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ANALYTICAL REPORT

A WAY HOME:

RETURNING INTENTIONS OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

AUTHOR:

NATALIIA ZAIKA,

Researcher of the Institute for
Behavioral Studies, AUK

PROJECT LEAD:

VOLODYMYR VAKHITOV,

Director of the Institute for
Behavioral Studies, AUK

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the results of a study of Ukrainians living in Poland, with a focus on their intentions to return home. The research combined quantitative and qualitative methods.
- For **the quantitative part** of our research, a survey of Ukrainians living in Poland was conducted: 937 respondents who came to the country after the start of the russia's full-scale invasion (*hereinafter referred to as refugees*) and 202 before the invasion (*hereinafter referred to as migrants*)¹. The survey was conducted by *Rating* sociological group throughout Poland from December 12 to 19, 2023.
- **The qualitative part** of the study included 15 in-depth interviews with Ukrainian women who were forced to leave Ukraine after the onset of full-scale invasion of russia in Ukraine and who at the time of the survey were living in Poland or Germany or had returned to Ukraine. The interviews were conducted on December 15-27, 2023, by the Ukrainian Center for the Study of Public Opinion *Sotsioinform*.
- In the beginning of 2024, **the number of Ukrainian refugees** in Poland was about 950,000². **The number of migrants** from Ukraine until February 2022 was estimated at 1.35 million³.
- Ukrainian refugees and migrants in Poland differ in **socio-demographic characteristics**:
 - refugees are mostly older, have lower incomes, are more likely to be married and have children. Most of them came from Eastern and Southern Ukraine, while the largest number of migrants came from the Central, Southern and Western Ukraine;
 - among refugees, there is a higher share of those who are unemployed, are retired or work remotely for a Ukrainian company, and a lower share of those who are employed in Poland;
 - during the full-scale invasion, the financial condition of refugees has, on average, worsened, while that of migrants improved.
- After February 2022, a large part of Ukrainians changed **their main language of everyday communication**: among refugees, the share of those who speak Ukrainian increased by 17 percentage points (from 39% to 56%). Among migrants, the biggest change occurred in the everyday use of the Russian language – it decreased from 39% to 16% (most of them switched to Ukrainian or Polish).
- The majority of Ukrainians living in Poland maintain close **ties with Ukraine** — they have relatives, friends or colleagues with whom they keep in touch; read news about Ukraine; keep Ukrainian phone numbers; transfer money or send goods for the army, and occasionally come to Ukraine. Only 27% of the pre-war migrants never came to Ukraine after moving to Poland (the visit was not necessarily during the full-scale invasion). For the refugees the percentage is higher — around 50%.
- Almost all Ukrainians living in Poland have **close relatives in Ukraine**. Most often, they are the parents of the respondent or her partner. Only 6% of Ukrainians in Poland say that none of their close relatives live in Ukraine.
- 61% of refugees who have school-aged children say that their children study **online in Ukrainian schools**. For migrants, the percentage is lower – 30%.

¹ In this study, by the word "refugees" we understand all Ukrainians who fled to Poland after 24.02.2022, by "migrants" we mean all those who left before 24.02.2024, regardless of their official legal status. "Forced migrants" and "forced displaced persons" are used as synonyms to the word "refugees".

² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

³ Duszczyk M., Kaczmarczyk P. The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges.

Intereconomics. V. 57, 2022. intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2022/number/3/article/the-war-in-ukraine-and-migration-to-poland-outlook-and-challenges.html

- The majority of Ukrainians living in Poland faced **the consequences of the war** in their families. Almost the same number of refugees and migrants have loved ones who serve in the Defense Forces of Ukraine (37% and 41%, respectively), lost a loved one because of Russia's military aggression (20% and 22%), or have destroyed or damaged housing in Ukraine (23% and 14%). Most respondents indicated long-term separation from family members (67% of refugees and 62% of migrants). Only 3% of refugees and 15% of migrants answered that they had not experienced any of the listed events.
- Ukrainians feel very **uncertain about the future**: more than half cannot even roughly answer when the war will end, and about a third do not have an opinion about which territories will remain under Ukrainian control. Older respondents and those from the Center and the South are more optimistic about the end of the war, they believe that it will happen in 2024. In general, Ukrainians are optimistic about post-war reconstruction. Most believe that Europe will help us in rebuilding and in 5-10 years life in Ukraine will be better than before the war.
- Despite the different times and motivations for coming to Poland, **the feelings of** refugees and migrants are very similar. Most often, they feel homesickness (4.39⁴ and 4.01, respectively), hope for a better future (4.29 and 4.35) and gratitude to the local population of the host country (4.10 and 4.02). The least common of all feelings are guilt for going abroad (2.80 and 2.50) and a feeling of hostility from those living in Ukraine (2.54 and 2.46). Noteworthy, feelings do not change significantly over time — among refugees, who arrived at Poland at different times during two years, the difference in answers is insignificant.
- Ukrainians in Poland feel huge **homesickness** — more than 60% of refugees and more than 50% of migrants feel homesick "always". Moreover, they often cannot express clearly what exactly they miss and give abstract answers: at home everything is familiar and in Poland everything is foreign (people, places, customs, home).
- Ukrainians abroad have a strong sense **of national identity**, and there is almost no difference in the sense of identity between migrants and refugees. During the in-depth interviews, some people said that they began to feel their Ukrainian identity stronger after moving abroad, when found themselves in a new environment.
- Approximately half of refugees and a third of migrants show clear **intentions to return** to Ukraine. Although from 12% to 23% of Ukrainians have not yet clearly formed their plans — they choose the "difficult to answer" option for the question about return.
- The desire to return to Ukraine correlates with **socio-demographic factors**: older people, those with low incomes, with Ukrainian as the main language of communication are more inclined to return. Those who have school-aged children and who know Polish are less likely to return. However, those whose children study remotely in Ukrainian schools show higher intentions to return.
- Those who often **came to Ukraine**, express a higher willingness to return, compared to those who did not come at all or visited once or several times.
- **Having close relatives** in Ukraine does not significantly affect the desire to return.
- Those who have **an optimistic view** on war developments (believe that the war will end in 2024 or 2025 and Ukraine will return all territories) express a higher willingness to return, compared to those who have a more pessimistic view of the future (believe that the war will last till 2026 or later and Ukraine will not be able to return all occupied territories).

⁴ Respondents rated their feelings on a scale: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), always (5).

- **Negative experiences and losses during the war** do not have a significant impact on intentions to return. Only refugees who had the experience of living in the occupied territories express a desire to return more often, compared to those who did not have such experience.
- The willingness to return is strongly correlated with the sense of "**acquired**" identity⁵: the stronger the sense of identity, the stronger the desire to return home.
- There is also a strong relationship between intentions to return and a **sense of pride** for the home country — refugees with a low sense of pride are less likely to show returning intentions.
- Between the **groups of refugees** who arrived in Poland at different times (February–March 2022, April–September 2022, October 2022–February 2023, March–December 2023), there is no significant difference in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, emotions, and desire to return to Ukraine.
- Using **cluster analysis**, we identified three groups of Ukrainian *refugees* depending on their intentions to return home. These the typical characteristics for each group:
 - "**want to return**" (45% of refugees): women with an average age of 40, who speak Ukrainian, have low incomes, came from the South of Ukraine, and mostly identify themselves with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. They show a high level of homesickness and loneliness. Moreover, they demonstrate the highest level of national identity and pride for their country among all clusters.
 - "**do not want to return**" (20% of refugees): younger and with high income compared to those who want to return. They mostly came from the East of Ukraine, speak Russian, and have no clear religion identification. This group perceives hostility from those living in Ukraine more often than others, has the most pessimistic view of the time and conditions for ending the war. Also, those who do not want to return have the lowest level of national identity and pride.
 - "**undecided**" (35% of refugees): this cluster has the highest share of women among all clusters, the average age is 37 years, most often they work in Polish companies and have school-age children. They are almost evenly distributed between three income groups: low, medium, and high. Their main language of communication is Ukrainian, they either do not belong to any religious community or to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Those who have not decided yet about returning are more likely than others to feel fear and uncertainty about the future, as well as gratitude to the local population.
- Thus, both among refugees and among pre-war migrants there is a share of those who clearly demonstrate their intentions to return to Ukraine, those who are inclined to remain abroad, and about a third are undecided about their future. Return intentions are influenced by *socio-demographic factors* (age, income, having children), *cultural factors* (language, religion, sense of national identity and pride), and *emotional factors* (feelings of homesickness, uncertainty, and loneliness).

⁵ For details on identity measurement and "acquired" and "endowed" identity, see [Section 6.2](#).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This analytical report presents the results of the analysis of a quantitative and qualitative study of Ukrainians living abroad. The study was conducted by [the Institute of Behavioral Studies \(IBS\)](#) at [American University Kyiv](#). The purpose of the study was to identify factors that influence the motivation of Ukrainian refugees and pre-war migrants to return home and, based on the data obtained, to provide recommendations for the development of policies that will facilitate the return of Ukrainians.

The quantitative survey was conducted by *Rating* sociological group on the *Ratings Online* platform throughout Poland from December 12 to 19, 2023. The survey was carried out using the CAWI (*Computer Assisted Web Interviewing*) method.

Our random sample covered the audience of Ukrainians over the age of 18 who use a smartphone and had access to the Internet at the time of the survey. The survey invitation was sent to the potential respondents through the following channels: Big Data from mobile operators; messengers and social networks for maximum audience coverage.

The sample included Ukrainian migrants (those who left Ukraine before the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022) and refugees (those who fled after February 24, 2022) who were in Poland at the time of the survey.

A total of 937 refugees and 202 migrants took part in the survey.

Data quality control included logical and technical checks to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and overall quality of the resulting data. Logical checks involved checking the data for coherency and consistency of answers. Respondents were asked 3 questions to test attention and those who answered less than 2 questions correctly were excluded from the analysis. Lastly, participation in the survey was controlled by a restriction on repeated participation.

The questionnaire could be taken in either Ukrainian or Russian, depending on respondent's choice. The median duration of the questionnaire was 00:11:01, the average duration was 00:12:12. The margin of error with a 0.95 confidence level does not exceed 3.3% for the sample.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the purpose of data collection, the possibility to stop their participation, and agreed to the processing of their answers.

Before conducting the survey, the questionnaire and research methodology were approved by the ethics committee of American University Kyiv.

Qualitative research involved semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted during December 15-27, 2023, by the Ukrainian Center for the Study of Public Opinion *Sotsioinform*. A total of 15 interviews were conducted with women who were forced to leave Ukraine after the full-scale invasion and at the time of the interview were living in Poland or Germany or had returned to Ukraine.

Interview participants were distributed as follows:

Live abroad: 9 participants	Returned to Ukraine: 6 participants
<input type="checkbox"/> in Poland: 3 participants	<input type="checkbox"/> from Poland: 3 participants
<input type="checkbox"/> in Germany: 4 participants	<input type="checkbox"/> from Germany: 3 participants
<input type="checkbox"/> lived in Poland, moved to Germany: 2 participants	

3. UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

3.1. The number of Ukrainian refugees and migrants in Poland

Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, caused a large wave of forced migration. Many Ukrainians were forced to leave their homes and go to other countries looking for safety. For millions of them, the first country of entry was Poland, from where some Ukrainians moved to other countries, while others remained in Poland or returned to Ukraine. A total of 18.61 million border crossings from Ukraine to Poland were recorded for the period from February 24, 2022, to January 19, 2024⁶. The largest flow was observed in the first month of the full-scale invasion, in the period from March 4 to 9, 2022, more than 100,000 people crossed the Polish border from the Ukrainian side every day⁷.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, as of December 15, 2023, 956 635 Ukrainian refugees lived in Poland⁸. Similar data is provided by the Ministry of Digitalization of Poland — 955 893 submitted applications for UKR status⁹ (as of January 9, 2024)¹⁰. As of the end of 2023, Poland is the second country as of number of Ukrainian refugees after Germany¹¹.

Many Ukrainian migrants lived in Poland before the Russian invasion. Their number is estimated at 1.35 million. They constituted the largest group of migrants in Poland, Ukrainians accounted for 71% of issued work permits and 98% of seasonal work permits¹².

The date of arrival in Poland is only an approximate criterion for pre-war migrants/war-time refugees division. Some of the Ukrainians came to Poland before the war (for example, for temporary work) and had plans to return, but decided to stay because of Russia's aggression. On the other hand, circular migration was (and still is) well-established between Ukraine and Poland. Therefore, some Ukrainians entered Poland after February 2022, but they already had the experience of long-term (and possibly multiple) residence in Poland and planned to go again, regardless of the military operations on the territory of Ukraine. This can affect adaptation strategies and plans for return/non-return to Ukraine. Therefore, it is not always possible to carry out a clear classification of "refugee-migrant".

In this study, we rely on respondents' answers regarding the date of their arrival to Poland and consider all those who entered the country starting from February 24, 2022, as refugees, and those who arrived earlier as migrants.

⁶ Data of the State Border Service of Ukraine: <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/961836.html>

⁷ Data of the State Border Service of Ukraine.

⁸ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

⁹ Ukrainians who entered Poland after February 24, 2024, and decided to stay in the country had to obtain a PESEL identification document with UKR status, which confirms the granting of temporary protection.

¹⁰ <https://dane.gov.pl/en/dataset/2715,zarejestrowane-wnioski-o-nadanie-statusu-ukr>

¹¹ Excluding Russia, where it is impossible to determine the number of Ukrainian refugees and forcibly deported Ukrainians.

¹² Duszczuk M., Kaczmarczyk P. The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges. *Intereconomics*. V. 57, 2022. intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2022/number/3/article/the-war-in-ukraine-and-migration-to-poland-outlook-and-challenges.html

3.2. Demographic characteristics of Ukrainians in Poland

Different motives and conditions for going abroad determine the different gender-age structure of pre-war Ukrainian migrants and forced migrants.

In the group of migrants, 56% are women and 44% are men, which is very similar to the gender structure of the population of Ukraine at the beginning of 2022 (54% women and 46% men¹³). Among refugees, the share of women is significantly higher and is around 74% (Figure 1). The main explanation for this difference is the prohibition on going abroad for men aged 18 to 60 during the period of martial law (except for certain categories defined by law).

Figure 1. Distribution of migrants and refugees by gender

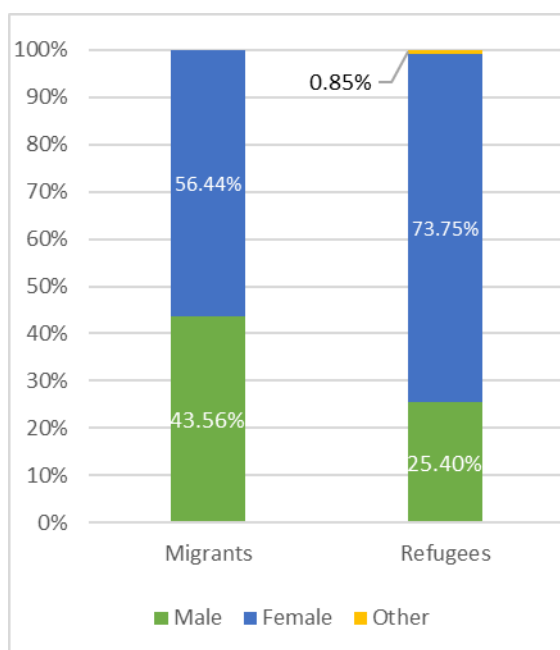
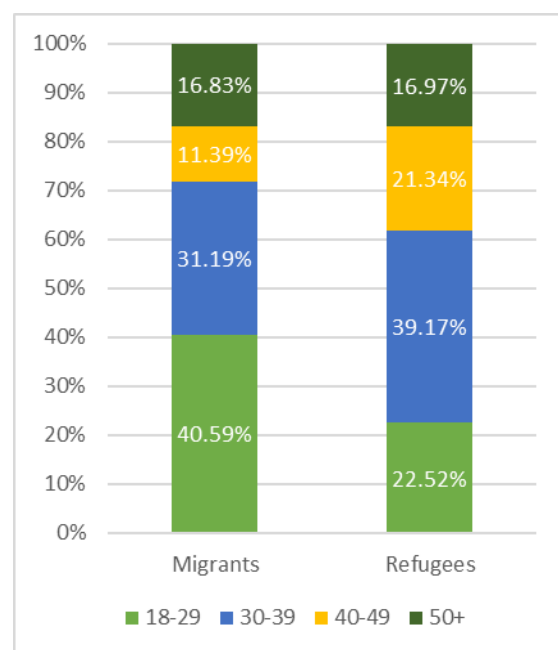


Figure 2. Distribution of migrants and refugees by age



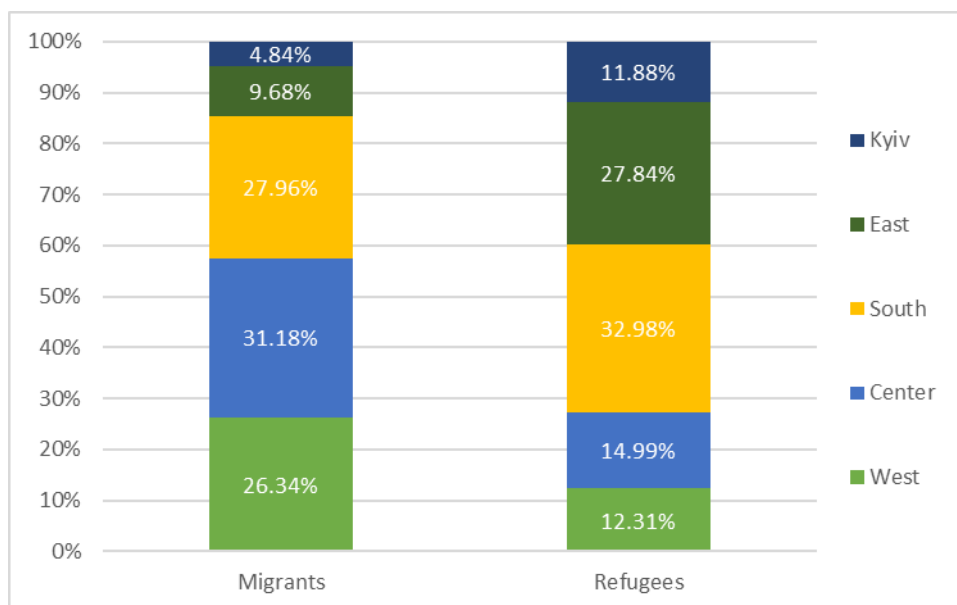
Migrants and refugees also differ in their age structure. Those who came to Poland before the beginning of the full-scale invasion are on average younger than refugees: the average age of a migrant is 35.5 years, the median is 32, while the average age of a refugee is 38.5 years, the median is 37. Among migrants there are a lot of young people aged 18-29 years old (41%, compared to 23% among refugees). The largest category of refugees is 30-39 years old (39%, against 31% among migrants). The oldest category, 50 years and older, is equally represented in both groups — 17% (Figure 2).

Before and after the start of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainians came to Poland from various regions. Those who arrived by February 2022 came, in almost equal shares, from Central (31%), Southern (28%), Western (26%), to less extent, Eastern (10%) Ukraine, and Kyiv (5%) (Figure 3). As the war progressed, the geography of origin shifted towards the most affected regions, most refugees came from the South (33%) and the East (28%). The share of newcomers from Kyiv also increased (12%). The share of forced migrants from the Center (15%) and the West (12%) is approximately half as much as pre-war migrants.

¹³ State Statistics Service of Ukraine: https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2020/m_w/arh_rozpod_nasel.htm

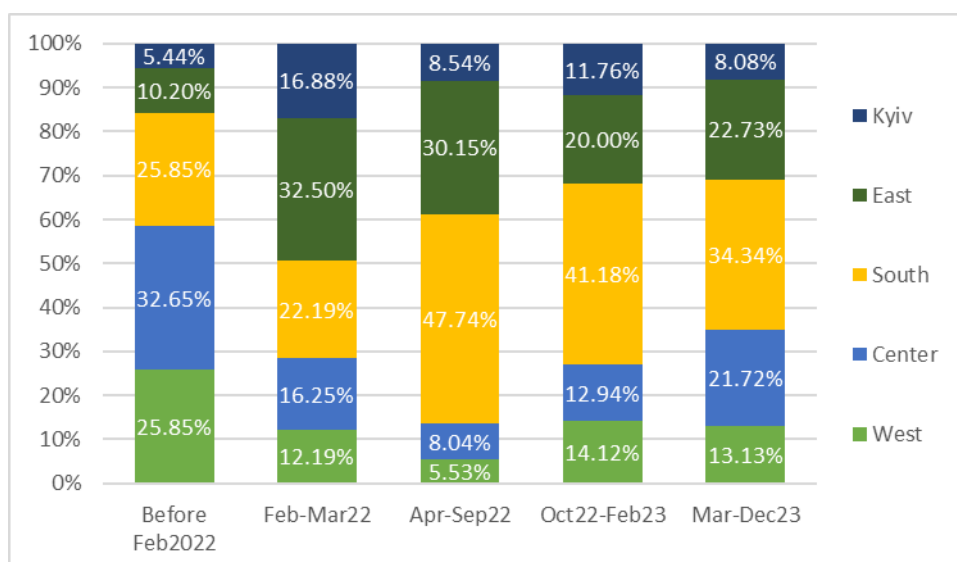
UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

Figure 3. Distribution of migrants and refugees by region of origin



In the first wave (February–March 2022), the largest number of refugees arrived in Poland from Eastern Ukraine, almost a third. In the following periods, the largest group was people from the South, in April–September 2022 they made up almost half of all Ukrainian refugees. The share of people from the East constantly decreased: from 33% at the beginning of 2022 to 23% at the end of 2023 (Figure 4).

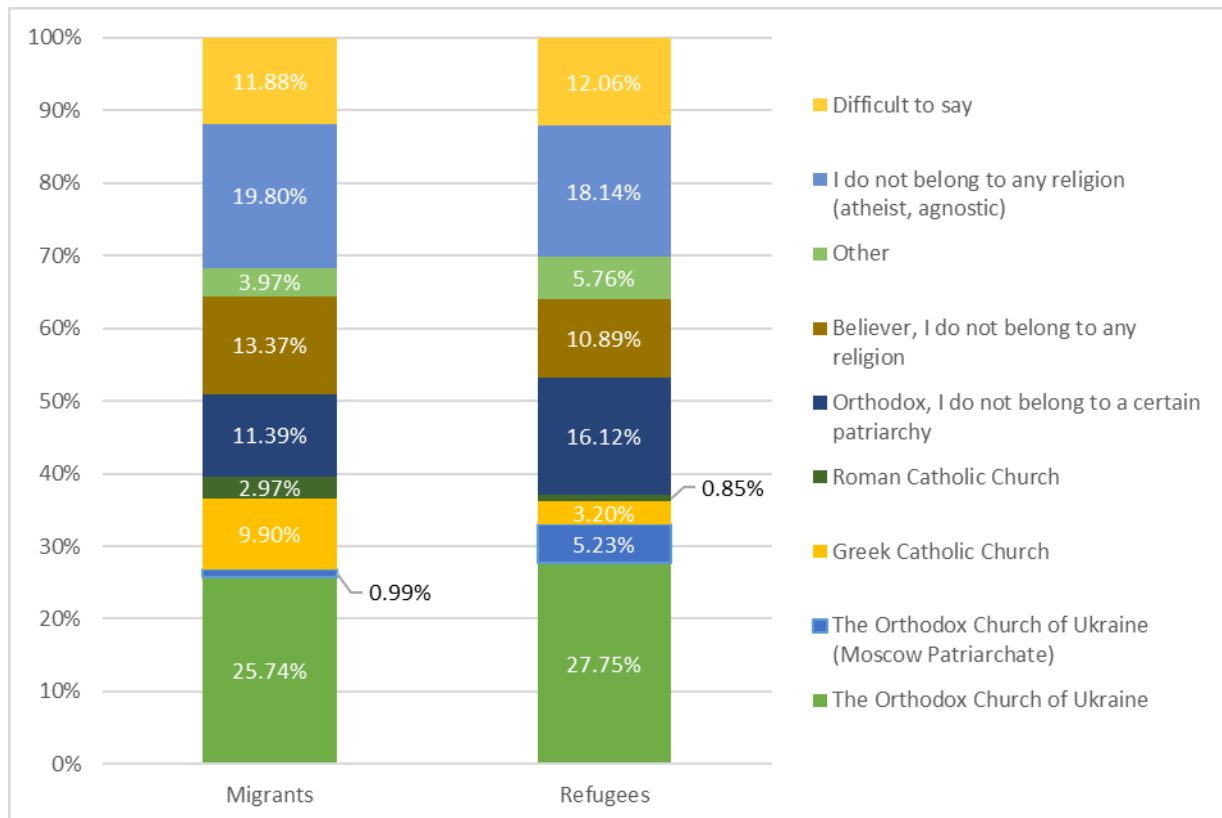
Figure 4. Distribution of migrants and refugees by region of origin depending on the arrival time in Poland¹⁴



¹⁴ **West:** Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Chernivtsi regions.
Center: Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Cherkasy, Chernihiv regions.
South: Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson regions.
East: Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv regions.

The distribution of Ukrainians living in Poland by denomination is very similar in both groups (Figure 5). The biggest differences are between representatives of Greek Catholics (10% of migrants and 3% of refugees belong to them) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (1% of migrants and 5% of refugees). This is explained by the differences in the regions of origin of these two groups.

Figure 5. Distribution of migrants and refugees by denomination

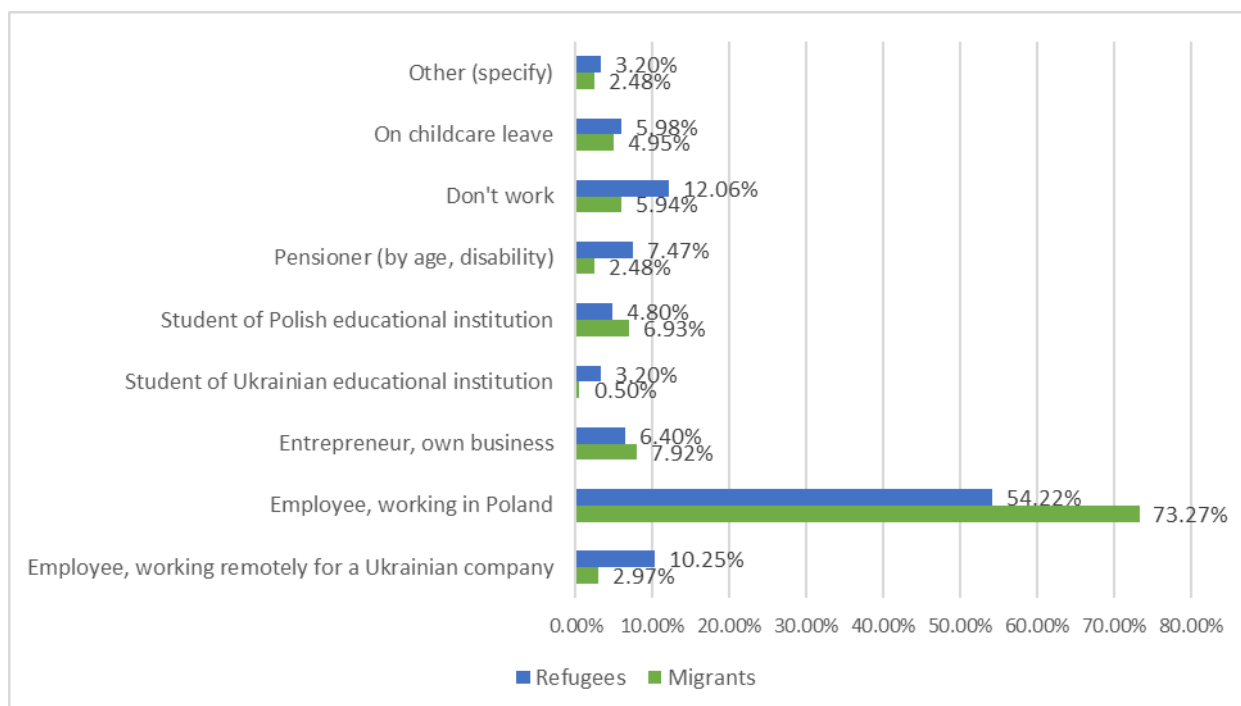


3.3. Employment and financial situation

The absolute majority of Ukrainians who came to Poland before the Russian invasion work in Polish companies, almost three quarters (Figure 6). Among the refugees, the largest group is also the employees of local companies, but their share is smaller, slightly more than half. Refugees are distinguished by a higher share of pensioners (7% versus 2% among migrants) and unemployed (12% versus 6% among migrants). Another feature of Ukrainian refugees is that a large proportion of them work remotely for Ukrainian companies (10% versus 3% among migrants). Previously, this was not typical for refugees coming to Europe from different countries.

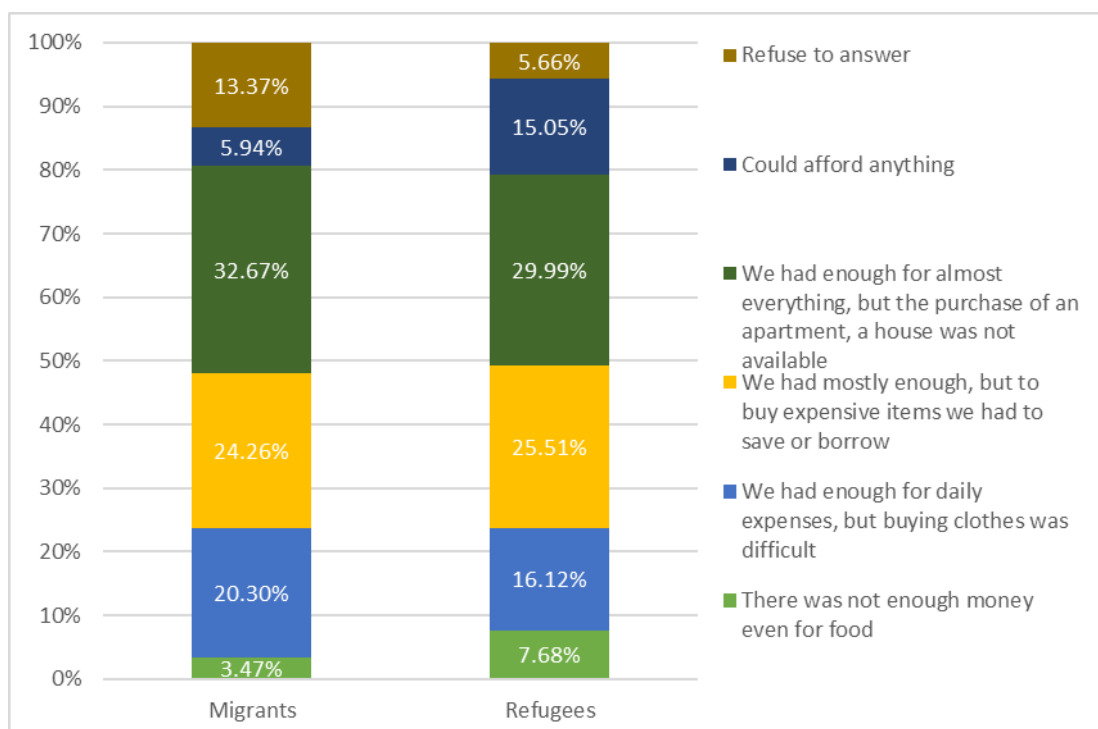
UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

Figure 6. Distribution of migrants and refugees by occupation (respondents could choose several options, so the sum is not equal to 100%)



The profile of migrants and refugees in terms of their financial situation before the full-scale invasion is very similar: 24% of both migrants and refugees belonged to the two poorest categories, 24% and 26%, respectively, had an average income, and 39% and 45% belonged to the two richest categories (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Distribution of migrants and refugees by financial situation before the full-scale invasion

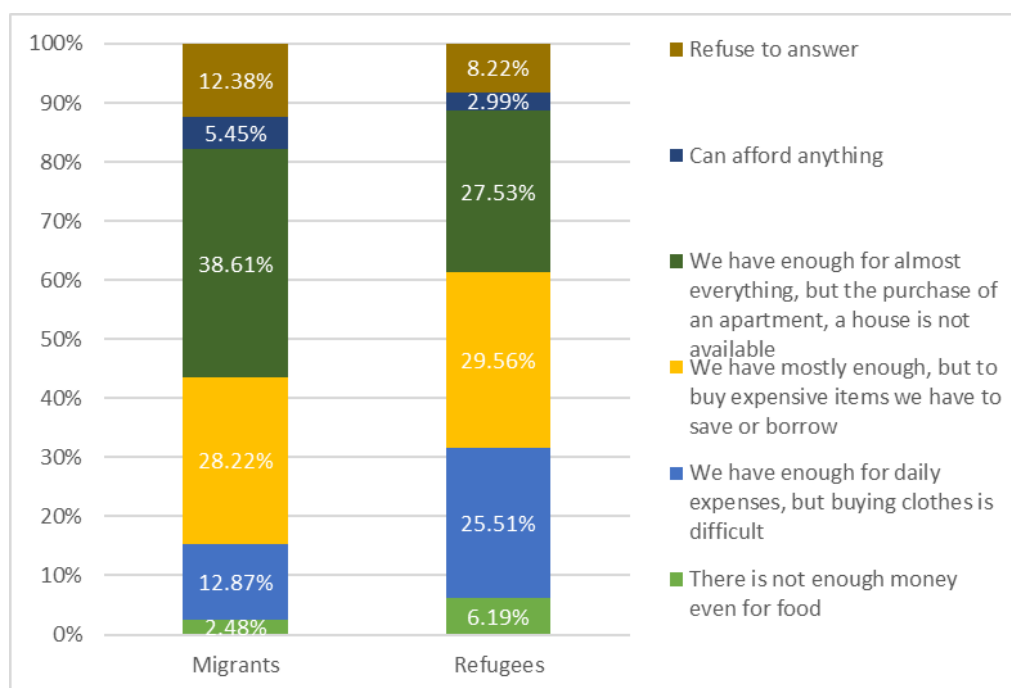


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We have two assumptions to explain such a high share of people with high incomes before leaving Ukraine. Firstly, it is likely that migrants and refugees do not represent the population of Ukraine in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, richer individuals left more often. Secondly, since the question was asked retrospectively, the respondents may not reproduce the real situation very accurately. For example, if they can afford less in Poland, regardless of whether their income has decreased in absolute terms, they may estimate their financial situation in Ukraine as being higher than it was.

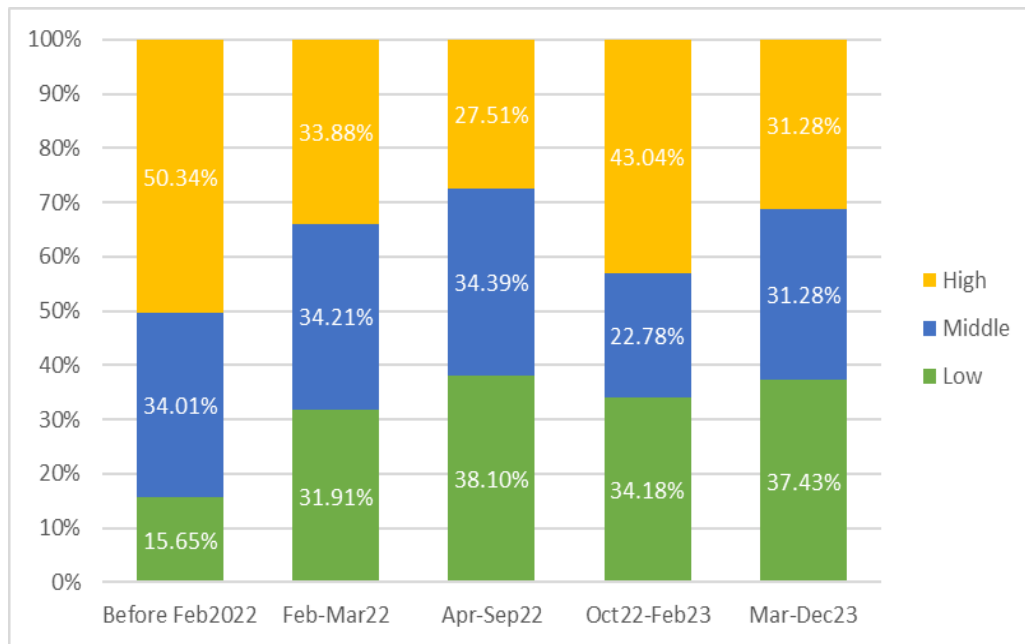
Before the full-scale invasion, migrants and refugees assessed their financial situation almost equally, but at the time of the survey (December 2023) there were significant differences between them (*Figure 8*). On average, refugees report a worse financial situation than migrants, which has completely understandable reasons: for refugees, moving to Poland was a quick and unprepared decision, most often they had to look for work and housing already after arrival. Finding a job with an income that would correspond to the Ukrainian level, after adjusting for purchasing power, was very often not possible.

Figure 8. Distribution of refugees and migrants by financial situation at the time of the survey



There is no significant difference in the financial status between different refugees who arrived at different times, they are distributed almost equally between the low-, middle- and high-income categories (*Figure 9*). Only in the period from October 2022 to February 2023 the share of forced migrants with a high-income increase (up to 43%).

Figure 9. Distribution of refugees and migrants by financial situation at the time of the survey, depending on the date of arrival in Poland¹⁵



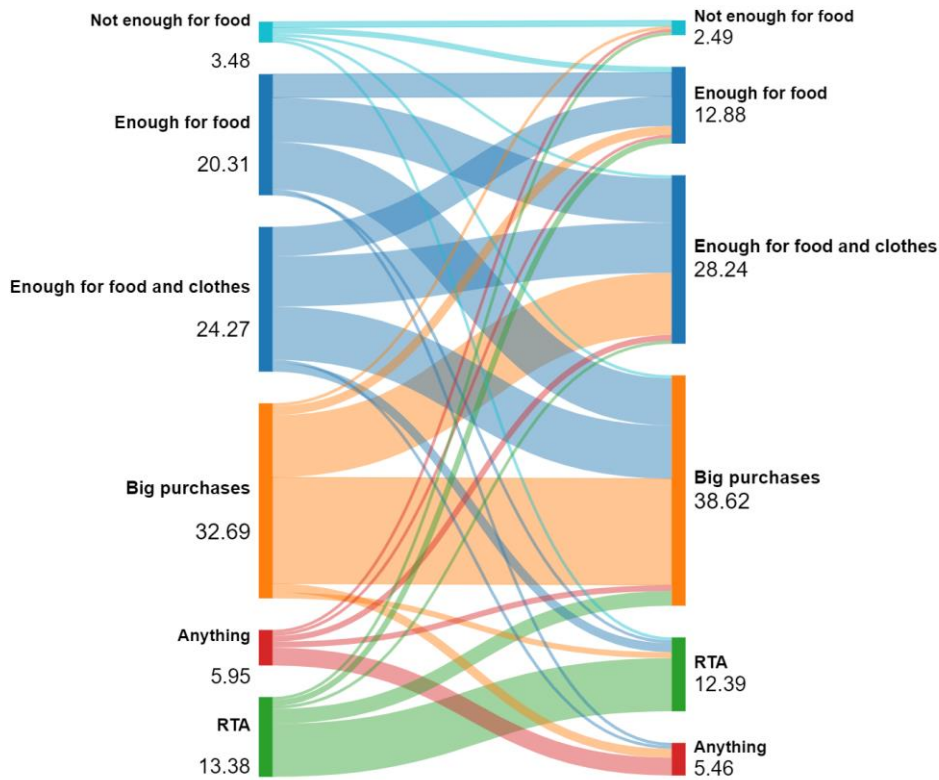
The financial situation of Ukrainian migrants in Poland has on average improved from the beginning of 2022 to December 2023: the share of respondents in the two richest categories who can afford any purchases or everything except very large purchases (for example, apartments) increased from 39% to 44% (

¹⁵ *High income*: the combined categories "We can afford anything" and "There is enough for almost everything, but the purchase of an apartment or house is not available"; *average income* - category "Basically enough, but to buy expensive items you need to save or borrow"; *low income* - the combined categories "There is enough for everyday expenses, but it is already difficult to buy clothes" and "There is not enough money even for food".

Figure 10. Change in the financial status of migrants, %

). The share in the two poorest categories has fallen from 24% to 15%.

For refugees, the situation worsened significantly, their incomes significantly decreased: the share of the two poorest categories (who did not have enough even for food or only for food) increased from 24% to



32% (

Figure 11). The share of the two richest categories, who could afford everything or everything except very expensive purchases, fell from 45% to 31%. The biggest changes occurred in the categories "can buy anything" (it dropped from 15% to 3%) and "can only buy food" (it increased from 16% to 26%).

Figure 10. Change in the financial status of migrants, %

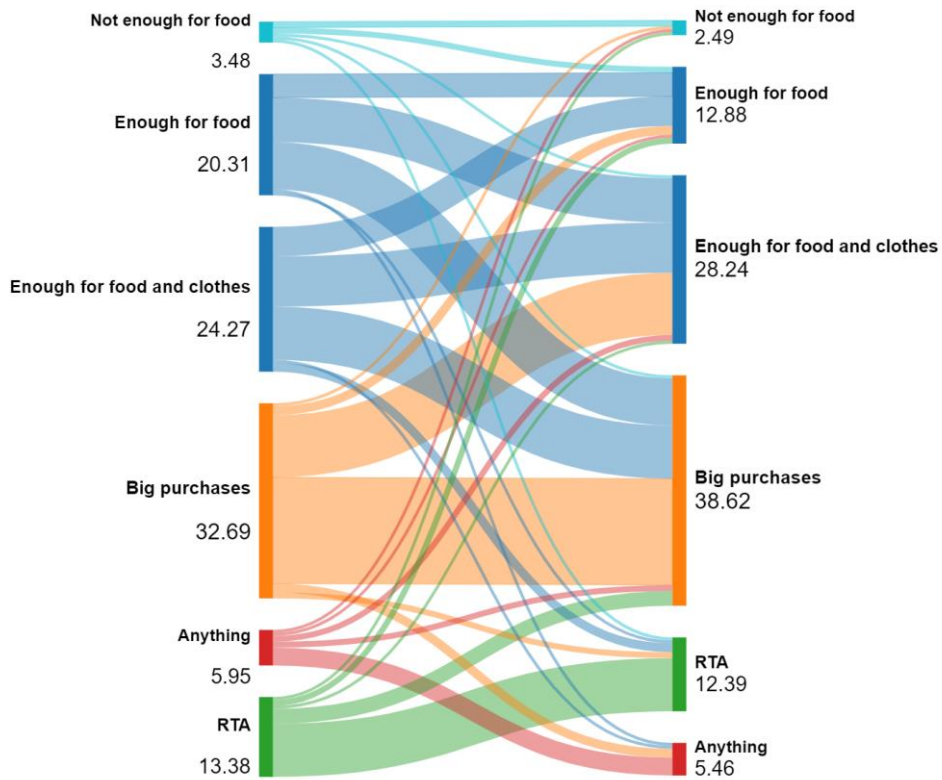
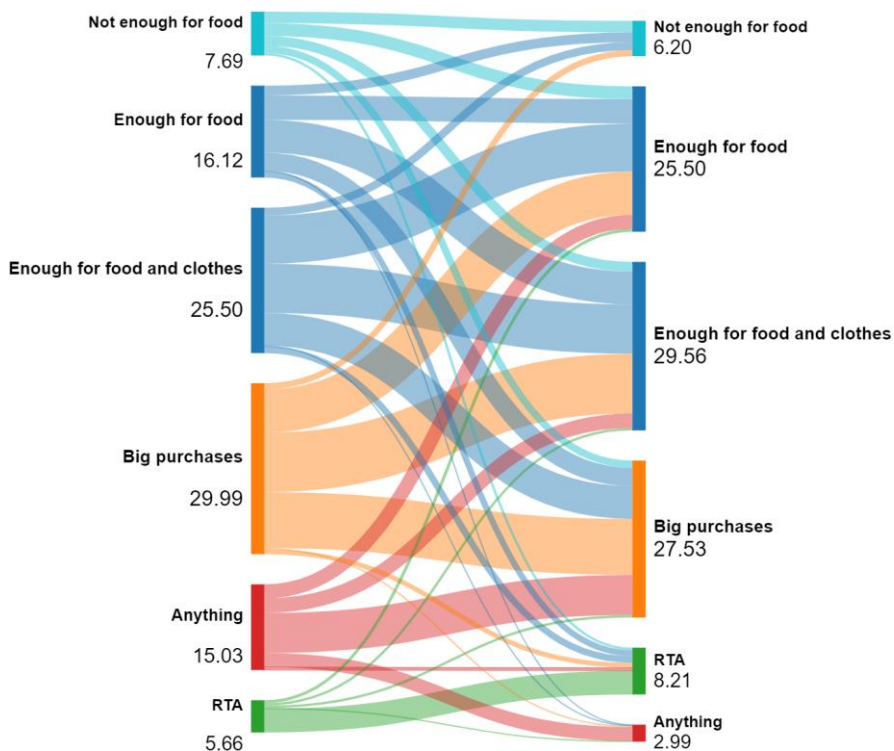


Figure 11. Change in the financial status of refugees, %



UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

3.4. Marital status and children

Ukrainians who came to Poland before and after the full-scale invasion differ in their marital status.

Figure 12. Distribution of refugees and migrants by marital status before the full-scale invasion

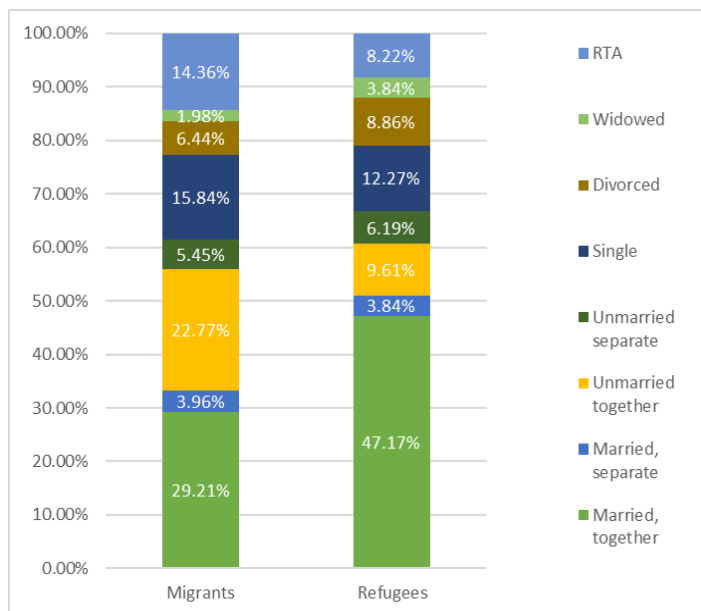
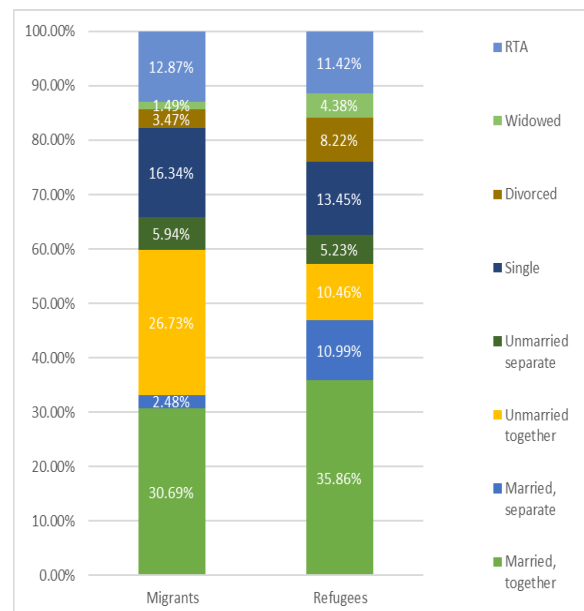
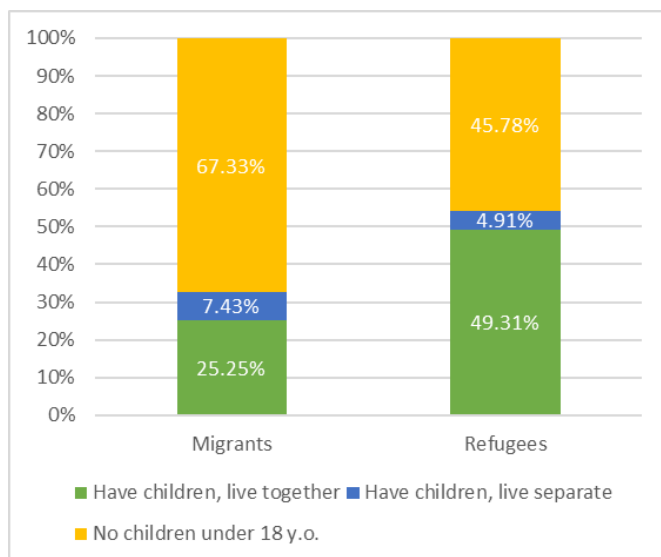


Figure 13. Distribution of refugees and migrants by marital status at the time of the survey



Before the Russian invasion, those already living in Poland were mostly single (44%), while among those living in Ukraine at that time, the largest share was married and lived together (47%) (Figure 12). The second largest group among migrants were married people living together (29%), among refugees — unmarried (28%). Each of the groups: "divorced", "widowed", "married, living separately" made up less than 10%.

Figure 14. Distribution of refugees and migrants based on having children under 18 years of age



UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

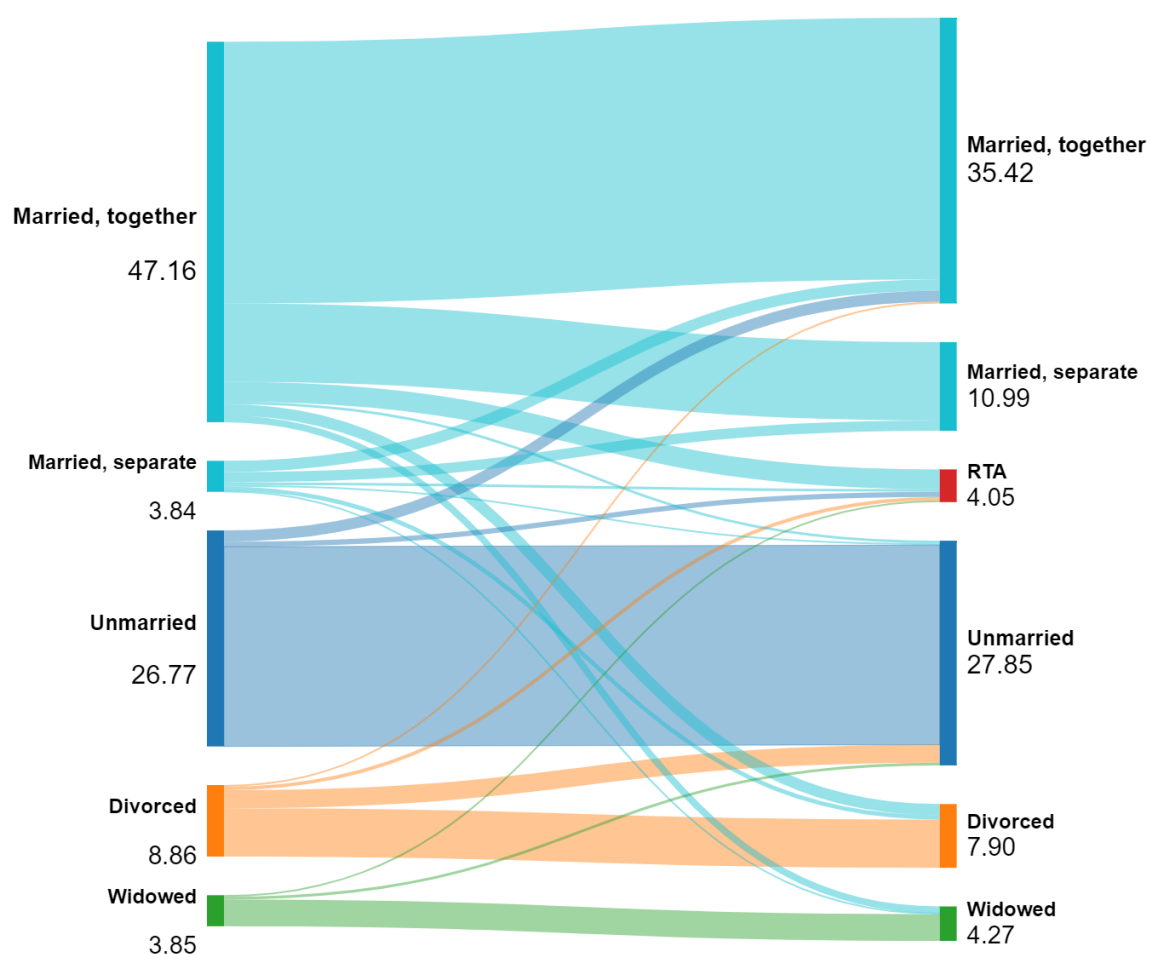
The full-scale invasion did not substantially affect the family situation of the migrants, but it made significant changes in the lives of the refugees, married people who live together, are still the predominant group, but their share decreased from 47% to 36% (Figure 13).

Due to the leaving of many women with children abroad, many families found themselves separated: almost 20% of those who previously lived with their husband/wife moved into the category of "married, live separately" (Figure 15). As a result, the share of married people who live separately with their partner increased from 4% to 11%.

At the same time, some of the respondents, on the contrary, reunited and started living together with their partner — more than a third of those who lived separately before the war. The share of unmarried, divorced, and widowed people has hardly changed.

Due to the difference in age and family status, refugees and migrants also differ in the presence of children under the age of 18 (Figure 14). More than half of refugees have children (54%), while only a third of migrants have children. It is interesting that among migrants there is a higher share of those who live separately from children under the age of 18 (23% against 10%¹⁶ among refugees).

Figure 15. Marital status change of refugees



¹⁶ Percentage of those who have children under 18 years of age.

3.5. Primary language at home

Before the full-scale invasion, the main language of communication at home of Ukrainian migrants in Poland was Ukrainian (55%), 39% spoke Russian. Among those who later became refugees, the majority (56%) spoke Russian, 39% spoke Ukrainian (*Figure 16*). This difference between migrants and refugees can be explained by differences in region of origin — more than half of migrants came from the West and the Center, while 60% of refugees moved from the East and the South of Ukraine.

Figure 16. Distribution of refugees and migrants by main language of communication in everyday life before the full-scale invasion

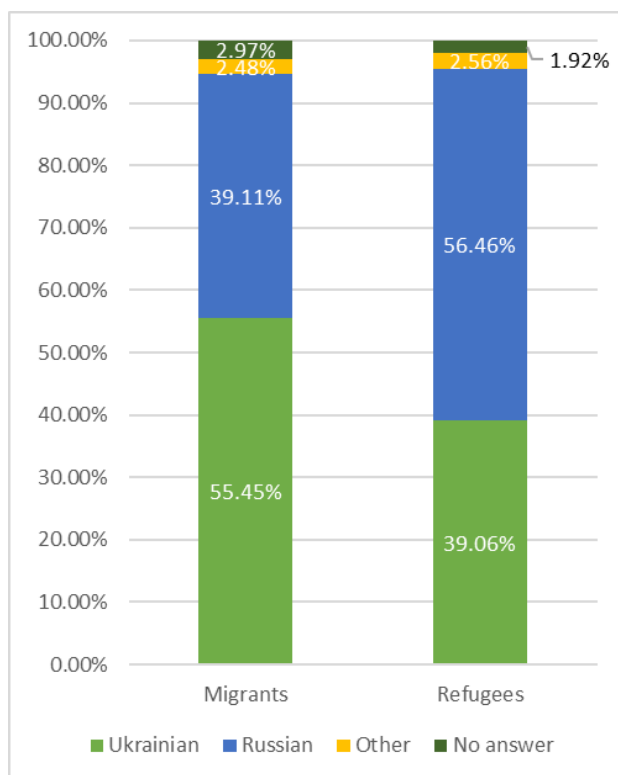
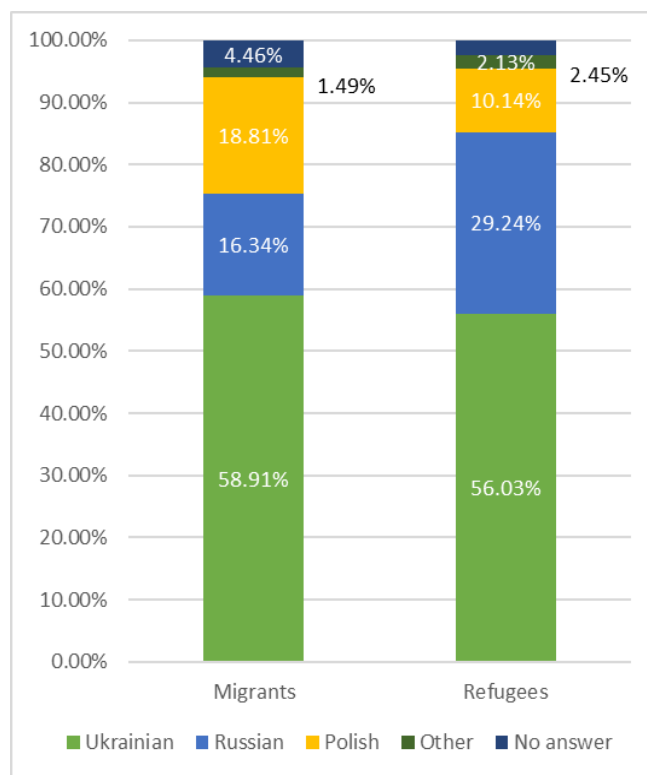


Figure 17. Distribution of refugees and migrants by main language of communication at the time of the survey



Throughout the war, many Ukrainians changed their language of communication. Among refugees, the share of those who speak Ukrainian increased by 17%, from 39% to 56%. Accordingly, the share of Russian language users fell by 27%, from 56% to 29% (*Figure 17*). 10% of refugees communicate in Polish in everyday life: almost equally switched from Ukrainian and Russian.

Such a change in the primary language of communication is extremely fast and greater than during all the years of independence: from 1991 to 2021, less than 15% of the residents of Ukraine switched from Russian to Ukrainian language. In 1991, 36.8% indicated that they communicate in everyday life mainly in Ukrainian, in 2021 — 51.5%, according to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine¹⁷. Whereas in just under two years of the full-scale war, 17% of Ukrainians who were forced to go abroad changed their language to Ukrainian (*Figure 18*).

¹⁷ Ukrainian society: monitoring social changes. 30 years of independence. Issue 8(22): <https://i-soc.com.ua/assets/files/monitoring/monitoring-2021-bez-dodatkov.pdf>

UKRAINIANS IN POLAND: WHO THEY ARE

Migrants also actively changed the language of communication. If previously Russian was the main language for 39%, now this number is 16%. A third of Russian speakers switched to Ukrainian, one in five switched to Polish. 19% switched from Ukrainian to Polish in everyday life (Figure 19).

Interestingly, even though at the time of the survey, almost 27% of all respondents indicated Russian as their main language, only 6% chose to take the survey in Russian.

Figure 18. Change in the language of communication among refugees

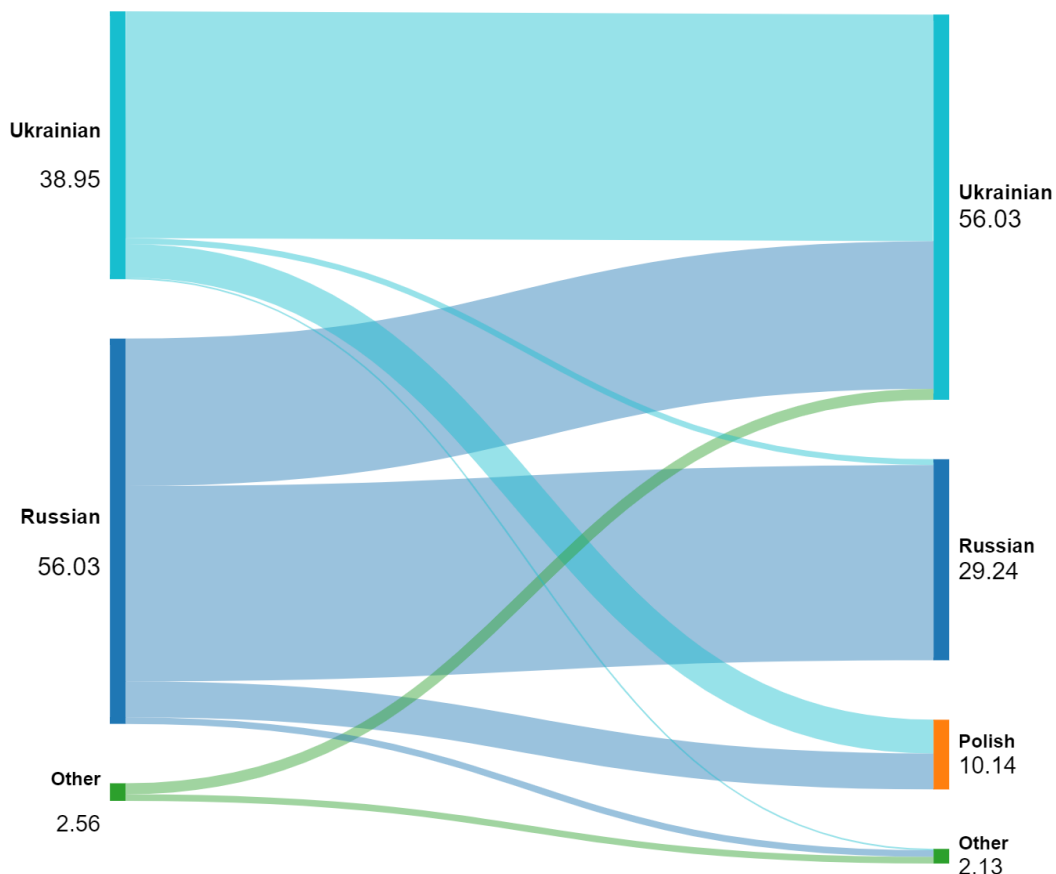
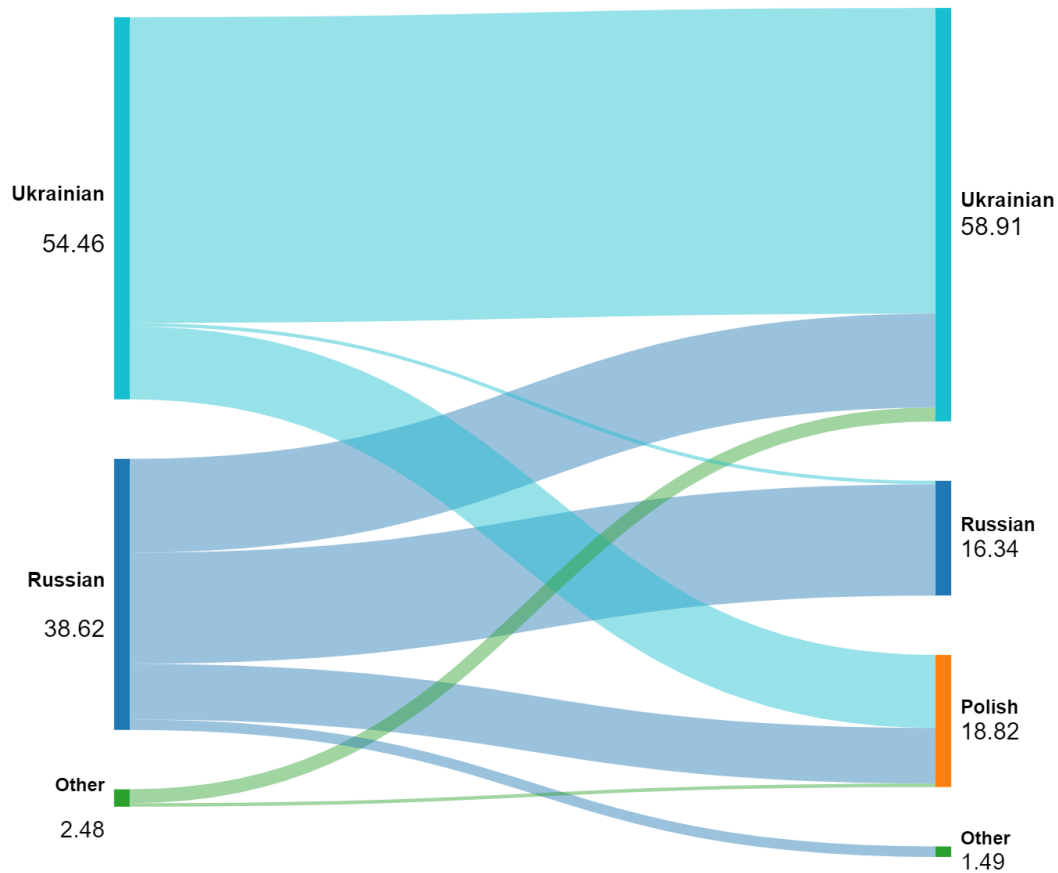
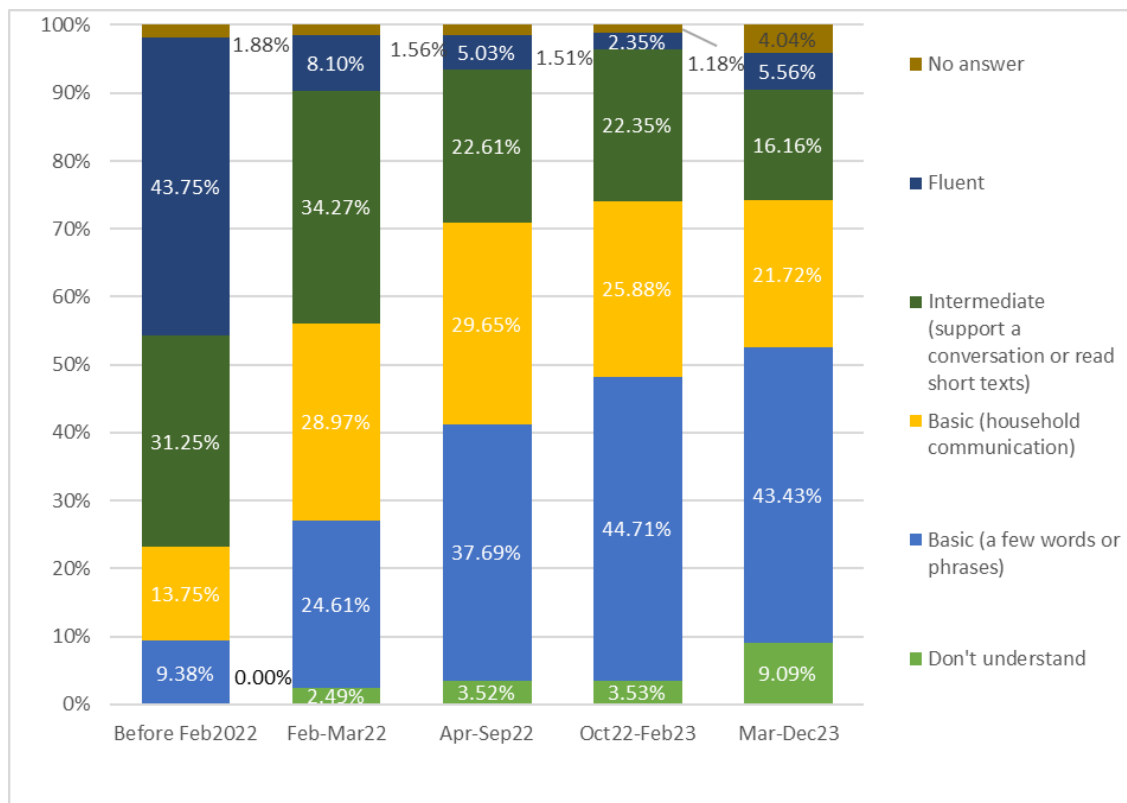


Figure 19. Change in the language of communication among migrants



Quite expectedly, pre-war migrants know the Polish language much better than refugees — 44% speak it fluently (*Figure 20*), compared to 6% of refugees. Most often, migrants indicate that they know Polish language at an elementary level, that is, they know certain words and phrases (about a third of the sample).

Figure 20. Knowledge of the Polish language depending on the time of arrival in Poland



The first wave of refugees (February–March 2022) stands out among refugees based on their level of Polish language. 42% refugees from this group know Polish at a high and medium level, while only 22-28% refugees who arrived after April 2022 speak Polish at the same levels.

Before the full-scale invasion, a large group of Ukrainian migrants (about 1.35 million) has already been living in Poland. After February 2022, Poland received the largest number of Ukrainian refugees, some of whom later moved to other countries or returned home. At the end of 2023, a little less than a million refugees from Ukraine lived in Poland.

Ukrainian migrants and refugees in Poland differ significantly in terms of demographics — refugees are generally older, are predominantly women, are married, and live with their children. As the war progressed, the geography of origin shifted towards the East and South of Ukraine.

Refugees, on average, have lower incomes, moreover, for many of them the income level decreased since the onset of the full-scale invasion. There is also a higher share of the unemployed and those who work remotely for Ukrainian companies among the refugees.

Throughout the full-scale invasion, many Ukrainians in Poland changed their language of communication from Russian to Ukrainian, the rate of the Ukrainian language use increased from 39 to 56%. Among the migrants who used to speak Russian, a third switched to Ukrainian, another 20% — to Polish.

4. HOW UKRAINIANS ABROAD KEEP CONNECTIONS WITH THE HOMELAND

4.1. Visiting Ukraine

Ukrainians living in Poland maintain close contacts with Ukraine, most have visited Ukraine at least once, many have a close relative living here, and children continue to study remotely in Ukrainian schools.

During in-depth interviews, all female respondents indicate that they maintain close ties with Ukraine: they

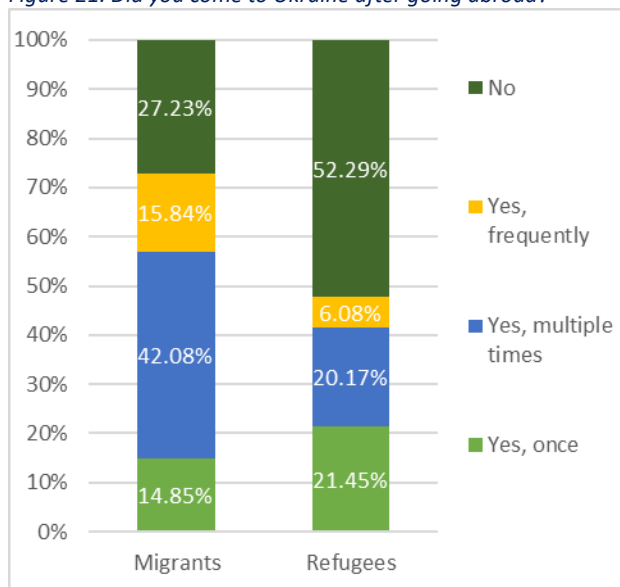
«I know all news from Ukraine, that is, I wake up and the first thing I do is open my phone and read everything that happens in Ukraine, and it happens at any time of the day, twelve, two o'clock, day, evening, night, doesn't matter...»

A refugee from Donetsk and Kharkov in Germany, 51 years old

follow the news, communicate with relatives and friends, and keep a Ukrainian phone number. Even those who have already decided not to return to Ukraine follow the events and keep in touch with their loved ones. Some of the refugees donate money and give humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian army.

Only 27% of the pre-war migrants never came to Ukraine after moving to Poland¹⁸. Most often, migrants indicate that they came several times (42%) (Figure 21). Refugees, on the other hand, visited Ukraine less frequently, less than half came after leaving Poland. Of those who came, 45% did so only once.

Figure 21. Did you come to Ukraine after going abroad?

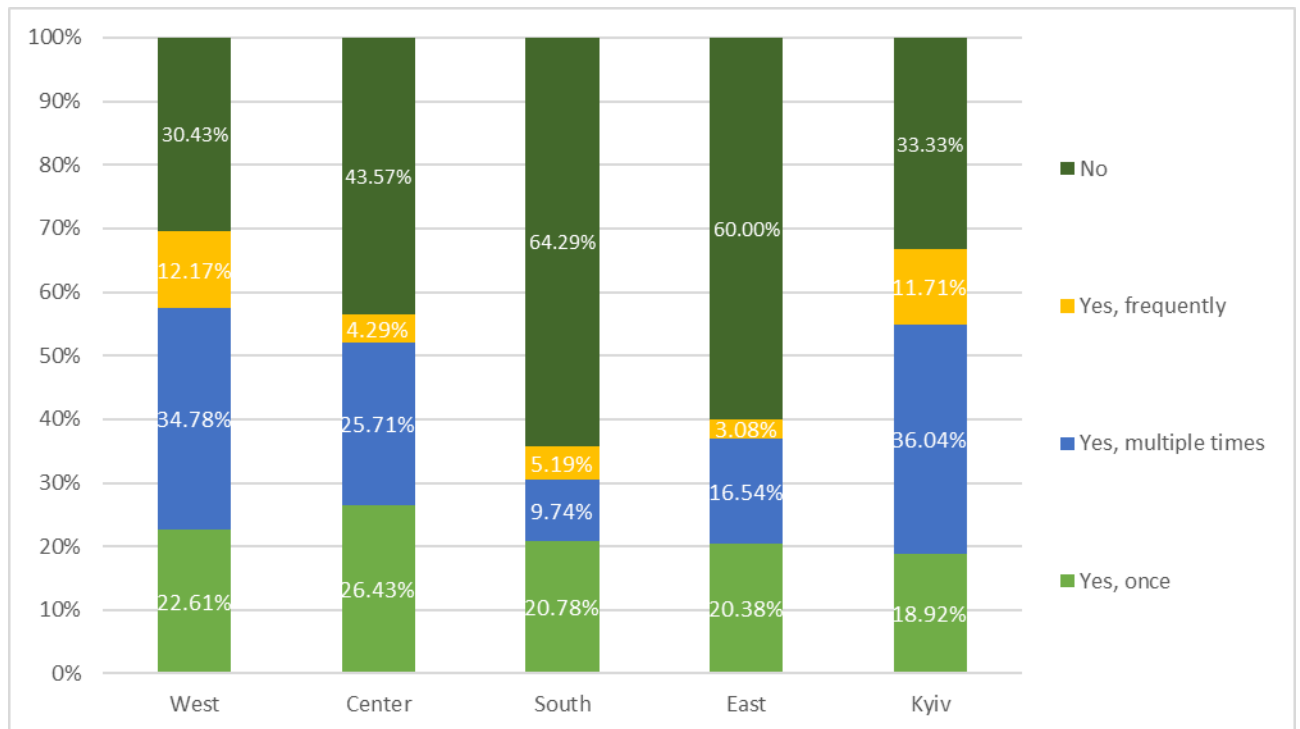


Men come to Ukraine much less frequently than women. This is very likely due to the impossibility of re-exiting. However, among migrants, the share of men who were in Ukraine (not necessarily during martial law) is significantly higher than among refugees: 59% of male migrants and 83% female migrants were in Ukraine at least once after moving abroad; among refugees the numbers are 21% and 57% respectively.

Refugees' visits to Ukraine strongly depend on the region from which they come (Figure 22). 64% from the South and 60% from the East never came to Ukraine, compared to 30% to 44% for the West, the Center and Kyiv.

¹⁸ The visit did not necessarily happen after February 2022.

Figure 22. Refugee visits to Ukraine after the start of the full-scale invasion by region of origin



There is no significant difference in visits by refugees to Ukraine depending on age, income, and having relatives in Ukraine.

«I was happy to be at home. But I was stunned by how things have changed here. I have arrived and there were barricades on the streets; sacks on sculptures in the city center; hedgehogs from steel. And it all looks very scary. Roadblocks. I was a little shocked. Also, people — they have become very depressed. »

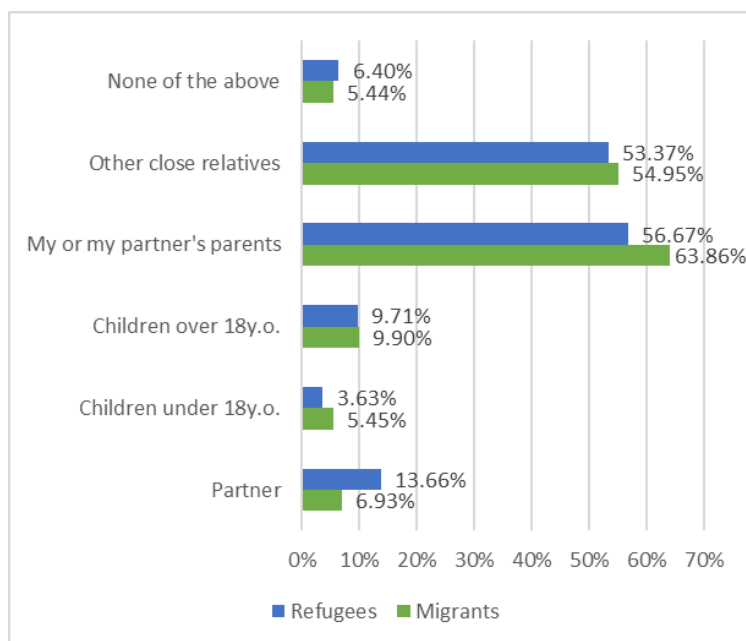
A refugee from Lviv in Poland, 21 years old, returned

Many of those who visited Ukraine say that their city has changed a lot — many people left, many new arrived; people also changed because of the war.

4.2. Relatives in Ukraine and studying in Ukrainian schools

Almost all Ukrainians in Poland have close relatives in Ukraine (Figure 23. Having close relatives in Ukraine (respondents could choose several options, so the sum does not equal 100%))

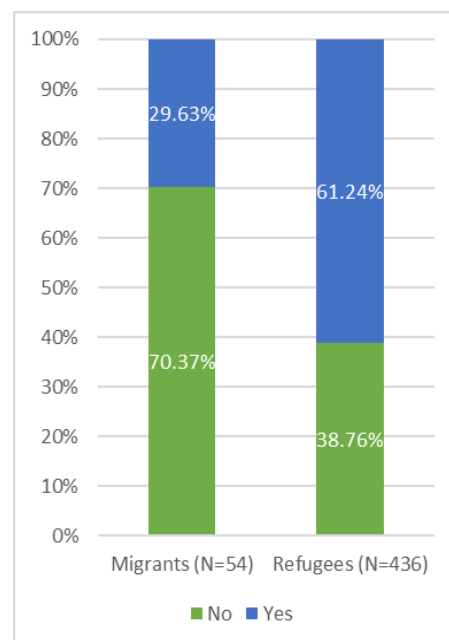
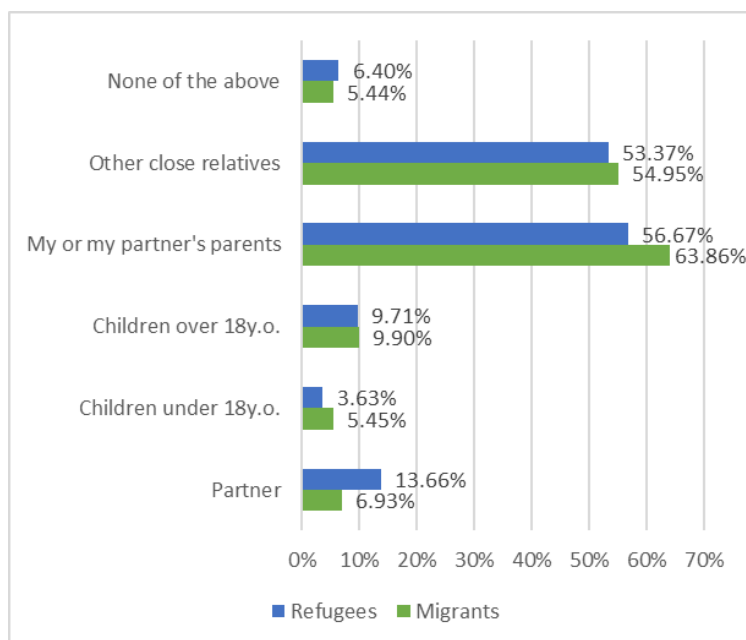
HOW UKRAINIANS ABROAD KEEP CONNECTIONS WITH THE HOMELAND



). Most often, these are respondent's or her partner's parents. Only 6 % of Ukrainians say that none of their close relatives live in Ukraine. Refugees more often than migrants have a husband or wife living in Ukraine, 14% and 7%, respectively.

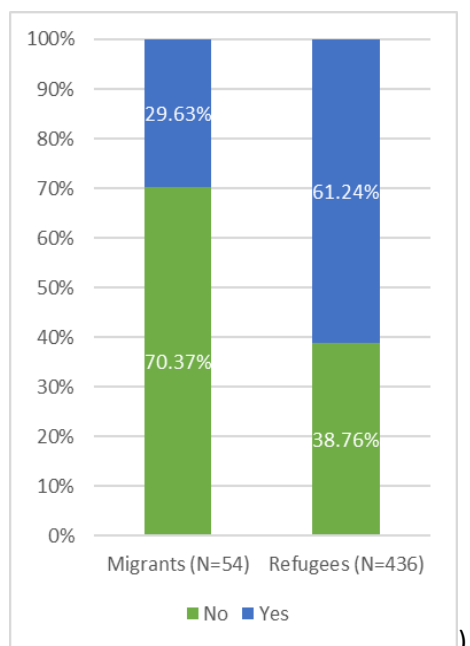
Figure 23. Having close relatives in Ukraine (respondents could choose several options, so the sum does not equal 100%)

Figure 24. Remote education of children in Ukrainian schools (% of those with school-age children)



Ukrainians in Poland also keep connection with homeland through remote education of children in Ukrainian schools. 61% of refugees with school-age children indicate that their children study online in Ukrainian schools. Among migrants, this share is lower, 30% (Figure 24. Remote education of children in Ukrainian schools (% of those with school-age children))

HOW UKRAINIANS ABROAD KEEP CONNECTIONS WITH THE HOMELAND



Thus, Ukrainians who came to Poland before and during the war maintain close contacts with Ukraine. The main reason for this is that many of them have close relatives in Ukraine, as well as friends, colleagues, and friends of their children. Only 6% of those living in Poland do not have close relatives in Ukraine. Almost half of refugees and three-quarters of migrants came to Ukraine at least once after leaving, most often they are people from Western Ukraine or Kyiv. Also, 60% of refugees indicate that their children study remotely in Ukrainian schools.

5. WAR EXPERIENCE AND VISION OF THE FUTURE

5.1. War experience

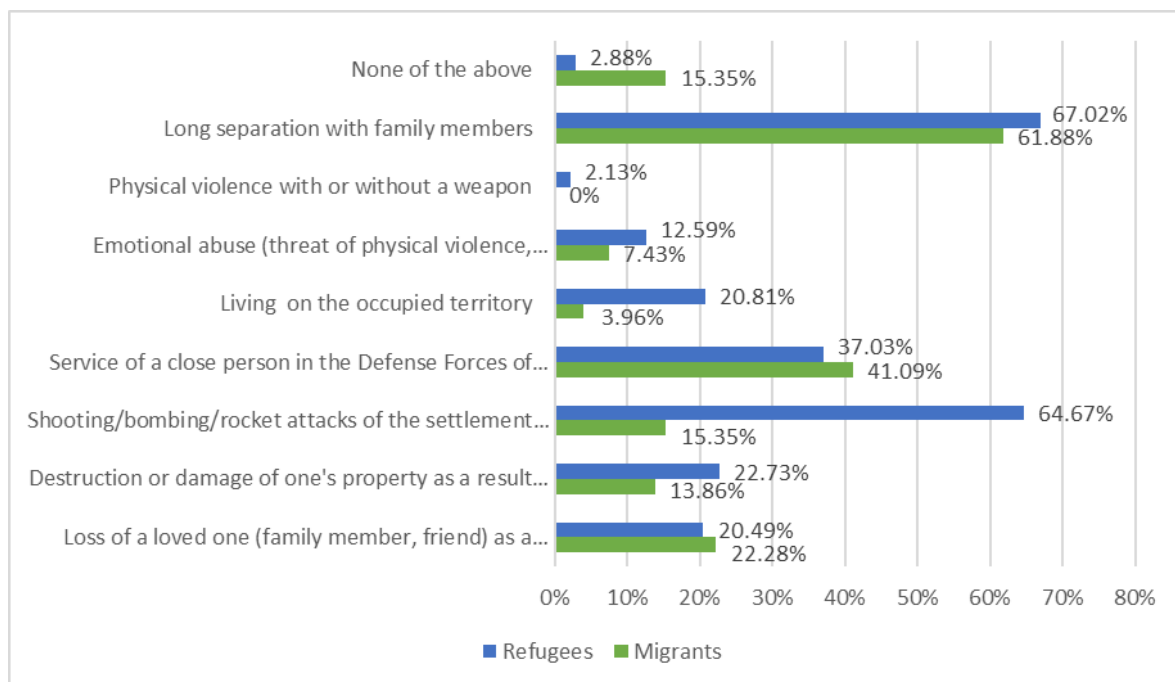
Most Ukrainians who currently live in Poland had some war experience. At the same time, even those who went abroad before the full-scale invasion were significantly affected by the war. Only 3% of refugees and 15% of migrants answered that they did not encounter any of the listed events (*Figure 25*). The most popular answer was being separated from their family members (67% of refugees and 62% of migrants).

If we consider the events that took place on the territory of Ukraine, then, of course, refugees had to face them much more often:

- *shooting/bombing/rocket attacks of the settlement in which I was at that time* — 65% refugees and 15% migrants;
- *living on the occupied territory* — 21% and 4%, respectively;
- *emotional violence* (threat of physical violence, humiliation, intimidation) — 13% and 7%, respectively;
- *physical violence with or without a weapon* — 2% of refugees and none of migrants.

The ‘non-direct’ consequences of war affected all Ukrainians to a similar extent. 37% of refugees and 41% of migrants have relatives who serve in the Defense Forces of Ukraine (which consist of Armed Forces, National Guard, Military Police, etc.). 20% refugees and 22% migrants lost a loved one because of Russia's military aggression. 23% refugees and 14% migrants have had their property damaged or destroyed in Ukraine.

Figure 25. Which of the following events did you experience after the full-scale invasion began? (respondents could choose several options, so the sum is not equal to 100%)



WAR EXPERIENCE AND VISION OF THE FUTURE

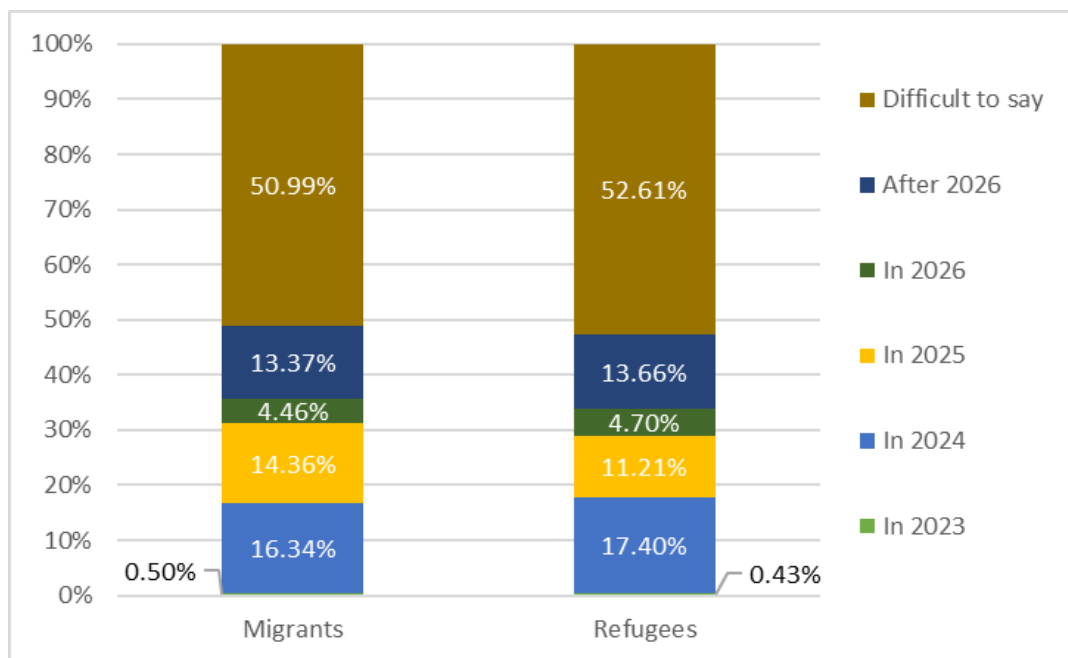
During the in-depth interviews, even women who left in the first days of the Russian invasion say that they faced the reality of war. They shared that they have heard explosions or shelling, saw military equipment and planes, some slept in the basement or the subway.

For some Ukrainians, this experience had serious long-term health consequences, for example, a respondent from Zaporizhzhia, who left for Poland, said that the sound of an air-raid alarm "provokes a heart attack", and, as long as the sirens are heard in Ukraine, she will definitely not return. Others, on the other hand, adapted to a new reality in Ukraine. *"People get used to everything. Well, it was weird, when in the beginning these air alarms started. Now when you come to Ukraine and hear air alarms, well, whatever. Yes, Shahed¹⁹ is flying somewhere. Well, okay, it can hit the building..."* (female refugee from Lviv in Germany, 43 years old).

5.2. The image of the future

For Ukrainians abroad, the question of when and how the war will end is key to building their post-migration strategies. At the same time, for most of them, the question "When do you think the war will end?" is extremely difficult to answer, more than half choose the option "difficult to answer" (Figure 26). Among those who chose an option other than "difficult to answer", a positive view prevails: 33% of migrants and 36% of refugees think the war will end in 2024. More than a quarter of Ukrainians in Poland expect the war to be long and end after 2026 (27% of migrants and 29% of refugees).

Figure 26. When do you think the war will end?



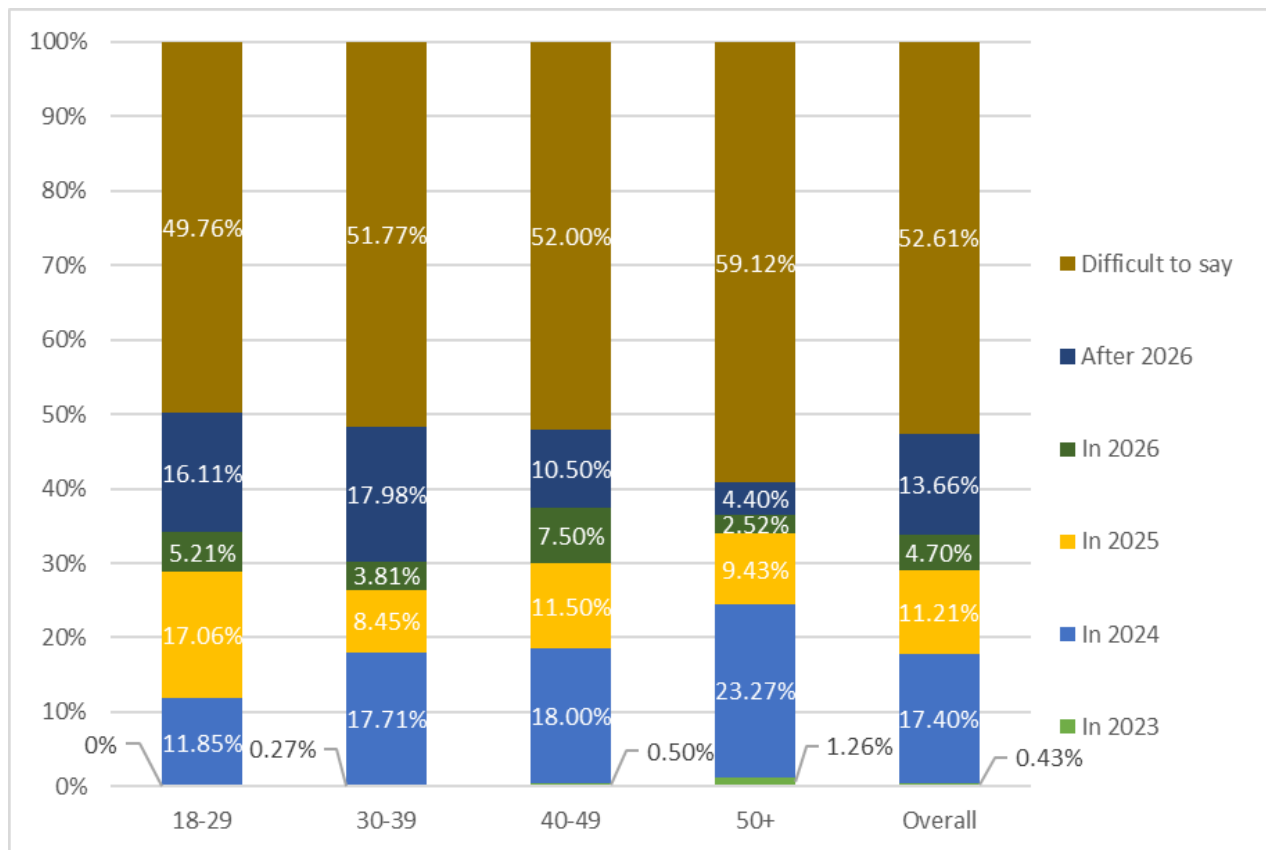
The older respondents are more optimistic about the end of the war. Almost a quarter (23%) of refugees aged 50+ believe that the war will end in 2024, young people (18-29 years) are less optimistic — only 12%

¹⁹ A type of kamikaze drone

WAR EXPERIENCE AND VISION OF THE FUTURE

believe in the end of the war in 2024 (Figure 27). At the same time, 16% of young people and 4% of those aged 50+ think that the war will end after 2026. Uncertainty also increases with the age, the 50+ group has the highest share of "difficult to answer" answers (59%).

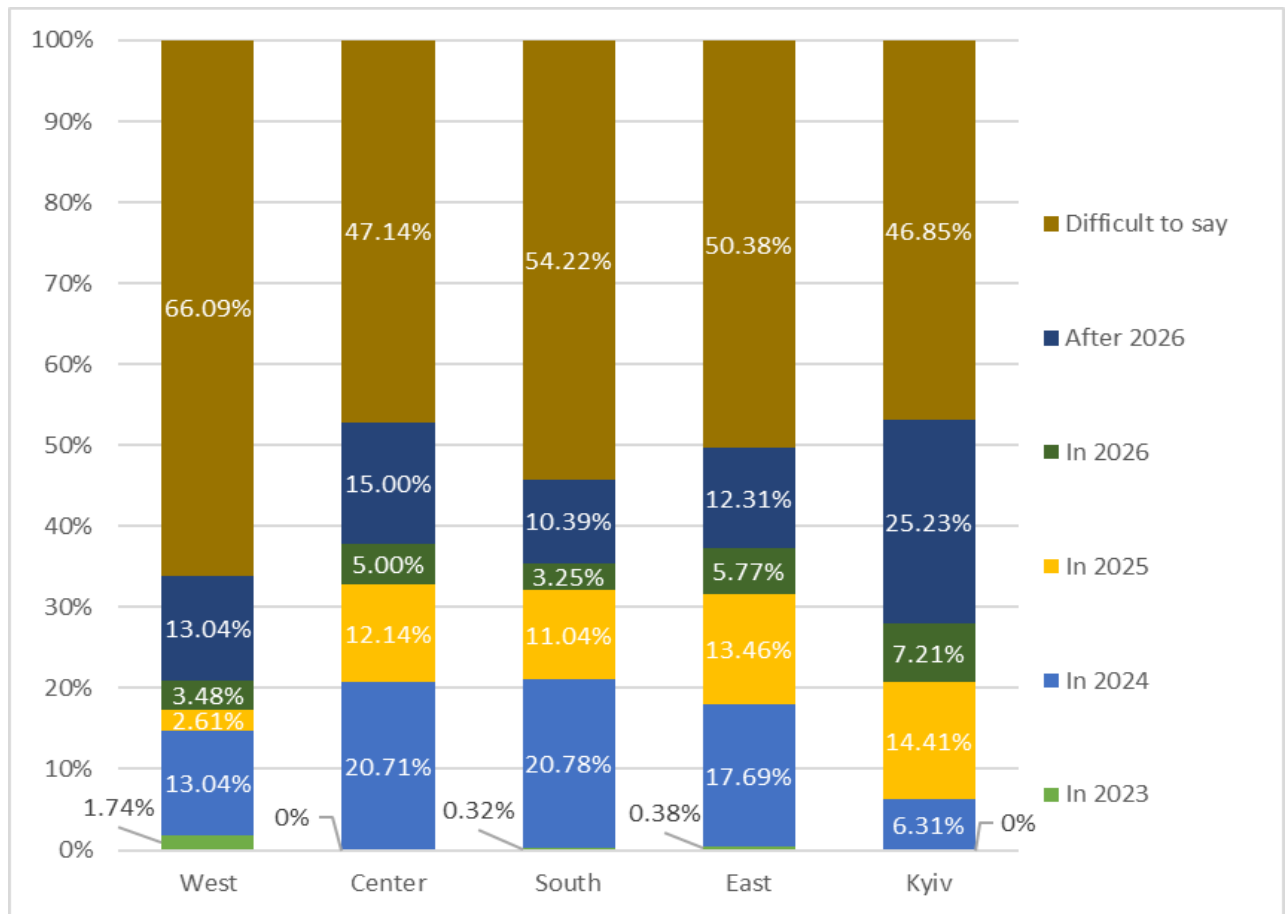
Figure 27. Refugees' perception of the end of the war depending on age



There is a significant difference in the answers depending on the region from which the respondents came (Figure 28). Refugees from the Center and the South are more likely to believe the war might end in 2024. The most pessimistic refugees are from Kyiv, one in four think the war will last longer than 2026, and the smallest share of all regional categories (6%) think the war will end in 2024.

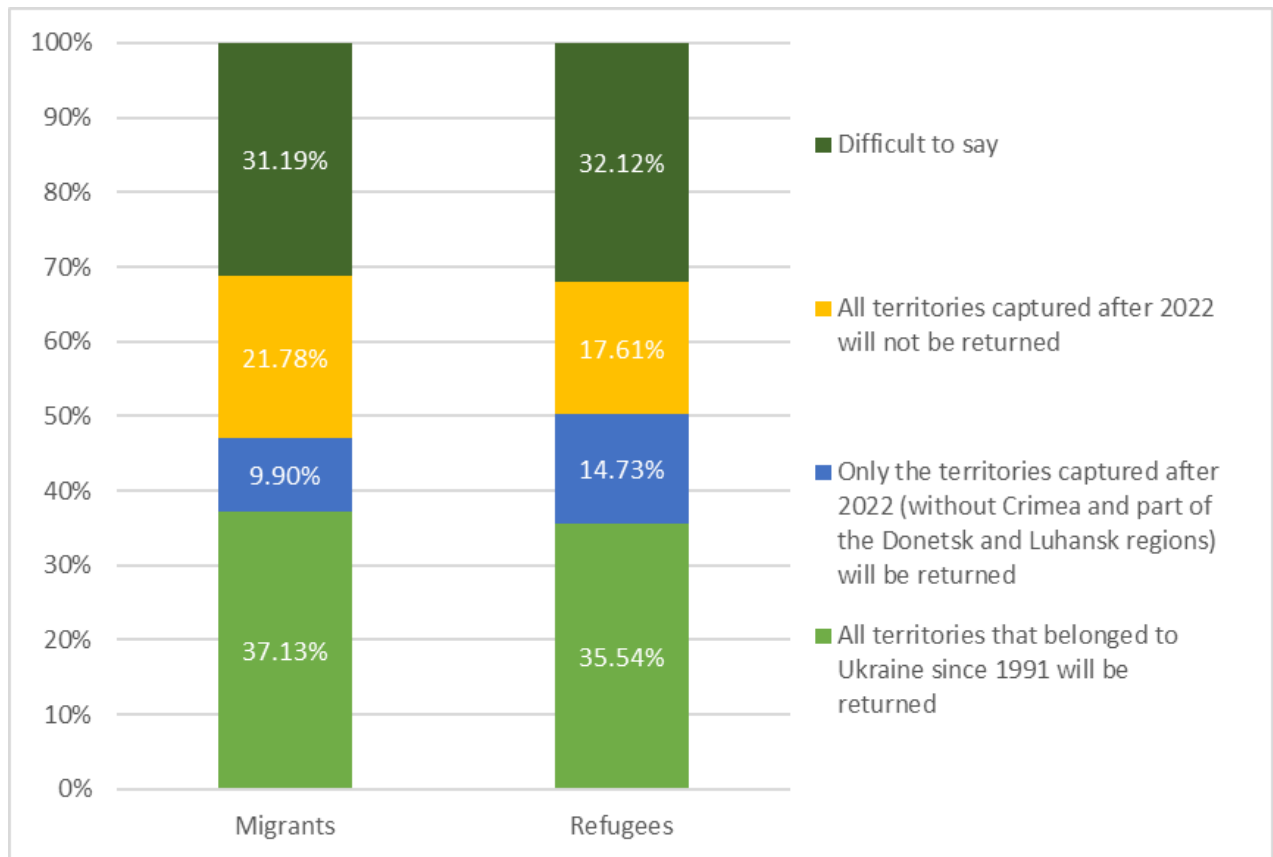
There is no significant difference in answers by gender and financial situation.

Figure 28. Refugees' perception of the end of the war depending on the region of origin



More than a third of respondents (36%) believe that Ukraine will return all territories that belonged to it since 1991 (Figure 29). 18% believe that Ukraine will not be able to return under its control even the territories occupied after February 24, 2022. Migrants and refugees give very similar answers to this question.

Figure 29. Do you think that Ukraine will be able to return the occupied territories?



Among refugees, men have a more pessimistic view — 27% believe that Ukraine will not be able to return even the territories occupied after 2022, compared to 15% of women, who share this opinion.

Refugees from the West and Center are more likely to believe in the return of all territories (approximately 40%), the least — from Kyiv (27%) ([Figure 30. Refugees’ view on the return of occupied territories depending on the region of origin](#))

WAR EXPERIENCE AND VISION OF THE FUTURE

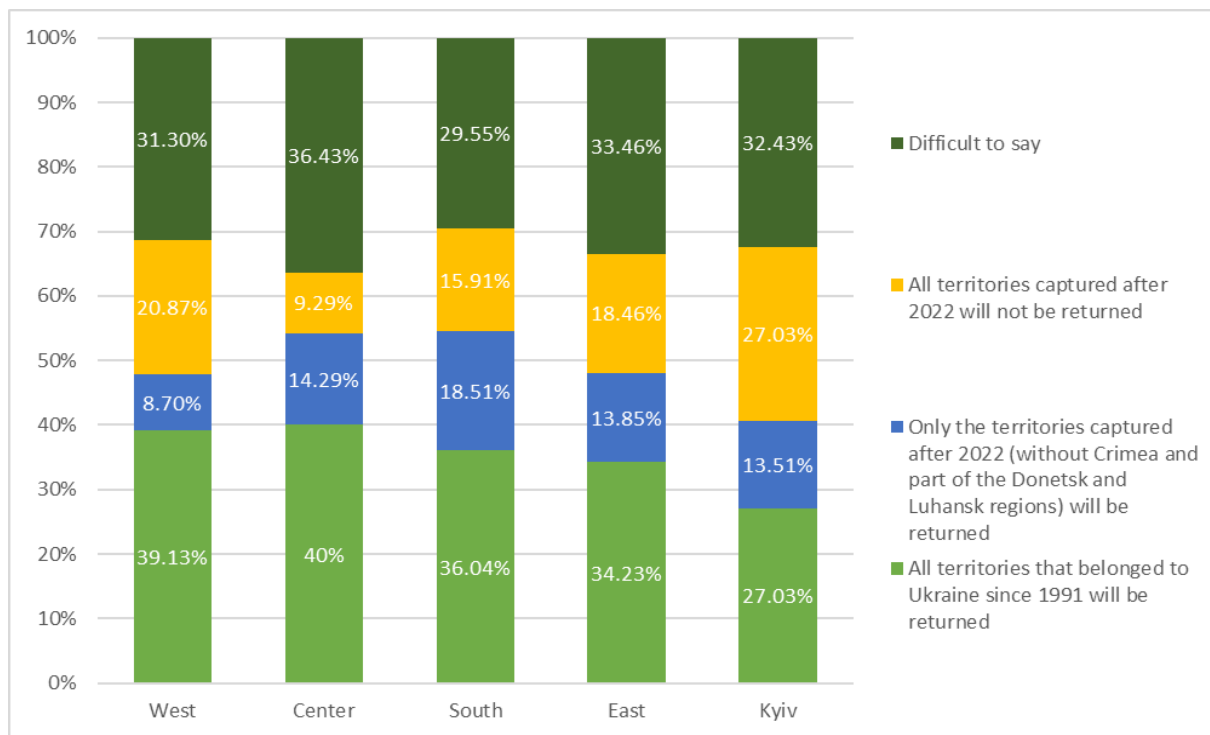
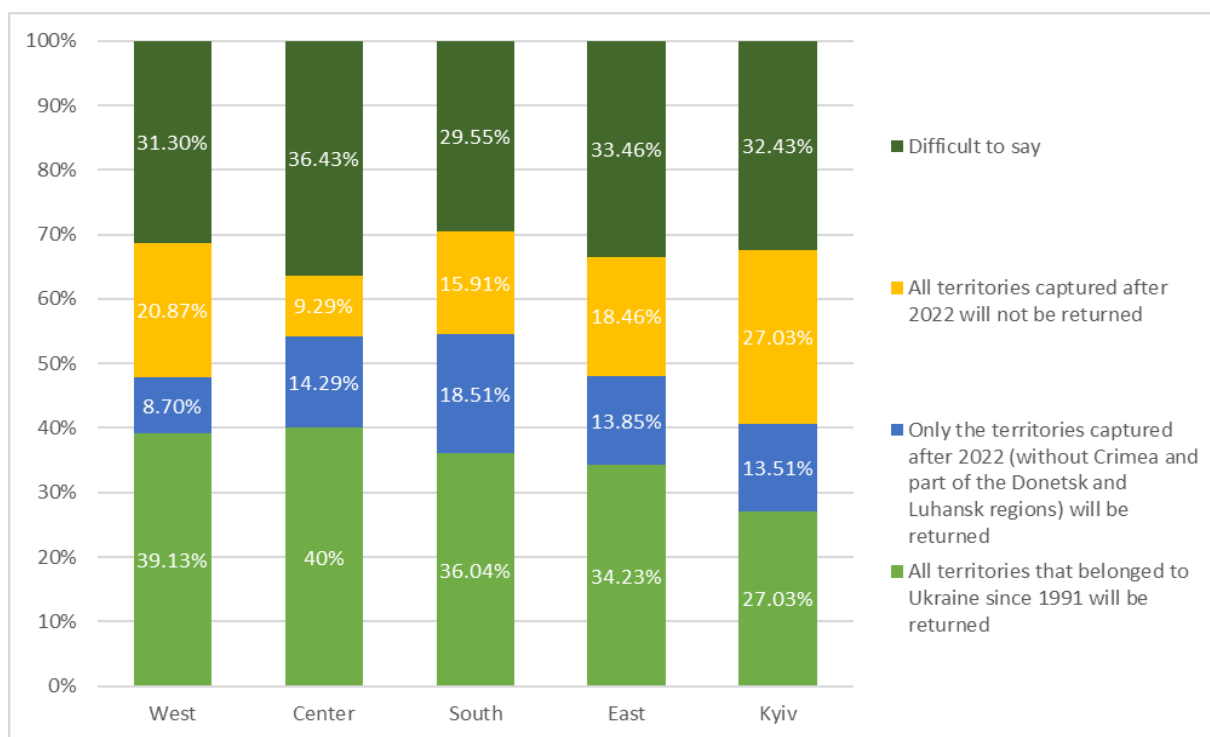
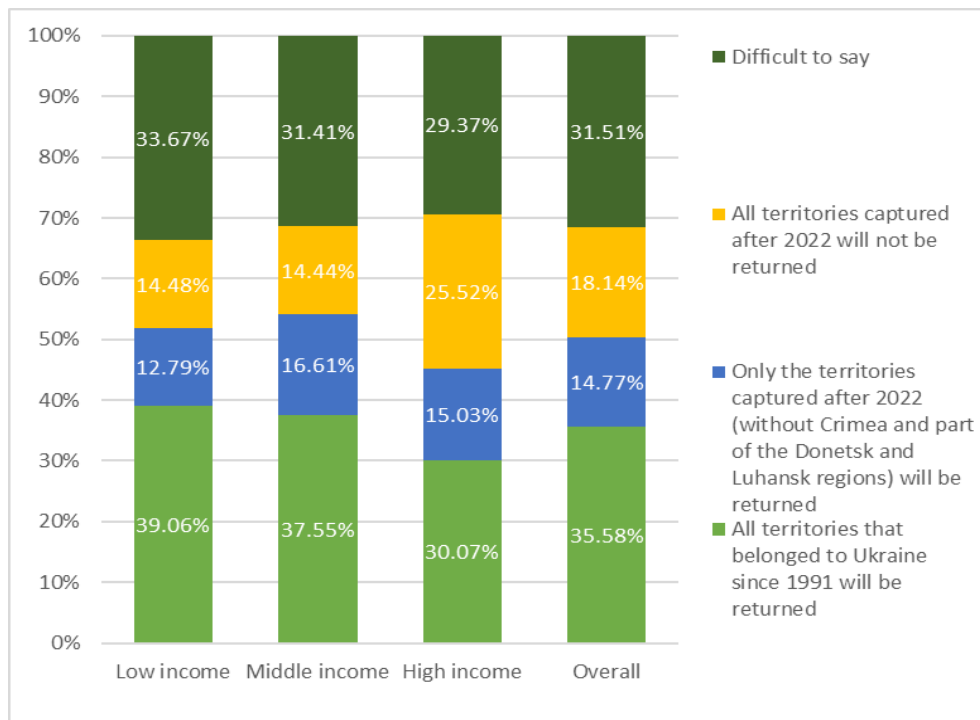


Figure 30. Refugees' view on the return of occupied territories depending on the region of origin



There is also a significant difference in the answers depending on the financial situation. Respondents from the two richest categories, who can buy expensive things or make any purchases, believe less in the liberation of occupied territories (Figure 31).

Figure 31. Refugees' view on the return of the occupied territories depending on the financial situation



During in-depth interviews, Ukrainian women demonstrated a very optimistic view of Ukraine's future. Two-thirds of respondents say that Ukraine will definitely win the war, others are ready for negative scenarios when part of the Ukrainian territory remains under Russian occupation.

«I think that it would be cool to live in Ukraine after the war. If there were at least some victory. [...] New organizations would be created. People with experience would come. Well, the Europeans would help and would be interested in Ukraine catching up to their level. I think it would be interesting and cool.»

Refugee woman from Lviv in Germany, 43 years old

Almost everyone believes that the war will last long but define "long" differently. For example, a 40-year-old returnee from Kyiv said "I think the war will not end soon [...] maybe it will be in a year." Another returnee from Okhlyrka (Sumy oblast²⁰) believes that the war will last "for a long [...] fifteen to twenty years."

At the same time, 11 out of 15 respondents, including those who admit that Ukraine may lose, have an optimistic view of the post-war reconstruction in case of Ukraine's victory. They believe that in this case, Ukraine will be able to rebuild everything and, in a short period (most often they mentioned a period of 5 to 10 years) the standards of living will be higher, than before the war. Refugees who do not hope for a quick recovery often said that corruption would stand in the way.

²⁰ Administrative Region of Ukraine (NUTS 2)

Almost all Ukrainians in Poland felt the effects of war, even those who left before the full-scale invasion. Only 3% of refugees and 15% of migrants did not experience significant losses or traumatic events. Every fifth Ukrainian in Poland lost a loved one in the war, 40% had a loved one who served or is currently serving in the Defense Forces of Ukraine.

The question of the duration of the war is extremely difficult for Ukrainians, more than half cannot answer it. Among the possible scenarios, the most popular is the end of the war in 2024. Older people and refugees from the Center and the South are the most optimistic about the end of the war.

Ukrainians are quite positive about Ukraine's chances to return all occupied territories — more than half, who decided on the answer, believe that Ukraine will be able to return all the territories that belonged to it since 1991.

Ukrainians are also optimistic about the post-war reconstruction. Most believe that Europe will help Ukraine in rebuilding and in 5-10 years life in Ukraine will be better than before the war.

6. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EMOTIONS OF UKRAINIANS ABROAD

6.1. Homesickness and hope for a better future. What do Ukrainians feel in Poland?

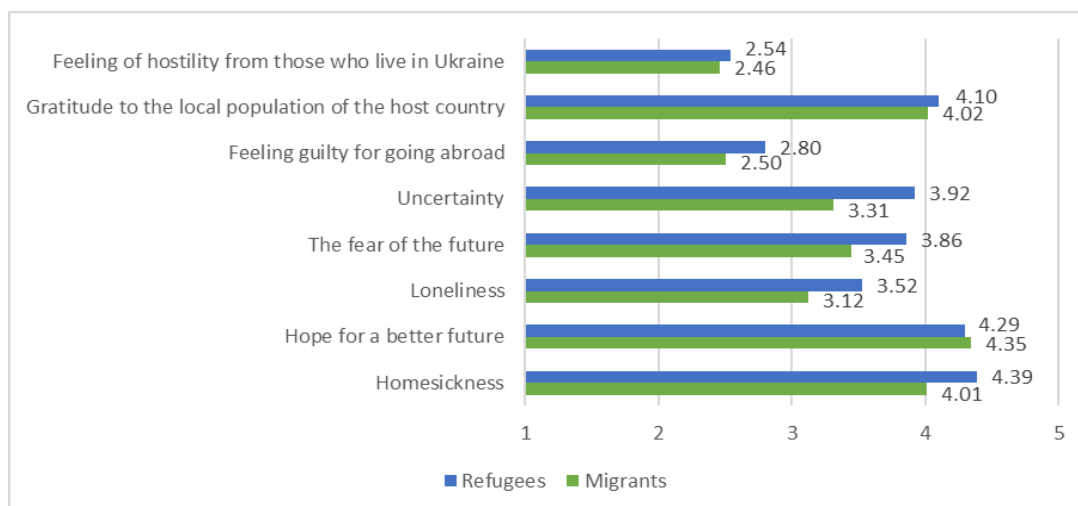
Evidence from previous studies show that among the reasons for returning, for both regular and forced migrants, there are not only demographic and financial factors, but also "intangible" ones — feelings, emotions, and a sense of national identity²¹.

Our survey included questions about how often respondents have various feelings:

- *About the current state:* homesickness, loneliness;
- *Related to the future:* hope for a better future feeling of uncertainty, fear of the future;
- *Related to other people:* feeling guilty for going abroad, gratitude to the local population of the host country, a feeling of hostility from those who live in Ukraine.

It is interesting that despite the different time and motivation of coming to Poland, the feelings of refugees and migrants are very similar. Most often they feel homesickness (4.39 and 4.01, respectively), hope for a better future (4.29 and 4.35) and gratitude to the local population of the host country (4.10 and 4.02)²² (Figure 32). Even migrants who moved to Poland six or more years before the full-scale invasion (that is, they lived there for more than 8 years at the time of the survey) have a homesickness score of 3.86, meaning almost everyone indicates that they feel homesick often.

Figure 32. Rate how often you have the following feelings (1-never, 5-always)



²¹ See, for example,

1) Hagen-Zanker, J., & Hennessey, G. (2021). What Do We Know about the Subjective and Intangible Factors That Shape Migration Decision-Making? PRIO Paper. Oslo: PRIO;

2) Kļave, E., Šūpule, I. (2019). Return Migration Process in Policy and Practice. In: Kaša, R., Mieriņa, I. (eds) The Emigrant Communities of Latvia. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham.

²² For each feeling, the respondents had to choose one of the answer options: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), always (5).

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EMOTIONS OF UKRAINIANS ABROAD

The second group in terms of response frequency is feeling of uncertainty (3.92 and 3.31, respectively), fear of the future (3.86 and 3.45) and loneliness (3.52 and 3.12). Refugees exhibit these feelings more often than migrants.

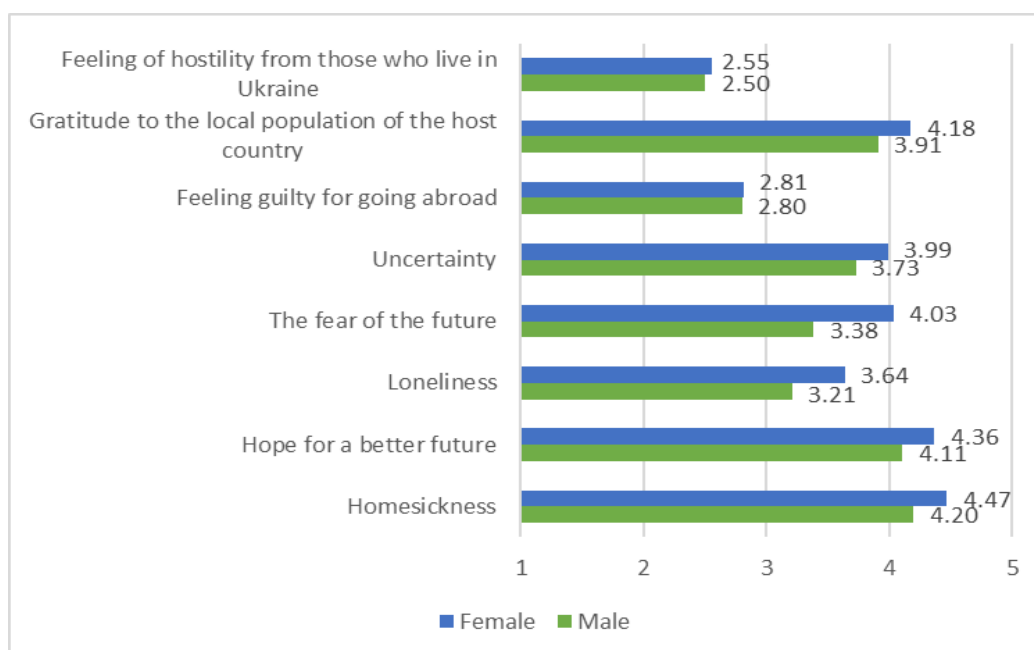
The third group of feelings, which the respondents feel most rarely: guilt for having gone abroad (2.80 and 2.50) and hostile attitude from those who live in Ukraine (2.54 and 2.46).

Feelings do not change significantly over time: among refugees who arrived in different waves (February–March 2022, April–September 2022, October 2022–February 2023, March–December 2023), the difference in responses is on average 0.11, with a maximum difference of 0.38.

Among migrants who arrived at different times (1 year, 2–3 years, 4–5 and more than 6 years before the invasion) there is no correlation between the level of feelings and the time spent abroad. The average difference in answers is 0.27, the maximum difference is 0.64.

So, despite migrants and refugees left Ukraine at different times and for different reasons, they experience very similar feelings, the strongest of which is homesickness.

Figure 33. Predominance of feelings among refugees depending on gender (1 - never, 5 - always)



Among refugees, there is a significant difference in responses depending on gender — women experience all feelings more often than men (Figure 33).

There is no significant difference in answers by age, region of origin, and financial status.

«[I missed] native air. Everything is foreign there [in Germany] [...], I'd rather walk here [in Ukraine] in galoshes than live in Germany.»

Refugee from Mangush (Donetsk oblast) in Germany, returned, 33 years old

In-depth interviews confirm that almost all refugees feel nostalgic and homesick. For some, these feelings became the main motive to return to Ukraine (more details in Section 0). Respondents interpret "homesickness" in different ways. They often cannot specify what exactly they miss and

provide rather abstract answers. For example: *"Everything is different here [in Germany], everything is not familiar. I really want to go home, of course"* (a refugee from Kostyantynivka (Donetsk oblast) in Germany, 43 years old). Among the factors that Ukrainian refugees miss while living abroad are the following:

- Familiar environment (understandable/acceptable rules of life, familiar lifestyle)
 - *"I missed everything. I didn't have a specific reason. I didn't even want to go [abroad]... I missed people, Ukrainian life, our mentality, everything, literally. I was so happy to come home. When you arrive and realize this is where I belong to. Because, no matter what, a foreign country is a foreign country. There, I lived according to someone else's rules, there is a slightly different standard of living and different rules of life. And they are not bad in principle, but... it's just a matter of habit"* (Returnee from Lviv, 21 years old).
- Native culture (language environment, traditions, church)
 - *"Because I got used there [in Ukraine]. And it doesn't feel like home here. [I miss] the fact that you go out and say "good morning" in [Ukrainian], and not in Polish. It's better there [at home]"* (Refugee from Lviv in Poland, 20 years old).
- Your own home (where everything is earned by your own efforts, where the living space is built according to your own needs and tastes)
 - *"Well, the house in which you were born and lived all your life. I do not know. Something very familiar, warm. Even here, we live in an apartment — a bright, warm, normal, quiet, and beautiful apartment, but I don't call it a house"* (Refugee from Odesa in Poland, 50 years old).
- Favorite city, nature of hometown
 - *"We have such a nature! [...] I found out what beautiful cities we have. What lakes we have, what quarries we have"* (Returnee from Okhtyrka (Sumy oblast), 33 years old).
- A place full of memories
- Close people.

The respondents also admit ups and downs in their emotions: *"Emotionally — there are waves. Everything is fine, everything is great, I like everything, and then bang — I want to go home"* (refugee from Odesa in Poland, 50 years old).

6.2. A sense of national identity

To measure the sense of national identity and pride for one's country, we adopted questions from *The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)*²³ – international research on various social topics, which has been conducted since 1984 in many countries of the world. Polls in 1995, 2003 and 2013 were devoted to the topic of national identity. We used questions from the 2013 survey.

The first block of questions is aimed at determining the sense of national identity based on characteristics that the respondent can influence, that is, consciously change throughout life, so we call this variable *"acquired identity"*. The second block of questions defines identity characteristics that are usually difficult to influence, so we called this variable *"endowed identity"* (*Table 1*).

²³ <https://issp.org/>

Table 1. Questions to measure two types of national identity

Acquired identity	Endowed identity
Some people say that the following things are important for being truly Ukrainian. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?	Some people say that the following things are important for being truly Ukrainian. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?
to be able to speak Ukrainian	to have been in born in Ukraine
to be Christian	to have Ukrainian citizenship
to respect Ukrainian political institutions and laws	to live in Ukraine for most of one’s life
to feel Ukrainian	to have Ukrainian ancestry

For each statement, respondents chose one of the options: "very important", "quite important", "not very important", "not at all important", "difficult to answer". We then recoded the responses into a binary variable, where "very important" and "somewhat important" are equal to 1, and all other responses are equal to 0. After that, we summed up the responses to each statement and thus obtained a measure of "acquired" and "endowed" identity for each respondent, which can take values from 0 to 4.

On [Figure 34](#) and [Figure 35](#) the distributions of these variables for migrants and refugees are shown. There is no significant difference in the perception of identity between these groups. In general, respondents consider "acquired" identity more important than "endowed".

Figure 34. Feeling of "acquired" identity among migrants and refugees

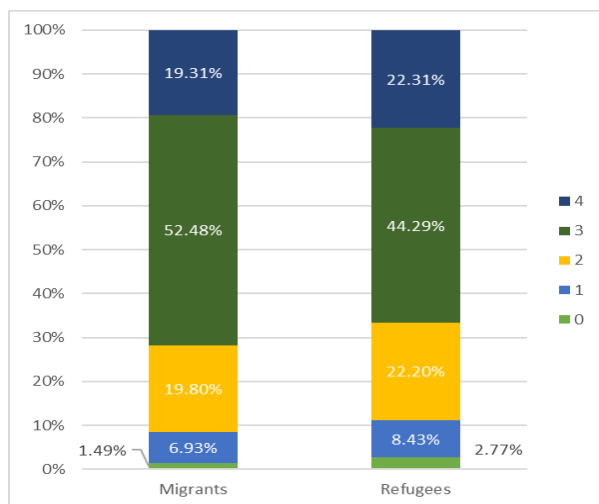
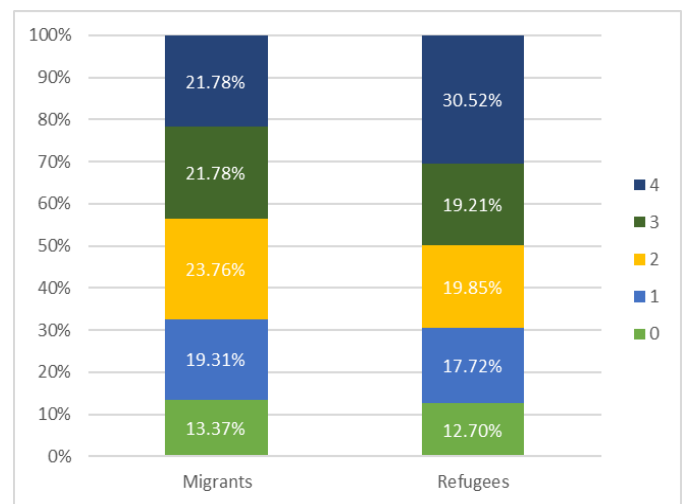


Figure 35. Feeling of "endowed" identity among migrants and refugees



For the "acquired" identity, consisting of four components, respondents consider "feeling Ukrainian" the most important — 90% of respondents chose "fairly important" or "very important". For "endowed" identity, the most important criterion is having Ukrainian citizenship — 74% of respondents chose the answers "fairly important" or "very important".

We also measured feelings of pride for one's country using questions from *ISSP* ([Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Questions to measure pride for their country

Pride for one's country
How proud are you of Ukraine in each of the following?
how democracy works
its political influence in the world
Ukraine's economic achievements
its social security system
its scientific and technological achievements
its achievements in sports
its achievements in the arts and literature
Armed Forces of Ukraine
its history
its fair and equal treatment of all groups in society

For each statement, respondents had to choose among the following options: "very proud", "somewhat proud", "not very proud", "not proud at all", "difficult to answer". In further analysis, we created a binary variable of pride — pride index. Answers to each question on pride were recoded and then summed up, resulting in an index ranging from 0 (not proud at all) to 10 (totally proud of their country). Each answer "very proud" or "somewhat proud" was recoded as "1" and all other answers as "0". For the convenience of calculations and comparisons, we recoded the ten-point scale of pride into a three-point scale, where 0-3 from the original scale become "low", 4-7— "moderate", 8-10 "high" degree of pride for Ukraine.

There is no significant difference in the feeling of pride for Ukraine between migrants and refugees ([Figure 36](#) and [Figure 37](#)). Most Ukrainians have a

"medium" level of pride for their country (4-7 points out of 10). 22% of migrants and 26% of refugees have a high level of pride.

During in-depth interviews, about half of the respondents say that before the full-scale invasion, it was

«I have started feeling more Ukrainian [...] I did not think about how much I loved my country before. You just live your life, you know, you are a citizen of this country [...] But now it is important for me to live in Ukraine».

**Returnee from Mangush (Donetsk oblast),
33 years old**

important for them to feel Ukrainians. Some did not think about it. Respondents rarely admitted that nationality was not important for them.

On the other hand, after the invasion, the feeling of patriotism increased in most of the study participants. This is most often reported by those who have returned to Ukraine or intend to do so.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EMOTIONS OF UKRAINIANS ABROAD

Figure 36. Feeling of pride for Ukraine among migrants and refugees (on a 10-point scale)

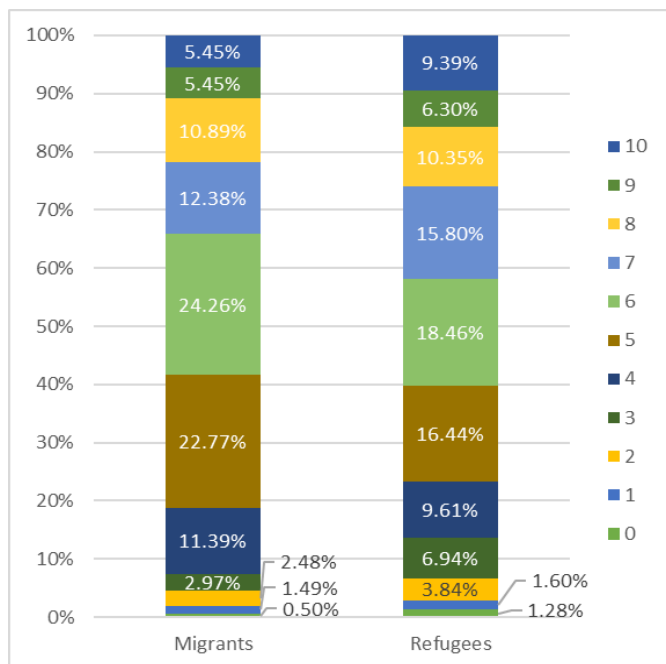
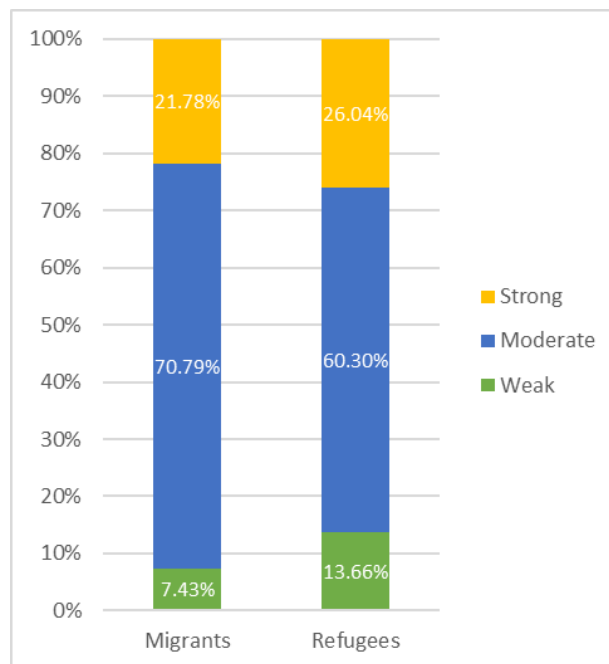


Figure 37. Feeling of pride for Ukraine among migrants and refugees (on a 3-point scale)



Ukrainians who came to Poland before and after the full-scale invasion experience very similar emotions. Most often, refugees mention feeling homesickness, and it almost does not change over time in Poland. More than 60% of refugees always feel homesick. For migrants, hope for a better future is the prevailing emotion — 56% always have this feeling. For both migrants and forced migrants "hope for a better future" is more prevalent feeling than "fear about the future" and feeling of "uncertainty".

The data shows that Ukrainians in Poland do not feel hostile towards themselves from those who live in Ukraine, on average the answers are between "rarely" and "sometimes". Ukrainians abroad have a high sense of national identity, especially "acquired". There is almost no difference in identity between migrants and refugees. Some began to feel their Ukrainian identity more after moving abroad, finding themselves in a new environment.

7. REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

According to the results of a **Vox Ukraine** study, based on survey data by the sociological company *Factum Group*, as of August 2023, 63% of those who left abroad after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion returned to Ukraine²⁴. Ukrainian and European researchers try to estimate how many more refugees could return home. Data from various studies show that approximately half of the refugees report their desire to return, 20-30% have not decided, and the rest are inclined to stay and live abroad²⁵.

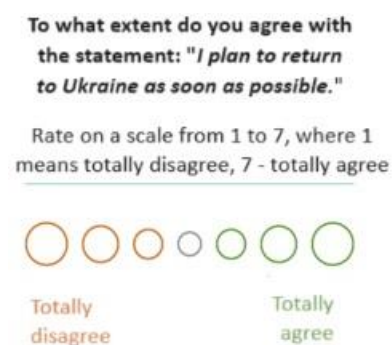
7.1. Willingness to return to Ukraine

To understand the Ukrainians' plans to return, we asked a set of five questions, all related to intentions to return at different points of time or to stay in Poland. The questions were formulated as follows:

To what extent do you agree with the statement:

1. I plan to return to Ukraine as soon as possible.
2. I plan to return to Ukraine in the foreseeable future.
3. Maybe I will return to Ukraine one day.
4. I would like to spend some time in Ukraine (for example, holidays, vacation) while living in Poland.
5. I plan to stay in Poland.

Figure 38. Options of the answer to the question about intentions to return to Ukraine



One more question aimed at identifying the extent to which people are inclined to return if they were offered financial assistance. Question #6 was formulated as following: "Imagine that you are offered a one-time financial aid of 2,000 dollars for each family member to return to Ukraine. Rate to what extent you agree with the statement: "I would accept financial aid and return to Ukraine".

Respondents gave answers to all six questions on a 7-point scale, where 1 means *completely disagree* and 7 — *completely agree*. For the respondents, the answer options were shown as presented in *Figure 38*.

Thus, answers 1-3 presents different degrees of disagreement with the statement, answers 5-7 – different degrees of agreement, and 4 means the respondent is undecided about the

answer.

Between questions #1 ("I plan to return to Ukraine as soon as possible") and #2 ("I plan to return to Ukraine in the near future"), there is a very high correlation of 0.84 (*Table 3*), that is, the respondents understood return "as soon as possible" and "in the foreseeable future" as very similar situations.

²⁴ <https://voxukraine.org/povernutysya-chy-zalyshytysya-yaki-chynnyky-vplyvayut-na-rishennya-ukrayinskyh-bizhentsiv>

²⁵ See, for example, research by the sociological group "Rating" (https://ratinggroup.ua/ru/research/ukraine/vse_vropeyske_dosl_dzhennya_ukra_nc_v_u_vrop.html) and the Center for Economic Strategy (https://ces.org.ua/ukrainian_refugees_third_wave_research/)

Table 3. Correlation between questions about returning intention

	Return ASAP	Return in the foreseeable future	Return one day	Spend time in Ukraine	Accept financial aid and come back	Stay in Poland
Return ASAP	1.00					
Return in the foreseeable future	0.84	1.00				
Return one day	0.30	0.37	1.00			
Spend time in Ukraine	0.62	0.66	0.56	1.00		
Accept financial aid and come back	0.52	0.52	0.25	0.41	1.00	
Stay in Poland	-0.60	-0.54	-0.15	-0.39	-0.35	1.00

The option "come back one day" has a much lower correlation with questions #1 and #2 and in the regression analysis socio-demographic factors explain a very small percentage of the variation in the answers ([Table 5 in Appendix 9.1](#)), which suggests that long-term plans are very uncertain and it is difficult for respondents to answer about their intentions when they do not have a defined time frame.

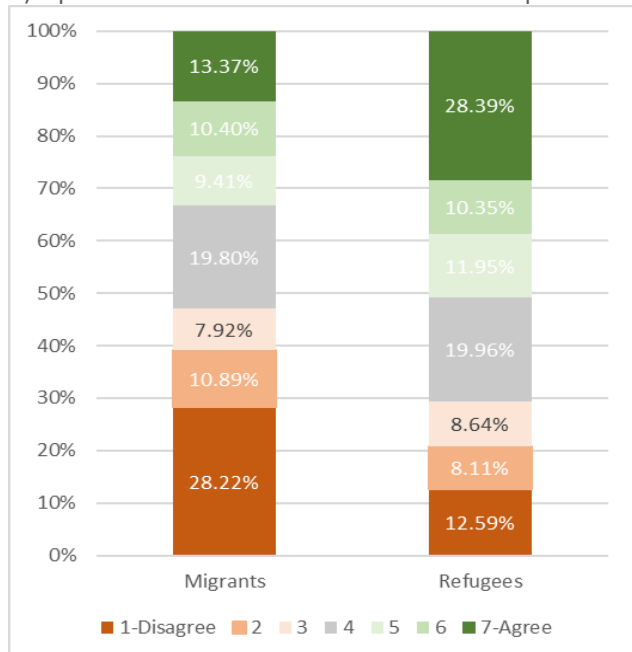
Approximately half of the refugees and a third of migrants show clear intentions to return to Ukraine: 51% of refugees agree with the statement about returning as soon as possible and 53% about returning in the foreseeable future. Among migrants, the shares are 33% and 39%, respectively ([Figure 39a](#), [Figure 39b](#)). 64% of refugees and 55% of migrants say they intend to return one day. In our analysis, we treat respondents who answer negatively to the question about returning one day as those who most likely do not want to return. Such respondents make up 22% of refugees and 32% of migrants.

From 12% to 23% chose the "difficult to answer" option for different question about return. This group of respondents has not yet clearly formed their plans and may be affected by the Ukrainian government's interventions encouraging returning.

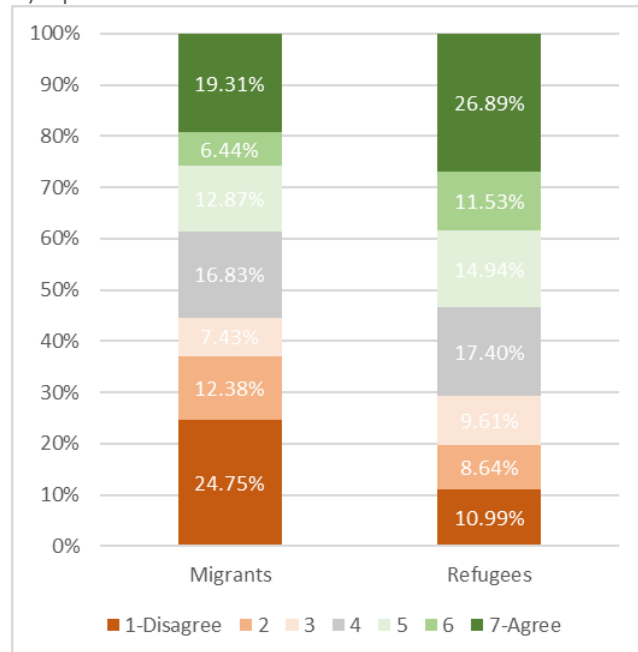
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 39. Distribution of answers to the question: How much do you agree with the statement:

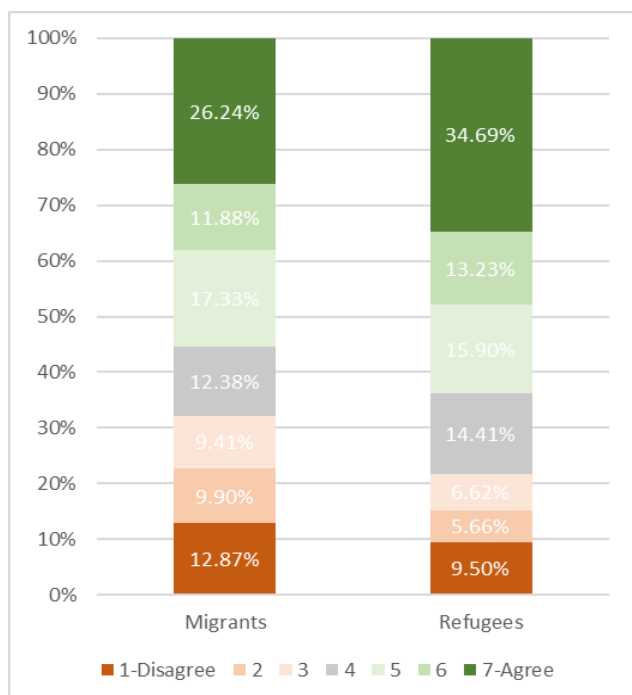
a) I plan to return to Ukraine as soon as possible



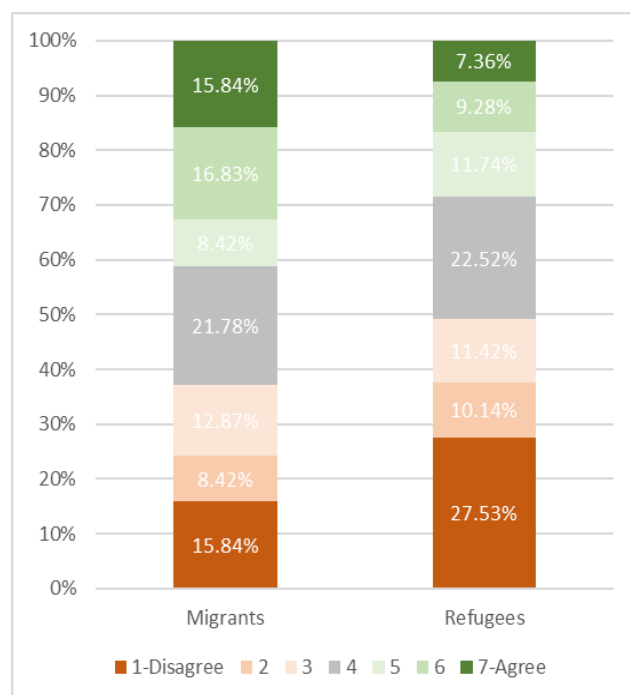
b) I plan to return to Ukraine in the foreseeable future



c) Maybe I will return to Ukraine one day



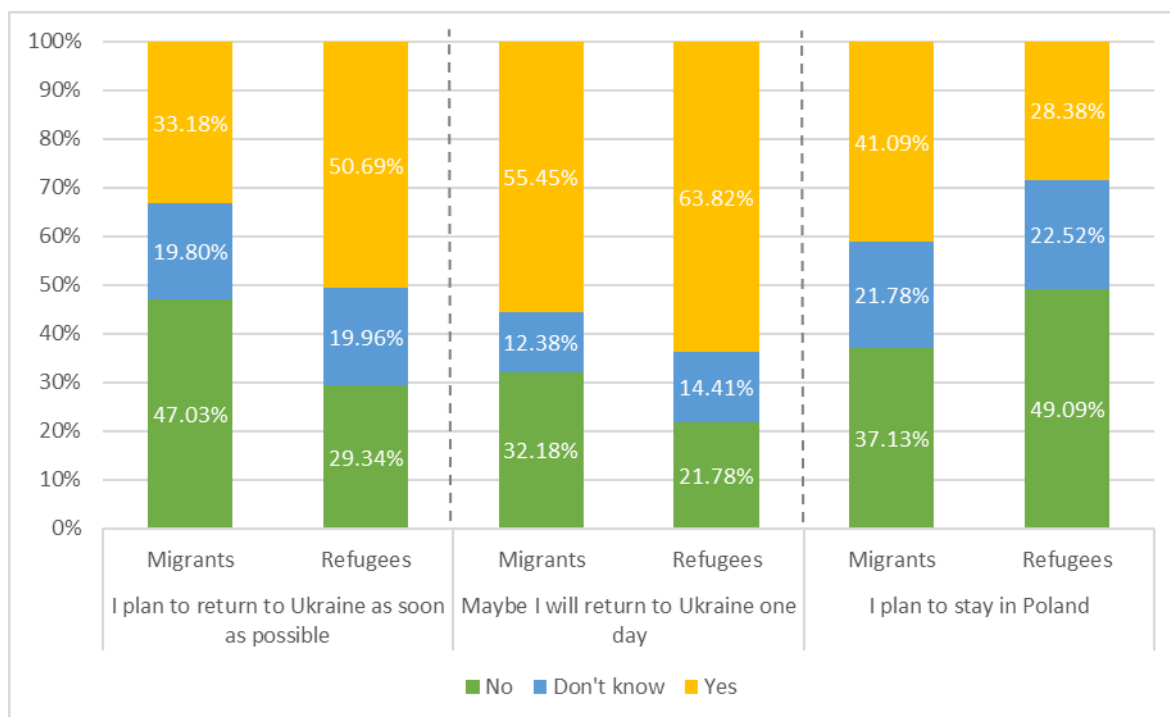
d) I plan to stay in Poland



In the following sections we mainly use the first question "I plan to return to Ukraine as soon as possible" to analyze return intentions, since it most clearly reflects the plans of the respondents. Also, when the number of observations is insufficient for analysis, we use a three-point scale of answers: 1-3 "I do not agree with the statement", 4 "it is difficult to answer", and 5-7 "I agree with the statement" (Figure 40).

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 40. Distribution of answers to the question about the desire to return on a three-point scale

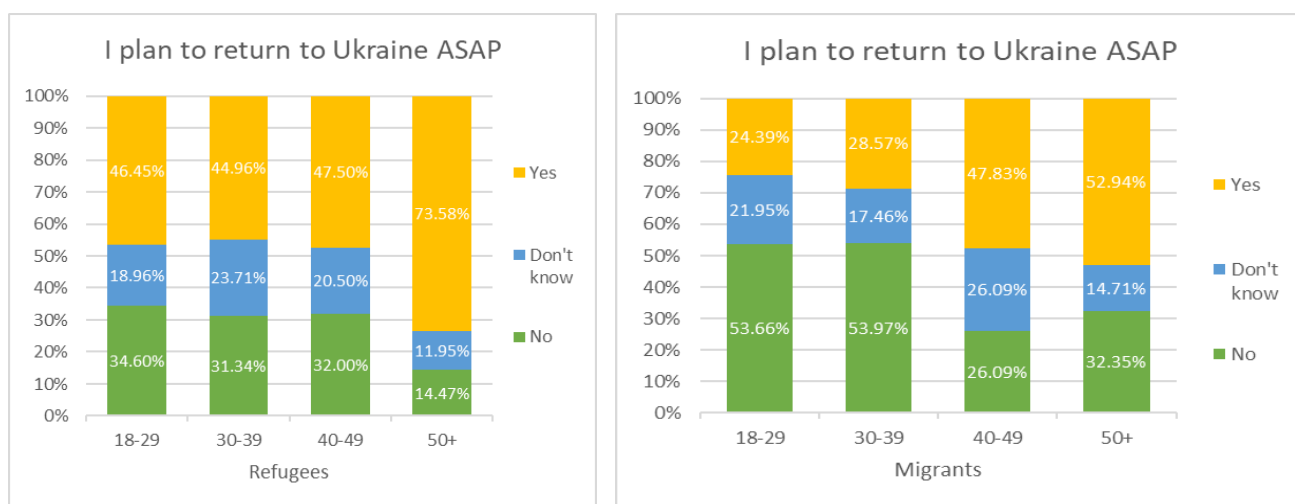


7.2. Socio-demographic factors affecting the willingness to return to Ukraine

Socio-demographic factors are certainly related to the desire of Ukrainians in Poland to return home. One important factor is age: older people express a greater willingness to return. For refugees, a significant change occurs in the 50+ age group: 74% in this group want to return, while only 45-48% respondents aged 18-49 want to return. Among migrants aged 18-39, 24-29% want to return, and among older ones — 48%-53% (

Figure 41).

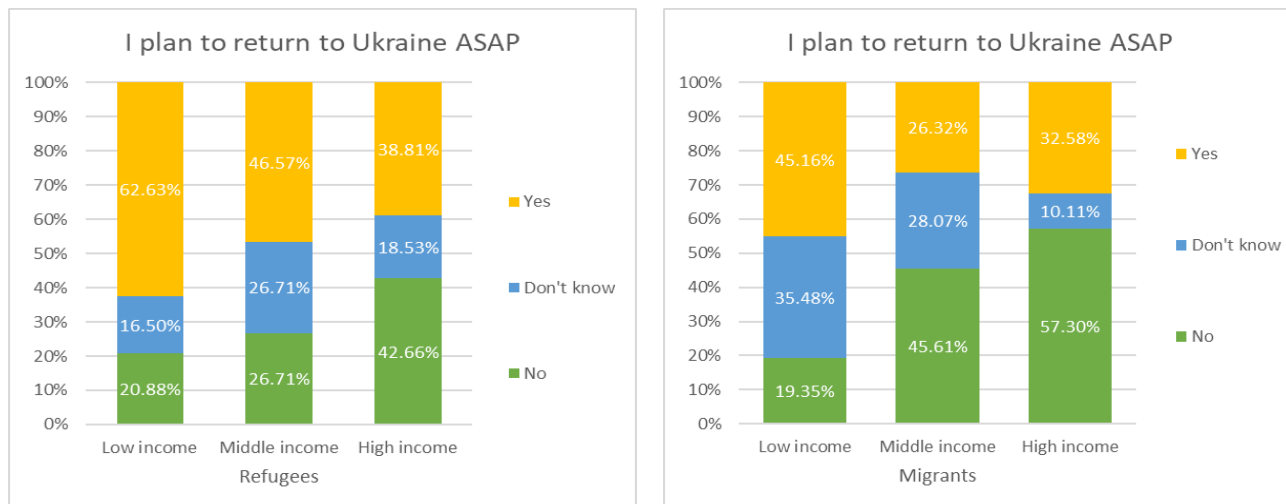
Figure 41. Distribution of responses of migrants and refugees to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible by age



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Financial status is also an important factor. Ukrainians who live in Poland and have low income are more likely to return to Ukraine (*Figure 42*). Among refugees with low income, 63% want to return, with high incomes — 39%. 45% of migrants with low income intend to return, and 33% - with high income.

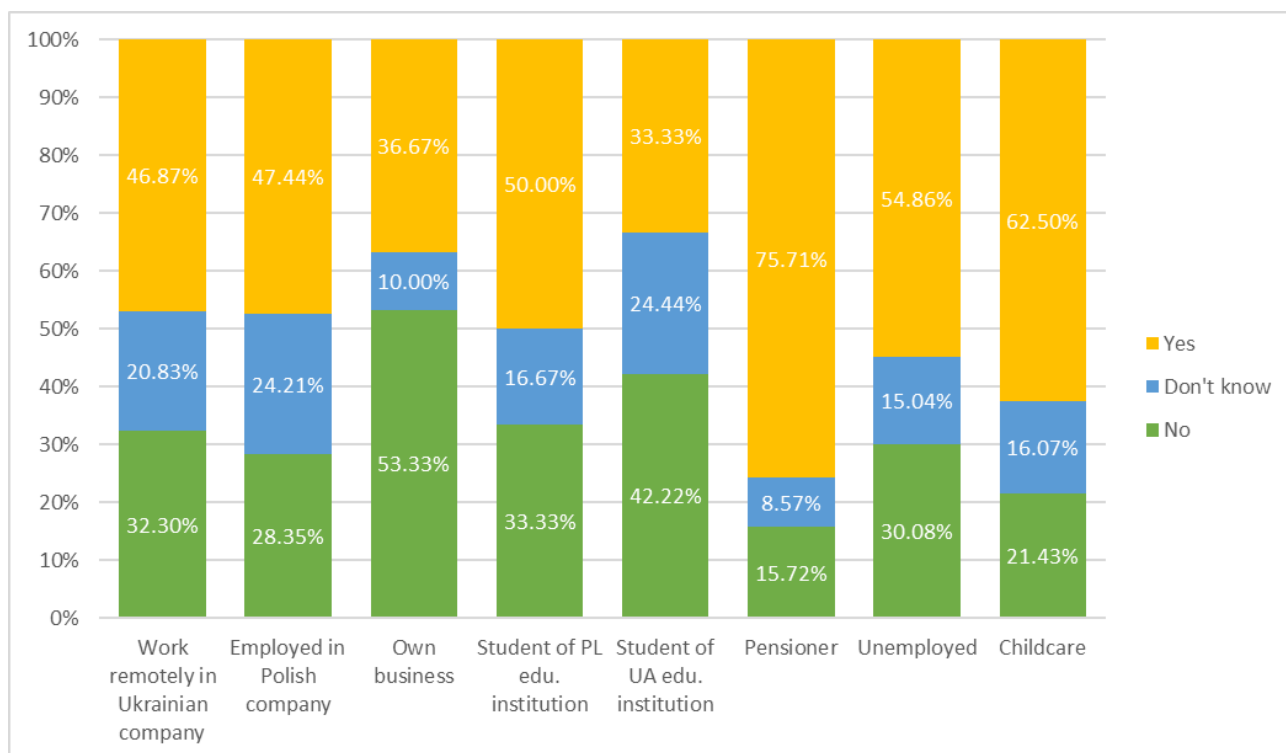
Figure 42. Distribution of migrants' and refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible by financial status



Looking at the type of employment of refugees, the pensioners stand out of other groups: 76% of them plan to go back home (*Figure 43*). This correlates with data on age — the oldest group has the greatest desire to return. Entrepreneurs and students of Polish educational institutions show the least desire to return (33-37%).

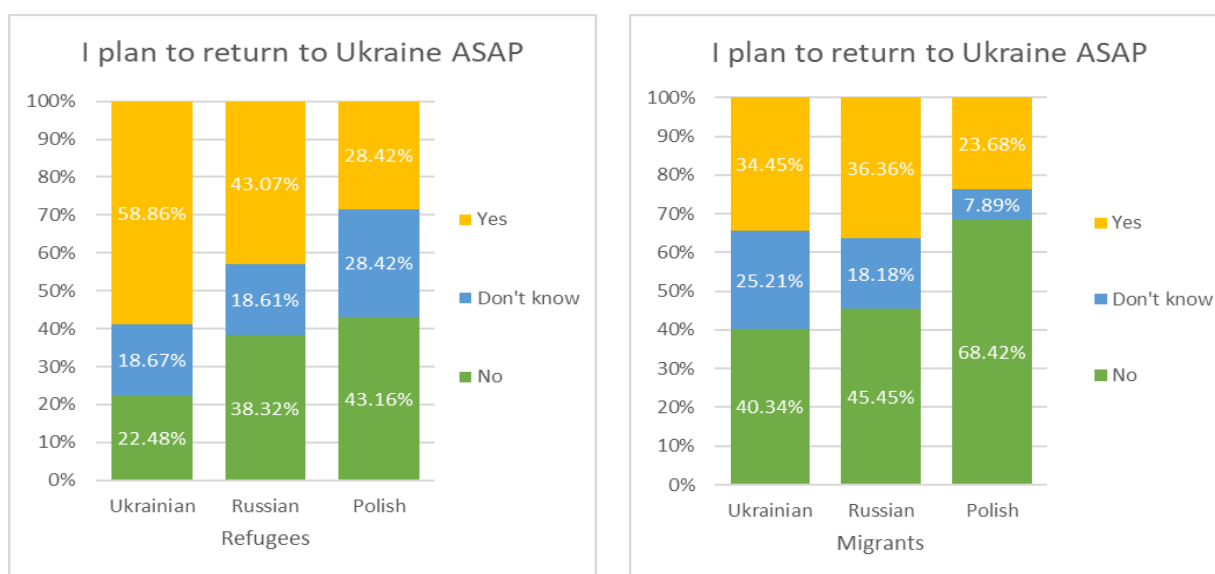
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 43. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on employment



Another important factor is the language of everyday communication. Refugees who use Ukrainian in everyday life are more likely to return: 59% have such intentions (Figure 44). Among those whose main language is Russian, 43% intend to return, and Polish — 28%. Among migrants, there is no significant difference between those who speak Ukrainian and Russian: 34%-36% want to return to Ukraine. The group with the primary Polish language is significantly different: 24% want to return, 68% do not.

Figure 44. Distribution of responses of refugees and migrants to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on the language of communication



Regression results (full results are given in [Table 4 in Appendix 9.1](#)). We found the following socio-demographic factors as *statistically significant* factors for the willingness to return to Ukraine as soon as possible:

- *Time of arrival in Poland*: refugees are more likely to return as migrants;
- *Age*: the older respondents show higher desire to return;
- *Region of residence before the full-scale invasion*: people from Kyiv are less likely to return (compared to people from Western Ukraine);
- *Having children*: having school-aged children is negatively correlated with intentions to return;
- *Language of communication*: respondents whose main language of communication is Russian or Polish are less likely to return;
- *Financial status*: the higher it is, the lower the intention to return.

Statistically insignificant factors: gender; marital status; parents, children, or spouse in Ukraine.

Socio-demographic factors explain around 15% of the variation in the desire to return as soon as possible ($R^2=0.156$) ([Table 4 in Appendix 9.1](#)). These factors explain almost no variation in the “return some” ($R^2=0.026$) ([Table 5 in Appendix 9.1](#)).

It is important to note that this analysis does not make it possible to establish a causal relationship or even the direction of the relationship, that is, to understand, for example, whether a high level of Polish language affects the desire to stay abroad, or whether those who decided to stay are more likely to learn language.

7.3. Connections with Ukraine and return

48% of refugees and 73% of migrants came to Ukraine at least once after leaving abroad²⁶. Those who came to Ukraine often express a stronger desire to return, compared to those who did not come at all or had one or several visits. Two-thirds of refugees and half of migrants who have been in Ukraine often want to return. Among those who have never visited, the shares are 53% and 35%, respectively (

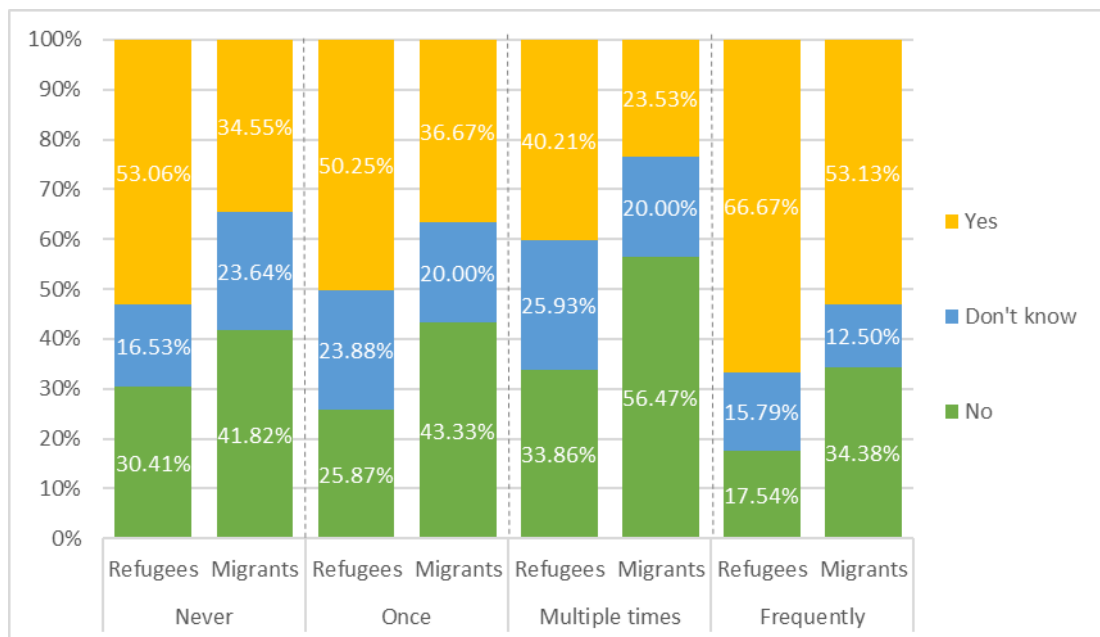
²⁶ For migrants, the visit was not necessarily after the start of the full-scale invasion.

Figure 45. Distribution of responses of refugees and migrants to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible by frequency of visiting Ukraine

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REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 45. Distribution of responses of refugees and migrants to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible by frequency of visiting Ukraine

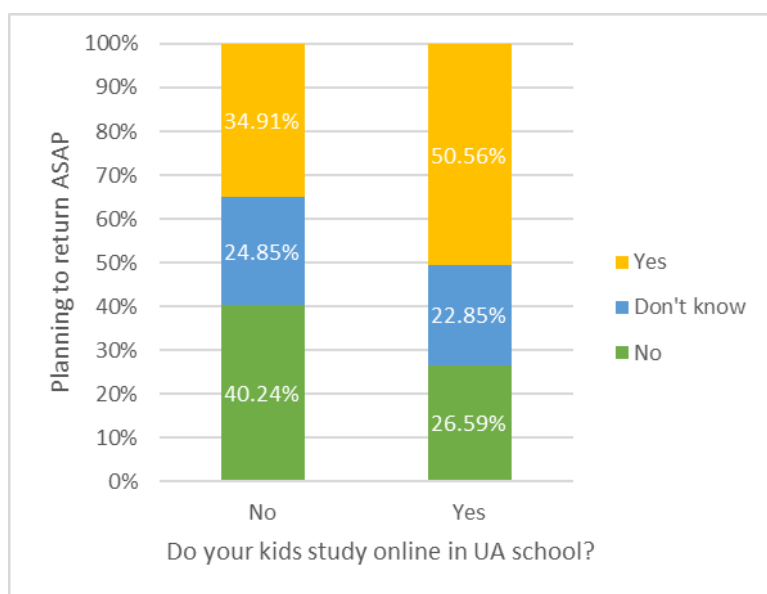


Refugees whose children study remotely in Ukrainian schools are more likely to return, compared to those who have children of school age, but do not study in Ukrainian schools — 51% versus 35%²⁷ (

Figure 46. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on their children studying remotely in UA school (N=436)

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Figure 46. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on their children studying remotely in UA school (N=436)

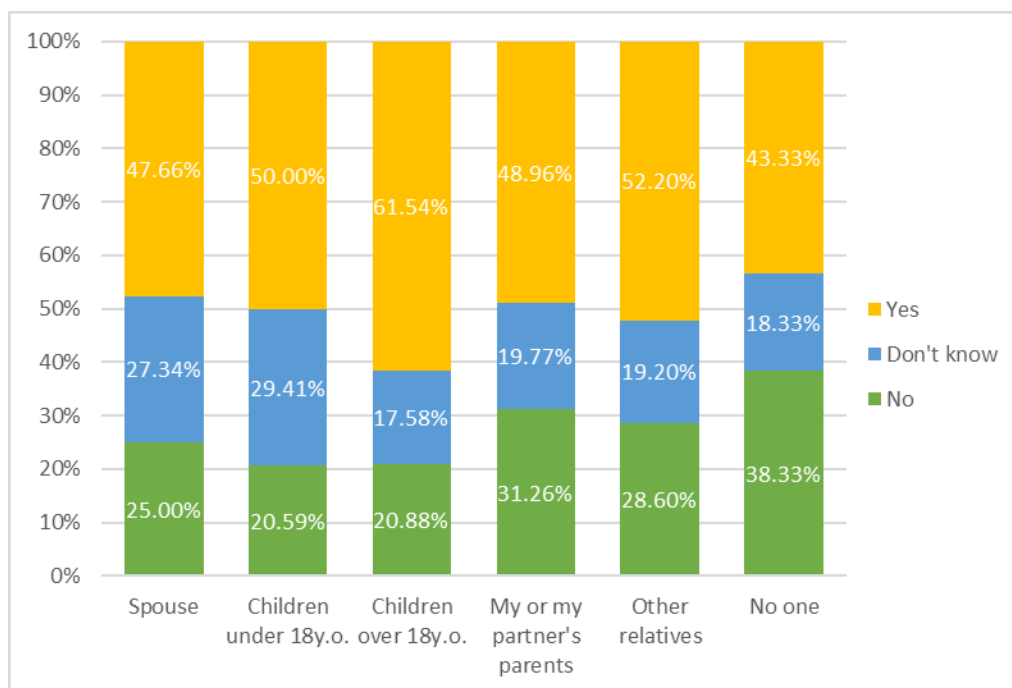


²⁷ Data is not provided for migrants due to the small number of respondents who have school-aged children.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Having close relatives in Ukraine does not significantly affect the desire to return. The biggest difference is observed in those who have children over 18 years old who live in Ukraine (Figure 47). However, we attribute this to the fact that this group of respondents is the oldest, and age strongly affects the desire to return (see Section 7.2)²⁸.

Figure 47. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on having relatives in Ukraine



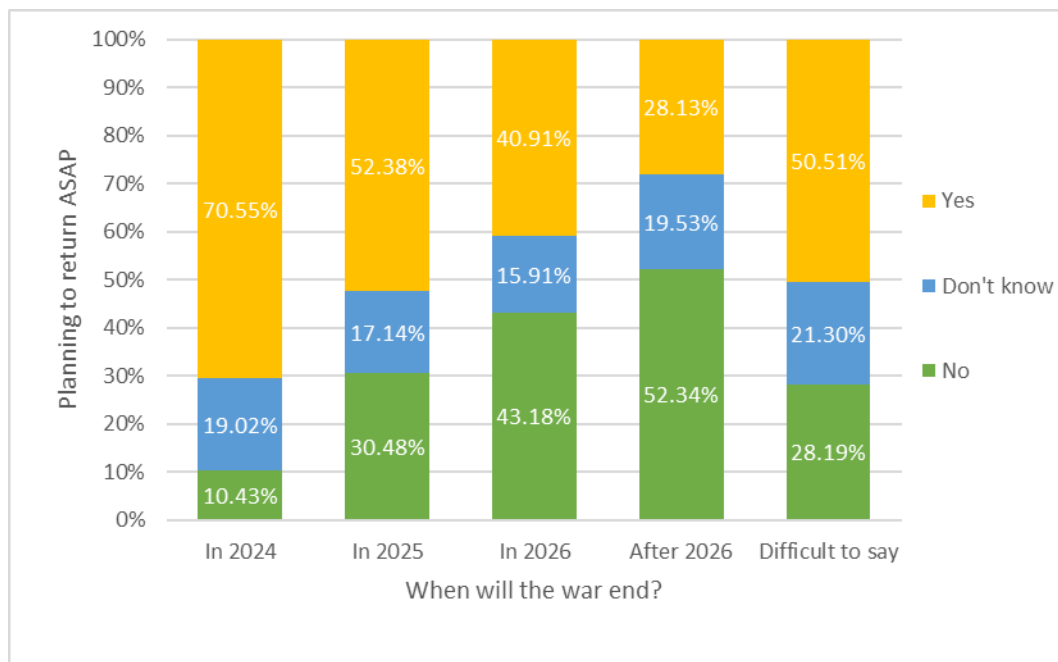
7.4. War experience, image of the future and willingness to return

The vision of how and when the war will end correlates with the desire to return to Ukraine. Those who have a more optimistic view of the future are more likely to return. 71% refugees, who believe that the war will end in 2024, want to return, and only 28% of those, who believe the war will last for more than three years (Figure 48).

²⁸ Data is not provided for migrants due to the small number of respondents who have relatives in Ukraine.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 48. Distribution of *refugees'* answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible depending on the vision of the war ending

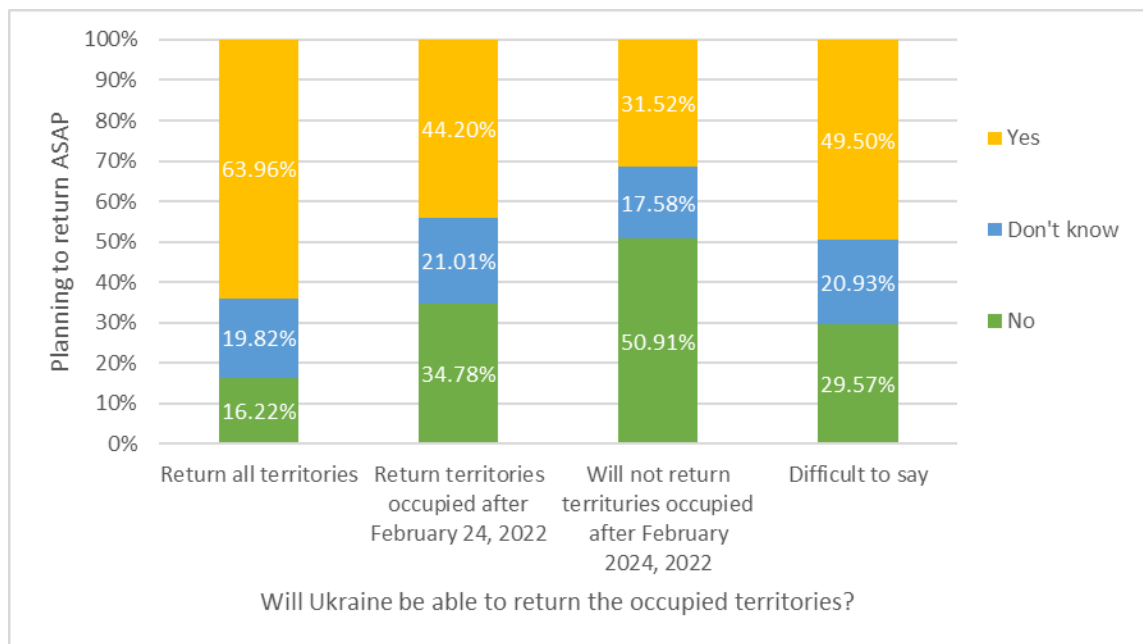


We observe a similar situation with the question of whether Ukraine will be able to regain its territories. Refugees who believe that Ukraine will return all the territories that belonged to it since 1991 are likelier to return (64% of them want to return), and those who think that it will not be possible to return even the territories occupied by Russia after 2022 are twice less likely to return (32%) (

Figure 49).

Figure 49. Distribution of *refugees'* answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible depending on their view of returning occupied territories

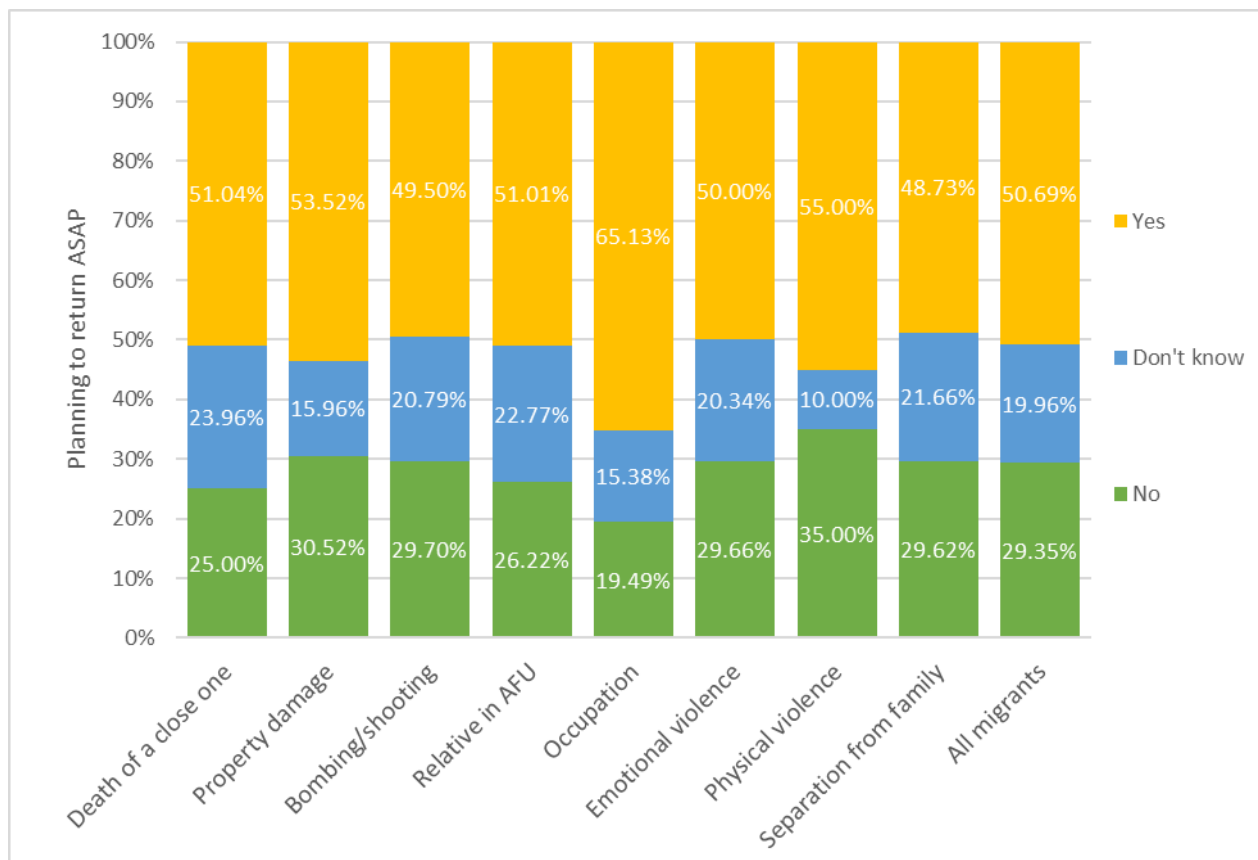
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN



Negative war experiences and losses (damages) as a result of war do not have a significant effect on intentions to return. Only refugees who had experience of living on the occupied territories (69% of them are from the South) more often express a desire to return: 65% compared to 47% who did not have such experience (*Figure 50*).

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

Figure 50. Distribution of **refugees'** answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on their experience during the war

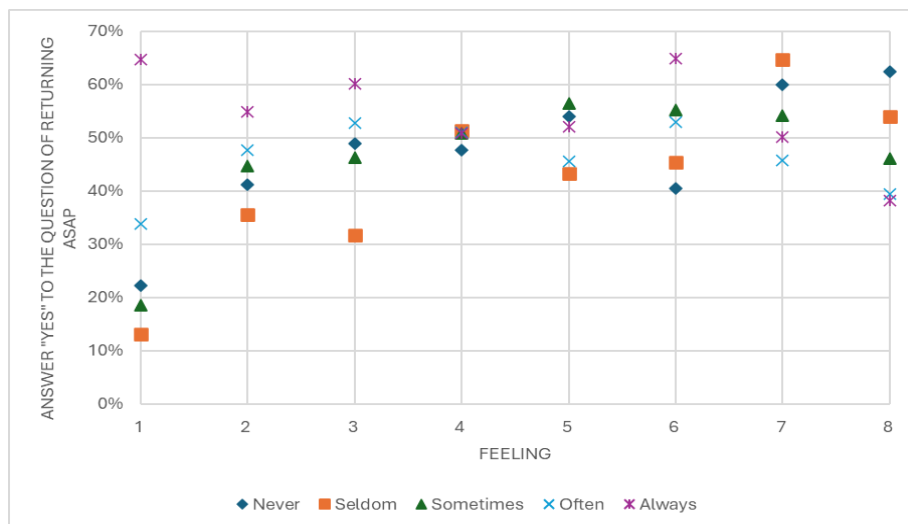


7.5. Feelings, identity and the willingness to return

The feelings experienced by Ukrainians abroad correlate with their desire to return home. Refugees who "always" feel homesick and lonely have a stronger desire to return to Ukraine (

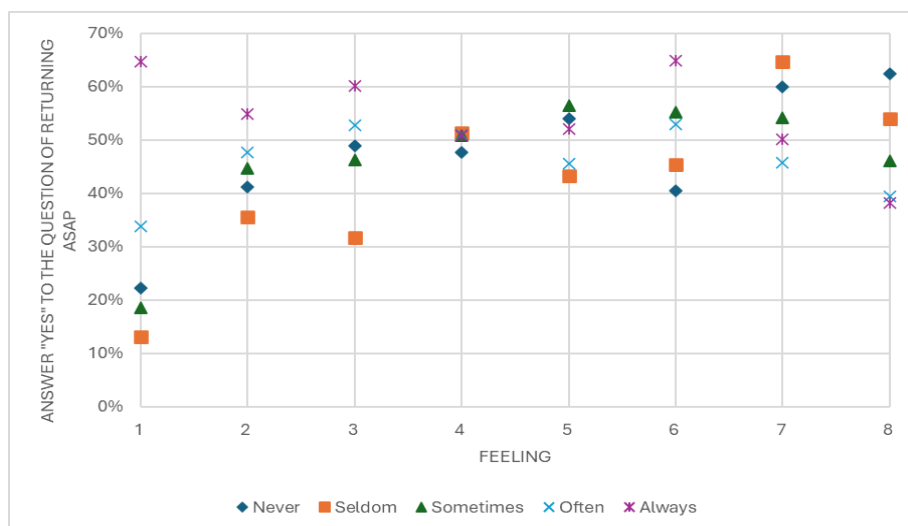
Figure 51. Percentage of "Yes" answers to the question about willingness to return as soon as possible depending on feelings (**refugees**)

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN



). "Feeling of hostility from those who live in Ukraine" reduces the desire to return. Interestingly, "hope for a better future" is positively correlated with intentions to return to Ukraine, while "gratitude to the local population" is negatively correlated. "Fear of the future" and "uncertainty" have no significant effect on return intentions.

Figure 51. Percentage of "Yes" answers to the question about willingness to return as soon as possible depending on feelings (refugees)



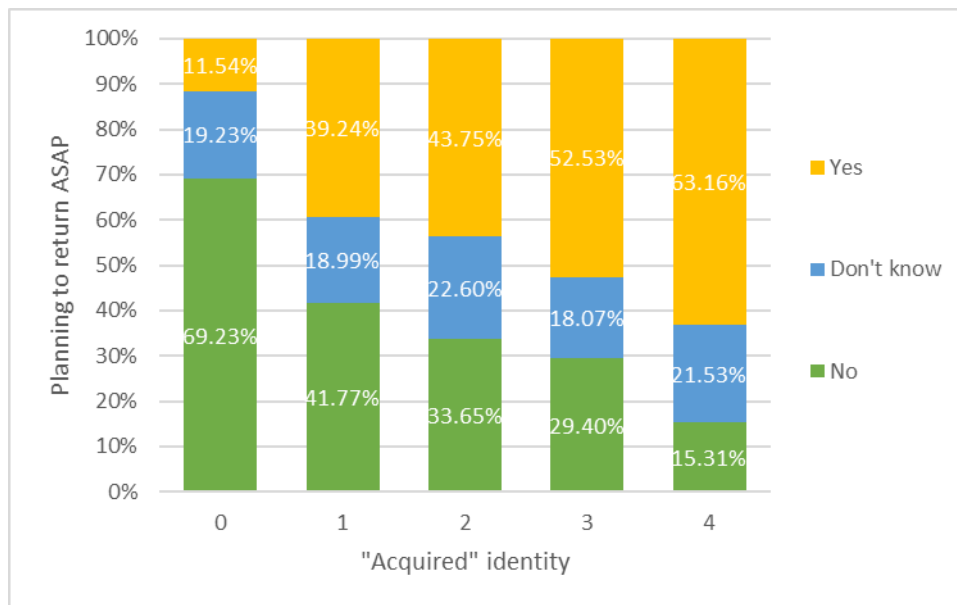
- 1 Homesickness
- 2 Hope for a better future
- 3 Loneliness
- 4 Fear about the future
- 5 Uncertainty
- 6 Feeling of guilt for going abroad
- 7 Gratitude to the local population
- 8 Feeling of hostility from those who live in Ukraine

There is a strong statistically significant relationship between the desire to return to Ukraine, identity, and pride for one's country. The biggest difference in the desire to return is between refugees with different

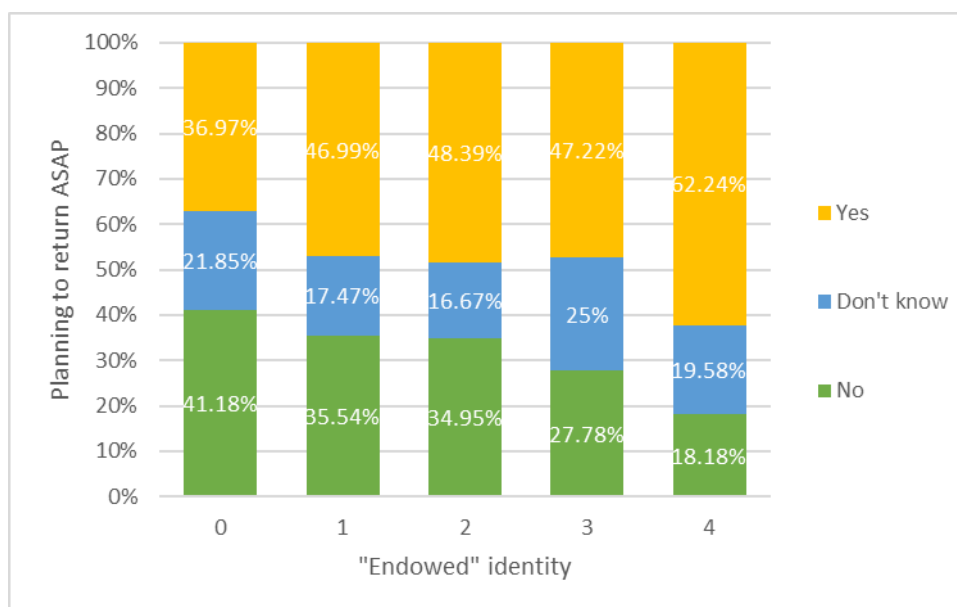
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

degrees of "acquired" identity. As it increases from 0 to 4, the share of respondents who intend to return increases from 12% to 63% (Figure 52).

Figure 52. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on the "acquired" identity



As for "endowed" identity, the difference in the desire to return is only present in "extreme" categories: 0 and 4. 37% of refugees with zero "endowed" identity plan to return, while 62% with the highest level of identity (4) want to do so. Among respondents, whose "endowed" identity lies in the range 1-3, 47-48% intend to return (Figure 53. Distribution of refugees' answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on the "endowed" identity



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REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN POLAND: INTENTIONS TO RETURN

There is also a significant difference in the desire to return depending on the feeling of pride for one's country. Refugees with a low level of pride are much less likely to express a desire to return: 30% versus 68% with a high level of pride (*Figure 54*).

Figure 53. Distribution of *refugees'* answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on the "endowed" identity

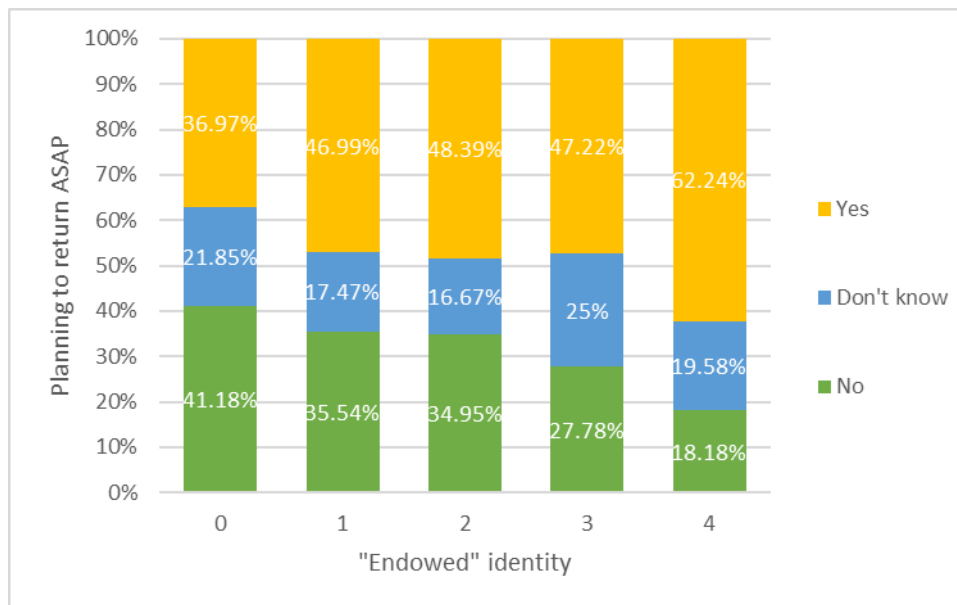
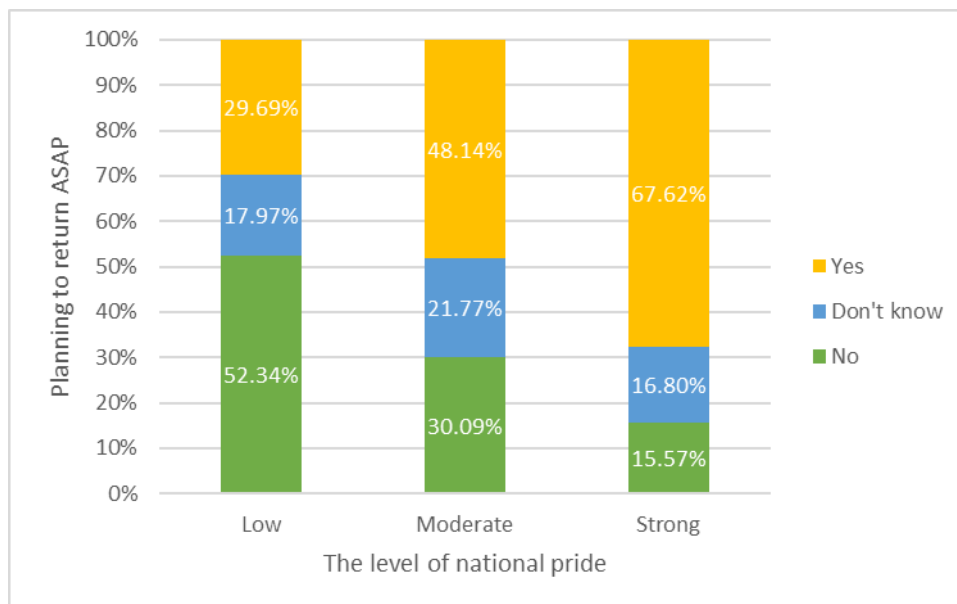


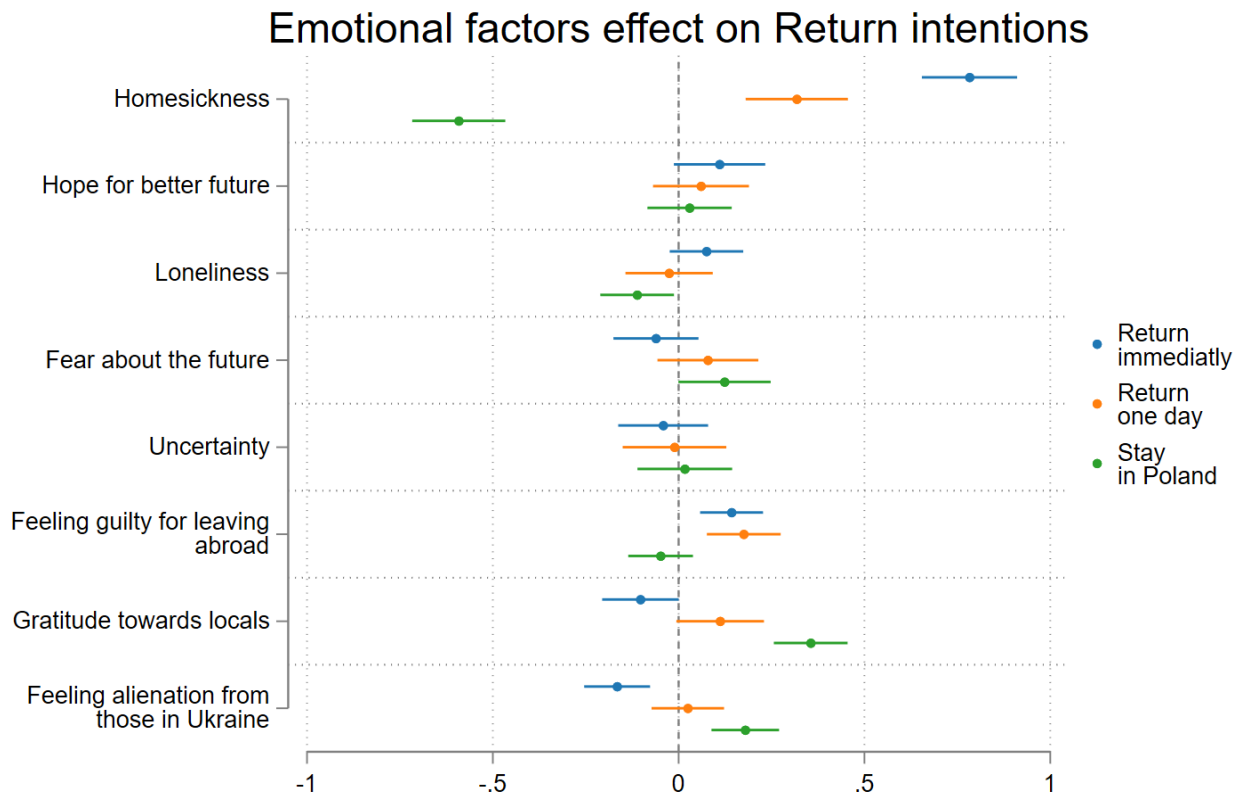
Figure 54. Distribution of *refugees'* answers to the question about the desire to return as soon as possible based on the feeling of pride for their country



Results show that cultural and emotional factors are statistically significant factors for the decision to return home (*Figure 55* and *Figure 56*). The effect of pride for one's country is the largest among cultural factors. Among the emotional factors, homesickness has the strongest effect, which significantly increases the

desire to return. The feeling of guilt for going abroad also has a positive effect on returning. At the same time, gratitude to the local population of the host country and a feeling of hostility from those living in Ukraine negatively affect the intention to return. Full regression results are presented in [Table 4](#) (dependent variable is "return as soon as possible"), [Table 5](#) (dependent variable is "return one day") and [Table 6](#) (dependent variable is "stay in Poland") in [Appendix 9.1](#).

Figure 55. The influence of emotional factors on intentions to return. Results of linear regression



When controlling for identity, pride and emotions in the regression, the adjusted R^2 increases from 0.16 to 0.34 for the return as soon as possible variable; from 0.026 to 0.08 for the return one day variable. Thus, the question "Maybe I will return to Ukraine one day" remains very confusing for respondents, and even a combination of socio-demographic, cultural and emotional factors explain very little variation in this question.

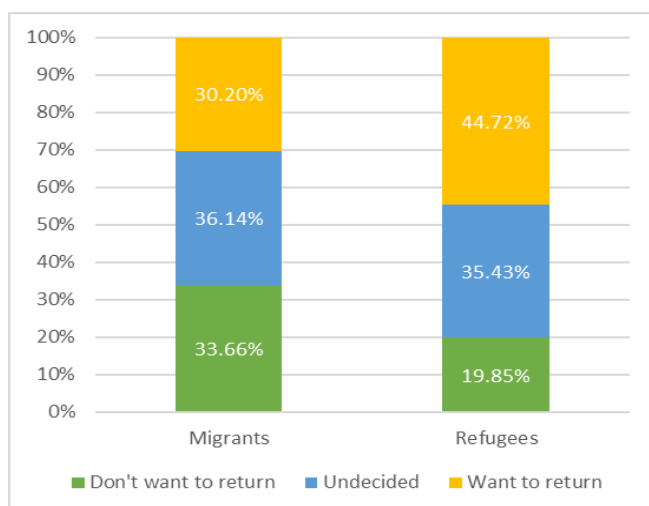
Figure 56. Influence of identity and pride for Ukraine on intentions to return. Results of linear regression



7.6. A portrait of Ukrainians who want to return and stay. Cluster analysis

To understand the portrait of refugees who want or do not want to return to Ukraine, we conducted a cluster analysis (using *kmeans* method in *Stata* software). It allowed us to distinguish three groups of respondents, based on their answers to the question about return (questions #1-4, and 5): those who want to return, those who do not want to return, and those who are undecided.

Figure 57. Distribution of migrants and refugees by return clusters



Migrants are almost equally distributed among these three categories. Among the refugees, the largest group is those who want to return (45%), the smallest group is those who do not want to return (20%), and 35% are undecided (Figure 57).

Portrait of refugees in each return cluster

- Want to return:** women (74%), with an average age of 40 and low income (44%), who speak Ukrainian (64%), mostly identify themselves with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (34%), came from the South of Ukraine (38%).

A significant part of them has experience of living on the occupied territories (28%) and has damaged or destroyed property in Ukraine (26%). Respondents in this cluster feel more than other: homesickness (4.76/5), loneliness (3.69/5), guilt for going abroad (3.08/5), as well as hope for a better future (4.42/5).

Those who want to return have the most optimistic view about the future: 37% believe that the war will end in 2024 or 2025 and 51% believe that Ukraine will be able to return all the territories it has owned since 1991.

This cluster shows the highest level of "endowed" (2.63/4), "acquired" (3.00/4) identity, and pride (6.76/10).

- Do not want to return:** The share of men in this group is higher (32%) as compared to 26% among those who want to return, the average age is 36 years. This cluster has significantly higher incomes (52% are in the category with high incomes) and the highest share of entrepreneurs (13% compared to 4-6% in other clusters). They often speak Russian (39%), do not have a clearly defined religiosity (choose the option "do not belong to any denomination" or "it is difficult to answer"), and came from the East of Ukraine (32%).

They, like the first cluster, experienced property damage (26%), but were less likely to have lived in occupation (13%). Those who do not want to return, often than others feel a hostile attitude from those who live in Ukraine (2.84/5).

In addition, this group has the most pessimistic view about the war developments: 26% believes that the war will end after 2026 and 35% do not believe that Ukraine will be able to win back even the territories occupied after 2022.

This cluster has the lowest rates of "endowed" (1.95/4), "acquired" (2.37/4) identity, and pride (4.78/10).

- Undecided:** this cluster has the highest share of women among all clusters (78%), the average age is 37 years, the main language is Ukrainian (56%). The share of individuals with children of school age is the highest among all clusters. They are almost equally distributed by income: low (31%), medium (35%) and high (35%). The share of those working in Polish companies is the highest among all clusters (58%).

Most often, they do not identify themselves with any denomination (28%) or belong to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (24%). Almost the same number of those who have not decided to return came to Poland from the South (29%) and the East of Ukraine (28%).

Respondents from this cluster are more likely than others to feel fear about the future (3.99/5) and uncertainty (4.06/5), as well as gratitude to the local population (4.24/5).

They are split between those who believe the war will end after 2026 (16%), in 2024 (13%) and in 2025 (12%). Regarding the return of territories an optimistic view prevails: 31% think that Ukraine will be able to return all the territories that belonged to it since 1991. Among those who have not

decided about returning, the share of those who have never come to Ukraine is the smallest: 47% compared to 54-57% in other clusters.

The identity and pride indicators of this cluster have values lower than those in the “want to return” group and higher than in “do not want to return” group.

The returning intentions of Ukrainian refugees and migrants in Poland are influenced by socio-demographic factors (age, income, and having children), cultural (language of communication, religion, sense of national identity and pride), and emotional factors (feeling of homesickness, uncertainty, and loneliness).

Refugees who show the greatest willingness to return are the oldest and poorest group, with a strong Ukrainian identity and predominantly Ukrainian language of communication. They have a high level of homesickness. Those who do not want to return are the youngest and most financially sustainable group, their main language is Russian, and they have weak Ukrainian identity. Women aged 30-39 with school-age children with a strong sense of uncertainty and fear about the future are undecided about returning.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Conclusions

This report presents the results of a **quantitative survey** of Ukrainians living in Poland and **in-depth interviews** with Ukrainian women who left Ukraine for Poland or Germany after February 2022. The survey was conducted in December 2023 and covers 1,139 Ukrainians who left for Poland before and after the full-scale Russian invasion. In the report, we refer to them as migrants and refugees, respectively, regardless of their formal legal status. In-depth interviews were conducted in December 2023 with 15 refugee women, six of whom had already returned to Ukraine at the time of the interview.

According to the survey, Ukrainian refugees and migrants in Poland differ in their **socio-demographic characteristics**. On average, refugees are older than migrants, have lower incomes, are more likely to be married and have children. The vast majority of refugees moved from the East and South of Ukraine (zones of the most active combat actions), while most migrants come from the central, southern and western regions of Ukraine.

The majority of Ukrainians in Poland **work** in local companies: 73% of migrants and 54% of refugees. Among refugees, there is a higher share of those who work remotely for Ukrainian companies (10% versus 3%) and unemployed (12% versus 6%).

Throughout the full-scale invasion many Ukrainians living abroad changed their main **language of communication at home**. Among refugees, the share of those who speak Ukrainian at home has increased significantly — from 39% to 56%. Among pre-war migrants, the use of the Russian language decreased significantly — from 39% to 16%. Of those migrants who used to speak Russian, about a third switched to Ukrainian, and one in five switched to Polish.

Most Ukrainians in Poland keep **close ties with Ukraine**, even those who left several years ago. 94% have close relatives in Ukraine, most often these are parents of the respondent or her partner. During the interview, the respondents indicated that they constantly read Ukrainian news, some transfer money or send goods to help the army or civilians. Almost half of refugees and three quarters of migrants came to Ukraine at least once after moving abroad. Some Ukrainian children continue to study remotely in Ukrainian schools — 61% children of refugees and 30% of migrants.

Both refugees and migrants in Poland were **affected by the war**, even though the former went abroad to escape the war, and the latter left Ukraine before the start of active hostilities. About 40% of refugees and migrants have loved ones who serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and every fifth person has lost a loved one because of Russia's military aggression. More than 60% experienced a long separation with family members. In addition, 23% of refugees have destroyed or damaged housing in Ukraine and 20% have lived in the occupied territory (among migrants the shares are 14% and 4%, respectively).

Even though migrants and refugees came to Poland under different circumstances and with different motivations, they experience very similar **emotions**. Most often, Ukrainians feel homesickness, hope for a better future and gratitude to the local population of the host country. Respondents rated all these emotions at more than four points out of five (on a scale of 1 — never, 5 — always). More than 60% of refugees and more than 50% of migrants always feel homesickness and this feeling does not decrease with increasing the time spent abroad. Among refugees who arrived in the first wave (February–March 2022),

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60% feel homesickness *always*, among those who arrived in the last wave (March–December 2023) the share is 63%. Even among migrants who have lived in Poland for more than 8 years at the time of the survey, 52% feel homesickness *always*.

The least common feelings among the respondents are guilt for going abroad and hostility from those who live in Ukraine (2.5/5 and 2.8/5, respectively).

Ukrainians in Poland have a very strong **sense of uncertainty** about the future, especially among refugees — 40% *always* feel uncertain and fear about the future. This is also confirmed by the answers to the questions about when and how the war may end. It is very difficult for the respondents to predict these events, more than half couldn't choose any of the options for time of war's end, and about a third do not have an opinion about which territories will remain under the control of Ukraine. Older people have the most optimistic view about the future — in the 50+ age group one in four believes that the war will end in 2024.

Despite the uncertainty regarding the development on the frontline, Ukrainians abroad believe that in case of Ukraine's victory, the post-war reconstruction will be quick and successful. During the in-depth interviews, the participants express hope that European countries will help in the reconstruction of the country and in about 5–10 years after the end of the war, life in Ukraine will be at the level of Western Europe.

Ukrainians in Poland have a strong sense **of national identity and pride for their country** (they were measured using the 2013 version of *International Social Survey Program* questionnaire²⁹), there is no significant difference between migrants and refugees.

Thus, although Ukrainian pre-war migrants and forcibly displaced people came to Poland for different reasons and have different socio-demographic characteristics, both groups were affected by the war, experience similar emotions and have similar feelings of national identity and pride for their country. All these factors affect the **intentions to return home**. In general, about half of forced migrants and a third of pre-war migrants express a desire to return to Ukraine.

Among **the socio-demographic factors** which influence returning intentions, the following are statistically significant:

- *Factors that increase the desire to return*: older age, low income, Ukrainian language as main language of communication, remote education of children in Ukrainian schools.
- *Factors that decrease the desire to return*: younger age, high income, Russian or Polish as main language of communication, having school-aged children, fluency in Polish.

There is also a link between **war-related factors and the desire to return home**:

- Ukrainians who *have often visited Ukraine* express a higher willingness to return, compared to those who have not visited at all or visited once or several times.
- Those who have *an optimistic view* of the developments at the frontline (believe that the war will end in 2024 or 2025 and Ukraine will return all territories) express a higher willingness to return, compared to those who have a more pessimistic view of the future (believe that the war will last until 2026 or later and Ukraine will not be able to recapture all occupied territories).
- Having close *relatives in Ukraine* does not significantly affect the desire to return.

²⁹ <https://www.gesis.org/en/issp>

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- Negative experiences and *losses because of war* do not have a significant impact on intentions to return. Only refugees who lived in the occupied territory more often express a willingness to return, compared to those who did not have such experience.

The third group of factors that influence intentions to return are **emotions, a sense of national identity, and pride** for one's country:

- Refugees, who often experience homesickness, loneliness, and hope for a better future, show higher returning intentions.
- "The feeling of hostility from those who live in Ukraine" and "gratitude to the local population" reduce the desire to return.
- The higher the national identity level, the stronger the respondents want to return home.
- Refugees with a low sense of pride are less likely to return.

In order to understand the portrait of refugees who plan and do not plan to return, we used **cluster analysis** and identified three groups and their main characteristics:

- **Refugees who express clear intentions to return to Ukraine.** They make up 45% of all refugees in Poland. A typical portrait of this group: women with an average age of 40 from the South of Ukraine, who have low incomes, mostly speak Ukrainian, and identify themselves with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. They feel homesick and lonely more often than other groups. They also demonstrate the highest level of national identity and pride among all clusters.
- **Refugees who are unlikely to return to Ukraine.** About 20% of all refugees are in this cluster. This is the youngest and most financially sustainable group. Most often, they came from the East of Ukraine, speak Russian, and have no clear religious identification. Compared to other two clusters, they more often feel a hostile attitude from those who live in Ukraine and have the most pessimistic view of the time and conditions for the end of the war. This cluster is also characterized by the lowest indicators of national identity and pride.
- **Refugees who are undecided about their return.** This group includes 35% of refugees. It has the highest share of women (78%) and is more likely to have school-aged children. Many representatives of this group work in Polish companies. The main language of communication is Ukrainian, they do not belong to any religious denomination or belong to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Those who have not decided yet about returning are more likely than others to feel fear and uncertainty about the future, as well as gratitude to the local population.

So, Ukrainian refugees and migrants living in Poland are different in their socio-demographic characteristics, but similar in the feelings they experience, and sense of national identity and pride for the country. In both groups, there are those who want to return to Ukraine, and this desire is influenced by socio-demographic, cultural, and emotional factors.

8.2. Recommendations

- Ukraine's efforts to encourage the return of Ukrainians from abroad should target not only refugees, but also pre-war migrants, since a significant number of them also want to go back to Ukraine or have not yet decided on this issue.
- Since migrants also had some losses because of the war (for example, the destruction of their homes) the policy of compensation for property and financial losses should also apply to them, provided they return.
- Despite all efforts and with any war course of war, some Ukrainians will not return home. Ukraine should develop a policy of constant dialogue with Ukrainians abroad to attract them to the cultural and informational Ukrainian orbit to preserve a sense of national identity, which may influence the decision to return to Ukraine in the future.
- It is important to involve children living abroad in Ukrainian educational and cultural space. Even if they start studying in local schools, they should be encouraged to study Ukrainian language, literature, and history through access to distance learning and face-to-face (in places where many children live) educational courses.
- It is necessary to encourage Ukrainians to visit Ukraine more often (even for short-term visits). To achieve this the simplification of border crossing is necessary.
- There will be significant changes in the gender-age structure of the labor market, more older women will be on the market. Thus, it is important to fight against age discrimination, to offer re-skilling and up-skilling programs for those who already have higher education and work experience, and to offer more flexible forms of employment.
- About a third of Ukrainians in Poland do not have a clear opinion about returning home. They are characterized by a strong feeling of uncertainty regarding the development of the military situation and the terms of the end of the war. This uncertainty prevents them from planning their future. It is impossible to give them clear promises about the military situation. However, in the long run, in order to persuade this cohort to come to Ukraine, it is essential to reduce uncertainty as much as possible and to give a vision of the future, for example, to provide clear answers what kind of assistance with housing they will receive upon return, whether they will receive help with finding a job, how to enroll a child in a local school and transfer grades from the school abroad, etc. Clear and defined rules increase the probability of returning.
- Financial incentives for return (e.g. one-time relocation assistance) most likely will not work.
- In the long term, cultural, educational, and information policies that contribute to the formation of national identity are important. A sense of belonging to one's country and pride for it are important factors in deciding to return home.

9. APPENDIX

9.1. Results of linear regressions

Table 4. Socio-demographic, emotional and cultural factors that influence the desire *to return as soon as possible*. Results of linear regression

	PLretAU1	PLretAU1	PLretAU1	PLretAU1	PLretAU1
Before/After Feb. 24	0.748***	0.644***	0.957***	0.743***	0.641***
Age - 30-39	0.237			0.141	0.129
Age - 40-49	0.367*			0.314	0.282
Age - 50+	1.125***			1.072***	0.844***
Gender - Female	0.102			-0.0450	-0.0140
Gender - Other	-0.868			-0.368	-0.768
Reg. Center	-0.135			-0.156	-0.105
Reg. South	0.259			0.208	0.0231
Reg. East	-0.238			-0.159	-0.367*
Reg. Kyiv	-0.478*			-0.432*	-0.491**
Have kids at school	-0.499***			-0.503***	-0.391***
Home lang Russian	-0.596***			-0.271*	-0.333**
Home lang Polish	-1.165***			-0.955***	-0.745***
Home lang Other	-0.110			0.196	0.134
Separated	0.150			0.152	0.162
Unmarried together	-0.164			-0.123	-0.201
Unmarried separate	-0.0548			-0.00798	-0.0376
Single	-0.0689			-0.0712	-0.106
Divorced	-0.145			-0.162	-0.248
Widowed	0.229			0.196	0.304
RTA	-0.260			-0.102	-0.494**
Income: middle	-0.539***			-0.471***	-0.326**
Income: rich	-1.108***			-0.952***	-0.713***
Family in Ukraine	0.0868			0.111	-0.0224
Homesickness		0.874***			0.783***
Hope for a better future		0.120**			0.110*
Loneliness		0.0984**			0.0749
Fear of the future		-0.0489			-0.0611
Uncertainty		-0.0447			-0.0416
Guilt about going abroad		0.187***			0.142***
Gratitude to locals		-0.0724			-0.103*
Hostile attitude from UA		-0.214***			-0.166***
Acquired identity			0.245***	0.172**	
Endowed identity			0.173***	0.146***	
Pride index			0.247***	0.225***	
Intercept	4.444***	-0.110	1.019***	2.195***	1.263**
<i>N</i>	1024	1139	1139	1024	1024
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.156	0.293	0.164	0.247	0.337

Levels of statistical significance * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 5. Socio-demographic, emotional and cultural factors that influence the desire *to return one day*. Results of linear regression

	(1) PLretAU3	(2) PLretAU3	(3) PLretAU3	(4) PLretAU3	(5) PLretAU3
Before/After Feb. 24	0.359*	0.224	0.475***	0.363*	0.243
<i>Age</i>					
30-39	0.106			0.0670	0.0559
40-49	0.210			0.191	0.180
50+	-0.0870			-0.109	-0.142
<i>Gender</i>					
Female	-0.0586			-0.119	-0.180
Other	-1.253			-1.080	-0.975
<i>Region UA</i>					
Reg. Center	-0.378*			-0.372*	-0.359*
Reg. South	-0.369*			-0.380*	-0.435**
Reg. East	-0.362*			-0.327	-0.399*
Reg. Kyiv	-0.261			-0.236	-0.255
Have kids at school	-0.310*			-0.305*	-0.296*
<i>Home language</i>					
Russian	-0.109			0.0414	0.0895
Polish	-0.657***			-0.570***	-0.450**
Other	0.285			0.420	0.423
<i>Marital status</i>					
Separated	0.179			0.189	0.206
Unmarried together	0.0672			0.0839	0.0447
Unmarried separate	-0.201			-0.166	-0.0955
Single	0.00373			0.00851	0.0589
Divorced	-0.0234			-0.0352	0.0471
Widowed	0.368			0.337	0.437
RTA	0.0433			0.117	-0.00387
<i>Income level</i>					
Middle	-0.0949			-0.0634	0.0134
Rich	-0.647***			-0.582***	-0.424**
Family in Ukraine	0.180			0.187	0.174
Homesickness		0.353***			0.318***
Hope for a better future		0.0176			0.0601
Loneliness		0.00979			-0.0257
Fear of the future		0.0912			0.0787
Uncertainty		0.0279			-0.0111
Guilt about going abroad		0.183***			0.175***
Gratitude to locals		0.116**			0.112*
Hostile attitude from UA		0.00250			0.0247
Acquired identity			0.166**	0.115	
Endowed identity			0.0436	0.0224	
Pride index			0.0989***	0.0952***	
Intercept	5.245***	1.658***	3.367***	4.248***	2.462***
<i>N</i>	1024	1139	1139	1024	1024
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.026	0.090	0.034	0.042	0.081

Levels of statistical significance * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

APPENDIX

Table 6. Socio-demographic, emotional and cultural factors that influence the desire to stay in Poland. Results of linear regression

	(1) PLretAU6	(2) PLretAU6	(3) PLretAU6	(4) PLretAU6	(5) PLretAU6
Before/After Feb. 24	-0.507***	-0.520***	-0.718***	-0.503***	-0.472***
<i>Age</i>					
30-39	-0.235			-0.178	-0.219
40-49	-0.213			-0.182	-0.192
50+	-0.722***			-0.691***	-0.536***
<i>Gender</i>					
Female	0.146			0.234*	0.156
Other	-0.485			-0.787	-0.179
<i>Region UA</i>					
Reg. Center	0.499**			0.518**	0.429**
Reg. South	-0.0746			-0.0368	0.133
Reg. East	0.0287			-0.0149	0.124
Reg. Kyiv	0.248			0.226	0.297
Have kids at school	0.380**			0.382**	0.289**
<i>Home language</i>					
Russian	0.216			0.0266	0.114
Polish	1.002***			0.875***	0.679***
Other	-0.310			-0.489	-0.499
<i>Marital status</i>					
Separated	-0.156			-0.156	-0.165
Unmarried together	0.0454			0.0212	0.0574
Unmarried separate	0.150			0.123	0.189
Single	-0.217			-0.213	-0.168
Divorced	0.0442			0.0531	0.232
Widowed	-0.354			-0.331	-0.442
RTA	0.0206			-0.0728	0.260
<i>Income level</i>					
Middle	0.381**			0.343**	0.241*
Rich	0.876***			0.783***	0.578***
Family in Ukraine	-0.283**			-0.299**	-0.145
Homesickness		-0.671***			-0.592***
Hope for a better future		0.0450			0.0294
Loneliness		-0.134***			-0.112**
Fear of the future		0.138**			0.124*
Uncertainty		0.00194			0.0166
Guilt about going abroad		-0.0605			-0.0485
Gratitude to locals		0.348***			0.355***
Hostile attitude from UA		0.222***			0.179***
Acquired identity			-0.0749	-0.0829	
Endowed identity			-0.101**	-0.0916**	
Pride index			-0.150***	-0.140***	
Intercept	3.464***	4.761***	5.452***	4.793***	3.945***
<i>N</i>	1024	1139	1139	1024	1024
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.097	0.219	0.064	0.134	0.246

Levels of statistical significance * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

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