

2024

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Recommended Citation

Barker, Kimberley; Victor, David A.; and Day, Christine R. (2024) "Communication and Cultural Strategies Impacting Ukrainian Refugees and Others Involved," *Global Advances in Business Communication*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <https://commons.emich.edu/gabc/vol11/iss1/1>

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Communication and Cultural Strategies Impacting Ukrainian Refugees and Others Involved

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to focus on the cross-cultural communication challenges faced by those involved, such as the Ukrainian refugees, hosts, paid and volunteer agency staff, school and learning personnel, potential and current employers, and co-workers.

The Russian armed forces moved into Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Immediately and in the months following, millions of Ukrainians left their homes to seek a safe haven elsewhere. The dimensions of the Ukrainian refugee crisis are, in the words of Germany's representative to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) Katherina Lump, "unprecedented... the refugee movement we are now seeing in Ukraine is unique. It is currently the second largest refugee¹ situation in the world. No situation has developed this rapidly since the Second World War" (Bauer, 2022). As of October 2023, the UN Refugee Agency has officially recorded 6,204,600 Ukrainian refugees (United Nations Refugee Agency, *Ukraine*, 2023).

The resulting Ukrainian refugee crisis needs to be understood in the context of a brief overview of its history and the relationship Ukraine has with its neighboring countries.

Historical Context

The central issue in the historical context of the Ukrainian refugee situation is that Ukraine for centuries has had unclear borders and the definition of national identification is correspondingly porous. In the classic book *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (2015), Andrew Wilson titles one of his chapters "Imagining Ukrainians: One Ukraine or Many?" This is quite literally the *defining* question at the heart of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Wilson writes that "Any Ukrainian would accept that Ukraine is a multi-ethnic society. Ukrainians only make up 73% of the population. The key question for Ukrainians is the extent to which they conceive of themselves as a plural social group" (p. 207). Before the Russian invasion, Ukraine had a Russian-speaking population of 11 million out of Ukraine's total population of

¹ After the Syrian refugee crisis, although the Syrian war has gone on since 2012, growing over more than a decade, while the Ukrainian refugees have reached this size within a matter of months.

43 million. Over half (57%) of these Russian Ukrainians were born in Ukraine (Wilson, p. 216). The heaviest concentration of Ukraine's Russian minority lives in the eastern regions of the country near the Russian border. This region has largely felt (before the invasion) a close tie with Russia and remained ambivalent toward Ukrainian self-identification. As a result, as Wilson puts it, "Eastern Ukraine is also *terra incognita* for Ukrainian nationalism" (p. 217).

In short, Russian-speaking Ukrainians may identify as Ukrainians who happen to speak Russian or as Russians living within Ukraine's borders. Ukrainians who speak both languages fluently or as mother tongues may identify as Ukrainian or Russian as well. People speaking other languages within the borders of Ukraine (such as Crimean Tatars) may identify as Ukrainian nationals but not ethnic Ukrainians.

What is clear is that Russia occupied first Ukrainian-owned Crimea and has since February 2022 attempted to take over Ukraine itself. Russia has used the lack of clarity of the borders of Ukraine and the national self-identification as a rationale for its invasion, which led to the refugee crisis.

During World War I as a consequence of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the newly formed USSR signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of March 1918 renounced its claims to most of its share of Ukraine (along with a swath of Russian territories from the Black Sea to the Baltic). Ukraine became a quasi-independent puppet state under German control the end of the war eight months later. After the end of World War I, at least five quasi-independent states or unions with Poland arose and fell before the March 1921 Peace of Riga ended the Polish-Soviet War with the formation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as part of the USSR, with a small portion remaining under control of the newly independent Poland. Russia and Ukraine had no formal agreement on their border from this period until the 1945 Yalta Conference in which the US, UK and USSR formalized the Curzon Line, named for the UK's Lord Curzon who, in 1919 following WWI, suggested borders mostly for the newly independent nation of Poland. This included altered borders for Ukraine and what was then Czechoslovakia. It did not include Crimea, which the Russian SSR bequeathed to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954 in a symbolic gesture as "a noble act on the part of the Russian people marking the 300th anniversary of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples" and the "centuries-long friendship of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples..." (Digital Archive of the Wilson Center, *Meeting of the Presidium*, 1954).

With the 1954 addition of Crimea, the territory constituting the current country of Ukraine was set. Despite Russian professions of this "centuries-long friendship," the Ukrainian view of Russia was less positive. This sentiment deteriorated notably after the 1986 accident at the Soviet-built nuclear power plant Chernobyl.

Ukraine declared independence in 1991, and turmoil ensued for decades. It is important to note that the eastern regions of Ukraine were home to a heavy concentration of Russian-speaking people. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the USSR viewed these Russian speakers as Russians by nationality living in Ukraine. In the USSR, in contrast to Western Europe or the Americas, these people would be labeled an ethnic or religious group (e.g., Crimean Tatars, Jews, Ukrainian, Russian). In the 1995 Census of Nationalities (Rapaway, 1997) in the then-Ukrainian SSR, 66.5% identified as Ukrainian, 10.8% as Russian, and 15.2% as Ukrainian/Russian combined. The remaining 6.8% consisted of other nationalities (e.g., Crimean Tatars endogenous to the region as well as other nationalities from throughout the USSR), or other combinations (Russian/Tatar, Ukrainian/Tatar, etc.).

In 2014, Russia reneged on its gift of Crimea to Ukraine. Russia then annexed (or re-annexed depending on one's point of view). In late 2021, Russia began a military buildup along the Ukrainian border, and in February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine.

This invasion created a significant refugee movement. According to Trzeszczynska, Demel, and Blaszczyk-Rozenbaum (2023), in contrast to this present refugee population:

The largest group of migrants that arrived in Poland before February 24, 2022, were economic migrants. They came from different regions of Ukraine, with different cultural backgrounds (including religion), different identities languages, cherished values, political preferences, and memories. They also differ both in their motivations and the nature of arrivals (seasonal, circular, permanent immigration), social class, including social and cultural capitals (highly skilled migrants, young people undertaking studies, people with lower education undertaking 3D jobs), and their orientation towards the Polish society or the migration networks. They also differ in the level of involvement in activities for the benefit of Ukrainian communities in Poland (p. 9).

In contrast to the previous refugee patterns, Vasco Amaral Cunha of the European Investment Bank in charge of the public sector in Poland, emphasized the unusual pattern regarding current Ukrainian refugees. Instead of entire families, rather “women and children make up 90% of the refugees” (Fusiek, 2022, p. 4). This presents unusual dynamics in terms of host family placement, childcare, and employment potential. The intensity and chaos of the crisis cannot be underestimated. For example, during March, 2022, as many as 100,000 refugees were arriving daily at the border city Lviv in western Ukraine (Gunter, 2022).

As of October 10, 2023, there were a reported 5,831,200 Ukrainian refugees in Europe; as of September 26, 2023, there are 6,203,600 Ukrainian refugees globally; and, as of May 25, 2023, there are a total of 5,088,000 refugees displaced in the Ukraine (Flash #57, from the UNHCR). These numbers continue to grow and shift daily; reports are generated monthly from UNHCR. Trends provided in data from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) report, updated on October 23, 2023, showed that the four nations which have received over 200,000 refugees from Ukraine are: Germany (1,114,070), Poland (958,955), Czech Republic (366,010), the United Kingdom (210,800) (UNCHR, October 23, 2023), and the United States (221, 000) (White House Briefing, December 21, 2022). Note: Russia currently has 1,275,315 Ukrainian refugees, but these are primarily people of Russian ethnicity (UNCHR, October 23, 2023).

This massive influx of Ukrainian refugees into other nations impacted communication and cultural challenges encountered by all involved. This research focused specifically on the cultural, communication, change, and grief and loss situations faced by the Ukrainian refugees, hosts, paid and volunteer agency staff, school and learning personnel, potential and current employers, ad co-workers.

Research Methods

Initial inquiry

In order to ease the adjustment process for Ukrainian refugees involved, an initial inquiry was made regarding communication and cultural situations. Two professional experts were interviewed. The first was a licensed counselor and therapist who traveled to Poland to meet with Ukrainian refugees and to consult with and advise other counselors and personnel in Poland who were supporting refugees. The second was a religious leader from the southeastern United States who had traveled to Poland three times in the first half of 2023, specifically to Polish/Ukrainian border cities. These two experts both had traveled separately to Polish cities at Ukraine's border to provide volunteer services to the Ukrainian refugees. Both experts identified needs that went beyond food, shelter, medical care, and financial support. Both experts identified three needs that were sorely lacking: 1) the cross-cultural communication skills to achieve a better understanding of the cultures to which the refugees fled and other communication tools; 2) a better perception of the various cultures, and 3) skills for how to handle the cosmic loss and overwhelming change required of all involved, including the refugees, host families, paid and volunteer agency personnel, school systems, potential and current employers, and co-workers.

These initial interviews supported the requirement to further identify of the types of communication and cultural needs which impact the refugees and others involved. The initial interviews took place in June and July 2023. They revealed a significant need for more in-depth interviews.

In-depth Interviews

To identify communication and intercultural needs of the Ukrainian refugees and those who support them, these researchers designed and executed a qualitative investigation, centered around interviews of people with a connection to the Ukrainian situation. This format was crucial, since every refugee and those supporting refugees have vastly different experiences. An additional advantage of this format was the ability to obtain the interviewees' opinions, behaviors, experience, and other phenomenon. Other methods were considered, but were eliminated due to limited access to refugees and hostile conditions in Ukraine.

The interview questions were open-ended, so that the researchers could collect in-depth information. Also, the questions were carefully worded to remain as neutral as possible, so as to prevent influencing the answers. Specific effort was made to avoid political issues, as well as judgmental and evocative words. As a result, this specific approach was a method for research collection.

Eighteen people were interviewed between June 2023 through November 2023. Several people interviewed were those specifically connected to Ukraine's situation, such as refugees themselves; professionals and hosts who dealt directly with Ukrainians and Ukrainian refugees; others were people with expertise in the refugee experience, with the refugees being from many

parts of the world; and, several were experts in communication and cultural strategies as well as experts from other disciplines which are connected to the refugee experience. Still others were volunteers or those with professional connections with refugees, including Ukrainian refugees; and others with global employment expertise.

People interviewed can be divided into two categories: those directly dealing with Ukrainian immigrants and refugees; and those experts whose cross-cultural expertise provided insight into the Ukrainian refugee situation, even though they were not directly working with Ukrainians themselves.

Those interviewees directly dealing with Ukrainian immigrants and refugees included:

- a family medical practitioner who recently served for two months as a volunteer in Ukraine with an organization offering medical assistance to Ukrainian families;
- a licensed counselor and therapist who traveled to Poland to meet with Ukrainian refugees and to consult with and advise other counselors, personnel, and host families in Poland who were supporting Ukrainian refugees;
- an attorney in the USA who is hosting two Ukrainian families and working with international and USA immigration procedures;
- a religious leader from the southeastern United States who has traveled to Poland multiple times in 2023, specifically to Polish/Ukrainian border cities, to assist Ukrainian refugees;
- a licensed family psychologist and university faculty member whose practice focuses, in part, on immigrant and second-language clients facing situations widespread among Ukrainian refugees;
- a Ukrainian-American son of Ukrainian immigrants who grew up in a Ukrainian-only speaking home, who has made multiple trips to Ukraine and who is working directly with an immigrant from Ukraine in the USA (as an aside, this interviewee is an international gold medal athlete);
- a Cuban refugee who fled to the USA in the 1960s who is currently assisting a Ukrainian refugee to adjust to a different country;
- a major university leader with extensive experience in media and digital education, managing a recently arrived Ukrainian refugee and his family.
- two Ukrainian refugees, one who arrived in North America four years ago; one who arrived in North American in the last eighteen months, as a result of having fled Ukraine after the Russian invasion.

Those experts whose cross-cultural expertise provided insight into the Ukrainian refugee situation, even though they were not directly working with Ukrainians themselves included:

- director with international experience at a large global company who has volunteer experience working with refugees;
- a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist and author who has written on humanitarian issues;
- a global IT and language program manager, who has taught on multiple continents to multiple audiences, including immigrants;
- the CEO of a global consulting firm with extensive experience in training people to adapt to multiple cultures around the world;

- a high school teacher with immigrant students; she is married to a Ukrainian-American;
- a multi-lingual faculty member at a major university with international training experience and international employment issues on multiple continents;
- a multi-lingual, multicultural psychologist and faculty member of major midwestern university, familiar with refugee and multi-cultural challenges in the legal system;
- an expert dealing with refugees adapting to different cultures and experiencing loss, who is an award-winning author and health care expert with emphasis on dying, grief, and loss;

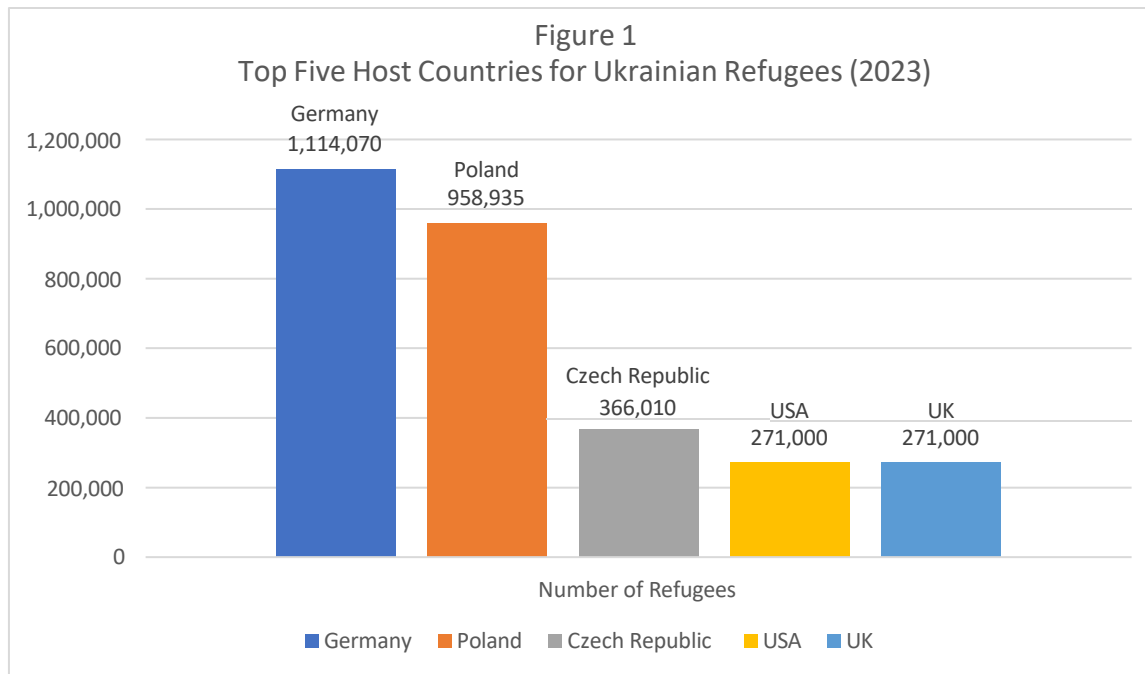
NOTE: Due to the political sensitivities of the Ukrainian-Russian war, the people interviewed are identified only using initials. Many have family remaining in Ukraine, and others would find their work hampered if not allowed to return to their service positions at or near the Poland/ Ukraine border.

Host Country Comparison Selection

Cross-cultural comparison requires a point of contrast. This article focuses on the cultural and communication challenges Ukrainian refugees face in the countries to which they have fled this raises the question of with which countries we compare Ukraine. While As Ukrainians refugees have found themselves in dozens of countries, it would not be feasible to handle all of these as points of comparison. To limit the points of comparison, this paper compares Ukrainian cultural and communications norms with those in the host countries with the largest number of Ukrainian refugees (at the time of this writing).

The five host nations with the largest number (200,000 or more) Ukrainian refugees are (in order of size) Germany, Poland, the United States, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom.

Figure 1 Top Five Host Countries for Ukrainian Refugees.



The data for the four European nations listed here come from the UN United Nations High data Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) Report (updated on October 23, 2023). As the UNHCR report provided only for Ukrainian refugees in European countries, it was necessary to find another source for the United States. The most recent source for Ukrainian refugees in the United States came in President Joe Biden's December 21, 2022 meeting with Ukraine's President Zelenskyy in which he announced that the United States had admitted roughly 219,000 refugees. (White House Briefing, December 21, 2022). Finally, this study leaves out those Ukrainian refugees who have fled to Russia. This is significant as Russia has over 1.275 million Ukrainians within its borders. This is the largest number of Ukrainians of any host country. That said, the Ukrainian refugees in Russia represent a separate subject for study. Unlike Russia, all of the other countries here are non-combatants in the war. It is likely too that those Ukrainians who voluntarily have sought refuge in Russia are themselves ethnic-Russian Ukrainians Russian minorities or are people living in Eastern Ukraine who have not voluntarily fled to Russia but simply live in that part of Ukraine that is now militarily controlled by Russia.

Key Themes Identified

The interviewees provided over 288 clusters of thoughts, which were analyzed for key themes. Many times, the interviewees used the key theme word to describe the concept.

- Cultural complexities were mentioned 88 times;
- Language and language dynamics were discussed 50 times;
- Change was highlighted 43 times; and
- Loss and grief were referred to 39 times.

- Other clusters of thoughts: Financial challenges were brought up 16 times; safety, nine times; and training (and the need for training), 43 times.

This study is an initial exploration to identify communication and cultural strategies for Ukrainian refugees and others involved to support with adjustment in unfamiliar language and cultural situations. There are daily living challenges, such as food, housing, medical care; however, this research focused on communication and cultural challenges. The top clusters are cultural complexities; language and language dynamics; change; grief and loss; and training (training will be addressed in a special section of the paper). The statistics have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

- Cultural Issues. Key themes identified were the elements of cultural awareness. In the human experience, Victor noted that “culture is not innate but learned. In other words, no culture is inherently natural or normal” (1992, p. 6). An important point is that “what is right in one culture is not necessarily right in another culture. In cross-cultural matters, behavior is not inherently right or wrong, only different” (1992, p. 6). It is also important from the Ukrainian refugees’ point of view that “Since culture is a collective phenomenon, individual facets of culturally determined behavior can be understood only within the framework of the culture as a whole” (1992, p. 6). A total of 15 interviewees (83.3%) commented on cultural issues. A total of 88 clusters of thought regarding culture and its impact were described by the interviewees.
- Language. Language and language dynamics were identified as key themes. A total of 16 interviewees (88.9%) highlighted the barriers which result from lack of or marginal knowledge of language and the dynamics of communication of the host country or the hosts not able to speak the refugees’ language with fluency. Additional complications were noted when the language of the third party, such as agency volunteers or government officials, was different from the refugees and the host county. Language and language dynamics were discussed 50 times.
- Overwhelming Change. Not just change, but overwhelming change was another key theme identified by the interviewees (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023; DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023). Change experts point out that some people have a hard time just changing one element of their life. Hans Gutsch, senior vice president of an international computer company, identified this as an “intensification of change,” which results in “the need for rapid adaptation” (LaMarsh, p. xi).

“The Ukrainian refugees, on the other hand, have to change almost every aspect of their entire life--their country is at war; their homes may not be safe; their former routines; have imploded; their living situation has been overturned due to the war; the old culture is gone, and the new culture is not understandable yet” (SJ, interviewee, September 15, 2023).

A total of 17 interviewees (94.4%) voiced 43 comments on change and the impact of significant change in the lives of the Ukrainian refugees.

- Grief and Loss. Other key themes identified were grief and loss. “Many Ukrainian refugees are grieving the loss of their home and family; their jobs and careers, for which some worked very hard; and many are experiencing spiritual distress” (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023); some are experiencing the death of their soldier family members, such as

husbands, sons, brothers, fathers, and grandparents. They grieve the loss of their life as they knew it. A total of 16 interviewees (88.9%) emphasized grief and loss, for a total of 39 comments.

These four key themes--cultural complexities, language and language dynamics, overwhelming change, and grief and loss--created the basis for identifying models for communication and cultural strategies impacting Ukrainian refugees and others involved.

Model for Effective Communication in an Intercultural Setting

Victor's seminal work, *International Business Communication* (1992), provided a widely known framework for effective communication in intercultural settings, such as those presently being experienced by the Ukrainian refugees, host families, school systems, agency volunteer and paid personnel, potential and current employers, and co-workers.

As Victor aptly pointed out, communication tenets "understood to be effective in transferring ideas and messages...in one culture may prove entirely ineffective or even counterproductive in another culture" (p. 1). Victor also emphasized that "people are unlikely to be sensitive to the nature or extent to which business communication in one national setting is ineffective in another until an obvious blunder or rift occurs" (p. 2). In the refugees' case, further cross-communication dilemmas present themselves when the refugees are from one country, the host families are from another, and the agency coordinating the situation may be from a third country.

Victor's model is thoroughly described, complete with examples, in *International Business Communication*. The issues are often referred to by the acronym LESCANT, one letter for each of the issues addressed:

- *Language*, including language, culture, and thought processing, fluency, accents, dialects, and regional differences, sociolinguistics, assumptions, and translated communication (pp. 16-45).
- *Environment and technology*, including climate, physical reality and topography, population density, natural resources, and attitudes toward the desirability of controlling the environment (pp. 46-76).
- *Social organization*, including kinship, family structure, education, gender roles, individualism, collectivism, religion, occupational institutions, judicial system, and mobility (pp. 77-136).
- *Contexting and face saving*, including high and low contexting, personal relationships, explicit communication, the law, contracts, uncertainty avoidance, and face-saving (pp. 137-168).
- *Authority conception*, including authority, power perception, power distance, and leadership style (pp. 169-182).
- *Nonverbal communication*, including active and passive nonverbal communication, kinesics, appearance, oculosics (eye behavior), haptics, proxemics, paralanguage, voice quality, and passive nonverbal communication (pp. 183-227).
- *Temporal conception*, including time as a medium, relativist perception of time, individual relativity, temporal conception, and culture, polychronic and monochronic temporal conception and culture, time budgeting, and accommodating differences (pp. 228-244).

Model for Understanding Cultural Situations

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (2012) pointed out that “culture is not a side dish; it is the main course” (p. 16). They highlighted the 4Rs of applying cultural competence: recognize, respect, reconcile, and realize. These 4Rs are important to the Ukrainian refugees as they try to establish stability in a different culture. The first step is recognizing what cultural dilemma may be primary in a situation. The second step is respecting that there is a dilemma and that both sides of the dilemma have cultural legitimacy. The third step is reconciling the dilemma through coming to some sort of agreement that honors all sides. Rarely are cultural dilemmas at one extreme or the other; usually common ground can be found. Finally, the fourth step is bringing into realization the needed change to a reconciled solution that honors all sides (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.16).

To help in identifying underlying cultural understanding, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) developed a model based on seven dimensions of culture:

1. Universalism vs. Particularism (What matters more: rules or relationships?)
2. Individualism vs. Communitarianism (Is the focus on individuals or the team? Are individual or team accomplishments recognized?)
3. Neutral vs. Affective (Do people share or not share emotions?)
4. Specific vs. Diffuse (How separate do people keep personal and work life? Specific keeps work and personal life separate. Diffuse deem personal and work to be connected).
5. Achievement vs. Ascription (Do people prove themselves through knowledge and skills to gain status or are people given status through whom they are?)
6. Sequential time or Synchronous time (Are things accomplished one at a time or are many things accomplished at once?)
7. Internal Direction vs. External Direction? (Do people believe they can control their environment or do people control life by working with their environment to achieve their goals?) (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.16).

Model for Concepts of Grief and Loss

Kubler-Ross (1969) identified the five stages of grief in *On Death and Dying*: denial and isolation (pp. 37-47); anger (pp. 49-78); bargaining (pp. 79-81); depression (pp. 83-107); and acceptance (pp. 109-132). According to Kubler-Ross, “everyone experiences many losses throughout their life” (p. 29). This “loss and the grief that accompanies it are very personal, [and] different from anyone else’s” (p. 29). In 2005, Kubler-Ross and Kessler expanded the death and dying process to include concepts to include grief and loss, as described in *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss*. DL expounded on the concept of grief and loss as related to the Ukrainian refugees. DL explained:

I was literate about the concept of death; I had grandparents, parents, and a 29-year-old cousin die. No doubt, these were a loss which is associated with the physical loss. These deaths, however, did not change the details of my daily life. I was, however, illiterate about the emotional impact of death and the depth that loss brings until the death of a person who was an integral part of my daily life. Most people are illiterate about the overwhelming magnitude of loss that the refugees are experiencing—the loss of a family, home, neighbors, a town, a history, a lifestyle, stability, or expectation of a future. The rest of the world is horrified about the bombing of neighborhoods, but we have no sense of the devastating loss that the Ukrainian refugees are experiencing” (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

Kessler (2019) added a sixth stage of grief, that of finding meaning. He acknowledged that “although for most of us grief will lessen in intensity over time, it will never end” (p. 2). Experiencing significant loss can overshadow people for years. However, “finding meaning in loss empowers us to find a path forward” (p. 2). As a result, the search for meaning provides “the springboard into some kind of major shift or change” (p. 3).

Many grieving people are haunted by “why” (p. 99). In the case of many refugees, the grief takes the form of the loss of hope as they previously viewed it.

The Ukrainian refugees may not be in the position to cope with their grief or to begin to find meaning in their losses. These ideas “are compounded with the complexity that the length of the war has far exceeded any initial expectations” (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023). As a result, “An important mantra is: With no end in sight” (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

Sustainable Change Model

LaMarsh, in the classic change book, *Changing the Way We Change*, helped people to view change as “movement away from the present” (p. 13) ...” through a place that is neither old nor new” ... [away from a place] that “was in a constant state of tension between the need to remain stable and the need to respond to time and its inevitable changes” (p. 13).

LaMarsh focused on four quadrants of change: the culture; the structure; the people; and the processes. LaMarsh emphasized that the four quadrants needed to change simultaneously. The culture included customs, norms, and beliefs. The structure included relationships, the power sources, and resources. The people included those involved, such as the refugees themselves, the volunteers helping, organizations assisting, committees, departments, leaders—are they trained, prepared, and aware of all aspects of the change? The processes included the practices, policies, and procedures involved in the change. What needs to be adjusted, added, eliminated, or revised?

LaMarsh identified five major stages to change. Stage One focused on identifying the change, particularly what was driving (causing) the change both internally and externally (pp. 13-72). Stage Two emphasized preparing to change, including preparing the people, building an awareness of the risk and costs of the change, particularly as impacted by culture, history and resistance (pp. 73-120). Stage Three highlighted all aspects of planning for the change, including how to manage communication, learning, and rewards (pp. 119-173). Stage Four detailed implementing the change, including what remained firmly in place, what needed to be adjusted, and the specific details of the plan (pp. 175-195). Stage Five focused on evaluating the progress, monitoring the change, and determining what additional changes might be needed to accomplish the goals of the change (pp. 197-198).

Applying the five stages of sustainable change provide a “solid basis for understanding the elements of change” (p. 197).

Discussion and Application for Ukrainian Refugees and Others

LESCANT

The LESCONT Model, as noted above, is an acronym for seven communication factors that shift across cultures. The acronym stands for

- Language

- Environment and technology
- Social,
- Contexting and face-saving
- Authority conception
- Nonverbal communication
- Temporal conception

The summary below applies relevant LESCANT cross-cultural factors that specifically relate to the Ukrainian refugees and those non-Ukrainians involved in interacting with the refugees. These would include hosts, paid and volunteer agency staff, school and learning personnel, potential and current employers, and co-workers.

Language Issues

Most (88.9%) of the people interviewed highlighted language and the barriers which result from lack of or marginal knowledge of language of the host country or the hosts not able to speak the refugees' language with fluency. With Ukrainian refugees, this presents a particular complexity in that some grew up under Russian authority and were schooled and spoke only Russian; others grew up in an independent Ukraine, which meant they were schooled in Ukrainian. Refugees went to many countries, including but not limited to Poland, Russia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the United Kingdom. Others went to Spain, Italy, and Moldova as well as the United States. Even multilingual refugees may not be skilled in the language of the receiving country. "Lack of understanding—or limited understanding—the language of the host country also causes issues in applying for financial assistance, health care, health insurance, public education, and child allowances" (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023). "Some circumstances required quick communication, which is impeded by lack of language skills and nonverbal gestures may not suffice" (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023).

In the "Ukrainian situation, language fluency is going to be an issue since lack of language skills causes isolation" (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023). Ukrainians tend to be social, and they try to make friends, but language challenges create difficulty. In Poland, it is less of an issue than anywhere else except a Slavic country.

For example, however, JM, interviewee, observed that:

In interacting with volunteers and medical personnel from the USA, UK, and France, and other countries, for instance, Ukrainians would likely have a significant lack of language skills. The same would result from those trying to seek refuge in these countries. (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023).

The alphabet varies from Cyrillic to Latin, which adds complexity. Ukrainians feel disorientation when they cannot read the signage. "What is interesting is that Ukrainian has many shared words with Poland. There are signs with the phrase in Polish and the Ukrainian equivalent phrase is shown" (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023). For other languages, the cognates are not there.

SM, a Ukrainian refugee who arrived in North American in March 2022, identified her most significant problem:

A significant challenge for me was bureaucracy and complicated paperwork in a language I do not understand and processes I do not know. I was not aware of what

status I could request or when I could get it. The uncertainty was a substantial issue. I have started relying on family members for help with language barriers, forms, and other paperwork” (SM, interviewee, November 1, 2023).

The importance of language skills cannot be underestimated. In Poland, The UNHCR has “initiated a pilot project aimed at supporting long-term unemployed refugees residing in collective shelters with acquiring employment.” One of the facets of the program is that it “offers various forms of support, including individual career counselling, language training, psychological assistance, and other services” (UNHCR, Flash 58, October 30, 2023). The key emphasis is that language training is included. GL, interviewee, supported this point:

I am a manager of a Ukrainian refugee. When he first arrived, we worked together closely to verify and reverify my instructions. He learned very quickly and has improved significantly, but initially he worked hard at repeating complex instructions. (GL, Interviewee, October 30, 2023).

When using language to communicate respect, Ukrainians specifically utilize language to communicate ways of showing veneration, such as respectful language and use of titles. This difference in language usage creates a cross-cultural disconnect when, for example, a volunteer health care worker from the USA tries to comfort the Ukrainian counterpart by using the refugee’s first name. “To North Americans, quickly moving to the use of first names reflects friendliness and a sense of caring. Ukrainians, however, are considerably less likely than North Americans to use personal names with strangers or in professional settings” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023). The use of titles, such as Engineer Name or Dr. Name, would help Ukrainians feel more comfortable and respected (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023). The Ukrainians have been uprooted and feel at a loss. This is the difference between intent (wanting to be friendly) versus the impact (feeling lack of respect). Bruce Weinstein stated that “respect is an essential moral principle in every relationship we have: with friends, with our family, with our coworkers, and even with total strangers” (2005, p. 69).

Environment and Technology

Ukraine and Poland were once a single country. The land spread from the North Sea to Black Sea. They were a common country. There is a sense that they are brothers—people in Poland and Ukraine. Then, Russia took part of Ukraine.

For a while, there was a very strong anti-immigrant feeling against immigrants from other parts of the world. However, Poland has been entirely opened up to Ukrainians. This brings up uncomfortable issue for Poland. Significant discussions are centered around issues as to whether the refugees from Ukraine likely to stay and work and whether they are likely to be allowed to vote. Homogeneousness regarding the population of Poland is also a major question. Before the influx of refugees, Poland was among the most homogenous nations in the world, with a population that was as late as 2001 98% Polish in background. Historically, though, Poland was among Europe’s most ethnically diverse nations. For instance, Poland’s 1921 Census listed only 69% ethnically Polish, with Ukrainians (designated as Ruthenians) listed as Poland’s largest minority with 15% of the population. (Statistics Poland, 2021) Other large minority groups Jews (listed as an ethnicity, at 8%), Belorussans (4%) and German (3%) (Statistics Poland, 1921 census). After WW II, virtually all the minorities in the country had been displaced or (in the case of the Jews) murdered. The irony is that Poland at several times in its history owned what is today Ukraine.

Now, the significant question is whether the Ukrainian refugees are going to stay. Many Poles may view the incoming Ukrainian refugees as cultural brothers, or at least family-linked relatives.

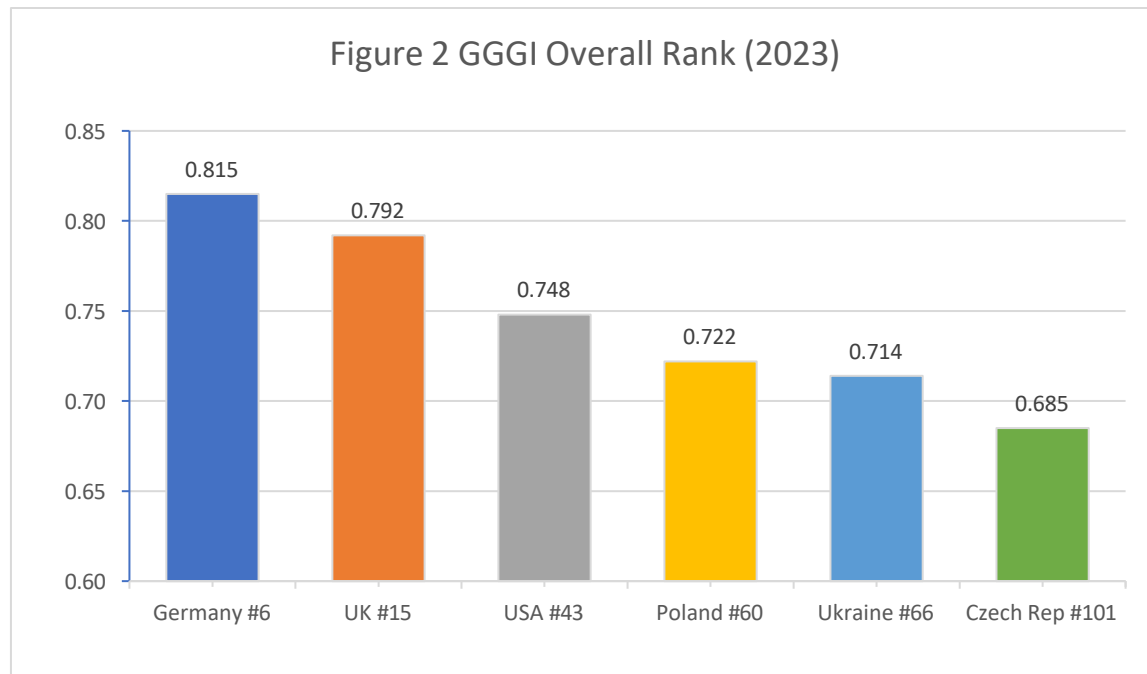
One precedent current Ukrainians are experiencing can be seen in the refugees who fled Crimea after Russia's military invaded and claimed this Ukrainian region as part of Russia. As mentioned above, the context of the historical relationship of Crimea between Ukraine and Russia is complicated. That point aside, though, research on the refugee experience of Ukrainians during this occupation remain relevant, even if the refugees were fleeing from Ukraine to Ukraine. That is, the refugees were still fleeing Russian military occupation, but they were not going to foreign countries but rather from the conquered part of Ukraine to the (as yet) unoccupied parts of Ukraine. Research on these Crimean precursors to the current Ukrainian crisis address several of the same issues. Relevant research with regard specifically to Ukrainians displaced by the Russian invasion of Crimea include Roberts et al. (2017) study of inadequate mental health care for displaced persons, Cheung et al.'s (2019) study of somatic distress among refugees, and Johnson et al.'s study (2022) on war trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

One useful "high technology tool is the internet translator. There is an application (an app) which can be put on a cell phone, and which operates quite effectively" according to JM (interviewee, August 30, 2023). JM, a family medical practitioner who recently served for two months as a volunteer in Ukraine, was able to use the application to help with the medical care he was providing. "Patients could explain conditions and previous treatments with much more accuracy" (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023). He also pointed out that cell service throughout Ukraine was high in terms of connectivity.

Social Organization

In Ukraine, there are "common institutions and collective activities shared by members of a culture" (Victor, 1992, p. 77), and it may be unsettling for refugees to go into places with variables not understood.

Regarding social considerations, differences in comparative gender parity between nations may contribute to refugees' challenges. Gender status in Ukraine differs notably from the major host countries to which the refugees have fled. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI, 2023) provides statistical bases for assessing these differences. The GGGI annually benchmarks 146 countries on the current status and evolution of gender parity for 14 variables across four key dimensions (economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political leadership). Figure X shows the composite overall gender gap ranking (out of 146 nations) and score (out of a possible 1.000) of Ukraine relative to the five host nations with the largest number (200,000 or more) Ukrainian refugees: Germany, Poland, the United States, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom.

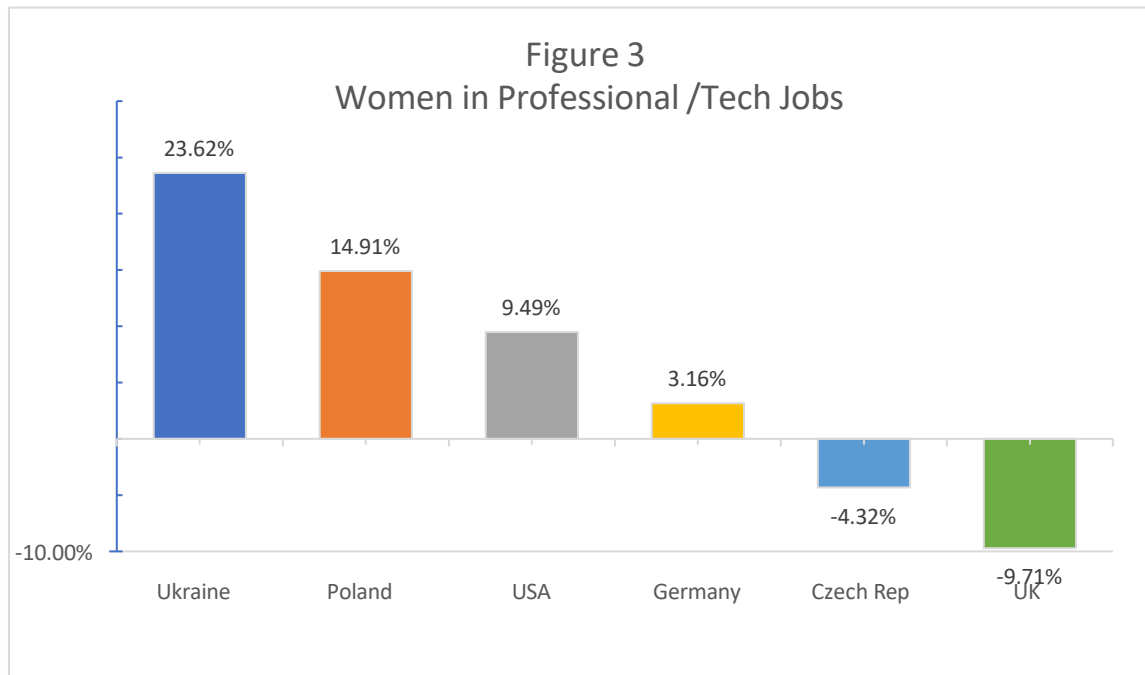


At first glance, it appears that female Ukrainian refugees would find the gender gap much higher in the Czech Republic (#101) relative to Ukraine (#66) with a large (0.029) score variation. These same refugees would find slightly better though comparable gender parity between Ukraine (#66) with Poland (#60) and a .08 score difference score difference. The United States (#43) would provide notably improved gender parity with a larger score variation (0.034). The gender gap decreases even more so with the remaining two host countries in the top 15 in the world: the UK (#15) and Germany (#6) with a very large score variation (0.078 and .101 difference respectively).

These overall figures are, however, potentially deceptive if we fail to look into the sub-indexes on gender parity on two factors in which Ukrainian women have a notably small gender gap than in the host countries: employment and education. As Figure Y shows, Ukrainian women have a far greater representation in professional and technical jobs than do any of the host countries. Indeed, Ukraine has a reverse gender gap. With Ukrainian women holding 23.62 percent more professional and technical jobs than their male counterparts. This contrasts notably with the Czech Republic where a more traditional gender gap exists, and men hold 4.32 percent more of the professional and technical jobs than women. Ukrainian women are even more likely to face a challenge in the UK where men dominate professional and technical jobs, with men there holding almost 10 percent (9.71%) more of these positions than women (World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, 2023).

Ukraine, however, is not the only nation where a reverse gender gap exists with more women than men holding professional and technical jobs. This reverse gender gap, in fact, is present in three of the host countries as well: Poland, 14.91%; USA, 9.549%; and, Germany, 3.16%. Ukrainian women, however, are over twice as likely than their US and 7 times as likely as their German counterparts to hold professional or technical jobs. Even in outlier Poland, women hold over 8% fewer such jobs than their Ukrainian counterparts (34.91% to 23.62%). This raises

the possibility that Ukrainian women seeking refuge in all of the major host countries will face the additional concern that women hold fewer—sometimes far fewer—of the professional and technical positions than that to which they were accustomed in Ukraine (World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index, 2023).



Another social issue is divorce in Ukraine, especially as the war is wrenching families apart. Gettleman (2023) discussed extensively the idea that marriage in Ukraine has also become a casualty of war. Additionally, the element of children and parts of families having gone missing is deeply disturbing to Ukrainians as well as many others in the world. In Ukraine, there is intense concern about what the war is doing to the country. The saying is “not how do I survive, but rather how do we survive” (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023).

Contexting is “the way in which one communicates and especially the circumstances surrounding that communication” (Borisoff & Victor, 1989, p. 140). Edward T. Hall coined the term contexting, Hall defining how it works as follows:

A high context communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. While, a low context communication is just the opposite; the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. (Hall, 1976, p. 111)

In Ukraine, connections are more important than in western countries. Ukrainians distrust people they do not already know. The Ukrainians and Poles are about the same on contexting.

Ukrainians and the Poles are similar in that they tend to avoid bragging, and use understatement, if they do not know someone beforehand. They have a tendency to be indirect when someone is not known and then become very direct when known” (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023).

In Ukraine, the concept of honor and loyalty are high context attributes, “especially with respect for educators, elderly, with family at center of their life. Respect is also key for kinship groups, and where people are working with others to whom they are related” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023).

Authority

Ukrainians value authority, power distance, and social hierarchy. They are very near to the top of the range on these concepts. For instance, in a medical situation, JM explained:

One example of this is that a nurse is not a doctor. Ukrainians understand hierarchy, and they expect to abide by hierarchy and to use the chain of command. As a result, they are more than willing to put up with the resulting bureaucracy. Ukrainians are accepting of powerful people and distance in power. (JM, interview, August 30, 2023).

This is different from other countries which are more independent from strong authority, power distance, and social hierarchy.

Non-verbal

Displays of emotion, while accepted in USA and other cultures, are not accepted in Poland and Ukraine. For someone from the USA while working in Poland and Ukraine, displaying emotion is a sign of a communication or relationship disconnect. For instance, when President Zelenskyy hit the table with his fingers, this was a stronger statement than as if President Biden had hit the table in the same way.

Ukrainians have a certain level of not showing their emotional side. It is ironic that women in the Poland have taken in families as these are women who never talk to strangers. However, for example, in a moment a woman took in two refugee families. (LTT, Interviewee, July 25, 2023).

Ukrainians have stronger family connections than USA and are similar to Poles.

Regarding nonverbal expressions, “Ukrainians don’t smile a lot. This creates a level of discomfort for the Ukrainians, since the volunteer workers from the USA smile a lot, thinking they are being friendly” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023).

Temporal

Uncertainty is a concept related to how uncomfortable the people in the county are with uncertainty. For Ukraine, the score is very high. They do not feel comfortable with uncertainty, yet the refugees are moving into areas without a similar belief. They want to stay away from strangers, yet they are being forced to live with strangers. They do not accept new ideas, innovation, or the idea that new is good. This is not part of their history, and they feel very uncomfortable with uncertainty. Germans, for instance, do like planned change, but Ukrainians and Poles do not like major changes.

Another variance is long-term orientation. Ukrainians have a long-term outlook, but unfortunately, they have now lost everything they saved. This creates a severe disconnect with their value system.

Knowledge and perception are also an inconsistency. As pointed out by Kateryna, a migrant activist in Warsaw:

The thing is that we do not even perceive many issues differently, but we know them differently because they learned history in Poland, and we did in Ukraine, someone else in Soviet Ukraine, and so he learned many things that I learned in Poland and about which I had had no idea. But I had an A in history both at school and at university and I thought I liked history, and later it turned out that I did not know it at all (Trzeszczynska, Demel, & Blaszczyk-Rozenbaum, 2023, p. 13).

Discussion and Cultural Applications for Ukrainian Refugees and Others

An examination of the cultural values comparing Ukraine with other countries revealed commonalities as well as differences. The comparison countries illustrated on the chart are those to which over 200,000 refugees have fled: Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, the United States, and the United Kingdom. For instance, even though Poland and Ukraine have a common border and history, there are differences in the dimensions of culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 16). Figure 4 illustrates these.

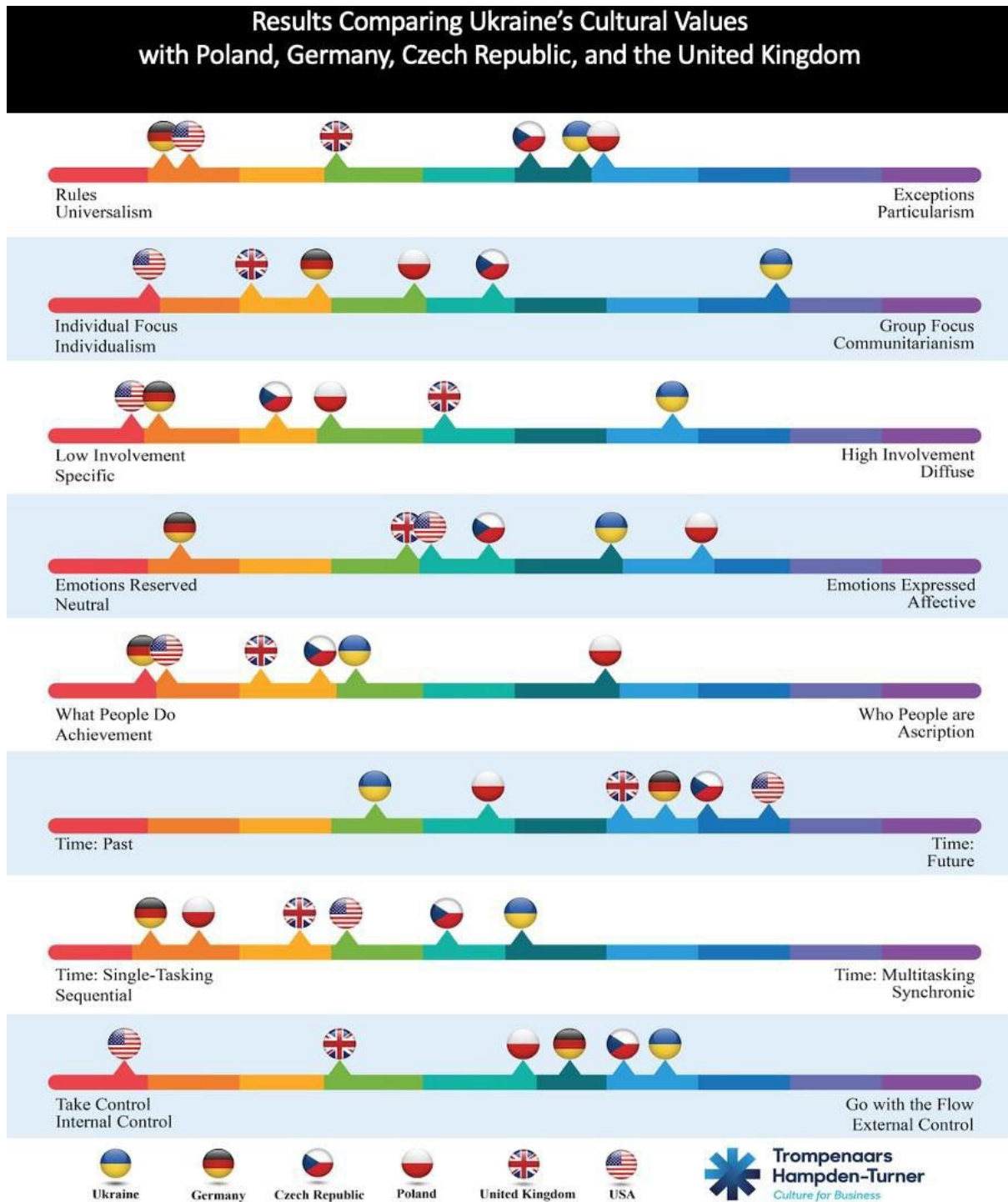


Figure 4. Results Comparing Ukraine's Cultural Values with Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, United Kingdom, and United State of America.

Universal vs. Particular

This dimension shows a major difference between the three countries, which would impact Ukrainian refugee behavior. Ukrainians tend toward particularism, whereas in contrast, the United Kingdom tends more toward universalism. An example of this would be that Ukrainian refugees believe in strict rule enforcement and they come before relationships. Poland is more particularistic than even Ukraine, even though their score is close.

Individualism vs. Communitarianism

On this dimension, Ukraine tends to be Communitarianism (collectivism) and group focused, which means that the group always comes before the individual. This is opposite of the United Kingdom, which is at the other end of the scale, thus behaving more individualistic. They believe more in personal freedom. Poland is midrange in this dimension. An example of this would be the idea of the importance of family and relatives as a group.

Achievement vs. Ascription

The United Kingdom tends to be very low on this scale; rather what is important is about who you are and what you do. Ukrainians are also close to the UK on the dimension of the cultures value of performance and what you do as a person. In contrast, Poles are more inclined toward ascription, which means power, title, and position matter, and roles define a person's behavior.

Sequential vs. Synchronous Time

In the concept of sequential time, or task orientation, Poland and the United Kingdom are very similar (for example, more western in that they stick to the schedule). Ukrainians are different, slightly more balanced in approach, in that the Ukrainians are more in the middle of the dimension scale slightly more than Poland and the United Kingdom. This means that Ukrainians would tend to see the past, present, and future interwoven as opposed to being with a high value on punctuality, planning, and sticking to the schedule.

Many refugees find themselves inserted into a cultural system which operates slightly differently, or differently, from their life in Ukraine. "In the same geographic region, there are differences. Some refugees seem reluctant to assimilate, as though taking that step would challenge their expectation of wanting to return to Ukraine" (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023). Others find class differences overwhelming. PL stated that "the refugee migration has been a significant class equalizer for the refugees. They are allowed to bring one or two suitcases, no matter how poor or wealthy they are. This has also impacted host families" (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023). One example explained by LTT:

there is no economic pairing done in terms of placement. As a result, a formerly upper-family may be placed with a middle-class family, who have no domestic servants or help with food preparation (LTT, interviewee, July 25, 2023).

In another instance, a family in Ukraine may have been living a very comfortable, even luxurious life style. This family has left their home due to the war and are now placed in a family with a significantly different level of financial resources. This creates a challenge for both families:

The host family may expect the refugee family to help with the refugees' own domestic activities, such as cleaning their own living area, food preparation, laundry, and general household tasks. The refugee family has never experienced household management, and may have no idea that such tasks were expected of them. As a result, there can be significantly mismatched expectations. The host family may not have realized the situation, and they view themselves as receiving no gratitude from the refugees (LTT, interviewee, July 25, 2023).

This situation is compounded by the duration of the war:

What was expected to be a temporary, short-term situation has now dragged on for many months with no end in sight. This may cause pre-existing disappointment on both sides and depletes initial enthusiasm, all of which add to weariness. The expectations were not matched clearly (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

Other cultural issues arise, such as with belief systems and social customs. Elzbieta Jamulska is the leader of the action Women Take The Wheel (WTTW). In a Polskie Radio broadcast, the WTTW initiative is described as Polish women who drive Ukrainian refugees, particularly women and children, from the border to deeper into the country. These refugees were not comfortable riding alone with male volunteers, so WTTW enables the frightened refugees to travel in safe transportation, "riding with other women [who] provide physical safety, and mental comfort" (Polskie Radio Broadcast, October 5, 2022).

The cultural issues and isolation do not stop upon the refugees' arrival at a host country. SM described her situation:

There is a complete lack of communication outside of the family. However, my son and his family are helping me, and I have been fortunate to connect with a local family services organization which provides many services I need. It motivates me to participate in different activities, so I can meet people in my new community. (SM, interviewee, November 1, 2023).

Grief and Loss Ukrainian Application

Many Ukrainian refugees know that the area from which they fled has been extensively bombed, so they expect that there will be no home to which to return. Some see this as the loss of community and that system they previously knew for generations is now gone.

The loss of hope is one significant concept which many Ukrainian refugees grieve. There is no hope that life as they knew it will be waiting in their future. Others see their commitment to being a refugee as lasting only as long as the war continues, which creates issues. Many people are weary and see "no end in sight" to their situation (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023). These exact words were also stressed by David A. Fusiek in his *European Investment Bank Report* of November 28, 2022 (p. 1) regarding the challenges of host countries and the issues of settling the arrivals for the long term (p. 1). A Ukrainian interviewed by *The New York Times* stated it this way: "It was this absence of the belief in tomorrow" (Gettleman, 2023, p. A1+).

An eleven-year-old Ukrainian boy named Yegor lamented: “The war separated me from many things: from friends, from my dad and everything, basically everything that made me happy.” The war, he added “took everything from me; that’s all. [It] separated me from my godfather, my brothers, separated me from all this” (as cited by Addario, 2023, p. 28).

The war caught many people by surprise. SM, a Ukrainian refugee, exemplifies this situation. By early March 2022, SM realized she was no longer safe in her home. She described her terror:

“I needed to escape the war. We were under missile attack. I hid in the basement for three horrible days and I was terrified. I finally decided to venture out. I tried to get a train to Romania. It was all a nightmare” (SM, interview, November 1, 2023).

Change Management Application

If change is the movement away from the present (LaMarsh, p.13), the Ukrainian refugees and others involved find that their former way of life has disappeared, and the new normal is chaos. This precludes any thought of the future and what it might look like (JR, interviewee, July 15, 2023).

Dramatic change is now the way of life for Ukrainian refugees and others involved. Even when trying to focus on the big picture, many parts of their life seem to be a moving puzzle (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023). Becoming aware of the impact of change as the new normal in their life, an extensive understanding of change is important. Their family is torn apart—males age 18-60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine (Gettleman, 2023, p. A11), so their family structure has been reduced frequently to only women and children; their employment opportunities are shattered, including their ability to obtain employment; their skills are not qualified to be used in their new host country; the children attending school may be participating in classes being taught in a language with which they are barely familiar at best. Ukrainian refugees are facing a change in possible job and careers. Former very successful entrepreneurs may find that there is no similar employment opportunity. As a result, people in various stages of life must change occupations and learn new skills (Gettleman, 2023, p. 1, A11).

As LTT stated, “the refugees are in shock. As a result, they are not themselves” (interviewee, July 25, 2023). This factor is “especially important as it relates to children. They tend to not speak as much as children normally would, and they may misbehave or become extremely shy in reaction to their severely changed circumstances” (LTT, interviewee, July 25, 2023). Adults, children, and entire families face cosmic change on many fronts. “Without a comprehensive change management strategy, there is little hope for the future (LaMarsh, 1995, p. 1).

The Ukrainian refugees experience severe adjustments from routine life to war. Refugees who were financially comfortable before having now lost everything. They lack financial resources and social support. One medical expert referred to “PTSD as being experienced by some refugee adults, and very frequently by children” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023). Missing also might be the routine aspect of employment. An example provided by BM (interviewee, August 21, 2023) was that of a personal acquaintance of his who was a nurse in Ukraine, but is now cleaning houses. The former nurse does not have strong second language skills, cannot bridge the gap

between her nursing knowledge in Ukraine to her nursing knowledge in her new home country, plus she cannot pass the required certification. Another example is that BM's uncle was a lawyer in Ukraine, but he ended up working as a manual laborer in a manufacturing factory (BM, interviewee, August 21, 2023). These are just two examples of refugees facing significantly different employment which contribute to drastic change in their lives.

One change aspect pointed out by DL was:

the challenge of how fluent the refugee is in the host culture. For instance, comparison could be made with Vietnam refugees, who may have worked for the USA government in their home country and learned the ways of the culture, which resulted in a quicker shift to living in that culture when they arrived in the USA. (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

With Ukrainian refugees, this presents a particular complexity in that some grew up under Russian authority and were schooled in Russian, and spoke only Russian; others grew up in an independent Ukraine, which meant they were schooled in Ukrainian.

Millions of refugees went to Poland, Russia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the United Kingdom. Others went to Spain, Italy, and Moldova as well as the United States. Even multilingual refugees may not be skilled in the language of the receiving country. Lack of understanding the language of the host country also causes issues in obtaining food, applying for assistance, health care, health insurance, public education, and child allowances. Some circumstances required quick communication, which is impeded by lack of language skills and nonverbal gestures may not suffice. This leads to deep frustration on the part of the refugees and those involved, such as hosts, paid and volunteer agency staff, school and learning personnel, potential and current employers, and co-workers (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023).

Even when refugees, families of refugees, hosts, or agencies try to assist with a change into a different life, the refugees find the system to be incomprehensible and bureaucratic. SM explained her situation:

Every decision or application to the government required extensive waiting. This wait could last for months and months and month, or in my case, over a year. There was no response or explanation or request for additional information. I ended up having to ask our congresswoman to help us. She was, fortunately, a huge help for us in speeding up the process. This waiting and waiting did not help with changing to a new life (SM, interviewee, November 1, 2023).

In the vortex of a major change, people “without thinking through the change process in an organized, structured way.... run a great risk of missing something” (LaMarsh, 1995, p. 197). This could be devastating to the Ukrainian refugees.

Need as a Factor in Communication and Cultural Strategies

Need may be a factor in the application of communication and cultural strategies. Need may range from immediate, short, interim, and long term.

Immediate Needs. Refugees may have an immediate need for communication and cultural strategies. At this point in their journey, the refugees may be focused on safety, food, and

temporary shelter. For example, this may include an instantaneous requirement for a meal or overnight housing. The refugees and others involved in the immediate need situation may find minimal communication and cultural strategies necessary. In this case, many volunteers may communicate by using nonverbal gestures (pointing to food tables, welcoming gestures, open palm gestures with motions, and inviting people to be seated), and facial expressions (such as a nod) are effective (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023). John Maxwell suggested that people use pictures which create memorable reactions, body movement, gestures, and appropriate facial expressions, lighting, and video (2023, pp. 195-206). Refugees may communicate with the same strategies, with nonverbal gestures of gratitude, nodding of the head, behavior (such as forming lines of people), and following the provided directions. Refugees can be assisted at this point by the international signage, such as picture symbols for bathrooms, train stations, and no smoking signs. They can also be assisted with moving from welcoming centers back to train stations and other important transportation points. The length of time related to immediate need may be a few hours to a few days.

Short-term Needs. Short-term needs may center around the concept of “getting along” actions, such as being polite in a care center or with a host family, managing temporary housing, trying to negotiate confusing paperwork for staying in a country, and completing other necessary forms. Short-term needs may last from a week into several weeks, even months.

Interim Needs. Interim needs may focus on transitioning to lengthier situations related to safety, housing, food, financial needs, and living skills. “Sometimes the refugees’ thoughts move to thinking about returning to their previous homes or setting up reunions with left behind family members” (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023). These interim needs may require a strong transition time between being a short-term refugee to a long-term refugee.

Long Term Needs. Long term needs focus on “continued safety, living venues, and stability, such as social, mental, financial, employment, community, spiritual, and peace of mind. Deep adjustment questions start to impact the situation: how capable is the person in being adaptable? How aware is the refugee regarding the host country culture? How much of a buffer is there between the former country and the new country?” (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

Permanent residency may be a significant consideration in the long-term needs. This varies from county to country. There are many application categories, such as through family, employment, or special immigration status, refugee or asylee status, human trafficking and crime victims, or those who suffer abuse. Once the status is determined, the specific criteria for admission then must be met (www.uscis.gov).

People in the long-term category need to think about in-depth understanding of a country’s communication and cultural strategies. People may need employment, long-term living space which they can afford, the ability to provide for food, and connections which create spiritual existence. A mentor or legal guide may be an important connection to help.

Brief Overview of Types of Learning Situations

Joanne Hession, a leader in business school and global entrepreneur projects volunteered to help “victims of the Rwandan civil war in refugee camps on the border in Tanzania. Witnessing the poverty, loss, tragedy, and corruption the refugees suffered, she had concluded that “education

was the only thing that couldn't be stolen from them'" (Maxwell, 2023, *The 16 Undeniable Laws*, p. 54). This same principle could be applied in the Ukrainian situation.

The Ukrainian refugees and their family may be too fatigued to start learning right way. However, once they are ready to start, an initial consideration regarding learner is the concept of having a "teachable spirit." This is focused on the people involved being "open to new ideas and new ways of doing things." Examples may include "thinking innovatively, listening more than talking, being able to change opinions based on new information, observing before acting, asking questions, and trying new ways to do things" (Maxwell, 2007, *Reader*, p. 258).

Learning structure suggestions for Ukrainian refugees were provided by Laura Grimes, CEO of the Harrington Consulting Group a global company specializing in customer experience and service delivery. The company has a global training department with expertise in strategic alignment, executive coaching, team building, community connections, consulting management, and all aspects of strategic customer management (interviewee, August 31, 2023). Suggestions specific to the refugee circumstances include:

1. Self-Study. Refugees could use observation, study books, video, flashcards, and other learning tools at a pace that is appropriate for the learner. When the traditional classroom setting is not an option, self-study offers opportunities to learn with flexibility and convenience, such as studying in their present living quarters or in an adjacent room. This method would require access to resources needed to study. One-on-one learning may have free internet access, or it may require enrollment on certain websites, it may also require equipment or books, may be exhausting in intensity, and may require considerable study time (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
2. 1 x 1 person learning (or partnered learning). Two people gather to study. This could be a pupil and teacher (or expert), or two pupils who need an equal level of learning. Resources needed could be paper items, such as books, handouts, or brochures, or may include only visual learning and no audio format. Expanded learning could consist of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile learning platforms. Students could examine language learning, culturally appropriate behavior, thought processes, decision-making, cultural examples, case studies of cultural situations, and pupil-to-pupil assistance, especially if both pupils were well versed in the native language of the learners. Another advantage could be that the teacher is an expert on communication and culture of the learning situation. Also, the one student and one expert (teacher) situation provide for undivided attention of the expert, who can adapt or expand the key points of the learning in response to the student needs. This could result in targeting the learner's strengths, with additional focus on developing areas where growth is needed. Expert instructors can develop comprehensive learning activities that benefit the student (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).

This style of partnered learning could also be augmented by employing the Four Cs, as described in the book *YOU Can Create Positive Change at Work*, by Kimberley Barker and Mary Ceccanese (2021). In a two-person group, this three-step Change exercise focuses on how we can help each other. Step One. Come Together (written reflection on one thing that makes you different from this person; one thing you think you have in common; one thing you would like this person to know about you; one thing you think you can do to help this person; one thing you think this person can do to help you at work). Step 2. Connect (exchange written

reflections in silence). Step 3. Collaborate (compare similarities, differences by naming what you think you can do to help this other person learn and grow; discuss how they think they can help you) (Barker & Ceccanese, 2021, pp. 171-190).

3. Small (2-3-4 person) learning. This could be 2-3-4 or more people gathered for common learning, such as a language, cultural training, grief and loss discussions, or change management skill building. The learning group may have a specific leader, a quasi-leader, or a rotating leader. One person needs to be responsible to organize the logistics (time, place, learning tools, others), and the learning content. For learning languages, if someone on the small team knows the native language of the learners as well as the new language, this person could serve as the leader. The small team setting provides a strong format for asking questions. The team members need to be strong self-starters (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
4. Medium-sized (5-15 person) learning. The medium sized learning circle has the advantage of a good format for many people learning the same information, such as people learning a language with all participants at the same skill level. People can benefit from hearing the questions of others and from practice inside a group of familiar people (fellow learners). Meeting location, an expert to lead the class, and equipment would be important considerations (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
5. Large-sized (15-30 person) learning. Large learning circles may take more logistical management than small and medium circles. The large circle will need a much bigger space, possibly with multiple experts teaching (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
6. Formal Classrooms (may be from 15-50 people). This learning condition may be set up with one teacher, meeting with a group of students for a specific time over specific scheduled dates, such as the first day of the week for four weeks. This can be for a long session (such as eight hours) or shorter sessions, such as one to two hours, or half a day. The class may be sponsored by an organization or may be a gathering (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
7. Bridge (also called “gap”) learning. The refugee is already familiar with an occupation but does not understand the language or the specific terms in the new country. Example: a person is a nurse in Ukraine, but needs the new country language training and equivalent medical equipment bridge from the nursing she knows in Ukraine to nursing in her new country (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023; BM, interviewee, August 21, 2023).
8. Immersion school. This tends to be for young students (elementary through high school level) although adults may also benefit from a short-term immersion experience on a focused topic. This would be structured with several students learning. Typically, there would be one teacher with Ukrainian language expert skills managing all aspects of the class. It may also be set up as a team-teaching class. The length of the class could be days to weeks to months, depending on the situation and stability of the refugees (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
9. Specific topic learning circle. Topics could include, for example, language studies for named country (such as Polish, German, Spanish, or any other specific language); business practices in (named country); cultural studies for a named country; social studies in (named country); government structure for a named country; leadership for named country; many, many other topics (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).

10. Online learning. There are many varieties of online learning which include specific synchronous classes, including many students who are dialing in from multiple locations, but at the same time; asynchronous, which include focus on students completing units of work, passing a test on that unit, and then moving to the next unit; or specific-topic video or series of video. Online learning may require student motivation to attend and equipment to access the class. This type of learning requires a highly visual learning orientation and some students who are kinesthetic learners may struggle with online learning. Some online learning requires a tuition payment in advance (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).
11. Specific Online Learning. Regarding the “Any Time, Any Place, Any Path, Any Pace,” online learning model, Sacco, Persezenyl-Pinter, and Ruggiero (2022) suggested that it “might be advantageous to revisit this model as a means to teach mastery-based instruction which requires students to achieve a minimum score of 80% before proceeding to the next unit” (p. 15). This research focused on “a curricular design for teaching Languages for Specific Purposes in the pandemic era and beyond” (p. 1).
12. Hybrid Learning. Hybrid learning provides an opportunity to combine the classroom with the online setting. Some classes start with a classroom session, where the topic is introduced, classroom structure and schedule are reviewed, and a basic discussion on the topic is provided. The students combine online work with the classroom learning. The class may end with a classroom examine or other means of testing for learning (Grimes, interviewee, August 31, 2023).

These twelve specific methods of training offer a wide range of flexibility to the Ukrainian refugee learner. The class sizes vary from one individual learner to thirty or more students. The learning mode varies from one-on-one, to online, to small learning circles, larger learning circles, to instructor-led. The types of learning could be self-study, immersion, and bridge learning to “any time, any place, any path, any pace” for specific online learning (such as language training). Ukrainian refugees and their support helpers will need to analyze the available opportunities and determine which best fits their learning style.

Study Importance and Future Research

This study revealed that refugee communication and cultural strategy issues are complex—a complexity based on individual dynamics of the individual and the situation. Just as there is not one solution to remedying the Ukrainian challenge, there will not be a unique solution to other on-going or future refugee crises. The UN’s International Organization for Migration Report 2022 indicated that there were 89.4 million people living in displacement globally (includes refugees, asylum seekers, displaced Venezuelans, and Internally displaced persons). It is apparent that the issue with refugees and other displaced persons has grown to an astronomical number, which will render communication and cultural strategy understand all the more important. The top four challenges addressed in this research appear to be common to most refugee situations—culture, language and language dynamics, managing change, and grief and loss. Individual adaptations will impact each of the four challenges.

The study importance is that it recognized the specific aspects of communication and cultural strategies impacting the Ukrainian refugees and those involved, such as hosts, paid and volunteer agency staff, school and learning personnel, potential and current employers, and co-

workers. This exploratory study has specific limitations, and it is recommended that the research be extended to include additional awareness and application strategies. As an exploratory examination, this study began to identify initial areas of consideration. The application could be to refugee situations around the world even though this research is related specifically to Ukrainian refugees.

Future research could examine what assisted some Ukrainian refugees to be successful, why others were not so successful, and what helped some Ukrainian refugees to adapt and others not. Since armed conflicts seem to be ongoing or developing around the globe, this type of investigation could include other refugees from various parts of the world.

Our specific research included a small sample of experts, which could also be augmented by a much wider variety of experts from various geographic regions.

This research has provided a foundation for substantial additional research. More detailed studies could capture a variety of topics which impact refugees and which also need to be explored.

Future studies could supplement models, mentoring and coaching guidelines, and curriculum content could be developed. Future research could emphasize building respect and appreciation for guest and host culture, with focus on similarities to help with adjustment. Leaders in all facets of life—home, community, government—could demonstrate the behaviors they aspire to generate.

Future study is needed on all aspects of language, culture, grief and loss, and change. The cost of not addressing these support systems for the refugees will not be measured only in dollars but in lost human potential.

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Appendix

Attached are sample interview comments. For illustration purposes, these comments show themes and issues facing the refugees as well as those involved. Through their experiences, the interviews also substantiated key research points. As before, the interviewees remain anonymous. These comments are not all inclusive, and there are not comments from every person interviewed.

“Language is a living concept. I say something to a refugee, and that person may hear me clearly. However, they may not understand me. The situation is further complicated by the idea that they may interpret what I said to be something entirely different from what I intended” (SJ, interviewee, September 15, 2023).

“Co-workers and managers need to recognize a different language and must also recognize that the refugees have different understandings. When talking, the refugee might agree but not understand at all. For instance, the work manager may say, “Please take this box down to the office.” The refugee may hear and understand “Take this box” but not comprehend the next words, so they hear the part about the box, but don’t know what to do with it. The manager has no idea that there is a misunderstanding, and the manager interprets the refugee’s confusion as reluctance to do the job (take the box to the office) when it is in actuality a lack of comprehension of what to do” (LJ, interviewee, August 2, 2023).

“Many in Ukraine speak ‘IT language.’ They are already connected to the world by this global language, and it will help their employment outside of Ukraine” (CCD, interviewee, July 22, 2023).

“Ukrainians feel uncomfortable—almost to the state of disorientation--when they cannot read the signs or posters. What is interesting is that Ukrainian has many shared words with Poland. On some streets there are huge billboards showing the phrase in Polish and the Ukrainian equivalent phrase” (PL, interviewee, July 6, 2023).

“We [our family] spoke Ukrainian in the home when I was pre-school. We moved to the USA, so when I went to kindergarten, I thought the other kids were idiots. They were speaking a language I did not understand, and I thought they could not talk properly. Consequently, I learned English in school, and I do not speak slang, because I learned English from my teachers” (BM, interviewee, August 21, 2023).

“Some people cannot flee because they are a caretaker of an elderly person or couple, most likely a relative. Many of the elderly are adamant in their refusal to leave. They maintain that they survive the Nazis, so they are not willing to take on that kind of adventure or the hardships of leaving for a different country” (LJ, interviewee, August 2, 2023).

“In the refugee situation, we are supporting kids growing up in a tough situation, both mentally and emotionally. Somehow, we assign them to be happy. Some of these [devastating war] effects are going to be permanent” (CCD, interviewee, July 22, 2023).

“Host families and refugees frequently have different expectations. This leads to cultural disconnects” (DL, interviewee, July 20, 2023).

“We [volunteer medical personnel] saw PTSD with kids. In a couple villages, we were the first ones to go in. In some cases, the main road was still mined. We went in back way through former Russian positions. We saw tanks blown up and missiles stuck in the ground” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023).

“How refugees handle uncertainty may depend on where a person is at in their life cycle. They may decide that they want to die where they grew up. At different ages people might adapt differently” (LJ, interviewee, August 2, 2023).

“People experienced child kidnapping in many of the villages. Many times, residents came to the [medical] office just to tell us stories. We could tell that these are not made up and not exaggerated, because they were all similar” (JM, interviewee, August 30, 2023).

“There is an intentional block of media and telecommunications so that refugees are not able to check up on the Ukrainian home situation, either through television or by calling home. They don’t want to have people thinking about what used to be, because they saw something on TV or someone hear horrible news. The idea was that refugees need to focus on getting through their current situations (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023).

“I was in Krakow, Poland. I saw a retired widow, her son, daughter, and grandchild. She told me that all of her retirement benefits used to come electronically, but now they were not available. She has nothing in Krakow other than the care of a local church, and some help from the European Union, but nothing that would bring stability for long term of her life. This story is multiplied by millions and millions of people. People had expected their retirement to be there, but not now” (PL, personal communication, July 6, 2023).

“Predictability is missing in their day to day lives. How do we replace that for the refugees? It is gone for them” (CN, interviewee, September 19, 2023).

“Most of the volunteers had full time jobs. Once they finished the work with the refugees, they had to go to work at their own job. They had families; they had challenging life issues of their own. I forgot volunteers were also struggling with things in their own life” (JR, interviewee, June 15, 2023).

“Ukrainian refugees may have let go of where they were at, but now they are in what people would call a free fall” (LJ, interviewee, August 2, 2023)

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