

King's College London
School of Politics & Economics
King's Russia Institute

Bush House NE Wing
Strand Campus
London WC2B 4BG



**Social Science Research in the Context of Conflict, War, and Authoritarianism:
Methodological Challenges and New Approaches to Data Collection and Analysis**

Symposium

Call for Proposals

Who: PhD students and early career scholars;

What: Based on research, but focus on methods; no paper necessary; 10-12 minutes presentations;

When: June 23-24, 2023

Where: King's College London;

Russia's unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, shattered the Western world as we knew it. While smaller-scale military conflicts have taken place in Europe before (including the war simmering in East Ukraine since 2014), Putin's decision to invade Ukraine became a moment of no return in the relations of Russia with Western countries. Along with moral, strategic, and security implications, the war shattered the status quo in Russian and Eurasian studies as well.

The war has put into question both the possibility and validity and reliability of widely used methods in research on Russia, such as survey, experiment, interview, ethnography, and others, putting research on Russia on par with research on other closed repressive authoritarian systems, such as China, Iran, and North Korea, as well as studies done in unsafe contexts, such as the contexts of war and civil conflict. This challenge requires new approaches to data collection, evaluation of validity and reliability, as well as learning from other disciplines and area specialists. The symposium will address methodological challenges facing scholars of authoritarianism, war, and conflict.

While a number of scholars have already been invited to participate in the symposium, we especially welcome PhD students and early career scholars to complement the panels. Contributions should be based on planned, started, or finished research projects, but address methodological aspects, such as gaining access to the field in the context of closed authoritarian systems, using methods that do not require access to the field, mitigating safety and ethical issues, reliability and validity of data collected in authoritarian environments, as well as addressing personal emotional involvement in knowledge-creating processes that are normally expected to take place in a more neutral environment. We seek contributions from scholars of authoritarian contexts, such as Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea, and are specifically interested in the following themes:

- Methodological and ethical dilemmas in the ethnography of war and conflict;
- Qualitative data collection in high-risk environments;
- Validity and reliability of survey research in authoritarian contexts;
- Computational approaches to (social) media analysis in authoritarian contexts;
- Computational approaches to event analysis in authoritarian contexts (protest, war, etc.);
- The use of open-source intelligence in research on war and authoritarianism.

All costs are covered by the organisers (including visa)

Submit your application [here](#). Deadline: 7th of April