

**Forging Wartime Biopolitics:
Militarized Refugees' Bodies and Environments in WWI Eastern Europe**

BIOFORGEWAR

The project aims to critically scrutinize the existing research paradigms in the three following conceptual areas and thus make an important contribution to the development of corresponding historiographical debates:

- the environmental history of the first industrial war from the victims' perspectives;
- the transnationality of the displacement biopolitics in the First World War in Eastern Europe;
- the digital humanities potential through the research of displacement, war, and environments.

The prism of anthropological constants – bodily experience, environmental experiences, gender constructions, mediatized taxonomies of displacement – allows us to overcome the methodological limitations of mostly nationally fixed historiographies.

This project aims to investigate the underexplored impact of military actions on the environment and lifeworlds of populations during World War I, with a particular focus on war-related displacement regimes in Eastern Europe. The research focuses on Austrian Galicia, Congress Poland, and Romanian Walachia, as unique natural, anthropogenic, and ethnic environments, through the viewpoints of Germany, Austria, and Russia. The research investigates the shaping of individual and political bodies amid collapsing empires, the influence of biopolitics, military medicine, and its colonial practices, and gendered experiences within the refugee system, treating the environment as an active participant in the war and its aftermath.

The interdisciplinary research approach combines, productively but also critically, the concepts, terms, and instruments of environmental and spatial history, historical anthropology, discourse and visual analysis, and digital humanities. Conceptualization of this approach will enrich the potential of military history with an innovative interface to environmental and migration studies, by leveraging digital humanities. The research will draw on various types of published and unpublished material, including military and civil documents, visual and cartographic sources, and personal documents in German, Austrian, Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian archives, libraries, and museums.

The project synthesizes for the first time the history of mass population displacement and medical and environmental history, taking a broad approach that addresses various actors and influences. It opens new fields for understanding migration crises both in the past and the present, examining human reactions and responses to crises in both historical and contemporary contexts. The innovation potential lies in producing comprehensive insights through advanced data processing, machine recognition, and GIS mapping, offering a novel, multidimensional understanding of the complex history of the Eastern Front during WWI.