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SOCIAL FACTORS OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES IN ENTERPRISES IN WAR CONDITIONS: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES OF RESEARCHING¹

The article analyses the methodological challenges involved in studying the social factors of organisational change at enterprises under wartime conditions. The authors argue that the reality of war not only transforms patterns of organisational behaviour but also reshapes the very logic of power relations, creating a need to rethink classical theoretical and methodological approaches. Based on a critical analysis of neo-institutionalism, structuration theory, field theory, and concepts of organisational learning, the article demonstrates that these paradigms are grounded on assumptions of social stability, the reproducibility of practices, and the predictability of institutional rules. The study examines how the state of radical instability generated by war undermines organisational structures and reshapes decision-making processes in conditions of uncertainty and threat. The findings highlight improvisation, informal coordination, solidarity, and moral mobilisation as the principal mechanisms of organisational survival. Particular attention is paid to the empirical dilemmas arising in these circumstances, including the instability of the research field, difficulties in data verification, the affective nature of narratives, the moral 'inflation' of experience, and the blurring of boundaries between researcher and respondent. The article demonstrates that war intensifies ethical concerns, particularly regarding the researcher's responsibility, the limits of permissible knowledge, the care for participants, and the handling of traumatic testimonies. The study substantiates the need to transition to adaptive, hybrid, and context-sensitive research strategies, including case-oriented methods, the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, the use of digital and visual data, and practices of methodological reflexivity.

Keywords: war, research methodology, organisational change, neo-institutionalism, structuration theory, field theory, transformations of power relations, innovation policy.

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СОЦІАЛЬНІ ФАКТОРИ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНИХ ЗМІН НА ПІДПРИЄМСТВАХ В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ: МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

У статті аналізуються методологічні проблеми дослідження соціальних факторів організаційних змін на підприємствах в умовах війни. Автори доводять, що воєнна дійсність не лише трансформує форми організаційної поведінки, але й змінює логіку владних відносин, зумовлюючи потребу в переосмисленні класичних теоретико-методологічних підходів. На основі критичного аналізу неоінституціоналізму, теорії структурування, теорії поля та концепцій організаційного навчання показано, що ці парадигми виходять з припущення стабільності соціального середовища, повторюваності практик і передбачуваності інституційних правил. У дослідженні аналізується, як стан радикальної нестабільності, викликаний війною, розмиває організаційні структури, змінює процеси ухвалення рішень в умовах невизначеності та загрози. Робляться висновки про ключові механізми організаційного виживання: імпровізацію, неформальну координацію, солідарність і моральну мобілізацію. Особливу увагу приділено емпіричним дилемам, що виникають за цих умов: нестабільності дослідницького поля, труднощам верифікації даних, афективності наративів, моральній "інфляції" досвіду та розмиванню меж між дослідником і респондентом. Показано, що війна загострює питання етики, зокрема відповідальності дослідника, меж дозволеного знання, турботи про учасників і роботи з травматичними свідченнями. У статті обґрунтовано необхідність переходу до адаптивних, гібридних і контекстуально чутливих дослідницьких стратегій: кейс-методів, поєднання кількісних і якісних технік, використання цифрових та візуальних даних, а також практик методологічної рефлексивності.

Ключові слова: війна, методологія дослідження, організаційні зміни, неоінституціоналізм, теорія структурації, теорія поля, трансформації владних відносин, політика інновацій.

Contemporary wars affecting civilian populations and economic infrastructure have become not only political and military events but also sociological challenges that require balanced and thoughtful responses. Wars radically transform conventional forms of labour organisation, management, social cooperation, and corporate identity [1]. Under wartime conditions, an enterprise ceases to function as a closed economic system and instead becomes a 'social organism of survival' [2], where relations of power, trust, responsibility, and solidarity are fundamentally reconsidered. Not only production and communication processes change, but also the very mechanisms of social adaptation [3]: rational models of behaviour give way to practices of improvisation, collective mutual aid, and situational mobilisation.

However, it is precisely this characteristic – the intensity and instability of change – that makes the study of wartime organisational processes methodologically vulnerable. Classical research approaches [4; 5], developed for stable and predictable environments, prove to be insufficient for analysing realities in which norms, roles, and structures lose their stability. Consequently, sociologists face not only empirical difficulties, such as the lack of representative data, the impossibility of long-term observation, and the evacuation of enterprises and employees, but also epistemological risks associated with the very nature of knowledge about war as a form of radicalised crisis [6]. How can one study an organisation when its boundaries are constantly blurred? How can scientific distance be maintained when the researcher becomes a participant in the collective experience of war?

The problem is further complicated by the fact that traditional methodological paradigms of organisational sociology – including neo-institutionalism [7], structuration theory [8], and field theory [9; 10] – are grounded in the assumption of institutional normality, where organisations operate according to predictable rules and procedures. War, by contrast, generates a regime of ‘exception’, in which formal structures are replaced by situational ones, and normative rationality gives way to a ‘rationality of survival’. Researchers attempting to apply conventional analytical instruments to such a context risk falling into a number of methodological traps, including the overestimation of institutional stability, the underestimation of informal networks, and the neglect of emotional and symbolic factors that shape organisational decision-making.

Particular importance is attached to the study of social factors underlying organisational change, including employee motivation, horizontal support practices, new forms of leadership, and collective strategies of resistance and adaptation [11]. These factors are often invisible in official reports and statistics, yet they are precisely what ensure the survival of enterprises. Their analysis therefore requires new research techniques – interdisciplinary, hybrid, and context-sensitive approaches focused on reconstructing meanings rather than merely recording facts [12]. In this sense, war becomes not just the background of research but a methodological event that compels a reconsideration of the very nature of sociological knowledge. It disrupts the dichotomy between observer and object, and between neutral analysis and engaged testimony. As a result, researchers find themselves in a situation where any knowledge inevitably becomes knowledge produced from within the crisis itself, requiring a new research ethics grounded in reflexivity, empathy, and respect for participants’ vulnerability.

These methodological shifts are directly related to the objectives of the broader research questions²: how war reshapes configurations of power in society in general and within organisations in particular, what new actors of influence emerge, how decision-making resources are redistributed, and which innovative policies – managerial, corporate, and governmental – are capable of supporting enterprise adaptation. The critical analysis of the

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methodological limitations of classical theories proposed in this article provides a theoretical foundation for the empirical study of these transformations of power relations.

The issue of organisational change in extreme conditions is attracting increasing attention from sociologists and management scholars. Research has typically focused on the transformation of managerial practices, the role of social capital, and the mechanisms of collective survival during emergencies. In particular, the work of D. Aldrich [2; 11] laid the foundations for understanding how social capital and horizontal networks contribute to community resilience in post-disaster periods. K. Weick [1] and C. Moorman and A. Miner [3] demonstrated the importance of sensemaking and organisational improvisation in situations of routine breakdown. At the same time, studies dealing directly with the wartime context have primarily focused on the ethical challenges of fieldwork [6; 13] or on empirical descriptions of enterprise adaptation strategies [14–16]. In contrast, a systematic analysis of the methodological problems involved in studying the social factors of organisational change under wartime conditions – in particular, how radical instability undermines the basic assumptions of classical theories (neo-institutionalism, structuration theory, field theory) – remains lacking. Most existing approaches [4; 8; 9] are based on the premises of stability, the reproducibility of practices, and the predictability of institutional rules, which makes them unsuitable for analysing the ‘logic of survival’ in wartime.

The purpose of this article is to identify the key methodological problems arising in the study of social factors of organisational change in enterprises under wartime conditions. Achieving this aim also involves demonstrating how the wartime context transforms traditional understandings of data reliability, methodological validity, and the role of the researcher. In a broader sense, the article outlines methodological prerequisites for analysing how war and related innovation policies – governmental, corporate, and civic – reshape power relations within enterprises, from the legitimacy of managerial decisions to practices of solidarity as a new source of power.

Main body of the research. 1. *Theoretical framework.* Research on organisational processes in sociology has traditionally relied on several influential paradigms, each proposing its own explanatory logic for social change. Among them are neo-institutionalism, structuration theory, Pierre Bourdieu’s field approach, and the organisational learning paradigm developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön. All of these frameworks offer stable analytical models for understanding the relationship between structure and agency, norms and action, and formal and informal practices (see Table 1). However, war as a socio-historical context calls into question the fundamental assumptions underlying these theories, namely the stability of institutions, the reproducibility of practices, and the predictability of the social environment.

Neo-institutionalism [4; 5; 7] is based on the assumption that organisations operate in relatively predictable institutional environments, where normative, cognitive, and coercive pressures shape their isomorphism – that is, the similarity of structures, procedures, and logics of action. This approach presupposes the existence of a stable organisational field in which the ‘rules of the game’ are reproduced and actors expect institutions to remain relatively unchanged over time. However, war radically undermines the very foundations of this logic. After the outbreak of war or armed conflict, institutions no longer function as

stabilising mechanisms: instead of institutional pressure, asymmetric forces of chaos, uncertainty, physical threat, and shock disruptions emerge, continuously disturbing coordination and accountability channels. Formal regulatory mechanisms lose their effectiveness, and are replaced by situational agreements, horizontal networks, improvised practices, and moral obligations that do not fit into the classical neo-institutional model.

Table 1

Comparison of theoretical approaches in wartime

Theoretical approach	Classical view of organisation	What war destroys	How organisation changes in war conditions	Methodological implications
Neo-institutionalism	The organisation operates in a stable institutional field and adapts to normative and cognitive expectations	The institutional structure disintegrates; formal norms lose their force; rules do not work	Organisations move to informal networks, situational agreements, moral solidarity; the logic of legitimacy changes	It is impossible to rely on isomorphism; the analysis shifts towards crisis forms of coordination, the 'logic of survival'
Structuration theory	Social order is reproduced through repetitive practices; action and structure mutually support each other	A gap between structure and action; practices are not reproduced; the structure ceases to support action	Action becomes improvisational, situational; social systems become temporary, fragmented	Analysis of temporality, instability, improvisational modes of action is necessary
Field theory	The organisation is part of a structured field, where actors 'compete' for capital and using the capitals themselves	The hierarchy of capitals changes; economic and cultural capital is devalued; the role of moral, symbolic, military capital is growing	Legitimacy is based on sacrifice, solidarity, volunteerism; the structure of the field is 'reshaped' by the crisis	It is necessary to introduce new categories: crisis capital, symbolic survival, moral economy; analyse changes in legitimacy
Organisational learning	The organisation 'learns' through reflection, error analysis, strategy development	Decisions are made in stress, uncertainty, information deficit; learning becomes improvisational	Informalised knowledge is formed: affective, bodily, situational; the key role of trust and interaction	Phenomenological, narrative, ethnographic methods are needed to capture 'knowledge in action'

Source: developed by the authors.

War creates conditions in which the logic of institutional conformity is replaced by a logic of adaptive necessity, where organisations survive not because they comply with field norms but because they deviate from them and violate expectations. Under such conditions, isomorphism loses its analytical power: organisations do not become more similar; rather, they diverge in their practices, developing unique ways of reproducing functions under wartime pressure. War also undermines the seemingly self-evident assumption of rational

actors oriented toward institutional sanctions [17], since under the influence of threats to life, resource loss, and violence, organisational decisions acquire affective, moral, and situational characteristics. Managerial actions in such contexts are increasingly shaped by emotional solidarity, trust, mutual support, and collective mobilisation, which are systematically underestimated in neo-institutionalism. Accordingly, the use of neo-institutional frameworks in wartime research creates a methodological trap: the researcher risks overlooking what is crucial for organisational survival – flexibility, informal coordination, local initiatives, an ethics of mutual support, and situational rationality.

A different, yet equally vulnerable, theoretical lens is offered by Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which conceptualises social order as the recursive reproduction of practices through the mutual reinforcement of structure and action [8]. The central proposition is that structure is both the medium and the outcome of action: actors draw upon rules and resources, thereby reproducing social order in their everyday practices. Such logic presupposes a relative stability of the social environment, in which practices can be repeated and institutions serve as stabilisers. In wartime conditions, this interaction is disrupted, as practices cease to be reproducible and structure ceases to be supportive or predictable. In the cycle 'structure → action → structure', a rupture emerges between structure and action, as institutions no longer ensure regularity, while actions become situational, reactive, and oriented toward immediate threat mitigation. This shifts social action into a regime of 'pragmatic improvisation', where actors act not to reproduce social order but to avoid risk, preserve life, or maintain organisational functionality.

From a methodological perspective, this creates a fundamental problem of identification: what can be considered 'structure' in a context where institutions collapse, norms cease to be binding, and rules are not enforced either through external coercion or fear? Structure in such a context becomes residual, fragmented, or emergent rather than a stable system assumed by classical structuration theory. War thus reveals the ontological fragility of social order that everyday stability in peacetime conceals. What A. Giddens described as the routine reproduction of practices turns out, under crisis conditions, to be anything but routine; it depends on infrastructure, external security, trust, and physical environment. When these conditions are disrupted, social order loses its 'structuredness' and features of temporality, discontinuity, and improvisation emerge.

Thus, the analysis of wartime reality forces sociologists to reconsider the theoretical foundations of structuration and turn to categories such as temporality, unpredictability, local survival practices, social collapse, and emergency reorganisation as fully legitimate analytical units.

A similar critique applies to Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, which – like structuration theory – presupposes a relatively stable hierarchy of capitals and predictable rules of competition. In this approach, an organisation is conceptualised as part of a field – a structured space of positions in which actors compete for various forms of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic [9]. A field exists insofar as stable rules of the game operate, and the distribution of capital determines access to resources, legitimacy, and power. War radically disrupts this configuration, as it transforms the hierarchy of capitals, meaning that forms that were decisive in peacetime may rapidly lose relevance or become devalued in

conditions of danger, market collapse, or infrastructural destruction. Conversely, moral, symbolic, and even military capital gain importance – including the capacity for self-sacrifice, volunteer engagement, participation in defense efforts, and recognition of incurred risks. Under such conditions, social status is determined not by compliance with professional norms but by contributions to collective survival and the ability to mobilise trust and solidarity.

These shifts do not merely reposition actors within the field; they transform the very foundations of legitimacy. What previously ensured authority (education, expertise, formal power) may become less significant in wartime than the willingness to act under crisis conditions, assume responsibility, and support others. Therefore, it is insufficient for the researcher to analyse capital distribution in its traditional sense; it is necessary to account for a crisis logic of legitimation grounded in moral evaluation, emotional mobilisation, and symbolic recognition [18]. In wartime conditions, the logic of the field becomes primarily moral and symbolic: organisational decisions are increasingly evaluated through the prism of justification, solidarity, and ethical expectations. As Luc Boltanski demonstrates, moral regimes of critique and justification become a key mechanism for constructing legitimacy [19], structurally shaping actor behaviour in crisis situations.

Organisational learning theories [1; 20] view change as a result of organisations' capacity to reflexively examine their own errors, engage in 'double-loop learning', and construct adaptive strategies. In classical approaches, learning presupposes time for analysis, institutional stability, and access to complete information – conditions under which organisations can critically reassess assumptions and transform behaviour. In wartime, this logic collapses, as learning ceases to be reflective and becomes improvisational response: decisions are made under conditions of threat, information scarcity, disrupted communication, and emotional pressure. A regime of 'learning-in-action' emerges, where knowledge does not precede action but is formed in the moment of execution through trial, error, and rapid adaptation to chaotic circumstances [21].

In this context, improvisational knowledge becomes particularly important – knowledge that is not codified in standardised procedures but emerges through interaction, trust, and shared experience of crisis. It is often affective and embodied: individuals 'know how to act' not because they have instructions, but because they have experienced similar situations and learned to recognise latent signals within chaos. This knowledge is transmitted through emotional responses, intuitive judgments, and collective support practices – forms that traditional rationalist epistemologies of organisations tend to overlook. As a result, war highlights what remains outside classical models of learning: knowledge as lived experience, knowledge as action, and knowledge as an element of solidarity. For researchers, this implies the necessity of moving away from strictly rationalist epistemologies toward phenomenological, narrative, and ethnographic approaches capable of capturing embodied, emotional, and situational forms of knowledge.

Thus, the reconsideration of classical theoretical frameworks under wartime conditions directly leads to the problem of the *transformations of power relations*. If in peacetime power within organisations is often equated with formal position and access to economic or cultural capital, in wartime moral capital, improvisational capacity, and the ability to

mobilise trust become central. These shifts must be placed at the core of innovation policies – both at the level of individual enterprises and in state-level support for business under crisis conditions.

2. *Empirical and Ethical Challenges of Research in Wartime Conditions.* The main methodological difficulty, in our view, lies in the instability of the research field. If in peacetime an organisation functions as a relatively closed and structured object of analysis [22], in wartime its boundaries become fluid: enterprises are evacuated, partially shut down, converted to military production, operate in distributed (hybrid) modes, or disappear entirely. Thus, studies of Ukrainian enterprises conducted in 2022–2023 [14] show that more than half were forced to change location, operational format, or staffing; many functioned under constant threat of shelling and communication disruptions. More recent studies [15; 16] confirm that, under wartime conditions, Ukrainian enterprises shift from linear hierarchical models to adaptive ones, where improvisation, informal coordination, and the ability to rapidly adjust decisions become key survival factors, directly illustrating the transformation of power relations toward horizontal networks.

For sociologists, this means that the traditional logic of field research breaks down, as the object cannot be ‘captured’ in a stable form and its parameters are constantly changing. The methodological trap lies in continuing to think in terms of a stable field, while reality becomes dynamic, fluid, and discontinuous. Under such conditions, standard sampling strategies are replaced by mobile and situational methods, such as short-term case studies, instant interviews, diary-based data collection, and digital tracking of changes.

A further set of problems concerns the validity and reliability of social data, since war produces a specific social context in which respondents’ answers are constituted not only rationally but also, to a significant extent, affectively. In conditions of prolonged danger, loss, and moral mobilisation, individual narratives are often saturated with emotional, moral, and patriotic evaluations. As a result, social data collected or analysed during wartime may be emotionally charged and normatively loaded, requiring heightened analytical caution from the researcher.

In the academic literature [23; 24] on organisations and labour in crisis and particularly in wartime conditions, the effect of professional heroisation is repeatedly described, whereby real difficulties and structural constraints are replaced by discourses of resilience, responsibility, and patriotic duty. This symbolic framing creates a risk of so-called ‘moral inflation’ of data – that is, excessive positive framing or rationalisation of experience. At the same time, such narratives should not be automatically interpreted as distortion or inaccuracy; rather, they can be understood as socially symptomatic, reflecting collective strategies for maintaining symbolic order and meaning-making under conditions of radical uncertainty and disruption. Therefore, the analysis of social processes in wartime requires not only factual verification but also interpretation of the semantic, emotional, and normative dimensions of statements.

Ethical problems in studying organisational processes and labour during wartime acquire an existential character [6], as they concern not only formal procedures such as anonymity, informed consent, or data protection, but also the limits of permissible analysis of managerial practices under heightened vulnerability. In the wartime context, the study of

managerial decisions, organisational survival strategies, or transformations of labour relations inevitably intersects with questions of responsibility, loyalty, and moral choice. Any reconstruction of organisational narratives may have unintended consequences: disclosure of sensitive information about internal conflicts, informal management practices, or adaptive strategies may create risks both for individuals and for organisations themselves. In this sense, the researcher must constantly weigh the analytical value of data against potential harm, asking not only how to study, but also whether certain aspects should be made the subject of public analysis.

Of particular importance in such research is the ethics of presence – the recognition that discussing work, management, or professional decisions in wartime often activates experiences of fear, loss, or moral pressure to act ‘correctly’ in relation to the war context. In this context, the distinction between researcher and interlocutor becomes unstable, and the research encounter turns into a zone of mutual vulnerability [13]. Therefore, the analysis of organisations and labour in wartime requires the incorporation of an ethics of care [25], which implies psychological sensitivity to experiences of professional responsibility under threat, respect for silence regarding certain managerial decisions, and a willingness to refrain from using data that may increase individual or collective vulnerability, even if such data are of high scientific value.

Moreover, war undermines the concept of a ‘neutral’ researcher, especially in studies of organisations and labour, where analytical categories directly intersect with moral and political evaluations. When analysing managerial decisions, business survival strategies, or transformations of labour relations during wartime, the researcher cannot remain fully external to the studied reality, as they are themselves part of the same economic, informational, and security environment [13]. This shared experience implies exposure to the same threats – mobilisation, economic instability, loss – and inevitably generates internal evaluative dilemmas: which managerial practices should be described as adaptive and which as problematic; where the boundary lies between analytical critique and moral judgment; and which organisational decisions can be legitimately problematised in wartime, and which should be left outside public scrutiny.

This embedded positionality has a dual effect. On the one hand, it enables a deeper understanding of organisational decision-making under conditions of uncertainty and resource scarcity. On the other hand, it creates a risk of normalisation or justification of certain practices through shared experiences of survival and solidarity. For this reason, reflexivity in wartime organisational research acquires an applied significance: it involves not only awareness of one’s emotions, but also continuous reconsideration of analytical categories, descriptive language, and evaluative criteria for managerial actions in wartime conditions.

As P. Bourdieu emphasises, reflexivity in the social sciences is not a form of personal confession or emotional subjectivity, but rather an instrument for systematic control of one’s biases, intellectual frameworks, and positionality [10]. Reflexivity requires sociologists to analyse their own social positions, professional interests, bodily and emotional engagements, since these shape what P. Bourdieu calls the ‘scientific collective unconscious’ – the hidden patterns of perception that determine which data are considered significant and how they are interpreted. In wartime contexts, such reflexivity becomes a key condition of validity, as the researcher is inevitable part of the traumatic experience they describe.

Reflexive control, in this sense, is not an abstract principle but rather involves specific methodological techniques drawn from the reflexive tradition of qualitative research. These include field diaries for recording emotional responses and shifts in positionality [26]; positionality statements outlining the researcher's social, professional, and political embeddedness [27]; and meta-interviews, including self-interviews and peer discussions on data collection and interpretation processes [28]. In this study, these approaches are not treated as a standardised set of procedures but as analytical tools requiring contextual adaptation to the study of organisations and labour under wartime conditions. Their application makes the process of knowledge production more transparent and enhances the ethical validity of interpretations.

In summary (see Table 2), empirical and ethical challenges in studying organisations under wartime conditions constitute a complex, multi-layered methodological tension involving the object of study, data, the researcher, and the very logic of knowledge production. Field instability, the affective nature of narratives, risks of symbolic heroisation or silencing, and the mutual vulnerability of researcher and respondent all call traditional notions of validity, objectivity, and distance into question. In this context, the key task is a transition toward a methodological culture that combines mobile research techniques, ethical sensitivity, and reflexive procedures for controlling positionality. War not only complicates data collection but also transforms the very foundations of research interaction; therefore, rigorous analysis in such conditions is possible only through an open, flexible, and ethically responsible methodology capable of accounting for both the social fragility of the context and the specific forms of knowledge that emerge in crisis situations.

Table 2

Empirical and ethical challenges of military research and corresponding methodological responses

Type of challenge	Manifestation in a military context	Methodological risks	Recommended research strategies
Instability of the research field	Organisations change form, location, personnel, modes of operation	Inability to capture a 'static' object; loss of representativeness	Mobile data collection methods; instant interviews; short cases; digital monitoring
Affectiveness and traumatism of data	Narratives are formed under the influence of fear, loss, mobilisation	'Moral inflation' of data; heroisation; selective silencing	Analysis of affective structures; narrative methods; contextualisation of emotional statements
Respondent vulnerability	Sensitive information about losses, military connections, risks	Danger of data disclosure; harm to informants	Ethics of care; flexible protocols of anonymity; respect for silence; right not to answer
Researcher positionality and involvement	The researcher experiences the same threats and emotions as the respondents	Loss of analytical distance; unconscious bias	Reflective techniques: diaries, position statements, meta-interviews, reflective journals
Fragility of validity and reliability	Data are fragmentary, situational, emotionally coloured	Risk of reinterpretation or false generalisability	Triangulation; combining digital, visual, and interview methods; analytical generalisation

Source: developed by the authors.

Conclusions. Understanding the methodological challenges faced by researchers in wartime conditions demonstrates that war does not merely transform organisational processes; it also radically reshapes the very logic of sociological inquiry. In contrast to classical approaches that assume field stability, institutional continuity, and the possibility of standardised research procedures, the study of enterprises in wartime requires fundamentally different methodological strategies – adaptive, hybrid, and reflexive ones.

Firstly, the instability of the research field makes traditional models of fieldwork impractical. Organisations constantly change their form, location, staffing, and modes of operation, and may even disappear entirely from the social landscape. This means that the sociologist cannot ‘capture’ a static object and must instead rely on mobile and situational methods: short-term case studies, instant interviews, digital monitoring, trace analysis, and real-time observation. War thus disrupts the assumptions of representativeness, continuity, and replicability – all of which are central to classical empirical research design.

Secondly, data validity and reliability acquire a different meaning. The wartime context generates emotionally charged, normatively loaded, and morally structured accounts. Entrepreneurs and employees narrate their experiences through the lenses of trauma, fear, patriotism, and moral duty, producing effects of heroisation, symbolic compensation, and selective silencing. Such narratives should not be dismissed as merely ‘subjective’; rather, they are socially symptomatic, as they reflect collective modes of experiencing war and attempts to maintain symbolic order within organisations.

Thirdly, wartime fieldwork exposes profound existential ethical dilemmas. These extend beyond data protection, anonymity, or informed consent, which represent only minimal safeguards. The central issue concerns the limits of permissible knowledge: not every experience can be safely disclosed, and not every testimony can or should be reproduced in academic texts. A wartime interview is always a reciprocal act of vulnerability. The sociologist engaging with individuals who have experienced occupation, shelling, or loss cannot remain an external observer and therefore incorporates an ethics of care into their work – empathy, attentiveness to silence, and a willingness to protect respondents even at the cost of losing part of the data.

Fourthly, wartime conditions sharply foreground reflexive methodology. The researcher is no longer neutral: they share the same risks, anxieties, and forms of collective traumatic experience as research participants. This requires continuous reflection on how the researcher’s positionality, emotional states, linguistic frameworks, and moral evaluations shape knowledge production. In this context, reflexivity is not a form of subjectivisation but a mode of scientific integrity – a means of ensuring ethical validity and transparency in the research process.

Fifthly, recent empirical studies demonstrate that Ukrainian enterprises are indeed shifting from traditional strategies toward adaptive, dynamic governance models, in which crisis becomes a permanent operational condition. This supports the conclusion that war necessitates the analysis of transformations of power relations through the lenses of moral capital, improvisational leadership, and emerging innovation policies.

These methodological constraints and analytical shifts simultaneously define promising directions for future research. A comparative analysis of organisational adaptation strategies

across different phases of war (initial mobilisation, prolonged exhaustion, partial stabilisation) would allow for identifying the temporal dynamics of managerial practices and labour relations. Further work is also needed on the analysis of moral and patriotic narratives within organisations as a distinct analytical object, rather than treating them as ‘noise’ in empirical data. Equally important is the development of ethically sensitive research designs oriented toward long-term engagement with organisations in conditions of instability, particularly through digital and remote methods. Finally, systematic elaboration of reflexive practices as part of the methodological toolkit for studying labour and management in wartime and post-conflict contexts remains a crucial task.

Accordingly, these methodological shifts enable a renewed understanding of power in wartime organisations: war does not simply dismantle existing hierarchies but produces hybrid configurations of power, where formal leadership is increasingly complemented or replaced by informal networks of solidarity. At the same time, innovation policies – such as state relocation programs, grants, and volunteer initiatives – become new channels of influence. Future analysis should examine how these transformations in power relations correlate with the effectiveness of adaptation strategies, which innovation policies are most responsive to wartime conditions, and what prospects these dynamics open for Ukraine in the post-war period.

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