

## **“Diasporas' Transnational Humanitarian and Political Engagements in Times of War: The Case of Ukrainian Women in Lebanon”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022,<sup>2</sup> Ukrainians residing outside<sup>3</sup> their homeland have assumed pivotal roles as humanitarian and nationalistic advocates amid the protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> Similar to other diaspora communities confronted with crises affecting their homelands, they have actively engaged in supporting Ukraine's struggle for independence.<sup>5</sup> This research<sup>6</sup> focuses on the engagement of Ukrainian women living in Lebanon during the concurrent crises in their host country and their homeland. The study is motivated by the unique characteristics of this demographic group, including its predominantly female composition, the community's relatively small size, and the intersection of the compounded crisis in Lebanon and the aggression on Ukraine. Utilizing an online questionnaire available in both English and Ukrainian, the research explores various factors of their humanitarian and political actions. The brief investigates the roles of Ukrainian women living in Lebanon during the ongoing war on Ukraine, highlighting their dual engagement as humanitarian and political activists. It also analyses the traditional and progressive dimensions of that engagement. Their transnational humanitarian and political activism, as well as their public policy advocacy, have positioned these women as activists within their home- and host-communities and have contributed to the discourse on diaspora women and their role in homeland affairs.

**Keywords/Tags:** Ukrainian women, Lebanon, Russian invasion, Diaspora communities, Humanitarian activism, Nationalistic advocacy, Sociopolitical roles, Transnational engagement, Public policy advocacy, Gender dynamics

**Dedication:** This study is dedicated to [Pianist Tetyana Prymak-Khuri](#) of Ukraine and her husband, Lebanese composer [Houtaf Khuri](#).

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ukrainian community in Lebanon is predominantly composed of immigrant women,<sup>7</sup> the vast majority of whom have migrated through transnational or international marriages with Lebanese men.<sup>8</sup> As such, their migration is aptly characterized as marriage-led-migration, entailing their relocation to their spouses' country of origin.<sup>9</sup> As of 2016, the Ukrainian population in Lebanon is estimated to be 5,000 individuals, comprising Ukrainian women and children from mixed marriages.<sup>10</sup>

While relatively nascent, the community qualifies as part of the Ukrainian diaspora by virtue of its members residing outside their homeland while retaining a strong sense of identity and belonging to Ukraine. They actively maintain connections with their homeland, participate in diasporic politics, cultivate networks with fellow Ukrainians globally, and share a collective identity, history, and national aspirations.<sup>11</sup>

The Ukrainian diaspora boasts a rich and extensive history, particularly within the broader framework of global migration spanning from the 19th century onwards. Throughout this period, scholars have delineated multiple waves of migration originating from



*"From Beirut to Kyiv: A Charity Concert by Pianist Tetyana Prymak-Khuri" - April 1, 2022*

Ukraine to various regions, each shaped by distinct historical, political, and economic factors, as well as a diverse array of migration catalysts.<sup>12</sup>

Taking into consideration the descendants of the initial Ukrainian emigrants, the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) estimates that the Ukrainian diaspora is nearly 7 million people constituting approximately 16%<sup>13</sup> of Ukraine's total population. This diaspora spans across over 60 countries worldwide.<sup>14</sup> Such an established and widespread dispersion maintained its identity association with Ukraine and have supported the countries struggle for statehood in 1991, its Orange Revolution of 2004, the Euromaidan movement or the Revolution of Dignity in 2013, and the struggle for returning of the lost Ukrainian territories namely Crimea which was annexed by Russia in 2014.<sup>15</sup>

The Ukrainian diaspora's profound attachment to their homeland was distinctly exemplified during the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, evidenced by an extensive display of both humanitarian assistance and political activism. Immediate mobilization became apparent within the first week of the invasion, as migrant-led organizations and diaspora members responded promptly through diverse means, including offering communication support, financial aid, in-kind resources, and volunteer services.<sup>16</sup>

Political initiatives resonated widely within Ukrainian communities, as diaspora leaders and networks globally assumed a highly vocal stance, organizing widespread protests<sup>17</sup> against the Russian incursion, lodging petitions with both Ukrainian and international authorities, orchestrating public awareness campaigns, and staging demonstrations at diplomatic missions.<sup>18</sup> Their astute vigilance over the evolving situation along the Ukrainian-Russian border, bolstered by their prior engagement during past crises in Ukraine (e.g., Russia annexation of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol in 2014)<sup>19</sup> enabled them to react with agility and efficacy.<sup>20</sup>

These concerted endeavors not only served to provide tangible assistance but also underscored an unwavering commitment to upholding Ukraine's independence and sovereignty. This steadfast support persisted despite the challenges encountered in halting the advancing offensive.

## **UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN LEBANON: STRUGGLING AMID ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE**

Amid grappling with the persistent economic and financial collapse in Lebanon since 2019,<sup>21</sup> Lebanon's liquidity crisis, compounded by the aftermath of the catastrophic explosion at the Port of Beirut,<sup>22</sup> state failure,<sup>23</sup> electricity blackouts,<sup>24</sup> Internet and mobile interruptions,<sup>25</sup> shortages and increases in gasoline prices,<sup>26</sup> and the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>27</sup> Ukrainian women in Lebanon confronted yet another calamity: the war on their homeland and the resultant displacement of millions of their people<sup>28</sup> due to the

Russian invasion,<sup>29</sup> the unfolding atrocities<sup>30</sup> against their nation multiplied by the consequences of the war in Ukraine on Lebanon's food security given that Lebanon heavily relies on imports of wheat (80% of which comes from Ukraine),<sup>31</sup> and vegetable oil from Ukraine.<sup>32</sup>

The concurrent occurrence of profound crises affecting both the homeland and the host land places Ukrainian diasporans in Lebanon in parallel challenging circumstances, particularly when responding to the crisis in Ukraine with humanitarian aid and political action. Undertaking such endeavors in Lebanon demanded meticulous attention to ensuring, among others, health safety from COVID-19, maintaining available connections to mobilize the community, and securing access to gasoline for physical movement, all of which were profoundly problematic in February of 2022. Nonetheless, these women have demonstrated adeptness in surmounting these obstacles, showcasing remarkable organizational skills, unwavering courage, and steadfast commitment, as revealed in the subsequent pages.

Against the backdrop of these complex circumstances, the fieldwork unfolded, driven by theoretical frameworks encompassing diaspora humanitarian engagement, diaspora politics, and gender dynamics. The overarching objective of this research is to document: a) the motivations propelling Ukrainian women in Lebanon towards involvement in response to the invasion of their country; b) their humanitarian endeavors; c) their political activism; and d) their advocacy for public policy changes.

Through the concerted efforts of its predominantly female and burgeoning membership, this small community stands on the brink of integration into the wider scope of global Ukrainian humanitarian and political endeavors, extending vital support to Ukraine and its populace. As well as positioning itself within the broader discourse on diaspora, gender, and transnationalism, thereby enriching the ongoing dialogue and understanding of these complex intersections.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND LIMITATIONS IN THIS STUDY**

Given the aforementioned circumstances in Lebanon, an online questionnaire emerged as the optimal method for prompting responses from this demographic. A dual-language questionnaire, provided in both English and Ukrainian, was employed as the principal instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was uploaded onto Google Forms, and promoted through Facebook and WhatsApp.

To garner support from the community for this project, we reached out to the embassy and briefed them on the topic. Additionally, two Zoom meetings with Ukrainian community organizations were conducted to explain the research project, request their backing, and encourage participation among their constituents.

The survey began in mid-February and concluded in mid-April of 2023. A total of 64 first-generation Ukrainian women immigrants to Lebanon filled out and completed the survey

After completing the data collection phase, comprehensive analysis and synthesis procedures were conducted. Close-ended responses were translated into English and subjected to further analytical scrutiny to extract meaningful insights. Furthermore, literature and media reviews were performed to provide a comprehensive understanding of diaspora engagement dynamics and the multifaceted roles played by the Ukrainian diaspora in Lebanon, as well as within various immigration contexts.

The study is subject to several limitations:

- *Limited Scope*: This study has a narrow scope, focusing solely on Ukrainian women in Lebanon and their engagement in humanitarian, political, and public policy advocacy activities in response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
- *Emotional Impact on the Community*: The Ukrainian community in Lebanon may have been emotionally affected by the ongoing shock and grief resulting from the atrocities committed by Russia, potentially impacting their willingness to participate in the survey.
- *Embassy Priorities*: While the embassy initially responded to my inquiries, it understandably prioritized more urgent matters. Hence, its assistance was limited.
- *Cultural Barriers*: Cultural barriers, including the negative connotation associated with the term "political" within Ukrainian culture, may have dissuaded participants from engaging in the survey process.
- *Applicability of the Findings*: The response of Ukrainian women in Lebanon to the aggression against their country reflects patterns observed in other diasporic communities concerning their humanitarian and political engagement. Hence, the findings of this study may hold broader relevance to analogous contexts and circumstances.

## **SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Gendered Community**

The Ukrainian community in Lebanon comprises predominantly women, accounting for over 90% of the total Ukrainian population. The demographic profile of the respondents is delineated as follows: Half of the respondents, constituting 50%, fall within the age bracket of 35-44 years. Subsequently, 23 % are situated within the age range of 45-54 years, while 20% belong to the cohort aged 25-34 years. A smaller percentage, 5%,

represents individuals aged 55-64 years, and a minimal proportion of 2% pertains to those in the 18-24 age group.

The predominance of women aged 35-44 years among the respondents suggests a significant trend of migration of women in their prime working and reproductive years.

### **Reasons for Migration to Lebanon**

The survey findings regarding marital status reveal that a significant proportion of respondents, constituting 90.6%, are presently married. Conversely, 7.8% reported being divorced, and 1.6% are widowed. Regarding the nationality of their spouses, the majority (89.1%) are Lebanese, while 3.1% have spouses of non-Lebanese nationality. Additionally, 7.8% of respondents are currently unmarried and do not have a spouse.

The data suggests that the migration of Ukrainian women to Lebanon may not primarily align with categories such as the feminization of migration or migration driven by job opportunities. Instead, it indicates that the migration is marriage-led and that Lebanon does not serve as a primary destination for employment or economic prospects for the surveyed women. This inference is supported by the notable percentage of respondents married to Lebanese spouses, implying that their migration to Lebanon is closely associated with familial or marital motivations rather than economic considerations.<sup>33</sup>

### **Demographic Diversity and Length of Residence**

The length of residence of Ukrainian women in Lebanon primarily evolved within the context of marital relationships, reflecting a unique aspect of migration dynamics within the Lebanese setting.

The analysis of respondents' duration of residence in Lebanon offers a demographic perspective on the composition of the surveyed population, shedding light on the distribution of individuals across different timeframes of stay in the country. Among the 64 respondents, 44% reported residing in Lebanon for 1-10 years, 34% for 11-20 years, 19% for 21-25 years, and 3% for 26-35 years. This spectrum of residency durations suggests that nearly all respondents migrated to Lebanon subsequent to the conclusion of the 1975-1990 Civil War in Lebanon. Within this broader migratory landscape, the history of Ukrainian migration to Lebanon emerges as a relatively recent phenomenon, beginning in the early 1990s, just a few years after the fall of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's declaration of independence.

The age distribution among respondents offers insights into the composition of the surveyed population; women aged 35-44 emerged as the predominant group among respondents, constituting half of the surveyed population. This demographic segment likely represents individuals in their prime years for career advancement and family

responsibilities. Interestingly, within this age group, a substantial portion may have migrated to Lebanon within the past decade, as indicated by the significant proportion of respondents who have been in the country for 1-10 years (44%).

### **Community Involvement Pre- and Post-Russian Invasion**

Before the 2022 Russian invasion, community involvement among respondents varied, with only a minority (14%) indicating intensive activity in community affairs, showcasing their capacity to gather and rally others. A significant portion (37%) expressed a lack of regular involvement but demonstrated a readiness to respond during crises. The majority (49%) noted their availability to participate when summoned by community leaders.

Following the invasion, there was a modest uptick (1.5%) in individuals becoming intensively active in community affairs, alongside a noteworthy increase (10%) in those transitioning from previously uninvolved status to active participation. Additionally, there was a slight rise (8%) in the number of individuals willing to engage when called upon by community leaders.

Understanding the contextual factors such as geographical dispersion across Lebanon, the prevailing economic crisis, the deteriorating living standard, escalating gasoline prices, and related challenges provides insights into why a significant proportion of the Ukrainian women in Lebanon remained categorized as uninvolved despite their underlying grief, concern, and patriotic motivations, as evidenced by their responses to other survey questions.

These responses align with Shain and Barth's (2003) framework delineating three diaspora categories: core members, passive members, and silent members. Core members, typically organizing elites, exhibit intensive involvement in diasporic affairs and possess the capacity to mobilize the broader diaspora. Passive members are predisposed to mobilize under the direction of active leadership, while silent members constitute a larger cohort generally disengaged from diasporic affairs but potentially responsive during crises.<sup>34</sup>

### **Motivations for Engagement in Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine**

The analysis of respondents' motivations for engaging in political and humanitarian actions in Ukraine provides valuable insights into the diverse factors driving their active involvement in response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. The findings highlight a range of emotions, values, and connections, delineating key categories of motivation - sense of justice, patriotism, sense of duty, concern for family and friends in Ukraine, and compassion and charity.

- *Sense of Justice for Ukraine and Anger Against Russia's Aggression:* A significant portion of respondents (70.3%) cited a sense of justice for Ukraine and anger towards Russia's aggression as primary motivators. Their emotional responses drove their commitment to support Ukraine. Research indicates that emotions such as anger, perceptions of injustice, and fear can play pivotal roles in mobilizing individuals and sustaining their engagement in social movements.<sup>35</sup>
- *Patriotism and Sense of Duty:* The second most prevalent motivation, accounting for 65.5% of respondents, is patriotism and a sense of duty to their country. Immigrants and diasporans hailing from nations experiencing conflicts or emerging from them harbor profound feelings of duty and obligation towards their countries of origin.<sup>36</sup>
- *Concern for Family and Friends in Ukraine:* A significant number of respondents (56.3%) cited concern for their family and friends in Ukraine as a motivating factor. The prevalence of this sentiment highlights the profound influence of personal relationships and familial ties as potent catalysts for engagement. The impact of conflict and violence in countries of origin is keenly felt by those within diaspora communities, arising from their deep concern for family and friends enduring the conflict. This poignant connection emphasizes the significant emotional toll experienced by individuals as they grapple with the well-being of their loved ones amidst turmoil.<sup>37</sup>
- *Compassion and Charity:* Compassion and Charity: A notable percentage (42.2%) cited compassion and charity as contributing factors to their decision to intervene. This reflects a humanitarian perspective, where individuals are motivated by a desire to alleviate the suffering of others regardless of kinship, and to contribute to the well-being of those affected by the conflict. The inclusion of compassion suggests an empathetic response to the human impact of the crisis, indicative of the altruistic mindset of the diaspora community and their interest in promoting human welfare in their country of origin.<sup>38</sup>

The analysis of motivations among women diasporans for engaging in political and humanitarian actions in Ukraine reveals a diverse range of factors driving their active involvement amidst the conflict. Emotions, values, and connections emerge as prominent drivers, highlighting the multifaceted nature of motivation. These findings encompass both personal and altruistic concerns, emphasizing the complex interplay of emotions and obligations shaping diasporans' commitment to addressing challenges. Moreover, these motivations often intertwine and reinforce each other, particularly in times of crisis.



## **Humanitarian Action**

The analysis of responses regarding Ukrainian women in Lebanon's participation in humanitarian aid efforts for Ukraine reveals a notable 54.7% of respondents providing financial assistance to diverse humanitarian organizations. Moreover, 56.2% demonstrated their commitment to family by providing direct financial assistance, highlighting a strong sense of responsibility towards immediate family members.

Additionally, 26.6% actively engaged in raising funds for relief operations, while 20.3% provided tangible support by sending clothes, addressing the immediate material needs of those affected. The commitment of 12.5% to monthly financial contributions to a humanitarian fund signifies a sustained dedication to supporting relief efforts over time.

Other forms of assistance, including sending food (12.5%), rallying international support for urgent funding and medical needs (10.9%), providing medicine (9.4%), and offering non-perishable necessities (6.3%), further showcase the diverse array of contributions made by these women.

The examination of Ukrainian women's humanitarian efforts in Lebanon resonates with broader research in the field,<sup>39</sup> showcasing shared characteristics with other diasporic humanitarian endeavors. These efforts demonstrate a comprehensive approach, addressing diverse needs ranging from cash assistance to medical support, food, clothing, and other necessities. Moreover, they exhibit adaptability and agility in swiftly mobilizing resources to respond effectively to emerging needs. Crucially, collaboration with existing community organizations enhances the efficiency and impact of these initiatives, underscoring the importance of partnerships in humanitarian action.<sup>40</sup>

## **Online Communication Action and Cyber Activism**

In their activism through media channels in support of Ukraine's resistance against Russian aggression, the respondents demonstrated a multifaceted approach. The majority, 81.3%, actively shared intriguing stories and crucial information, contributing to the dissemination of vital narratives.

Another substantial group, comprising 70.3%, expressed their political opinions and views on Facebook. A significant portion, 65.6%, demonstrated solidarity by engaging with posts related to the war through likes, while 64.1% played an active role in sharing news and visuals on social media, providing firsthand perspectives on the unfolding events in Ukraine.

Further, 51.6% shared news from reliable international source; 43.8% using trending hashtags and a comparable percentage actively discrediting fake news and disinformation. A notable 17.2% participated in media interviews, while 7.8% furthered

their engagement through insightful blogs about the situation in Ukraine. One started a newsletter on the situation in the Ukraine.

The respondents' activism through media channels in support of Ukraine's resistance reveals their adeptness in leveraging digital platforms for advocacy and participating in cyberspace defense against disinformation campaigns run by Russia. These dynamic positions diasporas as decentralized actors in the global conflict's information politics.<sup>41</sup>

### **Transnational Political Action and Public Policy Advocacy**

- *Signing Petitions:* A notable portion of the respondents engaged in signing petitions as a form of transnational political action. Specifically, 60.9% signed petitions condemning Russian aggression towards Ukraine, while 54.7% signed petitions calling for an end to the war. Additionally, 46.9% of respondents signed petitions targeting President Vladimir Putin. While signing electronic or online petitions may create a lasting record of one's political beliefs on the Internet, these women signed them with conviction. Their actions demonstrate a commitment to expressing their stance on the geopolitical situation, emphasizing political accountability, and serving as visible and impactful voices of dissent, calling for international action.



*"Ukrainian Women and Others Protesting the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine" - Beirut, Lebanon, February 24, 2023 (Credit: Nadiya Dragan)*

- *Organizing and Participating in Political Demonstrations:* A considerable percentage of respondents, comprising 51.6%, actively participated in organized demonstrations, protests, or marches as part of their transnational political actions.<sup>42</sup> During their protests, Ukrainian women in Lebanon utilized symbolic

elements, including the Ukrainian flag as a symbol of resistance, Ukraine's national flower, the sunflower, representing hope and resilience, and wearing the flower crown "vinok" as a symbol of strength, determination, and beauty.<sup>43</sup> These symbols served as a unifying identity for the protesters and Ukrainians worldwide, conveying a message of solidarity with those at home resisting or fighting.<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, they also carried the Lebanese flag. This dual flag display expresses the multifaceted identities of the diasporans and heightens the interconnectedness of their cultural affiliations and their solidarity with both Lebanon and Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> This dual display of flags also served as recognition of Lebanon's prompt official condemnation of the Russian military invasion and its call for Russia to "immediately stop its military operations, withdraw its forces, and resort to dialogue and negotiations."<sup>46</sup>

- ***Mobilizing and Campaigning:*** The significant role of mobilizing others undertaken by 28.1%, demonstrates not only personal commitment but also a recognition of the importance of rallying others to join the cause. The organization of campaigns by 20.3% further emphasizes proactive efforts to shape public opinion and garner broader support for Ukraine. During crisis escalation, diaspora groups employ rally public opinion support through campaigns.<sup>47</sup>
- ***Contributions to Homeland Defense:*** The significant contribution of 62.5% of individuals who sent money to support military defense underscores a strong dedication to national defense endeavors. This financial support not only aids the military directly but also reflects a tangible commitment to the broader security of the nation.<sup>48</sup> Several official sites were created to collect funds to support the Ukrainian army and resistance against Russia's invasion, including but not limited to "Unite with Ukraine - Support Ukrainian Army," "Donate to Ukraine's Defenders," and "Donate to Ukraine Army - Come Back Alive Foundation." Literature in the field abundantly documents the contributions of diasporas in support of homeland struggles for independence or defense against foreign aggressors.<sup>49</sup>
- ***Public Policy Advocacy:*** Respondents' responses to a question regarding what requests to make of the international community are as follows: 90.6% for preserving the territorial integrity of Ukraine; 84.4% advocate for an international tribunal to address Russia's military crimes in Ukraine; both the calls for an immediate ceasefire and the provision of military equipment for liberating the occupied territories of Ukraine received 68.8% support; the proposal to track war crimes and ensure accountability for those responsible garnered 65.6%; advocating for nuclear sites to be off-limits during conflicts received 64.1% support; freezing the assets and revoking the visas of Putin and his associates received 62.5%

support; both increasing sanctions on Russian banks and providing defensive military assistance received 60.9% support each; calling on countries to host and support refugees received 39.1% support; creating safe spaces for civilians received 34.4% support; waiving restrictive visa policies and supporting safe routes for refugees received 17.2% support; and 9.4% voted against the Nationality and Borders Bill, also known as UK's "Anti-Refugee Bill."<sup>50</sup>

- *Engagement in Formal Political Processes:* The lesser proportion (4.7%) participating in political gatherings indicates a minority of women actively engaged in formal political processes. In general, both Ukrainian men and women have a "negative perception of political culture,"<sup>51</sup> harboring low trust in political parties<sup>52</sup> and expressing dissatisfaction with their performance.<sup>53</sup>
- *Socio-Political Role of Diasporic Women:* In transnational environments, particularly during periods of conflict in their homeland, women often encounter opportunities for identity exploration alongside challenges in reconciling traditional gender roles with modern ones. Within this context, Ukrainian women residing in Lebanon, the focus of this survey, were prompted to contemplate their perception of their socio-political roles as diasporic women amidst the ongoing conflict in their homeland.

In addition to serving as cultural ambassadors, these women perceive themselves as educators, particularly for their children from mixed marriages, imparting knowledge of the Ukrainian language, history, and traditions. Furthermore, they identify as humanitarians, responding to the needs of their homeland, particularly during times of conflict. They also assert themselves as advocates for peace, raising awareness about the conflict and advocating for its resolution. Lastly, they see themselves as promoters of Ukraine, striving to cultivate appreciation for their country and present a positive image of Ukraine to the global community. These activities resonate with societal expectations that often dictate women's responsibilities in upholding cultural heritage and fostering familial and communal ties. However, within these traditional roles lies a progressive ethos as well. These women actively challenge entrenched gender norms by engaging in transnational political activism. Their multifaceted involvement in socio-political issues signifies a demonstration of agency and empowerment. The intersection of gender, diaspora experience, and transnational political activism may herald a new era of women's participation in post-invasion Ukraine, shaping the landscape of political discourse and action.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The active engagement of the respondents in humanitarian and political actions demonstrates their profound commitment to supporting Ukraine amidst the ongoing

aggression. Driven by a blend of personal convictions and diaspora-driven motivations, these women serve as strong agents of change, advocating for justice, peace, and solidarity. Their multifaceted involvement, spanning from grassroots activism to transnational political action, underscores their agency, resilience, and dedication to addressing the challenges faced by their homeland. As the war enters its third year and the global community continues to grapple with the ramifications of it, the contributions of Ukrainian women in Lebanon serve as an inspiring example of solidarity and empowerment.

The findings regarding Ukrainian women in Lebanon resonate with existing research, offering valuable insights due to their novelty, timeliness, and gender perspective. The response of Ukrainian women in Lebanon to the aggression against their country mirrors patterns observed in other diasporic communities concerning their humanitarian and political involvement. Consequently, the results of this study may possess broader applicability to similar contexts and circumstances. Expanding this research to include personal, stakeholder, and focus group interviews, as well as broadening the geographical coverage in Lebanon, could yield a deeper understanding of this community. Moreover, further exploration of the "progressive ethos" suggested by the results could enrich our comprehension of the impact of diasporic women's transnational engagement on their identities, communities, and broader societal dynamics.



### **DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**

The author declared that they had no potential conflicts of interest with regard to the research.

### **CONSENT AND ETHICS**

Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants' identities were kept private.

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The study was funded in-house.

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<sup>2</sup> Lister, T., John, T., & Murphy, P. P. (2022, February 24). Here's what we know about how Russia's invasion of Ukraine unfolded. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/24/europe/ukraine-russia-attack-timeline-intl/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> DEMAC (projekt). (2022). Diaspora Organizations and Their Humanitarian Response in Ukraine. DEMAC. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bb96c5e3-7b90-4f77-9dfa-f0a1e3903440/demac\\_ukraine\\_2022-spreads.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bb96c5e3-7b90-4f77-9dfa-f0a1e3903440/demac_ukraine_2022-spreads.pdf); DEMAC (projekt). (2021). Diaspora Organizations and Their Humanitarian Response in Ukraine. DEMAC. <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/e45bd554-a1d3-30d8-bbbf-44bbdcc15913/Demac%20Report%20Ukraine%20Final%20New%20Cover%202021.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, N. (2023, August 22). Conflict in Ukraine: A timeline (2014 - eve of 2022 invasion) [Research Briefing]. House of Commons. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9476/>

<sup>5</sup> Howlett, M. (2023, February 22). Expert Comment: Three Decades On, Ukraine, a Sovereign Country, Is Fighting a War for Independence. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2023-02-22-expert-comment-three-decades-ukraine-sovereign-country-fighting-war-independence>

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. (2023, June 20). Lebanon - Bilateral Cooperation - Middle East and Africa. <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/bilateral-cooperation/middle-east-and-africa>.

<sup>8</sup> In the context of current marital status, the survey findings indicate that 90.6% of respondents are presently married, with 7.8% having reported being divorced, and 1.6% widowed. Regarding the

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nationality of spouses, a significant majority (89.1%) are identified as Lebanese, while 3.1% belong to non-Lebanese nationalities, and the remaining 7.8% do not have a spouse due to their unmarried status. The analysis of marital status and the nationality of spouses suggests a notable level of stability within the marital framework of the surveyed population. The predominant proportion, comprising 90.6%, denotes an entrenched state of marital commitment, indicative of robust relational constancy. Furthermore, the substantial representation of Lebanese nationals as spouses (89.1%) underscores a strong affiliation with the local community.

<sup>9</sup> Defining an international marriage presents inherent challenges. Nonetheless, within the scope of our research, transnational/international/cross-border marriages defined here as the legal union of two individuals from two different nation-states. Lumayag, L. A. (2016). CHAPTER 3 Marriage “During” Work Migration: Lived Experiences of Filipino Marriage Migrants in Malaysia (pp. 73-102). In S. K. Ishii (Ed.), *Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States*. NUS Press, Kyoto University Press. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xz02c?turn\\_away=true](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xz02c?turn_away=true).

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