



Understanding Shifting Risk Perceptions Among Ukrainian Refugees Resettled in the US: Implications for Hazard Awareness and Preparedness

Dr. Logan Gerber-Chavez

logan.gerberchavez@erau.edu

Dr. Iuliia Hoban

hobani@erau.edu

Introduction and Background

- After 2022 Russian Invasion millions of Ukrainians became refugees
- Over 50% of the new Ukrainian refugees in the US resettled in CA, WA, and OR
- West Coast of the US has a different hazard profile than Ukraine
- The ability of refugees to adapt to new landscapes of hazards following their resettlement to the host state is critical to acculturation and removing structural barriers for their (re)integration and economic mobility in a host state

With limited research that specifically focuses on the changing nature of risk among refugees and its implications on hazard awareness and disaster preparedness, we examined how perceptions of risk among refugee populations shift following their resettlement in the host country.

Pilot Study Sample

Interview

- 4 participants
- 100% female
- 75% have kids
- 25% have pets
- 100% with professional degrees

Survey

- 20 participants
- 85% female
- 45% have kids
- 35% have pets
- 95% with a 4-year degree or higher

Methodology

- Qualitative Surveys and Semi-Structured Interviews
 - Conducted in Ukrainian and English by participant preference
- Public Information Sessions to teach about hazards and preparedness
- Local community organization partnerships
- Sample – refugees who have resettled in the US since Feb 2022
- Questions – previous hazard awareness, preparedness, and experience, immigration decisions, current hazard awareness and preparedness, information sources in disaster
- PILOT STUDY – Seattle, WA; small sample

Pilot Study

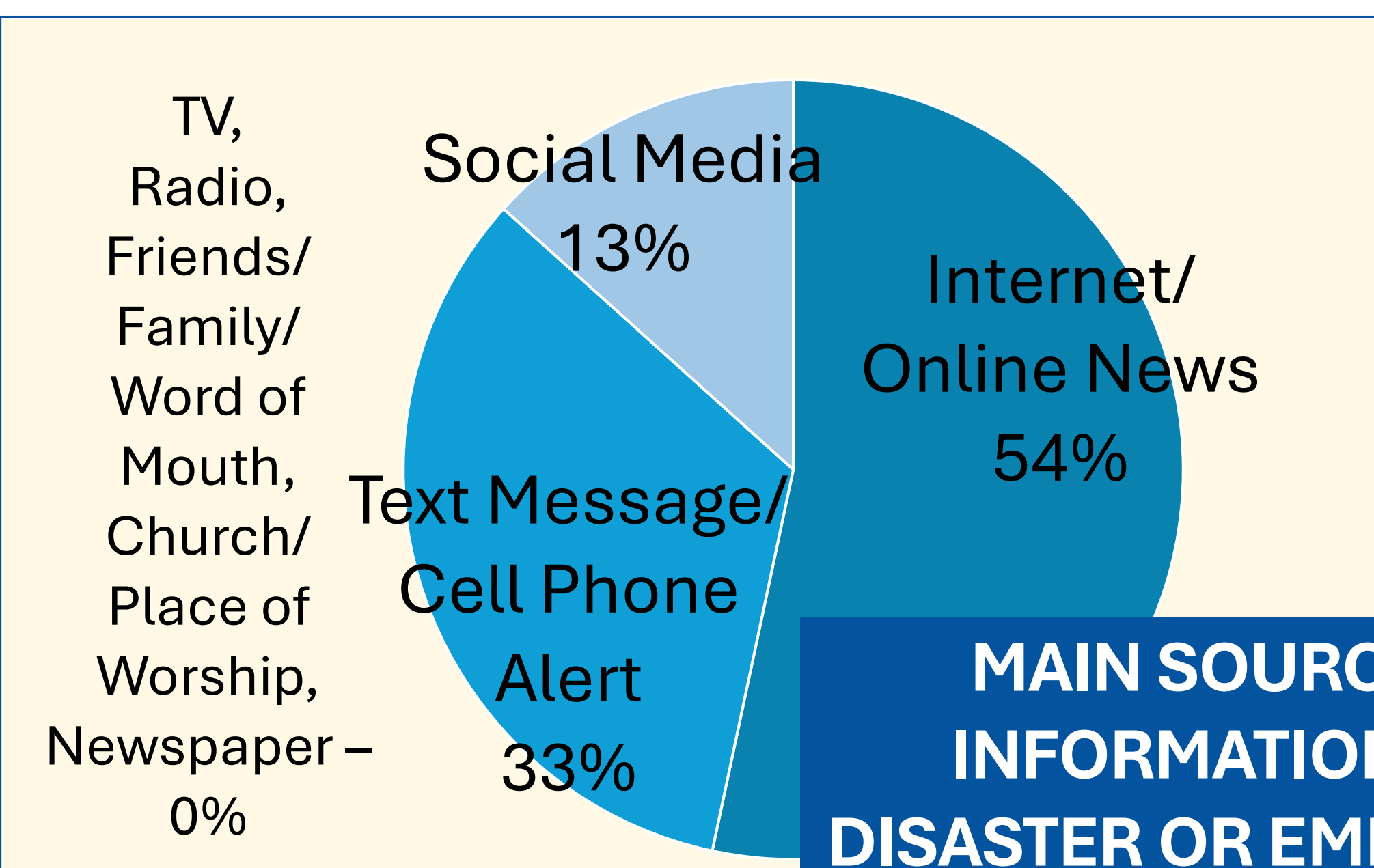
HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS	
Do you or your household have any of the following:	
Emergency communications plan	27%
Designated meeting place in neighborhood	20%
Designated meeting place outside neighborhood	7%
Copies of important documents in a safe location	40%
Multiple routes away from your home	20%
Evacuation supplies and first aid kit	53%
Shelter-in-place supplies	40%
3 days of drinking water	60%
3 days of non-perishable food	60%
7 day prescription supply	47%

Hazard	Concern	Experience
Blizzard/Snow/Ice Storm	17%	11%
Bridge/Road collapse	17%	11%
Civil Unrest/Riots	44%	33%
Drought	6%	6%
Earthquake	39%	22%
Epidemic/ Pandemic	28%	67%
Explosion	61%	44%
Extreme hot temperature	11%	33%
Extreme cold temperature	6%	11%
Flooding	17%	11%
Geomagnetic storm	6%	0%
Hazardous material spill	22%	6%
Hurricane/tropical storm	28%	17%
Landslide	17%	6%
Major transportation accident	28%	0%
Mass shooting/Violence	61%	28%
Mass power outage	28%	67%
Space debris	0%	0%
Terrorism	39%	28%
Tornado	22%	0%
Tsunami	11%	0%
Volcano	17%	0%
Wildfire	11%	17%
Windstorm	11%	22%
2+ Hazards Simultaneously	28%	17%
Other	0%	0%

HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS

Do you or your household have any of the following:

MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION IN A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY



Process Lessons Learned

- Integration of cultural humility practices
- Attentive listening, respect for lived experiences, and transparency about researcher positionality and research objectives is essential ^(1, 3)
- Refugees are “active survivors” and can be valuable participants in the research process ⁽²⁾
- Importance of language, terminology, and context
- Even within the same language understanding of terminology and hazard knowledge may be different
- Extensive time and commitment are required to foster and sustain community collaborations

Pilot Study Conclusions and Future Research

- Hazard concern doesn't match the profile of the new area – need for hazard education
- Hazard experience leaves gaps in protective action knowledge
- Generally good preparedness practices but need help with community orientation and awareness
- Need direction to official channels for disaster information

1. Abdi, Saida M., Alisa B. Miller, Naima Y. Agalab, and B. Heidi Ellis. 2022. “Partnering with Refugee Communities to Improve Mental Health Access: Going from ‘Why Are They Not Coming’ to ‘What Can I (We) Do Differently?’.” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 28 (3): 370–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000476>.

2. Alachkar, Mustafa. 2023. “The Lived Experiences of Resilience among Syrian Refugees in the UK: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.” *BJPsych Bulletin* 47 (3): 133–39. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjb.2022.16>.

3. Kia-Keating, Maryam, and Linda P. Juang. 2022. “Participatory Science as a Decolonizing Methodology: Leveraging Collective Knowledge from Partnerships with Refugee and Immigrant Communities.” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 28 (3): 299–305. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000514>.