

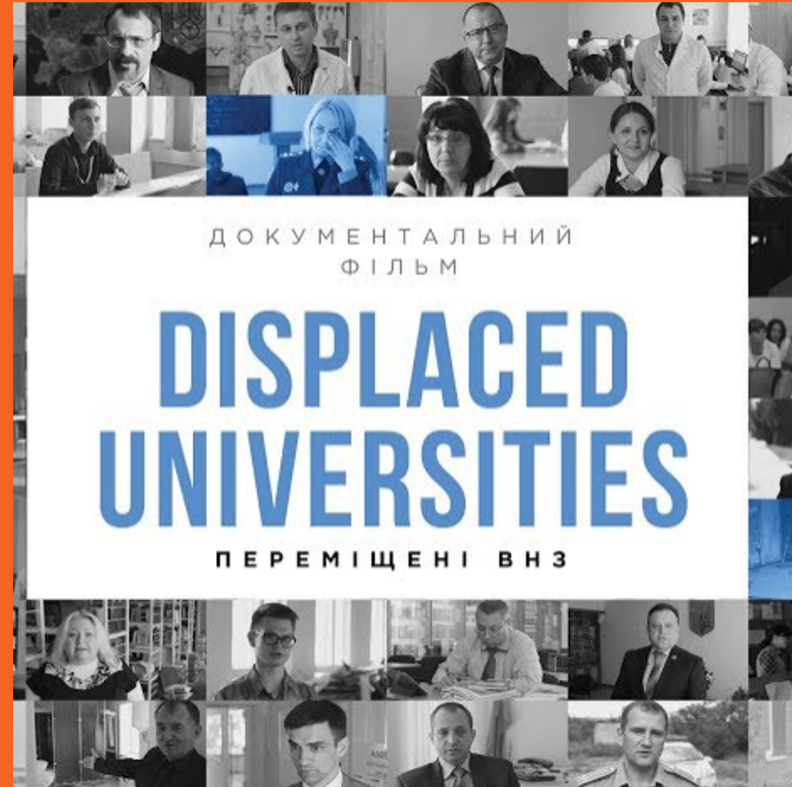
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# Ukrainian Higher Education in Time of Armed Conflict

2014-2018

Thesis presentation by Uliana Furiv

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only **11** out of  
**162** countries  
are conflict free





**Prioritized sectors**  
**defence, security,**  
**Less prioritized** food,  
health, basic  
education...

Overlooked sector  
**higher  
education**





# Why study this?

Limited knowledge of  
HEIs during armed  
conflict and war

'Geographic gap' –  
overrepresentation of  
the Western contexts

Insignificant study of  
crisis management  
in higher education

Mainly studied in  
business  
management

Available literature:  
non-empirical, more  
descriptive

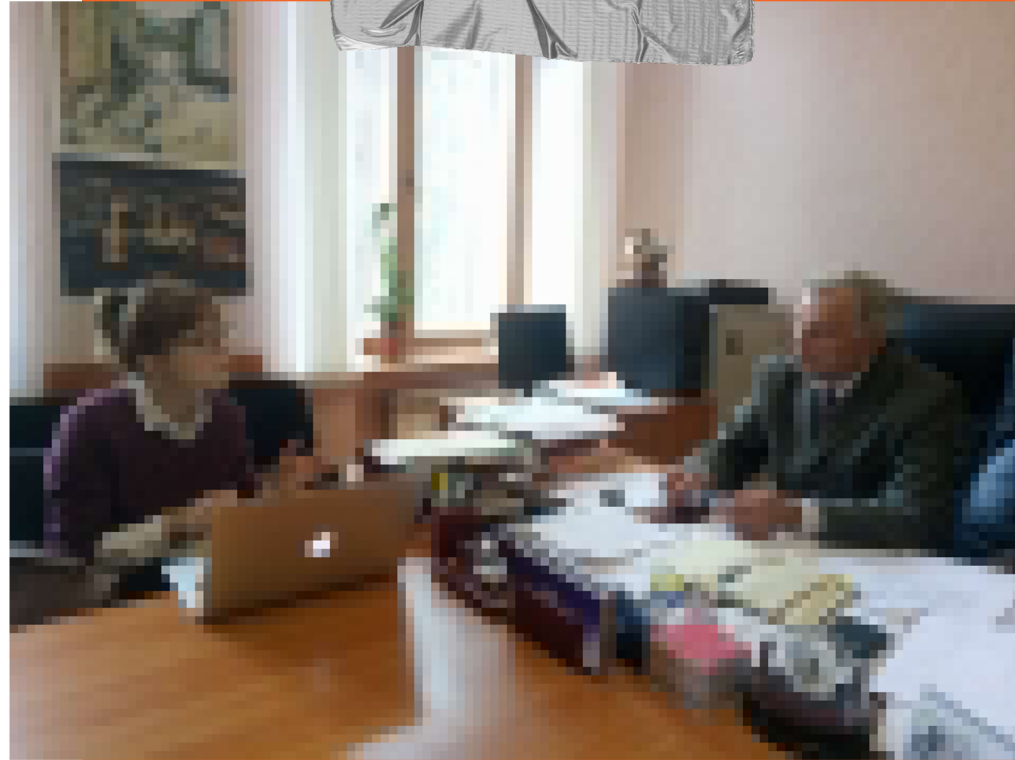
Basic education  
prioritized over  
higher education

## Central research question

*How the Ukrainian displaced **higher education institutions** have been **impacted by** and are **coping with the crisis**?*

## Sub-questions

- 1) Which **crisis management mechanisms** are being used by the Ukrainian higher education institutions to **cope with the crisis** brought by armed conflict?
- 2) What have been the **impacts of the armed conflict** on the Ukrainian displaced **higher education** institutions?



# Analytical framework

IMPACT DIMENSIONS	Planning and Prevention	Response
Human resources Enrolled staff and student Psychological & physical trauma		
Infrastructure Campus building (s) Classrooms Research facility, etc.		
Operations Teaching environment Learning environment Research environment		
Legitimacy Admissions Partnerships Public image		
Crisis of management Governance University safety policies Crisis management teams		
Crisis of communication Institutional communication strategy Informing students and faculty		

Qualitative research  
5 universities: 2  
comprehensive, 2  
specialized, 1 technical  
25+ semi-structured  
interviews



**Research  
approach and  
methodology**

# Stakeholders

- Displaced Universities
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Council of Rectors of Displaced Universities
- Coordination Center of Displaced Universities



# Research Findings



# Ukrainian armed conflict

→ Winter 2014

**Revolution of dignity**

→ Spring 2014

**Annexation of Crimea,  
armed conflict in  
eastern Ukraine**

→ Summer 2014

**Self-proclaimed “DRN”  
and “LNR” seized  
regional and  
administrative buildings**





# DISPLACED UNIVERSITIES

ПЕРЕМІЩЕНІ ВНЗ



УНІКАЛЬНІ ІСТОРІЇ ПЕРЕЇЗДУ ТА ВИЖИВАННЯ  
ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДІВ, ЯКІ БУЛИ  
ВИМУШЕНІ ВИЇХАТИ ІЗ ЗОНИ АТО

## Issue in numbers

**18** public higher education institutions

**2** private universities

**11** research institutes

**40.000** displaced students

**3.500** displaced research and teaching staff

**1.5 million** internally displaced people (IDPs)

**\$4.9 billion** educational infrastructure losses





<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Evacuation events</b>
End of August 2014	University temporarily stopped the educational process
Beginning of September 2014	Illegal Ministry of DNR ordered re-subordination of the university, a new pro-Russian rector appointed
Mid-September 2014	Evacuation process started after the university infrastructure captured by the rebel group
September 2014	University initiative group conducted negotiations with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in secret
End of September 2014	Ministry ordered displacement and operation of DonNU in Vinnytsia
October 2014	DonNU started the process of displacement
Beginning of November 2014	University started the educational process in a new location



# Crisis of national security and administration

- self-proclaimed Ministries of DNR and LNR appointed pro-Russian leadership and management in the universities
  - indoctrinated, pressured, intimidated and exposed to daily propaganda,
  - divide along the political and moral line
  - important political position of the university leadership
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- Second evacuation/lessons not learned
  - Lack of crisis management plan
  - Lack of preparation and planning efforts
  - Crisis management poorly communicated



**Crisis  
learning  
and  
prevention**

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- university leadership threatened and exiled
  - leadership support of terrorists - delayed evacuation
  - organizational culture - false claims and promises
  - self-removal of university leaders from crisis management
  - crash of roles and responsibilities



## **Crisis of the university leadership and management**

# Self-organized initiative groups & Crisis management action plan

- self-organized by separate individuals, so-called 'crisis management teams'
  - represented by the university leadership, faculty, students
  - no prior crisis management plan
  - mobilize the actions within a short period of time
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- no crisis communication plan
- delayed and unsystematic flow of information
- valid information not reaching quickly
- inconsistent information, increased anxiety and undermined credibility of the institutions
- importance of media outlets, toll-free hotline
- propaganda, false claims, miscommunication,
- distortion of information, sabotage of displacement



## Crisis communication

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- HE deprioritized and put on hold
  - failed to adequately plan and response time
  - overly regulated bureaucratic procedures
  - universities/state dependence expected
  - new legal framework to be crafted/helpful and harmful



## **Role of government in crisis management**

—  
~2/3 - students and staff evacuated

~1/3 - students and staff remained

Effective “brain drain”

Physical, psychological, social and domestic issues

Resilience and personal growth



Impact on  
human  
resources



# Impact on infrastructure

Captured infrastructure

Evacuated to branch campuses

Student housing and staff accommodation limited

Inability to restore documentation

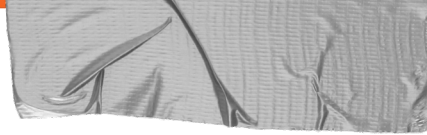
Use of online knowledge management tools and ICT



- use of distance education and online learning tools
- "rotation study mode"
- promotion of the staff to higher posts
- reorganization of organizational structures
- new initiatives, new modes of delivery of learning
- organizational culture - more resilient



**Impact on  
operations**



# Impact on legitimacy

- enrollment quality and quantity of entrants
- reintegration question
- stigma and prejudice
- concern for quality of education
- proactive recruitment methods
- old partnership opportunities lost - new found

# Conclusions

- Core missions of HEIs are disrupted
- No planning and prevention efforts worsens the effects of conflict
- Crisis management activities not prioritized - institutional resource capacity, quality of education and research processes drained
- Ineffectively communication strategy leads to anxiety and chaos
- Universities are adaptable and can mobilize quickly
- Individuals can undertake proactive roles in absence of leadership
- Diverse practices of crisis management depended on resources
- Distance education, online learning tools, cloud platforms play a significant role in crisis



# Lessons learned

- Create a national evacuation plan (address planning, prevention, response, recovery, and learning )
- Strategic, legislative, administrative, technical, and financial support at the national level
- Universities in crisis have special needs, prioritizing needed
- Quality of there HEIs ignored in legislature
- Concern of the university reintegration: loss of regional identity and assimilation?
- Governments to monitor the impacts and collect sufficient and reliable data to seek evidence-based solutions
- Shared understanding of a national evacuation plan among HEIs
- Mandate integration of crisis management practices in all HEIs
- Reinforced university leadership
- Re-assess the limitations and good practices of DU and focus on the contingency planning

ДОНБАСУ І КРИМУ



Thank  
you!