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NGOS' ROLE IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINIAN DISPLACED PERSONS IN AUSTRIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Author's declaration

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the global urgency of forced migration, the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has ushered in unprecedented challenges, provoking an active response from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This research focuses on analyzing the efforts of international, national, and Ukrainian NGOs in providing assistance to Ukrainian displaced persons in Austria, taking into account Austria's extensive history as a host country. This thesis builds on qualitative methods, incorporating an analysis of existing literature and interviews with representatives from NGOs relevant to this study. According to the interviews, international NGOs contribute indirectly to refugee governance in Austria through advocacy and raising awareness, while national organizations also engage in advocacy efforts and address specific needs. Ukrainian NGOs focus more on language, culture, and identity needs, facilitating integration into Austrian society. Thus, this thesis also contributes to the ongoing efforts to help Ukrainian displaced individuals in Austria.

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Chapter I. Introduction

The Russian-full scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 triggered a massive displacement, forcing millions of Ukrainians to seek protection in various countries, including Austria, a country with a long history of being a host country. Austria's geographical position, experience in previous migration waves, and established infrastructure for refugee assistance make it valuable for examining. Meanwhile, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing the immediate and long-term needs is pivotal as they offer different services, including healthcare, legal assistance, psychological help, which are crucial for displaced people. The sudden influx of Ukrainian displaced persons has placed significant demands on such NGOs, highlighting their important role in the humanitarian response. This research focuses on Austria and its NGOs investigating how they function and navigate challenges in addressing Ukrainians' needs.

This research aims to accomplish several objectives. Firstly, the goal is to explore the roles and contributions of international, national, and Ukrainian non-governmental organizations in providing assistance to displaced persons from Ukraine residing in the Republic of Austria. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the significant similarities and differences in the work of these NGOs in addressing Ukrainians' needs and challenges. Furthermore, it will analyze the NGOs' reaction to feedback from Ukrainian displaced individuals, thereby clarifying both the effectiveness and their mechanism for adaptive work.

The significance of this research is also illustrated by the identified gap in the existing literature. For instance, the role of NGOs in assisting displaced Ukrainians in Austria is notably underemphasized in reports from the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, the

Austrian Integration Fund, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Survey Report in 2023. These reports just briefly mention NGOs help to Ukrainian displaced individuals, which might be a reason of misperceived significance of NGOs' contributions and the lack of data on their activities. Thus, it is evident that this topic urges deeper attention and examination.

This research is valuable for informing policymakers and academic community about the effective practices and existing challenges for NGOs in Austria. Moreover, this thesis aims to contribute to development of more effective policies and programs for refugees, aiding in the formulation of balanced decisions regarding resource allocation, and funding distribution.

Chapter II. Migration Governance in Austria

2.1. Navigating migration: Austria's governance landscape

Austria as a country of refuge is an indisputable part of the historical consciousness. In the 20th century, Austria faced three waves of migration: from Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1981 (Josipovic and Reeger 2018, 6). Also, like many other EU member-counties, Austria has received a high number of asylum seekers in 2015 becoming the third-largest recipient country within the EU. With the numbers of 10.3 refugees per 1000 Austrian citizens, Austria was the second most frequented country in the European Union (Müller, Andreas Th., Oberprantacher 2017, 224). Despite Austria adheres to both international and domestic legal obligations; yet its characterization as a refugee- or asylum-friendly country is rather debatable.

Political, cultural and public discourse contexts are critical in terms of understanding Austrian migration governance. Austria is rather a small country both in terms of area and population. However, the country is divided into nine states that share legislative, executive and judicial powers. Hence, the federal level has almost full responsibility in case of the legal status of asylum seekers, the states are responsible for providing Basic Welfare Support, which is a social aid system for individuals in need, mostly for refugees.

At the institutional level, the topics of migration are subject to three ministries: the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BM.I) that deals with procedures on asylum and return decisions; the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA) that finances the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) and responsible for visa issuance, and The Federal Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection (BMASK), which deals with work permits and has the Service for job seekers (AMS) as a subordinated administrative body.

In adherence to constitutional principles, Austria has a distinct division of powers. It means that all branches of power contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive rule of law and equality under the law. Austria's migration policy is primarily shaped by national laws, European Union regulations, and international agreements. Like other EU countries, Austria follows the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), which states that asylum seekers are subject to examination of their cases, and those granted refugee status receive protection under international law. Meanwhile, the equality provision in the Basic Law of the State permits justifiable unequal differentiation between Austrian citizens and non-citizens. Nevertheless, the liberal principle constrains the utilization of political will within the legislative branch, especially in matters related to human rights (Josipovic and Reeger 2018, 9-23).

Despite Austria's seemingly long history in providing protection, Austria is also famous for the Marcus Omofuma story. Marcus Omofuma, a Nigerian asylum seeker on the basis of religious persecution, sought refugee status in Austria in 1998. Unfortunately, he was rejected twice and during his deportation to Nigeria via Bulgaria, Marcus Omofuma lost his life, succumbing to suffocation (Hintermann 2017, 248). Another example of the precursor to unilateral policies in the EU context in 2016 as a response to the refugee crisis proves that in the period of 2015-2023, Austrian migration policy has become more restrictive. Moreover, against the high influx of refugees Austria closed the Nickelsdorf border with Hungary in October 2015. Subsequently, the border fence in Spielfeld was erected in order to provide better border control with Slovenia. Also, the Austrian government agreed on the "upper limit" for the admission of asylum seekers, drawing criticism for its international law violation, in particular the non-refoulement principle, which prohibits the return of a person to a place where their life or freedom is at risk (Müller and Oberprantacher 2017, 227, 228). Additionally, the number of refugees leaving Austria is increasing significantly. Thus, in 2023, 25% more refugees were deported compared to 2022 (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2023).

It is also striking that Austria omits migration history from its cultural life. A notable observation supporting this statement is the museums' overlook of the narratives associated with the migration in the country. Another noteworthy indication is the lack of symbolic locations in public spaces that would perpetuate and acknowledge the recognition of refugees' histories. Only one presented monument is the Marcus Omofuma Stone that illustrates structural racism and discrimination policy towards asylum seekers. However, civil society in Austrian play a role of a "gap filler", also taking responsibly of emergency management and

significantly contributing to fulfilling the needs for initial care such as medical care, food, clothing at the first place, and followed by integration efforts (Simsa 2017, 16).

2.2. Austria's response to the Ukrainian Displaced Persons

In 2014, the Russian Federation initiated the war in Ukraine through the annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the occupation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, causing the outbreak of internal displacement from those regions. Additionally, according to the UN Refugee Agency (2014), as of the end of October 2014, 8,936 Ukrainians had asked for international protection in the EU. However, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, resulted in the largest migration of refugees in Europe since World War II (Muižnieks 2023). 6,444,800 Ukrainians fled the country as of December 31, 2023. Of this number, 74,130 are currently based in Austria (UNHCR 2023). The main reason for Ukrainian displaced persons to choose Austria as a host country was the personal networks, such as having friends (41%), family (22%), and knowing people who can help to find them a job (8%). While in some countries, Ukrainians might express that a large diaspora in the host country played an important role for them, this is not the case in Austria. Compared to such countries like Poland, Germany, Italy or the Czech Republic, the Ukrainian community in Austria was relatively small (Kohlenberger et al. 2023). The importance of discussing Austria's response lies not only in its role as a destination chosen by many Ukrainian displaced people to find protection but because it also reflects broader themes and challenges in migration governance. The Austrian response to Ukrainians who fled their home county is embedded in the global imperative to address displaced population and humanitarian crises.

Ukrainian context differs from the refugee crisis that started in 2015. Most of the displaced people from Ukraine are women, children, and senior people as per Ukrainian law, only men

under 18 and over 60 can leave the country. Additionally, in the case of mobility within the EU, Ukrainians have visa-free entry and can enter the Schengen area without visas for 90 days. Moreover, even before the Russian full-scale invasion, Ukraine established a strategic partnership with the EU under the EU4 Neighborhood Policy. So, Austria is providing good neighborly assistance to Ukraine.

The status of Ukrainian displaced persons also differs from the status of refugees in all countries of the European Union, including Austria. The right of staying in Austria is confirmed by the "Identity card for displaced persons" or "Blue card for displaced persons" (Ausweis für Vertriebene/ Blaue Karte Vertriebene). The Blue card facilitates displaced persons' entry to the Austrian labor market, education system and health insurance. Initially, the Blue card was issued for one year with the possibility of extension from the Austrian state if the situation in Ukraine does not change for the better. This system is still in effect today. Ukrainians receive extensions of their status with its review every year. It is important to note that this creates problems with finding housing, work, and integration into Austrian society due to the lack of guarantees regarding the future stay in the Republic of Austria. Thus, some companies do not want to undertake obligations to hire or educate Ukrainian displaced persons, since there is no guarantee that Ukrainians will not have to leave the country soon. This circumstance also prevents many displaces individuals from carrying out time-consuming and resource-intensive procedures for confirming diplomas, for instance, for doctors or lawyers, which Austria requires for the integration of people of these professions into the labor market.

Access to the Austrian labor market

The national employment agency is the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) is responsible for integrating Ukrainians into the Austrian labor market. Initially, Ukrainians needed permission to work. In 2023, it was decided that Ukrainians could be employed without a permit, aiming to facilitate job searching and labor market integration. Approximately 70-80% of Ukrainian displaced persons have higher education, and they also demonstrate a high level of English proficiency (UNHCR 2023). However, despite seemingly favorable conditions for job searching, only 25.3% of Ukrainian displaces individuals were employed in Austria in 2023 (ÖIF 2023).

This situation can be explained, firstly, by the annual reassessment of the status of Ukrainians, which hinders their job search, and the complex process of validating necessary diplomas for certain professions. Many Ukrainians, as well as Austrian employers, find themselves in a state of limbo every year, waiting for the Blue card for displaced people to be renewed or cancelled. Ukrainians are unsure whether they will be able to stay in Austria since the availability of work does not affect the renewal of the Blue card, and Austrian employers are hesitant to hire Ukrainians because they do not have a guarantee that Ukrainians will not be required to leave Austria soon. Additionally, many Ukrainians fear losing state financial support (Grundversorgung) upon entering the workforce, or they expect a significant reduction in support. The threshold for earnings without losing state support varies in different lands of Austria. For instance, in Styria, if receiving financial support, individuals can get an allowance of 110 Euros per month for individual accommodation or 142 Euros for organized accommodation, increasing by 80.00 Euros per month for each nuclear family member (spouse and/or children). The mentioned amount will be deducted from the financial support if the salary exceeds it (Ukrainehilfe Steiermark 2024).

Access to the education

In Austria, all "permanently" residing school-age children are required to attend school, regardless of their residency status (Bildungsdirektion Vorarlberg 2022). Thus, Ukrainian children are subject to mandatory school education regulations. Ukrainian school-age individuals can receive compulsory education in any state or private school. The main challenge for Ukrainian children has been the German language. Many Ukrainian children were held back for a repeat year after their first year of schooling in Austrian schools due to unsatisfactory proficiency in the German language. Schools consider this a positive decision for children as it provides an opportunity to better grasp the material and succeed in learning German. For Ukrainian mothers and children, however, this means a lack of progress for the children (Kleine Zeitung 2023). It prompts them to opt for parallel attendance at online Ukrainian schools or Saturday Ukrainian schools that exist in Austria, significantly increasing the workload for the pupils (Falter 2023).

Finding accommodation

Displaces persons from Ukraine face significant limitations in accessing social housing due to a widespread requirement that they should stay in Austria for several years first. In 2022, Ukrainians could obtain emergency accommodation for temporary stays and then be placed in organized housing, often fulfilled by hotels. However, approximately 70% of Ukrainian refugees are accommodated privately through basic service provisions and the assistance of Austrian acquaintances or individuals willing to offer rooms or entire apartments at reduced rates. Nevertheless, it is crucial to consider the rising costs, especially in the energy sector, and the prolonged duration of the war. Consequently, it can be assumed that in the future,

Ukrainian displaced people may increasingly rely on places in organized housing because Austria does not provide financial support to private individuals for hosting displaced Ukrainians (IOM 2023).

2.3. The Involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations

The assistance of non-governmental organization of Ukrainian displaced in Austria is noticeable across all three types of organizations: international, Austrian, and Ukrainian NGOs. Thus, the International Organization for Migration and the UN Refugee Agency operate in Vienna, providing a comprehensive response to Ukrainian displaced individuals. IOM Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, is based in Vienna, and works in Ukraine and neighboring countries to offer various forms of humanitarian assistance. IOM (2024) collaborates with governments as well as with local donors and partners to expand opportunities for Ukrainians. UNHCR communicates with displaced persons and also works with the government to provide recommendations for Ukrainians in Austria. The UNHCR (2023) stresses that more than a third of Ukrainians can barely meet their basic need and still rely only on Basic Service (Grundversornung) provided by the government to displaced Ukrainians. This amounts to around 440 Euros for a single adult person, making it impossible to live in Austria without further help from civil society.

Direct assistance for Ukrainian displaced persons is provided from such Austrian organizations such as Caritas and Diakonie, two Christian organizations deeply rooted in Austria's welfare state infrastructure. Caritas (2024) helps Ukrainians in many areas and spheres, including social counseling, financial aid (Grundversornung), and accommodation. Diakoni (2024) also helps find accommodation, provides social, psychological, and medical

counseling, but also offers information on German courses and orientation in institutions and structures in Austria.

According to the Ukrainian embassy in Austria (2020), 18 Ukrainian non-governmental organizations were officially registered in Austria. Ukrainian NGOs also offer necessary support for Ukrainian displaced people, focusing on psychological support, assistance in finding accommodation, courses of German language, and organizing rallies and national holidays' celebration fostering the feeling of belonging among Ukrainians who fled Ukraine due to the war.

Chapter III. Literature Review

Population displacement caused by war, conflict, fear of persecution and other humanitarian disasters is a worldwide problem that requires efficient solutions from different actors, including non-governmental organizations. Arguably, the most notable example of displacement emerged from the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As a result of this, Austria became one of the host countries for Ukrainian displaced population.

Among other objectives, this research project aims to fill a gap in the existing literature. The topics of NGOs' influence on Human Rights empowerment as well as the decision-making process are quite well-researched. However, its impact of non-state actors' assistance to Ukrainian displaced people is an underdeveloped theme. This gap in the literature could be ascribed due to the novelty of the research topic, especially in the case of Austria. Additionally, the ongoing character of the problem with new developments and shifts happening over time also contributes to the lack of development of this topic.

Non-Governmental Organizations have made a critical contribution in providing assistance to the Ukrainian displaced individuals. Austria, positioned at the crossroad of Eastern and Western Europe and having played one of the main roles in the refugee crisis in 2015, has already hosted 74,130 Ukrainian displaced individuals (UNHCR 2024). By focusing on the understanding the effectiveness of NGOs' assistance, this research aims to contribute to the critical in this situation policy-making process.

This literature review is organized into four sections and provides an analysis and explanation of the existing literature on the research topic. The first section focuses on the understanding of the concept of forced migration and its characteristics. The second section delves deeper into the understanding of NGO role during migrant crises. The third section examines specifically the case of Ukrainian migrant crisis. Finally, the forth section explores the refugee support organizations and their activities in Austria, analyzing their services and initiatives aimed to influence on human right empowerment.

3.1. Understanding Forced Migration

In a variety of contexts, it is crucial to differentiate between voluntary and forced migration. It is assumed that voluntary migration usually happens due to the individual's voluntary decision to move from one county to another because of various reasons such as economic or education opportunities. Contrarily, forced migration occurs due to circumstances beyond persons' control, such as wars, conflicts, or natural disasters that threaten people's lives or freedom. However, the differentiation of these two migration types is blurred.

Bakewell (2021) argues that in many cases, an individual could be considered both a voluntary and forced migrant. For instance, an individual might move to find better

economical opportunities not solely out of desire but because of desperate living conditions or a lack of job prospects in the country of origin. The most basic criteria for defining voluntary migration may be the absence of coercion when deciding to leave the country. The second criteria, according to Ottonelli and Torresi (2013), could be viable alternatives to migration available in home region, offering a satisfactory quality of life that is where the alternative does not mean starvation or unsatisfactory living conditions. Additionally, individuals who migrate should have the ability to change employers or decide to return home. Finally, those who move should have adequate and realistic information about the place they move and not be forced by traffickers.

Although, setting of strong differentiation criteria may pose a risk of creating new misperceptions by categorizing individuals as "illegal migrants" and "bogus asylum seekers", which means those who do not deserve international protection. Furthermore, it is critical to set distinctions between labels imposed on those who migrate and their self-identification. It is much more reflective for nuanced nature of migration to describe an individual's migration decisions along continuum between forced and voluntary migrations (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015).

Despite the absence of clear differentiation between forced and voluntary migration, Bakewell states that the classification of migration should be based on the circumstances and timing of the evaluation. Following this approach, this research defines Ukrainians who left Ukraine after February 24, 2022, as forced migrants as they were forced to flee in order to avoid the outcomes of the Russian full-scale war.

3.2. Non-Governmental Organizations in Migration Government

In his work, Coppola (2020, 615) gives an extensive definition of the term "non-governmental organizations": "Non-governmental organization is a general term for an organization made up of private citizens and that has no affiliation with a government of any nation other than support from government sources in the form of financial or in-kind contributions". The work of Lester M. Salamon, Helmut K. Anheier (1992, 1) answers a question of the definition of non-profit sector by posing a set of five core features, concluding that these organizations are formally constituted, non-governmental in basic structure, self-governing, non-profit-distributing, and voluntary to some meaningful extent.

Non-governmental organizations' work in migration field could be divided into two key spheres: direct and immediate aid provided to migrants, as well as research and activities aimed at contributing to migration policy. Meanwhile, NGOs offer diverse forms of support, which can be categorized into four primary groups: practical help, economic aid, psychological and emotional support, and legal aid (Ferriene 1951, 423). The added values of NGOs also lie in their values that often are seen as opposite to states and markets by refugees. However, it is a mistake to think that NGOs can fully compensate states' and markets failures, as these organizations are often interconnected with other stakeholders and sometimes rely on their assistance. Additionally, context plays a critical role; for instance, cities like Milan or Berlin have traditionally been places where people from around the world meet. This echoes the cities' role in migration governance, where NGOs play a more supporting role. Conversely, in Libya, NGOs became the almost only actor who refugees could ask for help (Cuttitta 2022, 5-7).

However, the number of studies attempting to explain the role of non-governmental organizations in providing support for externally displaced Ukrainians remains limited, and lacks coverage of the Austrian context. While the UNHCR Ukraine Flash Appeal 2022 makes an important contribution to understanding of the current situation of Ukrainian war refugees, it misses further examination of the specific roles of NGOs in the displacement situation. Similarly, the report by the International Crisis Group regarding the Ukraine's Displacement Crisis extend the comprehension of the war but it lacks a research, which would help to contextualize the roles of NGOs. Also, the article by Joshua P. Mulford's (2016) about Non-State actors in the Russo-Ukrainian war pays attention to the NGOs perspective, but it goes deeper to the Russian influence of Western NGOs.

Nevertheless, some key insights emerged from recent studies in this field. The study by Brozmanová Gregorová, Bambúch, and Šolcová (2024) examines the role of NGO in organizing support for Ukrainian displaced individuals in Slovakia. They highlight the significant contribution of NGOs in providing humanitarian aid, legal help, and psychological support. Additionally, the article underscores that financial instability existing even prior to the Ukrainian migration crisis, shows the necessity for a more systematic response from the Slovak government. The authors argue that such cooperation with the government not only benefited NGOs themselves but also played an advocacy role in promoting the rights of Ukrainians in the society and shaping more effective policies.

In her article, Flanihan (2022) discusses the role of NGOs in migration response in Romania, highlighting that Romanian NGOs also played a pivotal role in helping non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing Ukraine. She also sheds light on distinctive help from Moldovan migrants residing in

Romania to Romanian NGOs. A vast majority of NGOs employees mentioned the valuable contribution of Moldovan volunteers, including youth, such as high school students.

NGOs' contributions in the field of migration are critical and diverse, including direct assistance, policy advocacy, and humanitarian help. Given that migration remains a pressing worldwide issue, understanding the role of NGOs in refugee assistance and identifying their successful strategies is crucial. This understanding facilities policies empowerment, and foster cooperation among those NGOs. Subsequently, in the context of this research, better results could be achieved in assisting Ukrainian displaced persons in Austria.

3.3. Ukrainian Migration Crisis

Ukrainian migration crisis has actively been discussed since 2022, mostly due to its unprecedented scale and the novel challenges it brings into academic and political discourses. Researches, including Ukrainian and foreign, indicate dissimilarity and unique characteristics of this migration wave.

Firstly, the procedure of crossing borders is vastly different for Ukrainians compared to individuals coming from the Middle East in 2015. In 2017, visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens came into force (IOM 2017). Since then, Ukrainians with biometric passport have been allowed to travel to the EU for a period of 90 days within any 180-day period. Hence, already on February 24, 2022, Ukrainians could cross Ukrainian border and seek protection in the EU without any special permissions. Benjamin Tallis argues (2023, 226) that it is one of the examples that illustrates the contrast in how both receiving states and the EU acted efficiently and sympathetically toward Ukrainian displaced persons, also by activating a special "Temporary Protection Directive", compared to asylum seekers during the previous

migrant wave. Thomas B. Pepinsky, Ádám Reiff and Krisztina Szabó (2024) claim that Ukrainian migration crisis has dramatically shifted society attitude towards refugees in Hungary, a country with a highly restrictive political climate where the governing party frequently invokes anti-migrant rhetoric. They state that this shift was driven by "changes in the composition of refugees".

Those changes in the EU countries, which also faced, for instance, Poland, a country that traditionally opposes any form of openness toward non-EU refuges, could be explained by several arguments. Concerning border dynamics, it is noteworthy that Ukraine maintains territorial contiguity with four EU member states, including Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. Thus, while EU accommodated some Syrian refugees in Turkey among many reasons also because the country is geographically much closer to Syria compared to the European Union, Ukrainians have limited options, primarily limited to the EU countries. The second reason is the presence of cultural and ethnic similarities, as well as a shared historical legacy between Ukraine and certain EU countries such as Austria, Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic countries. The third explanation lies in the characterization of the war in Ukraine as European in its nature and provoking broader solidarity among EU countries (Ivan Martin, 2022). Additionally, Tallis (2023, 246) contends that in Western, Central and Eastern European states has been a shift towards a more ethnically and culturally defined sense of identity, driven by the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The novelty of this migration wave also lies in its predominantly female composition, attributed to the Ukrainian government's restrictions on men aged 18 to 60 from leaving Ukraine. Moreover, people fleeing Ukraine often migrate with children, significantly influencing their decisions and considerations. Prior to the full-scale war, labor migrants from Ukraine typically left children in the country, traveling solo to find employment opportunities. Presently, women are fleeing

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with their children, leaving husbands in Ukraine. Additionally, previously established labor migration patterns have significantly shaped choices of host country after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The predominantly male migrant from Ukraine before the full-scale invasion created networks that were important for female migrants after February 2022 (Andrews et al. 2023, 9).

3.4. The Role of the Refugee Support NGOs in Austria

Considering the importance of the Austrian host nation's response to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its far-reaching consequences, resulting in the thousands of Ukrainians looking for protection and asylum in Austria, it is crucial to analyze the Austrian experience in this question.

Sara de Jong and Ilker Atac article (2017, 35) about refugee support organizations in Austria is directly relevant to the proposed research topic. This work, based on interviews with the founders of each organization, provides valuable insights regarding the NGOs' work in this sphere and critique combined with service delivery. They claim that the prior experience of NGOs and social movements served as a foundation for establishing their own organization assisting asylum seekers in 2015. This experience has also led them to develop a political critique. Austria is a relevant case study for investigating local responses to the refugee policy crisis because of the institutions failure in 2015 to serve the high numbers of refugees when local communities became actors in refugees support (Rosenberger, Müller 2019). NGOs in Austria usually take responsibility and try to do a work that government leaves behind, which includes psychological support, healthcare, and food distribution. Moreover, NGOs play a critical role in assisting refugees when they are looking for apartment. Often, they even take

over the rental contracts and other functions of tenants because there are many cases related to discrimination when landlords are hesitant to accept refugees as renters (Dellinger 2021, 10).

Overall, the provided sources highlight the importance of defining NGOs, understanding their activities and their approach in terms of refugee assistance as well as contextualizing policies and experience in Austria. However, this literature review sets the stage for research, which would fill a gap in existing literature. Specifically, there remains a gap of research exploring the role of non-governmental organizations in addressing the needs of Ukrainian displaced people in Austria. As a result, this literature review not only synthesizes existing literature, but also establishes the groundwork for future research.

Chapter IV. Methodology

4.1. Methodological approach

The research relies exclusively on qualitative methods. This work includes a literature review as a vital component of the research. As previously discussed in the literature review chapter, the topic of NGOs assistance impact on Ukrainian displaced persons is currently underdeveloped in the existing literature, especially in the context of Austria. Hence, this research uses secondary data such as academic articles, NGOs' reports, publications by Austrian governmental bodies related to migration topic, etc. Additionally, this thesis benefits from primary data gathered through interviews.

The chosen method for data collection is interview method with the acknowledgement to different experiences, perceptions and motivations of NGO representatives. Interviews with NGO representatives include representatives from international, national, and Ukrainian

NGOs operating in Austria. This allows illustrating the broader spectrum of their approaches and experiences. To enable a fruitful conversation, the semi-structured interviews approach has been chosen. This approach allows the balance between structured questions and more open dialogue which would permit flexibility and help to explore unexpected insights.

Furthermore, the author's knowledge of the Ukrainian context and Ukrainian and English languages would give assistance to be culturally sensitive during the interviews' conduction, as all non-Ukrainian NGOs communicate in English. This background knowledge allows holding interviews with a more nuanced understanding of the needs and challenges of Ukrainians in Austria and examining the assistance provided by NGOs.

4.2 The scope of the research

In accordance with the research methodology, the research's focus within the population of Austria, the non-governmental organizations, the city, as well as the specification of the research timeframe, have been individually addressed within their respective sections of the research design:

4.2.1 The scope of population: Ukrainian Displaces Persons

Austria is recognized as a host county for various migrant populations, where the largest number of refugees is shown by Afghans and Syrians (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2023). However, the migration landscape dramatically changed with the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, causing the largest outbreak of migration in Europe, surpassing the levels seen during World War II. Although, since 2015, Austria has received 415, 123 applications from asylum seekers, this research specifically focuses on the Ukrainian

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displaced people within the Austrian population. Thus, this research narrows down the scope of the study to reflect the unique and urgent challenges faced by this group of individuals who have experienced forced migration. Such focus allows for a detailed examination of the experiences of Ukrainians within the Austrian context and sheds light on the complexities other refugee groups did not encounter and what new mechanisms are proposed.

4.2.2 The scope of non-governmental organizations

Since February 24, 2022, a wide range of NGOs in Austria, whether experienced or not in such matters, have actively engaged in providing necessary assistance to arriving Ukrainians. The new EU initiative for temporary protection and status of displaced persons, and not refugees has led in changes within existing activities and emergence of new NGOs, mostly launched by the Ukrainian diaspora in Austria or displaced individuals themselves. There are various types of organization, including international, national and Ukrainian organizations, that provide assistance in different ways, but this research aims to investigate the role of NGOs that directly engage in helping displaced persons from Ukraine. The scope of NGOs was also selected due to the assumed differences in how they organize and explain their activities. Another reason is to avoid concentration on specific target groups within this population, such as children, people with disabilities, women, etc. Additionally, a selection criterion was developed to determine appropriate organizations:

— Type of organizations: Non-governmental international, national (based in Austria), or Ukrainian (established by the Ukrainian diaspora or Ukrainian displaced persons).

— Operational period: Providing assistance to Ukrainian displaced persons starting from February 24, 2022.
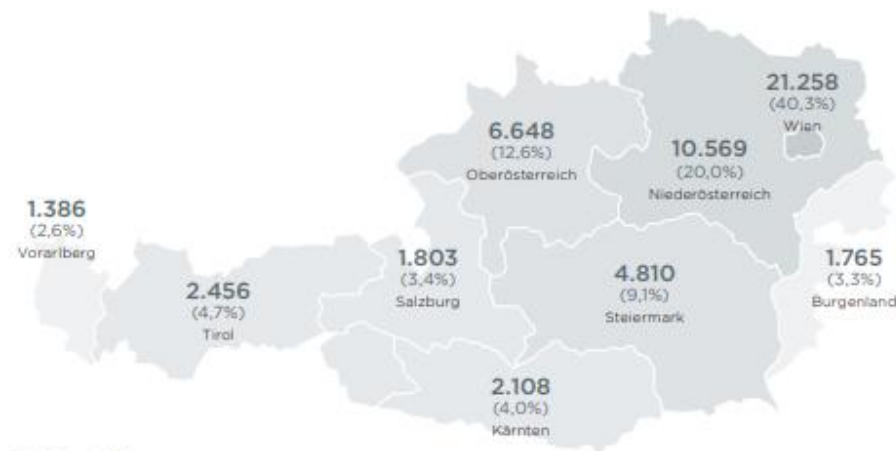
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— Engagement with the targeted group: Directly engaging in assisting Ukrainians.

— Engagement with state actors and other identified NGOs: Close engagement with before mentioned actors.

— Scope of activities: Communicate with state actors, social counseling, psychological counseling, community-based activities, language learning activities, participation activities.

4.2.3 The geographical scope of the research: Vienna

Vienna is the biggest city in the Republic of Austria, and also the city that hosts the most of Ukrainian displaced individuals (40,3% in April 2022). Vienna captures attention because of its opportunities, including a wide-range of employment options available in both German and English. Additionally, Vienna serves as the primary residence for Ukrainian diaspora and possesses the reputation of being the most livable city according to respected organizations such as the international consulting firm Mercer (2023), The Economist Intelligence Unit (2023), and the British magazine Monocle (2023).

UKRAINISCHE STAATSANGEHÖRIGE NACH BUNDESLÄNDERN

1.4.2022*

21.258 (40,3%) Wien

6.648 (12,6%) Oberösterreich

10.569 (20,0%) Niederösterreich

1.386 (2,6%) Vorarlberg

1.803 (3,4%) Salzburg

4.810 (9,1%) Steiermark

1.765 (3,3%) Burgenland

2.456 (4,7%) Tirol

2.108 (4,0%) Kärnten

*Vorläufige Zahlen

Quelle: Statistik Austria: Statistik des Bevölkerungsstandes

Figure 1. Distribution of Ukrainian displaced persons in Austrian federal states (as of April 1, 2022). Source: Österreichischer Integration Fonds (Austrian Integration Fund).

The selection of Vienna as the central geographical focus of this research is motivated also due to the republican structure of Austria. The government system is distinguished by its decentralized nature, with distinct legislation and aid efforts tailored to the specific needs the conditions of each federal state. Within this setting, the city of Vienna appears as a critical location due to its status as capital and largest city, enhancing its role as an important hub for governmental policies and decisions.

This research has also restricted its geographical scope to non-governmental organizations operating in Vienna. The study's concentration on Vienna-based NGOs or divisions of NGOs that are located in Vienna, allows it to dive thoroughly into their activities, responsibilities, and influence within the local context. This purposeful restriction enables for a more in-depth examination of the distinct interactions, problems, and contribution of NGOs functioning in Viennas's specific sociopolitical environment.

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4.2.4 Specification of the research period

Russia started the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in the early morning of February 24, 2022. This historical event serves as the starting point of this thesis, as thousands of Ukrainians arrived to Austria during the following days. Consequently, this thesis focuses on the period between from February 24, 2022, to May 6, 2024. During the each interview, the phases were explicitly discussed to understand the changes in NGOs' activities and the needs of Ukrainians during these periods. The following phases where distinguished:

- The first phase occurred between February 2022 and March 2023. This period is characterized by two significant incidents in Ukraine: the beginning of the full-scale war, which forced people to flee their homes, and its continuation. Between October 2022 and March 2023, the Russian armed forces conducted about 1,200 strikes on the energy infrastructure of Ukraine, leading to blackouts, that is, the absence of electricity supply throughout Ukraine, which also forced people to leave their homes. However, it is challenging to distinguish these incidents as distinct waves of forced migration from Ukraine because they represent a continuous flow with extra complexity, rather than two separate flows of migration to Austria.

Time period	Border crossing out of Ukraine		Border crossing into Ukraine		Net migration rate	
	Total per period	Average daily outflow	Total per period	Average daily inflow	Total per period	Average daily net migration
27 February–March 2022	2,290,000	69,917	585,000	17,556	−1,705,000	−51,667
April 2022	1,022,000	34,067	881,500	29,383	−140,500	−3903
May 2022	1,055,000	34,032	1,178,000	38,000	123,000	3968
June 2022	1,131,000	37,700	1,182,000	39,400	51,000	1700
July 2022	1,191,000	38,419	1,246,000	40,194	55,000	1774
August 2022	1,284,000	41,419	1,399,000	45,129	115,000	3710
Septemper 2022	1,138,000	37,933	1,152,000	38,400	14,000	467
October 2022	1,138,000	36,710	1,120,000	36,129	−18,000	−581
November 2022	1,043,000	34,767	1,011,000	33,700	−32,000	−1067
December 2022	1,160,000	37,419	1,158,000	37,355	−2000	−65
January 2023	1,102,000	35,548	1,022,000	32,968	−80,000	−2581
February 2023	913,000	32,607	850,000	30,357	−63,000	−2250
March 2023	1,020,000	32,903	1,052,000	33,935	32,000	1032
April 2023	1,094,000	36,467	1,204,000	40,133	110,000	3667
May 2023	1,148,000	37,032	1,120,000	36,129	−28,000	−903

Figure 2. Analysis of the border crossing to/from Ukraine between 27 February 2022 and 31 May 2023. Source: Iryna Maidani (the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine).

- The second phase occurred between March 2023 and May 2024. This phase is characterized by a decline of Ukrainian individuals seeking the protection in Austria, with some Ukrainians choosing to move back to Ukraine (UNHCR 2024).

4.3. Interviews

Interviews for this research were conducted with 5 representatives from 5 NGOs in operating Austria, involved in the work with Ukrainian displaced persons. Hence, this work benefits from the interviews with the representatives from an international NGO, namely the UN Refugee Agency, two Austrian NGOs, Diakonie (Beratungszentrum Ukraine – Consultation Center Ukraine), Caritas Austria, and two Ukrainian diaspora organizations, Unlimited Democracy, and Gesellschaft ukrainischer Jugend in Österreich (TUMA - Society of Ukrainian Youth in Austria). Two mentioned Ukrainian NGOs were not involved in refugee assistance work before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Unlimited Democracy is involved

in political activism but launched the project Unlimited Academy with free courses for Ukrainians in 2022. Since its inception in 2010, TUMA has been active in cultural diplomacy sphere and also shifted its activity towards assisting Ukrainian displaced people in February 2022.

Several measures were taken to guarantee accuracy and reliability of the data collection process. First of all, participants were chosen based on the criteria discussed in the scope of NGOs' part. The semi-structured format was chosen for the interviews as it allows more flexibility for following up on any angels the interviewee considers important and gives the interviewer a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant (Patricia Leavy 2020, 437). This is particularly crucial in the case of this research as it ensures that context-specific and detailed insights were captured. Finally, the collected data was cross-checked with the official documents and other sources to ensure that the information provided is reliable.

Additionally, ethical considerations were taken into account to guarantee that participants were treated fairly. All participants were asked to sign a consent form to provide their permission to take part in this research, to be recorded, and to receive information that no personal information such as their names or employer address would be revealed.

However, it is important to recognize several limitations and constraints. Firstly, the time limitation for data collection and analysis may have restricted the thorough exploration of all aspects of NGOs' work and the assistance provided to Ukrainian displaced people in Austria. Also, the Vienna branch of Caritas showed limited willingness to participate, resulting in an

interview with Caritas Austria instead. While this provides valuable insights regarding Caritas' advocacy work, it may limit the understanding of Caritas' efforts in the field.

Overall, this interview method aligns with the research objectives and question, facilitating in-depth exploration of how NGOs in Austria address the needs of Ukrainian displaced individuals. The selected method offer a comprehensive understanding of the context and capture nuanced perspectives, contributing to a more profound understanding of this topic.

4.4. Research question

The central research question of this study is:

How do international, national and Ukrainian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide assistance to Ukrainian displaced persons in Austria, and what are the key similarities and differences in their approaches in addressing the needs of Ukrainians fleeing from the war?

4.5. Initial Assumptions

The initial assumptions of this research suggests that the impact of International, National and Ukrainian NGOs in providing assistance to Ukrainian displaced people in Austria will differ, reflecting the different approaches of the organizations. International NGOs are not directly involved into the engagement with displaced people, are contributing to the refugee governance in Austria, indirectly impacting the assistance for displaced Ukrainians through cross-border initiatives. National NGOs having deeper understanding of the Austrian context are expected to provide their assistance to the specific needs and challenges faced by the

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displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria and have more impactful cooperation with the Austrian government. Ukrainian NGOs equipped with a deeper understanding of the Ukrainian context and languages skills are addressing specific needs related to language, culture and identity as well as facilitating the integration into Austrian society.

Chapter V. Analysis

Interviews with NGOs offer a detailed understanding of the types support provided, the prioritization of needs, collaborative efforts between stakeholders, the strategies employed for integration and empowerment, and the adaptive changes in their programs over time, ensuring a comprehensive investigation of the topic. Thus, this section presents the NGOs attitudes, analyzes and compares their assistance support of Ukrainian displaced persons in Austria.

5.1. Definition and Prioritization of Needs

All three types of organizations considered in this research define and prioritize the needs of displaced Ukrainians in different ways. While international and national NGOs leverage their experience from previous migration waves, Ukrainian organizations handle a large flow of Ukrainians for the first time. Additionally, the UN Refugee Agency and Caritas Austria representatives mentioned that they conduct surveys, asking Ukrainian people specifically about their needs, and based on the results, they work on advocacy strategies. Moreover, representatives from the UNHCR, Caritas Austria, and Diakonie highlighted regular meetings organized by Mr. Achrainer, refugee coordinator for Ukrainians in the Ministry of Interior, where they also receive valuable information about current needs, challenges, and identify patterns.

Noteworthy differences include that, in the case of the UNHCR, it also involves gathering data from other countries to identify patterns. Diakonie representative highlighted their reaction on specific needs:

"We identify specific needs of our clients, and we react on it. We do not shift our focus arbitrary. For example, we have elderly people who are mostly lost in this new society and had problems with language, so we organized a workshop group specifically for them. Another target group is teenagers. They are a bit lost as they are not used to this school system. Some of them are still in the Ukrainian school system online, but this has decreased in last months. Therefore, our psychologist is planning a workshop for teenagers and their parents now".

Two interviewed Ukrainian organizations, namely Unlimited Democracy and TUMA, stressed that the most important source of information in this context was the Ukrainian displaced people themselves. Furthermore, they emphasized that since the arrival of Ukrainians in February 2022; organizations have united and shared information about displaced Ukrainians' needs between Ukrainian NGOs to involve those with resources in the assistance process. Additionally, both organizations agreed that their experience and knowledge of Austria help to identify which needs Ukrainian will encounter in the future.

5.2. Types of Support Provided

All interviewed NGOs provide advocacy support in various ways to address the needs of Ukrainian displaced population in Austria. Caritas Austria representatives highlighted the structural organization of their efforts, which indicates a centralized approach to advocacy and delegates practical support to regional branches.

"At Caritas Austria, we function as the umbrella organization. Most of the practical work and projects are carried out at the diocesan level in our nine dioceses. We have a few projects ourselves within Austria, but it's a very limited number. Our main focus is on advocacy and policy work at the national level, rather than on provincial policies".

Similarly, the UNHCR and Diakonie advocate directly through communication with the national government. In contrast, Ukrainian NGOs do not have such a communication channel but they cooperate with the Embassy of Ukraine in Austria on this issue.

The organizations also provide other types of support, tailored to the specific needs. The UNHCR is also involved in raising awareness about displaced Ukrainians:

"We have been running many teachers' workshops throughout Austria, and the first thing we did was update our educational materials to explain to teachers a little bit about the rights and legal situation of refugees from Ukraine".

"Our task is to educate the media about the legal problems and to explain a little about the numbers. If we have a survey, we push it out to the public so that people can inform themselves".

"What we also did, we tried to have a few stories from people who want to share their experiences and talk about themselves because it's always nice when people can speak for themselves rather than having us talk about them".

Moreover, the UNHCR representative mentioned a project for young people from different refugee communities, which was included Ukrainians and showed positive results in

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community-building efforts. At the same time, the Diakonie Consultation Center Ukraine offers targeted support on housing issues, social counseling – primary addressing financial questions, job market guidance, and social medical counseling.

The arrival of Ukrainians, according to Unlimited Democracy and TUMA representatives, united all Ukrainian NGOs in Vienna, where each helped according to their capabilities. Closer to May 2022, Unlimited Democracy was able to secure an office and then launched an Unlimited Academy initiative where Ukrainians could attend free courses. Within the initiative, courses in first aid, Ukrainian history, English language, women's self-help club, public speaking, and German language were conducted. TUMA in 2022 focused its activities on assisting newcomers with resettlement, assistance with document submission and translation, as well as providing information upon request. Currently, they are organizing cultural events for Ukrainians such as Vienna tours, fairs, and charity events.

5.3. Advocacy work for Integration and Empowerment

Direct advocacy efforts by international and national NGOs involve communicating directly with the Austrian government to address specific needs and challenges faced by displaced Ukrainians. The UNHCR representative named examples where Ukrainians were not aware of their insurance coverage because of not receiving insurance papers, leading to unnecessary barriers in accessing healthcare. Hence, the UNHCR intervened by letting authorities know about the situation and asking them to inform Ukrainians to alleviate concerns and improve access to the necessary services.

Similarly, Caritas Austria and Diakonie highlighted their joint advocacy work. The representatives of Caritas Austria and Diakonie mentioned that now their advocacy efforts

aim to facilitate the transition of Ukrainians to a different residency status. This status would not solely rely only on Basic Care support mechanism, which was created as a temporary solution and put many constrains and hesitations on Ukrainians, as discussed in details in the Chapter II. However, given the war in Ukraine has persisted more than 2 years, they believe a more permanent solution is needed. While acknowledging the challenging political climate for such advocacy efforts in Austria, Caritas stressed the importance of advocating for solutions that benefit all individuals, including vulnerable groups. They expressed success in the open labor market for Ukrainian displaced individuals and partial success in allowing certain individuals to transition to the Red-White-Red Plus card, which is a combination of residence and work permit based on employment criteria, but argued the need for a broader and more inclusive solution:

"It's somewhat successful that there will be a new law permitting some Ukrainians to shift to this residency status. However, it's quite limited and stringent, applying only to those who are employed and have sufficient income. This doesn't meet our expectations because we believe in solutions that are accessible to everyone, particularly the vulnerable groups".

In contrast, Ukrainian NGOs engage in indirect advocacy as they do not communicate directly with authorities. Often they rely on such channels as the Ukrainian embassy to communicate concerns and need of Ukrainians to the government. Both interviewed NGOs emphasized that even if they may not have direct access to policymakers, they put all efforts to make sure that interests of displaced Ukrainians are represented in policy discussions.

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5.4. Collaboration with Other Stakeholders and NGOs

Since Ukrainian organizations have noted a high level of cooperation among themselves, the UNHCR and Austrian NGOs similarly commend the level of collaboration among themselves and with the government. As mentioned earlier, the main communication with the government occurs through regular meetings organized by the Ministry of the Interior, in which the UNHCR, Caritas, and Diakonie participate. Unfortunately, Ukrainian organizations are not involved in these meetings; however, they report cooperation and communication with the Embassy of Ukraine in Austria, to which they convey important information.

Representatives from Caritas discussed the collaboration of Austrian organizations in the context of their participation in the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Freie Wohlfahrt (Federal Association of Free Welfare), which comprises Caritas, Diakonie, the Red Cross, Hilfswerk, and Volkshilfe. The main goal of this working group is joint advocacy, and the issue of Ukrainian displaced persons is also addressed. The working group holds regular meetings where organizations consult with one another. Additionally, a representative from Diakonie Consultation Center Ukraine mentioned fruitful cooperation with another Austrian NGO, Train of Hope. Diakonie conducts counseling once a week in the Train of Hope building, benefiting from each other's resources: Diakonie needs space for consultations due to a lack of rooms in their own building, and Train of Hope visitors can attend Diakonie's counseling, as they does not have its counseling center. Moreover, according to the Diakonie representative:

"We are also cooperating with our deconflicting schemes, which are significant players in the social field. For example, we offer special counseling for women, including legal advice, particularly for those facing violence in the family".

Ukrainian NGOs continue to collaborate closely, organizing events and courses together and providing venues for each other. Regarding the cooperation between the UNHCR and Austrian NGOs with Ukrainian organizations, all representatives noted their communication with various Ukrainian groups. The UNHCR representative mentioned that in addition to Ukrainian NGOs in Vienna, her colleagues also communicated with an organization founded by displaced Ukrainians in Linz to better understand their needs. Caritas Austria representatives mentioned that while they do not collaborate directly with Ukrainian NGOs in Austria, their regional branches work closely with Ukrainian organizations. The Diakonie representative noted that they assist the Ukrainian NGO Matvsiya ("Mother") with venue space and frequently organize joint events with the Ukrainian St. Barbara church in Vienna.

Unlimited Democracy representative mentioned their involvement in organizing events for Ukrainians with Caritas Vienna. However, a representative from TUMA remarked, *"Unfortunately, we have had no cooperation with Austrian or international NGOs. I assume this is because we position ourselves as an organization focused on cultural aspects, and perhaps they do not see us as particularly useful."*

5.5. Response to Feedback from Displaced Ukrainians

Feedback plays an important role in the work of the interviewed NGOs and shapes their understanding of what is critical in their advocacy and assistance efforts. All NGOs stressed that they seek feedback as it highly relevant for their work. There are two types of feedback from Ukrainians that these organizations receive, depending on their operations: direct and indirect through surveys conducted by NGOs. Indirect feedback is received by the UNHCR and Caritas Austria, while direct feedback is obtained by the regional branches of Caritas. According to the Caritas Austria representatives:

"The survey was to check if our advocacy positions are still up to date, see if anything has changed, and identify any problems we're not aware of. We're seeking feedback on what we're addressing, but not on how we're conducting our work. Based on the results, we work on advocacy. For example, 60% of the people asked said that they want to stay in Austria even when the war will be over, and based on that, we work on long-term solutions."

Direct feedback is also received by Diakonie Consultation Center Ukraine and Ukrainian NGOs. As noted by a representative of Diakonie:

"Ukrainians are the first target group who can give feedback, which is really helpful for our work. All other target groups just say thank you. So, we have our anonymous feedback sheet in the waiting room, and everybody is invited to fill it out. We make the evaluation every three months".

The Diakonie representative noted that cases of negative feedback were isolated, such as when someone received incorrect information. However, there were no instances where Ukrainians were generally dissatisfied with the work of the NGO or the assistance it provides.

Ukrainian NGOs also directly communicate with displaced persons and receive direct feedback from them. According to the Unlimited Democracy representative:

"At the beginning, everyone was very grateful for any help, and we received more critical feedback later, particularly about our courses. We conducted surveys on Telegram, where people responded. Additionally, speaking about the courses, an indirect form of feedback is whether people attend them or not."

Chapter VI. Conclusion

Exploring the role of non-governmental organization in assisting Ukrainian displaced persons in the context of the Ukrainian migration crisis caused by the Russian invasion in 2022, this thesis explored the roles and contributions of international, national, and Ukrainian non-governmental organizations. It investigated the significant similarities and differences in the work of these NGOs in addressing Ukrainians' needs and challenges. Moreover, it also examined the NGOs' responses to feedback from displaced persons, shedding light on both their effectiveness and adaptive mechanisms.

To achieve other set research objectives, a qualitative methods approach was used, involving interviews with representatives from the UN Refugee Agency, Caritas Austria, Diakonie Consultation Center Ukraine, Unlimited Democracy, and TUMA NGOs, as well as a literature review analyzing existing literature in the field. It provides theoretical and historical contexts by focusing on prior research related to forced migration, the role of NGOs in humanitarian efforts, and the specific context of Ukrainian migration crisis.

As per findings, this research reveals significant differences in how various non-governmental organizations define needs, provide support, perform advocacy, collaborate with stakeholders, and respond to feedback. In the context of identifying and prioritizing Ukrainian displaced persons' needs, international and national NGOs rely on their experience and surveys to identify and prioritize the immediate necessities. They also benefit from regular meetings with government officials to acquire information. Ukrainian organizations, on the other hand, concentrate primary on direct communication with displaced people, emphasizing the value of firsthand knowledge.

NGOs provide a variety of services tailored to specific needs. International and national NGOs advocate directly with the Austrian government, raise awareness among the society, and offer various forms of support such as social counseling and job marketing advice. At the same time, Ukrainian NGOs offer cultural activities, language learning, and consultations upon request.

International and national NGOs directly advocate for the specific difficulties encountered by displaced Ukrainians to the policymakers. Conversely, the Austrian authorizes do not involve Ukrainian NGOs in this process, leading Ukrainian organization engage in indirect advocacy, relying on the Ukrainian Embassy to communicate concerns.

In terms of cooperation, while international and national NGOs collaborate closely with each other and the Austrian government, Ukrainian organization primary cooperate among themselves. Collaboration with other organizations and authorities varies among NGOs, but tends to concentrate on joint advocacy and resource sharing.

Feedback plays an important role in shaping the efforts of all organizations. While international and national NGOs receive both direct and indirect feedback, Ukrainian organizations rely on direct feedback from displaced individuals. All organizations use this feedback to evaluate and improve their services, stressing the importance of continuous communication and evaluation.

The findings of this study support the initial assumptions and also show that sometimes international NGOs might be involved into direct engagement with the displaced population. However, the findings are only limited to the assessment of pre-defined and agreed-upon NGOs and do not typologies all organizations working in this field, but concentrate on those

helping displaced Ukrainians in general. This thesis shows that three types of organizations have smooth cooperation that benefits displaced Ukrainians, but such cooperation is not always the norm. This observation adds depth to the findings and highlights rather the exceptional nature of the study. Nevertheless, the research findings provides a deep understanding of value and amount of work undertaken by NGOs in Austria and the government's selective communication with organizations supporting Ukrainian displaces persons, as well as the challenging advocacy environment. Lastly, this research aims to contribute to migration governance studies as well as shed light on Ukrainian migration crisis from the perspective of non-governmental organizations.

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