdam, Hierarchies in IR theory and the politics of knowledge production

Branislav Slantchev, University of California San Diego, IR Theory in the Wild: The Failure to Explain the Russian War on Ukraine

Coffee break

Xymena Kurowska, Central European University, The ethos of passionate humility in knowledge production about the Russo-Ukrainian war

Katerina Krulisova and Mila O’Sullivan, Nottingham Trent University, Do You Understand Now? Decolonising Feminist Security Studies Through Global Solidarity

Thomas Fetzer, Central European University, Knowledge production and the Russo-Ukrainian war: Some insights from the field of International Political Economy
Lunch break

14.00-16.45 Panel II: Political Communication

Anton Shekhovtsov, Central European University, *Strategic and Tactical Narratives if Russia’s War Propaganda*

Marielle Wijermars, University of Maastricht, *Conceptualising 'Russian' online audiences: Towards responsible use of social media data*

Coffee break

Maksym Yakovlyev, National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy and TSI non-residential fellow at Central European University, *Societal Resilience in the Disinformation Age*

Vera Axyonova, University of Vienna, *Reflections on Researcher Positionality in Times of War*

17.00 Book presentation

Nadiia Koval, Kyiv School of Economics, *Russian Cultural Diplomacy under Putin: Rossotrudnichestvo, the “Russkiy Mir” Foundation, and the Gorchakov Fund in 2007–2022*

20.00 Conference dinner

Friday, 1 December 2023 (room D001)

9.00-12.30 Panel III: Regional spatial orders

Martin Mueller, University of Lausanne, *Invisible Easts: Undoing the blind spots in the global geopolitics of knowledge*

Siddharth Tripathi, University of Erfurt, *The 'jungly-ness' in the garden: Colonial Frames and Racialised Discourses in the Russo-Ukrainian War*

Kateryna Zarembo, National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy and TSI non-residential fellow at Central European University, *Regional toponymy as a knowledge distortion tool: the case of ‘Donbas’*
Coffee break

Dagmar Vorlicek, University of Vienna, *Emancipating CEE security knowledges: the good, the bad, and the ugly*

Phillip Lottholz, University of Marburg, ‘Great powers don’t ask anyone!’ Reactions to and implications of the Russia-Ukraine war in the Southeast European periphery

Lunch break

14.00-17.00 Panel IV: Historical knowledge production

Olesya Khromeychuk, Ukrainian Institute, London, *From visibility to knowledge: The case of Ukraine*

Franziska Davies, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam, *Why does Germany have ‘Russland-Versteher’? Reflections on the origins of pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian narratives in Germany since 2014*

Coffee break

Andriy Zayarnyuk, University of Winnipeg (online), *Ukraine, War and the Ethics of History*

Tetiana Zemliakova, European University Institute, *How political science lost its ‘war’: Toward the historical epistemology of disciplinary knowledge*

17.30-19.00 CIVICA Public Lecture Series Tours d'Europe [link to CIVICA event page]

*The Russo-Ukrainian War and the future European Order*

No end is in sight in Russia’s war against Ukraine, while the war is changing how Ukraine and Europe see their own security. Ukraine is hoping for the iron-clad security guarantees of full NATO membership, and Europe is confronted with its security dependence on the US, bringing strategic and military autonomy back on the agenda. But what kind of security architecture, short of full NATO membership, would make Ukraine feel secure after such a harrowing experience? Is it, at all, fair to contemplate a Plan B when Ukrainians are still fighting tooth and nail, and millions of displaced people are hoping to get their normal lives back?
Meanwhile, Europe has weaned itself off Russian energy, as it had been viewing certain aspects of economic interdependence a security issue, already since the Covid epidemic. Are the war and responses to it bringing about “fortress Europe”, or to the contrary, is the war pushing the EU to develop its strategic autonomy and match its economic clout with political and military might, and a more robust international role? And is there still a choice for the EU, or does the weakening international order leave it with limited room for manoeuvre?

Speakers

- Mary Kaldor, London School of Economics
- Anton Shekhovtsov, Centre for Democratic Integrity, Vienna
- Viktoria Sereda, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv