УДК 316.613

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MAPPING DISPLACEMENT: THE POTENTIAL OF USING PSYCHOGEOGRAPHICAL METHODS TO EXPLORE THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANING OF DISPLACEMENT

The international armed conflict in Ukraine, which has been going on for already more than five years, has caused significant changes in Ukrainian society. More than 1.7 million people have been forced to leave their homes and become internally displaced. In such conditions, the question of identities becomes one of the most important for the affected people. The overall social situation of displacement has contributed to the individual and community self-perception of displaced people, and the creation of the 'resettlement identity' among them. Such specific social identity became the main subject of the author's research and will be discussed in the current paper. This article presents the first results of the ongoing research into social identities of displaced people in Ukraine. The research was conducted through a combination of narrative interviews and mental sketch mapping of the respondents' home cities in Donbas and their current places of residence. The research data was analysed from the perspectives of social psychology as well as of human geography, and the results show how the emotion-laden phenomenological experience contributes to spatial perception of the city and to turning space into place. The mapping and narrativization processes make it possible to distinguish the crucial elements of the complex identity of the displaced people: the Donbas identity, the Ukrainian identity, and a specific resettlement identity that simplifies the identification with a huge group of people sharing similar experiences. Our research shows that mental sketch mapping as a method helps to elicit the complexity of identities among the displaced people. Moreover, mapping exercise, combined with a narrative interview, also had a therapeutic effect upon the respondents as the research subjects experienced change during the interview. The complex usage of a position of existential outsideness (Relph 1980) revealed in the research, may be the symptom of a personal crisis. Thus the reflexive work on the maps may be a tool for displaced people to rethink and transform their spatial-temporal coordinates and their identities.

Keywords: Psychogeography; Donbas; Mental Mapping; Displacement; Identity.

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КАРТОГРАФУЮЧИ ПЕРЕСЕЛЕННЯ: ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ПСИХОГЕОГРАФІЧНИХ МЕТОДІВ ДЛЯ ВИВЧЕННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОГО ЗМІСТУ ВИМУШЕНОГО ПЕРЕСЕЛЕННЯ

Міжнародний збройний конфлікт, що триває в Україні вже понад п'ять років, призвів до суттєвих змін в українському суспільстві. Майже 1.7 мільйонів людей були вимушені покинути свої домівки і стали внутрішньо переміщеними особами. У таких умовах питання ідентичності стає одним із найбільш важливих для вивчення соціальними психологами. Соціальна ситуація переселення суттєво вплинула на індивідуальне та групове самосприйняття переміщених осіб, і зрештою призвела до появи у них так званої «переселенської ідентичності». Така специфічна соціальна ідентичність і стала основним предметом цього дослідження. У цій статті представлені результати проведеного нами дослідження просторових ідентичностей внутрішньо переміщених осіб в Україні, отримані завдяки поєднанню методів наративного інтерв'ю та ментального картографування. Створені учасниками дослідження ментальні карти рідних міст Донбасу, а також Києва, були проаналізовані з перспективи соціальної психології та гуманітарної географії. Результати дослідження показали, що емоційно забарвлений феноменологічний досвід є визначальним для сприймання образу міста, перетворення простору на місце та творення просторових ідентичностей. Процеси картографування й наративізації дозволили виділити значущі компоненти комплексної просторової ідентичності переміщених осіб: донбаську ідентичність, українську ідентичність та специфічну «переселенську» ідентичність, що полегшує ідентифікацію із ширшою спільнотою, об'єднаною спільним досвідом вимушеного переселення. Дослідження також показало, що ментальне картографування як метод дозволяє виявити багатоманіття ідентичностей серед переміщених осіб. Більше того, таке картографування у поєднанні з наративним інтерв'ю також може мати терапевтичний вплив на респондентів. Окрім того, було виявлено характерне для переселенців відчуття «екзистенційної відчуженості», що є симптомом особистісної кризи (Relph, 1980). Разом із тим дослідження

показало, що рефлекспивна робота над створеними ментальними картами допомагає переселенцям переконструювати власні просторово-часові координати та ідентичності.

Ключові слова: психогеографія; Донбас; ментальне картографування; переселення; ідентичність.

Introduction and Research Problem. During the current conflict in Ukraine, at least 1.7 million people from the Donbas region have been forced to leave their homes in the affected areas and become internally displaced. The displaced people form their personal stories of war and peace in order to deal with their psychological trauma, and these stories are formed within the contradictory fields of multiple discourses and interpretations of the conflict. They face difficulties in adaptation to the new living conditions because of social and economic problems, and also cannot easily accept the changed reality (Васютинський, 2016; Блинова, 2017; Коробка, 2017; Lazarenko, 2018). At the same time, the displaced people coming from Donbas bear a specific regional identity that reflects the complicated history of the region and appeals to values of freedom and self-determination (Gentile, 2015), and desire to preserve or strengthen civic identities in a polarizing society (Sasse and Lackner, 2018; Васютинський, 2017; Горностай, 2012). These aspects make studying the identities of the displaced people even more tangled, as an identity crisis may be one of the symptoms of the relocation trauma.

The term 'internally displaced person' itself, as well as the word 'displacement', reveal one more linguistic implication: the morphological word root '**place'**. Thus, the linguistic structure of the term supposes the core role of spatial relations and attitudes and requires a special investigation of the meanings of space and place for the displaced people. That is why the research on implicit senses of resettlement and displacement requires insights from both social psychology and also human geography, as the discipline dealing with personal-spatial relations.

Recent research shows that the notions of home and relation to home might be essential in forming '**migrant identities**' (Brooks and Simpson, 2013). The senses of belonging have been widely explored regarding transnational migrants, however, in the case of Ukrainian IDPs, the emotional dislocation with geographical distance is also crucial for understanding the emotional substance of the experience of resettlement. That is why a home may be considered as a combination of the material environment and a set of meaningful relationships, both produced and internalized by the resettlers (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015; Ewing, 2005).

The social situation of displacement has contributed to the individual and community self-perception of displaced people, and the creation of the '**resettlement identity**' among them. As Boccagni and Baldasar (2015)

point out, 'since the migration process involves moving from one place to (at least) an-other, it also entails change and transformation and the consequent (re)negotiation of self and others in both these places' (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015). That is why the above-mentioned 'resettlement identity' became **the main subject** of the author's research and will be discussed in the current paper.

As discussed before, the category of place has a crucial role in understanding displacement, as the word root **'place'** lies beneath this word. That is why the research design assumes the usage of human-geographical methods that have already proven to be effective in studying the human-space relationship, and of these methods, mental mapping is the prevailing one.

Mental mapping as a way to study human-space relations goes back to the Situationist International and Guy Debord's Naked City, a collage where the meaning lies in the arrows designating the intensity of spatial relation (Debord 1997). Kevin Lynch elaborated mapping as a research method, introduced the procedure and presented the first tools to analyse the maps, while Milgram and Jodelet were the first to explain the value of such a type of geographical knowledge for dealing with psychological reality (Milgram et al., 1976). Over recent decades the method has been used to gather knowledge about the dynamics of human-environment relations ranging from the daily-life practices to feminist geographies and experiences of oppressions (Downs and Stea, 1977; Gould and White, 2012; Kitchin and Dodge, 2007; Powell, 2010). Gieseking identifies the mental sketch mapping (MSM) version of the method as the most prevalent form, in which participants draft visual maps derived from their cognitive maps of space and the information, emotions, and ideas they hold, whether real and/or imagined (Gieseking, 2013).

One of the most important principles of mental mapping in the context of displacement studies is that 'it allows the subject to maintain the ownership of her/his story; thus, the elements and scenarios depicted are just the ones that she/he wanted to share. Therefore, it retrieves the intrinsic link between agency and storytelling' (Campos-Delgado, 2018). As agency and subjectivity mean so much for the resettlers, such a type of research method helps to reveal the stories about the war and resettlement, as well as about the transformation of space perception after moving to a new place of living. Creation of the mental map is predominantly a starting point for the remembering and transforming of the traumatic memories of displacement.

Therefore, in the current research, the narrative part will consider work on the trauma as a whole, while the mapping part will work both with the spatial expression of the trauma and the social production of space deriving from it. Mapping itself appropriates the place (Bruchansky, 2010) while reflecting the common practices of everyday life (Certeau, 2008). Thus the phenomenological experience of daily life is the main contributor to turning space into

place. Since the research aims to explore the identities that are built on experience, it is important to understand what kind of experience turns space into a place, and how the experience of perception of the hometown and the new city differs for the internally displaced persons.

The current research is part of a doctoral dissertation **aiming** to study the implicit senses of displacement, as well as the formation of a specific place-based identity shared among the IDPs in Ukraine. The research was designed with a mixed methods approach, to combine the psychological and spatial perspectives.

In the research case, the narrative impulse was the proposal to map the hometown and tell a story about the place. The suggestion to map the new city of residence (Kyiv in this case) was then made upon the completion of the mapping exercise on the home city. The research design implied that this is the point for the creation of an integral life story, where the narrativization process and the fusion of the stories of the past and the present should appear as clearly as possible.

The overall research sampling included 24 people aged 24 to 51, who moved from Donbas to Kyiv either in summer 2014 with the first migration wave (21 people) or in summer 2015. However, only 14 respondents completed the full research procedure and ended up with the two completed mental maps and a full narrative interview. The 28 maps, to be discussed in detail in the next part of the article, were created by respondents aged from 21 to 36 during personal interviews from September 2018 to November 2019. The empirical data was encoded and abstracted to ensure confidentiality, so the participants' names and their personal details were altered.

Gieseking distinguished 57 different categories of mental sketch map analysis; however, the current research will only consider those with the most significant differences, the ones reflecting the traumatic experience, and the categories indicated by the respondents during the interviews.

The analysis of the available maps shows that the respondents demonstrate two main approaches to the city mapping: a rational **sequential** approach, and a **spatial** one (Pocock, 1976). Thus, within the sequential approach, the respondent first created a certain structure of the city - the 'urban tissue', meaning the street grid, the subway map or the location of the river (as in Kyiv, where the Dnieper river is the backbone element of the urban structure and perception of the city). After that, meaningful objects or locations were superimposed onto the urban tissue: home, public spaces, places of memory, significant objects like a bus station or the airport. The respondents with the spatial approach started their mapping with meaningful objects and built up a kind of narrative about the places, ranging from the most significant (like home, hospital, meaningful public spaces) to common elements of the urban landscape such as dominant high-rise buildings, railway stations and stadia.

However, there is a notable tendency among the respondents to change the mapping type with the second task. Thus, the participants with a spatial map of their home town create a sequential map of Kyiv and vice versa. For instance, Tamara created her Donetsk with a well-rationalized structure and started the mapping with the street grid. She also started creating a mental image of Kyiv with a rational element - a river that divides the city and mapped the two circles denoting the left and the right bank. Those circles were then randomly filled with some meaningful elements. At the same time, Tamara herself noted that the contrast between a well-structured hometown and chaotic Kyiv is decisive for her in the understanding of these two cities. There are also two opposite cases: while the participants made the emotional spatial maps of Lugansk with only significant places indicated, their mapping of Kyiv started with the subway scheme, and the meaningful objects were placed around the stations.

Another important affective MSM component is the 'good figure' principle, borrowed from Gestalt theory. 'Good figure' means that element of the map which is a symbolic centre and attracts the main attention of the viewers (Pocock, 1976; Kitchin and Dodge, 2007). Such an element might be the object exactly in the middle of the map, the brightest or biggest item drawn, or the compositional centre of the map. Remarkably, half of participants mapped the monuments in public spaces as the 'good figures' – such as **Lenin monuments** in Donetsk and Ivanivka and '**The Worker with a Torch**' in Luhansk, alongside the Independence and Motherland monuments in Kyiv. On one of the Donetsk maps, Lenin Square itself became the central element, while the monument was marked only as a small pictogram. Two other maps featured the author's home at the symbolic centre, and one participant pictured herself in the centre of the map. Also, there are two Kyiv maps with transport infrastructure items as 'good figures': one with a subway station, another with the central bus terminal – the place of contact with the respondent's hometown. It turns out that the socialist meanings (the public space monuments) are still the semantic centre of the cities of Donbas, while in Kyiv the central objects may bear either Soviet meanings (for example, the Motherland monument), or the senses of modern Ukraine. The latter can be attributed to the images of Maidan; this place carries a lot of meanings regarding modern Ukraine and in particular the values associated with the resettlement. Perhaps that is why the Maidan is depicted on each of the maps of Kyiv.

With regards to the category of the first-drawn element, the respondents showed two different approaches to drawing the image on a sheet of paper. Even those who chose the sequential structure, as described above, and began with a reflection of the urban tissue, started the focused item-drawing from the picturing of their home. Generally, the home became the first significant element drawn on 16 of the 28 maps. However, one respondent made home the

last-drawn element on both MSMs, as if she was summing up the whole mapping process. On the other hand, in some of the cases the participants did not depict their homes at all: for example, Karina and Tamara started mapping their native cities with their homes, but did not depict the places where they live in Kyiv, explaining this by the fact that they have changed apartments several times and did not have a 'sense of home' anywhere in the city. At the same time, Taras, who drew the most detailed home-city map, with 115 elements, did not depict his house - because he wanted to stick to the chosen scale and there was simply not enough space on the sheet. In contrast, he began his mapping of Kyiv with an image of his new home, and after that added the area where he wanted to settle in the future.

Another noteworthy aspect is that some participants singled out or highlighted the objects associated with the most powerful emotions. So, for example, Zoya highlights the Donbas Arena stadium with colour and shading, as for her this item is a symbol of the once thriving, and now partially destroyed native city of Donetsk. Dana pictures her home in Donetsk in a separate area - and in the same way highlights Maidan in Kyiv, the place where the revolutionary events that changed her whole life happened. Taras singles out Rusanivka neighbourhood on the on the otherwise featureless left bank left bank of Dnieper, as for him it is a place where he sees himself in the future. Meanwhile, Polina distinguishes two objects that are the focus of her traumatic experience: an aeroplane ('Kyiv is always about aeroplanes. There are no aircrafts at home, only military aviation. I'm afraid my mom will feel sick of these aeroplanes when she comes here… It's so scary for someone who has seen the war') and a zoomorphic pictogram symbolizing the Kyiv club Coyote Ugly ('that is a strange club. The bouncer told us ugly things after seeing our birthplaces in the passports, like, do not pretend to make separatism here. Maybe he was crazy, but it was so frustrating! We just moved, and everyone demonstrated the othering…'). Thus, the maps reflect the respondents' traumatic experience of relocation, and the traumascape may take various forms - either be focused on the places where traumatic events occurred directly, or manifest as a regret about the destroyed city.

The juxtaposition of the maps makes it possible to compare the saturation of the maps, the change of the drawing style and patterns, as well as to find contrasting points in the perception of cities. Reflection on the maps results in reflection on the identities. Thus, Karina says: 'I don't affiliate myself to Luhansk, so if someone asks me, I tell that I'm from Donbas', while Polina mentions: 'I'm proud that I'm from Ivanivka, a unique place, unlike the other. But I see my home town only in terms of the past'.

At the same time, the process of mapping itself reflects the meaning of a **'resettlement identity'.** Some of the participants constantly used the past tense regarding their hometowns, but mentioned the changes that occurred, the

places that were destroyed, and described how the streets became empty. Accordingly, their narratives turned out to be not just the stories about the past, but in fact became their personal stories of war and displacement. Nevertheless, a certain distance to the city from the past was traced: thus, Polina said 'the city is mute. It is not my city anymore'.

The request to draw the second map reveals the resettlement narrative even more strongly. On the level of spoken narrative, the transition to the second map is to turn to the story about the displacement itself, the first impressions of Kyiv as a new place to live – not as a place from a school trip - and the difficulties upon arrival. The participants mentioned that none of them intended to live in Kyiv for a long time. They were going to fend for themselves at the relatives of friends' places and come back as soon as the situation calmed down, but they eventually settled down in Kyiv for almost five years. Eventually, the daily practices and experiences the respondents had in Kyiv contributed to their perception of the new city of residence and a new place-based identity.

In this regard, Kyiv appears as an 'unfriendly', 'unfamiliar' and 'incomprehensible' place, that is reflected in the large number of empty spaces on the maps or the marks of the **'non-places.'** So Kyiv is, to some extent, perceived as an 'inauthentic' placeless place due to a lack of significance and experience of some of its components (Relph, 1980). The further development of the narrative follows the principle of constructing day-to-day practices in order to get familiar with the city. For instance, Polina mentioned how she was constantly using the map navigator, Maryna remembered getting lost in the subway and Karina told the story of how she was riding the public transport to explore places in the city. In de Certeaus' terms, this is a manifestation of making sense of space through practices, and repeating the practices in order to overcome alienation. Hence, movement and turning spatiality into narratives is a way to transform 'foreignness' to 'familiarity', and is a step towards forming a particular spatial identity (Certeau, 2008).

At the same time, the participants still perceive themselves as displaced people. Hence, Zoya expressed her regret about renting the apartment: 'in these five years we are renting, we could have purchased our own apartment. It turns even sadder when I remember our flat in Donetsk, we just paid it out and the war started'. Tamara goes further and explains her resettler identity like this: 'the first apartment I rent was just terrible … with lots of cockroaches! We could do nothing to them… I was shocked: there were no cockroaches at home! But in Kyiv, they were everywhere, in all the apartments I rent, like they were migrating with me. As so, they are the resettlers, just as we are. And for me, they are a symbol of Kyiv. Here no one waits for you when you come, except the cockroaches.'

At the same time, the respondents share a common identity of **'the Ukrainians'**: they still label the cities in Ukrainian despite using the Russian language during the interviews; they depict the Ukrainian flags both in their hometowns and in Kyiv, and place specific emphasis on the fact of a Ukrainian presence in the occupied territories. Thus, Karina explains with emotion that the Ukrainian theatre in Luhansk still works and gives performances in Ukrainian; the same fact was also mentioned by Taras. Polina is also happy that her school still gives Ukrainian language classes. Larysa and Zoya depict Ukrainian flags on their hometown maps.

The mapping and narrativization processes make it possible to distinguish the crucial elements of the complex identity of the displaced people: the Donbas identity, the Ukrainian identity, and a specific resettlement identity that simplifies the identification with a huge group of people sharing similar experiences. Such identities might be manifested in the sites of memory, which hold communal identities together or divide them, while the spatiality of memory links the social and the personal (Halbwachs and Coser, 2008). Thus mapping the home cities and a new city of residence implies not the juxtaposition of the identities inside one mapped space, but the juxtaposition of the past and the present**.** However, in forming the sites of contest or dialogue, maps sustain a social memory that articulates civic and personal identities.

According to Leach's concept of belonging, the identification process is always specular and is always a question of recognising the self in the other. Thus, identification with place is a result of the process of 'mirroring' and 'introjection' of the external world into the self, and the projection of the self to the external world (Leach, 2002). Thus, the mental sketch maps of the participant reflect their interiorized images of the places that might no longer exist – in case of conflict-affected hometowns. So the spatial identification with such non-existent and imaginary places might lead to the participants' **'existential outsideness'** towards hometowns, and, at the same time, difficulties and even refusal to create new spatial practices in Kyiv, that might facilitate the formation of a new identity. But still, the identity is a performative discourse, so the articulation of the problem, and creating a narration about life events, helps to draw the connection between the past self and the present self (Титаренко, 2017). So the process of narrativization, followed by the reflexive work, can be a tool for the displaced people to re-think their spatial identities.

The personal stories of the research participants reveal that mental mapping gives insights into the study of human–space relations, as MSM evokes 'the lived experience of social, cultural, and political issues related to place' (Powell, 2010, p. 539) as well as giving insights into the way places live within and produce people, societies, cultures, and politics. Hence, mental mapping enables the researchers to literally see and hear participants' experiences that may go unrecorded if the studies of space and place rely solely on verbal

interchange. Also, mental sketch mapping as a method helps to elicit the complexity of identities among the displaced people. The mapping exercise, combined with a narrative interview, also had a therapeutic effect upon the respondents as the research subjects experienced change during the interview'. Thus, the respondents had a tool to partially transform their identities during the reflexive interviewing process through rethinking their attitudes to the represented spaces.

In any event, the displacement discussed in this paper has been a spatial trauma for everyone who experienced it, and the mental mapping, combined with the narrative interview, has revealed the fluid spaces of displacement. As traumatic pasts map themselves onto the wounds of other times and spaces, trauma's ability to affect daily life within and beyond the confines of the research field is realized. The structured and linear world of the resettlers' previous life was destroyed with the armed conflict, and current spatialised times emphasise the incoherence or disorder of time made possible through disjunctive spaces. Thus the loss of spatial and temporal intervals moves the memory theatre from ordering to disordering the world. Therefore, mapping, along with narrative interviews, can push respondents to think about the spatial coordinates of their lives and transform their identities.

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