

MEDIA COMMUNITIES OF UKRAINIAN
MIGRANT WOMEN (REFUGEES FROM WAR)
IN LITHUANIA AND GERMANY:
APPROACHES TO STUDYING

Olena Pavlova, Mariya Rohozha & Iryna Maslikova

© Olena Pavlova

Dr. habil. (Philosophy), Professor, Department of Ethics, Aesthetics and Cultural Studies, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv/ Humboldt-University of Berlin, Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin

Email: olenapavlova@knu.ua

ORCID: 0000-0002-0593-1336

© Mariya Rohozha

Dr. habil. (Philosophy), Professor, Department of Ethics, Aesthetics and Cultural Studies, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
Volodymyrska 64/13, 01601 Kyiv

Email: rogozha@knu.ua

ORCID: 0000-0002-1469-861X

© Iryna Maslikova

Dr. habil. (Philosophy), Head of the Department of Ethics, Aesthetics and Cultural Studies, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
Volodymyrska 64/13, 01601 Kyiv

Email: i.i.maslikova@gmail.com

ORCID: 000-0001-9463-5223

Abstract. This article examines the empirical data from media channels established by Ukrainian women migrants and refugees fleeing war residing in Lithuania and Germany. Additionally, the article seeks to develop theoretical insights into the organization and community dynamics of these migrant groups, with a particular focus on territorial distinctions and the distribution of gender roles. The article employs a case analysis method to examine the media communities of Ukrainian migrants in Germany and Lithuania during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The study involves



a relational content analysis of text messages and metadata from these communication channels. The resulting empirical data is framed within the context of Kant's well-being structure, considering its evolution under current circumstances. The media communities within the realm of immigration are examined through the lenses of the "digital text" and "vernacular writing on the web" concepts. Special attention is given to the diverse forms of "the network of networks" and their localization strategies. Ukrainian media communities, notably with women as a dominant social group, exhibit a form of "undirected' being-together", which involves reproduction or even integration into existing channels on a new territory to seek support and establish social networks in foreign countries. The article underscores the pivotal role of women's participation, economy platforms, and immaterial labor in this process.

Keywords: media community, Ukrainian migrant women, refugees from war, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, digital text, immaterial labor, network of networks.

Introduction

This study aims to define and explore the parameters of the relationship between social networks and media communities as integral components of their research. To accomplish this, empirical data from Lithuania and Germany are employed to analyze the media community practices of Ukrainian migrants who have sought refuge due to war. The study utilizes the Kantian concept of the sphere of well-being to organize the results of the content analysis, taking into consideration regional variations and gender role distribution. The research also delves into the distinct features of the economic activities of Ukrainian migrant women, emphasizing the role of immaterial labor within it, and examines the potential for their integration into a broader social context. A significant focus is placed on the habitus of interpretations and deliberation practices within these media communities.

Social media represents a form of de-differentiation in public, private, and intimate spaces (R. Sennett). This phenomenon is not solely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, although it became particularly evident during this period, even at the physical level. Instead, it signifies a broader trend that challenges the traditional industrial system's segmentation of labor, giving rise to networks of communities characterized by a blurring of lines between production and consumption. These communities foster more adaptive forms of immaterial labor.

Media-communities¹ in the post-Soviet era, particularly in Ukraine, exhibit distinctive characteristics in audience production. They can be

1 The media community is considered a form of association of people involved

seen as manifestations of “vernacular writing on the Web” (D. Barton). This mode of communication is informal and lacks institutional ties, closely linked to everyday life. It primarily involves Ukrainians, particularly women, who engage in networks focused on shared interests such as parenting and child-rearing. Consequently, it assumes the form of community production akin to a tribe. The horizontal structure of these communities is challenging to pinpoint, as they largely operate as “networks of networks” (F. Neidhardt). In this context, the term “network of networks” doesn’t exclusively refer to the entire internet but encompasses a broader, undifferentiated collective of individuals, devices, media channels, technical infrastructure, and the associated information they facilitate. De-differentiated networks, online and offline, among migrants are facets of these overarching networks. The researcher of ethnography of online cultures Jeffrey G. Snodgrass underlines this concept

“it is not always clear even where to conduct research, given the way online communities are typically rooted both on the Internet and also in the online world. This raises analytical challenges as well, as ethnographers struggle to identify the meaningful contexts within which to situate their observations. Here, the abundance of easily downloadable online data poses its own challenges. If ethnographers are not careful, they will lose the full richness and detail of online social life, which makes more traditional ethnographies so compelling” (Snodgrass, 2014, p. 490).

Approaches to the study of media communities are just developing.

Ukrainian migrants and their media communities in seeking refuge due to war

The paper examines the social media discussion groups of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania and Germany. It is dedicated to the analysis of the media community for Ukrainian women seeking refuge in these countries. We chose this comparative perspective because: 1) the European context presupposes a lot of commonality of legal and sociocultural foundations between these two countries; 2) it allows us to compare the general principles of refugee protection with different strategies in implementing them and ways of managing migrant flows; 3) the scope of the research allows us to focus on a comparison of only two countries; 4) the number of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania (more

in the consumption of media content as it contributes to the development of specific habitus patterns.

than 70 thousand refugees in less 3 million population) and Germany (more than 1 million in 84 million population) allows us to evaluate the strategies of their socialization in these countries.

The open structure of the media channels necessitated a defined time frame for analysis (April 12, 2022, to June 3, 2023, for German; February 24, 2022, to April 27, 2023, for Lithuanian). This temporal limitation facilitated relational content analysis as the primary research methodology. The *telemetr.io* analytics service also served as an auxiliary data source for the Telegram channel. The processing of text messages, along with their associated metadata, images, and pre-processed materials, involved manual coding of specific concepts and themes relevant to this context. These codes were further categorized into distinct *code categories*, including physical, civil, and cultural aspects. The structure of the codes was based on the Kantian classification of the division of labor and the corresponding categories of the well-being. Categories were continually added as the coding process unfolded, resulting in an interactive set of themes. This meticulous analysis of empirical material enabled the identification of fundamental themes, issues within the migrant community, and strategies for self-organization in response to these challenges.

This process enabled us to organize the overall discourse content and discern methods for audience engagement. *Telemetr.io*'s statistical analytics provided us with the ability to monitor several key aspects: 1) The enumeration and frequency of messages related to significant themes; the subscriber growth dynamics correlated with the escalation of specific themes; 2) The fluctuations in views associated with particular themes; 3) The contextual relevance of statements, as ascertained through content reconstruction.

Personal interviews were employed as a data collection method to elucidate themes that remained unexplored within media communities.

The ensuing problem area prompted a subsequent series of theoretical activations to pinpoint socially significant concepts and organize the existing themes into broader categories. The empirical parameters acquired were analyzed through the lens of Immanuel Kant's well-being classification, which also enabled us to discern a shift in the Kantian interpretation of the underlying structure. The modern individual's expansion process, their desubjectivization through participation in social networks and media chats, is associated with the notion of "new tribes" (M. Maffesoli).

The nuances of how a digital text operates, its material nature, the principles governing the shaping of the social and cultural sphere within a specific media channel, as well as the audience's organization and their "reading competencies", all draw from the insights provided by Roger Chartier in elucidating the transformations within written culture. David Barton's concept is a pivotal framework in the broader

context of delineating the modes of “organizing “vernacular writing on the Web”, in *interweaving* its content.

A key objective of this study was to gain insights into the challenges faced by women in migration. First of all, “Migration is a highly gendered process, including adjustment to the new country, which can be described as a gendered settlement process that affects men and women differently. Participating in the formal labor market (in high-income societies) is part of being an adult and accepted as a member of society”. (Lehtovaara & Jyrkinen, 2021). In this context, it was crucial to reference works that have examined the issues surrounding women’s migration (Bastia, 2014; Burdikova et al., 2020) and the experiences of refugees (Bredgaard et al., 2018; Ott, 2013). Notably, the unique aspect of Ukrainian migrant women following the commencement of the full-scale invasion in February 2022 is that they are not seeking employment or a better life voluntarily but are forced migrants, and *refugees from the war* (Лібанова, 2023).

This article examines the empirical data from media channels established by Ukrainian women migrants and refugees fleeing war residing in Lithuania and Germany. Additionally, the article seeks to develop theoretical insights into the organization and community dynamics of these migrant groups, with a particular focus on territorial distinctions and the distribution of gender roles.

Following the onset of a comprehensive Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, many Ukrainians left their homeland due to the escalating hostilities threatening their families and residences. Primarily, women with children were the first to depart, and subsequently, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine ratified the presidential decree for a general mobilization.

Calculating the exact number of refugees escaping the war in Ukraine proves challenging due to the multifaceted reasons prompting their departure. These encompass demolished housing, the looming threat of artillery strikes, crumbling infrastructure, and persistent power outages. In the context of what Mary Kaldor refers to as “*new wars*”, the peril to civilian populations pervades, extending beyond the frontline – the distinction between the battlefield and civilian areas has become blurred. (Kaldor, 2012, p. vi). Furthermore, favorable conditions for long-contemplated migration also contribute to the exodus, with changing circumstances offering grounds for potential return. Notably, following the de-occupation of the Kyiv, Kharkov, and Khereson regions, a portion of the population chose to return. Consequently, the figures about migrants remain in constant flux.

As of June 21, 2023, data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine indicates that 8,177,000 Ukrainians reside abroad (Кількість українців, 2023). Among the European Union nations, Poland emerges as the primary destination for Ukrainian migrants, with over 1,500,000 Ukrainian citizens residing there as of the early months of 2023. Concerning the countries at the center of this study’s media channels,

as of June 2023, the United Nations reports that Germany is home to 1,072,000 Ukrainian migrants, of whom 958,590 are registered under national protection programs. Lithuania, on the other hand, has a corresponding figure of 77,545 migrants, with 77,490 of them registered as such (Кількість українців, 2023).

Ella Libanova, the Director of the Ptoukha Institute of Demography and Social Research at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, points out that 70% of Ukrainian women refugees from the war hold higher education degrees. This sets them apart from earlier waves of Ukrainian labor migrants who sought temporary, unskilled, and low-paying employment abroad. As the full-scale invasion began, the educated, proactive, and self-assured women left, and they are positively reshaping the perception of Ukrainians in Europe (Лібанова, 2023).

Media-communities, often described as “the “undirected” being-together” (M. Maffesoli), were replicated by Ukrainian women during their immigration to other European countries, notably Germany and Lithuania, following the outbreak of the war. These communities served as a means to provide support, primarily on a psychological level but also socially and, at times, even to individuals uprooted from their familiar social networks.

The paper provides a quantitative analysis of data from media channels utilized by Ukrainian migrants, which either underwent substantial changes (Lithuania) or were established anew (Germany) in response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Consequently, the study’s time frame is defined by these circumstances. The research questions for the quantitative analysis are formulated as follows: 1) What is the gender composition of participants within each channel? 2) Which themes are most frequently addressed in each channel? 3) Is there a correlation between the frequency of theme engagement and the gender representation of participants in the channel?

The concept units to be coded include gender positioning, primarily based on the avatar image but also influenced by the name’s wording. A list of the most frequently addressed themes (codes) and the methods used to organize these prominent themes (categories) will be examined.

Table 1. Elaboration of the coding scheme

№	Category	Codes
	gender	female 0; male 1; undetermined 2
1	Physical well-being	requests to find a doctor 0, beauty 1, asking for help finding drugs 2, pharmacology students survey 3, photoshoots advertising 4, sport 5

2	Civil well-being	buying/selling goods 0, advertising of personal private business 1, logistics 2, job offer 3, charitable distribution of things 4, household services 5, cleaning 6, babysitting services 7, housing search 8, buying and selling cars 9, Search for volunteers for humanitarian aid 10, money exchange 11, Information about found documents 12, request for a lawyer 13, fortune teller/witch 14, pet 15, feedback on the help provided by community members 16, Document processing, consular appointment 17, details of law 18
3	Cultural well-being	education 0, Activities for children 1, assistance in organizing a children's Ukrainian refugees choreographic circle 2, "a student for a week" from EHU "Media and Communications" 3, speaking club, translations, language programs 4, book clubs, search for the purchase of books in Ukrainian and Russian, book crossing 5, cultural pastime 6, requests for communication 7, administrator (and not only) posts concerning communication, the beauty of nature, favorite films information, life-affirming stories 8, active rest, cycling 9, spouse proposal public services 10, request for information on policy towards Ukrainians 11, psychologist 12, information how to help Ukraine 13, Ideological-patriotic events 14, Information about the Embroidery Day 15, Where to buy Ukrainian symbols 16, Easter production industry 17

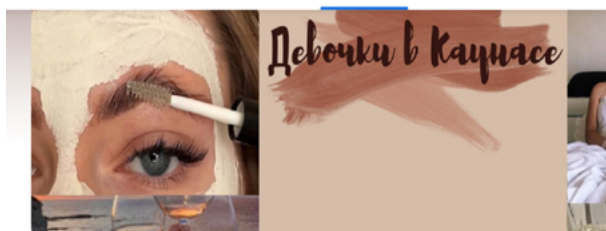
Lithuanian case

With 77,545 Ukrainians residing in Lithuania, this figure may appear modest when considered in absolute terms. However, when contextualized within the framework of Lithuania's 2023 population, which stands at 2,860,000, the Ukrainians who have chosen Lithuania as their new home constitute a noteworthy 2.7% of the total population. This percentage ranks Lithuania among the leading countries regarding Ukrainian refugee acceptance since the onset of the invasion.

Ukrainians contribute a distinctive flavor to the ambiance of Lithuanian cities, effectively influencing this relatively small nation's cultural, linguistic, and demographic tapestry. Monitoring these real-time transformations proves to be a complex task. Nonetheless, various tools can facilitate tracking these evolving patterns, even though they may not provide precise numerical data.

For example, Ukrainians who have settled in Kaunas actively utilize Facebook to communicate. On the Facebook platform, several groups have been established, such as "Українці в Каунасі" / "Українці

в Каунасе” (with 3,500 participants), “Ukrainiečiai Kaune – Украинцы в Каунасе” (boasting 15,800 participants), and “Украинцы в Литве” (comprising 16,000 members). Additionally, there is a group named “Девочки в Каунасе” / “Girls in Kaunas” (Fig. 1) with 3,187 participants.



Девочки в Каунасе 🇷🇺🇺🇸

Figure 1. Female channel *Girls in Kaunas*

The primary focus of this study centers on the “Girls in Kaunas” group. Established in September 2021 by a female student who arrived in Kaunas for her studies, the group’s founder articulated its purpose as follows: “The group was created exclusively for women to engage in discussions about pertinent women’s issues, provide mutual assistance in locating manicure professionals, offer recommendations on shopping destinations, and suggest places to visit. Additionally, it serves as a platform for organizing gatherings at local cafes for group members”. (Fig. 2).

Информация

Всем привет!)

эта группа создана только для девочек,девушек,женщин



чтобы обсуждать насущные женские вопросы,а также помогать друг-другу с поиском мастеров по маникюру или где что можно купить,куда пойти.А также можно будет даже устраивать посиделки в кафе на участников группы 🇷🇺 **Меньше**



Закрытая

Только участники группы видят, кто в ней состоит и что публикуется.



Видимая

Кто угодно может найти группу.



Может включать помеченный контент

Администраторы могут оставлять некоторые публикации и комментарии в группе, даже если они помечены системами Facebook. **Подробнее**

Подробнее

Figure 2. The founder articulates the purpose of the channel *Girls in Kaunas*

Initially, the group predominantly comprised Belarusians who fled their country in the aftermath of the political crisis in 2020. A post from a member on the eve of the invasion, dated February 23, 2022, expressed concern about the group's size, which stood at 300 participants at that time (Fig.3). However, after 1 year and 2 months of conflict, the group's membership swelled to 3,200 participants (as of April 27, 2023, the count was 3,187). These individuals are women, mostly Ukrainian women, who sought refuge in Kaunas due to the war. Throughout the war period, from February 24, 2022, to April 27, 2023, 1,590 messages were posted within the group.



Figure 3. Concern about the size of the group *Girl in Kaunas*, February 23,2022

Table 2. Data Decoding. Lithuania

well-being	codes	number of posts
Physical	beauty (1), searches and offers: eyelash and hair extension, hairdresser, search for beauty services, advertising and reviews of salons, training in beauty services, sports training, massages, body care	573
	nail service	110
	requests to find a doctor (0) (mainly gynecologist, mammologist, gastroenterologist, dentist)	77
	asking for help finding drugs (2)	4
	pharmacology students survey (3)	1
	photoshoots advertising (4)	35

Civil	buying/selling goods (0)	119
	advertising of personal private business (1)	113
	logistics (2) (transport to / from Ukraine, free places for a trip search / offer, parcels to / from Ukraine search / offer)	50
	job offer (3) (mainly in the service sector, most of all in the catering)	45
	charitable distribution of things (4) / request for essentials for free	34
	household services (5) (repair, construction, etc.)	51
	cleaning, maid (6) (offer and search)	5
	babysitting services (7) (offer and search)	8
	housing search (8)	42
	pets (15)	19
	buying and selling cars (9) / repairs / driving courses	10
	Search for volunteers for humanitarian aid (10)	6
	money exchange (11)	7
	Information about found documents (12)	2
	request for a lawyer (13)	4
	fortune teller/witch (14)	4
	feedback on the help provided by community members (16)	2
Cultural	education (0) (for children and adults, search/offer of tutors)	55
	activities for children, search and request for reviews about kindergartens (1)	7
	assistance in organizing a children's Ukrainian refugees choreographic circle (2)	2
	"a student for a week" from EHU "Media and Communications" (3)	4
	speaking club, translations, language programs (especially learning Lithuanian) (4)	29
	book clubs (5), search for the purchase of books in Ukrainian and Russian, book crossing	14
	cultural pastime in Kaunas (6)	31
	requests for communication (7) (mark that they are Ukrainians, talk about their hobbies and find friends for walks/leisure)	24
	administrator (and not only) posts concerning communication (8), the beauty of nature, favorite films information, life-affirming stories	18
	active rest, cycling (9)	5
	spouse proposal (10)(the girl writes that she wants to acquaint Lithuanian guy with the girl from the group to create a family)	1
	Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine public services (registration, migration documents, passports for Ukrainians, registration / dissolution of marriage of Ukrainians abroad)	22

Cultural	request for information on Lithuanian policy towards Ukrainians (11)	19
	psychologist (12)	22
	information how to help Ukraine (13), weaving textiles into camouflage nets, producing “trench candles” for troops from tin cans	11
	Ideological-patriotic events (14)	4
	Information about the Embroidery Day (15)	1
	Where to buy Ukrainian symbols? (16)	2
	Easter production industry (17)	5

After Ukrainian refugees entered the group, the content of the posts changed in a specific way. Having survived a terrible event and having received the experience of war, women are trying to preserve the signs of the former normal way of life, grasping for normality in significant moments.

In the realm of physical well-being, the beauty self-care code takes precedence. A substantial 44% of posts revolve around various topics such as eyelash and hair extensions, hairdressing services, beauty service inquiries, salon advertisements, customer reviews, beauty service training, sports coaching, massages, and body care.

On one hand, the beauty industry is a defining facet of contemporary bodily practices, emphasizing the veneration of youth and the tools for maintaining a youthful lifestyle. (Eriksen, 2001). On the other hand, it serves as a quintessential example of preserving tradition in an ever-evolving world while simultaneously signaling one’s financial and emotional well-being. This trend, evident here, mirrors a broader pattern seen across various themes within the group, highlighting the remarkable entrepreneurial spirit of Ukrainian women. They actively participate in the small business landscape, functioning as independent entrepreneurs. Notably, in addition to offerings from beauty salons, hairdressers, and fitness studios, a significant portion of proposals originate from self-employed women who are prepared to accommodate clients either at their homes or at the clients’ chosen locations.

The second most crucial theme for migrants is the quest to find a doctor, primarily emphasizing gynecologists, mammalogsists, gastroenterologists, and dentists. Predominantly, female doctors are sought after. An essential criterion for choosing a doctor is often language proficiency, ensuring effective communication and mutual understanding between the patient and the healthcare provider.

Another prevalent theme revolves around asking for help finding drugs/medicine. This pertains to the search for commonly available medications in Ukrainian pharmacies that are a staple in Ukrainian households but become problematic when urgently needed abroad. Additionally, there is a quest for specific prescription medications that

are only obtainable through specialized doctors abroad, which can be challenging due to limited access.

In civil well-being, the theme of buying/selling goods is a clear indicator of everyday life. Within this context, the entrepreneurial spirit of Ukrainians is prominently displayed through activities such as reselling goods, culinary endeavors, clothing craft production, and more. It's noteworthy to highlight the community's allowance for personal business advertisements (Fig. 4).

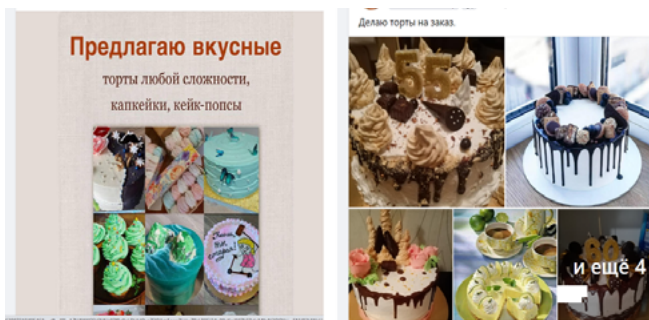


Figure 4. Personal business advertisements

Another noteworthy theme concerns logistics. There is a prevalent offering of available car seats and minibusses for travel to and from Ukraine. Requests for transporting belongings to refugees from Ukraine were quite common, but there were also requests for transporting items to Ukraine.

Within the array of choices about civilian well-being, job offers stand out prominently, particularly in the service sector, public catering (cafes, fast food establishments), and the field of repairs. Additionally, the group frequently features requests and offers related to domestic help, including maid and babysitting services.

The theme of charitable distribution of things/requests for essentials for free emerged in the spring of 2022 during the massive influx of refugees. These refugees often arrived with only the most critical belongings and reached out to the group seeking assistance with essential items. Simultaneously, those who had already begun establishing themselves in new locations offered possessions vital to newcomers as they settled in. However, this theme gradually faded away by the end of autumn 2022.

In the accommodation search theme, comments from those who have already arrived are worth noting, indicating that locals are hesitant to rent housing to Ukrainians. This observation might be the sole testament to tensions between newcomers and the indigenous population.

It is worth noting that, following the traumatic experience of war, Ukrainian women actively advocate for the topic of pets on social networks. There are numerous offers to either adopt or give away cats,

rabbits, puppies, and other animals into caring hands. Additionally, the “Girls in Kaunas” group includes information related to found documents, requests for legal assistance from lawyers and notaries, and inquiries about fortune tellers and witches.

Cultural well-being reflects the spiritual essence of daily life, encompassing cultural needs and how they are fulfilled. Primarily, this refers to pursuing educational opportunities for both children and adults. (Fig. 5). This includes actively searching for advice on schools, kindergartens, and tutors for various academic subjects. Additionally, there is a demand for instructors proficient in the Lithuanian language, catering to children and adults. Notably, there is a notable emphasis on finding conversation clubs and reading groups, underscoring the importance of intellectual engagement.

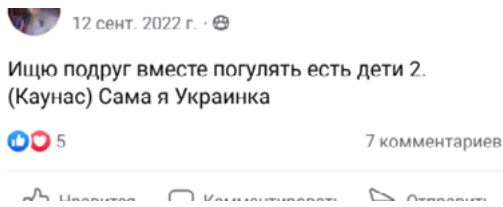


Figure 5. Educational opportunities. Student for a week

Furthermore, there is a desire to exchange books, encompassing purchases and sales and bookcrossing initiatives. Likewise, there is an active pursuit of social connections, including opportunities for women to meet one another and form friendships, often centered around gatherings or playdates involving their children (Fig. 6). The overarching theme is the need for social interaction through leisurely walks, events, or cultural venues such as concerts and theaters. It is worth mentioning that many individuals identify themselves as Ukrainians and share their hobbies as a way to connect with potential friends for social activities.



Figure 6. Call for social connections

These requests may vary in specifics, but they underscore the importance of comfortable adaptation within a new cultural environment and the desire to create a culturally and spiritually enriching experience in a foreign culture.

Information regarding Lithuania's policies towards Ukrainians should be provided. Additionally, it is important to highlight the availability of public services in Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine, including services related to registration, migration documents, and passports for Ukrainians. Furthermore, services related to the registration and dissolution of marriages abroad are worth mentioning. Finally, the availability of psychological services should also be emphasized.

Within the group, calls for humanitarian aid to Ukraine and invitations to engage in activities such as weaving nets, crafting trench candles, and participating in ideological-patriotic events (Fig. 7) are not frequently encountered, but they do receive support. This option also encompasses information about events like Embroidery Day, as well as inquiries and offers related to the production of traditional Ukrainian clothing, the availability of Ukrainian cuisine for order, and the broader Easter-related production industry.

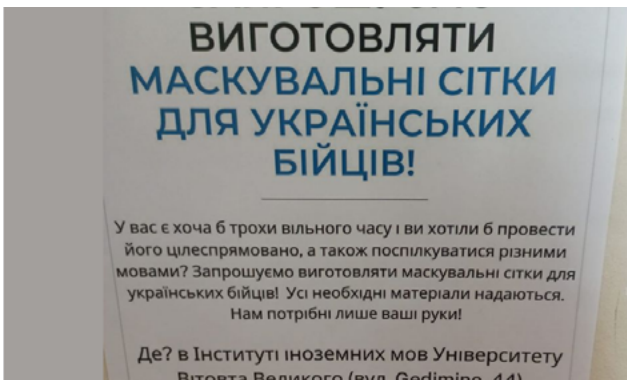


Figure 7. The ideological and patriotic events in Lithuania

In concluding the content analysis of the group's data, it is pertinent to note the availability of rules of communication surveys for the media community. These elements serve as evidence of a sort of grassroots democracy at a pre-political level, representing a means of structuring a non-political social sphere in which the social aspects are construed in a broader context than the political realm (Pavlova & Rohozha, 2023, p. 256-258).

German case

Nearly 1 million Ukrainians have chosen to reside in Germany as of 2023 (Кількість українців, 2023). The ongoing crises and radical shifts

in the social landscape have led to the intensified formation of trust networks within the media sphere. However, the self-organizing structures within media communities of Ukrainian migrant women continue to mirror domestic traits, such as gender and territorial affiliations. Examples include groups like “Moms of Berlin” (on Viber), “Ukraine’s Mamas in Berlin” (Fig. 8), “Kholodenko Germany” (on Telegram) (Fig. 9). The latter group, “Kholodenko Germany”, is the subject of our content analysis.

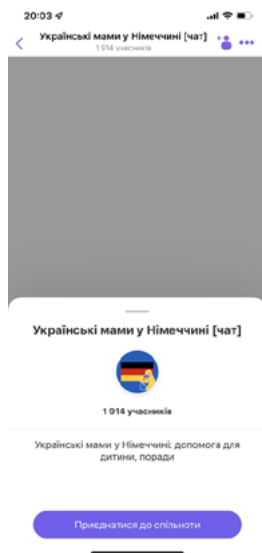


Figure 8. Female channels in Germany. *Ukraine’s Mamas in Berlin.*

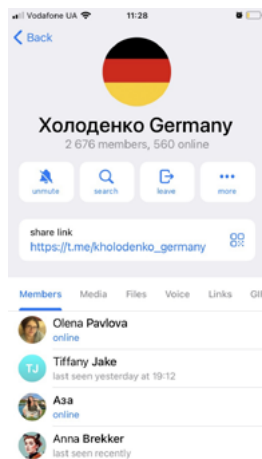


Figure 9. Female channels in Germany. *Kholodenko Germany*

Natalia Kholodenko is a renowned psychologist in Ukraine, known for her presence across various media platforms: Facebook boasts

917,000 followers, while her Instagram has 511,000 followers, TikTok garners 429,000 subscribers, YouTube boasts 333,000 subscribers, and her Telegram channel has 53,000 followers. She established her media resources, including the Telegram channel “Natalia Kholodenko” even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with the latter channel boasting the largest number of participants.

As the war began, Natalia Kholodenko adapted her channels to address the evolving needs: she introduced a thematic channel, “KHOLODENKO HELP CH”, with over 3,000 subscribers, dedicated to assisting those affected by the conflict. Additionally, she launched two territorial channels, one focused on Poland (“Kholodenko Poland” with nearly 2,000 subscribers) and another on Germany” – (“Kholodenko Germany” with 2,790 subscribers). It is essential to note that “sharing the same territory (real or symbolic)” (Maffesoli, 1996, p. 16). is key to understanding the functioning of these Ukrainian migration channels.

Table 3. Data Decoding. Germany

well-being	codes	sex		
		F (0)	M (1)	Un (2)
Physical	requests to find a doctor (0) (mainly gynecologist, ophthalmologist, dentist, orthodontist)	4347	-	6
	beauty (1) , searches and offers: nails, eyelash and hair extension, hairdresser, search for beauty services, advertising and reviews of salons, training in beauty services, sports training, massages, body care	3935	-	3
	sport (5)	845	6	-
Civil	Document processing, consular appointment (17)	9393	402	5
	details of law (18)	4614	762	7
	logistics (2) (transportation in Germany, transport transport to / from Ukraine, freight transportation, Deutsche ticket)	2766	2079	4
	housing search (8)	2731	91	5
	buying/selling goods (0)	806	17	6
	job offer (3) (mainly in the service sector, most of all in the catering)	631	43	4
	pets (15)	294	-	-
	feedback on the help provided by community members (16)	6793	402	44
Cultural	language courses (4)	1042	57	1
	psychological trainings (12)	805	19	-
	activities for children (1)	757	7	-
	Ideological-patriotic events (14) (money collection, stand with Ukraine, heroes' memorial, a proposal to get together for a celebration)	533	3	2

In German media community, certain themes are dedicated to extraordinary cases, ranging from the destruction of the Kachovka hydro-electro station (Fig. 10) to less severe incidents, such as the “Deutscher Ticket” (Fig. 11) case.

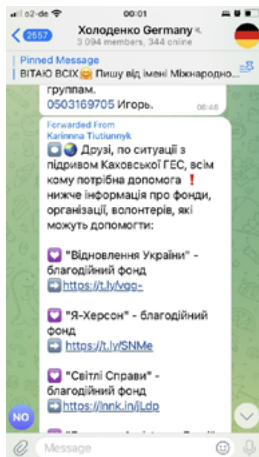


Figure 10. The message concerning the Kachovka hydro-electro station.

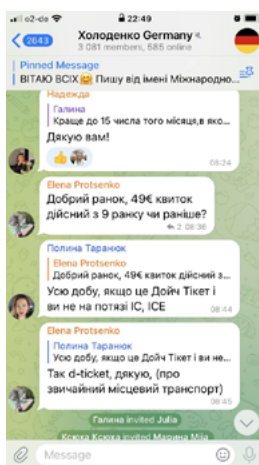


Figure 11. The message concerning “Deutscher Ticket”

The channel also features a set of recurring themes that, despite their diverse wording, can be systematically classified into nine positions. The three most prominent themes can be summarized as follows: Document processing and consular appointments, with a total of 9,795 messages; discussions related to German law, totaling 5,376 messages; and inquiries regarding the location of a doctor, comprising 4,347 messages.

These indicators highlight a relatively consistent set of challenges and requirements among Ukrainian migrants in Germany,

demonstrating their similarity to the circumstances faced by the Lithuanian community.

The German channel notably includes male participants (unlike the Lithuanian Facebook community, initially positioned itself exclusively for females), allowing for observing gender-related variations in the topics discussed. It is apparent that men tend to be most active: in certain themes, particularly logistics, German legal details, document processing, and consular appointments — themes typically associated with traditional male involvement and civic significance.

Conversely, there are specific topics in which men either did not participate or had minimal involvement, such as inquiries about finding a doctor, discussions about beauty, topics concerning pets, activities for children, and discussions surrounding ideological and patriotic events (Fig. 12). It can be inferred that these observations do not necessarily signify the absence of health issues or the absence of child-oriented activities, but rather highlight the persistence of gender-role-related discussion themes. Topics with undefined gender associations carry no significant quantitative significance.

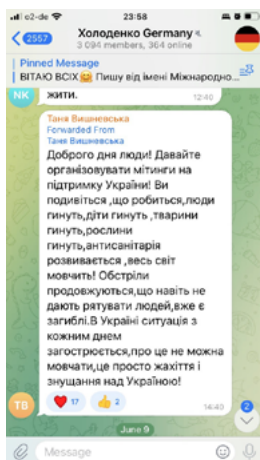


Figure 12. The ideological and patriotic events in Germany

Results of quantitative analysis

Upon initial inspection, it is evident that there are variances in the core themes conveyed through the Lithuanian and German versions of the media channel. Certain themes are exclusive to either Lithuania (e.g., physical well-being 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14) or Germany (5). In our perspective, the absence of an extensive theme list for additional indicators does not necessarily imply a lack of interest in these topics in Germany; rather, it suggests the existence of more specialized channels (“Новини Німеччина DE”, “Перевезення Україна — Німеччина”, “Моя Німеччина. Мій Берлін”, “НІМЕЧЧИНА ВИПЛАТИ”, “РОБОТА

НІМЕЧЧИНА DE”, total according to *telemetrio* – 43 telegram channels by tag *Німецчина*).

The quantity of messages and their hierarchical arrangement of quantitative indicators exhibit significant differences. Nevertheless, most themes address everyday migrant issues, sharing a similar structure to Lithuanian levels, albeit with variations. Specifically, the following codes are shared: Physical – 0, 1; Civil – 0, 2, 3, 8, 15, 16. The latter set of codes can be attributed to the unique context in Germany, which encompasses a broader array of social programs designed to aid refugees. Additionally, a third level pertains to cultural needs – 2, 4, 12, 14. These levels warrant further examination.

Organizing the content into well-being categories enables us to discern the manifestations of gender-related activities among Ukrainian migrants. Notably, in Germany, men tend to engage more in civil themes. The logistics theme is equally represented in post numbers across gender roles, with women (F – 2,766) and men (M – 2,079) participating in almost equal measures. This balance can be attributed to the fact that a substantial portion of Ukrainian men in media communities relocated before the onset of the war, and they were typically associated with less skilled labor forms, which were prevalent in migration during that period. Conversely, women who migrated after the full-scale invasion tend to have higher levels of education, leading them to predominantly assume the role of consumers within this category. Nevertheless, their overall activity still surpasses that of men.

In other categories, where the male presence is not substantial but still discernible, they pertain to civil well-being. Specifically, details concerning German law-garner 762, posts, while matters related to document processing, and consular appointments-account for 402 posts. Conversely, in the domains of physical well-being (with a sole exception being sports – 6) and cultural well-being (inclusive of language courses – 57, and psychological trainings – 19), male participation is minimal, if not absent. This gender-specific engagement in these categories is markedly lower than observed among women and men in the civic sphere.

A consistent trend in the construction of graphospheres within both media channels is the prevalence of consumer requests. These requests, typically seeking recommendations or services, are predominantly conveyed in textual form, while service offerings are typically presented in images. This pattern held for both the Lithuanian and German channels. Consequently, the prevalence of text messages is evident, with the German channel featuring 318 photo images during the specified period, in contrast to an average of 43 text messages daily. This prevalence of text messages underscores the greater emphasis on formulating requests instead of offering services.

The exploration of such media communities necessitates a comprehension of the unique dynamics of digital textuality. Roger Chartier emphasized that “the world of electronic communication is a world of

textual abundance in which the written texts that are offered go far beyond the reader's ability to take advantage of them" (Chartier, 2004, p. 139). Without understanding the intricacies of this surplus of digital text in the contemporary digital landscape, the study of the contemporary human world becomes an insurmountable challenge.

Media representations of Ukrainian migrant women: structure and shifts

1. The content of these messages supports the current trend toward the differentiation of human well-being and the resulting division of labor. Through content analysis of these media channels, we can track the transformations in the daily lives of Ukrainian migrant women and the "distinction between private and public use of reason" (I. Kant). Media practice researcher Almira Usmanova suggested that post-Soviet people have adapted to the new communication realities even faster: "Is it possible to argue that the triumphantly rapid development of new technologies in the post-Soviet space was also possible because former Soviet citizens turned out to be more adaptable to this new regime of "transparency"?" (Усманова, 2009, с. 91).

In the Enlightenment era, according to Michel Foucault, the notion of "a cog in the machine" was evident in how experts and books replaced our understanding. In the digital text era, this role is primarily taken on by a "deliberative sense of community" (J. Bessette). The vectors of the Early and Late Modernity in the common structure of the spheres of well-being are preserved:

"According to reason (that is, objectively), the following order exists among the incentives *that the government can use to achieve its end* (of influencing the people): •first comes the eternal well-being of each, •then his civil well-being as a member of society, •and finally his physical well-being (a long life and health)" (Kant, 1979, p. 31).

Consideration should be given to the shift in the content of Kant's concept of well-being. For instance, what was once eternal well-being has now transformed into more secular needs, including cultural pursuits such as scientific projects or psychological seminars. "The free play of reason" signifies an increase in secularity and forms the foundation for a "deliberative sense of community". The latter is constructed not in the "communicative rationality" (J. Habermas), but "reasonable disagreement" (J. Rawls). This "fact of disagreement" represents an elusive consensus on incompatible values and common decision-making models for the media community's well-being.

2. Data from media channels can illustrate Roger Chartier's thesis: digital text merges the private act of reading with the collective sharing of reactions. In digital text, no textual totality from which a fragment

is extracted exists. Consequently, the way women engage within the media community is more aligned with electronic text genres due to the inherent characteristics of discourse practices: non-linearity, inclusivity, networking, horizontality, and the absence of hierarchy.

3. The Internet provides an additional space for social interactions, fostering existing relationships and creating new relationships. Online communities on social media can be seen as *weak ties* within a society, where geographically dispersed individuals come together to discuss and engage in specialized topics. This concept aligns with Robert Putnam's classic idea of social capital as "a network of mutual social relations" (Putnam, 2000, p. 20–21). Social capital comes in two forms: bonding capital, characterized by close-knit group ties among members, and bridging capital, characterized by outwardly directed associative ties among members. Consequently, Miki Kittilson concludes that online communities built on bonding relationships strengthen interpersonal connections among their members, while those built on bridging relationships expand the social circles of their members, often reaching out to strangers in the online sphere (Kittilson & Dalton, 2010).

4. Media communities among Ukrainian migrants represent a distinctive type of community. Within such a community, communication facilitates transitions from the virtual dimension in two ways: a) towards personal interaction, where personal messages help clarify the details of online posts, and b) towards offline interactions. In today's world, the prevalence of virtual communication is not surprising. However, the shift towards offline communication offers hope for the resurgence of traditional social interactions in a new context. An important development is that offline communication is increasingly becoming an outgrowth of online communication. This trend is particularly pronounced within Ukrainian migration, where changing life circumstances for many individuals have resulted in the primary means of establishing new connections being through media communities.

5. In terms of topics and territorial references, *vernacular writing on the Web* and perhaps most noticeably, gender roles, replicate the practices of non-institutionalized, informal interactions reminiscent of traditional forms of communication outside the media community. A stable idiom in the Ukrainian language УБК — *усі баби кажуть*, *word of mouth*, clearly captures the gendered character of everyday communication, which is evident in these media channels.

6. Visual ethnography actively explores methods to examine media communities' digital landscape, focusing on parenting and motherhood themes. These topics are no longer confined to purely private affairs, thanks to social media:

"Within a wider sociocultural context, where the media sets the parameters of acceptable femininity, motherhood becomes a site of

moral and interactional “trouble”. Parenting increasingly occurs in the public arena in contemporary society; however, the everyday spaces of parenthood retain their invisibility. This interplay between invisibility, periodic visibility, and stigmatizing highly visible representation has been documented in previous studies” (Mannay et al., 2018).

Forced migration has played a significant role in reshaping typical women’s activities. They have found themselves unable to address their problems using the traditional methods of relying on relatives, neighbors, or established institutional structures that parents have utilized in the past. An example is a war refugee from Kyiv, a skilled migrant (born in the 1970s, who shares her concerns while in Germany. These concerns encompass bureaucratic hurdles, housing, difficulties, separation from her husband, language barriers, the possibility of a safe return home, access to medical care, high store prices, expensive cigarettes, limited job opportunities, costly services such as manicures and massages, expensive, translations, undisclosed benefits, and the challenge of finding time to study the language while working. Therefore, the support provided by a network of advice and discussions with people in similar situations is invaluable. The data from these channels predominantly reflect the experiences of women: “Turning to empirical benefit, Dawn Mannay demonstrates how visual methods can be a tool for accessing difficult-to-see aspects of parenting” (Scott, 2018).

Exploring such data offers empirical advantages, as another visual ethnography researcher highlights.

7. Men contribute significantly to the volume of messages in civil well-being, particularly within fields of activity characteristic of the division of labor in society of Modernity, such as law, and freight transportation. However, in themes related to physical well-being and cultural pursuits, men have shown limited involvement, either playing a minor role in job search and language courses) or not participating in topics such as finding doctors, pet-related discussions, children’s activities, and offline meeting offers.

8. The prevailing themes in *vernacular writing on the Web* often illustrate the shift from producing tangible “products to services” (Gawe, 2009), reflecting the emergence of the platform economy and the concept of immaterial labor, which arises from the blurred boundaries between production and consumption:

“If the product is defined through the intervention of the consumer, and is therefore in permanent evolution, it becomes always more difficult to define the norms of the production of services and establish an ‘objective’ measure of productivity” (Lazzarato, 1996).

The de-differentiation between production and consumption becomes more pronounced within migrant media communities. These communities assimilate into new social landscapes by leveraging their

communication networks and adeptness at navigating them. Women, forced to seek refuge from war and adapt to new employment opportunities and orientations, gradually immerse themselves in their host country's cultural and societal dynamics. They do so not in an immediate manner but through a more adaptable approach. They adjust their production and consumption in skills within media networks shared with their compatriots.

9. Ukrainian migrant women have achieved greater success in their job search endeavors in foreign countries than their male compatriots, primarily due to their adeptness at adapting to media communities characterized by immaterial labor. These women can quickly establish and maintain media communities in new territories and under altered life circumstances. Simultaneously, these forms of psychological support are essential for them, as they help maintain emotional equilibrium within immaterial labor. These communities aren't merely personal networks but serve as mechanisms for fostering a sense of belonging and community. In the current wave of Ukrainian migration, women are more prominently represented, not only in terms of quantity but also as active participants within media communities. This heightened presence translates into increased engagement in various forms of socialization.

10. Pooling emotional reactions within media communities and providing economic support represent two novel methods for sustaining a sense of equilibrium, particularly crucial in the face of sudden and drastic changes in circumstances. The challenges faced by Ukrainians undergoing forced migration are so daunting that many find it unbearable and are compelled to return to war-torn territories, once more subjecting themselves and their children into danger and hardship. This is why media communities are important for adapting to Ukrainian immigration, which predominantly has a *female face*.

11. To comprehend the intricacies of communication within media communities among Ukrainian migrants, it is necessary to record what they are *silent about*. Quantifying this silence can be challenging, relying on interviews with migrants or their Ukrainian contacts. Libanova rightly notes that each migrant has a unique circle of connections, making interview data diverse and limiting our understanding of the issue's scale. (Лібанова, 2023). However, objectivity demands acknowledging that many Ukrainian women who relocate abroad intentionally sever their former social ties in Ukraine. Upon settling in a new country, they often discontinue communication with former colleagues, neighbors, and sometimes even relatives. This behavior may stem from a psychological desire to detach from the past, facilitating faster assimilation into the new environment.

12. Additionally, they may prefer not to have friends and relatives intrude on their fresh start in a new place. The issue of divorce is closely linked to this phenomenon. A practicing psychologist, born in the 1990s, who works with Ukrainian men whose wives have left Ukraine

as refugees reports that these men often find temporary female partners in Ukraine, eventually evolving into more permanent relationships without formalizing the union. While no official statistical data exists on this matter, Libanova highlights increased family relationship breakups due to women's departure abroad (Лібанова 2023). Migrant women, on the one hand, initiate new relationships, often without formal registration, and on the other hand, finding themselves without their husbands' support, rely more on the strength of their connections within media communities and support from virtual friends.

Conclusions

Social media can be regarded as a postmodern de-differentiation of public and private spaces, while media communities can be perceived as adapted entities that now fulfill various vital social and cultural roles in the context of modernity. One such role pertains to addressing the issue of migrants, particularly Ukrainian refugees fleeing from war. Women who find themselves in forced migration situations offer each other both economic and psychological support, connecting through these media communities. In doing so, they become integrated into their new homeland not solely as individuals, but as members of these online communities, carrying the loosely-knit bonds of their digital homeland communities to new countries.

Most themes covered by media channels focus on the everyday challenges faced by migrants, which can be examined from three distinct dimensions in both Lithuania and Germany: physical, civil, and cultural well-being. Across all these dimensions, women tend to be more actively engaged than men. It is worth noting that men participate with roughly similar intensity in civil well-being, although this is not consistently observed across all themes. The codified themes are categorized based on Kantian classifications of well-being and labor division.

The digital realm effectively transforms Kant's concept of labor division by substituting expert authority with a sense of deliberation within media communities. This shift in the interpretation of Kant's classification can be observed in two key aspects: 1) the secularization of cultural practices; and 2) the persistence of the overarching structure of modern well-being differentiation. In the physical and cultural spheres, there is a discernible trend toward the dominance of self-organized, immaterial forms of labor, in which women tend to be more actively involved.

Digital communication determines the derivative of *presence* (U. Humbrecht) practices but preserves the forms of female activity in vernacular communication, especially in the practices of *vernacular writing on the Web*.

The conversion of the private sphere's concealed everyday life into publicized data within social networks occurred through the fusion of text and images, a fundamental hallmark of *vernacular writing on the Web*, according to David Barton. Competence in reading and writing messages, recognizing themes, ways of updating them and developing ready-made answers to certain requests, the timing of messages, as well as the sequence of engaging text and image materials, and the ways of *intertwining them* were the ways of turning individual participants into a media community channel. Its members changed, but digital data networks – those ways of writing digital text (themes and timing of messages), *reading competencies* of its participants, and communication etiquette become something more than the participants themselves.

Proficiency in comprehending and composing messages, recognizing themes, methods of updating content, crafting pre-formulated responses to specific inquiries, the timing of messages, and the sequence of incorporating textual and visual materials played pivotal roles in transforming individual participants into conduits for media communities. While the composition of its members may change over time, the digital data networks – comprising the methods of composing digital text (including themes and message timing), the reading abilities of its participants, and communication etiquette – become something more enduring than the individual participants themselves.

This shift doesn't centralize the role of women in society; rather, it highlights a novel approach to crafting a community primarily comprised of women. This doesn't imply the exclusion of men from participating in the *deliberation sense of community* but underscores the increased level of women's engagement in these communal activities.

Examining migrant media channels holds significant importance because empirical data, particularly statistical data, is currently scarce. Authoritative institutional efforts to compile and generalize this limited data are lacking. Consequently, analyzing media society data offers a fresh perspective for studying and managing emigration situations in various countries. It is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the broader media community and specific media community functions. The analysis of digital content within these media communities enables us to refine the methodology for studying digitized society, focusing on fundamental units of analysis such as the number of participants, the distribution of gender roles, modes of self-identification and self-representation, themes, the style of "deliberation sense of community", the structure of basic needs and the well-being of the community, as well as the relationship between forms of material and immaterial labor.

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