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Andrzej DEMCZUK 

Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej

mr.andrzej.demczuk@gmail.com

IDEALIZED INFLUENCE OF PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

ABSTRACT

This article examines the leadership of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. It applies three features of Bernard M. Bass's concept of idealized influence of transformational leadership: high ethical conduct, collective sense of mission, and perception of confidence. The author considers the results of the analysis and explains why these findings are important. While the study covers the political-scientific analysis of President Zelensky's leadership, its particular novelty lies in the use of Bass's theory of transformational leadership, formulated on the basis of management and organization science.

Keywords: transformational leadership, Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine, high ethical conduct, collective sense of mission, perception of confidence, idealized influence

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has become an internationally recognized hero, leading his country's fight against a much greater Russian power. President Vladimir Putin, on the other hand, has been *denounced around the world for inflicting death, destruction, and displacement on millions of Ukrainians*.¹ Through the lens of war, the world sees two political leaders who exercise completely different leadership styles. While Zelensky's leadership influences and positively motivates millions around the globe to withstand the aggressor, Putin's actions do the opposite, leading to calls for retaliation. The public is astonished by the transformation of Zelensky from once a comedian to, arguably, one of today's most recognized and admired political leaders. The same audience is shocked to witness the unethical actions of President Putin, whose soldiers destroy Ukraine and commit war crimes against civilians.

The objective of this study is to demonstrate that the 'transformation' of President Zelensky is related to his possession of the three leadership features: high ethical conduct, a collective sense of mission, and a perception of confidence. In order to accomplish the goal, the author is going to apply Bernard A. Bass's transformational leadership model, specifically, one of its components: idealized influence, which consists of those three leadership characteristics. Research materials come from three main types of sources: interviews with members of the President's inner circle, scientific studies on leadership by presidential scholars, and written statements, opinions and press interviews of Zelensky's advisers, close associates, and people who have personally met him and interacted with him, including foreign leaders, journalists, and other officials.

BERNARD BASS'S NOTION OF IDEALIZED INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In 1985, Bernard M. Bass developed the theory of transformational leadership. According to the founder, *[t]ransformational leadership refers to a leader who encourages followers to act beyond their immediate interests through their idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual treatment. This increases the level of maturity of the followers and broadens their ideals, as well as arouses their interest in the achievements, self-realization, the well-being of others, organization and society*.² The recognition of the important role of a relationship between a leader and a follower is the specific focus of the transformational leadership. Transformational political leaders have charisma that encourages people to identify with them and emulate them. For example, both Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. represent the types of leaders whose transformational leadership inspired others to imitate them. That is also one of the reasons why both of them have been very effective leaders who were able to 'make

¹ C. Walsh, "Putin's Iron Fist vs. Zelensky's Moral Clarity," *The Harvard Gazette*, 7 March 2022, at <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/03/putins-iron-fist-vs-zelenskys-moral-clarity/>, 19 April 2022.

² B.M. Bass, R.E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, New York 2006, p. 25.

change' through their actions. In contrast, transactional leaders are those who lead because they are able to 'make a deal' and, for example, get votes in exchange for jobs. Transformational political leaders are those *who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity*.³ As a consequence, they gain the support of their followers, because their goals correspond to the followers' objectives. Moreover, the followers identify with the vision of transformational leaders and want to participate in their mission.

Idealized influence as one of the components of Bass's model of transformational leadership focuses on a leader's ethics, collectivism, and his/her determination to reach the desired goal. Studies indicate that leaders who possess idealized influence focus on actions that are aimed at collective interests rather than at individual ones and by doing so, they *heighten follower collective identity*.⁴ Political leaders who exert idealized influence make *personal sacrifices* for the sake of their nation and stress the sense of a mutual purpose. To illustrate the point, through their actions, leaders such as Lincoln and King encouraged followers to behave in ways that contributed to the collective good. The followers of Lincoln and King were able to see and feed off the leader's steadfast determination in achieving their desired goals. Accordingly, it can be argued that today's Zelensky's determination and courage, like yesterday's Lincoln or King, inspires and motivates his countrymen, while at the same time motivating people around the world to support the underdog Ukraine. A question that arises is: Would it be possible for President Zelensky to become a leader as he appears to be today, that is the one that inspires people to identify with him and emulate him, if he did not possess these three features of the idealized influence of transformational leadership? Studies indicate that these characteristics are the most important leadership attributes.⁵ While the relative importance of these attributes may be debated by scholars, many agree that high ethical standards are at the top of the scale of leadership competencies.⁶

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY AND HIGH ETHICAL CONDUCT

Some officials who have had a chance to meet and personally speak with Zelensky, e.g., as Marie Louise "Masha" Yovanovitch, the former US Ambassador to Ukraine (2016-2019), believe *there is a pre-invasion Zelensky and a post-invasion Zelensky*.⁷ The

³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴ A. Zdaniuk, D.R. Bobocel, "The Role of Idealized Influence Leadership in Promoting Workplace Forgiveness," *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 5 (2015), pp. 863-877.

⁵ S. Giles, "The Most Important Leadership Competencies, According to Leaders around the World," *Harvard Business Review*, 15 March 2016, at <https://hbr.org/2016/03/the-most-important-leadership-competencies-according-to-leaders-around-the-world>, 13 April 2022.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ D. Remnick, "The Ambassador Caught between Ukraine and Trump," *The New Yorker*, 1 March 2022, at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-ambassador-caught-between-ukraine-and-trump>, 14 April 2022.

difference is founded on the way President Zelensky has carried himself since the invasion. First and foremost, the international community was amazed to see that faced with the war, the president and his family did not flee abroad, but decided to stay in Ukraine and lead his countrymen to fight the Russian invader. Second, what astonished all was not only how effectively President Zelensky has been motivating the Ukrainian people to withstand a much bigger and stronger Russian military, but also the way *the Jewish former comic actor, whom Putin grotesquely accuses of heading a 'Nazi' government*⁸ with little experience in politics, has unexpectedly emerged as a compelling war leader. From the beginning of what President Putin falsely called a *special military operation*⁹ President Zelensky has united the international community to stand behind Ukraine and effectively encouraged world leaders to impose tough economic sanctions on Russia and requested much needed military assistance. None of President Zelensky's heroic actions would have occurred if his character had lacked integrity and courage. After all, according to Stanley A. Renshon, *[c]haracter integrity lies at the core of presidential performance*.¹⁰

Various people, from journalists and politicians to the heads of international organizations and world leaders, who have had the opportunity to meet with President Zelensky in person confirm his extreme heroism. For example, Roberta Metsola, the president of the European Parliament, said that she *saw courage and resilience in Volodymyr Zelenskyy's eyes on her visit to Kyiv*.¹¹ Journalists Anne Applebaum and Jeffrey Goldberg describe Zelensky as *deliberately unpretentious (...) Zelensky inspires sympathy and trust precisely because, as a Ukrainian acquaintance says, he is like all of us. He is like an anti-Putin – without his cold, lethal superiority*.¹² After a surprise visit to Kyiv, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: *It is because of President Zelensky's resolute leadership and the invincible heroism and courage of the Ukrainian people that Putin's monstrous aims are being thwarted*.¹³

Indeed, trustworthiness and courage are also features of high ethical conduct and, accordingly, are very important leadership qualities without which a leader cannot act as a role model. President Zelensky has gained the trust of his countrymen by simply

⁸ D.H. Allin, "Ukraine: The Shock of Recognition," *Survival*, vol. 64, no. 2 (2022), p. 2.

⁹ A. Osborn, P. Nikolskaya, "Russia's Putin Authorizes 'Special Military Operation' against Ukraine," *REUTERS*, 24 February 2022, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-putin-authorizes-military-operations-donbass-domestic-media-2022-02-24/>, 15 April 2022.

¹⁰ S.A. Renshon, *High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition*, New York 1998, p. 69.

¹¹ B. Wesel, "European Parliament President Metsola Saw Courage and Resilience in Zelenskyy," *DW*, 1 April 2022, at <https://www.dw.com/en/european-parliament-president-metsola-saw-courage-and-resilience-in-zelenskyy/a-61384091>, 24 April 2022.

¹² A. Applebaum, J. Goldberg, "Zelenski do Applebaum: Moja córka ma prawie 18 lat. Wyobrażam sobie, co by było gdyby. Szukałbym ich i znalazł," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 April 2022, at <https://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/7,124059,28348297,zelenski-do-applebaum-moja-corka-ma-prawie-18-lat-wyobrazam.html#S.W-K.C-B.4-L.1.maly>, 19 April 2022.

¹³ R. Dex, "Boris Johnson Meets Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv," *The Standard*, 10 April 2022, at <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/pm-boris-johnson-ukrainian-president-zelensky-kyiv-b993479.html>, 24 April 2022.

not 'betraying' them. His famous: *The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride*,¹⁴ was Zelensky's answer to the US offer to evacuate him, which he turned down. US State Department spokesman Nat Price has confirmed that Zelensky was and continues to be the prime target for Russian aggression.

From the start of the conflict, Zelensky has sent a clear message to his people, the Russians, and the rest of the world that he is not leaving his nation. In a self-made video by phone alongside close companions, he said: *I am here. We are not putting down our arms. We will be defending our country because our weapon is truth, and our truth is that this is our land, our country, our children, and we will defend all of this*.¹⁵ His leadership represents a good example of what scientists call responsible leadership.¹⁶ Zelensky talks about truth, which is a very important element of his *internal ethical compass* that enables the president to 'walk the talk' and to decide what is ethical or unethical.¹⁷ Zelensky's decision to stay and fight alongside his men is the best example of a leader's *personal sacrifice* for the sake of the nation. Not only does he give inspiring speeches from his bunker, but against the advice of security to stay inside due to the danger of an attack, Zelensky leaves his hiding place and visits his soldiers on the battlefields and in hospitals, as well as places where Ukrainian forces found *mass graves* of civilians. Zelensky's demeanor resembles that of President Abraham Lincoln, a great transformational leader, who also visited his troops to boost team spirit.¹⁸

However, the Ukrainian president's attitude is worth imitating not only because of the moral aspect, but also because of its highly effective value. After all, it is significant to recognize that due to Zelensky's transformational leadership, thousands of foreigners have joined the Ukrainian army to fight as volunteers. Reports indicate *that over 20,000 individuals from 52 nations have volunteered to join the Ukrainian armed forces resisting the Russian invasion, perhaps the most notable volunteer effort since the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War*.¹⁹ That incredible total would not have been reached without President Zelensky's possession of high ethical conduct, featured by his courage, honesty and personal sacrifice. Having said that, one should also recognize another element of Zelensky's leadership: a collective sense of mission, which helped him to impact and influence those around him.

¹⁴ S. Braithwaite, "I Need Ammunition, Not a Ride": Zelensky Refuses US Offer to Evacuate," *The Journal Times*, 26 February 2022, at https://journaltimes.com/news/world/i-need-ammunition-not-a-ride-zelensky-refuses-us-offer-to-evacuate/article_d7d67dca-0547-5a5e-a301-2a80aebd566d.html, 20 April 2022.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ L.S. Paine, "A Compass for Decision Making", in T. Maak, N. Pless (eds), *Responsible Leadership*, New York 2006, pp. 74-87.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ D.K. Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, New York 2009, p. 452.

¹⁹ J. Kallberg, "Too Late for Russia to Stop the Foreign Volunteer Army," *CEPA*, 10 March 2022, at <https://cepa.org/too-late-for-russia-to-stop-the-foreign-volunteer-army/>, 21 April 2022.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY AND COLLECTIVE SENSE OF MISSION

The second element of idealized influence of transformational leadership is a collective sense of mission. A leader who possesses this feature demonstrates that his or her motivation is noble and focused on creating a *shared identity*. The public's trust in the leader is an important determinant if a collective sense of mission is to be achieved. After all, followers must have a strong faith in their leader if they choose to become a part of his/her mission and, accordingly, dedicate their time and energy to a shared goal. In addition to trust, *teamwork* is another significant element of this feature. A political leader who exercises teamwork that might lead to a collective sense of mission demonstrates a desire to achieve consensus, and, accordingly, asks for the opinions of other political actors as well as considering various points of view prior to making a final decision. He or she shows an "I am one of you" attitude.

A close examination of President Zelensky's leadership during the war demonstrates that his actions focus on building a sense of 'community' which unites and also mobilizes Ukrainians to defend their homeland. President Zelensky's daily appearances on television and social media, along with his frequent live appearances in various public places to meet with ordinary people have proved that he is "one of us." Unlike Putin, who sees himself as superior to others and distances himself from his staff and countrymen, President Zelensky puts an emphasis on a sense of togetherness. As a result, Ukrainians trust their president and put faith in him, because they can see how committed he is to defending them against the invader. Zelensky acts humbly and dresses modestly, not as a typical head of state. Instead of wearing a suit and tie, his everyday attire is khaki army clothes. Similarly, Zelensky's language intentionally lacks sophistication. It is rather 'simple,' but possesses powerful elements of identification, which makes the message clear, emotional and very effective. The president is an experienced communicator, who understands that he must create a *shared identity* with the audience and therefore uses direct rhetoric. To illustrate the point, when Zelensky addressed the US Congress, he pointed out to many similarities between Ukrainians and Americans. He compared the Russian invasion of Ukraine to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the attacks of 9/11, and referred to Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech while saying: *I can say I have a need. I need to protect our sky. I need your decision, your help, which means exactly the same, the same you feel when you hear the words, 'I have a dream.'*²⁰

Both elements of leadership, Zelensky's image as well as the way he communicates, are a part of the president's charisma. The two features help a leader to act in a collective way where the two sides, the president and his people, have the same mission to achieve. Another trait that cements Zelensky's leadership to act 'as one' is his teamwork approach. All the president's advisers are well known to him, some are even his close

²⁰ I. Kwai, "Walls, Dreams and Genocide: Zelensky's Speeches Invoke History to Rally Support," *The New York Times*, 21 March 2022, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/21/world/europe/zelensky-speeches-ukraine-russia.html>, 29 April 2022.

friends. The extraordinary atmosphere among Zelensky's team members helps build bonds between the people and a sense of brotherhood. These men are on a mission, probably the mission of a lifetime. Confirming the team spirit that exists among Zelensky's advisers Igor Novikov, a former foreign policy adviser, has said: *Not on paper, but in reality, it's all one big team (...) It's very close-knit.*²¹ Another Zelensky's adviser, Tymofiy Mylovanov, once minister of economy and now the president's economic consultant, adds: *It is a family.*²² However, none of the elements of Zelensky's collective sense of mission such as the sense of shared identity and teamwork would be possible if the president did not possess a perception of confidence of transformational leadership.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY AND PERCEPTION OF CONFIDENCE

The perception of confidence concerns the advisers' confidence in the leader. A confident president is seen by his/her followers as a skilled and competent leader, who is able to create tasks and set challenging goals and, as a result, his/her confidence can boost the followers' dedication and desire to work towards common aims.²³ Followers have confidence in the leader and the leader has confidence in himself. Among the indicators of perception of confidence are: *the leader reassures others that obstacles will be overcome*²⁴ and the leader is willing to take risks²⁵. Conversely, some traits may show that a leader lacks self-confidence. For instance, if in certain situations, the leader gets irritated and his/her emotions take control over him/her, this may be seen as an indication that the leader is not confident or, alternatively, that the leader *explodes* because the advisers do not meet the leader's expectations.

President Zelensky does not let his emotions take control over him. He remains cool and confident despite the difficult situation he faces. Nikita Poturaev, former adviser to Zelensky and deputy of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, confirms this trait stating that *[t]he president stays strong and calm.*²⁶ Indeed, the image of President Zelensky that the 'world' sees is one of a strong, confident leader who is consistently pursuing the goal of winning the war with Russia. The president acts calmly and does not panic. Every day, Zelensky reassures his countrymen that obstacles will be overcome. Since the beginning of the war, in his media videos on Facebook the president communicates:

²¹ A.E. Kramer, "How Zelensky Tamed Ukraine's Fractious Politics and Stood Up to Putin," *The New York Times*, 25 April 2022, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/25/world/europe/ukraine-zelensky-government.html>, 4 May 2022.

²² Ibid.

²³ A.S. Shipman, M.D. Mumford, "When Confidence Is Detrimental: Influence of Overconfidence on Leadership Effectiveness," *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2011), p. 649.

²⁴ B.M. Bass, R.E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership...*, p. 6.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ L. Harding, "Ukraine's Leader Stood on Platform of Peace, But Finds Himself on Brink of War," *The Guardian*, 20 February 2022, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/20/ukraines-leader-stood-on-platform-of-peace-but-finds-himself-on-brink-war>, 24 April 2022.

*Don't panic, we are ready for anything, we will win, because we are Ukraine.*²⁷ The use of rhetoric changes, but the main message to Ukrainians remains the same. To illustrate the point, during the address to the British Parliament, Zelensky restored confidence in his people by paraphrasing Winston Churchill famous words, as he stated: *We will fight till the end, at sea, in the air (...) We will fight in the forests, in the fields, on the shores, in the streets.*²⁸ The president's confidence inspires his followers and is recognized by the international community.

The analysis of President Zelensky's leadership shows that since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, he has been dedicated solely to his presidential tasks. Reports indicate that Zelensky sleeps only two to four hours a day and spends the rest of the time working very hard. He regularly meets with world leaders, gives speeches, addresses foreign parliaments, and organizes press conferences. More importantly, the public can see that Zelensky risks his life, because he frequently leaves the bunker to meet with ordinary people and military personnel. Accordingly, it is reasonable to state that President Zelensky's heroic actions are recognized by the public, and positively impact their confidence in him.

One of the followers is Andriy Yermak, Zelensky's chief of staff, who spends a lot of time with him. On a daily basis, the staffer sees an energetic and confident leader in President Zelensky who infects those around him with a positive attitude. As Yermak explains: *He stays very energetic. He energizes other people who are around him (...) During all these days, I have never seen the president being at a loss. I haven't seen him scared, I haven't seen him of two minds about what he needs to do (...) He's a true leader and inspiration, that's not by chance.*²⁹

Studies indicate that *Some 72% of Americans have either some or a lot of confidence in Zelenskyy to do the right thing regarding international affairs, according to the Pew Research Center – a much higher number than for other world leaders, including U.S. President Biden.*³⁰ President Zelensky's efforts to strengthen the Ukrainian military with much needed weapons have produced the desired outcome. Intelligence reports show that the West led by the US, Great Britain, Poland and other countries, answered Zelensky's call for help and have provided Ukraine with considerable military and humanitarian assistance. For example, *longer-range weapons like howitzers, anti-aircraft systems, anti-ship missiles, armed drones, armored trucks, personnel carriers and even*

²⁷ O. Adey, "President Zelensky to Ukrainians: 'Don't Panic, We Will Win,'" *get to text*, 25 February 2022, at <https://gettotext.com/president-zelensky-to-ukrainians-dont-panic-we-will-win/>, 5 May 2022.

²⁸ M. Landler, M. Santora, "Quoting Churchill and Shakespeare, Ukraine Leader Vows No Surrender," *The New York Times*, 8 March 2022, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/world/europe/ukraine-russia-zelensky.html?searchResultPosition=2>, 5 May 2022.

²⁹ L. Berman, "Top Zelensky Adviser Opens Up about His Jewish Roots, Urges Greater Israeli Support," *The Time of Israel*, 25 March 2022, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-zelensky-advisor-opens-up-about-his-jewish-roots-urges-greater-israeli-support/>, 1 May 2022.

³⁰ R. Treisman, "Americans Have More Confidence in Zelenskyy Than Biden When It Comes to World Affairs," *NPR*, 31 March 2022, at <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/31/1089958981/zelenskyy-approval-rating-us>, 5 May 2022.

*tanks*³¹ have been sent to Ukraine. One could argue, that that would not have been possible without President Zelensky's possession of perception of confidence.

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate, this preliminary analysis of Volodymyr Zelensky indicates that he possesses all three elements of the idealized influence component of transformational leadership. He is an example of a leader who shows high ethical conduct, a perception of confidence, and acts in accordance with a collective sense of mission. As a result of President Zelensky's attitude, his close associates not only respect and admire him but also support his mission and want to identify with him. Advisers trust the president, and like him, are willing to make personal sacrifices as a part of their fight against the Russians. Members of Zelensky's team such as Yermak have decided not to flee their country in the face of war, and as a consequence of that decision, put their lives at risk every day. Let's not forget the fact that since the beginning of the war, President Zelensky and his associates have been a prime target for the Russians, and the same can be said about his closest associates.

However, it is not only Ukrainians who have been positively influenced by Zelensky's leadership. Another notable group of followers are the leaders of western countries, especially those who have had the chance to meet Zelensky personally. For example, Polish President Andrzej Duda, who met Zelensky at his compound, praises the Ukrainian President's heroic leadership and appears to be clearly moved by his exceptional bravery and strong determination to succeed. Furthermore, it can be argued that Duda's political leadership has improved considerably due to Zelensky's leadership as Poland has become more involved in helping to solve the Ukrainian conflict. According to scholars such as Professor Alex Szczerbiak, as a result of President Duda's intensified diplomatic activity and his political leadership, *Poland has also been one of the main hubs for channeling military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and a prime destination for refugees fleeing from the conflict with more than three million people crossing its eastern border*.³² There is also an indication that some features of President Duda's leadership, such as communication, have improved. Duda's speeches, like Zelensky's, are simple and emotional. The Polish president uses plain-spoken but powerful language, something he had not done before meeting with Zelensky. To illustrate the point, as the first foreign leader to speak to the *Ukrainian parliament* after the beginning of the war, Duda said: *After Bucha, Borodyanka and Mariupol, there can be no return to business as*

³¹ S. Erlanger, E. Schmitt, J.E. Barnes, "The U.S. Races to Arm Ukraine with Heavier, More Advanced Weaponry," *The New York Times*, 19 April 2022, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/19/world/europe/us-ukraine-weaponry.html>, 6 May 2022.

³² A. Szczerbiak, "Intuition or Grand Plan? Explaining Andrzej Duda's Rise to Prominence during the War in Ukraine," *LSE*, 17 May 2022, at <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/05/17/intuition-or-grand-plan-explaining-andrzej-dudas-rise-to-prominence-during-the-war-in-ukraine/>, 17 May 2022.

usual with Russia, Honourable Presidents, Honourable Prime Ministers and Honourable Member of Parliaments around the world! There can be no return to business as usual! An honest world cannot do so by choosing to overlook crimes, aggression, violations of fundamental principles.³³ An argument can be made that President Duda's 'enhanced' leadership is at least partially a consequence of his personal relationship with Zelensky and the impact of the Ukrainian president's transformational leadership. The Polish president describes Zelensky as "a friend," and has met with him several times, more than other world leaders. There is evidence that Duda calls the Ukrainian leader every day since the start of the war.³⁴ As a result, Zelensky's individualized influence has positively impacted Duda's leadership. It needs to be recognized that Duda is proud to be associated with Zelensky; he feels good to be around him.

Additionally, as a consequence of Zelensky's individualized influence, the international community headed by the US and NATO members continues to answer the president's call for help to fight the Russian aggressor by sending much needed military assistance and imposing economic sanctions on Russia. It has been argued that *Zelensky's role in arousing Western support for the fighting Ukraine is invaluable*.³⁵ Reports indicate that as of today, the United States alone has provided Ukraine with a gigantic military, economic, and humanitarian aid package totaling \$53 billion since the start of the war.³⁶ Following the example of the US, other nations, such as Britain, Poland, France, Germany, have delivered assistance to Ukraine as well. Even though Ukraine has already received a lot of help from the west, President Zelensky does not rest and continues to use various opportunities, ranging from world economic forums, such as one in Davos, to film festivals such as one in Cannes, to ask for more much needed assistance. His voice is being heard because Zelensky has become a role model looked up to by everyone. He is successful because expecting much from others, he shows that he gives much himself. After all, *Followers await the leader to live up to 'For things to change, first I must change*.³⁷

Finally, the author believes that the conclusions of the study are important and stimulating for two reasons. First, the results show the relationship between the leader (the president) and multiple groups of followers, as well as the relationship between the

³³ "Speech by the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda at the Verkhovna Rada, May 22, 2022," *Kyiv Post*, 23 May 2022, at <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/speech-by-the-president-of-poland-andrzej-duda-at-the-verkhovna-rada-may-22-2022-video.html>, 27 May 2022.

³⁴ A. Szerbiak, "Intuition or Grand...".

³⁵ Z. Szczerek, "Szczerek: Zachód musi wybaczyć Zelenskiemu wszystko. Nawet to, że stanowiska obsadził kolegami z grupy komediowej," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 May 2022, at <https://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/7,124059,28499517,szczerek-zachod-musi-wybaczyc-zelenskiemu-wszystko-nawet-to.html>, 30 May 2022.

³⁶ E. Nix, A. Dhankher, N. Messieh, "Ukraine Aid Tracker: Mapping the West's Support to Counter Russia's Invasion," *The Atlantic Council*, 13 May 2022, at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/trackers-and-data-visualizations/ukraine-aid-tracker-mapping-the-west-s-support-to-counter-russias-invasion/>, 27 May 2022.

³⁷ M.M. Yaslioglu, N. Selenay Erden, "Transformational Leaders in Action: Theory Has Been There, But What about Practice?," *IUP Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2018), pp. 42-53.

examined leader and other world leaders. Those interactions can help us to understand how President Zelensky's leadership qualities are perceived by his close advisers and other political leaders. In addition, one can also determine whether or not Zelensky is able to inspire his followers to act ethically and collectively as well as whether he can boost their confidence. After all, it is difficult to follow a leader who behaves immorally rather than ethically; one who does not act collectively but pursues his/her own mission or one who spreads uncertainty instead of acting in a confident way.

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Andrzej DEMCZUK graduated from Seattle University in International Studies. He received a Master's Degree in International Relations, and PhD in political science from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. His interests focus on the political leadership with specific emphasis on American presidential leadership. The doctoral thesis, *Transformational Leadership in the United States of America*, was an analysis of the specific leadership characteristics of three presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barrack Obama, using the Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership model. Dr. Demczuk received a Fulbright Junior Research Award in 2020/2021 and conducted research at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government.