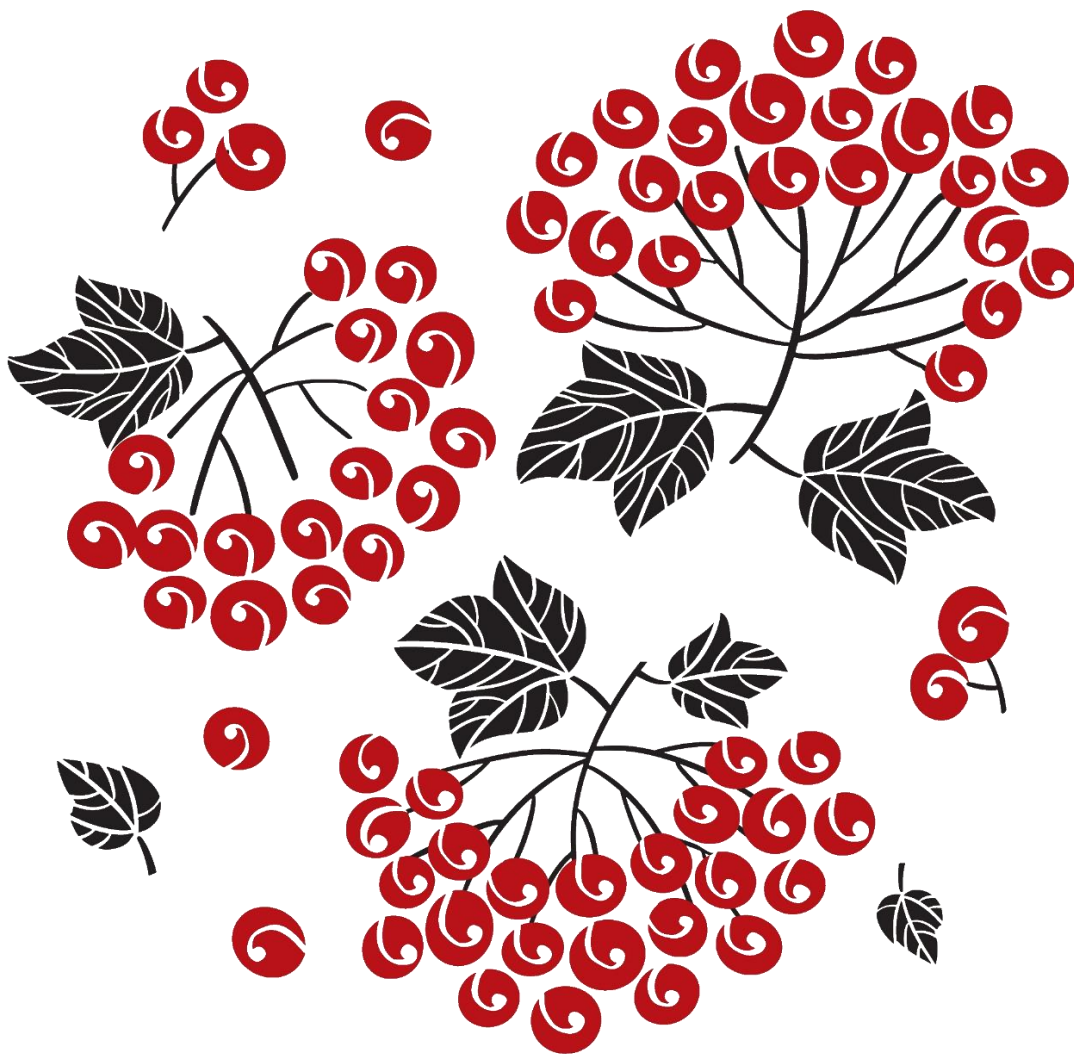


SciencesPo

PROGRAMME DE RECHERCHE ET
D'ENSEIGNEMENT DES SAVOIRS
SUR LE GENRE

CRAFTING RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF WAR

Ukrainian Refugee Craftswomen in Europe



About this publication

Since 2019, Sciences Po's Gender Studies Programme, PRESAGE, partners with the global nonprofit Women Forward International to offer a cooperative project pairing a Sciences Po Master's student team with organizations who advance women. This report is the result of the fourth year of this fruitful collaboration.

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1.

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, **more than 8 million Ukrainian refugees** have been recorded across the European Union (EU), a large majority of whom are women and children (UNHCR, 2023). With research showing that women already face obstacles to full economic, social, and political participation in Ukraine (CARE International and UN Women, 2022; Khromeychuk, 2018; SeeD, 2022), the **ongoing war has exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities** (SeeD, 2022; CARE International and UN Women, 2022). Moreover, the experience of displacement poses additional risks such as economic marginalization, social isolation, and sexual and gender-based violence. Yet, women refugees have been praised for their strength and resilience, with many successfully starting a new life in their host countries despite the challenges they face (Oviedo et al., 2022). While the benefits and the limitations of the protection mechanisms adopted by EU member states to support Ukrainian refugees have been widely discussed, multidimensional approaches to Ukrainian women's experiences of displacement are still lacking. Specifically, there is a need to better understand the agency and resilience that Ukrainian refugee women display in a time of hardship and uncertainty.

The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted" (UN General Assembly, 1951). Protected refugee status is granted after filing an asylum claim. Because the majority of Ukrainians who arrived in Europe after the start of war have applied for a specific scheme established at EU level – the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), rather than for asylum, most are not recognized as having refugee status under international law. The term *refugee* is thus used in this report in a broader sense, to define a person who has been forced to leave their country of nationality due to fear, threat, violence or persecution and war and has crossed an international border to find safety in another country (UNHCR, n.d.). **Resilience and integration are two crucial and co-constitutive components of refugee experiences** which will be studied in this report. Resilience implies positive adaptation in the face of challenging experiences and an ability to recover from shocks which can contribute to personal growth. Integration is a multidimensional and gradual two-way process which requires both a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the receiving society and a readiness on the part of the receiving society and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet their needs

(UNHCR Executive Committee, 2005). The goals of integration are to enable refugees to reach and develop their full potential in their host country, prevent their marginalization, and foster broader social inclusion.

This report uses *gender* as a lens to study the situation of Ukrainian refugee craftswomen. Gender is commonly understood as the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, attributes, and opportunities that a given society considers appropriate for women and men (Council of Europe, 2011). These roles, opportunities and relations are learned through socialization processes, which makes them context-specific, time-specific, and changeable (Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, 2016). Feminist scholars focus on gender as a system of *power relations* which reflect and produce social hierarchies based on perceived associations with masculine and feminine characteristics (Sjoberg, 2010). This power relation affects women, men, but also people who do not conform to that binary. Furthermore, gender studies scholars have demonstrated the many ways in which **war is gendered and gendering**. In times of war, not only are people impacted differently according to their gender, but femininity and masculinity are also invoked in discourses in specific ways, while men and women perform a variety of roles which either entrench gender hierarchies or transform gender dynamics (Sjoberg, 2010; Shepherd, 2015). Gender scholars have demonstrated how similar dynamics are at play in migration and displacement contexts (Bonjour and Cleton, 2021). Gender provides a useful lens to study broader female empowerment and emancipation – or the lack thereof – amongst war refugees.

Applying cross-disciplinary knowledge from war, migration, cultural, post-Soviet and gender studies, our research seeks to explore the meaning and everyday importance of craft in the resilience of Ukrainian women refugees. *Craft* or artisanal products¹ are produced either completely by hand or with the help of hand-tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product (UNESCO and ITC, 1997). They usually require special skills and knowledge to be produced. Craft is also versatile in nature: it can be modern, functional, decorative, artistic, culturally attached, traditional, as well as religiously and socially symbolic and significant. Across the world, craft has been found to be connected not only to issues of cultural empowerment and ethnic identity preservation, but also to the empowerment and inclusion of women and other socio-economically marginalized groups like migrants

¹ In this report, the words craft and artisanship will be used interchangeably.

(Nest, n.d.; Constantin, 2011; Gouyon et al., 2016; Brandes et al., 2022).

Building on those insights, this study sets out to answer the question **“How can craft provide opportunities for resilience for Ukrainian refugee women in Europe?”** By exploring how craft can become a vector of individual and collective resilience, this report aims to shed light on how Ukrainian women are persevering through times of crisis. More broadly, we hope that our findings can shed light on how people manage to cope with and adapt in harsh circumstances to inform how different stakeholders can support resilience strategies and integration opportunities among those most severely affected by war.

The study is based on 26 qualitative field interviews conducted in France, Poland and Germany with Ukrainian refugee artisan women who entered the EU after February 2022. The report also includes participant-observation in collective art spaces in Poland and Germany.

This report will be structured as follows: first, an overview of the background and literature sets the ground for the research question and subsequent analysis ([Part 2](#)). After presenting the methodological framework ([Part 3](#)), our analysis shows that craft can provide business development and economic integration opportunities ([Part 4.1](#)), social integration opportunities ([Part 4.2](#)) and opportunities for war-resistance and national resilience ([Part 4.3](#)). Based on the key findings, the report introduces policy recommendations to encourage decision-makers across all levels of governance to take action to improve the situation of Ukrainian refugee artisan women living in Europe ([Part 6](#)).

2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. SITUATING UKRAINE IN TIMES OF WAR

2.1.1. RUSSIAN ATTACKS ON MODERN UKRAINIAN STATEHOOD AND NATIONHOOD

In 1991, Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union in order to become a free, democratic, sovereign state with internationally recognized borders. The country is administratively divided into 24 regions called *oblasts*. In 2021, Ukraine's population was around 43.8 million people (The World Bank, 2021). Ukraine is a relatively homogenous Slavic Orthodox country composed of people of Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, and Polish origins, as well as religious and ethnic minorities such as the Tatars (Muslim or Orthodox), Jews, Roma, and minorities from neighboring countries such as Hungarians, Moldovans, and Bulgarians.

While the history of Ukraine goes back centuries, a close look at post-communist developments in its

relations with Russia can help understand some of the roots of the current conflict. Ever since Ukraine declared its independence, Russia has fought to keep Ukraine in its political and economic orbit, illustrating Russia's difficulty in coming to terms with its post-imperial complex and the loss of great-power status (Yekelchyk, 2020). Vladimir Putin – head of the Russian executive power since 1999 – and his regime also increasingly came to see Ukraine as a crucial battleground in its historical struggle with the West. Important turning points include the 2004 so-called Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” which overturned rigged presidential elections, the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration which declared that Ukraine could eventually become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as part of the Alliance’s “open door policy”, and more importantly, the EuroMaidan Revolution in 2013-2014.

In November 2013, mass protests erupted in the center of Kyiv after the pro-Russian government, under the direct pressure and threat of Moscow, suddenly backed out of the Association Agreement with the EU. As the protests



Figure 1: Map of Ukraine before February 24th, 2022 © olenadesign / Shutterstock

spread in different cities across Ukraine, the government's repressive reaction and escalating violence resulted in significant numbers of casualties among protesters. In February 2014, then President Yanukovich escaped to Russia and the Ukrainian parliament formed an interim government. This internal political crisis escalated into an international one when Russia took advantage of the situation to annex the Crimean Peninsula and further support already Russian-instigated separatism in the eastern region of the country – the Donbas. For almost 10 years, the Donbas was the scene of a Russian-sponsored hybrid war between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian armed forces. Diplomatic efforts were largely unsuccessful. In 2021, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimated that about 14,200 people had been killed since the start of the conflict including at least 3,400 civilians, and up to 40,000 people injured (UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2022). Population displacement from the Donbas, which used to be a densely populated area, also reached disastrous proportions with an estimated 1.6 million internally displaced persons in 2016 (Interfax-Ukraine, 2016).

Since 2014, **Russia has sought to justify its violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity through systematic attacks on Ukrainian statehood and nationhood.** To that effect, Russian propaganda has increasingly relied on imperial tropes including the concept of the “triumphant Russian people” – a perceived East Slavic brotherhood between Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, where Ukrainians, “Little Russians”, are depicted as a tribe emanating from the larger Russian people rather than as a distinct national and cultural group, and the concept of “*Russkiy Mir*” (Russian World) invoked to justify Russia's alleged duty to protect the rights of ethnic Russians and Russophones residing in Ukraine (Yekelchik, 2020; McIlhagga, 2022). In his essay “on historical unity” published in 2021, Vladimir Putin tried to cement these views by arguing that Ukraine and Russia were bound by a shared origin and denying the historical reality of any Ukrainian statehood separate from Russia. By arguing that the Ukrainian nation does not exist and that the current Ukrainian state is illegitimate, this rhetoric has been described by some analysts as neo-colonial (Snyder, 2022).

Yet, Russia found itself unable to stop the Western orientation of the Ukrainian political order which emerged after 2014 and was reinforced by the election of Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019. Publicly, it expressed growing concerns that Ukraine would become the next step in NATO's encroachment of Russia's former sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. After months of rising tensions and military-build up on the frontiers of Ukraine, invoking both national security and the protection of Russian minorities, the Russian Federation launched its large-scale military invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022.

On Modern Ukrainian National Identity

Ukrainian national identity can be traced back to the 17th century, with important turning points including the 1648–1657 Cossack rebellion against the Polish and the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic (1917-1921). However, national identities should not be understood as innate or fixed. Modern Ukrainian national identity, which emerged after Ukraine became an independent and sovereign state in 1991, can best be understood through its civic and ethno-cultural components (Kulyk, 2016). Under the Soviet Union, Ukrainian nationality was primarily understood in ethnocultural and hereditary terms. Although the Soviet Union acknowledged the existence of the Ukrainian nation and created the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) as a national homeland for Ukrainians, it lacked clear political distinctiveness from other SSRs, and in the long run, Soviet leaders encouraged Ukrainians to embrace a common Soviet identity while adopting the Russian language and culture. The Ukrainian language and Ukrainian-speaking intelligentsia were largely repressed in the first half of the century. Ukrainian national identity evolved to contain both elements of civic and ethno-cultural aspects during the communist period. Political elites embraced an inclusive concept of Ukrainian nation, referring to the “people of Ukraine” rather than ethnic Ukrainians as a source of sovereignty. At the same time, this conception was grounded in elements of ethnic nationalism which had been suppressed by the Soviet regime, including the perception of the independent Ukraine as the completion of the Ukrainian nation's long struggle for independence, and the need for the state to elevate Ukrainian language and culture to “official status” (Yekelchik, 2020). Accordingly, a process of both top-down and bottom-up cultural Ukrainization has been underway for the last 30 years (Arel, 2018).

The EuroMaidan Revolution and the war in the Donbas marked an important turning point in Ukrainian civic identity and attachment to the Ukrainian state. Modern Ukrainian identity has since then been found to be increasingly linked with patriotism, democracy, inclusivity, and perceived European values, rather than being centered on a single ethnic, linguistic or cultural identity (Onuch and Sasse, 2016).

These two components are increasingly being articulated in conjunction with one another to resist the external threat represented by Russia. Ukrainians seek to portray themselves as a distinct ethnocultural and political nation from Russia, suggesting that modern Ukrainian national identity is also being constructed in opposition to Russia, perceived as a fundamentally colonial, authoritarian, conservative and anti-European entity. Identity politics scholars have long-been demonstrated how identities shift or harden in times of crisis (Onuch, Hale and Sasse, 2018). It remains to see how the 2022 Russian offensive will affect the trajectory of Ukrainian national identity.

2.1.2. THE GENDERED IMPACTS OF THE 2022 WAR IN UKRAINE: BETWEEN EXACERBATED VULNERABILITIES AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

On the State of Gender Equality in Ukraine before 2022

Contemporary gender roles in Ukraine have been influenced by a number of factors, including Soviet ideology, Ukrainian history, the fall of communism and changes in the Ukrainian economy since the 1990s, as well as nation building efforts. As part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement signed in June 2014, **gender equality in employment, education, training, economy and society, and decision-making has become an integral part of Ukraine's political agenda** (Martsenyuk, 2016). Although gender equality has made progress in Ukraine since 1991 as a result of Ukraine's Europeanization agenda, in practice women continue to face barriers to their full economic, civic and political participation (ibid.; SeeD, 2022). **Ukrainian women face higher degrees of discrimination and marginalization due to enduring stereotypical gender roles and patriarchal values.**

Firstly, Ukrainian women face barriers to meaningful economic participation. Women **report higher levels of economic insecurity**, with lower employment rates and a substantial wage gap in all sectors of the economy (CARE International and UN Women, 2022). Furthermore, poor childcare services and traditional gender roles within family structures often make women primary caregivers (Soldan and Gagauz, 2018). As a result, most women carry a double burden by trying to balance their paid work with this unpaid form of labor that is care and domestic work (Soldan and Gagauz, 2018; UN Women Ukraine, 2020). In addition, discrimination and violence against Ukrainian women and girls is widespread (SeeD, 2022).

In addition, Ukrainian women **face barriers to their full and meaningful civic and political participation.** Women reported higher levels of exclusion from political spheres and active citizenship than men, with a lower sense of agency and responsibility overall (SeeD, 2022). Ukrainian women who have participated in political processes were faced with individual and structural discrimination and their roles were found to be limited because of the persistence of traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Khromeychuk, 2018). During the Maidan protests, the gendered allocation of duties prevented women from entering certain spaces and conducting certain activities like self-defense and building barricades (ibid.). In the army, women were not allowed to take up combat positions until 2022 and gender segregation was usually enforced (Ewe, 2022). Similarly, though there has been an increase in female members of Parliament since

1991, they made up for under 12% of MPs in 2017 (Zakharova, Ohtsyyuk, and Radchenko, 2017).

Nonetheless, women's involvement in the 2013-2014 EuroMaidan protests and the war in the Donbas created **new opportunities for their bottom-up participation in Ukraine's civic and political life as well as nation-building efforts.** Challenging traditional gender roles as carers and victims, women reclaimed visibility, recognition, and agency as revolutionaries and volunteers (Martsenyuk, 2016; Khromeychuk, 2018). The military also saw a major increase in the number of women joining after 2014. As a result, the Ukrainian army is one of the most feminised in the world. In 2021, it was estimated that 15,5% of service people were women (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 2021). These events have opened new spaces for contesting gender norms and reshaping the Ukrainian nation to better include women - something which more radical Ukrainian feminist groups like the Femen had been pushing for since the mid-2000s (Zychowicz, 2015).

The Impact of the 2022 Russian Military Offensive on Women

While the Russian-sponsored war in the Donbass had already amplified existing inequalities and violence against women, Russia's 2022 large-scale invasion of Ukraine has only exacerbated these tendencies. Faced with an increase in unemployment rates and disruptions to their income, **Ukrainian women are taking on new roles and multiple jobs, while their care burden has intensified** (SeeD, 2022). With a large number of civilian men now fighting on the front line, many women have shifted from second to primary breadwinners in their families while still having to act as caretakers. Research also indicates that single mothers and women-led households have experienced particularly negative effects in their access to income and paid employment (CARE International and UN Women, 2022). Furthermore, **sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls has significantly increased since the beginning of the invasion.** The systematic use of sexual violence and rape by Russian troops and proxies as a weapon of war against women and girls began to emerge less than two months after start of full-scale invasion and is now well documented (Mannell, 2022). The militarization of society and the return of war-traumatized partners has also led to a sharp increase in domestic violence (Williams, 2023).

At the same time, **the war appears to offer opportunities for challenging traditional gender roles and binaries.** For instance, the number of female recruits in the Ukrainian armed forces has increased once again in response to the Russian aggression (Ewe, 2022). Although women continue to face structural discrimination in the army and are still subjected to gendered expectations like providing emotional support to their

comrades and are less likely to be sent to the frontlines (Darden, 2023), attitudes towards women in the military are reported to be changing (Ewe, 2022). Ukraine's women soldiers are also increasingly being accepted by Ukrainian society and the country's political leadership during this war (Mathers and Kvit, 2023). To some extent, this dynamic also applies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) recruits, whose growing number and visibility in the armed forces is being linked to an advance in LGBTQ+ rights in Ukraine (Feder, 2023).

The vast majority of Ukrainian women, however, are supporting the country's war efforts through non-combatant roles. Indeed, the war has inspired Ukrainian women from diverse backgrounds to play a larger role in volunteering and providing humanitarian assistance. Many are finding ways to resist the Russian aggression and support the country's war effort through volunteering, providing mental health support, and taking on additional jobs to support their families (CARE International and UN Women, 2022). While the increased decision-making role of the military in political and administrative processes has decreased women's overall participation in formal decision-making processes, women's leadership, and ability to partake in decision making has increased at the community and family level (CARE International and UN Women, 2022).

With all strands of Ukrainian society mobilized to protect the country's freedom and sovereignty, more than ever, **women play a vital role in Ukraine's national defense**. In addition, because the war is widely regarded as a fight between liberal democracy and authoritarianism, Ukrainians increasingly see **the move towards greater gender equality and inclusivity as a necessary component of its shifting orientation towards Europe and the West** (Serhan, 2023) – as exemplifies the fast-track ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women in July 2022.

2.2. UKRAINIAN ARTISANSHIP AND CRAFT IN WARTIME

2.2.1. REPRESENTATION AND PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE CRAFTS

Ukraine's historical devotion to the arts and craft sector is largely tied to the importance of preserving its own unique ethnocultural identity. As Yekelchuk points out, the **folk culture of the peasantry served as the foundation of modern nations and contemporary national identity** for many Eastern European states, including Ukraine (Yekelchuk, 2020). From 1910 and during the Bolshevik period, Ukrainian traditions were a source of great inspiration to some of the greatest artistic movements of all time, such as suprematism and constructivism

(Shkandrij, 2019). These forms were both founded by Ukrainian-Polish artist Kazimir Malevitch and other female Ukrainian and Russian female artists (ibid.). During this time, one particular village, Verbovka, near Kyiv, was an arts and crafts community where traditional crafts met modernity (ibid.). From 1932 onwards, under Stalinization, ideas of freedom of expression and creativity were suppressed, which almost led to the destruction of Ukrainian traditional craft production (Skavronska, 2017). In the post-war period, distinct cultural expressions were further restrained by the Soviet regime seeking to forge a new common "Soviet" identity – although in reality Ukrainians were encouraged to embrace Russian culture (Yekelchuk, 2020). The various **experiences of occupation throughout Ukraine's long history have made the craft sector "the center of the preservation of national identity, uniqueness, and creative ideas of those in Ukraine"** (Skavronska, 2017).

Cultural Identity and Craft

Certain anthropologists have noted that craft practices can be strongly tied to national and cultural identity and association. Crafts are largely interconnected with ethnicity and artisanship can manifest as a feeling of belonging to a particular identity (Constantin, 2011). Additionally, artisanship can act as a mode of cultural empowerment, as it was the case in Chiapas, Mexico where traditional crafts were used to protect indigenous people from the non-indigenous population (ibid.). More recently, Palestinian NGOs have been using the education of craft as a form of heritage preservation and to promote Palestinian identity regionally (Yamada, 2021). Bearing in mind that craft holds cultural significance, in the report we understand the potential of Ukrainian craft to be both a tool of cultural preservation and national identity affirmation alongside one of modernity and art creation.

2.2.2. THE UKRAINIAN CRAFT SECTOR TODAY

In Ukraine, there is no concrete definition of what constitutes craft or artisanship. However, **the Handicraft Chamber of Ukraine, a Kyiv-based NGO, has organized craft into three different categories: technical and artistic, traditional (most closely related to folk art), and contemporary** (Skavronska, 2017). Ukrainian craftsmanship is usually not made to create large amounts of profit but is considered more of a socio-cultural process (ibid.). To this day, craft is considered a tradition passed along through time and generations (ibid.). The material production represents the "spirit" of those who once held the knowledge of its creation (Batyrieva, 2021).

Many Ukrainians believe that economic activities and culture are fields that operate independently, and **connecting craft with commercialization has proved**

to be very difficult in the country (Farinha, 2017). Creative activities, such as craft, are closer to the term *tvorchyy* which diminishes its significance to economic activity (British Council, 2018). However, it is noted that this disconnect can have negative consequences on Ukrainian artisans as their work can be undervalued and not considered a professional economic activity (ibid.). Certain professionals in the field have stated that the craft sector should have more financial support from the outside because of the unique role it has as a largely non-profit driven activity (ibid.).

The unique geographical location of Ukraine led to the development of **different types of traditional crafts throughout the regions of the country including pottery, weaving, and decorative painting** (Batyrieva, 2021; Via Regia Ukraine, 2020). For example, because of its prevalence in the Petrykivka region, a form of decorative painting has coined the name Petrykivka painting (ibid.). Certain crafts such as weaving are tied to creating household necessities, while other crafts such as Pysanky (using wax and paint to decorate an egg with culturally significant symbols, usually during Easter times), are tied to traditional values (ibid.). The aforementioned forms of Ukrainian artisanship are non-exhaustive and ever evolving. In a contemporary context, Ukrainian artisans are innovating their practices to work at the intersection of craft and modernity to support new business opportunities (Miroshnichenko, 2023). [See Appendix](#) for a more detailed and visual account of traditional Ukrainian crafts.

Gender and Craft

There is a necessity to acknowledge gender differences within the field of artisanship. Crafting skills are deeply gendered. As part of the Ukrainian school system's curriculum, "labor" lessons – which are supposed to teach children practical skills – are often gender-divided, with girls being taught housekeeping skills like cooking and sewing, and boys carpentry and metalwork (Khozhainova, 2020). Findings from the Youth in Transition Survey also show significant gender differences in the subject areas that young men and women choose to focus on in their studies (2007). One of the fields that women dominate in the classroom with nearly 80% representation is humanities and arts, where artisanship falls into (Oksamytna, 2012).

Craftwork is also a fundamental source of employment for women around the world. Yet, as workers, they are often unrecognized and lack social protection (Nest, n.d.). The potential of the artisan economy in advancing gender equality and economic inclusion remains largely overlooked (ibid.). Although there have been no specific statistics generated for Ukrainian women artisans or refugee artisans, sociological surveys in Ukraine shed light on the gendered barriers that women face in excelling professionally. Since 2014, the gender pay gap in Ukraine increased from 24% to 26%, and women have been found to fill

specific labor sectors associated with lower pay and unofficial labor (USAID, 2017). Studies in other countries, such as in France, have also identified the specific gendered barriers in the arts and cultural sectors. One study conducted in France found that from 1991-2011, the number of non-salaried workers in the arts and crafts sector jumped from 43% to 54% at the same time as the feminization of the sector (Goyoun et al., 2016). Often, women are segregated in the part-time sector in artistic and cultural fields and struggle to shift into full-time work in their profession (ibid.). When asked why the women were pursuing part-time rather than full time work, the first reason was that they were unable to find a job while the second reason was because they needed to take care of children (ibid.). The difficulties women in artistic and cultural occupations face accessing full-time professional employment are coupled with a gender wage gap. Although, there are no specific findings for artisanship uniquely, in France it has been found that women in cultural occupations earn approximately 19% lower salaries than men (ibid.).

2.2.3. UKRAINIAN ARTISANSHIP IN THE EU CRAFT SECTOR

The artisanship sector in the EU is ready for skilled individuals to enter and excel in if given the opportunity. In fact, the European Statistical System Network lists **Arts and Crafts as one of the top 10 domains identified in the EU cultural and creative sector**, and despite a difficulty indicating the quantitative economic benefits of craft, it was found that it has strong impacts at the local level (Renewal, Innovation and Change, 2016). Craft is said to increase innovation, creativity, and even potentially competitive advancement in local economies (ibid.). Craft also provides an alternative to large scale, polluting and industrial productions, by providing a small-batch creative product that is more individualized to the consumer (Brandes et al., 2022). Ukrainian arts and crafts have gained substantially more attention since February 2022. This is noticeable in the number of exhibitions across Europe's cultural hubs increasingly featuring Ukrainian artists and designers in the past year (Rankin, 2022; Landy, 2023).

From 2019-2022, the Creative Europe Programme of the European Commission co-funded the "Crafting Europe" project in partnership with nine partners, including the Handicraft Chamber of Ukraine. The project aims to build capacity in the craft sector by supporting trans-national craft policy making, fostering craft business development models, and increasing the skills of people interested in the sector. In 2020, Ukraine directly benefited from the project with the launch of their "Crafting Business Makers School" which will train Ukrainian artisans on how to make their practice a competitive business.

Ukrainian crafts also increasingly serve as potential business opportunities at a time when unique products

have become more relevant in European markets. From 2008 to 2012, Ukraine's creative goods exports increased by 42.7% (while imports by just 7.1%), and in the international market, Ukraine was the second largest transition economies-exporters of creative goods in 2014 (Skavronska, 2017; Skavronksa, 2019). Ukraine also ranked third out of European countries in terms of the number of handicrafts sold on Etsy, which is an e-commerce website used for the sale of handmade items and craft supplies (Skavronksa, 2019). On Amazon, Ukrainian handicraft is also easy to find with more than 20,000 products available from 750 sellers (ibid.). In addition, since before the war, Ukrainian brands, such as Gushka, Olk Manufactory and the Gunia Project, have been growing to connect craftswomanship with contemporary designs and promote a more modern conception of artisanship. This innovative approach to artisanship gives Ukrainian craft a unique area of opportunity in the European market.

Craft in Displacement Contexts

Migrant and refugee craftspeople often face difficulties having their artisan skills recognized in new countries (Guilyardi, 2018). Indeed, economic integration requires adapting and transferring their skills and knowledge to a new cultural and economic setting and building new customer relations (ibid.). Nonetheless, craft has been found to enhance the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees in Europe when taken into consideration by organizations helping them (Brandes et al., 2022). Attending crafting workshops has also been found to foster a multi-cultural exchange of skills and knowledge and help migrants and refugees integrate socially in their host communities (ibid.). In addition, crafting training programs can create new opportunities for employment for migrants and refugees who were not professional artisans in their home country (ibid.).

Craft can help migrants and refugees reconnect with their personal and cultural identity after having left their country and their former life behind (Guilyardi, 2018). Migrants are encouraged to express themselves, by sharing their culture and story through artistic production (Brandes et al., 2022). In that sense, craft can foster the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees without having them forsake part of their individual and identity. Yet, the benefits of craft in contexts of displacement remains largely understudied.

2.3. TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN UKRAINIAN WAR REFUGEE FLOWS TO EUROPE

2.3.1. BEFORE 2022: TEMPORARY AND CIRCULAR MIGRATIONS

Understanding the history of Ukrainian migration to Europe can help contextualize the ongoing mass exodus of Ukrainian citizens towards Europe. Ukrainian migration patterns have always been shaped by geopolitical, social, and economic changes in the country (Jaroszewicz, 2015). The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave Ukrainians the opportunity to explore job opportunities abroad. Of all former Soviet countries, Ukraine has historically had the largest movement towards the EU (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016). **Of all third-country nationals residing and working in the EU, Ukrainians are one of the largest groups** (ibid.). There has been a regular upward trend for the total number of residence permits in the EU held by Ukrainian citizens. At the end of 2021, 1.57 million Ukrainian citizens held a residence permit in the EU, and **Ukrainian citizenship was the third most common non-EU citizenship for those granted residence permits in the EU** (Eurostat, 2022). In comparison to the size of their population, the EU states Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Slovakia, had the largest proportion of Ukrainian citizens holding valid residence at the end of 2021 (Eurostat, 2022).

Ukrainian migration has historically been closely linked to escaping poverty and low salaries. Prior to 2014, 70% of all Ukrainian migrants were from the western part of the country (Jaroszewicz, 2015). The western region of Ukraine shares a border with Poland, which became a popular migration destination due to the geographical and cultural proximity, higher wages, and a very liberal system in terms of offering employment to non-nationals (Duszczuk and Kaczmarczyk, 2022). The majority of Ukrainian migrants to Poland held temporary visas and work permits, and nearly 90% of all Ukrainian migrants settled in southern and eastern Polish cities near the Ukrainian border (Brunarska et al., 2016). This trend reflects **the temporary circular nature of Ukrainian migration prior to 2022** – something which was not limited to Poland. Across the EU, length of stay was highly affected by access to quality migrant networks, development of social relations, family situation, and access to labor and employment opportunities (Górny and Kindler, 2016).

Prior to 2022, Ukrainian migration was already highly gendered in nature. **Ukrainian immigrants have largely split up in different industry sectors – and even different countries – based on their gender** (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016). For instance, most Ukrainian women worked in the domestic and care sector while Ukrainian men were more likely to work in construction and

transport (ibid.). In Germany and Poland, Ukrainian migrant women filled a caregiving gap left by German and Polish women as they entered the workforce, a gap which was not filled by men or the state (ibid.). Because of the predominantly gendered migration flow to Germany, family reunification became the most important reason for Ukrainian migration to Germany. Thus, family members of female care workers accounted for 20-30% of all migrants to Germany from Ukraine (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016). Similar trends were observed in France, with the creation of close-knit Ukrainian communities (Dupont-Melnyczenko, 2007).

2.3.2. REFUGEE FLOWS INTO THE EU SINCE FEBRUARY 2022

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has brought a change in Ukrainian migration patterns and EU member state policies – although there are some elements of continuity as well, particularly regarding circular movements and gender roles.

Mobility Patterns in Europe's Largest Refugee Wave since World War II

The high level of traffic between Ukraine and EU member states makes it difficult to estimate how many Ukrainians are currently in the EU. **Since February 2022, more than 8 million Ukrainian refugees have left Ukraine to seek refuge in the EU** in Europe's largest refugee wave since World War II, while many more have been internally displaced (UNHCR, 2023b). Refugee flows from Ukraine stabilized over the summer of 2022 and have significantly decreased since then (ibid.). Today, refugee outflows continue to evolve as the war progresses on the ground.

As of June 2022, it was estimated that a total of 2.5 million Ukrainians had left the EU to return to their home country since February (ibid.). The **high number of returnees** can be explained by the large number of separated families (as men from 18-60 years old are prohibited from leaving Ukraine), Russian withdrawal from certain occupied areas, and facilitated land border-crossing procedures. However, these returns do not necessarily signal a will to permanently go back to Ukraine **as circular movement patterns are still common**. As of April 2023, 5 million Ukrainian refugees had registered for the EU's temporary protection scheme or other national programs, signaling a willingness to settle in Europe, at least in the foreseeable future, for most people (ibid.).

Similarly, while country-specific data is readily available, it is difficult to know precisely where Ukrainians are currently located within the EU. Neighboring countries have attracted most refugee outflows, with Poland, Romania and Slovakia reported as the top three EU countries of first arrival (EUAA, IOM and OECD, 2022). **Ukrainian exit routes have largely been determined**

by proximity, unhindered access to roads, and available transport. However, recent data indicates that large numbers of refugees have carried on their journey into other EU countries (EUAA, IOM and OECD, 2022). Many refugees have made **secondary movements within the EU and are now relocated to wealthier EU countries.**

Figure 2 : Top ten countries hosting Ukrainian refugees registered for Temporary Protection of similar national protection schemes in the EU as of January 2023

Country	Number of Ukrainian refugees
Poland	1 583 563
Germany	922 657
Czech Republic	504 107
United Kingdom	201 000
Spain	173 829
Italy	173 213
Bulgaria	156 208
Romania	126 711
France	118 994*
Slovakia	114 192

* last update: October 31, 2022

Poland has been the main refugee-receiving country and accounts for over 60% of refugee arrivals in the EU – although new arrivals have decreased significantly in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). Poland has also granted the highest number of temporary protection statuses to Ukrainians fleeing the war – 1 583 563 as of April 2023 (ibid.). However, there is no concrete evidence on the number of Ukrainians who will choose to remain in Poland after the war or who are instead seeking temporary residence. With 922 657 Ukrainian refugees as of April 2023, Germany is the country with the second highest intake in Europe (UNHCR, 2023). The refugees have often previously arrived first in Ukrainian neighboring countries such as Poland or Slovakia and then moved on to Germany in the medium or long term. Thereby, 37% of the refugees from Ukraine would like to stay in Germany for the long term. Another 34% only until the end of the war. Only 2% plan to return within a year (IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP, 2022). Due to the geographical distance and a smaller diaspora presence in the country, significantly fewer Ukrainian refugees have arrived in France with 118 2023b994 registrations as of October 2022 (UNHCR, 2023).

A Feminized Refugee Wave: Ukrainian Women Face Gender-specific Risks and Challenges

The demographic profile of Ukrainian refugees in Europe is well documented and distinct from that of past refugee waves. With men aged 18-60 forbidden from leaving the country under martial law, **about 90% of those who fled**

the country since February 2022 are women and children (UNHCR, 2023). Displacement poses gender-specific challenges and risks for Ukrainian women. These difficulties can have a negative impact on the ability of refugee women to recover and rebuild their lives.

Ukrainian refugee women face a **heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and trafficking**. This is in part due to a lack of systemic protection and security measures at border crossing and reception sites, particularly in Poland where most refugees arrive (Human Rights Watch, 2022). In addition, there are no systemic measures to vet private transport or housing (ibid.). Often unaware of the law, many refugees have also found their access to preventive sexual and reproductive healthcare services restricted in certain host countries. While abortion is legal in Ukraine, Ukrainian women have found their access to emergency contraception and abortion services restricted by Poland's conservative abortion policies (Ferris-Rotman, 2022; Strzyzowska, 2022). This is particularly problematic for war rape victims who need permission from a prosecutor to abort, which means they are often forced to undergo abortions in secret and without access to proper medical care (Ciobanu, 2022).

When it comes to labor integration, **displaced Ukrainian women face a double disadvantage as women and migrants**. Although a large proportion of Ukrainian refugees are educated and high-skilled workers, with 75% of them holding higher education degrees and 86% of the working-age refugees being employed before leaving Ukraine (UNHCR, 2023), **most Ukrainian women struggle to find a position that matches their qualifications** (Kucharska, 2022). For instance, about half of the Ukrainian women recently hired in Poland are believed to be engaged in low-paid work in manufacturing, services, or agriculture (ibid.). Ukrainian women also face a form of horizontal segregation which limits employment opportunities in certain male-dominated sectors like construction or transport – something which was already observed in previous migration patterns (ibid.).

Frequent **barriers to labor integration and finding employment matching their qualifications include access to housing and childcare, and language barriers** (ibid.). With family ties disrupted, most refugee women face an exacerbated double burden by having to juggle between their role as caretaker and sole breadwinner. The cost and inaccessibility of childcare and after-school provision in some places can limit their ability to access the labor market (Cleton, 2023). These issues have pushed many refugees to **work in the informal economy**, including in the domestic care sector – a particularly feminized sector characterized by informality which puts them at a **higher risk of exploitation** (Kucharska, 2022). Moreover, women belonging to marginalized groups in Ukraine, such as the Roma population and third country nationals, including labor migrants, and refugee and asylum seekers, face

additional discrimination and difficulties in accessing social services, health services, and employment in host countries (CARE International and UN Women, 2022).

Yet, despite the unique challenges they face, Ukrainian refugees have been praised for their overall strength and resilience, with many successfully starting a new life in their host countries (Oviedo et al., 2022).

Migration Impacts on the Creative Sector

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, many artisans have left their country to pursue life elsewhere in Europe. In a study conducted by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, it was found that 86% of those who worked in the creative industries and who responded to the survey were in the EU or Schengen countries (2022). Specifically, 88% of respondents applied for temporary protection or refugee status, with 33% searching for a job (Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, 2022). More specifically, 10% of the creative industry that is outside Ukraine is in the folk arts sector, 9% in design and 3% in architecture which are all fields in which traditional and contemporary Ukrainian artisans work (Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, 2022). How the arrival of new refugees affects economic growth in coming years will depend primarily on the speed and quality of their labor market integration (Bird and Noumon, 2022).

2.3.3. EUROPEAN POLICY RESPONSES TO THE REFUGEE FLOWS

Government Support under the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)

The European Union's response to the high numbers of people fleeing from the war in Ukraine is unprecedented. For the first time since its creation, the decision to activate the **EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)** was unanimously adopted by the Council of the European Union on the 4th of March 2022 as to prevent a collapse of the asylum system due to the extreme high numbers of people fleeing Ukraine and entering the EU (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, 2022). The TPD is an **exceptional measure of the EU to provide immediate and temporary protection of displaced persons from non-EU countries**, who are unable to return to their country of origin due to crisis and conflict. Member States can extend those rights and benefits but must meet the minimum standards of the directive. In Poland, Germany and France, these services include financial assistance and support in finding jobs and housing, as well as language courses. As many observers have noted, the European Union's policy towards Ukrainian refugees stands in **stark contrast with the previous treatment and rights of other refugees**,

including from Syria and Afghanistan, since the TPD provides them with significantly more and immediate rights to access services and the labor market in their EU host-country (Parusel and Varfolomieieva, 2022).

In Poland, Germany and France, the rights, and services of Ukrainians under temporary protection equal to a large part the ones of the respective national citizens. Due to the strict EU requirements, the government support between the countries tends to differ only in detail, even though these can make significant differences in practice. More detail on the specific support offerings included in the TPD can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Artisanship Support

There is a large presence of Ukrainians in the creative sector in various European countries who may want to stay, continue their work, and create a new life for themselves, including Ukrainian refugee artisan women. Specific support measures for refugees from an artisan background is highly important, as **refugees often go through professional deskilling processes** where the skills that they brought from their host country are no longer valued in the society they find themselves in (Guilyardi, 2018). Providing tools for refugees to continue their craft often improves the mental health of refugees and gives them a space to improve their skills (ibid.). These community spaces can help refugees find a sense of belonging and a safe space which can help them adapt into living in a new country.

There are specific support services for artists in place, mostly provided through civil society organizations, such as NGOs. The services are available especially within country capitals, multiple cultural-oriented organizations provide support for Ukrainian refugee artists, such as through exhibitions, accommodation, or spaces to do artwork. Government-wise, France has a state-funded support program for the art creation of Ukrainians. For Germany, the Goethe Institute, as the state-funded cultural institute of Germany, provides the several support services specifically designed in support of Ukrainian (Goethe Institute, 2023) such as scholarships for Ukrainian artists, financial support for music projects or art projects, events, and preservation of cultural heritages in Ukraine to support the upholding of the local cultural structure. No government funding or support specifically for Ukrainian artists was found in Poland, though structural assistance to protect Ukrainian culture has been put in place (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, 2020).

Even though both government and NGO support are of great value and help make Ukrainian cultural work more visible, these **supports are less targeted to artisan work**. In all three countries, artisanship is included in their scope but often not the explicit focus. With the supported individuals being mostly artists, **there is a need to make artisans more visible**. Approximately half of the respondents (those working in the creative industries) to

a Ukrainian Cultural Foundation survey stated that they do not know what state support exists for their business and that they are insufficiently aware of the networks of people in their industry that exist in their host country (Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, 2022). While no statistics exist solely about the artisan sector or artisan refugee women, it is highly likely they face similar challenges. Many of those in the creative industries have been left to rely on government support, income from survival jobs and savings rather than employment in their field (ibid.).

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

Applying cross-disciplinary knowledge from war, migration, cultural, post-soviet and gender studies, our research seeks to explore the meaning and everyday importance of craft in the resilience of Ukrainian women refugees. Building on existing insights on the multidimensional value of craft, this study specifically sets out to answer the question *“How can craft provide opportunities for resilience for Ukrainian refugee women in Europe?”*.

3.2. COUNTRY SELECTION

The report, issued in 2023, is based on the experiences of displaced Ukrainian women artisans who are currently living in Germany, France, or Poland. All three countries have implemented the TPD. The countries were selected as follows:

France: Our home-base in Paris allowed us to frequent Ukrainian community events in the city, meet Ukrainian women artisans at cultural events such as Christmas markets, and snowball from our existing network of organizations devoted to helping migrant and refugee populations. Our prior knowledge of the French language and context facilitated this process.

Germany: Germany is currently the second most popular destination for Ukrainian refugees, right after Poland. Ukrainian migration to Germany has a history of more than 200 years, and among EU destination countries, Germany traditionally stands out for its extensive resettlement programs. In Germany, craftsmanship is also a large part of culture, tradition, and the local economy, which makes the country rich in opportunities for Ukrainian refugee artisan women. Germany was also highly considered due to several of our researchers being native German speakers and having a prior understanding of the German context.

Poland: Poland has been a popular destination for Ukrainian migrants since the 1990s, due to high cultural and spatial proximity. Since the start of the war, Poland has been the greatest receiver of Ukrainian refugees, accounting for over 60% of Ukrainian refugee arrivals in the EU. From the early days of the Russian invasion, Poland and Polish society have been praised for the rapidity and generosity of their welcome and mobilization to help Ukrainians fleeing the war.

3.3. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to study the experiences of Ukrainian refugee artisan women and understand how they perceive and make sense of their relationship to craft during war, qualitative research methods were adopted based on interviews and participant observation.

3.3.1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted in-person, via the video-conference platform Zoom, or on the phone, depending on the location of the participants and their individual preferences. Most interviews were conducted in person. Interview participants were given the option to partake in the interviews in either English, Russian, or Ukrainian languages. The majority of interviews were conducted in Ukrainian with the assistance of student and official translators. Interviewees were asked questions related to their socio-demographic background, their artisanship experience in Ukraine before the war, their current artisanship experience, the type of support they have received from their host country, and the current barriers they are facing. They were also given the opportunity to express their needs and ideas of how additional support, specifically regarding their craft, could look like. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure comparability, however, the specific questions asked depended on the specific history and situation of the interviewees. All interviews were recorded (with prior permission from all interviewees), and the interviewees' responses to the questions were analyzed comparatively to look for trends and themes across participants. The interviews lasted around 1 hour each.

3.3.2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND PROFILE

Participants were recruited through various Ukrainian community groups and social media platforms including Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, and Etsy. We visited Ukrainian community organizations and events in France, Poland, and Germany, to meet Ukrainian artisan women who were either selling their goods, teaching crafts-courses, or volunteering their time. Additionally, flyers were posted in Ukrainian community group chats on Telegram and Facebook, which allowed interested participants to contact us. When recruiting potential

participants, key factors for whether interested participants fit the scope of our research were whether they identified as women, engaged in craft work and whether they moved to their current host country from Ukraine after February 2022. Contemporary artists and designers who were not directly involved in the hand

production of craft were considered beyond the scope of the report. Ukrainian migrants who moved to their host country prior to February 2022 were not interviewed. The final analysis is based on 26 interviews conducted with Ukrainian women artisans currently living in Germany, Poland, and France (Figure 3).



Figure 3 : Interviews used for the analysis

France					
Interviewee	Age Range	Region of Origin	Size of Current City	Craft	Interview Language
F1	50+	North	Medium	Jewelry	Ukrainian
F2	36-50	Kyiv	Large	Pysanky	Russian
F3	18-35	Kyiv	Medium	Jewelry boxes, painting	English
F4	18-35	Kyiv	Large	Resin decor	English
F5	50+	West	Large	Embroidery	Ukrainian
F6	36-50	Kyiv	Small	Fashion, curtain design	Ukrainian
F7	36-50	Odessa	Large	Embroidery, home decor	Russian
F8	36-50	East	Small	Home decor	Ukrainian
Poland					
P1	50+	North	Large	Dukach jewelry	Ukrainian
P2	50+	Center	Large	Silk embroidery	Ukrainian
P3	36-50	South	Large	Beeswax candles	Ukrainian
P4	36-50	Center	Large	Beadwork	Ukrainian
P5	36-50	South	Large	Petrykivka, clay work	Ukrainian
P6	18-35	Kyiv	Large	Crocheting	Ukrainian
P7	36-50	Kyiv	Large	Ceramics, fine arts	Ukrainian
P8	50+	East	Small	Knitting, crocheting	Ukrainian
Germany					
G1	36-50	North	Large	Motanka dolls	Ukrainian
G2	36-50	West	Large	Puppets, knitting	Ukrainian
G3	36-50	Kyiv	Medium	Concrete design	English
G4	36-50	Center	Small	Pottery	English
G5	18-35	West	Large	Tufting	English
G6	18-35	Center	Large	Painting, sewing	English
G7	18-35	North	Large	Costume, set design	Ukrainian
G8	18-35	Kyiv	Large	Textile work	English
G9	36-50	Kyiv	Large	Motanka dolls	English
G10	36-50	East	Small	Embroidery, home decor	Ukrainian

3.3.3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Besides the qualitative interviews, participant observation was conducted in two collective art spaces in Berlin, Germany (Figure 4). The research team participated in two different creative workshops alongside Ukrainian women refugees – one sketching and one Petrykivka painting workshop. By immersing itself in the day-to-day activities of Ukrainian women who participated in those spaces, the team was able to gain further insight into their lived experiences.

Figure 4 : Description of the two collective art spaces visited by the research team in Berlin, Germany

Studio Ukraine	Heart For Ukraine
	
<p>Studio Ukraine's textile art studio © Anaïs Fiault</p>	<p>Heart for Ukraine's ARTdespite gallery and creative space © Anaïs Fiault</p>
<p>On April 20th, 2022, a group of about 30 Ukrainian artists met for the first time in Berlin to craft together. They decided to adopt the name "Studio Ukraine" and started holding art workshops for Ukrainian refugees. In June 2022, they moved to Hotel Continental – Art space in Exile to create a meeting space for Ukrainian and Berlin artists to connect. Studio Ukraine invites artists displaced by the war in Ukraine to meet the Berlin art scene and work on mutual ideas and artistic interventions. Studio Ukraine's self-stated goals are to raise awareness about the war in Ukraine, connect people through art, and give opportunities to boost creativity and gain new experience.</p>	<p>Heart for Ukraine is a charity that has held art exhibitions and fundraisers to raise money for projects helping war-affected people in Ukraine since 2014. The organization has brought cultural workshops directly to children and young adults living in those regions. In Berlin, its ARTdespite gallery and creative space holds regular creative workshops including Motanka doll-making and textile painting. Visitors can also view artwork by children and young people from Ukrainian war zones and make direct donations. All the money collected is used to provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Ukraine.</p>

3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To minimize potential re-traumatization for interviewees, all participants were briefed on their rights prior to the interview, on how they could skip any questions and answer to their comfort level. Interviewee participants were also given the option to select their language of choice for the interview, to ensure comfort and freedom in expression. Additionally, team members prepared country information sheets that included references for social support, mental health support, gender-based support, and legal support for Ukrainian refugees in their respective host countries. For translators, we struggled with finding professional Ukrainian-English translators in all three countries. Thus, for many interviews, we were helped by student volunteer translators. We acknowledge that this was unpaid labor from Ukrainian women. We are incredibly grateful for their help in ensuring the report's success. We were also aware of how interviews could be re-traumatizing for translators because they are

embedded in the same community, and encouraged them to voice any discomfort or difficulties they might face.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. CRAFT AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Economic integration is significantly more difficult for refugees than for other migrant groups yet also a crucial aspect of women's empowerment (Fasani et al., 2022). Although the EU TPD offers Ukrainian refugees more labor rights than previous refugees had, including the right for immediate uptake of employment, they still face a number of obstacles to achieving meaningful economic integration. While various indicators exist, economic integration is often assessed through participation in the labor market, either through employment or self-employment (OECD, 2018). Other factors, such as being employed at one's own qualification level or job security, are also relevant indicators of economic integration.

The idea of entrepreneurship was a central aspect of the interviews conducted. Entrepreneurship provides an alternative to finding an employer and gives women the opportunity to leverage the skills they have and carry out their own business projects - which is ultimately more conducive to economic empowerment. **Entrepreneurship can empower Ukrainian women to lead an independent life by increasing their economic stability.** This chapter studies to what extent becoming a crafting entrepreneur can enhance economic integration for Ukrainian refugee women and what are the main barriers and opportunities for them in this process.

4.1.1. ON A PATH TOWARD ECONOMIC INTEGRATION: PROFESSIONALIZATION THROUGH CRAFT

The level of economic integration was very diverse amongst the interviewees. While some interviewees were solely relying on government support, others were able to make some income through their craft and a few had taken up part-time or full-time jobs - some unrelated to craft - making them significantly more integrated into the local economy. While some women believed government support was enough to cover their basic needs for now, others were facing financial difficulties and felt high pressure to secure financial means, not only for themselves but also for their family.

"Like a Husband and a Mother": Ukrainian Refugee Women's Double Burden

Raising children alone in a foreign country was perceived as a heavy burden by the majority of the women with young children. Separated from their husbands and isolated from their families, for most, this was **the first time they were entirely responsible for raising their children and sustaining their family.** One woman from Poland mentioned that her husband used to be very present and involved in their child's upbringing (P6, crocheting). Another woman from Poland described what she felt like a *"gender imbalance"* and described the abrupt change in her new situation as being *"like a husband and a mother. The whole family is depending on me."* (P7, Ceramics, Fine Arts). Emphasizing her ability to take up this multitude of roles she elaborated: *"Of course, I am very strong. However, I have always had a husband, like a protection. So, he earned a living for both of us, and I was dealing with my art."* (P7, Ceramics, Fine Arts). She explained that having to sustain her child and parents alone was not a source of pride but a source of immense difficulty.

For some women, **the need to be a caretaker and breadwinner at the same time limited their ability to turn craft into their main economic activity** and prioritize their own professional fulfilment. For one woman, childcare made finding survival work over trying to achieve long-term professional fulfilment through craft a priority (F2, Pysanka). She wished to start her own pysanka-making business but was limited in her project by the need to find a job as quickly as possible to attend to the needs of her teenage son. She explained that monthly government allowances were barely enough to feed a child and buy them what they need (clothes, books, etc.). Another woman explained that developing her own creative business was a time-consuming endeavor, something she couldn't really afford venturing into at the moment given that she had to care for her two children (P4, beadwork). While government support in the form of childcare was generally available for the women in their host countries, two women stated that they could not rely on it, and had to take care of their children personally, because the available childcare was not suitable for their children with special needs.

Overall, this reflects how the double burden some of these women experience can negatively impact their desire to professionalize their craft. However, two interviewees from Poland did not perceive these difficulties as inherently tied to gender roles, but rather as situational. As one of the women put it, *"anyone, regardless of*

gender, would face the same difficulties [if alone in a foreign country with children].” (P4, Beadwork).

Ukrainian Craftswomen Perceive Professional Opportunity in Europe Differently

The women had heterogeneous perceptions of their potential to continue their craft in their European host country. Whether moving to the EU was perceived as an opportunity for business development or not appears to be dependent on their personal situation and where they live. For instance, interviewees based in Berlin unanimously highlighted how being in such a thriving culture hub made it easier for them to envision a career in that field and to take more creative liberties. One woman explained *“Art can live, can be alive in Berlin”* (G9, Motanka dolls). She mentioned how her non-traditional interpretation of Motanka dolls was popular in Berlin but less appreciated in Ukraine. One interviewee who did textile work explained that she felt like people were more open-minded towards art in Berlin compared to Kyiv (G8, textile work). She felt like there were fewer opportunities to explore oneself as an artist in Ukraine and that it was harder to work as a freelance artist and craftswoman there.

Conversely, **women living in rural areas were less likely to describe having new opportunities in their situation.** They lacked the possibility to exhibit or sell their craft and described having long ways to travel to larger cities where these opportunities exist. One woman in Germany stated clearly: *“in villages, people have less opportunities”* (G4, Pottery). Another woman from Poland explained how there were no art fair opportunities or infrastructure to host them in the small district where she lived (P8, knitting and crocheting). This could be linked to a lack of resources for integration projects and limited mobility of refugees in rural areas, as they often rely on public transport (Engel, 2013; Rösch et al., 2020). Specifically for the cultural sector, opportunities tend to concentrate in larger cities (Boccella and Salerno, 2016), which explains why women in rural areas reported a lack of venues and opportunities to promote their crafts. Linking these perceived issues with her mental state, one woman in Germany explains: *“I don't see any exhibitions, fairs, where I can do my business here, and it makes me tired. I work elsewhere, to be able to survive, but it's certainly not mine [her business].”* (G10, Embroidery, home décor). Women in rural France and Poland shared this perception. One woman in France explained that *“there are lots of creative artisans, however they are spread out over the cities and there is no shared space where we can meet”*, illustrating how women in villages and small cities have difficulties accessing the creative communities that exist in bigger cities. However, it is relevant to note that rural areas are very heterogeneous in many dimensions (such as size, political landscape, resources, etc.), and can generally also provide

significant potential for social integration through local clubs and associations (Engel, 2013).

Ukrainian Craftswomen Show Entrepreneurial Motivation

The **entrepreneurial spirit** of Ukrainian artisan women was a reoccurring characteristic of almost all interviewees. The vast majority of the interviewed women wanted to make crafting their main professional activity, while only two explicitly said they wanted to keep crafting as a hobby. For personal reasons, such as health issues or personal preference, these women did not consider further investment into their crafting. Amongst the numerous women who wanted to professionalize their craft, the level of progress on this path was very heterogeneous, which is also linked to the specific situation in which the women found themselves in. While younger interviewees (under 35) saw having their own business more as a long-term idea and first planned to focus on obtaining further education in arts or crafts, older women were thinking in more immediate terms.

Overall, the women's level of professionalization of crafting in Ukraine was again very heterogeneous in our sample, with around 1/3 of the women having made money with their craft in the past already. All women who had already made an income through craft in Ukraine wanted to professionalize their activity also in their host country, which reflects how they want to remain in their profession. For one woman, who had not made any money with crafting in Ukraine, this specific situation motivated her to follow up on the idea of professionalizing her artisan work. 11 women stated that they were already selling their products in their host country. This was achieved through different channels, though mostly through local crafts markets, Christmas markets and etsy.com, an online platform for craft entrepreneurs. However, most of them were facing challenges ([see 4.1.2](#)) and none of them could yet fully rely on their artisan work as an income at the time of the interviews. Some women stated that they were not able to continue with their previous jobs in their host country and did not want to take up low-skilled jobs for which they were over-qualified. The large inability to find a job in the same qualification level is supported by previous research findings (Kucharska, 2022).

The stages of professionalization of their craft ranged from having a vague idea or desire to start a business, to already being in the process of applying for administrative authorization to open their business in their host country. Two interviewees had already made significant progress on this path by writing a business plan and working on the legal authorization of the business. In both cases, the women wanted to open the business in collaboration with a partner. The example of a woman in Poland illustrated an extraordinary dedication to creating her own art foundation, as significant efforts were already made in

contacting potentially supportive organizations, having flyers and detailed information on the project.

Two Paths of Professionalization: Selling Crafts and Teaching Crafting

The women who were aiming to professionalize their craft activity were in most cases either **focusing on selling their products or on teaching crafting to others**. In many cases, there was a clear distinction and a preference for one over the other, which was often linked to their previous activities in Ukraine suggesting that business development is also path dependent. While some women were comfortable and proud to sell their craft, other women expressed discomfort towards this idea. This heterogeneity is in line with previous literature on the relationship of crafting as an economic activity amongst Ukrainians. As presented in the literature review (see 2.2.2), in Ukrainian society, the craft maker primarily holds the responsibility of passing his/her knowledge on to subsequent generations, making crafting primarily a socio-cultural process rather than a means of income (Skavronska, 2017). Commercializing one's craft can be difficult, as culture and economic activities are perceived as separate spheres by many Ukrainians (Farinha, 2017), something which could be noticed in some interviews as well. Indeed, some women perceived **craft as an emotional process** tied to their personal creative identity and well-being and thus felt uncomfortable selling something so personal. These women either preferred to make gifts out of their craft and to keep it as a hobby, or to professionalize in teaching crafting skills instead. At the time of the interview, five women were already able to make money through teaching craft workshops in the host country. These activities were organized through existing organizations, such as Ukrainian cultural and community organizations or local cultural institutions, like museums. These institutions provided the women with materials, space, and tools/equipment, which allowed the women to immediately start with the workshops. These women also emphasized their gratitude for these opportunities and the importance of such organizations.

4.1.2. BARRIERS ON THE PATH TOWARD MAKING CRAFT A BUSINESS

Even though the majority of the women were highly motivated to professionalize crafting and become crafting entrepreneurs, they faced numerous interconnected and mutually reinforcing barriers in doing so:

The most prominent barrier was the **bureaucracy and complexity of the legal procedure** to open a business in the host country. This issue was explicitly brought up in eight interviews. Multiple women pointed out that a lack of knowledge of the legal system, legal requirements, especially the taxation system, was a hindrance for them

to open a business. Some women said they were afraid to make mistakes and face penalties. They compared some of the procedures to those they were familiar with in Ukraine, stating that opening a business in Germany was significantly more complex and a longer process: *"In Ukraine, it goes within a day, with an app on your phone. And here in Germany, it can take months"* (G5, Tufting). However, only one woman explained that this insecurity was a reason to join pre-existing projects rather than open her own business – all others still wanted to proceed on an entrepreneurial path. Existing support services from the German job center were mentioned by one woman, however, the process was described as very slow. Multiple women have therefore pointed out that the lack of legal knowledge would be a crucial touchpoint for support services.

This issue is closely linked to **the language barrier** most interviewees faced. An insufficient level in the language spoken in the host country was described as an obstacle to accessing information about the legal and bureaucratic processes. The majority of the women were taking language courses and often stated that learning the language was a priority for them. However, because learning a new language is a long-term process, this barrier may still persist in the mid-term. The existence of language courses is therefore not sufficient to ensure access to entrepreneurial opportunities. In addition, two women in Germany mentioned that having language courses in the middle of weekdays was inconvenient as it prevented them from engaging in other activities.

The **lack of financial means** to start up their business was also brought up as a challenge by multiple women (six explicitly named this issue). While many women did perceive government support as sufficient to live on (with two exemptions, who were not able to secure their basic needs), this does not necessarily allow spendings that go beyond the daily needs, as clearly stated in multiple interviews: *"little resources remain to stream into my art activity in Poland"* (P1, Dukach jewelry). Larger business investments are therefore not possible for most of the women. This is why one woman in Poland mentioned she was applying for grants with the municipality of Warsaw – however, despite the proximity of Ukrainian and Polish, her limited Polish proficiency made the process difficult. insufficient knowledge of the local language and lack of financial means have also been identified as barriers to entrepreneurial activities in previous research (Leicht et al., 2021).

Several women mentioned that they did not have **access to the materials** they needed for their craft. This was partly linked to the above-mentioned financial constraints, as materials have been described as more expensive in Poland, France, Germany compared to Ukraine. Specific materials were also unavailable in the host country (such as specific beads and embroidery towels). In multiple cases, the women got their materials shipped from Ukraine or they still worked with the materials and tools they brought with them initially.

Another dominant barrier is the **lack of space** to do their crafting. As several women did crafts that needed large spaces (such as tufting and ceramics), they were lacking sufficient space to work on them, but had in most cases found temporary solutions. Limited financial means inhibit their ability to rent a proper studio for instance.

Some women that were selling their artwork expressed difficulties making their art valued by the local population. This can be a barrier to **finding customers** in the host country and selling at an adequate price. One woman expressed that Ukrainians value high-quality handcrafts more than people in France, though others reported an increased interest in Ukrainian artwork by the local population.

Additionally, a **lack in business contacts and occasion to exhibit or sell** resulted in *“less opportunities to show artwork”* (F1, Jewelry). As described above, the perception of opportunities appeared largely depended on the geographical location of the women. The lack in business contacts is linked to the missing social capital of refugees, who, in contrast to migrants, had to move abruptly and often without a social network in their host countries. While social networks were still small, many women did have some contacts in their host countries, especially in Germany and Poland where Ukrainian communities already existed before the war due to migration ([see 2.3](#)) (ibid.).

Finally, another recurring challenge was **lack of time**. The time constraints had different reasons, such as being occupied with language courses or having to take care of their children. Other women, on the contrary, noted that they were able to spend more time doing their craft now than previously in Ukraine, which reflects how the individual situations differ largely.

The barriers as well as the received services that have been described depend on national policies to some extent. Almost all women had accessed governmental support, most importantly social welfare (in the form of financial support), which is part of the EU Temporary Protection policy (European Commission, n.d.). Still, the path towards economic integration through craft is complex for Ukrainian refugee women. Based on Article 12 of the TPD, “Member States shall authorize, for a period not exceeding that of temporary protection, persons enjoying temporary protection to engage in employed or self-employed activities”. Member States should generally ensure that obstacles to employment and self-employment are addressed and mitigated (Council Directive 2001/55/EC, 2001).

4.1.3. OPPORTUNITIES OF PROFESSIONALIZATION IN EUROPE DESPITE CHALLENGES

Ukrainian Women are Motivated to Overcome Barriers

Despite the numerous barriers to opening a business in the host country, many interviewees expressed their confidence to overcome them and continue their crafts even with limited resources. A woman in Poland stated: *“As an entrepreneur woman I am not afraid. I feel like I am confident to achieve the same in Poland, just step by step and slower”*, illustrating both their awareness of the barriers but also their motivation to overcome them. Despite the lack of resources, she perceived herself as an independent woman and explained: *“I rely on myself and my skills.”* (P1, Dukach jewelry).

The women also expressed a **willingness to adapt to local markets** by varying their crafts and trying to find new ideas by visiting local exhibitions for inspiration. For instance, one woman from France who made jewelry explained that she was starting to understand French women’s taste in jewelry better and intended to make new creations which would fit their taste better. One woman with an established home decor business was exploring opportunities to enter the German market and adapting to the designs that are in fashion. Some, on the other hand, did not want to change their craft but put an emphasis on **explaining the meaning behind their works to the local population** so they may appreciate their value better.

A New Demand for Ukrainian Craft

The demand for Ukrainian crafts businesses was highlighted in multiple interviews and is in line with findings in the literature review. While **Ukrainian craft had been gaining in popularity in Europe** in recent years, the start of the Russian invasion has created a surge in interest for Ukrainian art and culture among European publics and cultural workers. For instance, one interviewee from France (F3, Jewelry boxes, Painting) recalled how Ukrainian craft was very popular amongst local French people during a local Christmas market.

Even more significant was **the high demand for crafting workshops and masterclasses** throughout the interviews. A woman who had started giving pottery workshops highlighted the large interest: *“when you want to visit the workshop we open the participation list only one day before, and for only half an hour or one hour, and then it’s completely full”* (G4, Pottery). This is coherent with the experiences of other women, who describe that *“now there is a queue of people waiting to join my workshops, Ukrainian and some Polish people too”* (P3,

Beeswax candles), which reflects its potential to create intercultural connections. This suggests how Ukrainian women may bring new skills and knowledge to the local cultural industry and help generate a larger and more diversified cultural offer in their host community. A particularly successful example of a woman giving workshops explained that her clients follow her to different locations in the Warsaw region where she is giving classes, because they appreciate it so much. As she is describing her workshops as a form of art therapy, she concluded that *“during the last four months, we have changed a lot of people through the workshops”* (P7, Ceramics, Fine Arts).

A Momentum of Opportunity

Some women highlighted that they perceived their current situation as an opportunity that opens new doors: they have (sometimes) more time for their craft, there is an increased interest in Ukrainian artwork, and therefore, some of them perceive the potential of professionalizing their craft for the first time. Not being able to enter the regular job market on the same level as their previous occupation in Ukraine, had allowed one woman to *“pay more attention to [her] hobby”*. She explained: *“it is unexpected that I am now doing more with my hobby than with my main profession”* (G4, Pottery). This feeling can even become a factor in the decision of whether the woman wants to stay in the host country or return to Ukraine in the long term. In direct comparison, one woman said: *“In Ukraine, it is harder to work as an artist”*, and *“you are not as free in your type of art”* (G8, textile work). Other interviewees are in line with this perception and stated that their host country, Poland, is an opportunity *“to realize my potential [...] as an artist, to be able to set up a business [...] and to have the possibility to develop as an artist.”* (P6, Petrykivka, Clay work).

4.2. CRAFT AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION

When refugees are forced to leave their home, they can often experience a loss in identity and decline in mental wellbeing (Strang and Quinn, 2019). Those that flee armed conflict often experience high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression (ibid.). Once refugees arrive in their host country, they often come with pre-migration trauma and have trouble integrating into society because of language barriers and/or a lack of understanding of the functioning of their new host community (ibid.). Studies have shown building social relationships is a necessary component of integration (ibid.). Integration refers to the end product of a complex and gradual process comprising three interlinked legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions (UNHCR Executive Committee, 2005). While social integration focuses on the social and cultural dimensions of

integration, such as cultural adjustment and contact with locals (Robila, 2018), there are also certain factors that can increase an individual's ability to socially integrate such as a sense of purpose, personal agency, having a goal and motivation (ibid.). For these reasons, social integration is considered both related to an individual's wellbeing and their contact with host communities. The benefits of social integration are immense for refugees as it can help them find employment, build social networks, and participate in community activities thus creating a more inclusive society (UNHCR, n.d.).

Women especially face challenges with social integration due to the existence of traditional gender roles and their inability to control their gender identities (Cheung and Phillimore, 2017). Studies have shown **that for many refugee women, gender can create additional barriers to social integration**, specifically in access to healthcare and language classes because of the additional responsibilities, such as childcare, and sexual violence they may experience (Cheung and Phillimore, 2017). In response to the gendered differences that women face in social integration, researchers have noted that women refugee's engagement in social practices, such as creating social networks, can play a significant role in integration processes in host countries (Hunt, 2008; Koyama, 2014). In this regard, the **creation of social networks through crafting and art spaces** may serve as a way to increase the social capital of refugee women and heavily contribute to their ability to socially integrate in a new country.

4.2.1. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF CRAFT FOR UKRAINIAN WOMEN

The research findings suggest that craft has a high social value in the lives of Ukrainian women and strongly contributes to their social wellbeing. Social wellbeing can be defined as the ability to communicate with others and be yourself freely (Stride, 2022). However, social wellbeing is not only about interaction with others, but it also centers around how we choose to interact with ourselves (ibid.). In this sense, personal habits and hobbies are key components of social wellbeing, as they allow for individuals to express themselves freely while also granting them access to specialized social groups (Malema, 2017). In the study it was found that **craft supports both the external and internal components of social wellbeing**: it improves the individual's mental wellbeing, and it opens doors to social spaces where individuals can connect through craft.

During interviews, the majority (14/26) of Ukrainian refugee artisan women expressed how they enjoyed their craft because to them it was a way to improve their mental health. Firstly, many women expressed that it was a form of relaxation for them. One woman in France explained that crafting is *“like meditations”*. Other interviewees stated that they saw craft as a tool that they could use to

relax and relieve the daily stresses in their life, especially during this period of war. A woman who made Motanka Dolls explained that crafting provides a distraction from the difficulties she faces and actually soothes her. These findings correspond with existing research which has shown the extent of benefits of crafting can have on women such as relieving difficulties associated with mental health (i.e., depression) and improving their overall wellbeing (Chetty and Hoque, 2012; Liddle et al., 2013). Pöllänen states that **crafting can allow individuals to feel as if they have control over their lives by diverting negative feelings** and instead encouraging a more positive mental state (2015). During a time of war, it was found that the relaxation properties of craft helped provide some relief to women who were facing hardship. One woman who did textile painting described the process of their work as a type of “*art therapy*”. The concept of art therapy was brought up on multiple occasions by women and refers to a creative process that allows individuals to explore their emotions through artistic creation (ATCB, n.d.).

While creating art cannot be a substitute for professional psychological therapy, the act of crafting seems to be a process of relaxation and distraction from the uncertainty of war for many Ukrainian women. Since the beginning of the war, many women explained that the state of their mental health had declined, and that crafting has helped them cope since arriving in a new country. One woman expressed that crafting helped her “*heal and distract from gloomy thoughts*” since it had almost been one year since the war, and she had been struggling with depression. In forced migration literature, artistic activities have been shown to help refugees cope with their mental and psychological stress by showing them that joy is possible even during difficult times (Andemichael, 2013). Since individual confidence and purpose are strong components of social integration, crafting represents an opportunity for refugees to improve their wellbeing and make them more open to engage in social activities in a host country (Robila, 2018).

For Ukrainian artisan refugee women, craft plays an important role in social wellbeing and emotional support. Since the war, craft has been extremely helpful in distracting women from the horror of the war and providing them an outlet to explore the difficult emotions that they are processing due to their circumstances. The **therapeutic nature of crafting** has made the act a personal tool of resiliency and emotional support for many Ukrainian refugee artisan women.

4.2.2. ART SPACES DURING WAR: A REFUGE FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEE ARTISAN WOMEN

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has noted how the existence of community centers in host countries can be extremely beneficial for the social wellbeing of refugees since they allow refugees to exchange ideas while also providing opportunities for further improving their skill set (UNHCR Community Centres, n.d.). Refugee women can strongly benefit from these spaces as they are often more harmfully impacted by displacement (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). Women are more prone to forms of gender-based violence (i.e., physical assault, rape, sexual harassment) and are more likely to feel socially isolated (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). Goodson and Phillimore (2008) note that refugee community organizations (RCOs) can play an important role in reducing the social isolation of refugee women, who largely tend to experience difficult feelings when they arrive in a host country. **In the context of war, artisanship creates spaces of community** for Ukrainian refugee artisan women. The inclusion of Ukrainian refugee artisan women in community art spaces may contribute to their social wellbeing as these informal spaces act as emotional, creative, and administrative support hubs.

The community spaces for art differed in the services that they offered in the countries visited. Some arts spaces focused mostly on the Ukrainian community (*Ukrainski Dom* in Warsaw) and overall support for them while others were more arts-based (Heart for Ukraine in Berlin) or international (Studio Ukraine which is a part of Hotel Continental in Berlin). Although these spaces exist, women expressed that at first they had difficulty finding them. Social contacts are crucial and finding these spaces occurs through word of mouth. The organizations are also not necessarily in contact with each other. For example, women at Heart for Ukraine had not heard about Studio Ukraine and vice versa, despite the two operating in Berlin. Nonetheless, large arts spaces were usually found in cities across the countries studied (Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Wroclaw) making it difficult for women who live in rural communities to participate in thus creating a barrier to access art spaces as a form of community support.

The existence of art spaces where Ukrainians can meet to create and discuss provided emotional support to many of the interviewees through community. Many women in France, Poland, and Germany expressed that in these art spaces they can feel more connected to the Ukrainian community despite being forced from their home. One interviewee stated, in reference to Studio Ukraine, that it is like a “*small island of Ukrainian people which makes it feel more like home or something you know*”. In these art spaces, women can share their emotions about the ongoing war in a community with other people that understand the situation. One interviewee expressed that

“meeting feels like meditation which distracts from horror, unnecessary thoughts and fear of unpleasant news”. Another woman who did textile painting explained how difficult it had been for her mentally before finding Heart for Ukraine. Once she found the group, she said that her mental health greatly improved. The findings align with research which suggests that community spaces can play an important role in fostering social inclusion as they can help promote cultural retention and identification during difficult times (UNHCR, n.d.). In addition, a previous study in the United Kingdom showed that, for refugee women, the formation of social networks through social spaces can foster friendships and be the primary source of asylum coping and mental health support in a host country (Goodman and Phillimore, 2008).

In addition, we found that **art spaces provided business and administrative support** for Ukrainian refugee artisan women in their host country. Four women, in France and Germany, expressed that being in art spaces helped them access business opportunities in their host country, whether that be through networking or finding a job teaching art. The channels created through art spaces, such as Telegram groups, also serve a purpose in providing administrative support to Ukrainian refugee artisan women who are newcomers in their host country. The groups provide a space of “informational assistance” whether that be to access information surrounding medical, immigration, or social services. These types of networks can help build social capital for refugee women as they provide a way to better understand how country institutions work and can help individuals to push the government for increased support (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). When refugees gain social capital, this enables them to be fully engaged in activities or processes in the country, such as social integration (ibid.).

Craft has not only allowed women to find pleasure in their lives during this difficult time, but it has allowed them to find community in their host countries. Since refugee women are particularly marginalized in social integration processes, these spaces act as a place where Ukrainian refugee women are able to share their emotional trauma and also increase their social capital. Despite these spaces being open to all, it was recognized that **the knowledge of these spaces largely rested on word of mouth and social networks**. Therefore, it is important that information surrounding these art spaces are communicated through channels that directly target Ukrainian refugee artisan women communities in order to increase participation. Overall, art spaces can be important venues for resilience for displaced communities as they are places where individuals can go to support their mental wellbeing and share information surrounding administrative processes in their host country.

4.2.3. SPACES FOR INTER-CULTURAL EXCHANGE: FOSTERING SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Field research in Germany and Poland highlighted that **art spaces have a transformative power to connect people that come from different backgrounds** and experiences through the creation of art. The Council of Europe has stated that cities which adopt more intercultural integration policies drive meaningful and positive interaction which is necessary for bringing together people from diverse backgrounds (2021). Artisanry can foster social integration by increasing contact and feelings of acceptance between refugees and host communities. Both art spaces and venues where refugees can sell their work play an important role in encouraging intercultural dialogue and building social connectedness.

Ukrainian refugee artisan women expressed to us that the artisanship has allowed them to connect with locals in their host countries through the art spaces that they are a part of. A Ukrainian refugee artisan woman we spoke to explained, in reference to Studio Ukraine, that it *“creates connections between people”* and that they *“met so many people from outside Ukraine”* (G8, Textile work). When locals and refugees collaborate together in these spaces, refugees can contribute and feel accepted by the local community. In France, one individual who made jewelry remarked that in an artisan association she has already gotten a nickname by locals. While in Poland, artisanship has provided a pathway for Ukrainian refugees to arrange workshops at local schools and community centers where they can teach locals about their artisanship. Across all countries, our interviewees expressed how selling their artisanship also allowed them to connect with the local community more. For example, one interviewee expressed how they can communicate with locals *“because we make items they like”* (F4, Resin decor) and another said that they feel *“a sort of sympathy”* (P1, Dukach jewelry) from locals when participating in exhibitions. One interviewee in Germany, who did tufting, said that learning to connect their artisanship to German and Ukrainian cultures (to sell the work) has helped them meet more German people.

Nonetheless, we noticed that several of the interviewees (7/26) had trouble with social integration because of **language barriers** despite their willingness to have greater communication with locals in their host country. Language barriers are commonly cited as challenges to refugee integration as they have detrimental effects on the mental health of individuals, can lead to isolation, and limit opportunities in host countries (Robila, 2018). One woman, who was an organizer of textile painting activities at Heart for Ukraine, described that she had trouble communicating with Germans that came into the Gallery because she was *“afraid of saying something wrong”* due to her limited language skills (G7, costume and set design). A woman in France who made jewelry said that

she “*would love to*” meet more French people but that “*the relationships are tough, because everything relies on language and communication*”, and that her French language skills are not yet at the level where this is possible (F5, Embroidery). In addition, some women (3/26) stated that they would be able to integrate better if they were able to find work in the country. In reference to power dynamics in relationships between refugees and locals, one woman who did pottery said: “*when you have a job, they [Germans] speak to you like you are more on the same level, not like a person who needs help*”.

The success of the art spaces in providing emotional, creative, and administrative support creates an opportunity for art spaces to be venues for intercultural dialogue between refugees and host communities. These spaces can be general in understanding and may take the form of community centers, organized activities, or creating exhibitions for artisans to sell their work. Since social ties and networks are especially important for refugee women, art spaces have the possibility to provide and encourage individuals to take part in intercultural community activities and can be key to promoting social integration.

Field Notes: Entering Ukrainian Art Spaces

After conducting extensive desk research, we found two organizations in Berlin that were creating art spaces for Ukrainian refugee women: Heart for Ukraine and Studio Ukraine. As researchers, we entered these spaces and were unsure what to expect especially as none of us are Ukrainian. Yet, from the moment we arrived at each, all we felt was warmth, kindness, and openness from those leading the workshops we took part in. At Heart for Ukraine, we took part in a Petrykivka painting workshop where we learned the difficulty of the craft by painting designs on our own recycled clothing. At Studio Ukraine we attended a sketch class open to the public but taught by a Ukrainian woman. In both spaces, there were language barriers to communication, however, we were still able to communicate non-verbally (a lot of laughing and pointing) and through Google Translate. Over apple tea, we listened to why the woman got involved in art, stories of their life before the war, and shared what our life was like in Paris and our hobbies. Our findings align with studies that show how common spaces can bring people who may never be in contact with each other together for a shared purpose and build “reciprocal recognition” (OECD, 2018). More specifically, McGregor and Ragab (2016) demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between cultural activities and different dimensions of integration. When we were in these spaces, we were able to build a social connection with Ukrainian women through our shared interest in art even despite our different cultures and lives.

4.3. CRAFT CAN PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESISTANCE AND POLITICAL AGENCY IN TIMES OF WAR

As explained in the literature review, women in Ukraine are displaying civic and political agency by actively helping support Ukraine’s war effort against Russia despite facing barriers to their meaningful participation in institutional processes. Yet, far from their country and unable to help on the ground, recovering agency in a time of war is doubly challenging for Ukrainian refugee women. Political agency here does not refer to participation in institutional political processes, but rather to “a variety of individual and collective, official and mundane, rational, and affective [...] ways of acting, affecting and impacting politically” (Häkli and Kallio, 2014). Feminist and postcolonial scholars have underlined how political agencies from less influential groups tend to go unnoticed (ibid.), while modes of resistance can be embedded in seemingly indirect and mundane practices (Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013). This section sets out how craft can shed light on alternative – and possibly gendered – modes of resistance and political agency among Ukrainian refugee women.

4.3.1. RESISTING TO RUSSIA’S WAR IN UKRAINE: A GENDER DIVISION OF LABOR

All interviewees expressed their desire to support Ukraine in a time of war. Yet, women across all three countries **reported feelings of guilt for having fled their country and being safe abroad** while their country is at war and men are risking their lives every day on the frontline. One participant from Germany who had just given birth explained she came from a family with a military background and felt guilty for not being “*strong like a man*” and not being able to protect her nation (G9, Motanka dolls). Still, another interviewee from Germany noted that it was ultimately easier for Ukrainian female refugees to be abroad than for Ukrainian male refugees (G8, Textile work). She mentioned how some of her male friends and acquaintances in Germany felt a much higher degree of shame for not being in Ukraine fighting to defend their homeland – suggesting expectations of participation in the war effort differ for men and women based on pre-existing and possibly exacerbated gender roles.

This is by no means a new trend. While both men and women have felt the patriotic need to take a stand to defend their country’s territorial integrity since 2014, they have been encouraged to adopt distinct roles, often based on stereotypical gender norms (Khromeychuk, 2018). For instance, under the guise of protection, women have been actively discouraged from entering certain spaces, given tasks often considered as auxiliary and inferior, and prevented from occupying certain positions, particularly within the Ukrainian armed forces – despite undertaking many different roles in practice (ibid.). Conversely, since 2014, Ukrainian society has undergone

a process of progressive militarization which has generated a certain value system where military activity is seen as the ultimate priority and its main actors – military men – occupy the top of the patriarchal hierarchy despite the growing presence of women in the Ukrainian armed forces (Khromeychuk, 2018). The 2022 Russian military offensive appears to have only exacerbated this tendency. It is therefore unsurprising that Ukrainian refugee women artisans perceive their role in defending the country as more limited than men's and consider combat as the most valuable form of resistance, while other forms are perceived as useful, but often subaltern. Nonetheless, craft appears to empower Ukrainian women refugees to find new spaces of participation and means of agency to support the country's resistance to Russian aggression.

4.3.2. PROMOTING PATRIOTISM AND UKRAINIAN CULTURE THROUGH CRAFT

When asked about whether they felt like the war had impacted their work as craftswomen, most participants conveyed a greater need to **express patriotism through their craft**. Patriotism can be understood as love for one's country, identification with it, and special concern for its well-being (Primoratz, 2020). While certain artisans preferred to keep the war and negative feelings associated with it out of their work, most interviewees had incorporated patriotic and war-related elements into their craft. Patriotism was most often associated to the use of yellow and blue – Ukraine's national colors. In fact, since the start of the Russian invasion, one artisan from Germany explained that there has been a proliferation of craft and art related to the war (G2, Puppets, knitting). Another interviewee from Germany explained that the popularity of patriotic craft predates 2022 and first started in 2014, when Russia first violated Ukraine's territorial sovereignty (G10, Embroidery, home décor). To a lesser extent, some interviewees used their craft as a tool for direct political commentary on the war itself. This was the case of two interviewees from Berlin who engaged in more modern forms of craft (G5, Tufting and G8, Textile work). They incorporated war-related themes and imagery into their work alongside more traditional Ukrainian symbols. Across all countries, and particularly in Poland and Germany, many Ukrainian refugee women were using artisanship as a means to convey patriotism in the face of Russian aggression while also engaging in other forms of resistance.

Ukrainian Women are Funding Ukraine's War Effort Through Craft

Ukrainian refugee artisan women are **resisting by contributing materially to ongoing war efforts**. Most of the women interviewed in Germany and Poland who monetized their craft work and/or skills explained that at

least part of the money they made from sales and/or teaching lessons went towards supporting the Ukrainian military. One interviewee from Germany explained that half of her revenues related to her tufting activities were donated to the Ukrainian armed forces and people living under Russian occupation: *"There is a big Ukrainian community [in Germany] now because of the war. It is important to support the war and send money, my friends are also doing so. Even if it is not a big contribution, we all try because we understand how important it is"* (G5, Tufting). One participant from Germany who made traditional Ukrainian Motanka dolls from old clothes mentioned she also made bandages for the frontlines using the same material. Whether it be by **contributing to fundraising exhibitions, donating a percentage of their sales or direct donations**, Ukrainian refugee artisan women reported feeling it was their duty to find some way to support the fight at home. In this sense, post-invasion artisanship has become a means to fund Ukrainian armed resistance to the Russian invasion.

Insights from war studies can help make further sense of Ukrainian craftswomen's involvement in such fundraising activities. The political agency of members of diasporas in conflict in their homeland and their cross-border mobilization is well studied (Adamson, 2013). Because they are uniquely positioned outside of their home country, members of diasporas can access other resources which can be channeled into support for conflict-related activities (ibid.). For instance, diaspora members can have a material impact on conflict by mobilizing financial resources in their host country through donations and economic activity, as in the case of Ukrainian women artisans. While those acts may not be the result of a deliberate and organized process since diaspora members are often dispersed, together, these individual initiatives amount to a form of collective agency. As members of the expanding Ukrainian diaspora in Europe, Ukrainian women refugee artisans are partaking in a form of **collective diaspora activism** by mobilizing material resources to support Ukraine's war resistance efforts from outside the country. In a sense, they are turning craft and displacement into an opportunity for political agency and resistance in the current conflict. Crafting represents both an opportunity for long-distance patriotism and war resistance.

Promoting Ukrainian Culture and Alternative Narratives on Ukraine through Craft

Several interviewees described a heightened need to **preserve and promote Ukrainian culture and identity** in the time of war. Indeed, women's craft work appears to be strongly grounded in traditional Ukrainian culture. The use of traditional Ukrainian motifs and symbols (like national flowers) was present across most of the interviewees' work. Several women were very knowledgeable about the cultural significance and the history behind certain traditional crafts such as

embroidery, Dukach jewelry, and Motanka doll-making. One interviewee in Germany explained that making Motanka dolls allowed her to feel connected to Ukraine despite now living in a foreign country, which is indicative of how craft may help maintain a shared sense of identity and national belonging amongst displaced Ukrainian craftswomen. Another participant from France who did Pysanka (traditional egg-carving) shared how she wanted to promote and preserve Ukrainian culture by writing a book explaining how to make Pysanky and the cultural meaning of different carvings and symbols. Overall, they conveyed a **feeling of pride** in helping preserve and perpetuate these traditions.

Several participants highlighted their desire to play a role as **cultural ambassadors in their host countries**. They shared an ambition to manifest Ukrainian identity abroad and show the uniqueness and value of Ukrainian culture to European audiences. One participant from Germany hoped that more people would know about Ukraine thanks to her Motanka dolls, which had already attracted the attention of local media. She referred to the early 20th century Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych, who by performing outside of Ukraine, in Western Europe and North America, she believed had greatly helped make Ukraine known to the world in a time when it was struggling for its independence. One interviewee from Poland explained more explicitly how her perception of her craft had changed after the outbreak of the war (P5, Petrykivka, clay work); since 2014, but now more than ever: *“The Ukrainian nation wants to celebrate its identity and culture more than it used to before. There is a desire to be reborn in Ukrainian society. Ukrainian people want to manifest to the world that they are different, that they have a unique culture”*. In the face of Russia’s efforts to destroy Ukrainian culture, she realized she had to protect and promote it where she now lives and show to the world that *“Ukraine is a unique and beautiful nation, culture, and country. And despite Russia’s efforts to destroy it, yes, it exists”*. The idea of the **uniqueness of Ukrainian culture** was emphasized by several interviewees and many interviewees expressed their gratitude towards the research team for taking such an interest in Ukrainian culture in such challenging times.

According to several scholars, the fact that the Russian invasion took the world by surprise has revealed a **need to decolonize and de-imperialize our knowledge of Ukraine** (Khromeychuk, 2022; Snyder, 2023). Increasingly drawing from post-colonial studies, post-Soviet studies today seek to explore the relation between discursive domination and imperialism to make sense of the Russian invasion. Imperialism relies not only on the political but also on the discursive subjugation of other cultures, where dominated groups are depicted as culturally inferior and prevented from forming alternative narratives about themselves which could challenge the premise for their subjugation (Said, 1994). The history of Russian imperialism and colonialism, to which the 2022 full-scale military invasion of Ukraine is largely perceived as the latest development, hinges on such mechanisms.

Through their craft, Ukrainian women refugees unsettle and challenge long-standing narratives of cultural proximity and subordination which underpin Russia’s neo-imperial attack on Ukrainian statehood. Through the promotion of Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian history, and Ukrainian voices on the war, these women are participating in the construction of alternative knowledge on Ukraine that is not dominated by Russian narratives. Through their craft, they seek to increase public awareness about their home country and foster a sense of Ukrainian legitimacy amongst European audiences. Thus, displaced Ukrainian artisan women seek not only to mobilize financial support, but also public support for their national cause. Craft, as a vector of discourse on Ukraine itself, represents a means of political agency for Ukrainian women artisan in exile.

4.3.3. ARTICULATING GENDERED MODES OF RESISTANCE THROUGH CRAFT

This section takes a closer look at the gendered modes and understandings of resistance which arise from some crafts women’s articulation of resistance around practices and behaviors coded as feminine. While not all women linked their work to their gender identity, for several participants, **craft and art were specifically tied to their identity as Ukrainian women**. Several of them mentioned how women around them had passed on their craft to them or how they always enjoyed art. They also explained how certain crafts such as embroidery, jewelry-making, and doll-making were tied to Ukrainian women’s traditional gender roles and experiences throughout history. For example, one interviewee from Poland explained how the Dukach jewelry she made traditionally used to be worn by Ukrainian women to appear more beautiful and find a husband, but also sold in exchange for money in times of hardship (P1, Dukach jewelry).

Interviewees’ heightened sense of duty to promote Ukrainian culture as women is reminiscent of how seemingly natural connections between women and culture are exacerbated during times of nation building. War is a nation (re)building experience, a process which is undeniably at work in Ukraine, and also relies on a gendered division of labor. Feminist literature on nationalism has shown how nations are built on “social constructions of masculinity and femininity that support a division of labor in which women reproduce the nation physically and symbolically, and men protect, defend and avenge the nation” (Ivekovic and Mostov, 2002). Displaced Ukrainian craftswomen, by incorporating a strong cultural dimension in their work, are indeed helping reproduce the Ukrainian nation abroad. However, while women are usually depicted as passive vectors of national identity in nation building processes (Ivekovic and Mostov, 2002), **Ukrainian refugee craftswomen are actively participating in defining modern Ukrainian national identity** based on its historical struggle with Russia and a stronger ethno-cultural dimension based on

folk culture, but also perhaps on civic elements of tolerance and inclusivity, particularly towards the LGBTQ+ community. Indeed, two participants from Poland presented depictions of a same-sex couple and an androgynous woman in their art and emphasized how these less conventional roles were also perfectly acceptable. Pointing at her painting of a same-sex couple, one interviewee said, *“this is fine”* and then pointed at a painting of a Russian missile – *“but this is not”* (P5, Petrykivka, clay work). This suggests that despite an emphasis on gender binaries, Ukrainian gender norms are indeed evolving in reaction to the Russian aggression (see 2.1.2). Ultimately, by actively helping define and redefine the Ukrainian nation in times of crisis, they are also **renegotiating gender roles** to some extent – something which has already been observed during past moments of crisis and nation building, namely the EuroMaidan revolution and the war in the Donbas.

At the same time, Ukrainian craftswomen are resisting in ways which seemingly reproduce certain **gendered assumptions about women’s role in war**. Several interviewees believed that they were able to help their country as women and complement men’s efforts on the ground by raising funds to support the Ukrainian military forces and promoting Ukrainian culture in their host countries. For instance, a woman from Germany (G9, Motanka dolls) explained that as a woman she could help her country from abroad by introducing Ukrainian art to European publics. For another woman in France (F5, Embroidery), pearl embroidery made her feel connected to her female ancestors who also embroidered while facing the same threat of Russian occupation hundreds of years ago. In that sense, embroidery was a way of channeling Ukrainian women’s historical strength and cultural resolve in front of Russian aggression. This suggests an appreciation for historically gendered forms of resilience and resistance in Ukrainian history. This is reminiscent of what feminist scholars call the **separation of the war space between the “front” and the “home front”**, where the front is perceived as a male face for combat while the home front is a female space for non-violent mobilization (Khromeychuk, 2020). This division is depicted as natural and creates a division of labor in times of war which is clearly separated into male and female domains despite reality being far less segmented, as the non-negligible presence of Ukrainian women in the national armed forces shows (ibid.). By engaging in fundraising and awareness raising, Ukrainian refugee craftswomen are in a sense participating in long-distance “home front” activities – an extension of the **limited female space for agency in times of war** where women help mostly in non-combative ways while men fight.

For one interviewee in Poland, this was ultimately related to Ukrainian men and women’s fundamental complementarity: Ukrainian identity relies on *“a balance between men’s and women’s energy and the two energies work together in perfect harmony”* (P1, Dukach jewelry). Thereby, while men were often associated with physical strength and combat, interviewees tended to

portray themselves as mentally strong, enduring, and resilient. When asked what kind of additional support they would like, several women said they did not need any more help and were used to looking out for themselves. For two interviewees from Poland, Ukrainian women were uniquely strong in their ability to undertake many roles to respond to the necessities of the moment, adapt and move on. After explaining how she was actively trying to rebuild her ceramics business in Warsaw, one of these two women said: *“A woman, despite all these troubles, is like a phoenix. A woman always has enough power to be reborn, to start everything again from scratch”* (P7, Ceramics and Fine arts). Overall, a particular vision of complementary – albeit essentializing – feminine strength and resistance in times of war seems to emerge from those accounts, in which culture and resilience play a crucial role.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this report was to explore the meaning and everyday significance of craft for Ukrainian refugee women, as well as the obstacles and opportunities for improving their lives through craft. To this end, our analysis is based on 26 on-site qualitative interviews with displaced Ukrainian women artisans currently living in three European countries: France, Germany, and Poland. The results show that **craft is closely linked to the personal well-being and identity** of Ukrainian refugee women artisans in Europe. It offers opportunities for individual and collective resilience for Ukrainian refugee women and the enriching of the Europe's creative economy:

First, crafting can be a **business opportunity** for the women, allowing them to professionalize their craftwork in their host country and possibly start new businesses in the artistic sector. However, Ukrainian women face **numerous obstacles that prevent them from making craft their primary activity**, ranging from financial difficulties to challenges in their host country's bureaucratic and legal system. Despite these obstacles to economic integration, the **entrepreneurial spirit** of the Ukrainian women interviewed in this report suggests a strong willingness to integrate. If the obstacles can be overcome, the interviews indicate that there is great potential for new businesses in the artistic field for Ukrainian women. The EU economy could benefit from this form of integration and the creative sector would be enriched.

Second, the act of crafting has helped Ukrainian refugee artisan women cope with the stress caused by the Russian invasion. Crafts have not only allowed these women to find joy in their lives during this difficult time, but also to find a community in their host country that allows them to enter a social environment. Art spaces have become **venues of community resilience** for these women, providing emotional, business, and administrative support. Encouraging the creation of such spaces can provide an opportunity for better **social integration** of Ukrainian refugee women through intercultural contact.

Finally, craft serves as a **tool of war-resistance**, enabling Ukrainian refugee women to regain political agency outside of their home country. This demonstrates how dispersed and disorganized practices of individual resistance can transform resistance into a collective phenomenon with significant impact. Ukrainian refugee artisans, as intermediaries between Ukraine and the rest of the world, can mobilize both material and ideational resources in their host countries to support their country's war effort from abroad. This form of political action and participation highlights both opportunities and limitations for **renegotiating gender roles in times of war** and

underscores the resourcefulness and resilience of Ukrainian women in times of crisis.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Within the previous framework of gender and war, nationalism and migration studies, the findings contribute to existing research on female empowerment and agency in times of crisis. This study also adds to the growing body of literature investigating the mechanisms of Ukrainian national resilience in the face of Russian aggression. At the same time, craft can be an important tool for economic and social integration, as well as emotional resilience. To harness the major potential of craft for Ukrainian refugee women, several policy recommendations have been derived from the identified opportunities and obstacles, which we present in the following chapter. More broadly, we hope that our findings can help inform how different stakeholders support resilience strategies and integration opportunities among other existing or future war refugees through craft.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations build on the barriers Ukrainian refugee artisan women have had accessing artisanship opportunities in their host countries in this time of war. In specific, our recommendations target the main barriers of economic and social integration which include: access to artisanship business endeavors and funding, access to education and training to improve entrepreneurial skills, access to information regarding the artisanship sector, access to materials and space, access to language courses, and more venues to display their artisanship.

While our recommendations are based on field work conducted with Ukrainian refugee artisan women in France, Poland, and Germany, we acknowledge that these recommendations may be applicable to the artisanship sector for other refugee communities across Europe. In addition, many of our recommendations are contingent upon host language acquisition from refugees and geographical proximity to a city. Since we strive for accessibility, we advocate for policy makers to employ a cross-cutting accessibility approach to the following recommendations. This includes, but is not limited to, facilitating access to the resources for women who live in rural and remote areas and for those who face language barriers.

1. To overcome geographical barriers, we suggest including remote options for informational meetings and workshops that take place to facilitate access and contact opportunities for women who do not live in big cities.
2. To overcome language barriers, we suggest that informational material be made accessible in the Ukrainian language and that NGOs and States work to make translators available in activities that aim to support Ukrainian refugee artisan women.

Recommendations:

1) Increase the visibility of information on how to start a business for refugee entrepreneurs

Barrier addressing: Access to for artisanship business endeavors/economic integration

a) States:

- i) Local authorities can work with Job Centers to implement targeted “Entrepreneurship Talks” for groups of refugees who would like to start a business but do not know how to. These workshops could be advertised by targeting specific cultural organizations and Ukrainian community organizations in the municipality, encouraging individuals to bring translators, and creating translated communications materials to facilitate better access to information.

b) NGOs:

- i) Local NGOs that support refugees can host weekly or monthly workshops on how to set up a business in the host country and any legal or technical guidance that is required. In order to target Ukrainian refugee artisan women, we suggest that information regarding these workshops is disseminated on Telegram channels for Ukrainian artisans, and that workshop information materials be available in the Ukrainian language.

2) Increase the visibility of information on how to access funding for refugee entrepreneurs

Barrier addressing: Access to funds for artisanship business endeavors/economic integration

a) States:

- i) Job centers can better promote translated information, talks, social media channels, and funding available for refugees who would like to start a business. If no targeted funding is available in a country, then States should work towards implementing such a funding mechanism through a consultation process.

b) NGOs:

- i) Local NGOs that support refugees can host workshops, talks, and seminars that inform refugees of the funding options available for their business and if they qualify. For individuals that do qualify, they can support their application process by providing courses on grant and loan proposal writing.

3) Offer Capacity Building Courses for refugee artisans

Barrier addressing: Access to education and training to improve skills/economic integration

a) States:

- i) National authorities can create a refugee artisanship apprenticeship program where eligible applicants are matched with a professional in their desired field of entry. Through this program, refugee artisans can improve their skills while better understanding the sector of the host country.
- ii) In addition, national authorities could set up a small grant program for refugees who would like to enroll in non-public training programs. This would allow refugees to continue to update their entrepreneurial skills through privately offered programs.

b) NGOs:

- i) Local NGOs that support refugees can create “Artisanship Educational Pathways Packages” for young refugees interested in the artisanship field in the host country. These “Packages” would include information on government support available to individuals who would like to enter the artisanship field as well as post-secondary education resources. The “Packages” would also be translated into the individual's desired language of choice.

4) Provide Networking Opportunities for refugee artisans

Barrier addressing: Access to information about the artisanship sector in host countries/social integration

a) States:

- i) National and local authorities can create “scholarship programs” for artisans to apply to fund masterclasses and career building opportunities. These “scholarship programs” can specifically include funding and transportation grants for artisans located in rural communities to attend master classes and networking conferences in larger cities.
- ii) Additionally, national, and local authorities can set up artisanship conferences where artisans can network and exchange information.
- iii) National and local authorities can connect artisans by providing a remote portal that can be accessed by artisans across the country. An online database/portal can help break artisans living in rural communities out of isolation and address demographic barriers in access to resources. Spatially sparse Ukrainian craftswomen can be in touch with artisans across the country/region and therefore be able to access informal information flows that are relevant to them.

b) NGOs:

- i) Local NGOs can provide “career talks” for refugees by inviting either someone from the refugee community who has successfully developed their crafting business in the host country or professionals from the host society working in craft or the broader the cultural industry.
- ii) NGOs could also continue providing masterclasses with more advanced/professional artisans, which doubles as providing more opportunities for women that want to monetize their crafting skills through teaching.

5) Facilitate Access to Crafting Material and Studio Space for refugee artisans

Barrier addressing: Access to materials, tools, and space for artisanship/social integration

a) State:

- i) National and local authorities can establish nationwide donation centers where community members can donate materials and tools for refugee artisans to use to continue their craft.
- ii) Additionally, State websites can provide resources on how to apply for artisanship residencies, and have a database of available offers for artisans.

b) NGOs:

- i) Organizations and humanitarian aid centers are offering emergency residencies for cultural and art workers across Europe. Local NGOs can work with museums, cultural institutions, and large art spaces to expand the time span of the emergency residency programs and ensure that artisans

(both professional and non-professional) are included in the program and can access adequate studio space and materials.

- ii) Also, NGOs can work with local artists and artisans to promote studio and space sharing for refugee artisans.

6) Promote More Flexible Hours for Language Courses

Barrier addressing: Language barrier and time available to dedicate to artisanship/social integration/economic integration

a) State:

- i) State-funded language courses should be available in both remote and in-person formats to accommodate the needs of refugees in urban centers and rural areas. The language classes should be available during the day and in the evenings, to allow artisans to have time to conduct their craft and business endeavors with minimal constraints.

b) NGOs:

- i) Organizations can reach out to Ukrainian community Telegram groups and community centers to see if any members that speak both Ukrainian and the host country language would be willing to volunteer their time and conduct flexible and accessible language courses.

7) Provide Venues for refugee artisans to Showcase and Promote Their Work

Addressing: Women's desire to make Ukrainian culture known and visible in Europe and raise funds to help the Ukrainian armed forces

a) State:

- i) Local authorities can help organize regular craft markets, Christmas markets, and craft fairs in their communities. They can also provide spaces for public exhibitions related to Ukrainian art and craft, where craftswomen can expose their work, sell their work to visitors, and raise funds.
- ii) National authorities can also provide transportation grants for artisans in rural communities to be able to attend craft markets and fairs in cities with larger artisanship hubs.

b) NGOs:

- i) Because they are often direct intermediaries for refugees, NGOs can keep refugees informed on opportunities to participate in local craft markets and fairs and help them take part in those. They can also organize crafting markets from their own initiative. In addition, NGOs can continue helping craftswomen to set up their own crafting workshops.

c) Educational institutions:

- i) Whether private or public, educational institutions such as schools, universities and vocational training institutions can partner up with refugee craftswomen to teach students crafting skills as part of their curriculum or as an extracurricular activity.
- ii) Educational institutions can also offer short-term housing for spatially sparsed Ukrainian craftswomen. This way, women from rural communities can attend relevant courses, present their work, and not have geographic distance as a barrier to continuing their craft.

Recommendation for the European Union

Creative Europe is a program launched by the European Commission from 2021-2027 and has a budget of 2.44 billion euros. The main objectives of the program are to protect and promote European cultural and linguistic heritage and increase the competitiveness of the creative and cultural sectors in Europe. The program is divided into three strands: CULTURE, MEDIA, and CROSS-SECTORAL. The World Craft Council Europe program co-funded by the European Union aims to foster networking and capacity-building projects for makers across Europe.

We recommend that the Creative Europe program, under the CULTURE strand and in collaboration with the World Craft Council Europe, dedicate a specific funding stream for Ukrainian artisan women who have been displaced as a result of the Russian invasion. The funding stream could offer two types of grants: 1) grants

for artisans working in traditional handicraft to support cultural preservation and 2) grants for Ukrainian artisans working in artisanship generally and would include more modern and interdisciplinary works. The aim of the grants would be to help artisan women cover the cost of materials/supplies, afford spaces to work, or help them launch a business endeavor, among other specific purposes relevant to the artisan women.

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8. Appendix

Specific support offerings included in the TPD

The rights for beneficiaries included in the temporary protection are as follows:

- a residence permit for the entire duration of the protection (which can last from one year to three years)
- appropriate information on temporary protection
- guarantees for access to the asylum procedure
- access to employment, subject to rules applicable to the profession and to national labor market policies and general conditions of employment
- access to suitable accommodation or housing
- access to social welfare or means of subsistence if necessary
- access to medical care
- access to education for persons under 18 years to the state education system
- opportunities for families to reunite in certain circumstances
- access to banking services, for instance opening a basic bank account
- move to another EU country, before the issuance of a residence permit
- move freely in EU countries (other than the Member State of residence) for 90 days within a 180-day period after a residence permit in the host EU country is issued

(European Commission, n.d.)

Crafts Visual Glossary

We have included a crafts glossary of popular Ukrainian handicraft, some of which we encountered directly through the work of our interviewees. The list is not exhaustive and is meant only to highlight a handful of popular and beautiful Ukrainian crafts.

Carpathian wool weaving



Photo 1 A winter market selling traditional rugs in center downtown Lviv, Ukraine. © Kristi Blokhin / Shutterstock

Ukrainian Embroidery Українська вишивка



Photo 3 Traditional Ukrainian embroidery on towels (ryshnyks) during a Pirogovo country fair in Kyiv, Ukraine © Natalia Bratslavsky / Shutterstock

Dukach Jewelry



Photo 2 A necklace exhibited in the National Museum of History of Ukraine in Kyiv, Ukraine, where an exhibition "Sun on necklace. Dukach" of Ukrainian old national jewelry opened on November 20, 2018 © Sarycheva Olesia / Shutterstock

Kosiv Ceramics Косівська кераміка



Photo 4 Handmade ceramic dishes and plates from the Kosiv region, Ukraine © Iryna Mylinska / Shutterstock

Motanka dolls
Ляльки-мотанки



Photo 5 A series of collectible Ukrainian folk dolls at the fair of the 56th annual flower exhibition on August 21, 2011 in Kyiv, Ukraine © Havoc / Shutterstock

Opishnya Ceramics
Опішнянська кераміка



Photo 8 Traditional Ukrainian clay jug on a wooden fence in village, in Opishnya, Ukraine © Greens and Blues / Shutterstock

Petrykivka painting
Петриківський розпис



Photo 6 Exhibition of decorative painting of the traditional Ukrainian ornamental folk art, Petrykivka, Ukraine © Vidmachok / Shutterstock

Silyanka Bead Necklace
Кольє из бисера "Сиянка"



Photo 9 Colorful beaded necklaces in traditional Ukrainian ethnic, Hutsul jewelry, at a souvenir stall © Iryna Mylinska / Shutterstock

Pysanky Eggs
Пісанка



Photo 7 Handmade Easter eggs decorated with a multi-layered wax and dye process. Ukrainian pysanka, Lviv, Ukraine, March 2022. © weha / Shutterstock

Vinok Wreath
ВІНОК



Photo 10 Typical Ukrainian hair bands are attached to a tree branch during a summer day © Daniel Albach / Shutterstock

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