Volunteering with refugees in Czechia: From traitors to heroes?

Lucie Macková[1,*], Markéta Seidlová[2]

[1] Palacký University Olomouc, Department of Development and Environmental Studies, Czechia
[2] University of Defence, Faculty of Military Leadership, Department of Applied Social Sciences and Humanities, Czechia
* Corresponding author: lucie.mackova@upol.cz

ABSTRACT

This article examines the experiences of volunteers (N=12) engaged with migrants in Czechia. It evaluates their roles during two different refugee crises which affected Czechia in 2015/2016 and in 2022. The starting point for the study was a difference in public attitudes towards migrants and refugees during these two refugee inflows. While negative perceptions were evident during the 2015/2016 refugee crisis, characterized by scepticism and resistance toward volunteerism, the response to the Ukrainian refugee influx showcased a more supportive environment, potentially influenced by institutional aid efforts and a greater sense of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees. We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with volunteers engaged in the 2022 refugee crisis, some of whom had a previous volunteering experience from 2015/2016. The article reveals individual experiences of volunteers, their positionality, coping strategies and different perceptions of migration contexts.

KEYWORDS

attitudes; Czechia; migration; refugees; volunteering

Received: 22 April 2025
Accepted: 18 July 2025
Published online: 5 August 2025

Macková, L., Seidlová, M. (2025): Volunteering with refugees in Czechia: From traitors to heroes? AUC Geographica, e23361980.2025.11
https://doi.org/10.14712/23361980.2025.11

1. Introduction

Contrary to initial expectations, Central and Eastern European states demonstrated swift responses to the 'crisis' stemming from the conflict in Ukraine in 2022. As the European Union decided, for the very first time, to activate temporary protection through Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of March 4, 2022 (European Union 2022), Czechia subsequently established a temporary protection framework aimed at assisting all incoming refugees, which has been framed in special 'Ukraine' Acts (Acts no. 65, 66 and 67/2022 Coll., regularly updated according to the evolution of the conflict; Elektronická Sbírka zákonů a mezinárodních smluv 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). With about 520,000 Ukrainian refugees for 10 million of inhabitants (UNHCR 2023), Czechia emerged as the host to the largest population of Ukrainian refugees per capita.

It has to be said that there could be some mostly historical reasons behind the rationale of so many Ukrainian refugees choosing Czechia instead of other countries. In the 19th century, both western Ukraine and present-day Czechia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, fostering long-standing ties between the regions. Notably, Transcarpathian Ukraine was incorporated into interwar Czechoslovakia. Political, and to a lesser extent economic, factors drove Ukrainian emigration in the early 20th century, with Czechoslovakia emerging as a key destination. Before World War II, approximately 6,000 Ukrainians had settled there, including army officers, politicians, intellectuals, students, and impoverished peasants (Drbohlav and Seidlová 2016). They established a range of institutions spanning politics, culture, education, and science, supported by the Czechoslovak state. Following World War II, many Ukrainians who opposed the Soviet regime left for Germany; others were imprisoned after being deported to the USSR. By 1948, all Ukrainian organizations in Czechoslovakia had been shut down (Drbohlav and Dzúrová 2007). During the socialist era (1948–1989), Czechoslovakia's restrictive immigration policies led to minimal (Ukrainian) migration.

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 marked a turning point in Czechia's migration landscape, initiating democratic and market reforms that opened the country to global mobility. As Czechia evolved from a transit zone to a net immigration country – particularly after joining the European Union (EU) in 2004 – migration flows intensified. Among immigrant groups, Ukrainians played a central role: their departure pressures aligned with Czechia's labour demand and liberal migration climate, making them a dominant force in the post-1990s immigration boom (Seidlová 2018). At the end of the year 2021, about 661,000 of immigrants lived in the country (making up about 6% of the population of Czechia), Ukrainians being the most represented ones (197,000 – 30% of immigrants), followed by Slovaks (114,000 – 17%) and Vietnamese (65,000 – 10%; MVCR 2024a).

In what concerns the migration policy with regard to the refugees, Czechia has traditionally applied a restrictive policy in terms of granting asylum or international protection. Of 99,352 persons who applied for such status between 1993 and 2021, only 3,499 (i.e. 3.5%) received it (MVCR 2024b), which obviously translated into a very small number of refugees living in the country.

The implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in 2022 resulted in a highly unprecedented situation, characterized by both the exceptional number of refugees entering at one moment and remaining in the country – while being mostly women and children – and the notably receptive stance adopted by public administration. At the same time, the seemingly 'forced' or 'imposed' welcoming attitude toward Ukrainian refugees was nonetheless met with a degree of public understanding. This response was shaped not only by the cultural proximity that many Czechs perceive in relation to Ukrainians – reinforced by prior experiences with already settled Ukrainian migrants – but also by a sense of shared historical memory, particularly the collective trauma associated with the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion led by the Soviet Union.

In this newly formed migration environment, we decided to further explore the perspectives held by the primary civil society actors engaged in providing assistance to refugees which became a pertinent endeavour. Still, it is important to note that the influx of Ukrainian refugees occurred against the backdrop of ongoing arrivals of asylum seekers from other parts of the world (MVCR 2024c). Grassroots or bottom-up initiatives that extend aid to refugees play a pivotal role within the realm of civil society organisations. Research shows that volunteer efforts play a vital role in fostering civil solidarity and mutual assistance (Madryha et al. 2024). We understand volunteer roles as various responsibilities and functions undertaken by individuals who offer their time and effort without financial compensation to support refugees and migrants. These roles can range from direct service provision (e.g. interpretation, distribution of aid, emotional support), to organizational tasks (e.g. coordination, logistics, outreach), and can occur in both formal institutional settings or informal grassroots initiatives.

This significance of volunteer efforts is even more pronounced in environments that exhibit a certain degree of hostility toward their humanitarian efforts, as was notably witnessed in the Central and Eastern European countries during the refugee situation of 2015/2016 (CVVM 2019; CVVM 2023). In this period, individuals who were not indifferent to other peoples' situations started forming informal networks that later developed into humanitarian actors attempting to help people on the move in the Balkans (PLNU 2024).

In 2015, over 1 million migrants from the Middle East and Africa entered Europe via Southeastern Europe. Transit countries initially enabled this movement, creating the so-called 'Balkan corridor' (Jochim and Macková 2024), where many volunteers assisted. This situation was fuelled by conflicts in Syria or Afghanistan but also political persecution and instability in various countries.

This paper draws upon interviews conducted with individuals actively involved in the current Ukrainian refugee situation in Czechia, which will be further referenced as 'crisis' or 'situation' or 'crisis situation'. Some of these volunteers were also active in 2015/2016. Comparing the attitudes in both 'crises' situations was made possible by the fact that the volunteers from 2015/2016 were our students or acquaintances, or other volunteers they knew well, so we were able to keep in touch with them. The paper aims to explore how the roles of volunteers with migrants and refugees can be shaped by various socio-political and institutional contexts and how they perceive different migration situations and their dynamics. Furthermore, this research probes whether the response to the Ukrainian refugee 'crisis' can be viewed as a continuum of the prior grassroots initiatives that aided refugees from the Middle East. In doing so, it endeavours to answer the following critical questions: What were the experiences of the volunteers and their positionality? Which differences do they perceive between both 'crisis' situations in terms of migration contexts and public discourse?

2. The context on volunteering with migrants including refugees

The environment of working with migrants has been described as 'hostile' in Central and Eastern Europe (Zogata-Kusz 2022). During the refugee situation of 2015/2016, volunteers were described as 'welcomers' or 'sunny people' in Czechia ('sunny' meaning a person who is more open to the world and left-leaning, pejorative term, mildly insulting or rather contemptuous; Trachtová 2015). These volunteers played a crucial role in providing aid and support to migrants, with some even departing for the Balkans to contribute to relief efforts through organisations like *Pomáháme lidem na* útěku (PLNU; the name translates into 'We help people on the move') and others. Notably, volunteers also organised material assistance initiatives, such as those seen at Autonomous Social Center named 'Klinika' in Prague (translates into 'Clinic', based on the place of operation – in a former pulmonary clinic) and similar organisations. Interestingly, it has been argued that individuals opted to leave their home country for a short term and volunteer abroad as a form of compensation for what they perceived as unfavourable Czech state policies (Křeček 2016). These solidarity practices evolved into a social movement of like-minded individuals.

Later on and in a different refugee context the act of 'volunteering' has evolved and has been officially recognized and institutionalised during the Ukrainian refugee situation. National and local authorities even appealed to the citizens to accommodate the refugees from Ukraine (see, for example, Seifert 2022). At same time, many citizen platforms had arisen and acted like coordinators of the helping activities for the refugees before the official authorities were able to do so (Švihel 2022). This shift reflects changing dynamics in the response to humanitarian crises and the integration of grassroots efforts into broader, more structured relief initiatives.

Globally, civil society organizations – where the majority of volunteer work is carried out – are generally focused on fostering equitable and sustainable social development, with the shared goal of making the world a better place (Vermeersch 2004). This mission is driven by individuals with good will, who feel a sense of responsibility toward their community and contribute through their time, skills, expertise, and sometimes even material or financial resources (Manço and Arara 2018). These so-called shadow citizens, motivated by a desire to foster mutual aid and collaboration among people, aim to transcend profit-driven motives and competition, working instead to strengthen the common good; and many of them do so as volunteers (Dubost 2007). Volunteers exchange their unpaid commitment for personal fulfilment, self-actualization, and a sense of balance in their lives, often seeking out social connections as well. The range of voluntary work is diverse, encompassing activities from organizing local leisure events to offering services such as legal guidance, professional training or social support (Manço et al. 2021).

According to the framework proposed by Clary and Snyder (1999), volunteering fulfils six core functions: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective functions. These roles provide a comprehensive lens for understanding the varied motivations and impacts associated with volunteer work (see also Haski-Leventhal et al. 2011 and Nesbit et al. 2018). Duguid et al. (2013) emphasize that volunteering not only benefits the recipient organization and its audience but also brings positive outcomes to the volunteers themselves. For example, volunteer activities can reinforce volunteers' personal identities, enhance their social networks, and develop their skills (Meyers 2006). Viewed as a form of informal education, volunteering enables individuals to gain knowledge and valuable social and professional experience. Other benefits include building qualifications, fostering a sense of usefulness and self-efficacy, enhancing self-confidence, and maintaining work habits (Frič 2001). Furthermore, volunteering can address psychosocial challenges, offering a means to empower and support the integration of migrants as

they settle in their host countries (Valentová and Justiniano-Medina 2019).

Volunteering plays a significant role in promoting social integration, particularly through its interactive dimension, which highlights the active participation of immigrants in relationships and in the private aspects of the majority society's social life (Heckmann and Schnapper 2003; Bosswick and Heckmann 2006). In this context, volunteering can act as a protective barrier against social exclusion for vulnerable groups, including migrants (Čamlíková et al. 2015). Since the early 2000s, numerous European initiatives have identified volunteering as both a tool and an indicator of social integration, political participation, and economic engagement, especially concerning immigrant communities (CEV 2006).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that migrants have often been portrayed as passive recipients of volunteering efforts in various contexts, as observed by Ambrosini (2020). This perception suggests that migrants typically receive volunteer support without actively contributing to or influencing the goals of volunteer activities. However, an emerging perspective known as citizenship from below offers a different view. Scholars such as Ambrosini and Baglioni (2022) and Ambrosini and Artero (2023), when discussing the case of Italy, highlight a new paradigm wherein migrants are recognized not only as recipients but also as active participants who contribute to and help shape volunteer initiatives. This grassroots form of citizenship reflects the evolving role and agency of migrants within the volunteer sector, challenging traditional views about their involvement in volunteer efforts.

Moreover, the dynamics of its frontiers, even in Europe at its most oppressive, have always been about the differential closing and opening of borders (Favell and Hansen 2002). At the same time, the boundaries can be also symbolic, framing the understanding and using of three most commonly used terms for people living outside their country of origin: foreigner, migrant, and refugee. According to the recent work of Rapoš Božič et al. (2022) on the Czech context, the label foreigner calls upon legal and cultural criteria, whilst the labels migrant and refugee involves moral criteria. We also use the label 'refugee' to refer to the temporary protection holders as a shortcut for this designation while understanding it is not a proper legal category in this context. At the same time, there is a strong political and media narrative which suggests that even where people have been forced to leave their countries due to conflict, persecution and human rights abuse, they should remain in the first countries to which they arrive rather than making the hazardous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe (Kuschminder and Koser 2016). Their decision to do so is viewed, under the false pretext of the 'first safe country' clause, as confirmation that they are 'migrants' rather than 'refugees', and therefore, undeserving of protection.

3. Methods

Between March and June of 2023, a comprehensive study was conducted involving in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with a diverse group of 12 volunteers. Our students and/or acquaintances, or their close contacts, involved in volunteering in the 2015/2016 situation, made up about one half of our respondents. Thanks to them, we also received the contact information of other volunteers, involved only in the situation of 2022. The interviews spanned a range of durations, lasting from 30 to 70 minutes, allowing for a nuanced exploration of their experiences and perspectives. A few interviews took place online based on participants' request, while most were taken in person. In both cases, the interviews were recorded – with the help of mobile phone if taking place in person, or directly with the help of Zoom application while taking place online.

To analyse the data collected from these interviews, we firstly transcribed the interview recordings and translated them into English. Then we employed qualitative data analysis which meant coding the acquired information in the first place. The tool used for coding was Atlas.ti software. In terms of concrete research design, we have chosen thematic analysis. This thematic analysis was chosen to enable the researchers to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights within the interview transcripts (Terry et al. 2017). This analytical approach ensured that the study's findings were grounded in the rich and nuanced perspectives shared by the volunteers. The codes were merged into seven different categories by the researchers, namely i) Emotional Responses, ii) Support Systems and Coping, iii) Perceived Deservingness and Judgments, iv) Social Categories and Identity, v) Politics and Institutions, vi) Migration Context and vii) Public Discourse. As an example, the codes under i) Emotional Responses included words such as anger, anxiety, burnout, emotions, fear, guilt, helplessness, hope, hopeful, joy, negative affect, positive affect, resilience, sadness, trauma, worry. Related categories were grouped into overarching themes through iterative review and team discussion. The themes are volunteers' positionality, emotional responses and coping strategies, and perceptions of migration contexts.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Prior to conducting the interviews, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose, the nature of their involvement, and their rights as interviewees. Furthermore, participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality, with pseudonyms (such as R1, R2 etc.) used to protect their identities in any subsequent publications or presentations of the research. Additionally, throughout the interviews, sensitivity was used in order to ensure that participants felt comfortable

sharing their experiences, particularly when discussing potentially contentious topics related to migration and volunteering in 'crisis' situations. Next, we will discuss the results of our study, including the perceived difficulties by the volunteers, differences perceived in both situations and attitudes towards their work.

Within this sample of volunteers, there were distinct categories of engagement. Mostly those who were involved in helping in the Regional Ukrainian refugee centres (see below) were 'new' volunteers, who did not help in the situation of 2015/2016. In concrete terms, seven volunteers dedicated their efforts exclusively to the ongoing Ukrainian refugee situation. Among them, only some of them were present in Czechia during 2015/2016. Five individuals had previously volunteered during the 2015/2016 refugee situation and had returned to volunteer once more in the current Ukrainian context, providing valuable comparative insights into the evolving landscape of volunteerism. We understand the limitation of the sample and the different experiences for those who only volunteered in 2022. However, this study enables us to explore experiences of volunteers in migration contexts and to show their positionalities at different points in time and across different geographies.

The interviewees represented a balanced gender distribution, with seven women and five men participating in the study. This gender diversity within the sample enriches the study's exploration of volunteering experiences. Additionally, there is one kind of interesting gender imbalance in the sample: the majority of Czech respondents are men (five out of six), while the rest of the participants are all women. This may also introduce certain biases into our findings. The women who volunteer may face different expectations from their roles and they may experience situations differently than their male counterparts. They may also face different circumstances (such as caring for family members) which may make volunteering more difficult for them than for men (Taniguchi 2006).

There is also the geographical diversity of the participants, with six volunteers hailing from Czechia, four from Ukraine, one from Russia, and one from Slovakia. The volunteers were either students at the university or they had already finished their university degree and worked full-time in their regular jobs. Their ages ranged from 20 to 43. In 2015/2016, volunteers outside of Czechia often operated informally, responding to needs as they arose, without formal written contracts. In contrast, due to the legal regulations governing volunteer work in Czechia, volunteers working within the country were required to have a formal volunteer contract with the organization they represented; however, the aim of this contract was only to provide them with some kind of insurance (if they cause for example some unintended damage) and not a financial compensation, i.e. they dedicate their time for the organisation in question for free. However, some 'volunteer translator' positions in KACPU (Regional Ukrainian refugee centre) developed into paid positions later. The respondents resided in different regions of Czechia at the time of interview, most of them in the Olomouc Region (8) and in Prague (4). This diverse representation allows for a range of volunteer experiences. The background of interviewees is shown in Tab. 1. The recruitment process for interviewees employed a snowball sampling technique, leveraging existing connections and organisational networks within the volunteer community. This approach ensured that the participants had relevant experiences and insights to share.

Tab. 1 List of interviewees.

Respondent	Gender	Nationality	Volunteering/coordinating activity
R1	F	Ukrainian	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R2	F	Russian	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R3	M	Czech	PLNU + transport from Ukraine
R4	F	Ukrainian	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R5	F	Ukrainian	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R6	F	Ukrainian	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R7	F	Slovak	PLNU + Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R8	M	Czech	PLNU + NGO "People in need"
R9	M	Czech	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre
R10	M	Czech	PLNU + transport from Ukraine
R11	M	Czech	Koridor UA
R12	F	Czech	Regional Ukrainian refugee centre

NB: PLNU – "Pomáháme lidem na útěku" (Czech NGO whose name translates into "We help people on the move"); Koridor UA – "Humanitární koridor na Ukrajinu" (Czech NGO whose name translates into "Humanitarian corridor to Ukraine"). Source: own research.

4. Results

4.1 Volunteers' positionality

The attitudes toward volunteering differed markedly in both situations. In 2015/2016, many volunteers experienced anger aimed at them or their work. They were even labelled as 'traitors' by some people. However, at the same time, they believed that they did the right thing, which helped them face the challenges. The different framing of their experience might come from differences in public perceptions of solidarity and who is seen as deserving of assistance. The volunteer below describes how mundane tasks such as operating a laundry room became political because of the narratives in the Czech society.

> [The situation] completely escalated by both sides as a hero for one, a traitor for the other. […] I was seen as a traitor, even if the only thing I was doing was keeping the washing machines running. We had a laundry room and the system put in place was that people – you know, that refugees – received tokens, they went there and simply washed their clothes there for those tokens. Me and my colleagues, we basically only cleaned and repaired the washing machines and simply kept the laundry room running (R8).

The spatial detachment of the 2015/2016 volunteering context outside Czechia, combined with prevailing media discourses, created a disconnect between the volunteers and their local environments. Volunteers often found themselves having to justify their efforts, emphasizing the importance of assisting those in need. In contrast, at the onset of the Ukrainian situation, such explanations were largely unnecessary. In this case, volunteering was treated more favourably with some volunteers even being described as heroes by their friends.

> My friends actually told me… I was a hero. […] The Czech Republic doesn't owe anything to Ukraine to help. But I think it's great that solidarity has been created (R5).

In general, volunteering in the current Ukrainian situation sparked curiosity among the friends and family and did not lead to any serious confrontation for the interview partners. The interviews included mentions of appreciation from friends and relatives for their involvement.

> When it comes up, they react very positively and they're curious about what it's like [to volunteer at KACPU]. […] So then they were totally texting me, like, it's so great that I'm helping out there (R2).

There was also the geographical aspect of volunteering closer to home which was perceived as safer. Yet, some volunteers ventured outside of Czechia, and this was seen as dangerous.

> Positive, more or less positive reaction or negative reaction in that people thought it was stupid to go straight there [to Ukraine] and that it was dangerous and so on. It was from the family side, but especially when we returned safely afterwards, they felt like we had done a good thing (R10).

However, with passing time, some volunteers also remarked on general tiredness and decrease in support towards the Ukrainian situation (and by extension, volunteering in this context).

> The reaction of the people around me was initially excellent, but as expected, it wasn't surprising at all, it just started to wane. And also simply because the classic 'what about me'-ism came. But also because there were more cases of some negative experiences, that it happened, I don't know, someone stabbed someone in a hostel or stole something. Again, a normal thing but […] with the social networks it just got bigger than it was probably in reality, so then this kind of thing started […], or that they [Ukrainians] get various discounts, that they get free travel, and so on (R7).

The temporal dimension played a significant role in the Ukrainian refugee response, with some volunteers observing a decline in public support over time – contrasting sharply with the initial weeks and months, when their efforts faced little to no opposition. However, the perception of the Ukrainian situation was much better than the 2015/2016 situation and it also points to the perceptions of solidarity and refugee deservingness in the general society.

4.2 Emotional responses and coping strategies

There were different emotions that volunteers identified as challenging in both situations in 2015/2016 and 2022/2023. For example, volunteers experienced stress, fear, sadness, and guilt. Some felt guilty primarily because they were in a safe environment while witnessing the suffering and challenges faced by migrants or their friends and family in conflict or 'crisis' situations. This guilt stemmed from a sense that they felt they should be doing more to help and make a meaningful contribution rather than merely acknowledging their own safety or comfort. Respondent 5 recalls:

> But the full-blown war started, and I felt guilty about being safe, so I thought about what I could do. […] All my friends and family were in Ukraine and I could just share [how I felt] with them, but it seemed unfair to me as well. Just kind of complaining that I have a hard life and [they]'re in Ukraine (R5).

The sense of guilt was also present in the other refugee context when some participants mentioned that their privileges such as having the EU passport and being able to travel freely across the borders gave them the obligation to help. In both contexts, the encounter with conflict situations and displacement underscored the importance of volunteers' roles not only in providing practical assistance but also in offering emotional support and empathy to those affected by the traumatic consequences of conflict and forced migration. These experiences had a lasting impact that went beyond the immediate volunteering engagement.

> The trauma […] came to me after six months, a year, and after that it seemed to fade away. It was really very, very demanding to work there, but I guess the main motivation was that you put your hand to the work, and that it was so [geographically] close, so I just couldn't let it go… That people were simply running away, they had nowhere to sleep, we simply couldn't let it happen (R7).

Some people who volunteered in 2015/2016 referred to experiences they witnessed while volunteering and even years later, the emotions like sadness resurfaced.

> Well, coming back there like a year later, when I was supposed to talk about it, I just had tears in my eyes, it was just really bloody difficult, it was like actually it didn't really sink in at the time, we were unmoved by something like that, for me it was just the first crisis like that, so I actually thought what we were doing was normal, but when I saw the experienced ones, when the others came, they were [exclaiming] Jesus f*cking Christ (R8).

While it seemed that the situation was harder for the volunteers in 2015/2016 when the support was less institutionalised, people also encountered difficult moments in 2022/2023 when they witnessed some situations first hand. The volunteers recall these encounters.

> I had a situation where I was interpreting at the psychosocial centre and there were a few old age pensioners sitting there and they were talking about how they were hiding in the basement and suddenly I thought… Well, I can't repeat it in Czech because I'm going to cry and I just… Well, so I told the psychologist that I'm so sorry but I'm not going to interpret it, it's like too much for me (R5).

There were different approaches to dealing with the emotionally laden situations. While the volunteers in the Ukrainian refugee situation mentioned psychologists being present in the centres and helping them to discuss any problematic situations, this was rarer in other refugee situations (R3). Some volunteers appreciated the professional psychological support. However, others did not find it as useful as sharing among their friends. This collective coping was often mentioned by volunteers in both situations.

> Actually, not only me, but also others felt that it didn't help us at all. We felt that it would help us if we went out to a pub in the evening or went for a coffee somewhere. That would help. It could be a friend or someone close to me and she would tell me and I would tell her, we would talk together and we would move on, rather than some psychologist I'm seeing for the first or second time in my life and he would just say "well, yeah, talk to me". […] A shower always helped me. But at the beginning it was quite challenging because at work you control your emotions and you just come home, like everything (comes out) […] but that's fine because it kind of goes away and that's it (R4).

Even without the institutionalised setup, some volunteers in the first 2015/2016 situation felt the need to find professional support such as a psychologist to deal with the situations they encountered.

> We had some kind of attempt to systematically set up psychological help for people (when volunteering in 2015/2016). Then I was in a few sessions, like a group therapy, and since then I've started going to therapy too as an individual. With greater or lesser intensity depending on how necessary it is. […] I simply came, I wanted to go to a pub in the evening, I looked at people there, like what on earth are you talking about, about the cinema, about going to buy some shoes… so I finished my beer and left (R8).

Others also described "switching off" and emotionally detaching from the situations.

> In general, the environment is so demanding, it probably affects some people more, some less. I don't know, I dealt with it a lot, that there is a lot of drinking, alcohol and such, to switch off the evening. It definitely affected me, especially those stories […]. Now when we went to Ukraine, it was actually… like some numbness… we crossed the border, now there were people standing at the crossings… a kilometer long queue of people and it didn't even affect me that much. I thought to myself 'well, more refugees'. And you defend yourself with that cynical attitude, that it doesn't affect you that much. Partly it's good, partly it probably isn't (R3).

Therefore, volunteers in both situations encountered difficult moments that were emotional and had to deal with them using different strategies. The mixed emotions did not fade with time for volunteers in 2015/2016 and they had to cope with them even later. We do not know about any lasting impact of the 2022/2023 situation as it was still ongoing at the time of research. However, some seasoned volunteers described emotional detachment affecting them

less in the second situation after they have gained experience from previous crises. Many volunteers also recalled using psychological help or coping collectively their peers to help them overcome difficult situations.

4.3 Perceptions of migration contexts and public discourse

Public discourse on migration was shaped by differing perceptions of solidarity and who was deemed deserving of support. The context of both situations differed markedly. With the political will to accept Ukrainian refugees came also institutionalization of centres for Ukrainian migrants (KACPU) in all regions of Czechia. These centres required volunteers for their daily operations. In contrast, the irregular transit migration context of 2015/2016 created a fluid and non-institutionalised environment that changed frequently based on the migration flows and volunteers outside of Czechia were only able to commit for a set period of time ranging from days to weeks.

Borders played an important role in this context. While the EU borders were closed to everyone outside the EU in 2015/2016 resulting in a 'game' when trying cross (Minca and Collins 2021), in 2022, the borders suddenly opened for Ukrainian 'third country' nationals while leaving some non-European migrants behind (Ojwang et al. 2024). The porousness of EU borders for some groups of Ukrainian refugees (with the exception of some men who were required to stay because of the conscription) contrasted sharply with the closed Polish Belarusian border for refugees who were seen as more politicised and less deserving (Grześkowiak 2023).

Against this backdrop, volunteers mentioned the role of the media as an important contributor towards the perception of both refugee situations. How people on the move were portrayed and their gender (even though the media could not portray the situation in a holistic way) proved significant in showing favouritism towards certain groups. In the words of respondent 7, referring to the Ukrainian situation, 'they're just like that, fragile young women with those little children and those mothers.' This echoes the portrayal of 'womenandchildren' as a category that is omitted in the securitization discourses (Enloe 2014). Participants also mentioned political parties that, during the 2015/2016 crisis, sought to gain electoral advantage by capitalizing on the migration issue. In that time, populist radical-right parties like France's National Rally, Germany's AfD, Italy's Lega or Hungary's Fidesz benefited from the 2015 crisis – while overall public attitude did not drastically shift, rightwing voters hardened and electoral divisions widened (van der Brug and Harteveld 2021). In Central European context, parties such as Polish PiS, Czech ANO or already above mentioned Hungarian Fidesz moved sharply toward restrictive immigration positions after 2015, correlating with electoral gains (Ivanov 2024). A discourse analysis of Czech parties' manifestos for the 2014 and 2019 European Parliament elections reveals that migration had already been framed in security terms before 2015, but the 2015–16 crisis intensified the securitization rhetoric. This framing was adopted pragmatically across the political spectrum, not limited to extremist populists (Krotký 2019). Despite low refugee numbers (circa 1,500 in 2015), prominent figures such as President Miloš Zeman referred to an "organised invasion" in December 2015. Far-right leader Tomio Okamura secured over 10 % of votes in 2017 campaigning against the "Islamisation" of Czech society (Saxonberg, Sirovátka and Csudai 2024).

> In 2015/16 I would say, it was still politically amplified, even in the media. Today, I don't know, even the SPD [far right party] is not so strongly against the aid to Ukraine. Back then, half of the political spectrum and a lot of the media just played on it, and here the effect has just multiplied exponentially. Today I don't think it has as much support, although a little bit, but not as much. And so that's why it was stronger than it is now. And moreover, with the Ukrainians, the people have very close experience, they can touch it, they are [culturally] closer, they do not feel some kind of threat (R3).

The quote above also elaborates on perceived cultural closeness between the Czechs and Ukrainians and previous historical ties between the countries. It is clear that because of this shared recent history, many Ukrainian refugees chose Czechia (or Poland) as their destination. This perceived cultural similarity was also highlighted by the volunteers.

> The cultural proximity, the linguistic proximity. One hundred percent, it played a role that just like there was a Ukrainian community here and everybody knew some Ukrainians and had some experience with something, whereas with Syrians they just didn't exist before, like that, the situation was very, very different in that way, and humanly, understandably, I was already angry at everybody in that year 2015 (R8).

Finally, volunteers were aware of the historical experience of Czechia with the Russian occupation in 1968 and the shared aggressor, which made the plight of Ukrainian refugees more relatable to the public.

> Then I would say that in the case of the aggression in Ukraine, the fact who the aggressor is, also plays a role. Because I'm sure for a lot of Czechs it's a trigger, just a trigger of 'oh, Russia' so there it probably wouldn't matter who Russia attacked anymore, it would just be that Russia is the aggressor. I don't know if there would be the same reaction if Ukraine was attacked by the US or Lithuania or just someone we basically know nothing about. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, maybe it would be exactly the same, but the role of Russia is also important (R2).

Therefore, the volunteers are aware of the differences in the migration contexts but stressed the role of the media and some political parties as important during the migration contexts. They also discussed the perceptions of shared migration history and cultural similarity between Czechia and Ukraine. Importantly, respondents also emphasized the perceived unequivocal role of Russia as the aggressor and the relative simplicity of the conflict and the narratives around it, which made it easier for the public to understand. As one respondent put it: 'The conflict is simply different, it's a different situation, like it's much more black and white than Syria, which was simply terribly complicated' (R8).

5. Discussion

Volunteer engagement in response to refugee situations has exhibited a notable evolution over time, transitioning from a form of protest against state policy to aligning with official institutional aid efforts (Křeček 2016). This transformation underscores the adaptability of individual initiatives, which have operated in tandem with established institutional support structures designed to assist refugees from Ukraine. Amidst this evolving landscape, certain constants persist. One unchanging aspect is the profound personal transformation experienced by individuals who engage in volunteering (Clary and Snyder 1999; Duguid et al. 2013; Meyers 2006). Emotional experiences and different coping strategies become a catalyst for personal growth and change. It remains evident that volunteering is fundamentally driven by internal motivation rather than by external factors or any other incentives, highlighting the intrinsic desire of individuals to contribute to the welfare of others (Nesbit et al. 2018).

Yet, despite the undeniable value of volunteering, it remains a challenging endeavour that impacts the individuals. One crucial lesson learned from both the 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 situations is the pressing need for psychological support for volunteers. The emotional toll of engaging with refugees, witnessing their traumas, and navigating the complexities of humanitarian crises can take a significant toll on the mental well-being of volunteers. Recognizing this, providing psychological support has emerged as an essential element in ensuring the overall well-being and effectiveness of volunteers in both cases. However, some volunteers preferred collective coping with their friends or emotional detachment which may pose difficulties later on.

The policy towards refugees from Ukraine has shifted and so has the public perception of this group of refugees. According to representative public opinion research, undertaken by Public Opinion Research Centre of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, just after the conflict in Ukraine has begun, only 13% of respondents were against receiving or helping the refugees from Ukraine (March–May 2022), while one year later, this proportion doubled to 26% (June–July 2023) (CVVM 2023). Even if this means worsening of public opinion, it is still a high contrast with public opinion about helping refugees in the previous situation in 2015/2016. In 2015/2016, the ratio was completely opposite: more than half of respondents (60%) from the same representative research of public opinion were against helping the people find refuge in Czechia (CVVM 2019).

The situations differed and in 2015/2016, there was an overwhelmingly negative public attitude towards the work of volunteers. However, the volunteers who were active at that time persevered because of their internal motivations and perceptions of justice or fairness. In 2022, there was a broader social consensus on solidarity towards refugees from Ukraine. While migrants are often seen as 'passive recipients' of volunteering efforts (Ambrosini 2020), this research also engaged with migrants who acted as volunteers. Therefore, this is connected with an emerging trend of inquiring about migrants' experience with volunteering (Ambrosini and Baglioni 2022; Ambrosini and Artero 2023). It could be interesting to further explore the role of migrant volunteers in different situations.

The marked disparity in the support extended to individuals with refugee backgrounds from the Middle East compared to those from Ukraine from the point of view of major population can be explained in three ways: firstly, in the overall attitude of state administration (very restrictive refugee policy within the last 30 years versus 'forced' welcoming following activation of the EU directive), secondly, in the perceived cultural proximity (long history of Ukrainian immigration versus no experience with immigrants from Middle East due to the absence of any colonial ties) and shared experience of the same enemy (USSR leading the troops invading Czechoslovakia in 1968 and now post-USSR invading Ukraine), and thirdly in the composition of refugee flows (women with children, opposed to the predominantly male flows in earlier periods). These three factors, together with the game of mass media portraying both crises very differently and hence, shaping public opinion, can explain why the response to refugees was so markedly different.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has provided an analysis of the experiences and roles of volunteers engaged with migrants in Czechia during the Ukrainian refugee influx in 2022 and some who assisted in the refugee situations of 2015/2016. Through a comparative approach, the study has illuminated the evolution of volunteerism and the shifting landscape of humanitarian response in Central and Eastern Europe. The findings highlight the crucial roles played by

volunteers during both 'crises', from providing direct aid and support to migrants to navigating the challenges posed by hostile environments, especially in the latter situation.

Volunteers who were active in both situations noted different perceptions of each situation. While negative perceptions were evident during the 2015/2016 refugee crisis – characterized by scepticism and resistance toward volunteerism – the response to the Ukrainian refugee influx showcased a more supportive environment, potentially influenced by institutional aid efforts and a greater sense of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees. The Ukrainian refugee situation was perceived as 'closer' to Czechia, prompting a stronger inclination toward providing help and support. This was especially highlighted by those who volunteered in 2022. In contrast, the 2015/2016 refugee situation sparked polarized reactions, with some volunteers even labelled as 'traitors' for aiding refugees. However, volunteers attributed this shift in perceptions to specific factors, such as historical connections, cultural proximity, and media influence, rather than to a change in attitudes toward refugees. Consequently, further research into the role of media in framing refugee situations across Europe will be essential for understanding this phenomenon, along with studies examining volunteerism among migrant populations themselves.

This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a comparative perspective on two distinct refugee situations, enhancing our understanding of how volunteers' roles, challenges, and perceptions evolve across different contexts. The comparative approach highlights the shifting dynamics of volunteerism in response to different sociopolitical environments, as well as the impact of public sentiment and institutional support on volunteer activities. These shifts highlight how public discourse, historical ties, perceived deservingness, and media framing influence volunteer engagement and societal attitudes toward refugees. This research underscores the importance of fostering supportive environments for volunteers working with displaced populations.

The results of this study should be considered exploratory, offering preliminary insights rather than definitive conclusions. Despite this limitation, the study's strength lies in its in-depth qualitative approach, capturing the nuanced experiences and evolving perspectives of volunteers. Future research could build on these findings by examining larger and more diverse samples to verify and expand upon these insights. In sum, this research provides a foundation for future investigations into volunteerism in refugee contexts, suggesting directions for exploring the complex interplay between media representation, public sentiment, and volunteer responses. Additional studies on the long-term impacts of institutionalized volunteerism and cross-national comparisons of volunteer responses to different refugee populations will further enrich our understanding of humanitarian efforts in diverse crisis situations.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our interviewees for their valuable input and anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback. This paper was created with the support of the Ministry of Defence as part of the institutional support project for the development of the research organization No. DZRO-FVL22-LANDOPS: Conduct of Land Operations.

References

Ambrosini, M. (2020): The local governance of immigration and asylum: Policies of exclusion as a battleground. In Ambrosini, M., Cinalli, M., Jacobson, D. (Eds.), Migration, borders and citizenship. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22157-7_9.

Ambrosini, M., Artero, M. (2023): Immigrant volunteering: A form of citizenship from below. VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations 34, 252–262, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00454-x.

Baglioni, S., Ambrosini, M. (2022): Introduzione: quando la cittadinanza sale dal basso. Introduzione: quando la cittadinanza sale dal basso. MONDI MIGRANTI 1, 9–24, https://doi.org/10.3280/MM2022-001001 (in Italian).

Bosswick, W., Heckmann, F. (2006): Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Available online: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2007/integration-migrants-contribution-local-and-regional-authorities (accessed on 17 January 2024).

Čamlíková, H., Miškelová, M., Šimandlová, N., Bakalová, J. (2015): Analýza dobrovolnictví a zapojení osob 50+ do dobrovolnických aktivit v ČR. Praha: Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí ČR (in Czech).

CEV (Centre européen du volontariat) (2006): INVOLVE – Implication des étrangers non communautaires dans les activités de bénévolat et volontariat comme moyen de renforcer l'intégration. Bruxelles: Centre européen du volontariat. Available online: https://www.iriv-migrations.net/fichiers/Involve/INVOLVEreportFR.pdf (accessed on 17 January 2024, in French).

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M. (1999): The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. Current directions in psychological science 8(5), 156–159, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00037.

CVVM (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění) (2019): Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků – květen 2019. Available online: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4966/f9/pm190626.pdf (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

CVVM (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění) (2023): Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků z Ukrajiny

– červen/červenec 2023. Available at: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a5663/f9/pm230814.pdf (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Drbohlav, D., Dzúrová, D. (2007): "Where Are They Going?": Immigrant Inclusion in the Czech Republic (A Case Study on Ukrainians, Vietnamese, and Armenians in Prague). International Migration 45, 69–95, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00404.x.

Drbohlav, D., Seidlová, M. (2016): Current Ukrainian migration to Czechia – refuge for economic migrants rather than for refugees. In Drbohlav, D., Jaroszewicz, M.: Ukrainian Migration in Times of Crisis: Forced and Labour Mobility. Praha: Přírodovědecká fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 95–127.

Dubost, N. (2007): Motivations des bénévoles: une revue de la littérature. Working Papers 2007-1, Laboratoire Orléanais de Gestion – université d'Orléans. Available online: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6310417.pdf (accessed on 17 January 2024, in French).

Duguid, F., Mündel, K., Schugurensky, D. (2013): Volunteer Work, Informal Learning and Social Action. Rotterdam: Sense publishers, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-233-4.

Elektronická Sbírka zákonů a mezinárodních smluv (2024a): 65 – Zákon ze dne 17. března 2022 o některých opatřeních v souvislosti s ozbrojeným konfliktem na území Ukrajiny vyvolaným invazí vojsk Ruské federace. Available online: https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2022/65/2024-01-01 (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Elektronická Sbírka zákonů a mezinárodních smluv (2024b): 66 – Zákon ze dne 17. března 2022 o opatřeních v oblasti zaměstnanosti a oblasti sociálního zabezpečení v souvislosti s ozbrojeným konfliktem na území Ukrajiny vyvolaným invazí vojsk Ruské federace. Available online: https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2022/66/2023-07-01 (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Elektronická Sbírka zákonů a mezinárodních smluv (2024c): 67 – Zákon ze dne 17. března 2022 o opatřeních v oblasti školství v souvislosti s ozbrojeným konfliktem na území Ukrajiny vyvolaným invazí vojsk Ruské federace. Available online: https://www.e-sbirka.cz/sb/2022/67/2023-01-24 (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Enloe, C. (2014): Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520957282.

European Union (2022): Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection. Available online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/382/oj (accessed on 17 January 2024).

Favell, A., Hansen, R. (2002): Markets against politics: Migration, EU enlargement and the idea of Europe. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 28(4), 581–601, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183021000032218.

Frič, P. (2001): Dárcovství a dobrovolnictví v České republice: výsledky výzkumu NROS a Agnes. 1. vyd. Praha: NROS, ISBN 80-902633-7-2, 115 p. (in Czech).

Grześkowiak, M. (2023): The "Guardian of the Treaties" is No More? The European Commission and the 2021 Humanitarian Crisis on Poland–Belarus Border. Refugee Survey Quarterly 42(1), 81–102, https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdac025.

Haski-Leventhal, D., Hustinx, L., Handy, F. (2011): What Money Cannot Buy: The Distinctive and Multidimensional Impact of Volunteers. Journal of Community Practice 19(2), 138–158, https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2011.568930.

Heckmann, F., Schnapper, D. (2003): Introduction. In Heckmann, F., Schnapper, D. (Eds.), The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies. National Differences and Trends of Convergence, 9–14, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110507324.

Ivanov, D. (2024): Left authoritarianism and positional shifts of populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe. East European Politics 40(3), 447–472, https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2024.2303712.

Jochim, V., Macková, L. (2024): 'I found everything in them': Formation of migrant networks and social capital. International Migration 62(6), 140–157, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13318.

Křeček, J. (2016): Volunteering as Protest: Against State Failure or the State Itself? Contention 4(1–2), 77–92.

Krotký, J. (2019): When migration unites political parties: The securitisation of migration in Czech party manifestos. Politologický časopis – Czech Journal of Political Science 26(3), 181–199, https://doi.org/10.5817/PC2019-3-181.

Kuschminder, K., Koser, K. (2017): The role of migration-specific and migration-relevant policies in migrant decision-making in transit. MERIT Working Papers 2017-022, United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (MERIT).

Madryha, T., Fedoryshyna, K., Krasnodemska, I., Bozhko, D., Chekaliuk, V. (2024): The volunteer movement as a tool for strengthening civil solidarity in wartime Authors. Cadernos de Educação, Tecnologia e Sociedade 17(2), 183–194, https://doi.org/10.14571/brajets.v17.nse2.183-194.

Manço, A., Arara, R. (2018): Le bénévolat comme dispositif d'insertion: à quel prix? In Manço, A., Gatugu, J. (Eds.), Insertion des travailleurs migrants. Efficacité des dispositifs. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 337–350 (in French).

Manço, A., Gerstnerová, A., Seidlová, M., (2021): L'engagement bénévole des migrants: un plus pour l'insertion sociale? Observations en Belgique, au Luxembourg et en République tchèque. In Manço, A., Scheurette, L. (Eds.), Inclusion des personnes d'origine étrangère sur le marché de l'emploi. Bilan des politiques en Wallonie. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 201–218 (in French).

Meyers, C. (2006): Le bénévolat associatif des jeunes au Luxembourg. Luxembourg: Centre d'Études sur la Situation des Jeunes en Europe. Available online: https://orbilu.uni.lu/bitstream/10993/23336/1/Meyers_C_2006_Le%20benevolat%20associatif%20des%20jeunes%20au%20Luxembourg.PDF (accessed on 17 January 2024, in French).

Minca, C., Collins, J. (2021): The Game: Or, 'the making of migration' along the Balkan Route. Political Geography 91: 102490, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102490.

MVCR (Ministertvo vnitra České republiky) (2024a): Cizinci s povoleným pobytem. Available online: http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/cizinci-s-povolenym-pobytem.aspx (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

MVCR (Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky) (2024b): Statistiky – mezinárodní ochrana. Available online: http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/mezinarodni-ochrana-253352.aspx (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

MVCR (Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky) (2024c): Souhrnná zpráva o mezinárodní ochraně za rok 2023. Available online: https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/souhrnna-zprava-o-mezinarodni-ochrane-za-rok-2023.aspx (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Nesbit, R., Christensen, R. K. Brudney, J. L. (2018): The Limits and Possibilities of Volunteering: A Framework for Explaining the Scope of Volunteer Involvement in Public and Nonprofit Organizations. Public Administration Review 78(4), 502–513, https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12894.

Ojwang, F., Mamaiev, D., Shikanga, S. (2024): African Immigrants' Experiences at the Ukraine Border Points During Russian Invasion: Meta-analysis of Racism during Global Crisis. International Journal of Religion 5(6), 1034–1042, https://doi.org/10.61707/cvz4bx52.

PLNU (Pomáháme lidem na útěku) (2024): Vznik a historie spolku. Available online: https://plnu.cz/vznik-a-historie-spolku/ (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Rapoš Božič, I., Klvaňová, R., Jaworsky, B. N. (2023): Foreigner, migrant, or refugee? How laypeople label those who cross borders. Migration Studies 11(1), 218–241, https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnac035.

Saxonberg, S., Sirovátka, T., Csudai, E. (2024): Crisis? What crisis? Social policy when crises are and are not crises in Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia. Social Policy Administration 58(2), 228–247, https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.13004.

Seidlová, M. (2018): The Birth of a Country of Immigration: The Case of the Czech Republic. Demografie 60(4), 348–359.

Seifert, R. (2022): Ubytování uprchlíků – výzva města Holešova. Available online: https://www.holesov.cz/2948-ubytovani-uprchliku-vyzva-mesta-holesova.html (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Švihel, P. (2022): Lidé nabízí pokoje, ale uprchlíci zůstávají v tělocvičnách. Available online: https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-zivot-v-cesku-lide-nabizi-pokoje-ale-uprchlici-jsou-v-telocvicnach-koordinatorka-vysvetluje-proc-193751 (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

Taniguchi, H. (2006): Men's and women's volunteering: Gender differences in the effects of employment and family characteristics. Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly 35(1), 83–101, https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764005282481.

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., Braun, V. (2017): Thematic analysis. In Willig, C., Rogers, W. S. (Eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology, 17–36. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555.n2.

Trachtová, Z. (2015): Sluníčkář je nový pravdoláskař. Zda je to jen móda, experti neodhadnou. Available online: https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/slunickar-je-novy-pravdolaskar.A150716_091217_domaci_zt (accessed on 17 January 2024, in Czech).

UNHCR (2023): Ukraine Refugee Situation. Available online: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine (accessed on 25 May 2023).

Valentová, M., Justiniano-Medina, A. C. (2019): Comparing Voluntary Activities Among Immigrant and Non-immigrant Youth. Focus on Third Country Nationals. Child Indicators Research 13, 1257–1281, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-019-09694-8.

van der Brug, W., Harteveld, E. (2021): The conditional effects of the refugee crisis on immigration attitudes and nationalism. European Union Politics 22(2), 227–247, https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116520988905.

Vermeersch, S. (2004): Entre individualisation et participation: l'engagement associatif bénévole. Revue française de sociologie 45(4), 681–710, https://doi.org/10.3917/rfs.454.0681 (in French).

Zogata-Kusz, A. (2022): Policy advocacy and NGOs assisting immigrants: Legitimacy, accountability and the perceived attitude of the majority. Social Sciences 11(2): 77, https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020077.