

Factors Influencing Ukrainian Parolees' Decision to Migrate in the U.S.

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war has caused a massive influx of Ukrainian refugees into the US. To address this, President Biden implemented the Uniting for Ukraine program which provides a pathway for Ukrainian refugees and their families to temporarily stay in the U.S. for a two-year period of parole. The question arises, will Ukrainian parolees' decide to stay or leave the U.S. after two years? This study attempts to better understand the factors that are influencing Ukrainian parolees' intentions to decide whether to stay or leave the US. The study surveyed parolees to gather data on their intentions. The findings provide convincing evidence that the majority of respondents indicated that they intend to stay in the US. The key factors influencing those who wish to stay include traveling as a group, family members in the US, the ongoing war, other family reasons, and finances. Those who intended to leave were influenced by factors such as family in Ukraine, culture, the ongoing war, and financial reasons. The results of the study can inform future policies toward refugee groups in the U.S. and further the field of migration studies.

Introduction

The two independent countries Russia and Ukraine share a long line of culture among their people. Both countries were formerly part of the Soviet Union. In 1991 the Soviet Union was dismantled under President Gorbachev and the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics broke into independent nations including Russia and Ukraine (*Map of Soviet Union*, n.d.). The current President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, wants nothing more than to restore Europe to its Soviet days, starting with Russia gaining control over Ukraine (Shvangiradze, 2022). In 2014, Putin annexed Crimea, a peninsula on the northern coast of the Black Sea, citing that it was to protect native Russians. However, the more probable reason was to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO. Then, Russia captured the regions Donetsk and Luhansk to further destabilize Ukraine. In November 2021, Russian troops began to gather along the border of Ukraine and run military tests (Turak & Ellyatt, 2022). On February 24, 2022, a full-scale war broke out as Russia invaded Ukraine starting the Russo-Ukraine war (Kirby & Guyer, 2022).

The escalation of the conflict in Ukraine has caused civilian casualties and destruction of property, forcing millions of Ukrainian citizens to flee their homes seeking shelter and humanitarian aid. As of September 30, 2022, there were an estimated 8 million refugees due to the crisis. Many of these refugees have fled to neighboring countries. Both Poland and Germany have received over one million refugees each. Other countries refugees have fled to include the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Moldova, Russia, and the United States (*Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation*, 2023). Under martial law, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky implemented a travel ban that restricts most men ages 18 to 60 from leaving the country (Carpenter & Fairchild, 2022). As a result, most refugees are women between the ages of 30 and 39 with children or elderly parents (Yayboke et al., 2022).

Taking a proactive approach to the war, United States President Biden on April 21, 2022, announced the program Uniting for Ukraine. Uniting for Ukraine provides a pathway for Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members outside the United States to come and stay temporarily for a two-year period of parole. Participants in the program must have a sponsor in the United States who agrees to provide them with financial support during their stay (*Uniting for Ukraine* | USCIS, 2023). As of January 20, 2023, Uniting for Ukraine has welcomed over 102,000 Ukrainians so far. Nearly 200,000 Americans have applied to sponsor those fleeing the war, and the majority of sponsors are from New York, Illinois, California, and Washington (Murray, 2023). In this paper, I will use the terms parolees and refugees interchangeably to refer to those who fled from Ukraine to the United States as a result of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

The large number of parolees in the U.S. raises the question, will Ukrainian parolees' decide to stay or leave the U.S. after two years? This study attempts to better understand the factors that are influencing Ukrainian parolees' intentions to decide whether to stay or leave the US. I believe that Russo-Ukrainian war status along with economic status, family presence in the U.S. and Ukrainian, and comfortability of lifestyle in the U.S. are among the top factors that influence whether or not Ukrainian parolees will stay or leave the US. When looking at typical factors for why refugees typically flee a country, specifically Ukrainian refugees, factors such as violence/war, family, and economic feasibility often are the top influences (Castelli, 2018). I hypothesize that these same factors will likely translate to the population of Ukrainian refugees who migrated to the U.S. because of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Furthermore, I believe that it is highly likely that most Ukrainian parolees will have adjusted to their life in the U.S. and be hesitant to uproot their lives again after two years. As a result, most parolees, around 75%, will choose to stay in the US. This is due to several factors, such as the unpredictable end to the Russo-Ukrainian war and the fact that many of the parolees who wished to return to Ukraine would have already done so.

Both my parents and grandparents left Ukraine, when it was still a part of the Soviet Union, in search of opportunity in the United States. My parents' and grandparents' heritage influenced me a lot as I grew up, and I feel a connection to the Ukrainian community. While most of my family does not live in Ukraine, we still hold a strong connection to the land and culture. Because of my family's history, I wish to study the factors that influence Ukrainian refugees as a means to better understand the experiences and decisions of Ukrainian refugees in the US.

Literature Review

One study I reviewed was by Francesco Castelli, "Drivers of migration: why do people move?" (Castelli, 2018). The purpose of the paper was to analyze the migration phenomenon and factors that contribute to migration. The study aimed to understand macro, meso, and micro factors and how they influenced migration.

The method used in the study was a review of already available literature, mainly qualitative information. The research covers a wide range of factors that contribute to migration, including economic development, population increase and urbanization, climate changes, wars and dictatorships, land grabbing, religion, sexual identity, education, and personal willingness to migrate.

The study concluded that a combination of macro, meso, and micro factors work together to influence the decision to migrate. Also, the study debunked the notion that most migrants are from low-income countries aiming to reach more affluent areas is simply not true. There is a similar, if not even larger, number of people migrating to neighboring low-income countries in the same geographical areas. The macro factors that influence migration include inadequate human and economic development of the origin country, demographic increase and urbanization, wars and dictatorships, social factors, and environmental changes. The meso factors include linking the individual to his/her ethnic group or religious community, land grabbing, communication technology, and diasporic links. The role of communication technologies and social media

attracts individuals from their home country by showing them a higher standard of living elsewhere. The ease of access to such technologies pushes many to migrate. Finally, micro factors like education, religion, marital status, and personal attitude to migration play a pivotal role in the final decision to migrate.

Another study that I reviewed was the United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) for Refugees Regional Protection Profiling and Monitoring Factsheet (*Profiles, Needs and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine*, 2022). The purpose of the study was to strengthen and promote evidence-based protection for Ukrainian refugees at the UNHCR. The UNHCR stands for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a United Nations agency mandated to provide aid and protect refugees. The organization with its partners in Belarus, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia implemented a regular data collection survey to analyze the profiles, needs, and intentions of refugees from Ukraine and monitor changes.

The study used interviews at border points and transport hubs (24%), reception and transit centers (18%), collective sites (15%), and assistance points in major cities (29%). Trained enumerators from UNHCR and partners digitally collected the data which was later stored on the UNHCR server, Kobo Toolbox. Respondents were selected randomly to reduce bias. However nonprobability sampling was used, so not all the different respondents in the population were equally represented. Thus, the results cannot be inferred to the population, Ukrainian refugees. It is also important to note, the results reflect the refugees' current situations and intentions at the time of data collection.

Key findings of the study include the following. The study got 43,571 respondents from 7 countries (Poland, Romania, Moldova, Slovakia, Belarus, Hungary, and Bulgaria). 85% of the respondents were females and 72% of respondents were females between the ages 18-59. The greater number of female respondents is mostly caused by the restriction of freedom of movement for men due to martial law. 87% of refugee families are women and children, and 13% of family members are older persons. 68% of respondents were staying in hosted or rented accommodations, and 28% were staying in collective sites, planned sites, and reception or transit centers. 12% of respondents had relatives in their host country. In the study, not all the presents add up to 100% due to rounding. The study concluded by ending with information about the intentions of the respondents. 63% of respondents said that they would stay in their host country, 14% said they don't know, 14% said they would return to Ukraine, and 9% said they would move to another host country. The main reasons behind those who opted to stay were safety, family ties, employment, and asylum procedure. The main reason behind the intention to return was the perception that the situation has improved financial reasons, and reuniting with family.

Francesco Castelli's study relates to the researcher's study because it lays out several important factors that could potentially influence Ukrainian refugees to migrate to the United States such as linking to war, ethnic groups or diaspora, education, and other factors. The same factors that influence Ukrainian refugees to flee Ukraine might be the same factors that influence Ukrainian refugees to return.

The study conducted by the UNHCR is also useful to the researcher's study. The UNHCR study shows that it will be hard to get a proper population sample, and most of the respondents will be women between 18-59. The study also found several factors that influenced respondents whether they would stay or leave their host country. Many of the same factors that influenced respondents to say that they will either leave or stay in their host county will carry over to the researcher's study about factors that influence Ukrainian parolees and whether or not they intend to stay or leave the United States. Additionally, the researcher's study plans to use a similar methodology for collecting data. The researcher will send out a survey with questions and use the response to draw conclusions about the subjects.

Methods

The researcher surveyed Ukrainian parolees in the United States. The location of where the participants are located was not tracked throughout the study, but other factors like age, gender, and more were tracked. To survey the Ukrainian refugee population the researcher used a Google Form survey. The survey asked the following questions: Age (18, 18-45, 46-68, 68<), Gender (Male, Female, Other), Did you travel to the U.S. alone or with a group (Alone, In a group 2+), Do you see yourself staying or leaving the U.S. within the next 2 years (I think I will stay in the US, I think I will leave the US), Do you have at least one family member that is a U.S. citizen (Yes, No), Do you have at least one family member still in Ukraine (Yes, No), If you plan on staying/leaving the US, what are your reasons? The survey was in Ukrainian, Russian, and English and included a consent form before participation.

(Fig 1a-o belong here)

Fig 1a-o are screen shots of the survey.

To find participants, the researcher contacted several nonprofit organizations, through email, that pledged to help refugees. The nonprofits include, but are not limited to, Nova Ukraine, Razom For Ukraine, United Help Ukraine, Project Hope, and Doctors Without Borders. The researcher asked these nonprofits if they would be able to share the survey through social media, an email list, or any other means to their network of refugees. Most did not respond or said that they were unable to help distribute the survey. However, Razom for Ukraine agreed to help the researcher distribute the survey, and sent it to their email list of Ukrainian refugees. The researcher did not have access to that list, but Razom for Ukraine is located in New York, NY; therefore, the researcher assumes that most respondents were from a nearby area. Additionally, the researcher utilized social media to get responses. The researcher reached out to Ukrainian Facebook groups and Instagram accounts with large followings. The researcher was able to post the survey in these online forums, and some of the Instagram accounts were able to post and send the survey to refugees. In total, the researcher got 52 responses with 51 agreeing to participate and 1 declining.

After creating the survey and gathering responses, the researcher created a spreadsheet with all the data.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Timestamp	Please select the language you want to participate	Do you want to participate	Ваше участие важно? Хотите внести свой вклад?	Age	Gender	Did you travel to the US	Do you see yourself stay	Do you have at least one	Do you have at least one	Do you have at least one	Do you have at least one	Do you have at least one	Do you have at least one
												Optional		
2	1/10/2023 21:45:19	Українська		Так										
3	1/10/2023 21:54:15	Українська		Так										
4	1/10/2023 23:12:24	Українська		Так									18-45	Мужчина
5	1/11/2023 0:14:58	Українська		Так										
6	1/11/2023 0:14:59	Українська		Так										
7	1/11/2023 1:19:27	Українська		Так									18-45	Жінщина
8	1/11/2023 2:24:02	Українська	Да	Так										
9	1/11/2023 4:12:48	Українська		Так										
10	1/11/2023 4:21:18	Українська		Так										
11	1/11/2023 5:02:17	Українська		Так										
12	1/11/2023 9:21:04	English	Yes		18-45	Female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave U.S.	No	Yes		Life is easier and safer in Ukraine, food is better and more affordable, taxes		
13	1/11/2023 6:09:09	Українська		Так										
14	1/11/2023 7:31:35	Українська		Так										
15	1/11/2023 9:16:40	Українська		Так										
16	1/11/2023 9:24:01	Українська		Так										
17	1/11/2023 10:00:15	Українська	Да	Так									18-45	Мужчина
18	1/11/2023 11:13:06	Українська		Так										
19	1/11/2023 12:27:35	Українська		Так										
20	1/11/2023 12:44:52	Українська		Так										
21	1/11/2023 14:03:49	Українська		Так										
22	1/11/2023 15:11:24	Українська		Так										
23	1/11/2023 16:48:29	Українська		Так										
24	1/11/2023 17:20:20	Українська	Да	Так									18-45	Жінщина
25	1/11/2023 18:27:43	Українська		Так										
26	1/11/2023 20:30:52	Українська		Так										
27	1/12/2023 11:59:56	Українська		Так										
28	1/12/2023 15:24:39	English	Yes		18-45	Male	In a group 2+	I think I will leave U.S.	Yes	Yes		Safety		
29	1/12/2023 16:24:26	Українська		Так										
30	1/12/2023 16:26:23	English	Да	Так									18-45	Жінщина
31	1/14/2023 14:31:12	English	Yes		18-45	Male	Alone	I think I will stay in U.S.	No	Yes		Guys, I don't know. I would like to stay in US for the you know better living, i		
32	1/19/2023 15:05:00	Українська		Німає										
33	1/19/2023 15:16:26	English	Yes		68+	Female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave U.S.	Yes	Yes				
34	1/19/2023 18:23:39	Українська		Так										
35	1/19/2023 19:10:14	Українська		Так										
36	1/20/2023 1:12:59	Українська		Так										
37	1/20/2023 10:11:26	English	Yes		18-45	Female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in U.S.	Yes	Yes				
38	1/20/2023 10:23:30	Українська		Так										
39	1/20/2023 12:44:04	Українська		Так										
40	1/20/2023 13:18:06	Українська		Так										
41	1/20/2023 21:07:22	Українська		Так										
42	1/21/2023 8:50:35	Українська		Так										
43	1/21/2023 14:21:06	Українська		Так										
44	1/21/2023 21:34:59	Українська		Так										
45	1/22/2023 0:31:10	Українська		Так										
46	1/22/2023 9:05:05	Українська		Так										
47	1/23/2023 7:43:04	English	Yes		<18	Male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in U.S.	Yes	Yes				
48	1/23/2023 12:02:13	English	Yes		46-68	Female	Alone	I think I will leave U.S.	Yes	Yes		Can't form a life here.		
49	1/23/2023 13:19:27	English	Yes		18-45	Female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in U.S.	Yes	Yes		Family		
50	1/23/2023 18:08:40	Українська		Так										
51	1/23/2023 18:45:06	Українська		Так									18-45	Жінщина
52	1/24/2023 16:40:25	Українська		Так										
53	2/13/2023 7:46:41	Українська	Да	Так									18-45	Жінщина

Fig2a

1	A	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD
1	Текст	Вы путешествовали в США видите себя, оставив у вас есть хотя бы один? У вас есть хотя бы один? Если вы планируете отъехать															
2	1/10/2023 21:45:19					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так			Безопасно				
3	1/10/2023 21:45:19	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Нет	Да		18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так			Я планировала выехать в США за примерно 2 дня назад! Исполнювати свое желание тут				
4	1/10/2023 23:12:24					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
5	1/11/2023 0:14:58					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
6	1/11/2023 0:14:58					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
7	1/11/2023 1:19:27	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Нет	Да		Безопасность, возможность реализовать себя, выучить английский язык	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Рядом были парни на то что можно повернуться и бы еще додуму летел! Таму що тут мій брат мамі і бабусі мого Рідні в Україні				
8	1/11/2023 2:24:02					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
9	1/11/2023 4:15:48					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
10	1/11/2023 4:21:18					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
11	1/11/2023 5:02:17					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
12	1/11/2023 5:21:56	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Нет	Да		Безопасность, возможность реализовать себя, выучить английский язык	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Я планировала выехать в США за примерно 2 дня назад! Исполнювати свое желание тут				
13	1/11/2023 6:09:09					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
14	1/11/2023 7:31:35					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
15	1/11/2023 8:19:40					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
16	1/11/2023 9:24:01					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
17	1/11/2023 10:10:15	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Да	Да		Безопасность, возможность реализовать себя, выучить английский язык	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Знайги роботу, щоб допомогти родина в Україні				
18	1/11/2023 11:13:06					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Немец			My decision to leave Ukraine was not spontaneous. We thought for a long time what to do next and realized that it w				
19	1/11/2023 12:27:35					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
20	1/11/2023 12:42:02					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
21	1/11/2023 14:03:49					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
22	1/11/2023 15:11:24					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
23	1/11/2023 16:48:39					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
24	1/11/2023 17:20:20	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Нет	Да		После войны в Донецке и переезда в Николаев, на данный момент я не хочу уезжать, под риском снова моего возвращаю в Украину.	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Чесно, коли буде безпечно в Україні і люди будуть коєфортно жити вдома в Україні				
25	1/11/2023 18:27:43					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Залишитись тут після війни триває			
26	1/11/2023 20:30:52					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
27	1/12/2023 11:58:56					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
28	1/12/2023 15:24:39					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
29	1/12/2023 16:28:23	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что уеду из США	Да		18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
30	1/12/2023 16:28:23	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что уеду из США	Да		18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
31	1/12/2023 16:28:23	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что уеду из США	Да		18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Немец	Так							
32	1/18/2023 10:05:00					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
33	1/18/2023 15:15:26					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
34	1/18/2023 18:23:39					46-68	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
35	1/18/2023 19:15:14					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
36	1/20/2023 1:12:59					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
37	1/20/2023 10:11:26					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
38	1/20/2023 10:29:30					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
39	1/20/2023 12:44:04					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
40	1/20/2023 13:16:06					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
41	1/20/2023 21:02:22					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
42	1/21/2023 8:59:35					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
43	1/21/2023 14:21:06					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
44	1/21/2023 21:34:59					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
45	1/22/2023 0:31:10					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
46	1/22/2023 0:31:10					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
47	1/22/2023 7:45:04					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
48	1/22/2023 12:02:13					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
49	1/22/2023 13:19:27					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
50	1/22/2023 18:08:40					18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
51	1/22/2023 18:45:06	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Нет	Да		Мой дом находится на оккупированной территории	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Тяжко і лягаватию				
52	1/26/2023 16:48:25	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Да	Да		18-45	женщина	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так							
53	2/13/2023 7:46:41	В группе 2*	Я думаю, что останусь / Да	Да		Я планирую остаться, пока минимум пока не закончится война на Украине. Но также рассматриваю и вариант остаться в США, т.к. я и мой маленький ребенок чувствуем себя в безопасности.	Инд группа 2*	Думает, и планирует в АН Так	Так				Вибрати пошу що мій чоловік та мого виїхати з України.				

Fig2b

Figure 2a-b. Screenshots of the data collected through the survey.

Then, the researcher translated the data collected into English to be more effective analyzed.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	language	agree to participate	Age	Gender	Did you travel to the US alone or with a group (including family members, friends, etc.)?	Do you see yourself staying or leaving the U.S. within the next 2 years?	Do you have at least one family member that that is a U.S. citizen?	Do you have at least one family member still in Ukraine?	*Optional If you plan on staying/leaving in the US, what are your reasons?
2	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	security
3	Russian	yes	18-45	male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	USA is a land of opportunity and I want to realize it here
4	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	I planned to leave the USA about 2 years ago and settle my life here.
5	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
6	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	male	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	
7	Russian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	Security, opportunity to realize oneself, learn English
8	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	male	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	If there were papers on the fact that it is possible to return, I would fly
9	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	Native in Ukraine
10	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	My son's future
11	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	leave when the war ends
12	English	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	Life is easier and safer in Ukraine, food is better and more affordable,
13	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	male	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	
14	Ukrainian	yes	<18	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	I am going because my parents stayed in Ukraine, I miss them very m
15	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
16	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	Find a job to help my family in Ukraine
17	Russian	yes	18-45	male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	Battles in my city
18	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	no	My decision to leave Ukraine was not spontaneous. We thought for a
19	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	war
20	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
21	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	It is not possible to leave and return
22	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	
23	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	I am waiting when it will be safe in Ukraine and there will be a place to
24	Russian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	After the war in Donetsk, I moved to Nikolaev, at the moment I do not
25	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	I will stay here while the war lasts
26	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
27	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	Danger due to the aggressive unprovoked war that the Russians are i
28	English	yes	18-45	male	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	Safety
29	Ukrainian	yes	<18	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	
30	Russian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	
31	English	yes	18-45	male	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	Guys, I don't know. I would like to stay in US for the you know better i
32	Ukrainian	no							
33	English	yes	68<	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	
34	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
35	Ukrainian	yes	46-68	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	
36	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	
37	English	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	
38	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	
39	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will stay in the U.S.		yes	
40	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	no	Security for the future
41	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	
42	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	Child's education
43	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	I want to live in Ukraine and travel in the USA
44	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	
45	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	There are more prospects here than in Ukraine in the coming years
46	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	
47	English	yes	<18	male	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	
48	English	yes	46-68	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	Can't form a life here.
49	English	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	yes	yes	Family
50	Ukrainian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will leave the U.S.	no	yes	Difficulty with legalization
51	Russian	yes	18-45	female	In a group 2+	I think I will stay in the U.S.	no	yes	My house is in the occupied territory
52	English	yes	18-45	female	Alone	I think I will leave the U.S.	yes	yes	To leave because my husband cannot leave Ukraine

Fig3

Figure 3. Screenshot of the organized data.

With the organized data, the researcher created pie charts that represented the response to each question (view Findings for more information).

After, the researcher created another spreadsheet with columns “traveled in a group,” “stay in the US” and “at least one family member in the US,” “stay in the US” to create stacked bar graphs, to determine if there was an association between the factors (traveled in a group and family in the US) and whether or not the respondent was going to stay in the US. The researcher created both standard stacked column charts and 100% stacked column charts.

Finally, the researcher grouped the optional responses to create categories for why respondents indicated to stay or leave the US. That concludes the implementation of the study.

Findings

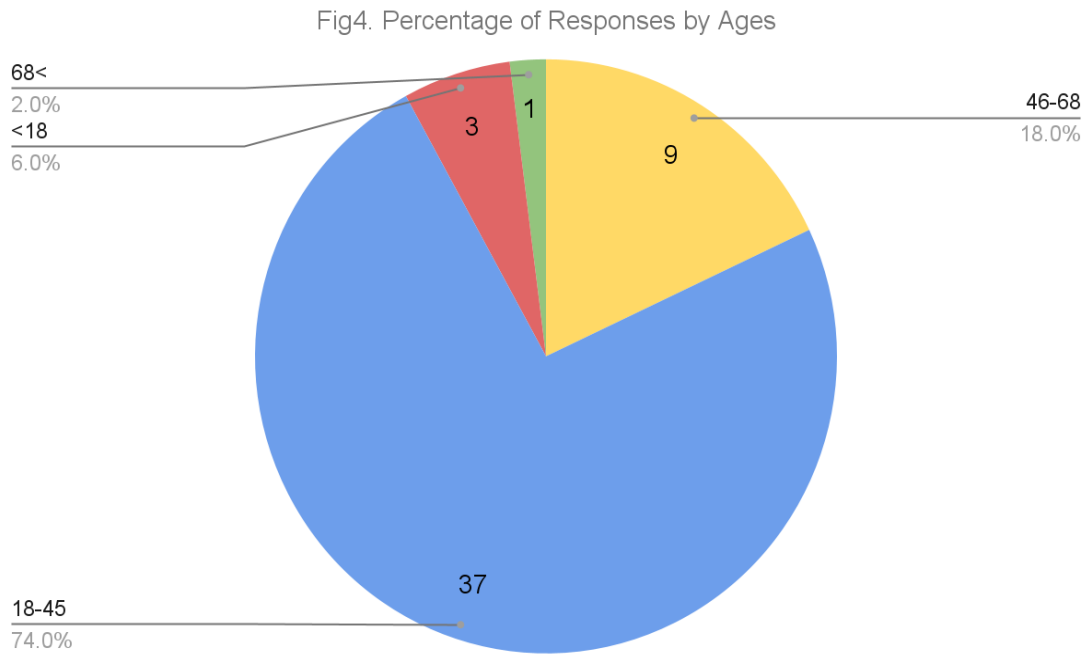


Figure 4. Shows the percentage of respondents by age group in the study. The majority of respondents are between the ages 18-45 and 46-68.

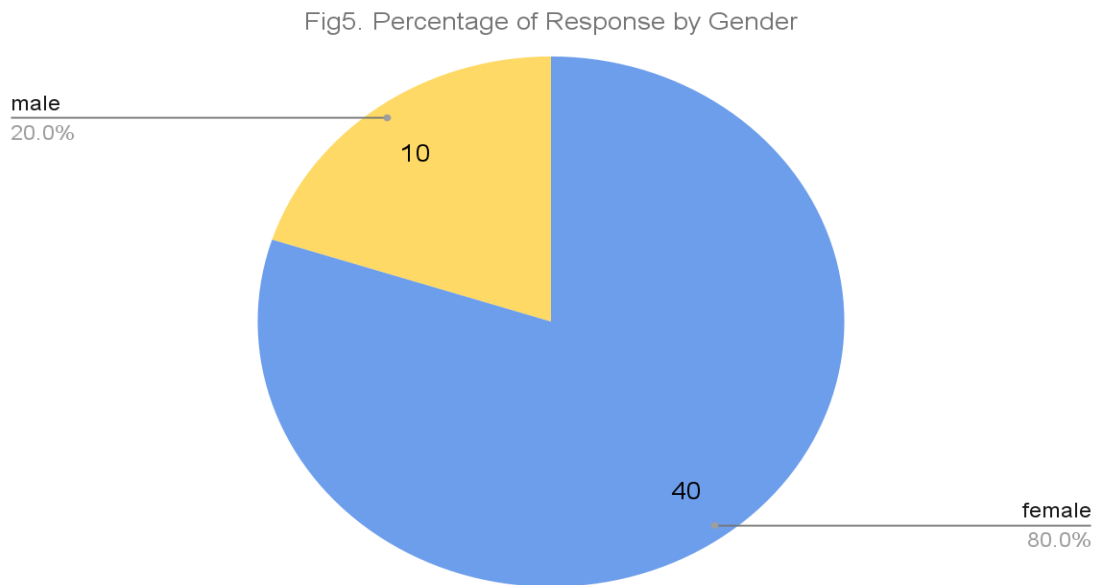


Figure 5. Shows the percentage of respondents by gender. An overwhelming majority of respondents were female.

Fig6. Percentage of Responses Travelled Alone or in a Company

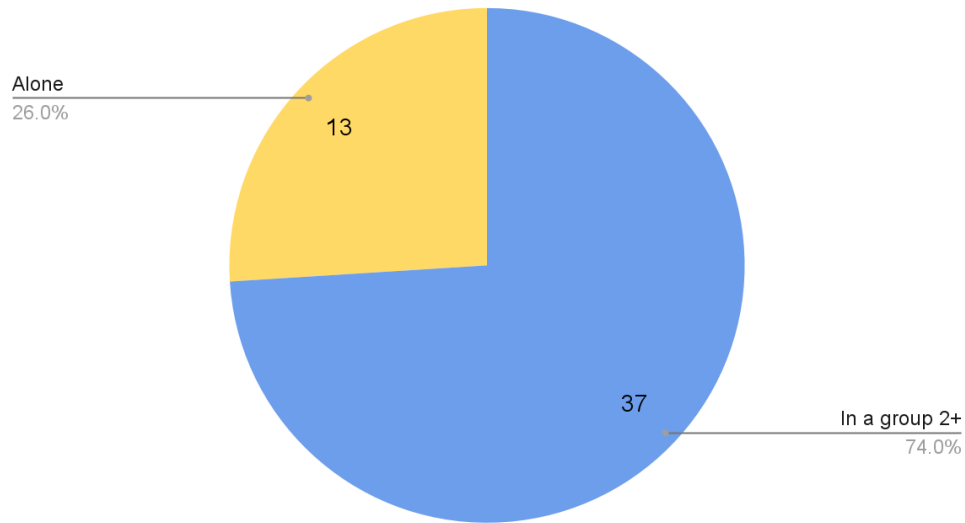


Figure 6. Shows the percentage of respondents who traveled alone or in a company. Most of the respondents traveled in groups of two or greater.

Fig7. Percentage of Responses Stay or Leave the US

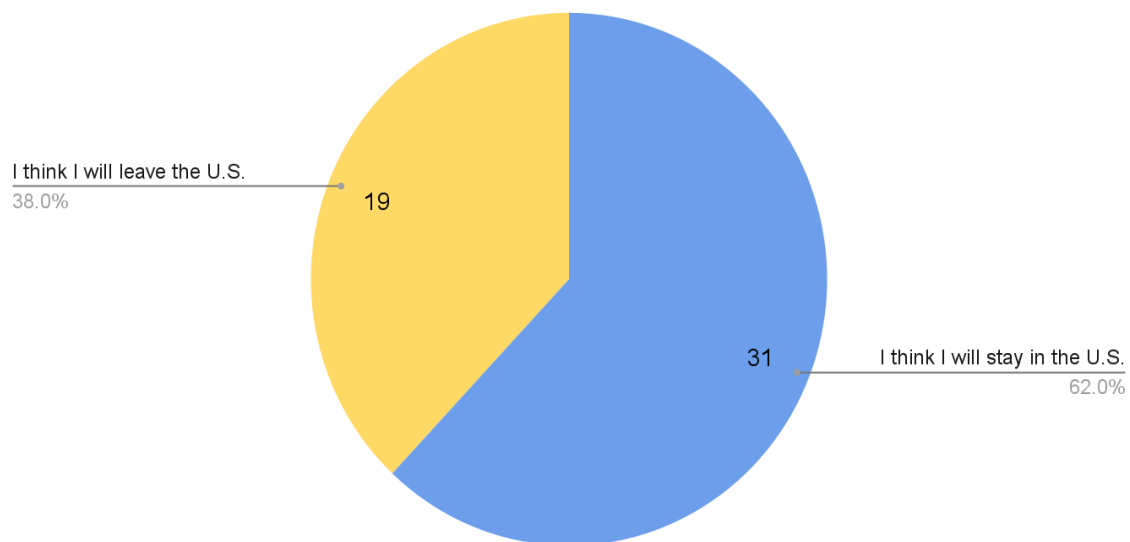


Figure 7. Shows the percentage of respondents who responded that they are going to stay or leave the US. Most of the respondents claimed that they were going to stay in the US. The percentage of respondents in the researcher's study who showed intention to stay in the US, 62%, was very similar to the percentage of respondents in the UNHCR's study which indicated that 63% of their respondents indicated that they were going to stay in their host country.

Fig8. Percentage of Participants Who Have at Least One Family Member that is a US citizen

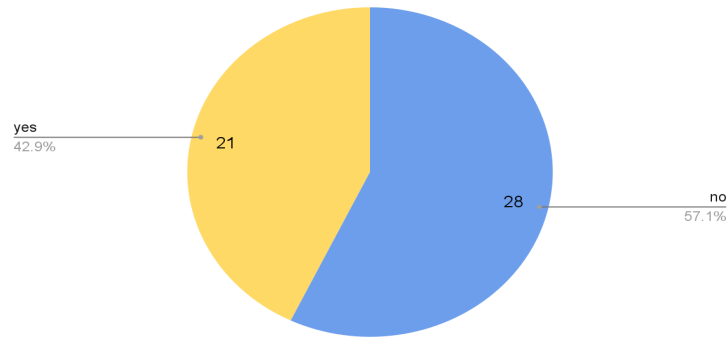


Figure 8. Shows the percentage of participants who have at least one family member that is a U.S. citizen. There were slightly more respondents who did not have a U.S. citizen who was a family member than those who did.

Fig9. Percentage of Participants Who Have at Least One Family Member Still in Ukraine

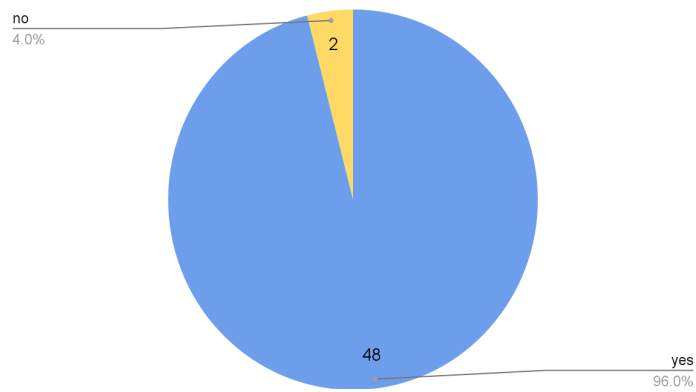


Figure 9. Shows the percentage of participants who have family members in Ukraine. Almost all of the participants had at least one family member who was still in Ukraine.

Fig10. Percentage of Respondents by Language Choice

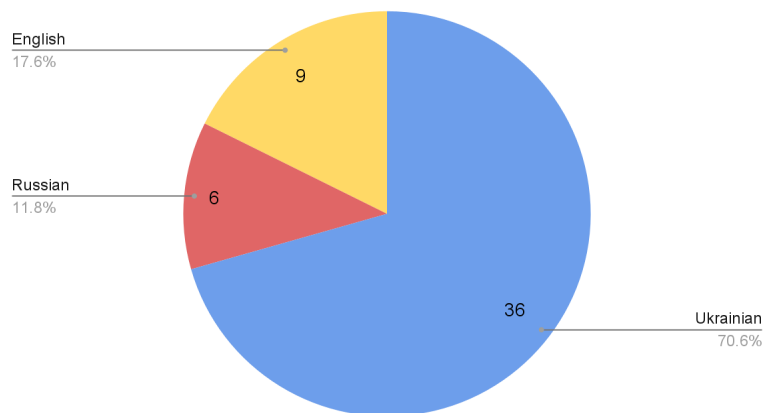


Figure 10. Shows the percentage of respondents who responded in English, Russian, and Ukrainian by percentage. Most respondents responded in Ukrainian, English was the second most used language, and Russian was the least used language.

Fig11. Standard Stacked Bar Graph of Respondents Who Had Traveled Alone and Who Traveled in a Group and Amount That Want to Stay and Leave

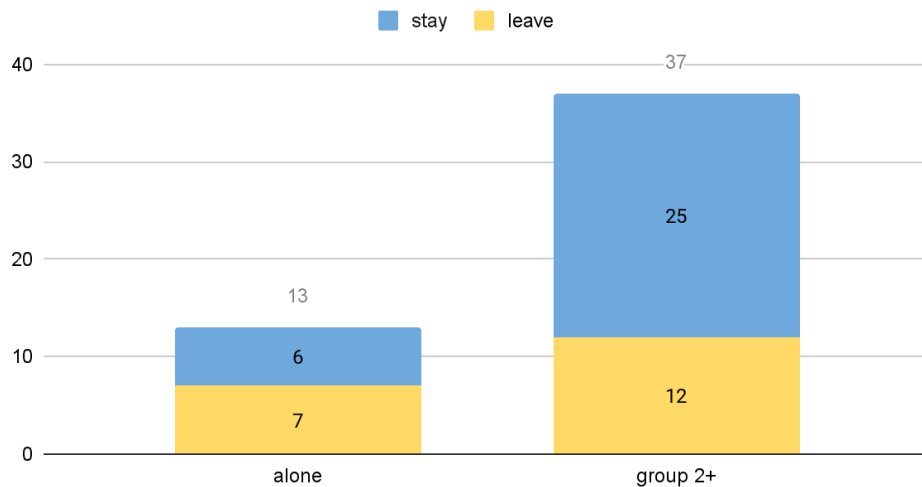


Figure 11. Shows two standard stacked bar graphs. On the left, the standard stacked bar graph represents respondents who had traveled alone and the amount that indicated that they are going to stay or leave the US. On the right, the standard stacked bar graph represents the respondents who traveled in a group and the amount that indicated that they are going to stay or leave the US.

Fig12. 100% Stacked Bar Graph of Respondents Who Had Traveled Alone and Who Traveled in a Group and Percentage That Want to Stay and Leave

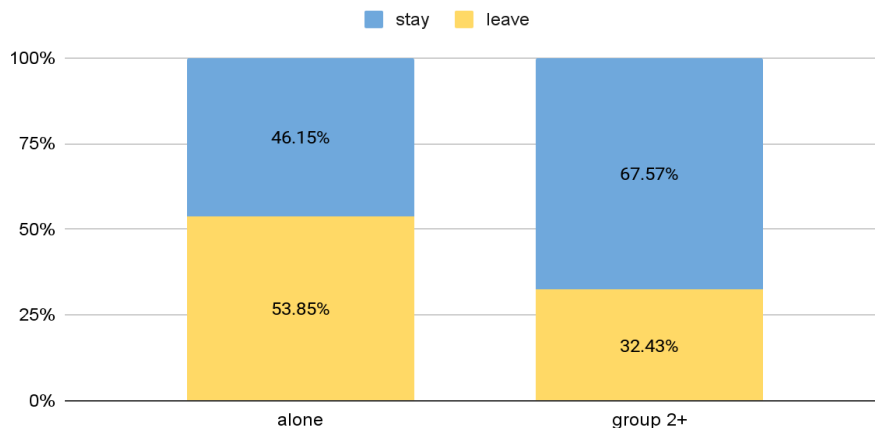


Figure 12. Shows a 100% stacked bar graph with the same data as Figure 11 but in percentages.

The data suggest that respondents who came to the U.S. in a group were more likely to stay than those who came alone. The study classifies a group as any individual who traveled to the U.S. with at least one family member, friend, or acquaintance. The study found that 67.57% of the respondents who traveled to the U.S. in

a group expressed that they were likely to stay in the US. Whereas, only 46.15% of those who traveled alone to the U.S. said they were going to stay. The percentage difference indicates that there is an association between those who migrated in a group vs those who migrated alone and the likelihood that they intend to stay in the US. A factor that influenced respondents was having at least one family member who was a citizen of the US.

Fig13. Standard Stacked Bar Graph of Respondents Have at Least One Family Member in The US and No Family Members in US and Amount That Want to Stay and Leave

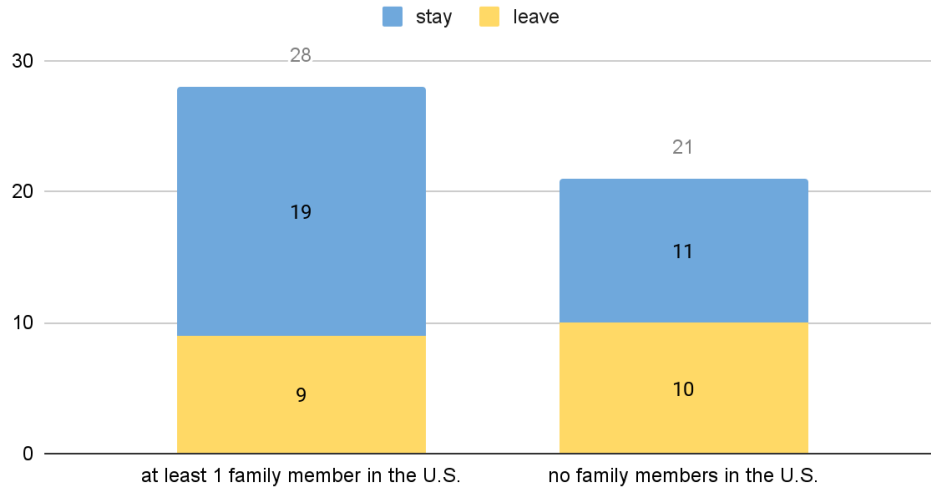


Figure 13. Shows two standard stacked bar graphs. The standard stacked bar graph on the left shows the number of respondents that indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. or leave the U.S. who had at least one family member that was a U.S. citizen. The bar graph on the right shows the number of respondents that indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. or leave the U.S. but had no family members that were a citizen in the US.

Fig14. 100% Stacked Bar Graph of Respondents Who Had Traveled Alone and Who Traveled in a Group and Percentage That Want to Stay and Leave

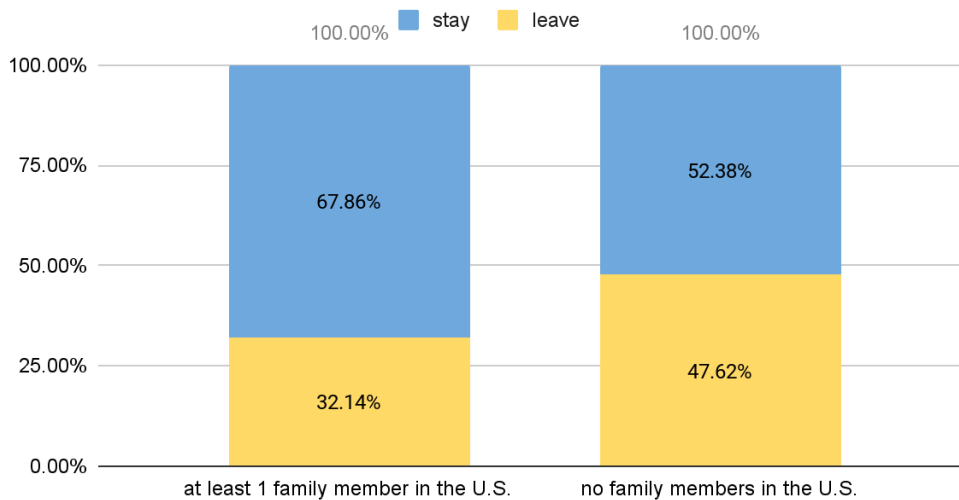


Figure 14. Shows the same data as Figure 13 but in percentages.

Data collected in this study also suggests that respondents who had at least one family member in the U.S. were more likely to stay than those who did not have family members in the US. Out of the respondents who had at least one family member that was a U.S. citizen, 67.86% of them said that they were going to stay in the US. Out of the respondents who did not have at least one family member in the US, 52.38% of them said that they were going to stay in the US. There is an association between the likelihood to stay in the U.S. and whether the respondent has a family member who is a U.S. citizen. It is clear that whether or not a respondent had family members in the U.S. played a role in their decision to indicate their future intentions to stay or leave the country.

Fig15. Individuals who answered optional response question: If you plan on staying/leaving in the US, what are your reasons?

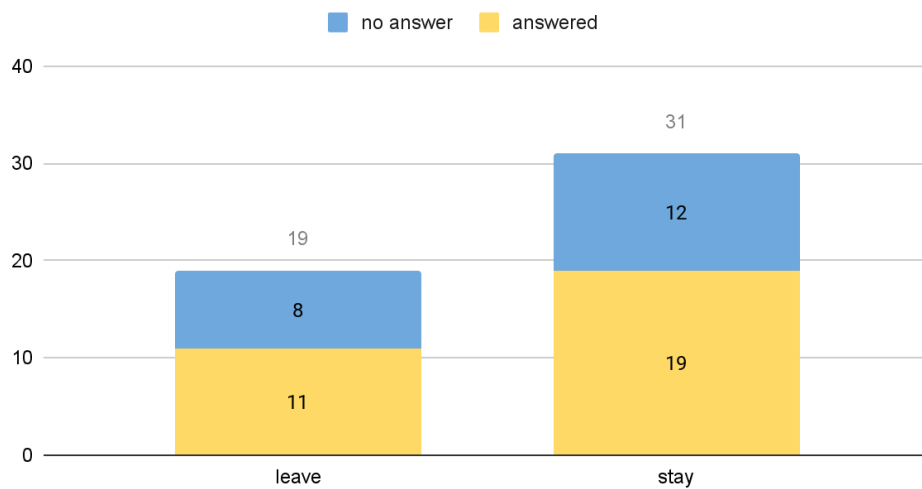


Figure 15. Shows two stacked bar graphs. Survey participants had the option at the end of the survey to explain why they choose to leave or stay in the U.S. after two years. The bar graph on the left shows the number of respondents that left a response and did not leave a response who indicated that they were going to leave the US. The bar graph on the right shows the number of respondents that left a response and did not leave a response who indicated that they were going to stay in the US.

Fig16. Individuals who answered optional response question: If you plan on staying/leaving in the US, what are your reasons?

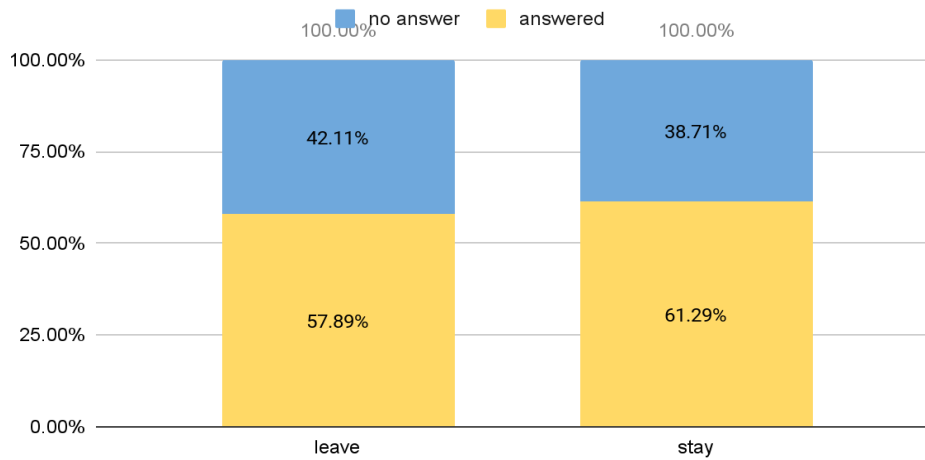


Figure 16. Shows the same data as Figure 14 but in a percentage format. Slightly more participants who indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. answered the optional question than those who indicated leaving.

Table1. Top Factors for Parolees to Leave the U.S.

Leave Categories	Ukrainian	Russian	English
Family	Якби бали папери на те що можна повернутися я би вже додому летів! Тому що тут мій брат мами і батько живуть		If there were papers on the fact that it is possible to return, I would fly home already! Because my mother's brother and father live here
	Їду через те, що мої батьки залишилися в Україні, дуже сумую за ними. Також це мій останній рік у школі, і я планую йти до польського університету		I am going because my parents stayed in Ukraine, I miss them very much. Also, this is my last year at school and I plan to go to a Polish university
	Виїхати тому що мій чоловік не може виїхати з України.		To leave because my husband cannot leave Ukraine
Culture	Рідні в Україні		Native in Ukraine
	Немає змоги виїхати і повернутись назад		It is not possible to leave and return
War	виїхати, як закінчиться війна		Leave when the war ends
Financial			Safety
			Life is easier and safer in Ukraine, food is better and more affordable, taxes for private business are lower

Other:	Я хочу жити в Україні, а в США подорожувати		I want to live in Ukraine and travel in the U.S.
			Can't form a life here.

The researcher organized the responses of the parolees who indicated that they were going to leave the U.S. in two years into categories, grouping similar responses together to create common factors. The researcher found that the top factors that respondents reported included family, culture, war, and financial reasons.

A common similarity between respondents was that participants missed male members of their family. Going back to Ukraine to reunite with family members seems to be an influential factor among respondents who said they were leaving the US.

Another factor that motivated Ukrainian refugees to indicate that they were going to leave the U.S. in two years was culture. Respondents felt strong ties to their homeland, Ukraine, and this pushed them to indicate that they are going to move back.

Most refugees fled because of the war; therefore, the Russo-Ukrainian war's status was a major factor in respondents' decisions to leave. One respondent said that once the war was over they were moving back.

Financial factors also influenced parolees to indicate they were going to move back. A respondent wrote that life was easier financially in Ukraine, hence their decision to migrate back.

Finally, other factors could not be grouped included those who wanted to travel to the U.S. but intended to return to Ukraine and hardship forming a 'life' in the US. Respondents indicate that both these factors affected their decision, at the time of the survey, to indicate that they were going to leave the US.

Table2. Top Factors for Parolees to Stay the US

Stay Category	Ukrainian	Russian	English
war	безпека		security
		Безопасность, возможность реализовать себя, выучить Английский язык	Security, opportunity to realize oneself, learn English
		Боевые действия в моем городе	Battles in my city
	Війна		war
	Чекаю, коли буде безпечно в Україні і коди буде де комфортно жити вдома в Україні		I am waiting until it will be safe in Ukraine, and there will be a place to live comfortably at home in Ukraine
		После войны в Донецке я переехала в Николаев, на данный момент я не хочу	After the war in Donetsk, I moved to Nikolaev, at the moment I do not want to put my family at risk again

		ставить под риск снова мою семью возвращаясь в Украину.	by returning to Ukraine
	Небезпека через агресивну неспровоковану війну, яку росіяни ведуть для знищення України та українців		Danger due to the aggressive unprovoked war that the Russians are waging to destroy Ukraine and Ukrainians
	Безпека на майбутнє		Security for the future
		Мой дом находится на оккупированной территории	My house is in the occupied territory
family	Майбутнє мого сина		My son's future
	Знайти роботу, щоб допомагати родині в Україні		Find a job to help my family in Ukraine
		После войны в Донецке я переехала в Николаев, на данный момент я не хочу ставить под риск снова мою семью возвращаясь в Украину.	After the war in Donetsk, I moved to Nikolaev, at the moment I do not want to put my family at risk again by returning to Ukraine
	навчання дитини		Child's education
			Family
opportunity		США страна возможностей, и я хочу реализовать их здесь	U.S. is a land of opportunity and I want to realize it here
			My decision to leave Ukraine was not spontaneous. We thought for a long time what to do next and realized that it was impossible to live without a further plan and in constant danger. We chose the U.S. because we have relatives here. Since we left Ukraine involuntarily, and not purposefully, we needed a country in which we would be able to adapt and recover as quickly as possible after the stress we had experienced. It is important for us to be in the Ukrainian diaspora in order to even out the feeling of not having a home at least a little. In the

			U.S., I see more opportunities for learning, career growth etc.
			Guys, I don't know. I would like to stay in the U.S. for the you know better living, and the basic values of U.S. society are really close to me. But on other hand it is mega huge stress for a refugees to appear in the middle of life in here without you know regular surrounding, common stuff, etc.
	Більше перспектив тут, аніж в Україні в найближчі роки		There are more prospects here than in Ukraine in the coming years
financial	Знайти роботу, щоб допомагати родині в Україні		Find a job to hep my family in Ukraine
other:	Я планувала виїхати в США ще приблизно 2 роки назад і влаштувати своє життя тут		I planned to leave the U.S. about 2 years ago and settle my life here.

Just like Table1, to construct Table2 the research took all the responses of participants who indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. and grouped similar responses together to create factors. The factors that emerged include war, family, opportunity, finances, and others.

Many participants who indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. after two years expressed that war was a major factor in their decision process. Participants responded that the lack of security in cities was a major concern for them, hence their indication to stay in the US. While both participants who stated that they were going to leave the U.S. or stay in the U.S. expressed that the status of the war was a factor they took into consideration, participants who indicated that they were going to return to Ukraine had a more optimistic view of the war and believed that Ukraine would be safe enough to return to. Whereas, participants who indicated that they were going to stay in the U.S. had a much bleak outlook and thought that it would not be safe enough for them to return to Ukraine. It is evident that respondents of the survey took the status of the war into consideration when indicating they plan on staying in the US.

Other participants wrote that family played an important factor in their decision. Participants expressed that they were going to stay in the U.S. to ensure a better future for their child, live in a safer environment, and earn money for their family in Ukraine. Again, there is an association between family and the decision to stay or leave the U.S. in respondents. The difference between the two was that those who indicated that they were going to leave expressed more concern over their families in Ukraine, specifically male members like fathers. In contrast, individuals who indicated they were going to stay in the U.S. due to family reasons tended to focus on their child's/children's well being.

Furthermore, participants indicated that opportunity in the U.S. was another factor in their decision. Respondents said that they wanted to realize the opportunities in the U.S. and that the U.S. has a better standard of living than Ukraine. For one respondent, the decision to migrate to the U.S. was planned out and the outbreak of the Russo-Ukraine war was merely a catalyst for their move.

Financials also played as a factor in one participant's response. As mentioned earlier, one participant moved to the U.S. and intends to stay in order to earn money for their family back in Ukraine. Financials, just like war and family, influenced not only respondents who indicated they wanted to leave, but respondents who indicated they will stay in the US. One participant who was planning to leave the U.S. indicated that they wanted to do so because taxes were high in the US.

Finally, one respondent wrote that they planned to stay in the U.S. because earlier they planned to settle in the US.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing Ukrainian parolees' decisions on whether to leave or stay in the U.S. in two years when their parole status expires. The study found that the majority of respondents (62%) planned to stay in the U.S. after two years. Furthermore, respondents who came to the U.S. in groups and/or had at least one family member who was a U.S. citizen were more likely to indicate their intention to stay. The top factors influencing respondents' decisions to stay or leave were war, family, and financial reasons, although each respondent had their own unique reasoning depending on their decision to stay or leave. Notably, culture was a factor that influenced respondents to indicate they would leave the US, while opportunity in the U.S. influenced respondents to indicate they would stay.

It is not clear to what extent these conclusions can be applied to the general population, Ukrainian parolees in the US. However, there is certainly some correlation between the sample group and respondents.

Limitations

The study had several limitations. Originally, the study was meant to predict the number of Ukrainian refugees who were going to stay in the U.S. after two years and not focus on the factors that influenced the respondents' decisions. However, the study did not receive enough respondents nor had a diverse representation of the population to generalize the results of the sample to the total population. The lack of results to create an inference about the whole population forced the researcher to shift the study's focus to instead examine the factors that influenced Ukrainian refugees on their decision to leave or stay in the US.

Another limitation was that the results of the study, the factors that indicate the future intentions of the refugees, cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the population of Ukrainian parolees in the US. Also, the study may contain response bias because Ukrainian parolees choose whether or not to respond. It is important to note that the results of the study also reflect the refugees' situation and thoughts at the time data was collected, the month of January 2023.

Implications

The study has important implications for understanding respondents' experiences, future refugee policy, and research objectives. The study provides a deeper understanding of experiences and challenges respondents face in the US. It is useful to understand the experiences of the parolees in the U.S. because this information can help improve services and future policies for refugees in similar circumstances in the US. Proper adjustments to services and policies can ensure that refugees receive the best support they can possibly receive to thrive in their new homes. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader field of migration studies, especially regarding the factors that motivate war refugees to move back to their country of origin. The insights gained from this study can aid future researchers and better help integrate refugees into unfamiliar societies.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor for the valuable insight provided to me on this topic.

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