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Contemporary Refugees in Ukraine: Causes of Displacement, Strategies of Resettlement, and Problems of Adaptation

This report presented the results of an original study carried out in October-December 2014 in Ukraine. Recent political events in Ukraine associated with the occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula, the actual, if undeclared Russian-Ukrainian war on part of the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stimulated a massive migration of the population and actualized the problem of internally displaced persons. The study focuses on the causes of displacement, strategies of resettlement, problems of adaptation of displaced persons and is based on seventy in-depth interviews (24 in-depth interviews of displaced persons from the territory of the Crimean peninsula; 46 in-depth interviews of displaced persons from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions). The research encompasses respondents who had the opportunity to choose their direction of migration (that is, those who migrated from Crimea in March-April and from Donbas in May-June 2014). Residents of the occupied territories, who were evacuated later in the fall and winter of 2014-2015 were not included in our sample. The sampling technique was the snowball method with no more than two steps in one branch.

In general, the process of relocation is not accompanied by social or ethnic conflicts, but does lead to social isolation of displaced persons. All displaced persons noted a deterioration in their own (and their family's) socio-economic status. Most of the displaced persons (independently of age) had limited contacts with people in the new city and most of them did not want to communicate with another displaced person (often due to fears that among them may be persons with a different outlook). The majority of displaced persons demonstrated a kind of exhaustion from the topic, unwillingness to talk about it, and irritation due to the lack of understanding of what was happening (especially older people from the East of Ukraine).

Keywords: internally displaced persons, Crimea, Donbas, resettlement, adaptation.

Introduction

Recent political events in Ukraine associated with the occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula, the actual, if undeclared Russian-Ukrainian war on part of the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stimulated a massive migration of the population. As a result, Ukraine had to face not only internal migration but also the problem of internally displaced persons. The main efforts associated with relocation and adaptation of the internally displaced persons were undertaken primarily by public associations. The activities of local government institutions (first of all municipalities) played a secondary role.

During the process of resettlement, however, resettled people face financial difficulties, as well as socio-cultural problems caused by different worldviews, models of behaviour, language practices, political dispositions, etc. One-sided media representations reinforced these contradictions using elements of «othering» and stigma, and deepened animosity among citizens of the same country. Since a divided society cannot successfully resist external aggression, this issue requires urgent attention of policy makers and scholars.

Therefore, one of the most urgent and important tasks for policy makers is to forge a new model of unity for Ukraine, based on diversity, understanding and acceptance of the "other", tolerance and human rights. The reality, however, has demonstrated the complexity of this task for us. On the one hand, direct contact between representatives of different regions of Ukraine and their active intercommunication resulting from the process of resettlement has exposed many problems, yet on the other hand, it has created opportunities for their solution.

Methodology

Geography of research: Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Kyiv, Lviv. The selective collection included: 1. Internally displaced persons from the territory of the Crimean peninsula - 24 in-depth interviews; 2. Internally displaced persons from the occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions - 46 in-depth interviews. The respondents were selected according to gender and age parameters. The sample of displaced persons from the East of Ukraine was enriched by two additional interviews in each city with representatives of national (ethnic) minorities (beyond gender-age parameters).

The research encompasses respondents who had the opportunity to choose their direction of migration (that is, those who migrated from Crimea in March-April and from Donbas in May-June 2014). Residents of the occupied territories, who were evacuated later in the fall and winter of 2014-2015, were not included in our sample. The sampling technique was the snowball method with not more than two steps in one branch.

Occupied Crimea

The main resettlements of the relocated people from Crimea were Kyiv and Lviv. While the migrants to Kyiv comprised a nationally mixed group of people, the Crimean Tatars moved mostly to Lviv. These vectors were influenced by the following motives: in Kyiv, the dominant motive was proximity to the power structures and institutions that deal with issues related to displace persons (this makes appeal to them easier and shortens the waiting time for a solution). The resettlement of Crimean Tatars to Lviv was in response to the invitation and willingness of local authorities (the City Council of Lviv and Lviv Regional Council decisions that were announced in the media), and also the positive reaction of the city residents.

- ✓ *“I did go (to Lviv) several years ago. I liked the city a lot. And I thought to myself, “It would be so nice to live here for a little while, to work here, to meet people.” People are very nice here, they are polite and most importantly, religious. It’s just that it is easy to communicate with religious people. It’s like we speak the same language: we are Muslim, they are Christians. But they are faithful, they are not atheists. They believe in their own way.” (Older Crimean Tatar man).*

Most people moved from the Crimea during March 2014. The main reason was the growth of intolerance towards pro-Ukraine minded people on the territory of the Crimean peninsula. Respondents indicate various kinds of pressure they have experienced there ranging from generally unpleasant atmosphere in the society to active persecution (denunciation, displays of aggression, beatings, violence, etc.).

- ✓ *“This aggression, this very pressure, all of this bothered me since I know the First Chechen war, the Second Chechen war, all that was happening there. They would arrive under the pretext of some noble motives, and people would start disappearing, they would commit transgressions. I was afraid this would start happening, was concerned for my grandchildren. We hosted kids from Chechnya when they were left without their parents, some of them had one parent, mother*

or father, and some didn't. There were orphans there too. So, all those kids, they were all traumatized. When they heard a large plane flying, they would wet themselves. I would always think of my grandchildren at those moments. God forbids they should go through something like this. And now it happened. It seems like it is quiet now, but it's not really quiet. A man should live where his family is, where his religion is, where his life is not in danger. But it is not that certain here. They break into homes. They search you. They search mosques.” (Older, Crimean Tatar man).

- ✓ *“After the events that took place, I somehow realized that there is no future at the place where I live... I didn't see any future for my home town, I mean I was tired of all the stress, of persecution of all things Ukrainian. All that was happening there, when flags were torn, when everything Ukrainian was being destroyed. It was very hard to endure, it was hard psychologically to stay in all that, there was pressure coming from everywhere. Turns out I have lived in the country for twenty something years, but it's like this country didn't even exist, and then there's Sevastopol, which is quite a peculiar city, everyone is chanting, “Russia, hurray-hurray” and they don't even understand, the herd just keeps chanting. Very few people had their own opinion and if they expressed their opinion, it would be immediately shut down, it's like you became an outcast by default. It was taking the form starting from just yelling at you in the street which would then turned into insults, for example, if you said something Ukrainian in the street, you became a “Banderite”, some kind of an enemy, some kind of an outcast, and you heard profanities and threats addressed at you, and so forth.” (Young man, Crimean).*
- ✓ *“In Crimea FSB is constantly conducting searches of people who are more religious. For example, my parents live in a pretty remote village, I mean, it is so isolated and remote from civilization, and even in the nearby village, where my Dad works...So FSB came there and searched Crimean Tatar families, they were looking for Islam literature and Ukrainian hryvnias, and they fired a Crimean Tatar school principle, although he had been the principle for quite a while.” (Middle-aged woman, Crimean Tatar).*

The resettlement of Ukrainian military personnel, who were transferred by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to Odesa, exhibited a different pattern. Their adaptation was carried out by the Ministry under better conditions.

Crimean Tatars differed from other migrants from Crimea and the East. They resorted to strategies of survival acquired during their war time deportation and repatriation. At the same time, their own experience of deportation (from the territories of present-day Poland) by parts of the population of Western Ukraine fostered additional sympathy and support for the Crimean Tatars on the part of Lviv dwellers.

- ✓ *“We've been carrying this heavy burden for centuries. Invaders are stabbing our people with bayonets. This bloodshed, all these tears, this genocide – the*

God will never forgive this without repentance. In order not to repeat the same mistakes it's time for us to learn the lesson how Tatar Ukrainians should not burn bridges. I'm touched and grateful to those people who welcomed us; those, who sincerely cried for us from their hearts." (Older, Crimean Tatar man).

- ✓ *"Towards Crimeans the attitude is generally positive. There are even villages where many people say their grandmothers and grandfathers were deported back in 1946, when they were evicted from Poland, and all of this, this pain and all is familiar to them." (Middle-aged Crimean Tatar man).*

Immediately after migration (in March-May 2014), the Crimean Tatars actively cooperated with the State (in terms of registration, acquiring the status of private entrepreneurs, appeals for land plots) and volunteer organizations (which often times they themselves initiated). They established their own businesses (in particular, ethnic and fast food restaurants. The question of forming local national-cultural societies of Crimean Tatars was also raised at this early stage.

- ✓ *"What's the point in asking for something and whining? If there's such a opportunity, we now should take a piece of land somewhere and maybe build on it. Maybe our young ones will build something. They can build a house. If they work, they will be able to build." (Older Crimean Tatar man).*
- ✓ *"We can't go around begging to give us something. Our country is in such a state now that it's not us who should be asking for something, but it's our country that's in need, asking us to help in any way we can: by giving bread, providing a kind word or a prayer. These are the times we live in." (Older Crimean Tatar man).*

The displaced Crimean Tatars confirmed a positive attitude toward their group on the part of the local population. This has had a positive effect on the formation of a wide communication network with the local population. Inclusion in local communication networks provided additional benefits in the process of seeking new jobs, or in the search for housing. Additionally, they note that even their lack of fluency in the Ukrainian language was not perceived by local people in a negative way (As one of the respondent said, "in any case they know that we are not Russians").

- ✓ *"I want them to see I am not local, because then people start asking a lot of questions: about the religion, about our culture, our traditions, our cuisine. They like it when I cook something for them, some Eastern food. I've realized that people like it here if they are asking questions, if they are interested." (Older, Crimean Tatar man).*

At the same time a potential problem, which was not articulated by the respondents during interviews, was brought up by some of them off the record. They were afraid that the resettlement of very religious Crimean Muslims (they called that group «wahhabis»), who were fleeing persecution for their religious beliefs from the new Russian administration in Crimea, might in the future cause some problems. Their appearance in Lviv, which is quite homogeneous in the religious aspect, can potentially become a real challenge for tolerance on the part of local communities toward the Crimean Tatars.

The groups for whom resettlement appeared to be most problematic were students, young professionals and people of retirement age, that is those who are not in demand on the labor market and whose salary only partially covers the cost of living. Members of these groups lacking extra help had to stay in very poor housing provided by the State in March (often in unheated buildings of old resorts or summer camps); they were not sure how long even such housing would be available to them, because officials constantly said that this housing is only temporary.

Displaced persons from Crimea received active assistance from volunteers in March-April, but with the escalation of violence in the East of Ukraine the attention of volunteers was diverted toward refugees from those territories. On the one hand, youth and middle-aged people more clearly expressed their pro-Ukrainian position. On the other hand, people of older age explained reality more frequently through the prism of survival strategies, and were very ambivalent in their explanations of what had happened.

Internally displaced persons expressed their willingness to stay. They explained that today's Crimean society is uncomfortable for them, and expressed their desire to live in Ukraine.

- ✓ *“For the time being I don't see myself staying in Crimea, neither for myself nor for my child.” (Middle-aged Crimean woman).*
- ✓ *“I don't want my grandchildren to go to Crimea, don't want that.” (Older Crimean woman).*

Describing events in Crimea, and the fact that Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation, a majority of respondents stressed the existence of external Russian influences and Russian occupation.

- ✓ *“People with Russian flags came here and announced that it is their territory. So how can I not react to that?! I don’t support this” (Young Crimean man).*
- ✓ *“So-called “older brother” that is not a brother at all, but just an alligator with a crazy appetite that is eating it all – the people, territories, resources. He doesn’t consider it, they don’t care that over there that some human lives are being destroyed or something like that.” (Young Crimean man).*

Occupied East Ukraine. Displaced persons from Crimea indicated a number of different reasons for their departure. In the case of people who escaped from the occupied territories in the East of Ukraine there was one dominant cause - a direct threat to life.

- ✓ *“R: My parents fled from our home town because of our pro-Ukrainian position. I mean at first DNR got interested in me because of my activity back in February during the European Maydan, as well as in Donetsk... Actually, I was put on their lists in January. They were making lists, and I was under number 32 and my address was included too. It was a wrong address though... They posted them online. There were a lot of those lists. Very different sites were posting them. First of all, social networks did. Second, Donetsk sites. Third, those were the sites of various newly created pro-Russian Donetsk organizations. And lastly, I believe some of the university websites posted those lists as well. I mean representatives of Donetsk National University posted online this very detailed information about the entire Donetsk chapter of our organization “Poshtovh”. They were collecting this information. During my college years, there have been rumors that there were these black lists. Well, we were joking about it, those were just rumors, but turned out they were probably not just rumors, they did have those lists, the lists of people they considered unreliable. And later my parents recalled those lists. And some nice people warned us, people who, let’s put it this way, are more pro-DNR than pro-Ukrainian, but out of respect for my family they warned us that we need to flee the city and do it immediately.” (Young man from Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“I was here in July and left in August, because it was impossible to stay there. You know, the buildings were being destroyed, and when rebels were entering the town on the second of August and Ukrainian army was retreating, a lot of our people were killed. A lot of homes burned down. In general it was very scary and it is still scary...” (Middle-aged woman, the city of Schastia).*

A significant motivation for migration was the presence in the family of children.

- ✓ *“We have two kids and we have to live through the war. If we didn’t have children, then maybe we could have stayed there. We moved because of children and because of work, since my husband didn’t have a job there.” (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk).*

In the respondents’ description of their reasons for relocation are reflected some basic elements of applied technologies of hybrid war: manipulation of marginal elements, incitement of various social groups against each other, practices of “othering”. The respondents’ answers demonstrate that this component of hybrid warfare was not very successful. Equally unsuccessful was the publication on the Internet of “lists of pro-Ukraine minded residents of Donbas”, complete with addresses and telephone numbers. The addresses were published in order to stimulate aggression towards those who were identified as “an alien”, “the enemy”, etc. However, this did not happen. But the expectation and fear of possible aggression actually pushed many people to relocate. Another unsuccessful attempt was an anti-Semitic strategy. The appearance of proclamations and appeals of an anti-Semitic nature did not result in actions against the Jewish population of Donbas. These attitudes serve to characterize Ukrainian society as being in general, quite tolerant. In the case of hybrid war, Russia had very actively stoked “othering” strategies and fostered negative tendencies, because otherwise, from Russian’s point of view, the necessary high degree of conflict could not be created.

Another practice described in the interviews was “delaying of relocation” that is, people did not want to believe until the last moment that their place of residence would threaten their lives.

- ✓ *“I stayed there until the very last moment, and then it became so scary to be sitting there, to be waiting and be scared – it just made no sense anymore. We were hiding in the basements, in the bathroom and lavatory. We would put mattresses and pillows against the window, because you know, when there’s impact wave you want to make sure glass pieces do not reach children. I would put mattresses on top of my kids too. I would hide in a pantry, I have this tiny pantry in the kitchen, and that’s where I’d be sitting, and my kids would be sitting in the room.” (Middle-aged woman, the city of Schastia).*

For almost all respondents the situation seemed absurd, and for that reason people thought that it could not last long. Migration out of the occupied territory was perceived as temporary. The beginning of the active phase of the fighting coincided with summer vacation time. The majority of respondents tried to use this as an

explanation for their movement and to present it as usual summer migration. Despite the real threat to their lives respondents delayed their departure on official holidays. Most of them at that time did not make serious attempts to sell or lease their housing, or to quit work. Going on vacation they also did not take with them any warm clothing or winter gear, not to mention other goods.

- ✓ *“The situation in our city was getting worse. It was getting worse so quickly that in February-March there were still protests, and then armed conflicts started... We kept guessing what all of this would turn into, waiting that maybe it was only temporary, that maybe we can fight this, but nobody could have guessed this would lead to a war. But when the regional administration was already seized, when explosions started to occur in the city, weapons, armed people, armored fighting vehicles, the airport, when all the events started at the airport, and we live not too far from it and for several days or more we heard explosions, heard shooting, all of this scared us.” (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk).*

With regard to release from work – people tried to save their jobs and employment records. The majority of respondents started their process of release at long distance, when institutions and enterprises in the occupied territories were taken over by the DNR and the LNR. This led to problems with documentation (obtaining of work records, diplomas, certificates, confirmation of the release, etc). Slightly better conditions faced those who worked at enterprises that were officially evacuated from the occupied territory. However, most institutions - one part of which evacuated, one remained - confronted people with difficult choices.

An important element in the process of resettlement was the choice of the direction of relocation. The choice of future place of residence was not strongly associated with national, State or patriotic considerations. The dominant motivation was survival. Therefore, the vector of the relocation depended on the following points: 1. The presence of relatives (who could provide a place to stay and help with the initial integration into local social networks); 2. Prospect of work or employment; 3. Presence of friends, colleagues, etc.

Moreover, it often was a place already familiar to the migrating person. Respondents often chose a city because that city was a part of their life. It may have been a city where they had studied, visited relatives, worked, had many friends etc. In this way people expected to make the process of adaptation easier.

The choice of place of relocation was also associated with how the person perceived the prospect of returning home. Many people looked for a temporary residence not far from home. This allowed the possibility of communication with those parts of the family, who remained in the zone of ATO, access to the property, created a sense of proximity to home. It created the comforting feeling that they could return at any moment.

- ✓ *“We thought it would all end soon, so we can go home regularly and so that it wouldn’t be too far.” (Young man, Luhansk).*

Stereotypes and fears also played a role. People from the East who believed in some of the propaganda stories about Western Ukrainians, would not choose Lviv as their destination. They perceived Lviv and increasingly Kyiv, as cities of high concentration of "the Right Sector" and "Banderites". For the same reason some of the inhabitants of the East region, those who could only see "the Right Sector" and "Banderites" in all regions throughout Ukraine, generally refused to move.

- ✓ *“Well, he [my husband] has this impression that people in western Ukraine have negative attitudes toward residents of the Donbass: “No, they are westerners [derogatory connotation], I’m not gonna go there.” (Young woman, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“My Mom is 75. It is the age when it is hard to make such decision. She says, “Why should I go to the foreign land? If I have to die – I’d rather die in my own town.” Besides, my Mom has a different opinion about the events that are taking place. She is actually one of those people who voted in the referendum that took place either on the 25th or the 28th of May... So, my Mom voted in the referendum because she believed that the new Ukrainian regime that was installed illegitimately, that it would bring us no good. Moreover, my Mom is a fan of Russian TV, of that opinion that it imposes on our residents, so to come to Lviv is an enormous stress for her, she is scared, she is really scared that there are Banderites here, who hate the East and so on.” (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk-Lviv).*

In general, we can see several different trajectories of migration that reflected the different conditions behind their migration for internally displaced person. These can be divided into two main categories: 1) persons who relocated as part of an organized group (such as an: enterprise, institution, religious community, regular troops, etc.); 2) those who moved individually or as part of the family.

The first strategy was a «soft» trajectory of relocation. The migrants received assistance mainly in the two most important areas of the process of relocation - housing

and work places. In such cases, the displaced person mainly received help from national-cultural societies and religious communities. These persons demonstrated a significantly higher level of integration in the local community, using as a resource their local professional, national or religious networks.

In other instances, when people moved individually or as a family, they faced many more problems, beginning with such basic issues as accommodations, work and new social contacts.

Another evident problem was that of trust. Before the government decision about allocating financial help to displaced persons, most of them were not registered officially and didn't want to receive the status of internally displaced persons. The stated explanation was the desire to maintain their independence, the ability to solve their problems on their own. A hidden motive (which was often revealed off the record) was fear of how those lists would be used and for what purpose. Only the need for financial State support and valid documents created the specific circumstances that forced most relocated people to register.

Displaced persons confirmed the existence of rumors about misunderstandings and unpleasant situations in communication between locals and displaced persons, but in most cases they were not experienced or witnessed personally by respondents. Thinking about the causes of such rumors about "bad" migrants, they would speak of propaganda, and the dissemination of negative information. On the other hand they spoke of stereotyping of displaced persons and the different problems that might cause.

In addition, respondents didn't want to talk about attitudes toward them in the new place of relocation. Analyzing the answers to other questions, motivation for such «silence» became more understandable.

- ✓ *“Well, so, when you go to get water you hear what people are saying. Well, different people say different things. Some sympathize with us, others look at us as if saying, “Why did you come here? Go live back there.” And someone else just says something filthy. I don't want to repeat that. But there were cases when I had to control myself. You want to respond, but you need to control yourself. Back home I wouldn't have put up with that, but over here I just keep silent. (Older man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“I.: Do you think people guess that you are not local?
R.: Most likely yes.
I.: What gives you out, what signs help them guess?
R.: Maybe my facial expression, as I look lost. I think I feel differently. I feel insecure. (Young man, Luhansk).*

- ✓ *“The thing is that by staying here, when someone hasn’t heard and hasn’t seen the war, they don’t know how scary it is, and that’s why they...I think when they say something negative, they just don’t understand what it’s like. I don’t respond and don’t even get too offended by anyone because unless you are in the same situation, you can’t understand someone else. (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk).*

On the one hand, displaced people are silent because they want to quickly merge into the new environment; they do not feel that they are different. They are ready to forget about their dignity, their own position and system of values. But this doesn't mean that they could do so forever. This creates a situation of "deferred action". In Ukraine we had the same experience after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when a part of the population did not support the change, but kept silent. However, at some point, that resentment was harnessed by image makers for organization of pro-Russian rallies, where Russia was depicted not as a contemporary country, but as a Russia which was closely associated with the USSR. Moreover, the displaced persons are silent because they are afraid to express their point of view, to defend their rights in situations when they didn't feel themselves as full-fledged citizens. All those feelings of displaced persons may become manifested in the future. As soon as people adapt to new places, they will feel the right to express their voice. And that voice can be unexpected.

- ✓ *“They are not doing anything, they are just sitting and raking in a big pile of dough. I actually think Yanukovich wasn’t stealing anything, they just blamed this money on him and they took the money and just divided it between them all and started borrowing from America, from Russia, and where else were they borrowing from? And Yanyk [Yanukovych] just got off in Russia because there’s nothing else he can do – he gets either killed or he jumps across to Russia. This is my opinion and I’m trying not to make it public.” (Young man, Kirovsk – Kharkiv).*

Many respondents understand that their perception of the situation does not correspond to the official version. However, they do not feel the right to demonstrate their own position. But, as was shown by the present situation in Donbas, a marginal position has the potential to turn quickly into a dominant one or even the only possible one.

The process of adaptation becomes even more complicated because displaced persons have a heightened perception of the surrounding reality, and often perceive neutral approval as value judgments.

In both migration groups (Crimea and Donbas) we can talk about the “family gap”.

First, older people refused to move because of their awareness of the help rendered them by the State, and they do not want to make problems for their relatives.

Secondly, there is the strategy of leaving someone to guard their property. This strategy is a response to the practice by the DNR and the LNR authorities to give housing to their soldiers using the property of people, who fled. Therefore, people were willing to risk their own lives, in order to protect their property.

Third, the strategy of moving only the young part of the family often reflects the notion of family “sacrifice”, there are not enough resources to move the whole family, this strategy takes into account understanding about future prospects of life in a new place.

And fourth, there is the return of individual family members (mainly young and middle-aged men) to the occupied territories in search of work. Such decisions are made after unsuccessful searches of work in Ukraine, although this strategy turns out to be a failure.

- ✓ *“My wife’s parents. We wanted to take them with us, but they refused emphatically. They said, “we are too old and don’t want to go anywhere. Come what may.” (Older man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“I mean everyone left, our family, and my father, and my sister and her daughter. Everybody moved out, they moved to Chernigov. But they want to come back, it’s hard for them to be there. It’s hard in all regards, I must say. People were literally running away, and they only took what they could. They simply don’t have enough things. My sister’s husband hasn’t been paid for several months by now.” (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“My mom and my sister are staying there. And their reasons are the following. My sister came here and lived with us for about two months. That was during the most unpeaceful times. My mom didn’t want to leave. My mom is 75. This is the age when it is hard to make such decision. She says, “Why should I go to a foreign land? If I have to die – I’d rather die in my own town.” Besides, my Mom has a different opinion about the events that are taking place.” (Middle-aged women, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *«Well, here’s for example my grandmother, my dad’s mom, she has just returned to Donetsk on Tuesday. Well, it’s because she’s like 70 years old. She misses her home and wants to look after it, she cannot stay at her relatives’ for too long.” (Young woman, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“I mean my mom has a very clear political opinion. And that’s why she didn’t want to go. Besides, there’s also a practical side of the question. My mom*

understands that it's not safe to abandon the apartment. Anyone can – maybe Ukrainian junta, or maybe local rebels, she does see that there are different people among them too and an abandoned apartment means looting. So, it's better if I stay here and watch over things because this is my only property in life and I'll never have any new one. (Middle-aged woman, Donetsk).

These models of a “family gap” disprove claims of the separatist convictions of those people who remained on the territory of the DNR and the LNR. As analyzed here reasons show they are not directly related to the political attitudes of such people.

The central problems that internally displaced persons faced at their new locations were those connected with housing and work. In the process of searching for housing all migrants faced manifestations of negative attitudes. Some internally displaced persons facing problems of housing, were ready to provide references asserting their “ability to pay”, responsibility, "normality", etc. However, the use of references in housing market is not common, allowing owners to refuse potentially "unwanted" clients.

- ✓ *“There was quite active propaganda going on for some time here and it was pretty hard to find anything. Housing, job. A lot of people from the west [of Ukraine] thought that some lumpens were coming here who were not going to work and would live at someone else's expense. But in reality, the people who went to Lviv are professors, intelligentsia, IT-specialists, programmers, business owners. You can say that the intelligent part of the city left and pro-Ukrainian part did too. That is why all rumors have gradually stopped. There were some problems with renting a place to live. We found a reasonable realtor. We found housing. And then the realtor called us back and said that the owners are hesitant... It came to them asking us to show a proof of employment to make sure we were settled here. It made me angry, I collected all possible documents, my student rosters, where I was written down as their lecturer, some decrees, a letter to the Consular General of Poland in Ukraine, in which my name was mentioned. In addition, I asked “The Right Sector” to provide a letter of support for me. And then things started moving forward. Then those people calmed down.” (Young man, Donetsk).*

Unwillingness to provide housing was associated not only with the stereotypes held by owners about tenants from Donbas, but also concern about their potential insolvency. Many owners, for whom housing rental is their main source of income, obviously want to avoid problems with payments. Moreover, a significant part of the apartment business in Ukraine has an illegal character. Therefore, the owners often times did not want to lease housing to persons who must register with the authorities

and in this way create problems for themselves because of illegal activity. Thus, in most cases housing was rented to people with whom the owners would not encounter the same problems.

- ✓ *“There are owners who wouldn’t lease housing to refugees. Well, here’s the reason. If I hadn’t had any support, I would have been in the same situation. People from Slaviansk, Kramatorsk were fleeing in their bathrobes and only some thought of taking some money. And to get a job here right away, if someone is distracted, depressed, doesn’t understand what’s going on. Even if you start working right away, you are not gonna get paid right away, you’ll be paid in a month. And even if you paid rent, you still need money for food. You pay for a month and then in a month you are out of money. And they share this information among themselves... Your permanent residency is in Donetsk? We are not going to lease to you because you have problems paying. Yet not everyone is like that.” (Middle-aged woman, Kostiantynivka).*

The next point is the problem of employment. Respondents mentioned two types of obstacles: 1. Obstacles to employment related to age; 2. Obstacles to employment related to «Donbas» origin. These obstacles, as in the case of housing, are related both to stereotypes about people from Donbas, and to rational considerations. Displaced persons, through their undefined social position, are perceived as unstable employees who might at any moment return to Donbas. Respondents mentioned both denials of employment, and the desire of employers to take advantage of the situation by hiring displaced persons to work illegally and paying them a lower salary.

- ✓ *“They look at your age and where you are from. And if they see we are from Donetsk... Here’s an announcement: workers are needed. I get there – sorry, we have already filled the position.” (Older man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“.. it’s rabota.ua, I mean I actually left several times. I would send my resume and would not get any response because it’s obvious where I work, my age. It happened twice when I left, went to Brovary... after the interview I was told the following, “You are a temporary person. You are going to leave in three months, there’s no sense in hiring you.” Plus my age, and the official hire... So, finally, I have just found a firm, I want to go check it out. They advertise official hire, but when I started talking to them – it turns out it’s unofficial.” (Old man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“I was looking for a job for about three weeks. It’s a separate story, it’s quite hard to find a job considering that I have 10 years of experience as a system analyst, the department head. They only say – your war will be over tomorrow and we are going to waste time on you. Nobody is offering a job. Actually, I have just found the only solution. I’ve agreed to tutor people at enterprises who start working there. I teach them. I*

get paid for two months of work and then go to the next enterprise. I get there and they tell me, "Are you from Donetsk? Your salary is 5000, for example, but since you are from Donetsk, we are going to pay you 2500. Since I don't have any other options I have to agree..." (Middle-aged man, Donetsk).

The problem of employment of displaced person is closely connected with the experience of two-fold stress: about life in the zone of war conflict, and about the process of adaptation to the new environment. Often the job seeker does not quickly find employment.

Searching for work is further complicated by differences in the structure of employment, the specific qualifications of workers from Donbas, where economic activity was mainly focused on industry.

Another problem for displaced persons is the level of salary. One working person in Ukraine in most cases cannot provide the necessary living minimum. Families are more viable, when there are two working persons. In this case one person's wages go for rent, the second – for food. Young single displaced persons form groups with joint finances.

Young people perceive their situation as migrants with greater equanimity, considering their new status as an opportunity, a challenge. Most of them don't think about returning, and are focused on self-actualization at their new location. The older generation dreams longingly of returning.

The difference in attitudes about returning is often associated with attitudes about property. For the older generation, property is something that they accumulated over the years through self-sacrifice, so it carries a significant value. In this regard young people for the most part understand that their status has not changed. If they wished to live separately from their parents, no matter in what location, – they had to rent an apartment; young Ukrainians were not able to acquire a dwelling. Housing in another city (especially in Kyiv), on the one hand, carries risks, but on the other hand, gives new opportunities. Middle-aged people either associated their level of motivation to return with the property that they left behind in the occupied territory.

Some national minorities consider the Donbas conflict as external to their group. They take the position of a witness, one who stays aside uninvolved in the conflict. This answer and the answers of respondents belonging to national minorities demonstrate

that some people perceive events in Ukraine not only as a State/Interstate conflict, but also in the context of an interethnic (Ukrainian-Russian) relationship.

- ✓ *“Because when eight thousand people were running up and down the main street, tearing down Ukrainian flags... What is that? And they were yelling “fascists” at us. They are tearing flags down, they are ready to kill anybody, anyone and they are calling us “fascists”. I don’t know...” (Jewish man, Donetsk).*

- ✓ *Interviewer: “Is this an internal conflict or external one?”*
Respondent: “Nobody can tell. It’s not clear. What I’m saying is for example we had a war. We knew that Azerbaijanis speak their language, Armenians speak Armenian. And you know whom you are killing, who’s shooting at you. Here it’s not clear. Here it’s one nation, but nevertheless it turns out that you don’t even have the words to explain that they had been living as brothers for centuries and have now become enemies. It’s not clear, I don’t know who is there.” (Armenian woman, Kostiantynivka).

Due to the general uncertainty about the future of the occupied territories, displaced persons from the Donbas region continue to live in a situation of uncertainty – they cannot return, and at the same time they are not ready to give up the idea of possible return. Their general vision of the situation in Donbas consists of mosaic fragments of personal experiences and some generalizations taken from the media. The flow of information is like a spinning snowball, it has a high tempo and volume that a person is unable to rethink. People are exposed to a huge number of different messages, but still cannot understand what is happening. Most of the messages are mutually exclusive and cause a general distrust of any message and its source. Therefore, despite access to a considerable volume of information the respondents still do not know what is happening in their region; they stay in an information vacuum, unable to make decisions and act.

- ✓ *“Respondent: Exactly at that time I took vacation and brought my family here. Because if airplanes are shooting down at Donetsk, this is as you understand so scary. And that was happening not too far from us, that’s why we left.*
Interviewer: What part of the town was it?
Respondent: Leninskiy district.
Interviewer: And there really were airplanes there?
Respondent: Yes, they showed them on TV.” (Old man, Donetsk).

- ✓ *Interviewer: “How would you explain what happened there [in Donbas]?”*
Respondent: “I saw it all from the outside. I heard about it. I mostly saw everything on TV. We got on the train over there and we were here the next morning. I didn’t see anything either. But when they are shooting, we hear it all. When you hear a bomb going off you get really scared and start running right

away. But to be able to say who with whom and what troops I saw, I didn't see anything like that.” (Armenian woman, Kostiantynivka).

Displaced persons from the Donbas region are experiencing the incompleteness of knowledge about the current situation and uncertainty about the future of the territories on which they lived. This places the respondent in an indeterminate state of a person who neither lives at home, nor integrates deeply into the community at the new location. Under such conditions, the person has problems with making decisions concerning employment, the organization of everyday life, etc.

- ✓ *“And for her, you know, such household things bother her. For example, she sees a fridge and she says we used to have a fridge too. So she sees something like this and says – we used to have it too. So she sees winter boots and says – we have that in Donetsk, maybe we don't need it. Such moments are demoralizing.” (Young man, Donetsk).*

All displaced persons were seriously stressed by the feeling of losing their own homes.

- ✓ *“We long for our own housing...We've always had a feeling that we have a house where your home is, there's a place where your parents live and you can come visit them any time. We used to have this feeling. We no longer have it. And we feel this discomfort. Such absence of something of your own. I mean we are renting now and if the owner who seems to be a reasonable man but if he asks us to vacate, we will have to move out.” (Young man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“We weren't paying for our Donetsk housing and are still not paying. This really bothers me as I don't know what to do about it. Sometimes I think maybe we need to pull it together and do it, and sometimes I think maybe it's all a waste, it is empty now and the district is empty. And our building is still standing but what's going to be there if they take it down. Well, I do consider this. Sometime it worries me because to lose your property, the only thing that we have is scary.” (Older man, Donetsk).*

Displaced persons spoke about aid from government structures and volunteers. The more negative experiences reported by displaced persons were with the State authorities.

First, they spoke about negative experiences in their contacts with local bureaucrats, who would not exceed their formal instructions, show willingness to help in situations with lost documents, inability to produce necessary documents. On the other hand, bureaucrats also made negative comments about the displaced persons (especially in Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk).

At the same time, respondents demonstrated a high level of expectations from the State, believing that it is the state's direct responsibility to help them. Considering their experience with state bureaucrats the unexpected assistance from volunteers, NGOs and other non-governmental people was evaluated very highly by the displaced persons. The intensity of contacts with Governmental structures and with volunteers depended on the financial situation of the displaced persons. Some of them did not need help from the State or volunteers. All respondents were familiar with the activities of volunteer organizations, and all received offers of assistance from them.

Many displaced persons made their own contributions to volunteer work. They actively assisted people who moved from the occupied territories or sent help to those who still are living in war zone, but none of them provided assistance to the Ukrainian army. This vector of assistance confirms a latent condemnation of the armed conflict in Donbas and of all participants in the war on the territory of Donbas. This position is not articulated, but is manifested in practice.

The next point that requires our attention is the respondents' assessment of their own financial position after relocation. On the one hand, they recognize that in fact they have lost everything and must start from scratch in a new place. They recognize that they are dependent on Government decisions and volunteer activities in regard to aid. On the other hand, the respondents try to assess their new status as quite acceptable, as "normal." In the condition of a worsening economic situation in Ukraine, internally displaced persons feel that in a situation of limited resources the necessity for the state to include them as a new category of those needing assistance might lead to diminution of resources for other categories of people in need. Accordingly, they begin to feel guilt over the fact that they need help.

- ✓ *"It's ten times worse. We lost everything. Our building was destroyed."*
(Young man, Donetsk).
- ✓ *"Well, what do I miss. Volunteers have left us, they come over not as often, well, the food is fine, it's all fine I think. What I do miss is a job, and I miss comfort. What else, you know everything is fine, excellent. The most important thing is when they stop bombing, I hope to have some money to buy something. It's not like, they give us food here so why do we need a job? It's warm, we have everything and we don't need anything. It's the opposite, I want to have a job, and a private bath and bathroom. I want to have some comfort, when you come home and that's it, it's your home. But there are a lot of people here. And I love it when I come home by myself and it's all mine."*

But it's not bad here, yet it's better at home (Middle-aged woman, the city of Schastia).

- ✓ *“As far as helping the refugees, I don't know, we are so poor now, our country is in such trouble that everyone should be helped, no just the refugees.” (Older woman, Donetsk).*

Most respondents complained of physical and mental health problems. By that displaced persons mean that stress causes an acceleration of death, a sharp deterioration of health. They describe their mental state as bad and speak of suicidal thoughts brought on by a sense of hopelessness, limiting their civic rights.

- ✓ *“I simply heard that there were places where people lived in some tent, slept on the floor and ate baked potatoes, but something like this is not for people, it's for animals. It was cold, about +5-7C and there were little kids there. My acquaintances told me about all this, they moved too and it was hard for them, thanks to our president and Ukraine... Refugees – they don't want to live. Why don't they want to? It's because the president treats people badly.” (Young man, Kirovsk)*
- ✓ *“At the beginning of the assault [of Donetsk airport by Ukrainian troops], on May 26 or 23, she [the mother of the respondent] was at home and was greatly disturbed by a Ukrainian helicopter that hovered right over our building and then fired off the entire load towards the airport. That happened right over our building. And my mom was greatly shocked by that.” (Young man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“And when we moved to Odesa [from Konstantinovka], he [the husband], got a job making kebabs. And I was sick, from all the worries, it all affected my health a lot. My blood pressure started to go up. Hypertension of second degree. Well. So, I was diagnosed with a lot of health issues. I am still getting treatment so to say and don't work.” (Armenian, middle-aged woman, Kostiantynivka).*
- ✓ *“...people from Lugansk have been traumatized psychologically. It's nerves, some of them can start crying. Sometimes you don't need to pity them, you need to communicate with them as normal. I think it's better to do so without pity, their mood is horrible already and you hear “poor people” and it makes it even worse. And they start crying, getting upset and so on.” (Middle-aged woman, the city of Schastia).*
- ✓ *Respondent: “ I visited Ilovaysk on October 23-24.”
Interviewer: “Did you go there to help?”
Respondent: “Yes, I did. At least we wouldn't have just gone there, but my grandfather passed away, and he endured all that, so to say, and then people started to get better, but the effect it had on them... several people have already died after those events. So. And my grandmother is in Ilovaysk, and*

my wife's sister is in Amvrosievka. We call each other daily, and we look at the situation... (Older man, Donetsk).

The occupation of parts of Ukraine, and the reaction to this situation by the Ukrainian State, has forced people from the occupied territories to rethink the phenomenon of their citizenship. Internally displaced persons who experienced limitations on their civil rights are inclined in their interviews to stress their Ukrainian citizenship – that is, they manifest a desire to return to their previous status and claim that the state does not fulfill its duties of protecting its own citizens.

- ✓ *“You know what they say – an internally displaced person, I find it unpleasant to hear. I don't like any of these statements. I am a resident of Ukraine. If I came here, then I came here. I'm not an internally displaced person in any way. I am a resident of Ukraine. That's all!” (Older man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *Interviewer: “Why did you decide to get registered?”
Respondent: “I was afraid if I don't get registered, I will lose my Ukrainian citizenship. I want Ukraine to know that I'm on the Ukrainian territory and not over there.” (Middle-aged man, Kirovsk).*
- ✓ *“No, I haven't registered as an internally displaced person. Neither my family nor I have. My mom finds it humiliating, she doesn't consider herself to be a refugee, and I don't see any need in this. I mean both my Mom and I have jobs in Lviv.” (Young man, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“And what is being done to stop all this? Both these and those keep bombing. Peace negotiations are nothing, they keep shooting as they did before, they keep killing as they did before... Well I don't see it coming from any side that they are doing something to stop the war. The help – yes, Poroshenko, Ukraine help us, we are not part of LNR and we are thankful for that. Even for that Poroshenko – we did not vote for him, they didn't give us a chance to vote. We live in a part of Ukraine, we should have voted.” (Middle-aged woman, the city of Schastia).*

Stigmatization, demonization and dehumanization of people from the Donbas region have led to a distorted perception of events by people of other regions of Ukraine. In some quarters the entire population of Donbas was seen as homogeneously supporting separatist aspirations. They were held responsible for the occupation of a part of the Donbas region by Russia. Most of the people from Donbas felt abandoned, not included in the national context, while the problems of Donbas were not perceived as being national in character.

- ✓ *“When I went to Dnepropetrovks, I got an absolutely horrible impression. I heard one woman talking on the phone: “Donetsk, ew, Donetsk, why didn't*

you come out, you should have come out to the streets!” And I say: “Of course, there’s a tank standing in the center of the city, we should have definitely come out! Why didn’t you come over here? You did go to Maydan in Kiev, but you didn’t come to us. The same train system was working, so you could have come to us, okay.” (Young woman, Donetsk).

There is no common vision of the situation in the East of Ukraine in the minds of displaced persons. Their understanding of reality is radically different, and depends on sources of information and their own experience. But for the majority the situation is seen as created artificially, brought from the outside (with America, Europe, Kiev, Russia as possible instigators). The newly established local authorities are described as fictitious, dependent, decorative, and unrelated to local people, their attitudes and expectations.

A different vision of the situation in Donbas also creates additional obstacles and slows the process of uniting the displaced persons at their new locations. Many displaced persons demonstrate unwillingness to enter into contact with people from their own region because they attempt to avoid traumatic discussions about their situation. They mostly tend to form closed family circles, and limit their contacts with the outside world.

- ✓ *“So we stopped by there, there’s a Dreamtown in the Obolon district [volunteer help center] and there’s a former shop or something like that, and they are giving out clothes. So we went there one or two times and I didn’t like our people from Donetsk in there. So we stopped going there.” (Middle-aged man, Donetsk).*

Most of the respondents demonstrate a pessimistic vision of the region’s future. The territories are regarded as lost. They are convinced that they will not return to Donbas for a variety of reasons, both external and internal.

- ✓ *“The most likely scenario, there are several scenarios. One of the scenarios is that the region will be divided. Ukraine and let’s call it “This”, I don’t even know what it’s going to be, if it’s going to be independent, but most likely it’s going to be something like Abkhazia or Transdnistria, not recognized by anyone, artificial state, with flourishing illegal drug trade, weapon trade and so on, like in Transdnistria. And those parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that remain in Ukraine will attract a flow of investments and adequate population will move there. Instead, the first part will be so-called independent, but it will stagnate and just deteriorate. Another scenario is Donbas will just be deserted and we’ll go back to the wild field original state. I mean it’ll become an abandoned region.” (young man, Donetsk).*

- ✓ *“We don’t put our hope in anyone anymore, because as they say “the bear will not let go of its own.” (older woman, Torez).*
- ✓ *“Well, to be honest, I don’t see any possibilities, because when it all started I thought: “well, maybe the war will be going on for a couple of months and that’s it. When it is over we’ll go back there.” But now I think I’m not going to go back there because a lot of people who stayed there, they support DNR and they like it all. People over there have been completely brainwashed and it’s impossible to talk to them. You cannot even tell them that our Ukrainian troops are good as they are fighting for our territory, because they believe that Ukrainian troops are killers.” (young woman, Donetsk).*
- ✓ *“Honestly? I don’t see any possibilities at all. Honestly speaking, I don’t see anything for myself there at all.” (older man, Donetsk).*

The conclusion

In general, the process of relocation is not accompanied by social or ethnic conflicts, but does lead to social isolation of displaced persons.

Responses suggest that there are some latent conflicts which are not articulated by displaced persons during answers to direct questions. However, they are revealed in answers to other questions. For example, we can see this when respondents explain their "silence" in response to insults. These latent conflicts are associated with different models of perception, stereotypes and one-sided perception of information. Another latent conflict is related to visual displays of new traditions (for example the appearance of traditional Muslim dress; non-observance of the local traditions by newly arrived people due to their lack of knowledge or detachment from the local community).

The process of migration basically has the nature of individual trajectories rather than organized group translocation. The main role in the process of relocation devolves on social and institutional contacts of the displaced person. In a situation of shortage of such contacts, the primary responsibility devolves on volunteer organizations.

The State plays a minor role in the process of resettlement. Partly this is due to the unwillingness of displaced persons to officially declare their status and partly because of the State’s bureaucratic inertia.

State statistical reports do not show the actual number of displaced persons, because some of them still remain “invisible”. Among those who moved out of Crimea the number of unregistered persons is lower; among migrants from areas of ATO at the time of the study (October-December 2014) the non-registered accounted for about half.

Challenges / opportunities. This is the first time in Ukraine, when representatives of various regions met in the process of active cooperation (first in the “Maidan”, and later at the time of resettlement from the occupied territories). Direct communication undermines mutual stereotypes, promotes the integration of Ukrainian society. These processes are slow, but overall demonstrate positive trends.

Events that happened in Ukraine during 2014 led people to rethink their own attitudes toward Ukrainian State independence, the values of independence, national and State symbols, etc.

As a result of this new awareness we can see extremely strong public criticism practically of all State institutions, the demonstration of the significant potential of civil society to take over the tasks of societal organization. For the country, this is a unique opportunity to produce a State of new quality. One should remember, however, that the "window of opportunity" does not last forever.

The social reaction to the Maidan and the Russian-Ukrainian undeclared war in Ukraine has demonstrated an unexpected level of social solidarity, which was apparent in the large-scale volunteer movement, rational people’s reaction to provocations and to some extent their ability to resist the technologies of hybrid war. The volunteer movement is also an extraordinary opportunity for Ukraine, because finally we have social organization positively perceived in society and with the potential to create a new social solidarity.

Respondents’ answers about their nationality demonstrate the process of construction of a political nation, which harmoniously unites ethnicity and nationality:

“I am a Ukrainian of Jewish descent” (middle age man, Donetsk);

«I am Ukrainian. I was born in the USSR, but not in Russia. I have never been “Russian”, I have never been in Russia, and I don’t know how it is there. We have a different language" (middle age woman, Schastie);

"I have a friend, he is Armenian, but he is Ukrainian and he identifies himself as a Ukrainian" (young man, Donetsk);

«I am Ukrainian. But this is not a nationality. This is citizenship. Specifically I am “*Ruskaya*”, but not “*Rossijanka*”(middle aged woman, Donetsk).