



DOI: 10.2478/genst-2025-0002

**INTERSECTIONAL TRAP OF (IN)VISIBLE IDENTITIES AND BELONGINGS.
BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AND ENTRAPMENT OF DISPLACED
UKRAINIAN WOMEN SCIENTISTS¹**

MARIYA SHCHERBYNA

Politecnico di Torino

V. Dahl's East Ukrainian National University

mariya.shcherbyna@polito.it

TETIANA HAVLIN

Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg

havlin@b-tu.de

Abstract: *The displacement of Ukrainian women scientists due to the war has created a liminal state of multilocal entanglements, where they sustain emotional and professional ties to Ukraine while navigating the precarious realities of host countries. Despite contributing to Ukraine's resistance through science diplomacy and advocacy, they face existential dilemmas around return, employment, and family care. EU-based temporary protection and funding schemes offer Ukrainian (women) scholars short-term relief but rarely lead to long-term institutional embeddedness. Instead, these scholars are caught in an intersectional trap, where gender, nationality, and non-hegemonic academic backgrounds hinder access to long-term or tenure-track positions. Based on interviews, autoethnography, and participatory observations in Germany and Italy as contrasting examples, in our study, we explore three coping strategies: engaging with and managing multiple transnational workload shifts, prioritizing professional self-actualization, and exercising a political voice for civic engagement internationally. The findings highlight the need for institutional responses that recognize the structural hierarchies shaped by epistemic injustice and the (in)visible burden of sustaining professional identities across intersecting axes of inequality.*

¹ This article belongs to the special section titled “Women’s Migration from Central and Eastern Europe: Discursive, Sociocultural and Historical Perspectives,” edited by Irina Diana Mădroane and Ruxandra Trandafoiu, this issue (*Gender Studies*, 24(1), 2025).

Keywords: *Ukrainian women scientists, multiple belongings, (in)visible identities, displacement, intersectionality, gender, transnational mobility, multilocality, HerStory*

1. Introduction

According to the 2024 UNESCO analysis of war damage to the Ukrainian science sector, 13.5% of scientists and university faculty from Ukraine were displaced within Ukraine (approx. 7%) and internationally (approx. 6% or 3,426 academic staff) (UNESCO, 2024, p. 24).² Displaced Ukrainian women scientists are the focus of our contribution; this displacement has created complex multilocal realities in which they are both engaged and trapped (Antoniuk, 2023; Kenworthy & Opatska, 2023; Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023). On the one hand, these women are actively contributing to Ukraine's cause and reconstruction through science diplomacy, volunteering, and advocacy, maintaining strong professional and emotional ties to their homeland. They serve as ambassadors of Ukrainian science and culture, promoting their development abroad while maintaining vital connections to institutions and colleagues in Ukraine. On the other hand, Ukrainian women scientists are in a state of *liminality*, caught in the limbo of complex transnational realities and facing existential dilemmas directly affecting their professional identities and belongings, their personal well-being, and the welfare of their families. The state of limbo revolves around fundamental questions: When is it secure to return to Ukraine or still remain in the EU? Is it better to seek professional self-realization in unfamiliar academic settings with precarious employment or return to the familiar Ukrainian academia enjoying high social recognition but struggling with precarious financial situations and the ongoing war? These existential questions intertwine with the constant load of caregiving responsibilities towards children, the elderly, and pets as well as professional tasks in displacement.

The EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) has granted access to the EU labor market for displaced individuals (predominantly women with dependent children) from Ukraine (Havlin, 2025). A wide range of funding programs and granting schemes have been supporting Ukrainian (women) scholars with temporary funds or short-term employment opportunities (Science For Ukraine, n.d.; Tsybuliak et al., 2024). However, the competition

² The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine reports that approximately 5,000 academic staff, referred to as the "Ukrainian academic diaspora," left Ukraine in the wake of the war (MESU n.a.). These figures are situational and may reflect a specific period, as academic professionals represent a highly mobile group.

for long-term or tenured positions in EU higher education institutions and research centers presents a “mission impossible” scenario due to the coloniality of knowledge production (Amelina, 2022), inherent hierarchies within academic languages (Havlin, 2022), and the fulfillment of explicit and subtle academic requirements for such positions (Shinozaki, 2017). This scenario forms an *intersectional trap*, where Ukrainian women scholars are unable to find themselves. Even though they are privileged to enjoy temporary protection due to their nationality, displacement experiences, education, professional status, and gender³ within the EU, these same intersections hinder their competitiveness for tenure-track positions, reinforcing epistemic injustice and structural hierarchies that undervalue Ukrainian academic credentials and non-English publications. While positions for *researchers at risk* provide opportunities, they remain precarious, reinforcing existing hierarchies.

In this contribution, we explore cases of forcibly mobile women scholars from Ukraine through an intersectional and postcolonial lens, examining how identity and belonging are constructed within liminal transnational academic spaces. We ask the following question: *How do displaced Ukrainian women scientists navigate complex multilocal professional, individual, familial, and political landscapes?* In answering this question, we begin by outlining the theoretical framework, drawing on intersectionality to analyze overlapping structures of inequality and representations as well as postcolonial theory to situate these experiences within broader historical (colonial) power dynamics and systems of epistemic injustice. In the second section, we contextualize our case study by examining the policy and structural landscapes, particularly the EU’s TPD and framework of solidarity-based support initiatives. Building on this, in our empirical study we investigate how displaced women scholars navigate their identities and transnational belongings as well as professional and familial trajectories under conditions of both support and systemic constraints. By means of a transnational methodology, we highlight the key findings in the nuanced ways in which individuals experience and negotiate privilege and precarity simultaneously. In the discussion, the concept of *intersectional entrapment* is developed to capture the paradoxical position of being simultaneously included and marginalized. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications for academic solidarity, migration governance, and the need for more just and inclusive support structures.

³ For most Ukrainian men, cross-border mobility has been severely constrained by martial law restrictions, compounded by prevailing constructions of masculinity during wartime.

2. Intersectional and postcolonial lens

How can we understand the complex realities of displaced Ukrainian women scholars⁴ within transnational academic contexts shaped by both privilege and marginalization? Intersectionality and postcolonial theories compose our conceptual frameworks while equipping us with the tools required to analyze the complex realities of displaced Ukrainian women scholars. These theories give us the foundation for understanding how multiple axes of identity (*e.g.*, gender, nationality, education, academic status) and the historical legacies of imperialism, global power relations, and knowledge production overlap in shaping these scholars' lived experiences. These frameworks also help illuminate the paradoxes of privilege and marginalization inherent in transnational (academic) spaces.

Given the complex positionalities of the investigated group, it is essential to examine the identity-conditioning factors that shape their experiences. The intersectional approach, originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, offers a valuable analytical tool. Crenshaw (1991) introduced the term “intersectionality” to capture the compounded structural injustices faced by African American women in the US workforce, particularly where racism and sexism intersected in institutional settings. She distinguished between *structural intersectionality*, which examines how systems of power produce overlapping inequalities, and *representational intersectionality*, which addresses the challenges of representing multiple identities within the realm of politics and discourse (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296). This distinction of intersectionality is valid for our case study of displaced Ukrainian women scholars. From the standpoint of representational intersectionality, they are privileged through political decisions (the TPD, labor market access, and scholarships, revised in detail in Section 2). However, from the point of view of structural intersectionality, they have to deal with obstacles inherent to academic systems (epistemic injustice and marginality, coloniality of knowledge production, etc.).

Building on this foundation, we follow the work of Nina Lykke (2011), who conceptualized intersectionality as an analytical tool that enables analysis of how power differentials and identity formations (across categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, class,

⁴ Throughout the article, we use interchangeably signifiers such as women scholars, women scientists, and researchers independently of the specialization, referring to persons identified as females whose primary occupation is in research and higher education.

sexuality, age, nationality, and more) co-produce dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, recognition and marginalization. She wrote about “the concept of intersectionality as a discursive site where different feminist positions are in critical dialogue or productive conflict with each other” (Lykke, 2011, p. 208). As a discursive arena, intersectionality can be perceived as “a thinking technology that encompasses a multiplicity of ways in which the concept is used to analyse how power differentials, normativities and identity formations in terms of categorisations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, nationality, etc., co-produce in/exclusion, mis/recognition, dis/possession, re/distribution, majoritising/minoritising, etc.” (Lykke, 2011, p. 208). We return to these dynamics of co-production of in/exclusion, privileging, and marginalization – particularly as they manifest through precarity in the academic settings – in our analysis of the investigated group.

Given the transnational scope of our study,⁵ Floya Anthias’ (2012) work is particularly insightful. Her application of intersectionality to studying transnational mobilities demonstrated how identities of mobile, displaced, and migrant individuals are embedded within broader global structures of opportunity and exclusion. These identities are not fixed but are constantly negotiated within intersecting global hierarchies, social relations, and the lived realities of forced displacement. Such negotiations occur in ambiguous, disrupted, and unstable settings that can be described as a threshold state or a condition of self-in-betweenness, characterized by liminality (Beech, 2011, p. 286).

In the case of displaced Ukrainian women scholars, identity formation frequently manifests as a condition of “perpetual liminality” (Ybema, Beech, & Ellis, 2011), in which individuals remain caught in an ongoing state of transition and uncertainty. Key intersecting factors – such as nationality, gender, war and displacement experiences, educational and professional status – position them as a comparatively privileged group within the broader displaced population in Western Europe. Through the lens of *representational intersectionality*, this relative privilege becomes visible, particularly when juxtaposed with other groups affected by war and displacement.

However, from the standpoint of *structural intersectionality*, their status is far more complex. As Ukrainians, as post-Soviet subjects, and as scholars from Eastern Europe, they carry a *longue durée* history of marginalization and othering (Bogachenko & Oleinikova,

⁵ We refer here to experiences of internationally displaced Ukrainian scholars who, while forcibly remaining abroad, maintain their familial and professional ties on a daily basis with family members, friends, colleagues who remained in Ukraine.

2023; Sushytska, 2012; Tlostanova, 2015). These subaltern positionalities highlight the importance of applying a postcolonial lens. Why is the postcolonial framework particularly relevant to the Ukrainian case? This approach is necessary not only to understand subjectivities shaped by the imperial legacies of both Eastern and Western Europe but also to critically examine ongoing forms of epistemic injustice within academic knowledge production.

In the context of the postcolonial theory, the term “epistemic injustice”, referred to several times earlier, is useful for us to highlight inherent hierarchies of asymmetrical knowledge production. Based on the literature reviewed below, we understand *epistemic injustice* as a multidimensional form of knowledge-based marginalization that occurs when the lived experiences, credentials, knowledge practices, and interpretative frameworks of displaced Ukrainian women scholars are devalued, mistrusted, or rendered unintelligible within dominant academic systems. Following Miranda Fricker (2007), we distinguish between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. In the case of the former, the voices of affected individuals and their expertise are treated with distrust due to gendered, racialized, and/or regional bias. The latter refers to the condition whereby Western institutional settings lack the frameworks to recognize war-related experiences and positionalities. Building on Kristie Dotson (2012, 2014), we also consider *contributory injustice*, where such scholars’ epistemic resources and thematic agendas are excluded from what is recognized as legitimate scholarship. Furthermore, we draw on Medina’s notions (2013) of shared ignorance and epistemic pluralism to show how the marginalization of Ukrainian knowledge not only harms the scholars themselves but weakens the plurality of knowledge in the academy. As Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. (2012) highlights, this process often involves willful ignorance – the dominant system’s refusal to engage with marginalized epistemic standpoints.

In this context, Hendl, Burlyuk, O’Sullivan, and Arystanbek (2024) offer a timely critique of “westsplaining” in international relations (IR). They demonstrate how Ukrainian voices are frequently silenced or sidelined in dominant IR discourses, including within feminist and Global South frameworks. Knowledge about Ukraine is often filtered through Western or Russocentric perspectives, casting Ukrainian scholars not as experts but as “emotional witnesses” (Hendl et al., p. 190). This reflects a persistent coloniality in global knowledge hierarchies, where certain voices are systematically devalued or excluded.

Furthermore, in current academic debates, the West–East European divide is often overshadowed by the Global North–Global South binary, especially following the

democratization of Eastern Europe in the 1990s and the region's accelerated integration into the EU in the 2000s. However, this framing can obscure the nuanced differentiation among the hierarchies and power relations within Europe, ignoring forms of marginalization specific to Eastern Europe. As Anna Amelina and colleagues remind us, "This positionality is more complex than a mere North–South divide (...) Within globally hegemonic Europe, Eastern European, migrant and racialized scholars do, for example, occupy a marginalized position" (Amelina et al., 2020, p. 3). Recognizing the intersecting identity markers, historical legacies, and structural hierarchies at play is essential for understanding the institutional and policy environments within which displaced Ukrainian women scholars must navigate. This is what we analyze next.

3. Policy and structural landscapes

Which institutional and policy environments shape the experiences of displaced Ukrainian women scholars? To answer this question, we examine the structural and legal frameworks that define their opportunities and constraints, with particular focus on the EU's TPD and various solidarity-based support mechanisms. We analyze how these measures have been implemented across different national contexts, highlighting both the opportunities they offer for academic refuge and professional continuity as well as their structural limitations and inconsistencies.

3.1. Mobility frameworks and emergency solidarity

Prior to the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, Ukrainian citizens benefited from a visa-free regime with the EU, allowing for short-term travel (up to three months for tourism, family visits, or business purposes) under the European Neighbourhood Policy (European Commission). When Russia launched its full-scale invasion, including massive airstrikes and ground offensives from both Russian and Belarusian territory, the majority of civilians sought safety by fleeing westward toward and across EU borders – facilitated in part by the existing visa-free travel agreements. Civil society across the EU responded with strong outrage and solidarity, resonating with the suffering of displaced individuals and amplified by extensive media coverage (Ousmanova, 2023). This synergy between public empathy and media representation created political momentum, pressuring EU decision-makers to activate

mechanisms capable of offering swift and coordinated protection Kortukova et al., 2023, p. 668).

The TPD has served as a legal framework designed to harmonize the response of EU Member States toward a mass movement of displaced persons (Havlin, 2025). Its origins date back to the 1990s Yugoslav Wars, which underscored the need for a coordinated EU response in cases of large-scale displacement. As a result, the Council Directive 2001/55/EC was adopted, establishing minimum standards for temporary protection and promoting burden-sharing among Member States (EUR-Lex, 2001). Although the directive had been considered earlier (*e.g.*, during 2015 in connection with the arrival of displaced individuals fleeing the Syrian war), no political consensus was reached to activate it at that time (Kortukova et al., 2023, p. 672). In contrast, broad agreement emerged swiftly in spring 2022, leading to its activation for the first time to protect those escaping the war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian academic staff and scientists, like other citizens displaced by the war, fell under the TPD, which granted them access to healthcare, the labor market, and social security systems in EU host countries. However, while the TPD provided a legal umbrella of protection, it did not address the specific academic and professional needs of displaced scholars. To fill this gap, numerous initiatives have been launched internationally to support scholars at risk. In what follows, we focus selectively on the European context, where the majority of displaced Ukrainian academics and university faculties have found shelter (UNESCO, 2024, p. 25).

3.2. EU academic support structures and constraints

The disruption, ruination, and relocation of Ukrainian higher education institutions, along with the decline in scientific activity and the projected loss of academic potential (Tsybuliak et al., 2024), have underscored the urgent need for targeted strategies to support university researchers in times of armed conflict. From the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion, public solidarity in EU member states has largely mirrored public opinion in favor of EU actions supporting Ukraine and those forcibly displaced by the war (Eurobarometer, 2022, 2025). Leading institutions and academic journals issued solidarity statements and calls to action (Maryl et al., 2022 and Sotnik et al., 2023 to name just a few), proposing concrete support measures. Displaced Ukrainian scholars have actively engaged with this issue and

spoken out about their experiences and positionalities (Martsenyuk & Kostiuchenko, 2024; Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023), advocating not only for their own rights but also for the broader revitalization of Ukraine's academic infrastructure. Many have contributed to mobilizing international resources and fostering transnational solidarity both abroad and within Ukraine. The Ukrainian academic diaspora has played a pivotal role in this process, helping to connect scholars with international institutions and support networks (DUAG, n.a.; Keudel, 2024; Vision Ukraine, n.a.).

An analysis of over hundred initiatives documented by the #ScienceForUkraine foundation (2022–2025) reveals several key trends,⁶ some of which align with the experiences and observations of our study's participants:

- *Dominance of Temporary Fellowship and Mobility Programs:* A significant portion of support mechanisms involve short- to medium-term fellowships and mobility grants for researchers at various career stages. Programs such as MSCA4Ukraine (2022–2025) emphasize not only institutional placement in host countries but also the maintenance of ties to Ukraine, with the aim of facilitating future reintegration (MSCA4Ukraine, 2025). These programs seek to prevent a permanent brain drain while strengthening Ukraine's academic sector and its integration into international research networks.
- *Emerging Focus on Systemic Resilience and Institutional Embedding:* Newer programs are increasingly directed toward building structural capacity and fostering long-term collaboration. Examples include the European Commission's Twinning Scheme (European Commission, n.a.), which supports institutional cooperation, and Poland's IMPRESS-U initiative aimed at building scientific infrastructure (National Science Centre Poland, n.a.).
- *Digital Tools and Learning Resources:* Several initiatives have provided displaced scholars with access to academic databases and digital learning platforms, such as Elsevier's resources and Erasmus+ digital education projects.

While programs like MSCA4Ukraine are meaningful in reducing short- or medium-term precarity, they rarely lead to long-term, tenure-track, or permanent academic positions. In Western academic systems, such career paths typically require long-term residency, deep institutional integration, strong professional networks, and usually fluency in dominant, local

⁶ An analysis of the funding programs listed on Science For Ukraine (n.d.) was conducted using generative AI (ChatGPT). The prompts guiding this evaluation aimed at identifying key trends in support for Ukrainian scholars at risk, including disciplinary focus, geographic distribution, and types of assistance offered. The authors of the article have verified and interpreted the unprocessed thematic output from ChatGPT.

academic languages. These factors pose significant barriers for Ukrainian scholars at risk and trap them in these precarious employment positions (Hendl et al., 2024, pp. 195–196). A major limitation of many support initiatives lies in their short- or medium-term orientation, initially underestimating the war's duration and the structural needs of displaced academics. Furthermore, geographic and disciplinary disparities persist. Most programs are concentrated in the EU and Central/Eastern Europe, with limited global (*e.g.*, U.S.-based) engagement. In terms of disciplinary reach, funding is heavily skewed toward STEM fields (particularly life sciences and IT) with comparatively less support for the humanities, social sciences, and area studies.

In sum, while the scope of academic solidarity with Ukrainian scholars is significant (*i.e.*, directed toward representational intersectionality), its sustainability and inclusiveness remain uneven and limited (structural intersectionality). Addressing structural constraints, such as access to long-term academic employment and equitable disciplinary representation, is essential for transforming short-term emergency responses into lasting forms of academic inclusion resilience, and epistemic injustice. In what follows, we focus on the case studies of selected Ukrainian women scholars from STEM as well as from humanities and social sciences (HSS) to uncover the complexities of identity and belonging in the context of displacement, caused by war.

4. Construction of identity and belonging in liminal transnational academic spaces

4.1. Methodological considerations and limitations

Building on the framework outlined above, we adopted a transnational multi-method methodology (Amelina & Faist, 2012) to explore the institutional, emotional, and epistemic conditions shaping the HerStory⁷ of the lived realities of displaced Ukrainian women scholars who navigate professional visibility without structural inclusion, perform epistemic labor

⁷ We use HerStory (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) here as a feminist epistemological concept that resists androcentric and universalizing accounts of knowledge production. It foregrounds women's rights, social positions, perspectives, and lived experiences, while also acknowledging their epistemic labor and contributions as central to historical and contemporary understandings. In this sense, HerStory does not merely recover women's voices but reconfigures the terms of visibility, legitimacy, and inclusion in academic and social narratives.

while remaining marginal to institutional decisions, and balance care responsibilities with transnational academic affiliations. Combining semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and reflexive autoethnography, the methodology foregrounds overlapping forms of precarity and symbolic overexposure, showing how displacement reconfigures gendered academic identity as simultaneously visible and disposable. We carried out a thematic analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) of the interview transcripts, following an initial phase of close reading to identify recurring patterns, affective tensions,⁸ and key epistemic dilemmas articulated by participants.

Between November 2022 and December 2024, Mariya Shcherbyna conducted seven in-depth interviews with displaced Ukrainian women academics who had relocated to Germany and Italy after Russia's full-scale invasion. Recruited via solidarity initiatives and snowball sampling, participants had academic affiliations in Ukraine before displacement and were currently or recently engaged in Italian or German academia. The sample included scholars from both STEM (n=3) and HSS (n=4) at various career stages; one had experienced prior internal displacement in 2014.

All participants maintained transnational academic ties, often holding temporary fellowships abroad or support through European initiatives such as Researchers at Risk, national emergency funding programs, etc., while continuing underpaid or unpaid work in Ukrainian institutions. Many were also primary caregivers, navigating forced solo motherhood, care for elderly relatives, and the emotional labor⁹ of sustaining a sense of belonging. The interviews (60–120 minutes, in Ukrainian) explored identity, adaptation to unfamiliar academic cultures, intensified gendered care burdens, and coping strategies amid precarious conditions.

The conversations highlighted tensions between institutional gratitude and epistemic marginality, and recurrent themes of burnout, symbolic invisibility, and the affective costs of over-performance. All the interviews were recorded with informed consent, then transcribed

⁸ In this article, we approach *affect* as a socially mediated and politically structured force, drawing on Sara Ahmed's notion of affect as a "social conductor" (2014; 2010). Emotions are not private states but circulate unevenly across bodies and institutions, shaping whose grief, exhaustion, and care are recognized as legitimate. This aligns with the idea of emotional capital – the uneven distribution of legitimacy in feeling, where some are allowed to express vulnerability, while others must demonstrate strength (Ahmed, 2010).

⁹ Following Arlie Hochschild (1983), we also consider the notion of *emotional labor*, where scholars manage not only their own affective states but also those of students, families, and colleagues. Finally, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) helps us trace how care, affect, and knowledge blend in the everyday survival strategies of Ukrainian women scholars, whose informal advising, emotional support, and caregiving are integral but often invisible parts of their academic presence.

and anonymized. Data analysis combined inductive coding with theory-driven mapping of narrative patterns, aligning with outlined categories as representational and structural intersectionality, the postcolonial critique of hierarchized belonging, epistemic injustice, and conditional inclusion (See Section 2, 4).

During the time of the interviews, the research participants were based in Germany and Italy, which – though compliant with the EU TPD – may serve as contrasting examples for humanitarian and welcoming infrastructures as well as distinct academic traditions. Germany offers more structured, bureaucratic integration mechanisms, whereas Italy's fragmented humanitarian landscape enables support by local actors.¹⁰ This comparison highlights how national contexts mediate symbolic recognition and access. Participants came from various Ukrainian urban centers with differing levels of institutional recognition and linguistic capital (Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, English, Italian, and German).

From 2022 to 2024, we also conducted participatory observation at academic events in Germany and Italy. Fieldnotes captured interactional asymmetries, speaker-audience dynamics, informal networks, and tensions between inclusion rhetoric and lived institutional precarity. These observations, treated as situated knowledge, identified informal networks of care and solidarity, and real-time tensions between institutional discourses on inclusion and the lived realities of precarious academic labor and the embodied experience of liminality.

Our research team benefits from two complimentary positionalities: one co-author – with formal training in the philosophy of culture – is a forcibly displaced associate professor from Ukraine, who is currently in Italy while engaging actively in both Ukrainian and European networks. Another, a sociologist – with formal training in Ukraine (PhD) and Germany (Habilitation, post-doctoral degree) – has been integrating in German and international academia over the last 15 years, while maintaining ties with Ukrainian institutions and colleagues. This dual perspective enabled both deep access and critical reflexivity. Besides, a reflexive autoethnographic lens was applied by the co-author with the

¹⁰ In Germany, the responsibility for welcoming infrastructures for displaced individuals from Ukraine was assigned to *Ausländeramt* (Immigration Office), *Sozialamt* (Social Assistance Office), and Job Centers, which in turn had their communal partners pursue integration measures (language courses, social adaptation, support in dealing with medical systems, rental, etc.). In Italy, the responsibility for welcoming infrastructures was dispersed among multiple institutions: the Ministry of the Interior, Prefectures and Questure, Municipalities (*Comuni*), and the Civil Protection Department, alongside the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and the Ministry of Health. In practice, however, the provision of housing, language courses, healthcare, and social integration relied heavily on third-sector organizations, faith-based associations, and volunteer networks, which compensated for the fragmented and uneven institutional framework (fieldwork observations).

displacement experience, originating from Kharkiv, who maintains institutional affiliations with Ukrainian academia while holding temporary fellowships in Italy. Her trajectory – comparable to those of the research participants – has been marked by precarious short-term contracts,¹¹ imposed solo parenting, long-term care for a disabled aging pet, international advocacy, and remote teaching in Ukraine. This load has been paired with navigating bureaucratic, linguistic, and emotional obstacles in Italy. Such a displacement trajectory mirrors the structural conditions under study: (in)visible identities, a range of liminality states from prolonged to perpetual, and the emotional effort to cope with conditions that forcibly shape her lived experiences of exhaustion, fragmented belonging, and epistemic invisibility. These entangled experiences inform both our research design and analysis, grounding the principles of epistemic reflexivity. This authors' dual positionality, as both participants in and analysts of transnational academic precarity – allowed for deeper attunement to the nuances of double life, overwork, invisibility, resilience, and burnout that shape the lives of displaced women scholars. Reflexive fieldnotes and analytical memos were used to trace the positional bias and ethical tensions of writing from within and alongside precarity.

While the sample is intentionally limited in scope, analytic depth is achieved through a combination of interviews, observations, and autoethnography. This allows for the triangulation of structural patterns and affective textures, foregrounding the agentic, situated responses of displaced scholars. The methodology reflects an intention to resist the objectification of displaced scholars and instead foreground their agentic, situated responses to intersecting forms of marginality. The current sample reflects a targeted effort to capture intersectional positionalities rather than broad representativeness.

Limitations of our study include the difficulty of accessing participants embedded in multiple responsibilities and stressors. Besides, worth mentioning is the underrepresentation of those who were forced to leave academia entirely, which is a major loss for the field¹² and the anticipated damage of the Russo-Ukrainian war, as mentioned earlier.

¹¹ The use of *short-term* refers to contracts renewed on a monthly basis, from several months to one year.

¹² We continue interviewing researchers.

4.2. Findings: Dilemmas of lived experiences with displacement and coping strategies

We have divided the findings section into two parts: We open it by outlining the dilemmas of lived experiences of displacement abroad, while mitigating the problems of the intersectional trap between representational privileging and structural marginalization. For this reason, we explore the institutional and affective dilemmas encountered by research participants as they navigate protracted liminality, intersectional entrapment, and the paradox of conditional recognition. We pay particular attention to (in)visible dimensions of identities, and how gender, academic expertise, and displacement status intersect to produce simultaneous hypervisibility and structural erasure. We then examine three coping strategies developed by research participants in response to overlapping academic, care, and displacement pressures. Finally, we consider how some reclaim professional and symbolic agency through acts of academic and cultural visibility within precarious institutional settings.

4.2.1. Existential dilemmas in the liminality spectrum – from protracted to perpetual

A state of protracted liminality characterized the daily conditions of our research participants, which was not merely caused by war-induced displacement but had resulted in extended academic and existential suspension. This state was not a transition between roles but a prolonged entrapment in uncertainty, where neither return nor reintegration felt viable. As a condition of limbo, it was not only reduced to legal or spatial in-betweenness, but even more, it touched all layers of identity: epistemic, professional, affective, and gendered. Their migration did not constitute a shift from one stable role to another.

Drawing on van Gennep's (2019[1909]) foundational model of rites of passage, where liminality was conceptualized as a transitional phase, and Turner's (1995[1969]) elaboration of liminality as a "betwixt and between" state of ambiguity and suspension, we extend this to contemporary discussions of unresolved and enduring liminality. While notions such as protracted or prolonged liminality capture its temporally extended but still transitional character, the more recent idea of perpetual liminality (Ybema et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2020) points to conditions where transition never resolves into stable belonging. In this sense,

displaced Ukrainian women scholars experience a spectrum of liminality from prolonged uncertainty to perpetual exclusion, perpetual liminality. Using the notion of perpetual liminality, we view this as a fragmented belonging condition where academic status, epistemic recognition, and institutional embeddedness remain unresolved. For Ukrainian women scholars, these fractures are intensified by the overlapping constraints of war, care, and conditional inclusion in foreign institutions.

This situation is heightened by two existential dilemmas dominating their daily reality. First, *the return or remain dilemma* refers to an undecidedness regarding whether to sustain ties with Ukrainian academia, hoping for the post-war return, or to invest in host systems offering precarious security but limited continuity. This undecidedness is intensified by fragmented transnational families, temporary protection regimes, and the emotional toll of life “на валізах” (“in suitcases”), suspended between war and exile, visibility and exclusion.

One participant responded to the question “Do you have a vision of your future? If so, what is it?” by commenting “What future? What can one possibly foresee now?!” – and she then began to cry. Another added:

The uncertainty irritated me deeply – after the full-scale invasion, I could not plan even for a single day. Not for a week, not for a month... For now, I still have a vision: I want my child to receive an education; I want to continue my research; I have ideas in science, in education, and in activism. I wish that either I return home, or we find some little house where my husband and I grow grapes and strawberries, write stories, and meet our friends. But at this moment, my plans extend only for half a year (Oksana, HSS, Germany)

Second, *the compete or comply dilemma* highlights a condition of previously established scholars in leadership positions, who find themselves in precarious, subordinated (subaltern) positions abroad. They are often redefined through trauma narratives or reduced to “Ukrainian themes.” Their degrees are questioned, expertise sidelined, and voices reframed within scripts of resilience or symbolic gratitude. In my autoethnographic notes, I reflected: “At some conferences in Italy, I noticed that I am introduced not by my field but simply as a *Ukrainian scholar*” (MS). Fieldwork observations further confirmed this tendency, as displaced women scholars were recurrently framed through national identity rather than disciplinary expertise.

These dilemmas are not freely navigated but shaped by structural constraints. Gendered care responsibilities, solo motherhood, care of the elderly, managing remote teaching, or civic engagement amplify the burden of adjustment and adaptation (Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023; Maryl et al., 2022) while also navigating foreign bureaucracies and attempting to preserve professional continuity. The result is a triple bind: care, career, and (existential) crisis, none of which can be paused. Emotional consequences here include epistemic erasure; survivor's guilt, especially towards colleagues under continuous daily bombing; physical and institutional collapse (Tsybuliak et al., 2024); and identity destabilization: Who am I here, if I am no longer a professor but not a refugee either? There is no closure, no ritual of reintegration. Instead, participants inhabit what McLaughlin et al. (2020) terms a "suspension of belonging": fragmented across languages, affiliations, and expectations. Yet they navigate this liminality with agency, sustaining Ukrainian links, creating and participating in diaspora-driven projects, and resisting symbolic erasure. Their agency lies not in overcoming displacement but in making it livable with dignity and continuity, even though no resolution is offered. We outline this next by examining the coping strategies.

4.2.2. Coping strategies in navigating the intersectional trap

Engaging with and navigating multiple transnational workload shifts is the first coping strategy we outline. For most participants, care work, both visible and invisible, was central to daily survival. They were primarily responsible for children, elderly relatives, pets, and the emotional stabilization of their families. This unpaid labor conflicted with academic demands for sustained productivity. As one participant summarized, "A child requires a lot of attention in a normal situation, and here my child is stressed out, without a social circle, and I had to give him a lot of time" (Ilona, STEM, Germany).¹³ Ilona's positioning exemplifies an intersectional trap: women were expected to maintain academic visibility while absorbing the material and emotional costs of war and displacement across multiple care chains. They navigated bureaucracies, housing precarity, healthcare, and school enrollment, and mediated between family and hosts: "My mom is under psychological stress; she cries all the time..."

¹³ All participant names are pseudonyms assigned for confidentiality. Citations indicate pseudonym, academic field, and host country.

The dog has neurosis and barks... We need constant communication with neighbors so we're not kicked out" (Nadiya, HSS, Italy).

These pressures had created a state of embedded liminality (Ybema, Beech, & Ellis, 2011): the women were neither fully integrated into European academia nor freed from transnational obligations. The liminality was also epistemic; care labor, fractured careers, informal advising, and emotional containment all took place in a suspended status: "School, doctors, documents, bureaucracy. Pronto Soccorso¹⁴ is a nightmare. You can sit there for eight hours with a child and not get any help. I translate for myself and for others" (Olesya, STEM, Italy). These infrastructures, though vital, were absent from institutional metrics. Many participants described their research as fragmented and precarious, pushing them toward an intersectional trap where gender, caregiving, and migration limited access to stability and recognition.

Mothers of adolescents described intensified emotional labor due to their children's grief and resistance to integration: "He [the participant's teenage son] just disappeared ... after learning about a tragedy with a classmate in Ukraine... He turned off his phone... I was scared" (Maryna, HSS, Italy). Another added, "She [the participant's teenage daughter] constantly says she wants to go home; she doesn't accept the environment" (Olesya, STEM, Italy).

Academic work extended beyond research: translation, informal advising, activism, donations, and ongoing teaching for Ukrainian institutions on fractional contracts. These were framed as ethical obligations, not professional achievements. Several participants reported that their scholarships were insufficient to cover basic needs: "I'm on a temporary research position. I also work as a translator because I don't have enough money" (Olesya, STEM, Italy).

Under such circumstances, the chronic overload was common: "I am overwhelmed by everyday life, school, documents, doctor's appointments, translations ... I do not have time to do science" (Maryna, HSS, Italy). Bureaucratic hurdles consumed free time and weekends: "You can maybe study one day, but documents take the rest" (Tamila, STEM, Germany). Burnout, insomnia, and emotional dissociation were frequent companions to the chronic overload. The women scholars' maternal, professional, and civic identities collided in a space where academic expectations ignore the scaffolding of survival.

¹⁴ Italian: Emergency station.

While fearing “falling out of the system,” many had been forced to maintain appearances, perform resilience, and mask vulnerability: “I hide it. If they see my poor condition... they’ll never choose me for the next grant” (Nadiya, HSS, Italy). Displaced women scholars were required to stay productive while managing traumatic experiences, caregiving, and institutional instability. Their affective labor, such as soothing others, organizing crises, and translating across systems, was unpaid and epistemically unrecognized. This disconnect had created a deep internal tension between visible academic roles and invisible survival work.

The intersectional trap reappears here: expectations of academic mobility and productivity collided with war displacement and loss, as well as multiple transnational workloads in care, career, and emotional regulation. This had resulted not only in overwork but also in epistemic injustice, where women’s knowledge and strategies for survival were excluded from what counts as achievements and success in the system of academic evaluation. Yet, engaging with and navigating multiple transnational workload shifts (care, career, and existential crisis), they maintained the façade of resilience and continuous struggle to survive and, hopefully, succeed.

Prioritizing professional self-actualization is the next coping strategy we identify. Forced migration had fractured not only the daily lives of our research participants but also their sense of professional self-understanding. Academic identity had become a mode of epistemic survival, a source of continuity and dignity in a context of dislocation, status devaluation, and marginalization. Following Strelnyk and Shcherbyna (2023), professional identification functioned as symbolic capital enabling agency where other forms of recognition had collapsed. As a coping strategy, professional self-actualization was shaped by embedded (from prolonged to perpetual) liminality and intersectional entrapment, between visibility and precarity, mobility and suspension.

Back in Ukraine, many participants navigated precarious contracts, low wages, and overwork. This was familiar, if exhausting. In exile, however, instability had taken on unfamiliar and disorienting forms: emergency grants with no renewal prospects, institutional opacity, and marginal positions. Some had re-enrolled as doctoral students to access funding and legal stay despite already having established careers: “I hope for another PhD. I know Italian, so I have a chance” (Olesya, STEM, Italy). These trajectories expose a structural stratification in global academia, where in a manifestation of epistemic injustice, displaced

scholars are peripheralized despite their credentials (Fricker, 2007), and the coloniality of knowledge production is paired with imposed, subaltern otherness (Sushytska, 2012).

Still, participants insisted on the symbolic value of academic roles. Research, even if precarious, offers a refusal to be reduced to vulnerable, “refugee” status; it restores epistemic agency and connection to prewar identity. “Academic continuity” serves not only as a source of professional livelihood but as a strategy to resist disidentification. As Amelina et al. (2020) note, such marginalization reflects broader patterns affecting Eastern European scholars as a subaltern other, regardless of migration status and country of origin within Eastern Europe.

This identity, though, was marked by contradiction. Displaced women were framed as beneficiaries of aid, not as full academic agents. Host institutions treated them as temporary guests, downplaying at times their expertise and credentials. This condition had created a liminal zone between symbolic authority and institutional marginalization (Martsenyuk & Kostiuhenko, 2024; Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023). Across interviews, autoethnographic reflections, and observations at academic events, participants voiced dissonance. Some hesitated to call themselves refugees; others simultaneously affirmed and rejected the label. “I am not a refugee; I am a professional migrant. But I cannot not call myself a refugee,” insisted Tamila, a STEM scholar based in Germany. The contradiction was systemic: they were not treated as international researchers under standard mobility schemes but were subject to irregular contracts and legal insecurity. As McLaughlin et al. (2020) describe, they had become “scholars from nowhere to nowhere,” symbolically and structurally dislocated. Professional identity, then, operated as both anchor and shield – a way to preserve selfhood and resist victimhood. Scientific work had become a refuge and counter-narrative to displacement (Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023).

Participants engaged in what Irina Diana Mădroane (2021) terms symbolic resistance: asserting discipline, merit, and contribution. Like Romanian migrant women reclaiming dignity through narratives of work ethic and sacrifice, the displaced scholars re-signified precariousness through labor, activism, and public engagement. Yet, these narratives did not shield them from symbolic degradation. They had often been perceived not as researchers and experts but as Ukrainian women, displaced by war (*i.e.*, representational intersectionality), whose intellectual legitimacy remained conditional and limited (*i.e.*, structural intersectionality).

Exercising political voice for advocacy and civic engagement internationally is the last coping strategy we explore in our investigation. Interviews and fieldnotes reveal a widespread shift in research agendas among many displaced Ukrainian scholars in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). This represented not opportunism but a coping strategy with political, affective, and epistemic dimensions. As many admitted during discussion panels and informal exchanges (2023–2024), continuing prewar topics was no longer possible. Scholars had turned to projects on war, displacement, trauma, resistance, women HerStory of war, and the reconstruction of public discourses, becoming both “ambassadors of Ukraine” and precarious academics, carrying representational burdens without structural support.

This transformation preserved epistemic authority and challenged the victimhood frame imposed on displaced scholars. One participant shared, “I couldn’t just go on writing women’s history of the past; I must document what has been happening, to make our experience count.” Another added, “Ukraine is judged by us,” highlighting responsibility to both international audiences and those who stayed behind (Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023).

This shift was also a collective response to the proliferation of academic events on Ukraine. Panels, workshops, and special issues emerged across disciplines. Ukrainian scholars not only joined them but often shaped them. Events like *Il senso della pace* (Italy, 2023), *Prospettive sulla semiotica della guerra*¹⁵ (2024), *Women Philosophers and Scientists against Ecocide in Ukraine* (Germany, 2022), and some AtGender conferences became sites of intentional representation, guided by the ethos of “nothing about us without us.” These were more than scholarly contributions; they were intellectual and affective lifelines, transforming academic labor into survival, resistance, and voice.

As Strelnyk and Shcherbyna (2023) observe, such interventions opened a “space between worlds” where scholars acted as witnesses, analysts, and cultural diplomats. Yet, this path was not universal; some scholars reoriented, but others were not able to. Still, for those who did, it aligned with Mădroane’s idea (2021) of diasporic counter-narration: a moral and epistemic response that resists marginalization and reclaims agency in global knowledge production. This response creates an opposition to epistemic injustice, bringing to the discussion voices of the epistemically marginalized and subaltern, overshadowed by the hegemonic coloniality of knowledge production.

¹⁵ Italian: The sense of peace. Perspectives on the semiotics of war.

Importantly, this is not only about career maintenance. Displaced scholars experienced the dual precarity of institutional instability and emotional dislocation (Martsenyuk & Kostiuchenko, 2024; Tsybuliak et al., 2024). They were expected to “represent Ukraine” in global forums while lacking any stable footing. This representational labor extended beyond scholarship: they were asked to explain the war in casual conversations, support other migrants, and explain Ukrainian situation to foreign colleagues, often without acknowledgment or compensation.

This labor entwined epistemic authority with affective work, reinforcing intersectional entrapment: scholars became visible only when performing Ukraine, and rarely on their own terms. Yet for many, returning to Ukraine-focused research was also a way to reclaim subjectivity. It can be understood as epistemic coping – processing trauma and asserting identity through meaningful academic work. Still, this mode of coping comes at a cost. Representational expectations included not just panels but informal explanations, administrative interactions, and the emotional burden of “speaking for a country at war” in daily life.

5. Discussion

Our findings point to a complex interplay between displacement, epistemic transformation, gendered precarity, and political agency among Ukrainian women scholars after Russia’s full-scale invasion and full-fledged war against Ukraine and its citizens. Synthesizing through intersectional and postcolonial theories, which bring to the fore the liminality spectrum ranging from protracted and perpetual, epistemic injustice, war-induced displacement, and (im)mobilities, the data reflects key insights from Crenshaw (1991), Tlostanova (2015), Mădroane (2021), Amelina (2022), and Havlin (2025).

Liminality emerged as a dominant condition (Turner, 1995[1969]; van Gennep, 2019[1909]; Ybema et al., 2011). Forced relocation had suspended both careers and epistemic positioning; participants described being “in-between systems” or “academically suspended.” Many could not return to prior topics “as if nothing has happened,” and were compelled to rearticulate their scholarly identities with the research themes dictated by political and civic agendas or granting schemes.

Displaced women scholars often inhabit *spaces* between worlds, simultaneously witnesses and analysts, migrants and experts (Strelnyk & Shcherbyna, 2023). These spaces

reinforce what we call an *intersectional trap* or *intersectional entrapment*, being captured between representational and structural intersectionality. Intersectional entrapment highlights a condition where the intersection of gender, displacement, caregiving, and academic precarity produces limited privilege (mobility, language, networks) and reinforces institutional marginalization. As Amelina and Faist (2012) note, these paradoxes generate transnational methodological dilemmas, producing knowledge from non-hegemonic, mobile standpoints.

In this paradox with regard to the Russo-Ukrainian war, many scholars launched an epistemic counterattack (Mădroane, 2021), shifting to war-related themes out of ethical urgency. Research became a coping strategy and a form of epistemic resistance by which the Ukrainian women scholars reasserted a symbolic presence in global academia while resisting passive victimhood frames. These shifts coincided with a sharp rise in an invisible workload: care work, navigating unfamiliar systems, supporting colleagues in Ukraine, and sustaining grassroots engagement. This labor, unrecognized institutionally, is essential for continuity and belonging, exemplifying the gendered layering of crisis labor (Havlin, 2025).

The displaced scholars' academic labor had extended into public scholarship: organizing panels, publishing open-access work, and translating lived experiences for global audiences. Such activities serve not only as an aid to survival but help build transnational affective communities (Anthias, 2012), sustaining recognition and solidarity. Therefore, displaced Ukrainian scholars' transformations are not mere adaptation but are acts of political and epistemic negotiation. Their strategies expose the limits of current academic metrics of achievement and success, while demanding institutional change, toward practices that acknowledge the layered, affective, and politicized labor of knowledge production in the state of emergency.

Moreover, the experiences of displaced Ukrainian women scholars exemplify intersectional entrapment, a condition in which intersecting identities (gender, caregiver status, academic field, nationality) generate both selective privilege and entrenched precarity. Participants reported simultaneously war-induced visibility in international academia paired with institutional marginalization that is unable to accommodate their complex realities. This entrapment was not only structural but also epistemic, emotional, and temporal. Scholars were praised as "witnesses of war" yet excluded from long-term roles, decision-making, or stability. In other words, "They wanted my story, but not my presence," as one participant put it bluntly. Such a condition underlines a double bind: being included as tokens of diversity but excluded from shaping agendas. Academic visibility brought a gendered burden. Many

women were expected to explain the war, mentor others, and speak on trauma panels while simultaneously managing caregiving and unstable employment. In this context, so-called “mobility” was a myth: forced relocation did not open many opportunities but instead reproduced instability, marginalization, and unresolved precarity. Their academic workload expanded in invisible ways: constant grant applications, temporary teaching roles, and informal tasks like maintaining ties with Ukraine or volunteering for community integration. This feminized survival labor remains unrecognized in productivity metrics but has been essential to staying afloat. Another layer was perpetual liminality (Ybema et al., 2011): scholars were suspended between affiliations and alienation, between war and uncertain futures. Temporary recognition through panels or discourse did not guarantee contracts, stability, or residency for themselves or their dependents (children, elderly, pets). They were celebrated yet disposable. Even at the epistemic level, their voice was constrained; they were invited to speak but were rarely asked to define the terms of knowledge production. This reflects what Mădroane (2021) calls a reclassification struggle: resisting symbolic reduction and fighting to assert agency. Thus, intersectional entrapment is not only about who they are but about what they are permitted to say and under which conditions.

Implications for the future of academic (forced) migration and policy. Our findings suggest that existing academic frameworks are ill-equipped to address the layered realities of displaced Ukrainian women scholars. Existing support relies on short-term, individualized schemes, fellowships, and temporary positions without addressing the structural, gendered, and epistemic dimensions of forced mobility. A shift from the charity model to systemic transformation is urgent and ought to include:

- integration of the intersectional lens not only with a mere representational purpose but for structural change through program design and evaluation
- acknowledgement of the multiple transnational workload (care, career, and crisis management) as legitimate academic contributions
- and support for scholars not only to “voice out emergency” but as agents of knowledge production with long-term trajectories.

Policies must also confront the recursive temporality of war-induced displacement. Many scholars remain in extended liminality, mobile yet suspended, proactive yet precarious. Visibility alone is not inclusion. Sustainable support demands structural predictability, permanent pathways, and recognition of knowledge outside dominant norms and hegemonic

epistemologies. Just policies must also address the double colonization faced by women from non-hegemonic academic traditions: once by Global North institutions that instrumentalize their narratives, and again by frameworks that fail to decolonize knowledge hierarchies. This calls for what Tlostanova and Mignolo (2012) name “learning to unlearn”, that is, reimagining mobility ethics with displaced scholars as co-creators, not passive recipients.

6. Conclusions

In our contribution, we analyzed how professional identity and belonging becomes a contested space, shaped by intersectional entrapment, precarity, and embedded liminality. Academic labor emerged as a strategy of epistemic coping, preserving the coherence of professional self-actualization and resisting victimhood, yet remaining entangled in asymmetric systems of recognition. Scholars may have found themselves marginalized even as they were called to represent their country. These dynamics resonate beyond Ukraine. As Amelina et al. (2020) note, scholars from Eastern Europe often occupy marginalized positions even within EU academia. The hierarchies faced by displaced Ukrainian scholars mirror those experienced by Central and East European women academics without refugee status, highlighting persistent intra-European epistemic inequalities marked by gender, origin, and disciplinary segmentation. Whether displaced or not, Central and East European women academics are frequently positioned as contingent contributors but rarely as epistemic equals.

The trajectories of displaced Ukrainian scholars challenge dominant models of mobility, inclusion, and crisis response. Mobility without structural integration exacerbates precarity; visibility without institutional embeddedness and reward intensifies marginalization. True inclusion requires recognizing displacement not as an interruption but as an epistemic rupture that calls for systemic transformation. This shift entails rethinking how institutions and funding agencies engage with displacement. Beyond short-term schemes, the EU must develop long-term pathways, including permanent positions and restructured funding mechanisms that recognize epistemic inequality and research expertise developed outside dominant Western institutions. Transnational academic initiatives must shift from extractive to participatory models, co-designed with scholars from CEE countries, ensuring that those with lived experience of marginality shape the terms of collaboration.

Both host and Ukrainian institutions hold responsibility. Host universities must integrate displaced scholars into long-term structures through co-authorship, sustained roles, and institutional recognition. Ukrainian institutions should recognize displaced scholars not as “lost” but as epistemic bridges between national and transnational academic spaces. Symbolic and representational labor often extends beyond formal academia. Displaced women scholars take on multiple overlapping roles: informal diplomacy, peer support, public advocacy, and care, both domestic and diasporic. These intersecting shifts form a feminized academic labor that stretches institutional categories of productivity and often goes unrecognized. Without formal acknowledgment and redistribution, the burden of visibility becomes unsustainable. What appears as resilience often masks structural neglect.

Funding bodies can adopt intersectional selection criteria, recognizing symbolic and affective labor. Emotional work, such as explaining the war, educating colleagues, navigating global expectations, must be accounted for in support schemes. Programs should prioritize collaborations that challenge center–periphery hierarchies and build transnational academic networks beyond the crisis horizon. Ultimately, the experiences analyzed in our study point not only to individual strategies of survival but also to systemic conditions of inequality that shape the possibilities for epistemic agency. Celebrating resilience without transforming underlying conditions risks further entrenching the very structures that marginalize. In a Europe shaped by war, migration, asymmetrical knowledge production, and the epistemic injustice of the West-East European divide, what is needed is not mere resilience but reconfiguration.¹⁶

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback and valuable suggestions, which helped us improve our paper. We are also thankful to the special section editors, Diana Madroane and Ruxandra Trandafoiu, for their professional guidance throughout the writing and revision process. We are deeply grateful to Olena Strelnyk for her contributions during the early stages of the research project involving displaced Ukrainian women scientists, as well as for her input in shaping the methodological framework.

¹⁶ The authors used several AI-based software for proofreading and refining academic phrasing at an early stage of the article draft, and at the final stage of submission, they commissioned professional proofreading by Johanna Roberts (The Essay Doctor, UK).

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Mariya SHCHERBYNA (PhD) is JTWIA research fellow at the Department of Management and Production Engineering, Politecnico di Torino, Italy as well as an associate professor at V. Dahl's East Ukrainian National University, gender and anti-discrimination expert. She served on the Anti-Discrimination Commission for Ukraine's Ministry of Education (2021-2023) and is a lecturer at the Gender Museum in Kharkiv, Ukraine. She authored and coordinated the international project «*Beading the Womantory*» for the Gender Museum, Ukraine. Her research focuses on gender studies, STEM gap, HerStory, and war-induced changes in women's practices and identities, myth, and stereotypes. She participated in the *Ideal STEM Academic Model* project on the Women and Science Chair grant from Université Paris Dauphine-PSL and co-created the “Le Prime” project and exhibition to identify pioneering STEM women at Politecnico di Torino within the broader HerStory of global women's rights and accomplishments.

Tetiana HAVLIN (PhD) is a visiting professor for Intercultural Studies at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg since April 2025. Previously, she worked as a research associate in the 5183 DFG Research Unit *Transborder Mobility and Institutional Dynamics* at the University of Siegen. Her key research areas are migration and transnationalism research, empirical social research, cultural sociology and multilingualism as well as gender and intersectionality studies. Her upcoming book *The Dynamics of Immigrant Agency – Identity Formation, Translanguaging, and Purposeful Actions of Post-Soviet Migrants in West Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan) focusses on the dynamic transformation of human agency within the complex context of settlement-oriented migration. It places a central focus on agency, examining it from interdisciplinary perspective while considering the individual and collective experiences throughout the migration process.