

# UKRAINIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA:

FROM POST  
INDEPENDENCE  
TO POST WAR

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Session: Self and Settlement

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## **Queering migration studies: Methodological challenges in studying Ukrainian queer migration/diaspora**

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In scholarship on the Ukrainian migration to Canada, a focus on sexuality and gender is relatively new. The growing scholarship on global queer migration also rarely includes ethnic groups from postsocialist Eastern Europe, let alone Ukrainians. Our research project seeks to fill this gap and, importantly, to offer methodological insights transferrable to the broader area of diaspora/migration studies.

We see the domination of identity categories in migration studies as a methodological problem. LGBT+ acronym signifying a set of identities underpins the extant publications on queer migration. Even if researchers aim to deconstruct the idea of (genuine) sexual and gender (self-)identification of migrants, the political development of Queer Diaspora Studies keeps reproducing strict identity-based categories. But how to define “queerness”/non-cis-heteronormative identification and experience of migrants beyond Western models of gender and sexuality? How to define “Ukrainianness” given the heterogeneity of the Ukrainian population and the intense political dynamics after 2014 and even more so after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022? Finally, how the positioning of Ukrainian queer migrants is shaped by the Canadian context where both queerness and Ukraineness have specific historical-political meanings?

We urge to prioritize the intersectional perspective on the combination of migration experience, Ukrainian ethnic/cultural belonging, and non-heteronormative sexuality and non-binary genders in their complexity and entanglements. Resisting identitarian homogenization in diaspora/migration studies in a feminist intersectional way opens the possibility for nuanced research and cross-communal solidarities. Further, we call for “queering” general migration studies – aligning methodologies and methods with anti-essentialist theoretical assumptions and sensibilities to power relations.