FROM SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIP

Rethinking International Academic Solidarity with Ukrainian Researchers During War

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A place in the university

Funding
Affiliation
Access to resources

Have we really considered what gives a colleague a voice?

Solidarity and research integrity

Validity	Transparent interpretation and proportionate claims
Reproducibility	Clear methods and explicit limits on access to data
Integrity	Fair attribution and room to question decisions

“Scholars listening to scholars” includes who can influence the work

What war disrupts

01 Research infrastructure and long-term projects

02 Teams, institutional anchoring and professional continuity

03 Predictability in everyday academic work

Brain circulation: opportunity and expectation

“The connections that were there, they remained… I would even say that now there are more connections than before.”

New ties can sustain research. The success narrative can also make exceptional adaptation seem routine.

Interview excerpt translated by the authors. The analytical reading follows the quotation.

The contributions within partnership

01 Disciplinary expertise and methodological contribution

02 Contextual knowledge that informs research decisions

03 Networks and the work of sustaining Ukrainian academic teams

The research question

How do Ukrainian researchers experience support, and through which adaptation scripts do recognition, authority and participation become conditional?

Listening to 62 researchers

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online interviews in Ukrainian
May 2023 to May 2025

Across borders, internally displaced, in relocated institutions, or working in Ukraine amid severe disruption

How we read the accounts

Recruitment through networks and snowball sampling

Close reading in dialogue with theory

Author translations checked for conceptual accuracy

Quotations selected to illuminate organisational processes

Access and meaningful participation

ACCESS

A fellowship or appointment

Resources and facilities

Invitations to academic spaces

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Influence over research agendas

Recognition of expertise

Participation in decisions

The paradox of institutional support

Support sustains academic continuity.

The same arrangements can leave recognition, authority and voice dependent on additional expectations.

Adaptation scripts

Implicit expectations of a “successful” displaced researcher

Productivity	Continued output despite disruption
Gratitude	Concerns expressed without appearing ungrateful
Cultural legibility	Needs communicated in institutionally acceptable ways
One-way adjustment	Researchers adapt while existing practices remain

Productivity expectations under disruption

“A person left their house… in a down jacket with a laptop and a bag… and never returned. You have nothing else. … People cannot recover.”

An opportunity to continue working can coexist with pressure to recover quickly and remain productive.

Gratitude, silence and speaking up

Support relationships can make criticism feel costly

Organisational silence research explains why people may withhold concerns when voice seems risky or futile.

An absence of complaints does not establish that a programme works well

Unequal benefit and professional recognition

“In some cases, it seems to me that some universities use researchers to have certain results for themselves… I don’t see the same return for our university. … We are guests, sometimes burdens, occasionally symbols, but rarely equals.”

A participant’s account of whose institution benefits and whose expertise receives authority

Interview excerpt translated into English in the manuscript

Contribution, authority and authorship

Expertise	Disciplinary contributions beyond the role of war witness
Credit	Authorship and roles that reflect intellectual contribution
Authority	Influence over research agendas and decisions

Academic work across two institutions

HOST INSTITUTION

Projects, seminars and new ties

Availability and visible involvement

Continuing ties with Ukraine may be read as partial commitment

UKRAINIAN HOME INSTITUTION

Students, colleagues and ongoing work

Synchronous availability and productivity

Physical return and loyalty may become expectations

Expectations overlap on both sides. Researchers negotiate continuing transnational obligations.

A dispersed Ukrainian university

“We have no premises of our own; our community is dispersed across regions of Ukraine and multiple countries.”

Home institutions also have to practise support under conditions of loss.

Presence, loyalty and academic belonging

“researchers who stayed abroad often encounter persistent stigma”

A participant also described contracts not renewed for colleagues unable to return to in-person teaching.

The analytical issue: how physical presence becomes a marker of professional commitment

Integrity questions raised by the analysis

Attribution	Whose expertise counts as an intellectual contribution?
Speaking up	Can a supported colleague question an arrangement?
Agenda-setting	Who can revise the questions and interpretation?

A risk of extractive collaboration

A project studies Ukrainian universities during war.
The questions and budget are already agreed.
Ukrainian colleagues join for context and data collection.

A familiar risk in “helicopter research”: contribution without meaningful influence over the work

Can the colleagues still change a research question?

Reciprocal adaptation

Researchers learn new institutional practices.
Institutions also revise their practices
in response to researchers' expertise
and circumstances.

Collaboration after emergency funding

Early discussion of what happens when funding ends

Continuing collaboration and realistic routes to further work

Sustainable ties with Ukrainian teams and institutions

Partnership in institutional practice

Recommendation	An example in practice
Recognise earlier achievements	Prior expertise informs roles and responsibility
Share intellectual authority	Colleagues participate in academic decisions
Support transnational obligations	Workload accommodates agreed responsibilities in Ukraine
Practise reciprocal adaptation	Two-way mentoring and revisions to institutional routines

From “How can we help?” to partnership

Asking how to help is already a meaningful step.

Continue your work. Invite another voice to help shape it.

In one current collaboration, reopen a decision:
a question, a role, or how credit is shared.

Together, we can achieve more than the sum of our individual contributions.

Questions and discussion

Thank you

Study scope and limitations

01 Analytical interpretation rather than prevalence estimates

02 Researchers’ accounts rather than an institutional audit

03 No inference of institutional motives or causal effects

04 Comparative and longitudinal research remains necessary

The manuscript behind this lecture

The Paradox of Institutional Support

Conditional Inclusion and Adaptation Scripts
among Displaced Ukrainian Researchers

Unpublished manuscript