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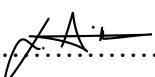
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Abstract

This thesis illuminates the experiences of Ukrainian university students at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany. It examines the impact of higher education on integration. Both Czechia and Germany have a considerable Ukrainian community, including young Ukrainians seeking higher education. Therefore, it is important to investigate the experiences of Ukrainian university students in the Czech Republic and Germany, as well as the influence of higher education on their integration journey, if they aspire to achieve integration in the host country. A semi-structured interview method for data collection and a thematic analysis technique for data analysis are utilised. Social integration theory is employed as a conceptual and theoretical framework to discover the experiences of five students in each city. The thesis found that students in both cities are satisfied with their studies. They enjoy similar support mechanisms like free language courses and financial support, and similar challenges such as linguistic problems and cultural disparities. Due to country-based differences together with the experiences of students, various support mechanisms and challenges emerge as well. The study revealed that students in Olomouc experience discrimination more frequently than those in Göttingen. Students acknowledge that higher education has positive impacts on their lives and the integration process. They, nevertheless, believe that employment is the most significant facilitator of integration. The study also disproves the assumption that immigrants or refugees seeking higher education always want to integrate into the host community because some students in Olomouc desiring to return to Ukraine. The study, finally, found that nearly all Ukrainian students in Göttingen, want to stay and establish a life in Germany. Most students in Olomouc, however, are uncertain about their plans. They express a desire to leave Czechia for Ukraine or another country.

Keywords: Czech Republic, Germany, higher education, migration, social integration, Ukrainian refugees, war in Ukraine.

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(incl. footnotes, excl. bibliography & annexes)

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definitions
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
BAföG	Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz (Federal Education Funding Act)
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CNN	Cable News Network
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DIW	Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (German Institute for Economic Research)
Erasmus (+)	European Community Action Scheme for Mobility of University Students
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
EU	European Union
ISIC Card	International Student Identity Card
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RO	Research objective
RQ	Research question
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WG	Wohngemeinschaft (Sharing flat)

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my family, which makes life bearable to me: my fiancé and prospective husband, who enriches my life with a lot of love and support and with whom I can be myself; the strongest and most devoted mother in the world, to whom I owe everything I have; my father, who encourages me in my master's journey; my twin siblings, who taught me to be an older sister; my grandmother, who has been in my life since my birth, picked me up from school, and helped with my homework; and my extended family for everything they made for me. Without you, I cannot be the person I am right now.

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1. Introduction

On February 24, 2022, Europe witnessed the most significant conventional military attack since World War II.[1] The Ukraine-Russia war is unprecedented for the continent, as politicians are not accustomed to observing and handling the situation in Europe; rather, they are familiar with dealing with wars and migration crises in distant places.[2] However, politicians in the EU reacted immediately, with authorities launching the temporary protection directive in the European Union (EU) on March 4, 2022, in response to the migration and refugee crises following the war and the declaration of martial law. Because of the ongoing war in Ukraine, authorities extended the temporary protection for Ukrainians, making it valid until March 4, 2026.[3] A significant number of displaced individuals migrating to the EU without the option to go back to their home country can benefit from temporary protection, which provides fundamental rights such as residence, entry into the job market and housing, access to health care services, social services, and education.[4]

According to the recent record, 4.2 million Ukrainians sought shelter in Europe, and Ukrainians mostly live in Germany, Poland, and Czechia, respectively.[5] Ukrainians who migrated to Czechia and Germany are mostly females over 18,[6] and they are well-educated and experienced in their professions.[7]

The war has adversely affected the most vulnerable part of the population, including young people and students, whose development of abilities for the future and their options

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[1] Jeremy Herb Kaufman Barbara Starr,Ellie, 'US Orders 7,000 More Troops to Europe Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine | CNN Politics', CNN, 24 February 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/24/politics/us-military-ukraine-russia/index.html.

[2] Linda Morrice, 'Will the War in Ukraine Be a Pivotal Moment for Refugee Education in *Europe*?', *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 41, no. 3 (4 May 2022): 251–56, https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2022.2079260.

[3] 'How the EU Helps Refugees from Ukraine', accessed 25 June 2024, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/refugee-inflow-from-ukraine/.

[4] 'Ukrainian Refugees: EU Member States Welcome the Proposal to Extend Temporary Protection', accessed 25 June 2024, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/13/ukrainian-refugees-eu-member-states-welcome-the-proposal-to-extend-temporary-protection/.

[5] 'Ukrainian Refugees by Country 2024', Statista, accessed 25 June 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees-by-country/.

[6] 'Czechia: Refugees from Ukraine under Temporary Protection by Sex and Age 2023', Statista, accessed 24 October 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1316128/czechia-refugees-from-ukraine-under-temporary-protection-by-sex-and-age/.
'1.1 Million Arrivals of People from Ukraine in 2022', Federal Statistical Office, accessed 1 December 2023, https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2023/02/PE23_N010_12411.html.

[7] European Union Agency for Asylum., IOM., and Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development., *Forced Displacement from and within Ukraine: Profiles, Experiences, and Aspirations of Affected Populations.* (LU: Publications Office, 2022), https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2847/739455.

for employment have been negatively affected.[8] They have suffered from physical and mental overload, personal and familial jeopardy, financial instability or unemployment, displacement from residence and property, and the potential for fatality.[9] The invasion has also had a detrimental impact on students' education and studies. Studies show that wars have negative effects on students and education, including reluctance to resume schooling as a result of an interruption, the poverty of some families pushing children to labour, impairment and devastation of educational facilities, reduction or elimination of funding for education, dissolution of teaching staff, students, academic personnel, etc.[10] After the invasion, these issues also surfaced in Ukrainian society and the education system. For example, bombs and shells have hit 3,798 educational institutions, including schools, kindergartens, and universities, and 365 of them have been destroyed since the invasion.[11] Reports also show that at least 16% of registered students and 6% of teaching staff migrated to neighbouring countries.[12]

After arriving in the host country, refugees face many challenges, such as language barriers to doing daily routines, receiving compulsory and tertiary education, cultural and traditional differences, and difficulties accessing the job market due to differences in expertise, experience, and diploma recognition.[13] Those who want to pursue their studies in higher education institutions may face challenges including unclear immigration status, a lack of recognition of graduation certifications, and obstacles related to finances and language proficiency. However, the EU's temporary protection scheme and the European Commission's recommendation to recognise Ukrainians' higher education qualifications eliminated the first and second challenges for Ukrainian students.[14] Other types of support mechanisms are developed by the EU countries for Ukrainians to increase their access to

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[8] Shubhajeet Roy, Vivek Bhat, and Ahmad Ozair, 'Overseas Medical Students in Ukraine and War-Related Interruption in Education: Global Health Considerations from India', *Annals of Global Health* 88, no. 1 (3 November 2022): 98, https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.3926.

[9] A. V. Stadnik, Yu. B. Melnyk, S. A. Babak, I. V. Vashchenko, and P. P. Krut, 'Psychological Distress among Students and Cadets of Universities in the War Conditions,' International Journal of Science Annals 5, no. 1-2 (2022): 20-29, https://doi.org/10.26697/ijsa.2022.1-2.0.

[10] Luisa Cervantes-Duarte and Antonio Fernández-Cano, 'Impact of Armed Conflicts on Education and Educational Agents: A Multivocal Review', *Revista Electrónica Educare* 20, no. 3 (1 September 2016): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.15359/ree.20-3.12.

[11] 'Education in Emergency', Освіта під загрозою, accessed 25 June 2024, https://saveschools.in.ua/en/.

[12] 'Education: Impact of the War in Ukraine,' May 2022, accessed June 25, 2024, https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/education-impact-war-ukraine-may-2022.

[13] Malgorzata Rataj and Iryna Berezovska, 'Addressing Challenges with Ukrainian Refugees through Sustainable Integration: Response of the Educational Community in Poland', *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 47, no. 9 (21 October 2023): 1221–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2241386.

[14] 'Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the Recognition of Qualifications for People Fleeing Russia's Invasion of Ukraine', *OJ L*, vol. 107I, 5 April 2022, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2022/554/oj/eng.

higher education institutions. The Czech Republic, for example, provides reserved study places, financial and language support, academic guidance, and psychological counselling. Germany, on the other hand, offers language support, welcome or introductory courses, online courses or programmes, and academic guidance.[15]

Refugees' access to higher education has a positive impact on their involvement in the job market in host countries, making them prominent figures in their communities and rebuilding their countries.[16] At the same time, tertiary education accelerates integration into host countries.[17] Therefore, a refugee wishing to pursue higher education and attend a higher education institution to obtain a certificate wants to improve their living conditions, integrate into the host society, and help rebuild their own country. As a result, this thesis aims to investigate the student experiences of Ukrainian university students at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, as well as how higher education impacts their integration.

The existing literature is limited to studying the experiences of Ukrainian university students who left their country due to the invasion. Simultaneously, although Germany is the first recipient and Czechia is the third, young Ukrainians' experiences in accessing higher education and pursuing their studies are unstudied in these countries. This thesis, as a result, aims to contribute to knowledge by trying to find answers to the following questions.

1.1 Research Questions

The thesis has two research questions. The first one is "How do Ukrainian university students experience their lives as refugees or immigrants in the Czech Republic and Germany?" The second question is, "How does access to higher education impact the integration of Ukrainian students into Czech and German society?" Undergraduate and graduate students at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, are targeted for these questions.

These questions inform four research objectives in the thesis. The first research objective is to discover the student experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc, Czechia, and Göttingen, Germany. The second objective is to identify challenges and support

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[15] European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, *Supporting Refugee Learners from Ukraine in Higher Education in Europe*, Eurydice Report (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022).

[16] UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis* (Geneva: UNHCR, September 2016).

[17] Martha K. Ferede, *Higher Education for Refugees*. Background paper prepared for the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report, *Migration, Displacement and Education*: Building Bridges, Not Walls (Paris: UNESCO, 2018).

mechanisms that Ukrainian students encounter while pursuing their studies. The third research objective unearths the discrimination and integration experiences of students. The fourth research objective investigates the impact of higher education on the integration process. By achieving these objectives, the study will shed light on the comparison of Ukrainian students in the Czech Republic and Germany, as well as whether students holding refugee status or not. The following glossary explains the terms and words used in research questions and objectives to ensure their clarity before delving into the thesis.

1.2 Glossary

The research questions include some terminology that needs clarification to help the reader comprehend the research questions, objectives, and findings. These terms are clearly defined in the following glossary.

Challenges: Any barrier or problem that makes Ukrainian students' lives difficult and uneasy, including financial problems, language barriers, etc.

Higher/tertiary education: Undergraduate, graduate, and PhD studies at academies, colleges, and universities.

Integration: A successful and positive process of experiences by individuals, in this case refugees or migrants, blending into a different (Czech and German) society.

Full integration: The process through which Ukrainian students are included fully in a society, with equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources.

Support mechanisms: Any facility or support that is provided by third parties to make students' lives easier, including scholarships, psychological support, etc.

Ukrainian university students: Those who migrated to other countries after or just before the invasion and pursued higher education. Refugee status is an option for this category, but not a requirement. When referring to Ukrainian (university) students studying in Ukraine, it will be specified.

These definitions establish the research scope and clarify terms related to research questions, which are answered using the following methodology and theory.

1.3 Overview of Methodology and Theory

The chosen methodological approach for this thesis is qualitative. The interviews serve as the primary source for the research. A semi-structured interview method and thematic

analysis are employed to gather data and interpret the findings. The chosen interview method allows the researcher to ask undetermined questions during the interview and effectively understand the individual experiences. The thematic analysis method assists the researcher in interpreting data by utilising keywords, codes, and themes. Notta is used for transcriptions, and Atlas.ti is used for qualitative data analysis of the transcribed interviews. The Theory Chapter, on the other hand, elaborates on the theoretical and conceptual framework for social integration, using measurement concepts explained by Brissette et al. and the conceptual framework of Ager and Strang.

1.4 Significance of the Thesis

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.[18] It is, therefore, critical to examine the invasion-led refugee crisis from various angles to comprehend the circumstances of refugees and improve their living conditions. Although Germany and the Czech Republic host a significant number of Ukrainian refugees, including the young population, the experiences of Ukrainian university students at higher education institutions in Germany and Czechia have not previously been studied in the literature. This thesis, therefore, focuses on the experiences of Ukrainian university students at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany. As a result, this research will be unique and serve as an exemplary model for future studies. Simultaneously, the research analyses the situation in two countries, enabling comparisons in terms of challenges, support mechanisms, and discrimination and integration in two different EU countries.

Secondly, higher education has positive impacts on refugees, host communities, and the countries of origin of refugees, as stated before. Correspondingly, a goal was set by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to increase the enrolment of refugees in higher education institutions by 15% by 2030. Refugees' access to higher education institutions has increased from 1% in 2019 to 7% in 2024, thanks to the efforts of the UNHCR.[19] Hence, this thesis presents the necessary research for this target by revealing the challenges Ukrainian university students in Olomouc and Göttingen face and the support mechanisms they get. By focusing on the relationship between higher education and integration and unearthing the integration and discrimination experiences

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[18] 'Ukraine-Fastest Growing Refugee Crisis in Europe Since WWII', UNHCR Hong Kong, accessed 26 June 2024, https://www.unhcr.org/hk/en/news/ukraine-fastest-growing-refugee-crisis-europe-wwii.

[19] 'Higher Education and Skills', UNHCR, accessed 26 June 2024, https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/higher-education-and-skills.

of students, the thesis also contributes to the literature on how the experiences of students differ in each country. The research, as a result, may provide authorities and civil society with ideas on how to increase the percentage of Ukrainians in higher education institutions and take the necessary steps to eliminate difficulties.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. The introduction chapter gives an overview of the study, including the research questions, research objectives, the contribution and significance of the study to the literature, and a concise explanation of the methodology and theory used for the research. The second chapter is the literature review, which presents a critical overview of the studies and research about Ukrainian university students abroad and in Ukraine after the invasion. The third chapter delves into the theory and conception of social integration. The methodology chapter elucidates research methods, justification for country and city selection, primary data sources, the steps taken during data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations and limitations of the research. The fifth chapter presents the research findings based on the interviews with Ukrainian students in Czechia and Germany, including selected interview quotes. The discussion chapter interprets the findings and connects them to existing knowledge and theory. The thesis concludes with a conclusion chapter that summarises the key findings and provides recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

According to the UNHCR, children make up 40% of the forcibly displaced people.[20] Therefore, the existing literature includes more research on primary and secondary school children than those in higher education. Studies that focus on the experiences of refugees pursuing higher education are scarce,[21] but they have been on the increase since 2010.[22] Research focusing on Ukrainian university students migrated to other countries after the invasion has also grown since the incident was relatively new. Consequently, the current body of knowledge does not include extensive studies on the conditions of Ukrainian university students abroad after the war. Nevertheless, the current research on them can be categorised based on their respective topics:

1) Ukrainian university students abroad and their access to higher education
2) University students in Ukraine (Ukrainian nationals and international students)

The following sections examine the studies on these two topics. The first one provides critical analyses of studies that focus on Ukrainian university students abroad. On the other hand, the second section investigates studies on the condition of Ukrainian and international university students in Ukraine and includes several studies.

2.1 Ukrainian university students abroad and their access to higher education

This category includes research about the feelings and experiences of Ukrainian university students at higher education institutions abroad and the policies of higher education institutions towards Ukrainian students. There are only four studies in this category.

The first study conducted by Pentón Herrera and Byndas focusing on the consequences of interrupted higher education for Ukrainian university students in Poland after February 24, 2022, demonstrates that students are not certain about their future, and they want to go back to Ukraine after the war. They consider their stay in Poland as temporary. According to the researchers, this temporary status increases uncertainty. They face challenges, including linguistic difficulties and differences in the education systems in

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[20] 'Figures at a Glance', UNHCR, accessed 19 June 2024, https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance.

[21] Bernhard Streitwieser et al., 'Access for Refugees Into Higher Education: A Review of Interventions in North America and Europe', *Journal of Studies in International Education* 23, no. 4 (September 2019): 473–96, https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315318813201.

[22] Georgina Ramsay and Sally Baker, 'Higher Education and Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Meta-Scoping Study', *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1 March 2019): 55–82, https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdy018.

Poland and Ukraine. For this reason, courses taught in English motivate students to pursue their education in Poland. Students also state that they are thankful to the Polish people and government for accommodation, financial support, and humanitarian help. As a result, researchers assert that Ukrainian students face challenges despite their appreciation for the support they receive from their host nation, as both students and authorities perceive Ukrainian migration as temporary. The research is crucial to understanding the situation of Ukrainian university students in Europe after the invasion. The most significant issue, however, is the lack of a specific date for conducting research. It is obvious that the research took place after February 2022. But the exact date is missing. The interpretation of the findings would differ if it were known that the study was conducted in the early days of the invasion or one year later. Thus, this situation makes it difficult to analyse, compare, and contextualise the results.[23]

The second study carried out by Ishchenko et al. addresses students' social and psychological adaptation due to the changing ethno-cultural and ethno-political environment. Students from the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague in the Czech Republic, Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg in Germany, Lublin University of Technology in Poland, and Università degli Studi del Molise in Italy were participants. The results show that Ukrainian students in Germany have a high level of adaptation, followed by Italy, the Czech Republic, and Poland. Students in Italy and Poland have higher depression values, whereas those who stay in Germany and the Czech Republic have relatively low depression values. The study also investigates students' satisfaction with their studies, which are listed in the table below.

Subject	Czechia	Germany	Poland	Italy
Overall satisfaction with the educational experience	67%	75%	71%	75%
Alignment of curriculum and materials with expectations	65%	58%	61%	60%
The teaching quality of teachers	78%	75%	82%	80%
Satisfaction with the availability of resources and equipment at the university	68%	64%	67%	70%
Support and availability of student services	60%	65%	63%	65%

[23] Luis Javier Pentón Herrera and Olena Byndas, '"You Sway on the Waves like a Boat in the Ocean": The Effects of Interrupted Education on Ukrainian Higher Education Refugee Students in Poland', *Cogent Education* 10, no. 2 (11 December 2023): 2264009, https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2264009.

Satisfaction with the opportunity for communication and interaction with fellow students	56%	58%	55%	55%
Alignment of academic requirements with abilities and interests	70%	73%	69%	70%
Satisfaction with extracurricular participation opportunities	70%	77%	70%	75%
The organisation of the educational process and schedule for meeting needs	65%	70%	66%	65%
The environment for learning and personal development	80%	73%	76%	80%

Table 1: Results of the study conducted by Ishchenko et al.

It is notable that the University of Magdeburg and the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague have come to the forefront in terms of overall student satisfaction. While students indicate that the University of Magdeburg successfully supports them, matches their academic requirements and abilities, provides extracurricular activities, and provides a successful organisation and timetable, the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague comes forward in teaching quality and creating an environment that fosters learning and personal development. The study is significant because it analyses and compares the experiences of Ukrainian students at different higher education institutions in four European countries. Because this thesis focuses on Ukrainian students in the Czech Republic and Germany, it is critical to interpret and compare the findings with those of this study. However, the research is not effective in explaining the potential reasons and factors contributing to the disparities in student ratings at each university. The reader, as a result, cannot understand why students in Poland give the lowest grade when it comes to overall satisfaction with their studies.[24]

Luşcan focuses on the perspectives and plans of Ukrainian students who participated in the Erasmus+ project "Boost the European Feeling" in Romania in October 2022. The study only included females who are regular students at the Uzhhorod National University in Ukraine. Although students live in Ukraine and visited Romania for a short period, the research falls under this category because it was conducted outside of Ukraine. Findings

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[24] Yevhenii Ishchenko et al., 'Psychological and Pedagogical Aspects of Adaptation of Students Who Received Temporary Shelter to the Educational Environment of Another Country', *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice* 24, no. 1 (29 January 2024), https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v24i1.6766.

indicate that even though their lives are affected by the war, the students have a desire to finish their studies in Ukraine. The majority of students believe that education is suffering due to the war, but they emphasise that they can cope with the situation because they gained experience during the pandemic. Yet, when it comes to leaving the country to find a better job, they are undecided. Many students express that due to the war, they start considering leaving Ukraine. Nevertheless, finding a job in Ukraine is still manageable despite some difficulties, according to students. Finally, the study demonstrates that young Ukrainians believe that civil society and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are more effective than governments in terms of help and support. The study is important to understand how Ukrainian university students perceive the situation in Ukraine and envision their future while temporarily away from their countries. The study, however, does not contain a solid literature review and a theoretical framework to determine its importance and interpret its findings.[25]

Lastly, Viczko and Matsumoto analyse Ukrainian students' access to higher education by comparing Canadian universities' policies and initiatives for refugees coming from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine in light of the policies of the Canadian government. Using the discourse analysis method to analyse the initiatives introduced by ten universities in the Ontario region, the study demonstrates that universities approach Ukrainians differently than Syrians and Afghans. According to the research, unlike the previous refugee crises, Canadian universities are more inclusive of students from Ukraine, regardless of their nationality. For example, the support mechanisms include anyone with links to studying in Ukraine. Material support, partnerships, and more inclusive, flexible admission criteria are provided for anyone coming from the war-affected region. Although the paper is significant in examining university policies supporting Ukrainian refugees' access to higher education, it does not explain the region selection or the reasons for differences in attitudes towards Ukrainians compared to Syrians and Afghans in Canadian universities. The application of methodology also remains unclear.[26]

As a result, studies in this category are independent of one another and focus on Ukrainian university students in Poland and at four European universities in Czechia, Germany,

[25] Mihai-Ciprian Luşcan, 'PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN UKRAINE FOLLOWING THE AGGRESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION', 2023.

[26] Melody Viczko and Renata Matsumoto, 'Problematizing Access to Higher Education for Refugee and Globally Displaced Students: What's the Problem Represented to Be in Canadian University Responses to Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian Crises?', *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education* 17, no. 1 (11 July 2022), https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29504.

Italy, and Poland, as well as Erasmus+ participants in Romania. Although the last study does not centre on students, it is included in this category as it covers the policies of Canadian universities for Ukrainian refugees. These studies are important and pioneering for researchers, despite their deficiencies, and will later be used to contextualise the findings of this thesis in the discussion chapter.

2.2 University students in Ukraine (Ukrainian nationals and international students)

This category includes research on the experiences and conditions of Ukrainian and international university students still studying in Ukraine. In this category, the following paragraphs critically examine studies on the distance learning experiences of students, the conditions of medical students, the psychological well-being of students, and the conditions of international students after the invasion.

In Ukraine, the pandemic and martial law made distance learning necessary for university education, prompting researchers to investigate how online education shaped students' experiences. Therefore, Klishevych et al. conducted a study examining the opinions of students studying at the Institute of Human Sciences at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University regarding distance learning during COVID-19 and martial law in Ukraine. The study first investigates students' experiences during online education, following their satisfaction with the Institute's education standards and the internship opportunities provided by the Institute during the pandemic and martial law. Findings indicate that students' experience and satisfaction with their studies at the Institute during online education are positive. For example, 92% of students express that they have no difficulties with online education, and 37.1% of them claim that it is easier than on-campus education. They also mention many advantages of distance education, such as convenience, comfort, accessibility, mobility, and objectivity in evaluation. Compared to other programmes, students find the Moodle platform and Google Meet for online classes effective. However, 46.4% of students claim that distance learning increases their work burden. Although the study is important to assess the satisfaction of students during online education, the objectivity of the research is controversial, as the research is conducted by the staff of the institute. For example, appreciation of students is highlighted about internship opportunities provided by the Institute in the paper.[27]

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[27] Nataliia Klishevych, Roman Pavliuk, Vadym Sulitskyi, and Tetiana Liakh, 'Education in the Conditions of Pandemic and War: Ukrainian Students' Representative Opinions,'in *E-learning in the Transformation of Education in Digital Society*, ed. Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska, *E-learning* vol. 14 (Katowice–Cieszyn 2022): 105–119, https://doi.org/10.34916/el.2022.14.08.

The second one conducted by Cherepiekhina et al. focuses on the academic procrastination of university students in Ukraine during compulsory remote education during the pandemic and the war. It reveals the disadvantages of distance learning, unlike the first study. An online survey of undergraduate and graduate students in Ukraine was conducted by the researchers who divided them into two groups. The first group consists of students experiencing hybrid education. The second group comprises students receiving online education only. The results reveal that the first group is not satisfied with online education. The second group sees it as a necessity and is positive about it. However, the academic performance of the second group is lower than the first one. Moreover, forced online learning increases academic procrastination and decreases self-organisation. The second group has a greater tendency to procrastinate than the first group, which developed behaviours towards self-organisation and conscientiousness. According to the study, undergraduate students tend to procrastinate more than graduate students. Researchers also mention "active academic procrastination" and define it as a new type of academic procrastination:

> "Active academic procrastination" refers to the intentional postponement of necessary and important academic tasks, despite being fully aware of the negative consequences that such delays may entail. This behaviour occurs in the context of prolonged stress caused by traumatic and/or post-traumatic experiences stemming from unavoidable living conditions. We posit that active academic procrastination may be linked to the operation of personal defence mechanisms within students' psyches. This procrastination type could serve as a coping strategy, allowing students to shield themselves from distressing emotions or challenging circumstances related to their academic responsibilities.

Researchers assert that active academic procrastination emerges in the process of compulsory remote education and negatively affects the self-organisation of students, their social skills, and their self-efficacy. As a result, 5.6% of participants in the first group define themselves as active academic procrastinators, whereas 52.3% of students in the second group admit to being active academic procrastinators. The study was very successful in interpreting the results and discussing their place in the literature. However, the research does not analyse academic procrastination separately in the pandemic and wartime but rather reviews them together, preventing comprehension of the differences in forced online education in both periods.[28]

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[28] Olha Cherepiekhina, Anastasiia Turubarova, Oleksii Sysoiev, Nataliya Derevyanko, and Valerii Bulanov, 'HOW UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ACADEMICALLY PROCRASTINATE IN CONDITIONS OF FORCED-ONLINE-LEARNING CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND

Bayliak et al. sheds light on the motivations of students to participate in an interuniversity online course called "Integrated Course in Life Sciences," designed by Ukrainian and German universities and supported by the DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*—German Academic Exchange Service). Based on an anonymous questionnaire among participants in the course, the study provides details on attendance, exam results, and learning outcomes of the course. Findings indicate that students show a high interest in the course, and 330 students registered for the course, exceeding the capacity of 90 students. More than 90% of students say they attend the course to acquire useful knowledge, and almost 90% of them say that they register for the course to gain a deeper understanding of the field of biology. Students believe that the course certificate will help them apply for master's studies in Ukraine and abroad as well. Students also provide reasons for registering to expand their network and establish connections with faculty and students from other universities. The study is crucial in demonstrating students' willingness and interest in online courses, which can be beneficial for their academic pursuits and career advancement. However, the study does not give reasons for some findings, such as why a scholarship did not serve as an incentive to pursue the course and finish the course successfully.[29]

Studies addressing the situation of Ukrainian university students in Ukraine during the war pose importance to medical students[30] because they play a crucial role in the defence of the country. At the same time, medical schools in Ukraine have a favourable reputation in Europe and attract many students.[31] The study by Khaniukov et al. reveals the problems of distance education and medicine during the war. Researchers state that medical personnel have been highly affected by casualties, kidnappings, and a lack of healthcare equipment due to the war. Thus, education in medicine is significant during the war for the healthcare system in the country. They found that although higher education institutions prepared for distance education thanks to the pandemic, security concerns, difficulties in providing water and food in the areas highly affected by the war, an unstable internet connection, and disruption of the psychological well-being of students and

WARTIME,' Advanced Education 10, no. 22 (1 August 2023): 51–71, https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.273846.

[29] Maria Bayliak et al., 'Interuniversity Online Courses as Possible Approach to Improve Teaching During Crisis: A Ukrainian Case Study', *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University* 10, no. 1 (3 April 2023): 49–60, https://doi.org/10.15330/jpnu.10.1.49-60.

[30] Bahadar Singh Srichawla et al., 'War on Ukraine: Impact on Ukrainian Medical Students', *International Journal of Medical Students* 10, no. 1 (5 April 2022): 15–17, https://doi.org/10.5195/ijms.2022.1468.

[31] Fakir Al Gharaibeh, Ifzal Ahmad, and Rima Malkawi, 'Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Education and International Students' 25 (2023).

professors because of the consistent scarcity of basic resources adversely affected the learning process of students and professors both in Ukraine and abroad. Time zone conflicts also appeared due to migration, resulting in the rescheduling of lessons. Although the study is important in addressing the challenges faced by students and teachers in medicine during the war, it suffers from serious problems such as a lack of a literature review, a clear theoretical framework, and an explanation of data collection and analysis. As a result, the study only shows results rather than discussing them in light of literature and theory.[32]

Students' psychological well-being is another issue that has been studied by researchers to understand how the war has affected higher education students. The study conducted by Kurapov et al., which is the first to examine how the war has affected the psychological well-being of Ukrainian university students and personnel who continue to reside in the country, focuses on students who enrolled in universities located in war zones and pursued their studies online. The research demonstrates that students suffer from a higher level of fear and burnout than university personnel. Female students also suffer from fear and burnout more than male students. The same trend is also observed in terms of resilience levels. The war led to an increase in substance use among participants. For example, tobacco usage surged by 17%, and alcohol consumption increased by 19%. The study reveals that the majority of participants experience depression, exhaustion, loneliness, nervousness, and anger as well. Students report more negative mental issues than personnel do, except for depression. Females also suffer from depression, exhaustion, loneliness, and nervousness more than males. Despite significant findings, the study fails to interpret the results and tries to answer the reasons and factors leading to these disparities.[33]

Stadnik et al. examines the mental health and social adaptability of students and cadets at the Military Department of the Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs and Uzhhorod National University confirms the findings in the study conducted by Kurapov et al. To see differences in mental health and social adaptation through online psychological tests, participants are divided into three categories. The first group, cadets,

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[32] O. O. Khaniukov, O. V. Smolianova, and O. S. Shchukina, 'DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE WAR IN UKRAINE: EXPERIENCE OF INTERNAL MEDICINE DEPARTMENT (ORGANISATION AND CHALLENGES)', *Art of Medicine* 23, no. 3 (18 October 2022): 134–38, https://doi.org/10.21802/artm.2022.3.23.134.

[33] Anton Kurapov et al., 'Toward an Understanding of the Russian-Ukrainian War Impact on University Students and Personnel', *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 28, no. 2 (17 February 2023): 167–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2022.2084838.

changed their location within Ukraine. The second group consists of students who have migrated to safer parts of Ukraine and the EU. The last group comprises students who chose to stay in their permanent residence and those who live in combat zones. Results show that group three suffers from more psychological disorders, like severe depression, than other groups. Women have a higher tendency to experience more mental distress and psychological trauma than men. Group three also suffered more regarding social support, probably due to uncertainty and insecurity. The study shows that students in the third group share an understanding of living from day to day. When it comes to emotional support, group one came to the forefront because researchers assert that team spirit among cadets strengthens mutual aid, solidarity, interchangeability, and low conflict. Group two has the highest score in terms of practical support as they live in either safer places in Ukraine or the EU, providing many possibilities for them. The study is successful in interpreting some results in the context of existing literature by identifying potential factors influencing differences among the three groups and providing a rationale for university selection. However, further explanation is necessary to comprehend findings like the high psychological trauma score among women.[34]

The literature also examines the effect of war on international students. Ukraine had been home to more than 80.000 international students before the war, with a 50% increase from 2011 to 2019, according to the statistics. The majority of students came from India, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Nigeria, Turkey, and China.[35] Several reasons influenced foreign students. Firstly, university degrees in Ukraine are recognised by the EU, and Ukrainian universities have strong international cooperation. Secondly, Ukrainian universities offer majors in English, which attracts international scholars. Thirdly, university education in Ukraine is affordable.[36] Apart from that, job opportunities in Ukraine, improved infrastructure, and reliable electricity supply made the country popular for African students.[37] International students primarily chose to study in fields such as medicine, medical practice, dentistry, management, pharmacy, industrial

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[34] A. V. Stadnik et al., 'Peculiarities of the Psychological Well-Being and Social Adaptation of Young Students and Cadets in Wartime Conditions', *International Journal of Science Annals* 6, no. 1 (30 June 2023): 22–30, https://doi.org/10.26697/ijsa.2023.1.7.

[35] admin erudera, 'Ukraine International Student Statistics 2022', Erudera, 11 March 2022, https://erudera.com/statistics/ukraine/ukraine-international-student-statistics/.

[36] Gharaibeh, Ahmad, and Malkawi, 'Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Education and International Students'.

[37] Vincent Okwudiba Anyika and Kelechi Johnmary Ani, 'Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Implications for Regular Nigerian Students' Migration to Ukraine', *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (Formerly Ubuntu : Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation)* 2023, no. si1 (October 2023): 241–61, https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3665/2023/Sin1a12.

pharmacy, and law. Kharkiv was the most popular city for international students, followed by Kyiv and Odesa. Correspondingly, universities in Kharkiv, such as Kharkiv National Medical University and V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, were prominent among foreign students.[38] International students also contributed to the country's economy. According to a report published by the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine in 2020, foreign students contributed $542 million in income to the country, with an average expenditure of more than $7.000.[39]

Yet, when the war erupted, international students left the country with the help of the Ukrainian government, countries of students' origin, and NGOs such as US-based Sewa International, Sewa Europe, and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh.[40] However, discrimination was observed during the evacuation towards students from the Middle East and African countries. According to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, some foreign students were discriminated against and harassed by Ukrainian border police while crossing the border:

> Examples included students who were reportedly beaten up, prevented from boarding trains, barred from crossing, or told that Ukrainians must cross first.[41]

A Nigerian medical student also told a similar story to CNN when she observed buses carrying Ukrainians to the border and was ordered to walk in freezing weather in the border town of Shehyni. After these reports, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba warned of equal treatment for foreigners.[42]

Due to these incidents, one study carried out by Ojwang et al. focuses on the forms of discrimination experienced by the African students during the evacuation. Based on the interview with students and media footage, results demonstrate that some of them experience inequalities in access to transportation, long waiting hours at the border while Ukrainians cross the border, and xenophobic attitudes of the security personnel, such as

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[38] erudera, 'Ukraine International Student Statistics 2022'.

[39] Charu Sudan Kasturi, 'Ukraine Is Seeing an Exodus of Foreign Students, and Revenue', Al Jazeera, accessed 22 June 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/3/1/ukraine-sees-an-exodus-of-foreign-students-and-revenue.

[40] editor, 'Ukraine Crisis: The Struggle to Evacuate International Students', *ICEF Monitor - Market Intelligence for International Student Recruitment* (blog), 2 March 2022, https://monitor.icef.com/2022/03/ukraine-crisis-the-struggle-to-evacuate-international-students/.

[41] 'Middle East Students Stranded in Ukraine | The Washington Institute', accessed 23 June 2024, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/middle-east-students-stranded-ukraine.

[42] '(1) X'te Dmytro Kuleba: "Russia's invasion of Ukraine has affected Ukrainians and non-citizens in many devastating ways. Africans seeking evacuation are our friends and need to have equal opportunities to return to their home countries safely. Ukraine's government spares no effort to solve the problem." / X', X (formerly Twitter), 1 March 2022, https://x.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1498791864916496389.

hostile communication and reluctance to engage in dialogue with black people during their journey to Poland. While the research validates previous reports, it is not possible to generalise the results due to the limited sample size because only four African students were interviewed, and ten media clips were reviewed. Therefore, it raises questions about the arbitrariness of the racist attitude towards black people, as one respondent in the study reports not experiencing discrimination while crossing the border.[43]

Goncharuk-Khomyn et al. examines the satisfaction of foreign students studying medicine and dentistry at the Uzhhorod National University during the war. The war led to online education, which had a negative impact on practical education in these departments, as well as the migration of foreign students. The study demonstrates that, thanks to the experience during the pandemic, online education due to the war did not significantly reduce students' satisfaction, particularly when it comes to the performance of teaching staff, course content, quality of teaching materials, connectivity, and technological equipment. However, students mention their dissatisfaction when it comes to practical skills and collaborative learning. The study also shows that forced migration because of the war and the direct impact of the war on safety concerns have a negative correlation with satisfaction. Although the study mentions details about the participation rates of different grades, there is no information on disparities in terms of satisfaction between senior and junior students, which may be different.[44]

Other studies on the future of Indian medical students in Ukraine and their reintegration into Indian medical universities,[45] as well as the motivations for Nigerian students to study in Ukraine,[46] are crucial to showing interest in understanding the situation of foreign students in Ukraine after the war in the literature.

As a result, this category includes several studies that focus on a variety of topics, from the experiences of higher education students in Ukraine during online education to the conditions of international students after the invasion. The studies in this section are sometimes linked to each other. They either confirm or disprove each other's findings. It

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[43] Frank Ojwang, Dmytro Mamaiev, and Sharon Shikanga, 'African Immigrants' Experiences at the Ukraine Border Points During Russian Invasion: Meta-Analysis of Racism during Global Crisis', *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 6 (21 May 2024): 1034–42, https://doi.org/10.61707/cvz4bx52.

[44] Myroslav Goncharuk-Khomyn et al., 'Impact of War on Foreign Students' Satisfaction with Quality of Dental and Medical Education in Ukraine', *Brazilian Oral Research* 37 (2023): e026, https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-3107bor-2023.vol37.0026.

[45] Roy, Bhat, and Ozair, 'Overseas Medical Students in Ukraine and War-Related Interruption in Education'.

[46] 'INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF AFRICAN & ASIAN STUDIES (IJAAS) VOL. 9 NO. 2, 2023 (ISSN: 2504-8694), Indexed in Google Scholar (Email: Ijaasng@gmail.Com) Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria', *ASIAN STUDIES* 9, no. 2 (2023).

is important to note that participants in the studies consist mostly of females, and the situation at the Uzhhorod National University dominates the studies. This is because males are under general mobilisation in Ukraine,[47] and the location of the Uzhhorod National University, which is on the border with Slovakia, makes the university a safe place to conduct academic studies.

The literature also includes studies on how higher education,[48] teaching methods,[49] and approaches[50] have changed due to the war. However, they are disregarded in this study as they lack direct research on the effects of changes on the experiences of students.

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[47] 'Ukraine President Orders General Mobilization – DW – 02/25/2022', dw.com, accessed 1 July 2024, https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-president-orders-general-mobilization/a-60908996.

[48] Volodymyr Lugovyi et al., 'Transformation of Higher Education in Ukraine: Impact of the War and Objectives for Post-war Recovery', *European Journal of Education* 58, no. 4 (December 2023): 611–28, https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12584.

[49] Alisa Popovich and Olena Aliyeva, 'Providing Education to the 1st Year Students at the Medical University in the Conditions of Martial State in Ukraine', *Educational Challenges* 28, no. 1 (28 April 2023): 139–48, https://doi.org/10.34142/2709-7986.2023.28.1.11.

[50] Morrice, 'Will the War in Ukraine Be a Pivotal Moment for Refugee Education in *Europe*?'

3. Theory

This thesis utilises social integration as a theoretical and conceptual framework. The following paragraphs define social integration and the social integration process and mention measurements and concepts developed by researchers to understand and interpret the social integration experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc and Göttingen.

3.1 Definition of Social Integration and Its Process

As a concept first used by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim in the 19th century,[51] social integration refers to the extent to which people enjoy various social roles and relationships. According to Brissette et al., social integration has behavioural and cognitive aspects. The behavioural component includes active involvement in numerous social activities and connections, while the cognitive component pertains to a degree of sense of belonging to the society of people and their social responsibilities. They suggest that four measurement categories can be used to evaluate social integration. These are role-based, social participation, perceived integration, and complex measurement. The first one examines how many roles a person actively takes on, including social roles such as friend, neighbour, student, or worker. The social participation metric refers to the frequency of different activities a person performs with other people, such as spending time with friends, dining out, or participating in leisure activities. The perceived integration indicator demonstrates "individuals' feelings of communality and belongingness." Finally, in the following paragraph, researchers define complex indicators:

> (…) typically combine information about marital status, number of social ties, frequency of contact with friends and relatives, and community involvement into a single summary index.[52]

As a result, it is possible to link social integration with social interaction and engagement according to these measurements.

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[51] Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, Suicide (New York, NY, US: Free Press, 1951).

[52] Ian Brissette, Sheldon Cohen, and Teresa E. Seeman, 'Measuring Social Integration and Social Networks', in *Social Support Measurement and Intervention: A Guide for Health and Social Scientists*, ed. Sheldon Cohen, Lynn G. Underwood, and Benjamin H. Gottlieb (Oxford University Press, 2000), 0, https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780195126709.003.0003.

Social integration, which is a continuous and dynamic process, is also affected by both immigrants/refugees and locals over time.[53] Therefore, as a communication tool enabling the interaction between immigrants and locals, language is the most significant element in social integration.[54] At the same time, both individuals and the host society have to make changes to enable the integration of immigrants and refugees.[55] Immigrants should adapt to the host society to a certain degree. The host society, on the other hand, should be open to mutual acculturation and social engagement with newcomers.[56] Nevertheless, refugees face challenges in this process. For example, social and political difficulties in their home country, in the host country, and around the world may affect them. Separating from their homes and establishing a new life in the host country emerges as a hardship for refugees as well.[57]

Social integration has both public and private aspects. The public aspect is about legal and social difficulties such as legal status, accommodation, education, healthcare, employment, and so on, whereas interpersonal circumstances experienced by refugees on a personal level refer to the private dimension.[58] These aspects are important to achieving successful integration, as listed also by Ager and Strang in their conceptual framework map, elaborated in detail in the following section.

3.2 The Conceptual Framework of Ager and Strang

Certain issues are crucial for refugees to effectively navigate the challenges they face in both their public and private spheres to reach successful integration. According to the conceptual framework developed by Ager and Strang, certain fundamental areas, which are the foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means, are important to understanding the social integration of refugees, as seen in the figure below.[59]

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[53] Ilgar Seyidov, 'On Social Integration Process with Refugees in Turkey: How Can NGOs Be More Effective?' *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 25, no. 1 (2019): 7–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1673955.

[54] Hartmut Esser, 'Integration and Ethnic Stratification,' in *Towards Emerging Ethnic Classes in Europe? Volume I Workshop Proceedings, Project Conclusions, Integration and Ethnic Economy and Social Exclusion*, ed. Hartmut Esser (Weinheim: Freudenberg-Stiftung, 2000), 49–84.

[55] Joseph E. Trimble, 'Introduction: Social Change and Acculturation,' in *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, ed. K. Chun, P. B. Organista, and G. Marin (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002), 3–14.

[56] Seyidov, 'On Social Integration Process with Refugees.'

[57] Steven Dijkstra, Karin Geuijen, and Arie de Ruijter, 'Multiculturalism and Social Integration in Europe', *International Political Science Review* 22, no. 1 (1 January 2001): 55–84, https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512101221004.

[58] Sylvie da Lomba, 'Legal Status and Refugee Integration: A UK Perspective', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 415–36, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq039.

[59] Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 166–91, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016.
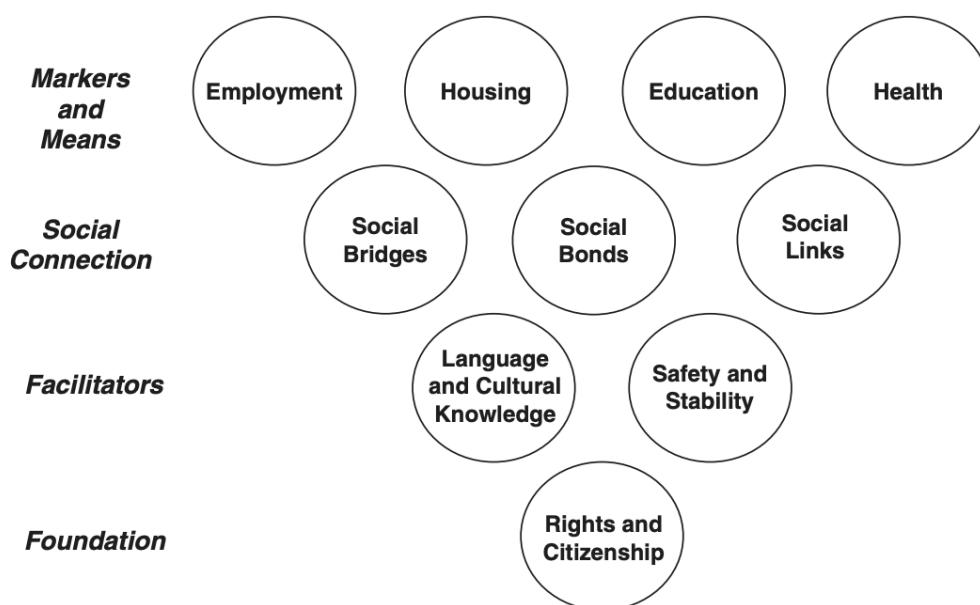
Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework Demonstrating Core Domains of Integration, Developed by Ager and Strang

In the conceptual framework, the foundation encompasses rights and citizenship, which are essential for governments to establish policies for integrating refugees. Facilitators refer to language, cultural knowledge, safety, and stability. While facilitators help with integration, they could also appear as barriers. Proficiency in the language of the host country is essential for the integration process. Cultural knowledge is also needed to comprehend important knowledge for daily life like rules and regulations, traditions, and "cultural expectations" in the host society. Feeling safe and stable in the area where refugees live also speeds up integration.[60]

Social connection includes social bridges, social bonds, and social links. The importance of interactions with people of the same ethnic background, as well as communication between refugees and locals through friendliness and common activities like sports, is emphasised in this core area. On the other hand, social links focus on the associations and interactions of people and governmental institutions, like public services. All of them act as facilitators for successful integration. Finally, markers and means consist of employment, housing, education, and health. Through education, refugees equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge, enabling them to get a job later on. Education also plays a role in making refugees more effective and valuable members of society. Having a job supports economic independence, motivation to develop goals for

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[60] Ager and Strang.

the future, interaction with locals, proficiency in language, self-confidence, and self-reliance.[61] Accommodation, on the other hand, is important for refugees to feel "at home" and improve their physical and mental health. Finally, active interactions with locals require excellent health conditions, which is important for a successful integration process.[62]

Therefore, this thesis assesses the integration experiences of Ukrainian students in Göttingen and Olomouc using the conceptual framework that Ager and Strang developed.

3.3 Implication of Social Integration Theory

If countries aim to provide social integration for immigrants and refugees, education is the key tool to do it.[63] Through education, immigrants and refugees can gain social, academic, and professional skills and access many opportunities.[64] Four measurement categories defined by Brissette et al. suggest role-based, participation-based, perceived integration, and complex measurements. As a result, it can be said that higher education provides students with many roles, occasions, and opportunities to integrate into society at the same time. A student in higher education can be a student, a friend, or a neighbour in a dormitory or shared flat. They spend time with their friends and participate in a hobby or sports club. As they increase their roles and engagement with people in the society in which they live, their sense of belonging to that society consolidates. They can also evaluate their social integration based on these indicators.

The conceptual framework developed by Ager and Strang highlights the importance of rights, language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, employment, housing, and health for social integration, including higher education and social connection with the host society, as mentioned by other scholars. According to the researchers, education is a tool for securing a job requiring skilled labour. This study aims to investigate the roles and impacts of higher education in other aspects of life, as well as the integration process of Ukrainian students in Olomouc and Göttingen.

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[61] Frances Tomlinson and Sue Egan, 'From Marginalization to (Dis)Empowerment: Organizing Training and Employment Services for Refugees', *Human Relations* 55, no. 8 (1 August 2002): 1019–43, https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726702055008182.

[62] Ager and Strang, 'Understanding Integration'.

[63] UNESCO, *Enforcing the Right to Education of Refugees: A Policy Perspective*, Working Papers on Education Policy No. 8 (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019), https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/190208eng.pdf.

[64] OECD, *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors That Shape Well-Being*, OECD Reviews of Migrant Education (OECD, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264292093-en.

As stated in the Introduction Chapter, this thesis assumes that if an immigrant or a refugee attends higher education, they wish to integrate into the host society. The thesis also aims to assess the impact of higher education on the social integration of Ukrainian students in Czechia and Germany using social integration measurements and the conceptual framework developed by the researchers defined above.

4. Methodology

This chapter provides detailed information on the steps and methods used during data collection and analysis. The first section defines the qualitative research design of the study. The second one provides information on the selection of countries and cities. The third chapter elucidates the source of data for the research, and the fourth one discusses ethical considerations while collecting data. Section five explains the data collection and analysis process and outlines the steps. Finally, issues regarding the limitations of the study and methodology are addressed in the last section.

4.1 Research Design

This research is based on a qualitative study, including a semi-structured interview method and thematic analysis used to analyse the interview data. "Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things."[65] It is, therefore, important to comprehend our lives.[66] Furthermore, researchers can use qualitative methods to obtain in-depth and amplified information about a small number of individuals and instances. However, while this situation allows for a detailed comprehension of subjects and circumstances, it decreases the ability to generate general concepts and themes based on findings.[67] This study, as a result, focuses on the individual experiences of ten Ukrainian university students at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany. It does not generalise the findings but emphasises repeated themes, concepts, and answers to reflect the similarities and differences of their unique experiences.

Interviewing is the most common and prominent method for collecting data in the social sciences.[68] Because qualitative interviews aim to get insights into the experiences and perspectives of interviewees and to comprehend the significance of the phenomena they mention,[69] interviews provide information about the way people think, their motivations

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[65] Bruce L. Berg and Howard Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Ninth edition, Books a La Carte (Boston: Pearson, 2017).

[66] Berg and Lune.

[67] Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*, Fourth edition (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2015).

[68] *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods. 3: Q - Z, Index* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2004).

[69] L Sayrs, 'InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing Steinar Kvale. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996. 326 Pp.', *The American Journal of Evaluation* 19, no. 2 (1998): 267–70, https://doi.org/10.1016/S1098-2140(99)80208-2.

and choices, and their justifications. Interviews, on the other hand, provide unique narratives of individuals and their points of view.[70] Therefore, the interview method, specifically the semi-structured interview method, is employed to learn about the individual experiences of Ukrainian students in two different countries.

The semi-structured interview is chosen because the method allows for the adjustment of questions during the interviews, while conducting interviews. This interview method allows the researcher to ask a list of predetermined questions that are posed "in a systematic and consistent order" and additional ones when necessary to understand individual thoughts and experiences. Interviews can also deviate from the order.[71] As a result, the semi-structured interview technique is chosen because it gives the researcher the freedom to ask further questions and change the order of questions.

Thematic analysis is used to analyse the interview data. This technique enables the researcher to find, define, and evaluate patterns and themes. The thematic analysis follows a subsequent order, making it a "systematic" method for analysing the data.[72] As explained in detail in the Data Collection and Analysis Section, the method allows the researcher to find repeated keywords, codes, and themes. Before delving into the details of the analysis, it is important to explain the justification for country and city selection in the following section.

4.2 Selection of Countries and Cities

The thesis sheds light on the experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc, Czechia, and Göttingen, Germany, because Germany is the leading country hosting 1,194,900 Ukrainians. The Czech Republic comes in third, with 357,960 Ukrainians receiving temporary protection.[73] Thus, Germany and the Czech Republic are selected based on the assumption that their large Ukrainian communities host a significant number of Ukrainian students pursuing higher education. Although Poland ranks second in terms of hosting Ukrainians, it is disregarded due to a lack of knowledge about Poland and its Ukrainian community and as well as a lack of a research network.

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[70] Berg and Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*.

[71] Berg and Lune.

[72] Muhammad Naeem et al., 'A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (1 March 2023): 16094069231205789, https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789.

[73] 'Refugees from Ukraine in the EU', accessed 9 May 2024, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/ukraine-refugees-eu/.

Secondly, Göttingen, Germany, and Olomouc, the Czech Republic, are chosen because the researcher has studied at Palacký University, Olomouc, the University of Strasbourg, and the University of Göttingen in her studies in Euroculture. The researcher, therefore, is familiar with these cities and countries. Lastly, Göttingen and Olomouc host big student communities, and Palacký University and Georg-August University are popular among students.[74] This study, as a result, focuses on Ukrainian university students in Göttingen and Olomouc, and the subsequent chapter gives details on the main sources of data.

4.3 Sources of Data

Interviews serve as the main source of data for this thesis. Participants for the research are Ukrainian university students studying their undergraduate, graduate, or PhD studies at the University of Göttingen and Palacký University Olomouc.

To reach out to potential participants, different steps were followed for each city. One of the supervisors for this thesis, Dr. Eva Dohnalová, provided contact information for some Ukrainian students studying in Olomouc. Emails were sent to students to learn about their willingness to participate. After finding two participants, the International Student Office at Palacký University of Olomouc provided information for potential mediums and channels to reach out to other entrants. Another three participants were found through a Facebook group called Olomouc Helps Ukraine. As a result, a total of five undergraduate students in Olomouc were found.

On the other hand, the snowball sampling technique was used to reach out to Ukrainian students in Göttingen. The snowball sampling technique is based on the referral/chain system, in which participants refer to other potential participants.[75] It was used to find sufficient number of participants in Göttingen thanks to the network of each student referring their friends. The table below gives information about participants.

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[74] 'Czechia: Share of University Students by City 2022', Statista, accessed 9 May 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1386482/czechia-share-of-university-students-by-city/.
'Top German Universities 2020', Statista, accessed 9 May 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1091741/best-german-universities-by-times-higher-education/.
[75] T.P. Johnson, 'Snowball Sampling: Introduction,' in *Wiley StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online*, eds. N. Balakrishnan, T. Colton, B. Everitt, W. Piegorsch, F. Ruggeri, and J.L. Teugels (2014), accessed June 25, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05720.

The Number of Participants	Age	Gender	Affiliation	City
P1	20	Female	Undergraduate student	Olomouc
P2	18	Female	Undergraduate student	Olomouc
P3	21	Female	Undergraduate student	Olomouc
P4	20	Female	Undergraduate student	Olomouc
P5	20	Female	Undergraduate student	Olomouc
P6	20	Female	Undergraduate student	Göttingen
P7	22	Female	Graduate student	Göttingen
P8	24	Female	Graduate student	Göttingen
P9	25	Male	Graduate Student	Göttingen
P10	25	Female	Graduate student	Göttingen

Table 2: Participant information

Detailed information about participants, such as date of arrival in each country, language proficiency in Czech and German, refugee status of students, etc., can be found in the Findings Chapter. Numbers like P1 and P2 are assigned to all participants based on the interview orders to refer them rather than giving pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. Although other information, such as their majors at both universities and the cities they lived in before coming to Europe, was collected, it is not published because it may reveal the identities of students. For this reason, ethical considerations are important for this research and are explained in the following section in detail.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Interviews are the primary research source, as previously stated. Therefore, the researcher provided each participant with an informed consent form before conducting interviews, which provided a brief explanation of the nature of the study. Before beginning the interview, participants and the researcher dated and signed the informed consent forms, which included the research aim, confidentiality, data collection and usage, and voluntary participation in the study.[76] Students were free to ask any questions about their

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[76] Appendix B.

participation. The researcher conducted the interviews in a secure location, free from third parties, and also obtained verbal consent before recording each interview to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher conducted the interviews in a secure location, free from third parties, and also obtained verbal consent before recording each interview. The records of the interviews are kept secretly on the researcher's personal computer and the Google Drive account. As a result, data collection for this research follows ethical guidelines, and the following section elucidates this process in detail.

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis process for this qualitative study involved the following steps. Except for the interviews with two participants in Göttingen, all interviews were conducted online. Google Meet was used as a platform because it is free and convenient for both the researcher and participants. Interviews were carried out from December 15, 2023, to May 6, 2024, based on the availability of participants and the researcher. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants. They were stored on a password-protected personal Google Drive account and on the personal computer of the researcher. Interviews lasted from thirty minutes to one hour. However, compared to those who participated online, respondents who participated in in-person interviews were more willing to speak and express their feelings sincerely.

The interviews were transcribed using Notta, and the transcriptions were cross-checked and edited when necessary. Atlas.ti was employed to analyse the interview data. The interviews were transcribed to become familiar with the data before applying the thematic analysis method. Quotations were selected to see diverse viewpoints and patterns. Keywords and codes were defined to create understandable and manageable units. In the later stage, themes were developed to formulate special findings according to theories and previous studies and to find answers to the research questions.[77] However, although these steps were taken to collect and analyse data, some limitations appeared from the very beginning to the analysis step, which is elaborated below.

4.6 Limitations

At various stages of the research, some limitations have emerged. Language is the first limitation. The researcher cannot speak Ukrainian. As a result, the language presented a

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[77] Naeem et al., 'A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research'.

challenge during the process of finding participants and collecting data. Although a report shows that half of the Ukrainians can speak English, the researcher struggled to find English-speaking Ukrainians, especially in the Czech Republic. English levels of some students in Olomouc are not enough to express themselves fluently. This research, therefore, had to overlook the experiences of non-English-speaking Ukrainian students in Olomouc and Göttingen.

Secondly, the majority of Ukrainians in Europe are women, as previously mentioned. Therefore, all participants in this study are female, except for one male participant in Göttingen. This situation forces the researcher to discount gender diversity in their research, which focuses primarily on the experiences of women.

Thirdly, because Ukrainian migration is a relatively recent phenomenon, the literature does not include enough studies and research on Ukrainian university students in Europe. Because of this, comparing and analysing the data using previous academic research is difficult.

Fourth, this research focuses on one dimension of Ukrainian migration, namely, higher education, and its impact on the integration process. However, healthcare facilities, the job market, and the socio-political situation in the host countries can all influence the integration process of Ukrainians. As a result, this research neglects other elements and tries to uncover students' experiences by focusing only on higher education.

Last but not least, some social scientists claim that generalisation is not possible in the social sciences because of differences in social contexts.[78] Simultaneously, through in-depth analyses, researchers conducting qualitative studies aim to unearth a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of the experiences of individuals.[79] Therefore, because the study involves qualitative research with a limited number of participants in two cities, it is not possible to generalise the results to reach general concepts. The results still highlight certain issues that students experience in each country.

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[78] David A. Erlandson, ed., *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: A Guide to Methods* (Newbury Park, Calif: Sage, 1993).

[79] Denise F. Polit and Cheryl Tatano Beck, 'Generalization in Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Myths and Strategies', *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 47, no. 11 (November 2010): 1451–58, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2010.06.004.

5. Findings

This chapter displays the results of the research. The first section shows the results of the interviews carried out with Ukrainian university students in Olomouc, the Czech Republic. Then, it is divided into subsections, which are the main themes of the interview, such as challenges, integration, discrimination, etc. The second section demonstrates the findings gathered from the interviews with Ukrainian university students in Göttingen, Germany. It is also divided into subsections. Each subsection is enriched with direct quotes from interviews, and tables are used to increase the readability and clarity of the results.

5.1 Ukrainian Students in Olomouc, Czech Republic

This section presents the findings from interviews with Ukrainian students at the Palacký University of Olomouc. Except for P4, who arrived in September 2022, all students have lived in the Czech Republic for more than two years. They are fluent in Czech and speak it at the C1 level, which indicates a proficient user according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).[80] However, due to their poor language skills, some of them struggle to express themselves in English. Therefore, P1 requires online language assistance while answering questions. Students, except for P5, say that they want to go back to Ukraine or move to another European country. P4 is uncertain about whether to settle in the Czech Republic. P2, P4, and P5 hold refugee status, unlike P1 and P3. The following tables provide information about Ukrainian students in Olomouc.

The Number of Participants	Age	Gender	Affiliation
P1	20	Female	Undergraduate student
P2	18	Female	Undergraduate student
P3	21	Female	Undergraduate student
P4	-	Female	Undergraduate student
P5	20	Female	Undergraduate student

Table 3: Information about Ukrainian students in Olomouc

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[80] 'The CEFR Levels - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) - Www.Coe.Int', Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), accessed 1 July 2024, https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions.

Partici pant	Date of arrival in Czechia	Place of Accommodation	Czech level	Refugee Status	Desire to stay in Czechia	Desire to stay in Olomouc
P1	September 2021	Dormitory	C1	No	No	No
P2	March 2022	Dormitory	C1	Yes	No	No
P3	September 2021	Dormitory	C1	No	No	No
P4	September 2022	Dormitory	C1	Yes	Possible	Possible
P5	March 2022	Dormitory	C1	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4: Information on the Ukrainian students' migration to Olomouc

In detail, the subsections below demonstrate student life and future aspirations, support mechanisms and challenges, integration, and discrimination experiences.

5.1.1 Student Life in Olomouc, the Czech Republic, and the Students' Future Aspirations

This section includes information on the experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc, their thoughts and feelings while studying in Czechia, and their future aspirations.

First of all, Ukrainian students cite many reasons for choosing to study in the Czech Republic and Olomouc. P1 and P3 are dissatisfied with the university education in Ukraine. P3 mentions that the situation in Ukraine was not stable before the war. She preferred Olomouc because the city is small and easy to live in. Many of them choose to live in Olomouc because of their previous visits to Czechia and Erasmus semesters. Thus, they are familiar with the country and city, and they have friends. P2, P4, and P5 say that they came to the Czech Republic because of the war. They also want to obtain a qualified higher education in Czechia, like P4:

> I knew that education in the Czech Republic is a little bit better than in Ukraine because the Ukrainian universities are a little bit corrupt. Here, I think there are more fair play rules. It's better because it's European.

Free university education influenced students' decisions to study in the Czech Republic. They also mention that Palacký University of Olomouc has the best departments in their fields of study. The other reason to study in Czechia is familiarity with the Czech language. Some students find it easier to learn Czech because it is a Slavic language, similar to Ukrainian. Online education because of the war after online education during COVID-19 also triggered students to migrate to Olomouc because they wanted to have a better student experience, like P5:

My university in Ukraine was closed in 2022, and we studied online. So, it was a harmful experience. I understand that studying at a university offline is much better for me. So, I moved here because I wanted to live a full university life.

According to students, enrolment at Palacký University was easier. They are also satisfied with their studies. P1 notes that her studies encompass theory and practice, allowing her to practice her job skills to use. P4 emphasises that the lectures, in which she learns a lot, are highly interactive. Students also highlight the freedom to elect courses, like P2:

We can sign up for a subject or not. It depends on us. But in Ukraine, they give us a plan, and you must attend it every day in some circles.

Regarding the differences between university education in Ukraine and the Czech Republic, P5 mentions the different mentalities of professors. She says that in Olomouc she feels better during lectures than in Ukraine because she is not discriminated against because of her opinions:

In Ukraine, there are a lot of teachers who were born in the Soviet Union. So, they have a mind, like in the Soviet Union sometimes, and they discriminate against you on some topics. A lot of men are discriminating against you because you're a woman. They say, for example, when you study law or politics, "You just came for a year to search for your husband." This is really common in Ukraine. Here, I feel better. I can express my opinions. I'm really interested in feminist topics, and for example, one teacher asked about gender issues in a lecture, and I started to say my opinion that gender is not only man and woman. We need to add more options to surveys. I feel that my professor understands me. But when I say this in Ukraine, they will discriminate against me and say, "Oh, you support LGBT." I feel like here I can support all of the things that I stand for.

When asked about their future aspirations, Ukrainian students in Czechia have different plans and expectations. P1 and P2 express that they want to go to Ukraine when they finish their studies. P1 says that it is impossible to make plans during the war because everything has changed suddenly. P2 wants to work for a Ukrainian business online, in case she cannot return to Ukraine.

P3 and P5 mention their plans to pursue a master's degree in another country. While P4 hopes to secure a job that provides sufficient income for living expenses, travel, and social interaction, she remains uncertain about her stay in the Czech Republic. Because she cannot predict Russian plans, P5 emphasises the importance of flexibility in future planning. She tries to be positive but very considerate, and her mood depends on the news she hears:

It's really hard for Ukrainians to express feelings about the future, but I want to think positively. Now I understand that I need to think about myself, my friends,

and my family. But I can't think about the whole country; I can't change the world; I can't change Putin; and I can't change Russia. So, I need to only think about myself and improve myself. And maybe when I improve myself, I improve the society around me. For example, today I feel more positive. Because I hear good news from the USA. We received some help, so today it's okay.

In summary, Ukrainian students are satisfied with their studies in Olomouc. They are aware that they receive a better university education in the Czech Republic than in Ukraine. Although they have different plans for the future, they share the same feeling: uncertainty.

5.1.2 Support Mechanisms

This section reflects the support mechanisms that students enjoy while studying. Students talk about many support mechanisms while pursuing their studies in Olomouc. The free Czech language courses offered by the university are one of them. Students also mention financial support from the university. Table 5 shows the amount of financial support the students receive in Czech crowns and its equivalent in euros[81], except for P1, who does not receive financial support. P3, however, receives financial support only once because after the invasion, she applied for financial support for Ukrainians provided by Palacký University Olomouc.[82]

Participants	Amount
P2	5000 Kč (approx. €200)
P3	10000 Kč (approx. €400) - one time
P4	-
P5	7000 Kč (approx. €275)

Table 5: Amount of financial support received by Ukrainian students in Olomouc

P5 also receives a scholarship from the government, but she is concerned about the effect of the scholarship on her future citizenship application. Therefore, she is thinking about working. P4 does not share the amount of the scholarship but calls it a "pleasant bonus." For this reason, she has to work two jobs. She is a coach at the archery club, and she teaches Czech for Ukrainians. P2 also mentions free health insurance provided by the government.

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[81] According to the exchange rate on July 31, 2024.
[82] 'Fund', Palacký University Olomouc, accessed 8 June 2024, https://www.upol.cz/en/ukraine/fund/.

Students' classmates assist them during their studies and adaptation period. For instance, her classmates welcomed P1 into their group of friends and helped her when she struggled with understanding certain subjects. She also has good relations with them outside of the classroom.

Students receive assistance and support from lecturers as well. For example, P2 receives support from lecturers and professors in both her studies and daily life. She notes that some of the lecturers are Ukrainians who have fled the war. She adds that many professors in her faculty speak Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish, and they accept exams in these languages instead of Czech at the beginning. Professors also recommend that students should not take mandatory classes at the advanced Czech level during their first year. Other students share the same attitude from lecturers and professors, who do not expect perfect Czech in exams and homework. Only P1, however, mentions a change in the attitudes of professors over time because she came to Olomouc before the war. She claims that in the beginning, some professors offended her by criticising her language skills. But when the war started, they changed their attitudes, asked her to apologise, and became helpful to her.

P1 finds support at university parties, providing opportunities to learn about Czech music and food. She also observes a political shift in the Czech government. When she arrived in Czechia just a few months prior to the war, she did not have access to opportunities or mechanisms that would have facilitated her integration. Instead, she received support from her parents in Ukraine and Ukrainians who have lived in the Czech Republic for many years. However, the war led to the implementation of numerous policies. Therefore, she no longer needed once they came into effect.

Students benefit from cheaper travel, involvement in student (hobby) clubs such as yoga and debate, participation in speaking clubs, and the assistance and information offered by the international and welcome offices as well. P5 also expresses her gratitude to the Czech government and Czech President Petr Pavel for their support of Ukrainians and Ukraine. As a result, responses show that students enjoy a variety of support, such as language courses, financial aid, friends, and lecturers, among others.

5.1.3 Challenges

This section includes challenges ranging from language problems to bureaucratic issues that Ukrainian students face in Olomouc during their studies. Students cite that language is one of the main challenges. They have difficulties understanding lectures, preparing

homework, and taking exams. They received low grades due to their insufficient language skills in the first semester. They experience difficulties communicating and expressing their feelings and thoughts because of their insufficient language skills. Thus, they struggled to make friends and felt lonely at the beginning. For example, P1 mentions that her poor language skills, combined with the characteristics of Czech people, led to her feeling alone:

> I am a fairly open and sociable person, but Czechs still prefer to communicate and be friends with other Czechs. And that's normal. We are from different cultures. We have different upbringings. We watched different cartoons as children, and so on. Initially, my Czech language was far from perfect, and it was difficult to understand me sometimes. So, I'm not surprised that I felt lonely. Two years later, of course, I already have friends here, but I'm not sure about any close friends.

P3 expresses the same concern. She has not been able to make friends among Czechs for two years, and her close friends are foreigners. She says making foreign friends is easier because they experience the same problem. P5 feels that her introverted Czech classmates do not understand her:

> I sometimes feel like my Czech classmates don't understand me. And we're not so friends in class. But they are not as friendly as they were at my university in Kyiv. We had a small group, and we had a really good relationship with each other. Now I have a friendship relationship with my classmates from Ukraine. But it is really hard to make friends with Czech students because sometimes I feel they have another mentality. They move closer, and they feel better when they learn alone. I sometimes understand that I can't have friends with them because I'm more sociable than them. Czech people are shier and more closed.

As a result, cultural barriers pose another challenge for them to understand their Czech colleagues, their ways of life, behaviours, and traditions. In addition, students face financial difficulties, stating that their amount of scholarship is insufficient to cover their living expenses. Everything is more expensive in Czechia than in Ukraine, according to P1. For this reason, some students work part-time jobs or look for job opportunities. Some of them receive financial support from their families, too.

Except for P2, the students' families remain in Ukraine. Therefore, some of them are concerned about their family's safety. P4 shares her sadness about being separated from her family:

> It's difficult to live in a foreign country where you see other people going home every week. I'm not jealous, but it's sometimes hard to understand that it's my situation. I should get used to it, and I don't have another option.

P4 also experiences panic attacks. To come up with these problems, she sees a psychologist regularly and practices meditation. Students also state their shyness, especially during the first semester, due to the aforementioned reasons, such as poor language skills, unfamiliarity with the academic environment in Olomouc, and a lack of friends. They cite visa issues, bureaucratic problems, and slow procedures as reasons for their months-long wait for visas and residence permits, among other things. Finally, P5 notes that the poor design and lack of information on university websites prevent her from finding the information she needs.

In conclusion, students face many challenges, and some of them, such as language proficiency and financial difficulties, continue despite support from the university and government. Cultural differences also pose challenges when interacting with Czech people.

5.1.4 Discrimination and Reactions from Locals

Apart from the challenges, discrimination also affects the integration process of students and poses another challenge to their daily lives and studies. Therefore, this section investigates whether students experience discrimination based on their personal stories.

Ukrainian students explicitly declare that they face discrimination and even assault, except for P3. P1 states that, like all Ukrainians abroad, she experienced discrimination. She emphasises that Czech people's behaviours changed over time, and she faced open discrimination:

> In 2022, I encountered support and sympathy more often. I went to rallies with Czechs in support of Ukraine, and a lot of Czechs helped for free at help centres. In 2023, there was already ignorance or even negativity. For example, on the street, Czechs can react aggressively because I communicate with someone in Ukrainian. Once, an old man attacked me in a store when he saw a yellow-blue ribbon on my coat. He started shouting that the Chinese would soon take over Ukraine and that my president (Volodymyr Zelenskyy) is a criminal. But most often, the Czechs ignore me. They are tired of thinking about the war.

P2 sometimes feels discriminated against because Czechs think that Ukrainians steal job opportunities. P4 gets positive feedback about her Czech language proficiency from Czech people. She says Czech people appreciate that she does not have a foreign accent, and they ask her whether she was born in Czechia. However, her proficiency in Czech does not shield her from discrimination:

> While I've been in a sauna with my Czech friend, there was a man. He said that Ukrainians are the worst people in the world, and they shouldn't live (in Czechia)

and should go back. And he didn't know that I'm Ukrainian because I don't have a big accent. I just didn't want to listen, so we went out. He came after us, and my friend told him that I'm Ukrainian. Then he said, "Sorry," but kept saying the same things. I didn't understand why he said sorry and repeated the same things. It was so weird.

P5 experienced discrimination twice: once at the hospital and on the second anniversary of the invasion. When she was in the hospital, she was told that she needed to wait because healthcare personnel first asked to a Czech person what they needed help with. She also faced discrimination when she attended the protest on February 24, 2024. Some Czech people supported Russia in the protest against Ukrainians, which led to a dispute between them. However, she admits that it is hard for her to understand the freedom of opinion and speech in a democratic society when it involves supporting Russia:

> I'm thankful for the Czech people because they are supportive. But sometimes I feel they can also support another opinion because some people support Russia. And it's really hard to see these rallies in Prague[83] and understand that it's a democratic society. So, you can't ignore them; you can't reject them. But it's really hard to understand that there is another opinion here.

However, P5 keeps an aggressive attitude towards Russia and its language and culture since the war. For example, she refuses to speak Russian. She does not want to be exposed to Russian language and culture and unfollowed Russian accounts, including the accounts of the late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, on social media. She also adopted an aggressive stance towards people interested in the Russian language and culture:

> When Navalny died, there was support for him.[84] He is better than Putin, but he's still Russian. And it's really hard for me to communicate with Russian students here. Now, I am sitting in a study room, and there was a Russian girl here. When I started this interview and said something about Russia, she left the room. So, I feel aggressive towards them. I feel that I need to say something. When I saw them, I said something bad about Russia. I want to make them shy. Palacký University has a Russian theology department, or Russian language and culture maybe.[85] It's really hard for me because I feel disgusted with Russian culture, Russian music, Russian language, and everything else that is connected with Russia, and I'm so sad that some people want to study the Russian language.

[83] 'Czech Pro-Russian Force Rallies against Government's pro-Western Policies', www.euractiv.com, 17 September 2023, https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/czech-pro-russian-force-rallies-against-governments-pro-western-policies/.

[84] 'Photos: Honouring Navalny: Supporters Gather to Mourn, Express Outrage', Al Jazeera, accessed 24 July 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/17/photos-honouring-navalny-supporters-gather-to-mourn-express-outrage.

[85] Palacký University hosts the Department of Slavonic Studies.

In summary, four students out of five faced discriminations in different forms. Only P5, however, shares her aggressive stance towards Russian people, culture, and language.

5.1.5 Integration

One of the aims of this study is to find the relationship between higher education and integration. Questions related to integration were asked to understand their feelings and thoughts while living in the Czech Republic. The researcher also asked participants to rate their integration process on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest score. By asking this question, the researcher aims to understand how participants evaluate their level of integration.

Although P1 has lived in Czechia and studied at the Czech University, she does not feel that she belongs to the Czech Republic, but to Ukraine. She views integration as a process of learning beneficial procedures and policies to implement when she returns to Ukraine:

> Living in the Czech Republic and communicating with locals helped me to understand their mentality, and I will bring certain habits home and try to integrate them. For example, I was impressed by the inclusion of infrastructure for people with disabilities. In Ukraine, disabled people practically do not go out into the streets because the realities of Ukraine are not adapted for them. In the Czech Republic, they receive more respect and attention. This is a very good European feature that Ukraine lacks.

She also views higher education as a tool for acquiring knowledge, observing business practices in her field of study, and integrating these skills into the Ukrainian workplace. Although she does not belong to the Czech Republic and expresses challenges and open discrimination, she gives an 8 for her integration process, which is one of the highest scores among Ukrainian students in Olomouc. But she keeps believing that higher education does not bring full integration into society.

Participant	Integration score
P1	8
P2	2
P3	5
P4	8
P5	7

Table 6: Integration scores given by Ukrainian students in Olomouc

In contrast to P1, P2 gives the lowest score, 2, for her integration process. Yet she declines to discuss her integration process, despite feeling more like she belongs to Czech society than before. Higher education, according to P2, makes a person part of society by

fostering interaction with students from different backgrounds and communicating with professors. She asserts that higher education provides her with the opportunity to learn about Czech history, politics, and economics, which she finds to be a valuable way to understand Czech society. She also believes that higher education does not enable people to fully integrate into society because full integration requires work experience.

P3 perceives that higher education gives her equal treatment, even though she is a foreigner. All students are perceived as the same in higher education, regardless of their nationality, according to P3. As a result, she does not perceive any discrimination against her. Higher education also helps her understand Czech society better and allows her to communicate with Czech people, but it is not sufficient to fully integrate into society. Moreover, she does not make efforts to be integrated because she believes that her presence in the Czech Republic is only for study purposes:

> I am not trying to (be integrated). I learned the language, and I communicate with the Czech people. But I haven't tried to become a Czech citizen. The whole time, I consider myself in Ukraine. My stay here is temporary. I'm going back somewhere to Ukraine or moving somewhere in Western Europe or Asia.

Because she can speak Czech fluently, is a full-time student, and has accommodation and a friend group where she can interact with locals, P4 feels integrated into Czech society. She also states that higher education helps her find friends, get to know local people, and improve her language skills. She is an archer, and she trains people who want to learn archery at the same time. Therefore, she claims that her profession helps her integrate into society and gives her confidence. Hence, she gives an 8 for her integration score, thanks to her profession:

> I teach archery as a free-time activity, and I work with people. This year, I teach Czech people as well. I also help organise the archery events sometimes. It's great because I could use my knowledge of archery in real life, and this helps me a lot. So, I believe that archery is the primary facilitator because the people I meet during competitions or training sessions see me not as a foreigner but as an archer. They do not score my nationality, but my skills in archery.

Therefore, her profession in archery is the most significant factor when it comes to finding a place for herself in Czech society. Finally, she perceives that full integration depends on her motivation and looking for new opportunities rather than getting a higher education diploma.

Because she can speak the language, P5 believes that she has started integrating into the Czech Republic. She is familiar with Czech laws and the political environment, and she has gained knowledge about Czech society through data on the socio-political context of

the country, thanks to her study programme. As a result, her studies have helped her understand the behaviours and thoughts of Czech people on various issues. However, she encounters some challenges during her integration process, including making Czech friends. Because of this, her social circle primarily consists of Ukrainian individuals living in Czechia:

> Now I'm working in a Ukrainian culture centre for children, and they hold events such as Ukrainian Christmas and Ukrainian Easter. So, now I feel supported because there are a lot of Ukrainians, and I have a lot of friends from Ukraine. It's nice to make your society in another country and support our culture and our mentality here.

P5, nevertheless, is the only participant among Ukrainian students in Olomouc who believes that higher education will make full integration easier. She aims to find jobs requiring higher education, enabling her to fully integrate into Czech society:

> If I choose to work in a factory or restaurant, it's not so integrative for me. At university, I study in Czech. Then I will write my thesis in Czech and receive my diploma. It will enable me to contribute more to society.

In conclusion, each student believes that higher education contributes positively to their lives from different sides. However, except for P5, students say that higher education itself is not enough for full integration.

5.2 Ukrainian Students in Göttingen, Germany

This section reveals the results of interviews with Ukrainian students in Göttingen. All students have lived in Germany for more than two years. They can speak German at least at B2 level, according to the CEFR. Although the students desire to remain in Germany after graduation, they indicate that they plan to explore opportunities in larger German cities, as they perceive Göttingen as a smaller city offering limited opportunities. Only P9 is not sure whether to stay in Germany, as he says he may apply for PhD positions in different countries. While P6, P7, and P8 have refugee status, P9 and P10 do not because they arrived in Germany before the war. The following tables show information about students in a systematic order. The following subsections provide detailed information on student life and future aspirations, support mechanisms and challenges, integration, and discrimination experiences.

The Number of Participants	Age	Gender	Affiliation
P6	20	Female	Undergraduate student
P7	22	Female	Graduate student
P8	24	Female	Graduate student
P9	25	Male	Graduate Student
P10	25	Female	Graduate student

Table 7: Information on Ukrainian students in Göttingen

Participant	Date of arrival in Germany	Place of Accommodation	German level	Refugee Status	Desire to stay in Germany	Desire to stay in Göttingen
P6	February 2022	Family house	C1	Yes	Yes	No
P7	March 2022	Flat	C1	Yes	Yes	Yes
P8	April 2022	WG (*Wohngemeinschaft*; Sharing Flat)	C1	Yes	Yes	No
P9	October 2021	Dormitory	B2	No	Not sure	Not sure
P10	December 2021	Family house	C2	No	Yes	Yes

Table 8: Information on the Ukrainian students' migration to Göttingen

5.2.1 Student Life in Göttingen, Germany, and Students' Future Aspirations

This subsection examines the reasons, experiences, and future aspirations of students in Göttingen. Students have numerous reasons for studying in Germany, particularly at Göttingen. The prestige of the German diploma, the rank of the university, the quality of study programmes, and the free university education in Germany motivated many of them to come to Germany after the invasion. They want to improve their career prospects by obtaining a German diploma. Some of them mentioned their desire to study in Germany before the war. Therefore, all students started learning German before arriving in Germany, except P9. Since the German government provides better policies for refugees, P8 chose Germany, and she came to Göttingen because it is not an expensive city. On the other hand, P10 started her master's programme in Göttingen because her husband lives there.

Students say accessing higher education and enrolling in a university is not a difficult process. P7 mentions the freedom to choose electives, courses, and types of exams, which was impossible in her previous studies in Ukraine. She also emphasises the abundance of cultural activities in Göttingen, such as the *Literarisches Zentrum*, which hosts events and

debates about German and international literature,[86] and *Forum Wissen*, the University of Göttingen's Museum of knowledge.[87]

Students enjoy their studies. P7 likes to study in Germany more than in Ukraine. Göttingen is a vibrant place with lots of activities, according to P8. She participates in the ESN (Erasmus Student Network) group, a non-profit international student organisation in Europe that Erasmus+ supports to improve exchange students' experiences[88] and, therefore, helps her meet new people. She notes that studying in Germany is easier than in Ukraine because she has fewer courses, but the examination system is different:

> Examinations in Ukraine were very easy. I did not have to write any portfolios or term papers. Sometimes I had to, but it was a rare occasion, usually three to five pages. And most of the time, we had written or oral exams at the end of the semester. And if you're a very good student, as I was at some points, you don't have to take any exams at all. So, the semester is just over for you. You attended all of the classes, got good grades, were active during class discussions, and earned your credits. I understand that you have to work hard to earn credits in Germany. You write very long portfolios. And in my first experience, I was petrified that I had to write more than 1000 words. In my country, I did not have to do such a thing.

P9 enjoys the quality of his studies, although he struggles with the differences between his previous and current studies. Therefore, he puts in more effort to be successful in his major. However, he also distinguishes between the features of universities in Germany and Ukraine:

> Not only in Germany but in Europe, universities are research institutions. They are institutions that are, firstly, research-oriented, and teaching is the second goal. But in Ukraine, universities are usually viewed as simply advanced schools. The people at the universities usually conduct some research, but it's just a very formal thing. They do not usually have publications in any big journals. I think universities in Ukraine were mostly pedagogical institutions. It's a place where you go to study, and the professors are viewed not as scientists but as teachers.

Students express different future aspirations, including the pursuit of a PhD and employment in their respective fields in Germany. Some of them intend to become teachers in Germany and prepare themselves for a training period called *Referendariat,* which is necessary for those who want to work in the civil service, like teaching.[89] Nearly

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[86] 'Literarisches Zentrum Göttingen Literarisches Zentrum Göttingen', accessed 29 June 2024, https://www.literarisches-zentrum-goettingen.de/.
[87] 'Home', Forum Wissen, 29 June 2024, https://www.forum-wissen.de/en/home-en/.
[88] 'Erasmus Student Network', Erasmus Student Network, accessed 29 June 2024, https://esn.org/.
[89] 'Definition of "Training Period" in Our Glossary', accessed 30 May 2024, https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/service/glossary/glossary-period-of-practical-training.

all students want to stay in Germany after graduation but relocate to larger cities, except for P7, who would like to stay in Göttingen:

> I like the city. It's comfortable. Everything is nearby. There are no transportation issues, and everywhere is accessible. I feel more comfortable in smaller cities because I come from a small city, and Göttingen reminds me of my city in Ukraine. There are lots of cultural opportunities and possibilities in Göttingen, and there are many places where you can find a job in this area that I want.

Students in Göttingen are optimistic about the future. Although P9 has financial problems at the moment, he is optimistic because people he trusts say that "everything will be fine." In summary, students opt to study in Göttingen for various reasons. They compare their previous and current studies, highlighting their satisfaction with the University of Göttingen. They are also positive about the future.

5.2.2 Support Mechanisms

Ukrainian students enjoy being students in Göttingen because they have several support mechanisms to aid them in their studies and lives in Germany. Firstly, financial assistance from the government is one of the support mechanisms for students. Three students receive different amounts of BAföG (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – Federal Education Funding Act), which is a government financial support consisting of federal grants and interest-free loans based on their family income.[90] The table below shows the amount of financial aid each student receives.

Participants	Amount
P6	€511
P7	€900
P8	€900

Table 9: Amount of financial support received by Ukrainian students in Göttingen

P6 receives less money than others because she lives with her family in a family house. On the other hand, P9 could not get BAföG because his visa type was not appropriate to receive the financial aid. He was informed that he could get BAföG if he received refugee status. But his refugee status application was rejected. P10 refrained from applying for BAföG due to its repayment requirements. She also wants to be "independent" and works to afford her master's degree. Aside from that, upon her arrival in Germany, P6 received

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[90] 'What Is BAföG?', accessed 29 June 2024, https://www.swfr.de/en/money/bafoeg/what-is-bafoeg.

a DAAD scholarship for Ukrainian refugees.[91] She was able to improve her German skills from B2 to C1 and enrol in her programme, thanks to this scholarship.

As stated in P10, professors, heads of departments, and advisors provide assistance to students during the enrolment process and study period as needed:

> I mentioned to professors that I'm a new student and I come from Ukraine. I need some time to adapt. And they helped me. They also asked questions, such as, "Did you understand everything?" They were very supportive.

Students also emphasise that professors treat everyone equally, as P8 states:

> I have never witnessed racism, sexism, or any of those issues. I have a feeling that professors just look at you and see a student in front of them. They don't care about your background. Unfortunately, in my home country, if you're smart, work hard, and show that you know a lot, you've got to get a better attitude from the professors.

Students cite friend groups and classmates as support mechanisms, among others. When he does not understand something, P9 asks for help from his friends, who are better at their studies. P6 emphasises that her acceptance by "German" friend groups prevents her from feeling excluded. However, while students acknowledge the existence of supportive friends, they also draw attention to the distinctions between their friendships in Ukraine and Germany, as highlighted by P10:

> In Ukraine, we were like a group for two or four years. And you can establish good friendships. But here in Germany, it's different because you just choose the courses you're interested in, and every time you meet different people. But I'd say that till today I've met only nice people, and all of them were friendly and helpful. You can always find one or two people with whom you could be, maybe not friends, but like in a good relationship, and you can also grab a coffee.

Language courses, the International Students Office at the University of Göttingen, department advisors who help with internships, the Ukrainian community in Göttingen that shares information about facilities, the DAAD website for university and programme information, and Google emerge as support mechanisms for students as well. They, lastly, mention *Kulturticket*, which offers free admission or discounted rates for cultural events.[92]

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[91] daadssakatsch, 'Future Ukraine – Scholarship Programme for Refugees from Ukraine at German Universities', DAAD Ukraine, 22 May 2023, https://www.daad-ukraine.org/en/2023/05/22/future-ukraine-scholarship-programme-for-refugees-from-ukraine-at-german-universities/.
[92] Georg-August-Universität Göttingen- Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, '"Semesterticket" - Georg-August-University Göttingen', Georg-August Universität Göttingen, accessed 7 July 2024, https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/16432.html.

As a result, Ukrainian students receive support from different parties, including the government, university administration, and their social circles.

5.2.3 Challenges

While Ukrainian students in Göttingen benefit from support mechanisms, they also face many challenges. This subsection demonstrates common and unique challenges based on students' experiences.

Firstly, the language problem is one of the important challenges that some students encounter. Although students' German language skills range from B2 to C1, they need help with speaking German. Some are shy about talking with natives or have difficulties understanding the connotations of certain meanings in a conversation. When he arrived in Germany, P9 could not speak German. For this reason, he had a stressful period at the beginning, but now he can speak German at the B2 level. Particularly in the first semester, P6 mentions the difficulty of entering German exams but has improved her language skills. Additionally, many students face challenges in the first semester for a variety of reasons, like P6:

> I believe that the first semester was challenging because I didn't have friends, I felt lost and stressed, and I was unfamiliar with everything. But, things improved in the second semester, and I began to talk to more people.

P7 chose the wrong courses because she had difficulties understanding the university system. She also felt lonely and did not have enough friends to socialise with because she had limited courses due to the complexity of the course selection at the beginning.

P8 mentions specific issues, among other things. She has difficulty obtaining the necessary books for certain courses due to the library's limited stock and high cost. Because of this, she had to withdraw from several classes. She also finds it difficult to understand the instructions for papers due to her unfamiliarity with the academic writing style prevalent in German academia. She could not adapt to the different currency system in Germany at the beginning, either. Finally, she is unaware of her rights under the German constitution, also known as the Basic Law. Particularly when she receives letters from official institutions, she struggles to understand their meaning and requires assistance from a German citizen.

P9 addresses two main problems. Because he cannot receive BAföG, he has financial problems and must work part-time jobs simultaneously. His studies, therefore, are negatively affected. Additionally, his current major is different from his previous studies,

and he has problems understanding courses. As a result, he put in a lot of effort to succeed. He also struggles to find friends, and he attributes this to a lack of smoking culture:

> When university students smoke during the breaks between lectures, it's quite simple to start a conversation by asking for a cigarette or a lighter. I brought four packs of tobacco with me when I came to Germany. I intended to socialize because, in Ukraine, it was very useful in terms of social interaction. But here, it wasn't particularly helpful.

Students also express concern about the lives of their families. They sometimes feel lonely because the families of students, except P6, currently live in Ukraine. The majority of them also mention the bureaucratic challenges they encounter, particularly during the university enrolment process. They express those certain necessary documents, such as health insurance, document translation, and obtaining an equivalency diploma, presented difficulties and took time to resolve. Access to the healthcare system and a long waiting list for doctor appointments also pose problems.

In conclusion, students cite various common problems, including language barriers, family concerns, bureaucratic challenges, and unprecedented issues such as difficulties borrowing books and understanding the currency system.

5.2.4   Discrimination and Reactions from the Locals

Investigating discrimination is another important aspect of understanding students' lives and their integration. This subsection sheds light on the discriminatory experiences of students, if there are any.

Ukrainian students in Göttingen explicitly declare that they have not faced open discrimination, except for P10. According to P7, people are so friendly and understanding when she struggles to speak in German. P8 asserts that, as she belongs to a university community consisting of kind and friendly people, she has not faced discrimination until now. However, P10 shares her experience when she was in the hospital a few days before the interview:

> It was at my doctor several days ago. It was the first time in my life. I couldn't get (sufficient) treatment from the doctor, and I asked for some examinations. And the doctor said to me, "If you want some examinations, I don't think that you need them; if you want, go to Ukraine.

However, P10 agrees with P8's viewpoint. She accepts that because she belongs to the university community, she does not experience frequent discrimination. According to her, facing discrimination depends on the people she meets, and she has met nice and friendly people until now.

On the other hand, P9 does not experience discrimination but instead encounters Russian propaganda at the university, spread by people under Russia's influence. Although P9 does not take the propaganda personally or see it as a form of discrimination, he gets annoyed seeing Russian propaganda slogans in every man's restroom in the central library.

According to P6 and P7, when asked about the reactions from locals in Göttingen, locals are friendly, sympathetic, and open to communication with Ukrainians. P9 is the only participant sharing his observations about the initial reactions of the local population to the invasion because he arrived in Germany before the invasion. He said the protests in Göttingen right after the invasion surprised him due to their nature:

> At the beginning of the war, a demonstration took place. It was shocking for me and a few Ukrainian friends of mine. We went there, and after 20 minutes, we realised that it was not a protest in support of Ukraine but a protest against the imperialism of NATO.

An additional question about discrimination due to the rise of the far-right AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) party was also asked of the students. In December, the party reached 23% in the polls when the budget crisis broke out in the current government.[93] However, the unveiling of its "*Geheimplan gegen Deutschland*" (Secret Plan against Germany) in January 2024 led to a decline in popularity. The plan aims to forcibly deport migrants, asylum seekers, and German citizens with migrant backgrounds discussed by AfD politicians, their sympathisers, and neo-Nazis.[94] The revelation of the plan sparked protests in several German cities.[95] Nevertheless, although polls indicate that the party lost its popularity compared to polls in December, it is still the second most popular party in Germany.[96] The last European Parliament election results confirm this because the party increased support compared to the European Parliament election in 2019 by

[93] 'Germany's AfD Hits Record High in Poll after Budget Chaos', *Reuters*, 19 December 2023, sec. Europe, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germanys-afd-hits-record-high-poll-after-budget-chaos-2023-12-19/.

[94] Valentin Zick, 'Secret Plan against Germany', *Correctiv.Org* (blog), 15 January 2024, https://correctiv.org/en/latest-stories/2024/01/15/secret-plan-against-germany/.

[95] Kate Connolly and Ashifa Kassam, 'Germans Take to Streets after AfD Meeting on Mass Deportation Plan', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2024, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/16/germans-take-to-streets-to-oppose-far-right-afds-mass-deportation-plan.

[96] 'German Election Polls 2024', Statista, accessed 16 May 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1257178/voting-intention-in-germany/.

reaching 16% of the vote and became the second party in Germany.[97] As a result, some students articulate their concerns and fears about the rise of the party, like P7:

> I feel scared because I don't know in which direction it's going to go in the future. And I don't think that this party has nice goals. I don't like their main thoughts because there are many foreigners in Germany, and they help to increase the economy. And I don't think it's the right decision to make these people leave Germany.

As a result, although Ukrainian students in Göttingen do not face open discrimination except in one case, they expressed their concerns and fears because of the rise of the AfD and their plan to deport people of migrant origin to Germany. Many of them find the attitudes and behaviours of people in Göttingen to be friendly.

5.2.5   Integration

As previously stated, this thesis examines the relationship between higher education and integration. Therefore, this subsection includes responses from Ukrainian students in Göttingen about their integration process and their thoughts on whether higher education is enough for full integration into host countries.

When asked about her integration, P6 attributed it to her language skills, her studies, and her ability to observe and comprehend the actions and mindsets of German people:

> I've learned the language. I can speak German. I got a (language) certificate in German. I study at a German university. I study in an education programme. So, I am willing to teach in Germany. And I am also quite observant. I like to watch how people act and think. The more I interact with German society, the more I understand their thoughts, behaviours, and actions. The longer I stay here, the more society influences me, and I am becoming more integrated and thinking more broadly about society.

On the other hand, P7 cannot feel 100% integrated because of her language skills. She addresses language issues, particularly when speaking. She feels nervous when speaking, and she is quite anxious that her language skills may prevent her from finding a job after graduation and presenting her skills in an effective way. However, she says that her integration process is going well, and she does not face another difficulty apart from the language. Therefore, she feels at home in Germany:

> I feel at home here because I have friends, and I am pursuing my studies here. So, practically, my whole life is in Germany. The only thing that's not here is my family, because they're in a different country. They are the only thing left in Ukraine. If you have more here, it's home.

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[97] 'German Conservatives First, Far-Right AfD Second in EU Election', POLITICO, 9 June 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/conservatives-finish-first-germany-eu-election-early-projection-cdu-csu/.

P7 does not feel she belongs in Ukraine because she no longer studies there. She says she has everything she needs for a successful career in her area of study in Germany.

P8 did not have challenges during her integration process because she felt welcomed when she came to Germany. German people offered her help and assistance, and she developed a positive perception of them. However, cultural differences prevent her from fully integrating into society because she sometimes struggles to understand the nature of people's behaviours. Nevertheless, she is quite satisfied with the way of life in Germany:

> I like it when things are done properly. When there are rules, everybody does things according to the books. I have this work ethic, and I would say that this country suits my character at some point.

P9 is the only student who cannot integrate into German society as he expected when he arrived there. Despite feeling more integrated into German society than in the past, he does not believe he has successfully built a new life in Göttingen. According to him, the language alone is insufficient to feel integrated. Although he can speak German, he does not feel a part of German society. He also addresses the issue of a lack of social circles:

> It has been two and a half years, and I have zero good German friends. The situation is a little bit better now because I live in a dorm and share a house with 11 people, including myself. Half of them is German. So, I'm in a pretty good relationship with them, but we're more of a good-neighbour relationship. So, it's not a proper friendship, I would say. We don't hang out as much outside, which is usually something that friends do. I communicate with them in German, but I would not say that there are any German people with whom I'm particularly close.

P10 stands out as the most integrated student in Göttingen. She visited Germany several times before she moved to the country. She is married to a German and has built a family in Germany. Her family and husband supported her during her integration into the country. When she started her studies, she did not face severe challenges because she had already worked at a school in Germany. Apart from her husband and family, she receives support from professors at the university. Therefore, she says that Germany became "home" for her:

> I like Germany, and I feel more at home here than in Ukraine because I have already established my life here. I have my studies, my job, friends, family.

Rating their integration in Germany on a scale of 1 to 10 was also asked students to see how they evaluate their integration process. The table below shows the integration score of each student.

Participant	Integration score
P6	6
P7	8
P8	8
P9	4
P10	10

Table 10: Integration scores given by Ukrainian students in Göttingen

When asked about the impact of higher education on the integration process, P6 says that higher education enables her to establish connections, make friends, and be part of German friend groups. Her friend circle consists of Germans rather than Ukrainians. She only meets one or two Ukrainians because other Ukrainians also spread to friend groups consisting of Germans. She believes that pursuing higher education will facilitate her full integration into Germany, as it will equip her with a profession:

> When I finish my education—my bachelor's and master's— I become a teacher in Germany. I think it will enable me to fully integrate because I will get a job.

P6 believes that full integration is a mutual process between locals and migrants, and she believes that the latter should also strive for acceptance:

> Sometimes you have to change a bit to be fully integrated. It's like a mutual process. It's not only to expect that you will be accepted. You also have to move towards this, not only wait until other people will accept you.

P10 shares the same opinion. If immigrants accept their reality, integration can be easier, she says:

> You just have to understand that it's a new country, a new life, new rules, and new pros and cons. If you accept them and feel comfortable with them, you can live with them. Then just stay in that country and find yourself. It's also important to find yourself doing things that you like, to find new friends, to go out, to follow the law, and to know everything. Not just to stay at home and tell everyone everything is bad. If you don't act towards a better future, you won't achieve anything.

P7 articulates that higher education will give her the opportunity to learn the language and practical skills that she will use at work. She also finds the job advertising centre at the university, which is quite useful and important for her career because it helps students find suitable jobs and offers opportunities. Simultaneously, she finds satisfaction in the opportunities provided by *Semesterticket/Kulturticket*, which allows students to access

public transportation in Germany and offers free or significant discounts on cultural events:[98]

> I'm a student, and I have access to transport. I can travel, learn more about cities, and communicate with people from different cities. I also have access to cultural opportunities. I can visit different events. And also, transportation is easy to use. So, I can navigate the city and go to different places.

P7 also believes that higher education will enable her to fully integrate into society. Thanks to the higher education diploma, she can stay in Germany while looking for a job. However, P8 and P9 believe that higher education is not enough to fully integrate into Germany. According to P8, full integration necessitates working and socialising with Germans. P9 asserts that higher education might be essential and helpful, but full integration means sharing cultural things, understanding history, and getting to know society.

In summary, students have different ideas and perspectives tailored to their individual experiences with integration processes. Although students live in the same city and study at the same university, they give different scores for their integration process, and some of them cite that full integration depends on not only higher education but also other issues like employment.

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[98] Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, '"Semesterticket" - Georg-August-University Göttingen'.

6. Discussion

This chapter discusses the answers to the research questions (RQ) and whether the research objectives (RO) were met. The findings of the research are also interpreted by highlighting similarities and differences and emphasising unique responses and experiences. The discussion chapter also elucidates the theoretical and practical implications of the research.

6.1 Interpretation of Findings

The thesis has two research questions. The first question is, "How do Ukrainian university students experience their lives as refugees or migrants in the Czech Republic and Germany?" This question encompasses student life and future expectations, support mechanisms, and challenges that students face in both the Czech Republic and Germany. Therefore, the findings of these parts are discussed under the first question. The second question is, "How does access to higher education impact the integration of Ukrainian students into Czech and German society?" This question centres on the experiences of discrimination and integration among students, and it provides an interpretation of the findings related to these topics. In addition to research questions, the thesis has four research objectives, which are discussed to determine whether they meet:

- RO1: Discovering the student experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc, Czechia, and Göttingen, Germany
- RO2: Identifying support mechanisms and challenges that Ukrainian students encounter while pursuing their studies in the Czech Republic and Germany
- RO3: Unearthing the integration and discrimination experiences of students based on these challenges, support mechanisms, and their personal stories
- RO4: Investigating the impact of higher education on the integration process

According to the findings, the following subsections answer research questions and objectives.

6.1.1 RQ1: How do Ukrainian university students experience their lives as refugees or immigrants in the Czech Republic and Germany?

This subsection, comparatively, covers student life, support mechanisms, and challenges faced by Ukrainian students in the Czech Republic and Germany. While answering the

first research question, this subsection proves that the first and second research objectives were also fulfilled.

Firstly, the research question includes the words "refugees" and "immigrants," as not all Ukrainian students in Olomouc and Göttingen have refugee status. P1 and P3 in Olomouc came to Czechia before the war in September 2021, but they do not hold refugee status. P9 and P10 in Germany also do not have refugee status because they arrived there in October 2021 and December 2021, respectively. Nevertheless, they were included in the study since their migration date was close to the beginning of the war and they suffered from the consequences of the war.

All students in the Czech Republic are undergraduates, whereas students in Göttingen are graduate students, except for P6. Although different channels were used to reach out to students in Olomouc, undergraduate students were the participants in the research. However, because of the snowball sampling technique, the majority of participants are graduate students in Göttingen.

Students in Olomouc and Göttingen are proficient in Czech and German. Yet, it was observed that students in Göttingen are more proficient in English than those in Olomouc. Therefore, the responses of students in Göttingen are much clearer and more understandable. For this reason, extra questions were asked, and extra time was given for students to think and use dictionaries in Olomouc.

Differences are also seen in accommodations. While all students in Olomouc live in dormitories, the accommodation in Göttingen varies, showing the freedom of choice according to the students' situations and incomes.

Except for P9, students in Göttingen are certain to remain in Germany, albeit not in Göttingen itself, because it is a small city with limited opportunities. Whereas the majority of students in the Czech Republic want to return to Ukraine or relocate to another European country. This is a great indicator of differences in each country, and the reasons for this situation are discussed in the following parts thoroughly.

6.1.1.1 Student Life in the Czech Republic and Germany and Students' Future Aspirations

In this part, the lives of students in Olomouc and Göttingen and their future aspirations are discussed. This thesis reveals that students in Olomouc chose to study in Czechia because they were dissatisfied with their studies in Ukraine. Since 2014, the situation also

was not stable before the war due to security, economic, and social challenges.[99] Free and qualified education at Palacký University Olomouc played an important role in their decision. They came to the Czech Republic because they had already visited the country, familiarised themselves with the city, and had networks. Familiarity with the Czech language played a role, too. The study also reveals that online education due to the pandemic and war also influenced their decision, because they wanted to have better student life experiences.

Students in Göttingen emphasise the prestige of German diplomas and the rank of the university. The study found that students want to study in qualified university programmes and to increase their career prospects. Free university education also played a role, as it did in Olomouc. Students always wanted to study in Germany. Therefore, they started to learn German in Ukraine, except for P9. Previous studies also show the popularity of the German language among Ukrainian students. Pentón Herrera and Byndas, for instance, conducted a study with 14 Ukrainian students, half of whom were able to speak German and English fluently.[100] Another report also shows that 5% of Ukrainian refugees are fluent in German.[101] Therefore, learning German is a popular trend among Ukrainian students who aspired to study in Germany before the war. Apart from that, P8 preferred to come to Germany because the German government created a better situation for refugees. It is known that the German government makes laws and policies to attract migrants, especially skilled ones.[102] Its policies towards Ukrainian refugees influenced the decisions of students to settle in Germany. Thus, although the EU offers fundamental rights for refugees, which are valid in all EU countries, country-based policies are dominant in attracting Ukrainians.

The thesis reveals that Ukrainian students in Czechia and Germany are satisfied with their studies. According to students, enrolling at each university was not complicated. Students in Göttingen say that studying in Germany is easier and more enjoyable than in Ukraine. They are satisfied with the freedom to choose electives and types of exams, which they did not enjoy in Ukraine. They emphasise the cultural activities and the vibrant

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[99] 'Causes and Consequences of the War in Eastern Ukraine: An Economic Geography Perspective', accessed 15 July 2024, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/09668136.2019.1684447?needAccess=true.

[100] Pentón Herrera and Byndas, '"You Sway on the Waves like a Boat in the Ocean"'.

[101] European Union Agency for Asylum., IOM., and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., *Forced Displacement from and within Ukraine*.

[102] 'Governance of Migrant Integration in Germany | European Website on Integration', accessed 15 July 2024, https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-germany_en.

atmosphere in Göttingen. Students in Olomouc and Göttingen also mention the affordability and liveability of both cities. Students express their satisfaction by highlighting the openness of professors to different ideas and features of European universities, which are primarily research institutions rather than teaching institutions. These findings also confirm the study of Ishchenko et al., which found that Ukrainian students at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague in the Czech Republic are satisfied with teaching at 78% and Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg in Germany at 75%.[103]

Finally, when asked about future aspirations, students aim to pursue their studies with a master's degree or PhD or find a job. The most significant difference is seen in their desire to live after graduation in their current countries and their state of feelings. For example, some students in Olomouc express their desire to return to Ukraine or contribute to the country in case they are unable to do so, while students in Göttingen do not mention returning to Ukraine. They want to stay in Germany, as half of Ukrainian refugees in Germany wish, according to the report by the DIW (*Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung* – German Institute for Economic Research).[104] Some of them prepare themselves for *Referendariat* to work as civil servants in Germany. In contrast, Czech students emphasise flexibility and are uncertain about their plans. Consequently, their tendencies and feelings align with those of Ukrainian students in Poland, as revealed by Pentón Herrera and Byndas.[105] Students in Göttingen, on the contrary, are optimistic about their future, even though they have difficulties. Hence, further studies should be conducted to understand why students in the Czech Republic and Poland are uncertain and desire to return to Ukraine, unlike students in Germany. It can arise from policies towards refugees and migrants, the economic strength of countries, or distinct student profiles in each country.

6.1.1.2 Support mechanisms

This part sheds light on support mechanisms. The study demonstrates that students in both countries receive similar and different support mechanisms. Free language courses in Czech and German are examples of similar mechanisms. Students in each country also

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[103] Ishchenko et al., 'Psychological and Pedagogical Aspects of Adaptation of Students Who Received Temporary Shelter to the Educational Environment of Another Country'.

[104] Herbert Brücker et al., 'Ukrainian Refugees: Nearly Half Intend to Stay in Germany for the Longer Term', *DIW Wochenbericht*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.18723/DIW_DWR:2023-28-1.

[105] Pentón Herrera and Byndas, '"You Sway on the Waves like a Boat in the Ocean"'.

receive financial support. All students in Olomouc receive financial aid from the university and the government, except for P1. However, the amount of aid is not enough to make their ends meet. This forces some of them to work. Students in Göttingen, in contrast, receive BAföG and DAAD scholarships, which amount to at least €511, and they do not experience financial difficulties except for P9, whose application for BAföG is not eligible. This demonstrates the economic power of each country. As the third-largest economy in the world,[106] Germany is able to financially support Ukrainian students, who do not have to work to afford their lives.

Students in both cities receive help from their classmates and friends when they have difficulties understanding lectures. Although they have positive relationships with their classmates, they say that their relationship is different from that in Ukraine, where they had a close and sincere friendship. This discrepancy is an excellent example of the cultural disparities they encounter.

Lecturers also provide support to Ukrainian students in Czechia and Germany. Students in Göttingen emphasise that their professors assisted them during the enrolment process and in lectures. They are satisfied with their equal treatment of everybody, which is not the case in Ukraine. Those in Olomouc say that their lecturers and professors assist them in their studies and daily lives, and they do not require advanced Czech proficiency for their homework and exams. Instead, some professors give students the right to express themselves in other languages, such as Russian, Ukrainian, or Polish. This demonstrates the linguistic similarities between Czech and the aforementioned languages, justifying students' preference to study in the Czech Republic because of their familiarity with the Czech language.

Students in Czechia name the ISIC Card (International Student Identity Card), which is provided by Czech universities as a student card, enabling them to enjoy discounts on travel, shops, and other activities.[107] Students in Göttingen use the same support mechanism, known as a *Kulturticket*. Students in both countries also cite the international students and welcome offices at each university and the Ukrainian community in each city as support mechanisms.

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[106] 'Countries with the Largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2024', Statista, accessed 16 July 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/268173/countries-with-the-largest-gross-domestic-product-gdp/.
[107] 'ISIC Card', *ISIC CZ* (blog), accessed 29 June 2024, https://www.isic.cz/en/cards/isic-card/.

Though students in Czechia receive free health insurance, Ukrainian students in Germany do not mention this, as they are responsible for covering their insurance costs[108] with the financial support they receive. University parties are viewed as events to learn about Czech culture, expand their networks, and engage in hobby clubs for socialisation by students in Olomouc, a support mechanism that Göttingen students do not mention. DAAD and university websites, however, are helpful for students to gather information about higher education in Germany. Thanks to their policies, support, and aid for Ukrainian refugees, P5 in Olomouc perceives the Czech Government and President Petr Pavel as support mechanisms. Pentón Herrera and Byndas also show a similar feeling among Ukrainian students in Poland towards the Polish government.[109]

The migration from Ukraine compelled the Czech Republic to change its previous policy against refugees[110] as well. P1 notes this shift and highlights the increase in support mechanisms and policies for refugee integration.

6.1.1.3 Challenges

In addition to support mechanisms, students in Olomouc and Göttingen also articulate similar and different challenges. Simultaneously, receiving support mechanisms alone may not be sufficient to handle challenges, and certain issues themselves may also present both support mechanisms and challenges. For example, although students receive support for language acquisition and are proficient in Czech and German, they identify the language as one of the main challenges in Czechia and Germany. They experience difficulties in understanding lectures, preparing homework, and entering exams. Some of them received low grades because their language level was insufficient to succeed in their studies. At the same time, students cannot express their ideas or feelings fluently in Czech or German. They tend to be shy when speaking because of their insufficient language proficiency and foreign accents. As a result, students cannot expand their social circles, and they feel lonely as a result. They say that the first semester was difficult due to insufficient language skills, a lack of social circles, and different academic traditions. Students in Göttingen also struggled with understanding how to select courses and earn credits. Linguistic challenges and difficulties due to the academic system and traditions

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[108] 'Health Insurance', DAAD Ukraine, accessed 29 June 2024, https://www.daad-ukraine.org/en/accommodation-and-residency-in-germany/health-insurance/.

[109] Pentón Herrera and Byndas, '"You Sway on the Waves like a Boat in the Ocean"'.

[110] Helena Bauerová, 'Migration Policy of the V4 in the Context of Migration Crisis', *Politics in Central Europe* 14, no. 2 (1 September 2018): 99–120, https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2018-0011.

were also seen among Ukrainian students in Poland.[111] Therefore, it can be said that they are common problems for all of them in Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC).[112]

The thesis reveals that cultural differences appear, especially when it comes to finding friends, because individualism is dominant in Czech culture, contrary to Ukrainian culture, which tends to be collectivist.[113] Students, particularly in the Czech Republic, struggle to find friends because they claim that Czechs are not open to foreigners. According to them, Czechs are introverted, shy, closed, and not social butterflies, unlike Ukrainian students. Due to significant cultural differences, Ukrainian students experience loneliness and struggle to form genuine friendships, just as they did in Ukraine. The study by Ishchenko et al. also shows a similar problem among Ukrainian students at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague and Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg. According to the study, students in Czechia are satisfied with communication and interaction with other students at 56%, and in Germany at 58%.[114] As a result, students in CEEC struggle to communicate with native students.

Particularly students in Olomouc face financial difficulties because of inadequate financial assistance and the higher cost of living in Czechia compared to Ukraine. Some of them work, and other students seek jobs to make ends meet for this reason. While in Göttingen, only P9 suffers from financial issues, causing failure in his studies as he could not receive BAföG. Aside from that, the majority of students in both countries say that their families still live in Ukraine and are concerned about their families' safety and lives. Other examples also include bureaucratic challenges and slow procedures for obtaining visas and residence permits. Students in Göttingen mostly cite unique examples, such as getting the necessary sources for seminars because they are either expensive in bookshops or scarce in libraries, adapting the Euro currency system in Germany, the unfamiliarity of the German constitution, and the bureaucratic system for understanding official letters. Students also suffer from the insufficient healthcare system in Germany, where they cannot find appointments. Students in Olomouc point out poorly designed university websites that lack sufficient information, offering an alternative example.

[111] Pentón Herrera and Byndas, '"You Sway on the Waves like a Boat in the Ocean"'.

[112] The Czech Republic and Germany are included in CEEC in this thesis.

[113] Marie Jelínková, Michal Plaček, and František Ochrana, 'Achieving Better Integration of Ukrainian Refugees in the Czech Republic: Making Use of Expertise and Addressing Cultural Differences', *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, 28 May 2024, https://doi.org/10.1515/npf-2023-0059.

[114] Ishchenko et al., 'Psychological and Pedagogical Aspects of Adaptation of Students Who Received Temporary Shelter to the Educational Environment of Another Country'.

As a result, the study found that students in Olomouc and Göttingen enjoy their studies. While students in Olomouc are uncertain about their future, those in Göttingen are certain and want to stay in Germany. Secondly, although students cite similar challenges, they also face country-based challenges, such as financial difficulties in Olomouc and understanding official letters in Germany. The first and second research objectives were also met by revealing the overall experiences of students and identifying support mechanisms and challenges in this subsection.

6.1.2 RQ2: How does access to higher education impact the integration of Ukrainian students into Czech and German society?

This subsection discusses the discrimination and integration experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc and Göttingen by giving references to the literature. Discrimination causes a decline in self-identity with the host country.[115] Therefore, this subsection integrates both experiences to address the second research question and fulfil the third and fourth research objectives.

6.1.2.1 Discrimination

Discrimination is one of the important issues in the path of integration, and this part addresses the discrimination experiences of students. The findings demonstrate that students in the Czech Republic face more discrimination and even assault than those in Germany. Out of five students in Germany, only one, P10 in Göttingen, experienced discrimination when she saw a doctor. P9 only conveys his discomfort regarding the exposure to Russian propaganda by individuals under Russian influence. Nevertheless, students share their concerns about the rise of the far-right AfD party. However, despite the rise of the far right and the decrease in public support for Ukrainians,[116] students have not faced discrimination, demonstrating German society's welcome, tolerance, and acceptance of migrants.

In Olomouc, by contrast, all students face and feel different types of discrimination, including assault and insult, except for P3. An old man attacked P1 because she had a yellow-blue ribbon representing the Ukrainian flag on her coat. He shouted against the

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[115] Thomas de Vroome, Maykel Verkuyten, and Borja Martinovic, 'Host National Identification of Immigrants in the Netherlands', *International Migration Review* 48, no. 1 (1 March 2014): 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12063.

[116] 'German Public Support for Ukraine Is Falling', UnHerd, accessed 17 July 2024, https://unherd.com/newsroom/german-public-support-for-ukraine-is-falling/.

existence of Ukraine as a country, blaming Ukrainian President Zelenskyy for his actions. This illustrates an example of the increasing attacks on Ukrainians in the country.[117] The shift in attitudes towards Ukrainians is also highlighted by P1. Czechs are tired of discussing the war and show less support and sympathy for Ukrainians than in 2022, according to her. Her observation was also proven by reports and polls revealing a decline in support for the acceptance of Ukrainian refugees.[118] Thus, P1 directly experienced changes and trends in Czech society towards Ukrainians.

The Czech people are opposed to the permanent stay of Ukrainians in their country and prefer to return when the war is over, according to the polls.[119] The experience of P4, where a Czech man advocates for the return of Ukrainians to Ukraine, exemplifies this situation. He also insulted her by saying that Ukrainians are the worst people in the world. Consequently, her experience also underscores the shift in public opinion.

P5 received inferior hospital treatment as a form of discrimination. She had to wait for treatment because the Czechs were receiving priority. She also got into a dispute with Czechs who support Russia during a rally on February 24, 2024. Nevertheless, her discrimination experiences do not discourage her from staying in the Czech Republic, because she is the only participant who says that she wants to stay in the Czech Republic after her studies. Her satisfaction with her studies and life in Olomouc and her gratitude for the support of the Czech government can reduce the negative effects of discrimination. As a result, students in Olomouc frequently face discrimination compared to those in Göttingen. Therefore, it is not surprising that students in Olomouc want to go back to Ukraine or relocate to another country in Europe. Finally, the study found that higher education and proficiency in the native tongue increase awareness of perceived discrimination, fostering wishes for return.[120]

6.1.2.2 Integration

One of the main aims of this thesis is to assess the relationship between higher education and integration. Although many determinants, such as the host society, financial issues,

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[117] Tim Gosling, 'Attacks on Ukrainians in Czechia Are on the Rise', *Balkan Insight* (blog), 12 October 2023, https://balkaninsight.com/2023/10/12/attacks-on-ukrainians-in-czechia-are-on-the-rise/.

[118] 'New Survey Shows Falling Czech Support for Helping Ukrainian Refugees', 28 June 2023, https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/new-survey-shows-falling-czech-support-for-helping-ukrainian-refugees.

[119] 'New Survey Shows Falling Czech Support for Helping Ukrainian Refugees'.

[120] 'Return Wishes of Refugees in the Netherlands: The Role of Integration, Host National Identification and Perceived Discrimination', accessed 17 July 2024, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1023184?needAccess=true.

and the psychological state of immigrants or refugees, affect integration, higher education plays a crucial role in helping them adapt to their new country.

Firstly, as stated previously, this thesis assumes that attending higher education shows a wish for integration into the host society. However, results demonstrate that it is not valid for all students, especially those who live in Olomouc, because P1 and P2 express their desire to return to Ukraine and P3 thinks about going back. Despite attending higher education, they do not desire integration. Rather, they attend higher education to benefit from its advantages. Thus, their argument falsifies the assumption.

Secondly, this thesis found that Ukrainian students in Czechia believe that higher education itself is not enough for full integration, except for P5. They rather perceive higher education as a tool for accelerating their integration. P2 perceives, for instance, higher education as an institution where she can learn general knowledge about Czech society, history, politics, and economics. P2, therefore, acknowledges the positive impact of higher education on her integration, which allows her to become a part of society through education and interact with natives such as Czech professors and students. P3 agrees with P2 in terms of the opportunities provided by higher education. She says that higher education presents equal treatment for her, regardless of her country of origin. Higher education, thus, has a positive impact on student integration, but achieving full integration exceeds its boundaries.

The thesis reveals that, when it comes to full integration, employment plays a critical role for students. Students emphasise that once they find a job that is suitable for their studies and finances their lives, they can integrate into Czech society. For this reason, P4 is integrated into society because she works as an archery coach. Her profession gives her confidence, as do her studies, proficiency in the Czech language, and life in Olomouc. Her example reinforces the students' arguments that employment enables full integration. Although P5 believes that higher education enables full integration into society, and that her integration process began because she can speak Czech and learn about Czech society, politics, and law, she admits that a higher education degree will offer highly skilled jobs that are more integrative than working in a factory or restaurant. Therefore, she also links full integration with employment.

Despite not all of them having jobs, Ukrainian students in Göttingen feel more integrated into society. For example, P7 belongs to Germany because she established a life there. She feels at home even though she suffers from poor language skills in German. Similarly, P10 feels that Germany is home for her rather than Ukraine because she successfully

established a life in Germany through higher education, marriage, and employment. Other students, except for P9, say that their integration process is going well thanks to their proficiency in German, studying at a higher education institution, and assistance from German people. P9, however, fails to be integrated, although he feels more integrated than in the past and speaks the language. His financial difficulties and lack of social circle among Germans led him to be isolated and cannot establish a life in Germany.

Even though some students in Göttingen believe that higher education enables full integration into German society, they link higher education with employment later in their responses. For example, P6, who has more German friends than Ukrainian ones, sees higher education as a way to expand her network. She also adds that higher education will provide her a job eventually. As a result, she equates full integration with employment. Similarly, P7 claims that higher education enables full integration. But she later adds that she learns necessary knowledge and skills in higher education that she can use at work. She also indirectly acknowledges that full integration can be achieved through employment. Throughout the interview, P8 consistently advocates for the idea that full integration can be achieved through employment. As a result, students in Germany also believe that full integration is possible via employment, like those in Czechia.

However, students in Göttingen share different views on full integration rather than only employment. For example, P9 advocates the idea that full integration is possible to learn about society and history and share the same cultural values. P10 links integration with the immigrant's effort for integration and establish a better life. P6, on the other hand, argues that full integration depends on mutual interaction with immigrants and locals who take steps towards each other. P8 also emphasises that cultural differences play an important role in full integration. As a result, although students in Germany link full integration with employment, they also name other factors that contribute to achieving full integration.

In summary, the thesis reveals that students in Olomouc face discriminatory rhetoric and behaviours more frequently than those in Göttingen. The majority of students in Czechia also do not feel integrated into Czech society, unlike those in Göttingen. Nevertheless, students in both countries agree that higher education is not sufficient for full integration, even though it provides many opportunities and facilitators for their lives. Rather, they see employment as the key to full integration. As a result, the research succeeded in answering the second question and meeting the third and fourth research objectives.

6.2 Theoretical Implication of the Study

This section analyses the findings based on the conceptual framework developed by Ager and Strang and the four measurement categories determined by Brissette et al. First of all, according to Ager and Strang, four fundamental areas—the foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means—are important for successful integration.[121] The foundation includes rights and citizenship which are important to integrate successfully into the host community. This is seen among participants in Germany. For instance, due to the German government's policies for refugees, P8 chose to come to Göttingen, and her integration score is high. According to Ager and Strang, facilitators comprise language and cultural knowledge, safety, and stability. They also argue that facilitators have the potential to both accelerate and prevent integration. This thesis also found that support mechanisms, such as language, may appear as challenges in students' lives. While students can feel integrated into the host society via language, linguistic difficulties also appear as challenges in their lives and studies.

Social connection is one of the pillars of successful integration, which is also revealed in this thesis. Students, especially in Olomouc and also some in Göttingen, suffer from a lack of social interaction with locals. This situation affects their integration into Czech and German society adversely. Finally, two elements in the markers and means— education and employment—are discussed in this thesis. Ager and Strang argue that education is important for integration because immigrants and refugees can gain the necessary skills for the job market. This argument was also articulated by participants in this study, and they see education as a facilitator rather than a sole factor enabling full integration. Researchers remark that employment, however, supports independence financially, dialogue with locals, and self-confidence, among other things. The participants of the study acknowledge this as well, highlighting that employment is necessary for successful integration. As a result, this study validates the conceptual framework developed by Ager and Strang.

On the other hand, the thesis also confirms some of the four measurement categories determined by Brissette et al. According to them, there are role-based, social participation-based, perceived integration, and complex indicators.[122] The study found that role-based measurement, consisting of the number of social roles, is effective in

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[121] Ager and Strang, 'Understanding Integration'.
[122] Brissette, Cohen, and Seeman, 'Measuring Social Integration and Social Networks'.

evaluating social integration. When a Ukrainian university student in Czechia and Germany takes on other roles such as friend, neighbourhood, and employer, their integration process goes well. P4 in Olomouc, for example, who has a part-time job in addition to her role as a student, therefore feels integrated into Czech society. The participation-based category is also useful because spending time with other people, especially locals, has a positive impact on integration. Although it was not asked about the frequency of social participation, it is clear that it has a positive influence on social integration, no matter its frequency. For instance, P9 cannot feel integrated because he has no good German friends to socialise with.

Despite asking the participants to score their integration, the research's findings do not validate their perceived integration, which is about the sense of community and belonging experienced by people, due to the contradictory answers. To give an example, even though P1 gave an 8 for her integration score, she does not feel like she belongs to society and wants to return to Ukraine. The study's sample size and qualitative nature make it impossible to assess the complex indicators, which involve complicated data. Nevertheless, the study uses the first two measures and validates them.

 As a result, the theoretical and conceptual framework of social integration guided the research, and the findings validated the conceptual framework of Ager and Strang and some measurements of Brissette et al.

6.3 Practical Implication of the Findings

This section provides suggestions for further policies to enhance the quality of life for Ukrainian students in Europe and Ukraine. These recommendations are based on successful policies, implementations and challenges that were identified by students during interviews.

Firstly, students enjoy studying in Europe because they have the freedom to choose electives and design their curriculum according to their interests, which is lacking in Ukraine. Students in Göttingen can choose different types of exams, as well. Hence, other universities across Europe and Ukraine should introduce the freedom to choose electives and exams to enhance the study experience of students.

Secondly, the Czech Republic should increase financial support for students, as all of them express that the current amount is insufficient. If resources are not sufficient to increase the amount of aid, job opportunities should be created for students.

Thirdly, it is clear that language courses are not sufficient for students to understand lectures, especially in their first semesters. Preparatory schools for language acquisition or advanced academic or general language courses should be introduced for refugees to eliminate difficulties in comprehension of lectures..

Students struggle with the unfamiliarity of academic traditions in each country, which differ from those in Ukraine. Students, as a result, are unable to comprehend how to choose courses or prepare homework and exams. Thus, introductory events and welcome weeks should be more inclusive, detailed, and oriented for each department and faculty.

Results show that students are unable to form friendships with native students. Therefore, departments, faculties, and universities should organise social events to integrate Ukrainian students and native students in each country.

Students also share their concerns about the safety of their families, and some of them experience psychological problems. This demonstrates the importance of psychological counselling and support for forced immigrants and refugees. Therefore, all universities, including those in Europe and Ukraine, should establish psychological support units. If they have this support, they should make it available to everyone.

Introductory sheets, booklets, or informative tutorials should be introduced to explain the basic information required for the daily life and culture of the country, the rules and rights of students, migrants, and refugees in the constitution, and brief information about healthcare, education, and bureaucratic steps that each of them should follow when they arrive in the country.

Students believe that successful integration depends on employment. Correspondingly, the Czech and German governments should start new initiatives or improve current policies to integrate them into the labour market.

Finally, the study results indicate that Germany has implemented more effective policies to enhance the experiences of refugees and facilitate their integration into society. Therefore, the Czech government should take further steps to eliminate difficulties and challenges faced by Ukrainian students, prevent discrimination, and increase policies for integration.

7. Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the research and summarises the results. It also suggests future research areas.

7.1 Summary of the Research

This thesis aimed to unearth the overall student experiences of Ukrainian university students studying at Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, and their integration process into Czech and German society. To reach these goals, the thesis had two research questions, as listed below.

- RQ1: How do Ukrainian university students experience their lives as refugees or immigrants in the Czech Republic and Germany?
- RQ2: How does access to higher education impact the integration of Ukrainian students into Czech and German society?

The first research question allowed us to accomplish two research aims, which were to comprehend the experiences of Ukrainian students at higher education institutions:

- RO1: Discovering the student experiences of Ukrainian students in Olomouc, Czechia, and Göttingen, Germany
- RO2: Identifying support mechanisms and challenges that Ukrainian students encounter while pursuing their studies in the Czech Republic and Germany

On the other hand, the second research question shed light on another two research objectives to understand their integration, as listed below.

- RO3: Unearthing the integration and discrimination experiences of students based on these challenges, support mechanisms, and their personal stories
- RO4: Investigating the impact of higher education on the integration process

The semi-structured interview method was used to interview ten Ukrainian undergraduate and graduate students. The thematic analysis technique was employed to analyse the interview data using Atlas.ti. The thesis employed social integration theory as a theoretical and conceptual framework to interpret the results, which will be covered in the next section.

7.2 Summary of the Findings

This section summarises the key findings of the research. The findings showed that students in each city encounter both similar and different experiences, as listed below.

1. The thesis found that Ukrainian students migrated to the Czech Republic because they wanted to benefit from a free and qualified education. Familiarity with the Czech language also played a role. Some of them became familiar with the country thanks to their previous visits.

2. Ukrainian students chose Germany because it has prestigious higher education institutions worldwide. Free and qualified education also played a role. The German government's policies to attract migrants were influential on students.

3. The findings demonstrated that Ukrainian students at Palacký University of Olomouc and Georg-August-University Göttingen are satisfied with their studies. They enjoy the freedom to choose electives. Students are also satisfied with the teaching quality and freedom of thought and expression.

4. Students in Olomouc are uncertain about their future, and they do not want to stay in the Czech Republic after graduation. Some of them mention returning to Ukraine. Students in Göttingen, on the other hand, are optimistic about their future and want to establish a life in Germany after graduation.

5. The thesis revealed that students in both cities enjoy similar support mechanisms. There are free language courses, financial support, and assistance from their classmates and faculty members, as well as student cards that provide discounts and free access to a variety of activities.

6. Students in Olomouc referred to free health insurance, hobby clubs, and university parties as support mechanisms for socialising and learning the culture. However, those in Göttingen cited DAAD and university websites, which are helpful for them to gather information.

7. The thesis revealed that receiving support mechanisms does not prevent challenges, and some support mechanisms also appear as challenges. As a result, students in Olomouc and Göttingen articulated similar challenges. Insufficient language skills, a lack of a social circle, different academic traditions, and bureaucratic procedures are among the challenges preventing students from succeeding in their studies.

8. Students in Olomouc suffer from cultural disparities when finding friends, financial difficulties, and poorly designed university websites. Only one student in Göttingen experiences financial troubles. Those in Göttingen also mentioned the insufficient healthcare system, difficulties in obtaining sources for seminars, and difficulty understanding official letters.

9. The thesis found that students in Olomouc faced more discriminatory behaviours and assaults than those in Göttingen. Four students out of five in Olomouc experienced discrimination, while only one student out of five in Göttingen suffered from discriminatory behaviour.

10. The thesis falsified the assumption that attending higher education links with a desire to be integrated into the host society. The results showed that some students in Olomouc do not want to integrate into Czech society although they attend higher education.

11. Students in the Czech Republic do not feel integrated into society; rather, they perceive their stay as temporary. However, those who live in Germany feel more integrated into German society.

12. The majority of students in Olomouc and Göttingen believe that higher education is not sufficient to make full integration possible in Czech and German societies. They, rather, argue that higher education is a facilitator in their integration process.

13. Ukrainian students in Czechia and Germany agree that employment makes full integration possible.

14. Financial difficulties may prevent integration, as students in Olomouc suffer from financial difficulties more than those in Göttingen. Similarly, only one student experiencing financial problems in Göttingen acknowledged that he failed to be integrated.

Consequently, the thesis illustrated the support mechanisms and challenges that students encounter in both countries, as well as their experiences with discrimination and integration. According to students, the thesis found that although higher education has a positive impact, employment plays a key role in integration. The thesis also fulfilled the research objectives. However, more research is required to interpret the findings and develop a comprehensive picture.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This section provides future research suggestions for researchers to understand migration from Ukraine. Firstly, in Olomouc, all participants are undergraduate students in this research. However, the majority of participants are graduate students in Göttingen. The difference in academic levels may prevent the accuracy of the comparisons generated between the two groups, as graduates and undergraduates may possess different experiences and expectations. Further studies should examine student groups at the same

academic level in Czechia and Germany to see the exact similarities and differences in their experiences.

Secondly, Ukrainian refugees in the EU live primarily in Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic, as stated before. Further research should be done to understand the situation of Ukrainian university students in different cities within these countries. To give an example, it would be beneficial to expand the research to include Brno, Ostrava, and other university cities in Czechia, in addition to the study on Prague[123] and the current thesis on Olomouc. This enables us to compare situations in different cities in the same country and reach broad conclusions.

Thirdly, research in the literature mostly concentrates on the EU countries. Therefore, to understand the differences between EU and non-EU countries better, further studies should include non-EU countries such as Russia, the UK, Switzerland, and other countries that host significant Ukrainian refugees.[124]

Because the research is qualitative and conducted with a limited number of participants, the results of the thesis cannot be generalised. Therefore, quantitative studies with multiple participants should be performed to draw broader conclusions and verify or refute the findings in this thesis.

Existing research, including this thesis, focuses mostly on the experiences of female students. Further research should look into the experiences of male students and LGBT individuals in order to compare them to those of female students.

Finally, the thesis focuses on only one dimension of the migration from Ukraine: those in higher education and their integration. However, migration has various facets, and the integration of students depends on many variables. Therefore, other studies should focus on other dimensions and facets of the migration.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for the MA Thesis titled "Ukrainian University Students in Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Göttingen, Germany."

Introductory Questions *(Вступні питання)*

1) Could you introduce yourself? *(Можете себе представити?)*
   - How old are you? *(Скільки вам років?)*
   - What are you studying? *(Що ви вивчаєте?)*
2) Could you talk about your life in Ukraine: Which city do you come from? Where did you study before coming to the Czech Republic or Germany? *(Можете розповісти про своє життя в Україні: З якого міста ви родом? Де ви вивчалися перед тим, як приїхати в Чехію чи Німеччину)*

Stay in the Czech Republic or Germany (*Залишок у Чехії чи Німеччині*)

3) Why did you choose to settle down in Olomouc, Czech Republic, or Göttingen, Germany? *(Чому ви вирішили оселитися в Оломоуці, Чехія чи Ґоттінгені, Німеччина?)*
   - How long have you lived in Czechia or Germany? *(Як довго ви проживаєте в Чехії чи Німеччині?)*
   - Where do you live? In a private accommodation, with your family, or in a dormitory? *(Де ви живете? В приватному житлі, з родиною чи в гуртожитку?)*
   - Would you like to continue living in Olomouc or Göttingen? If yes, what are the factors that influence your decision? *(Чи б ви хотіли продовжувати жити в Оломоуці чи Ґоттінгені? Якщо так, які чинники впливають на ваш рішення?)*
4) How could you describe your student life in Olomouc or Göttingen so far? *(Як ви можете описати своє студентське життя в Оломоуці чи Ґоттінгені до цього моменту?)*
   - What kind of facilities are available to make your life easier in both cities? *(Які умови доступні для полегшення вашого життя у обох містах?)*
   - What are the problems e.g., financial, cultural, linguistic, social, etc. do you face in Olomouc or Göttingen? *Які проблеми, наприклад фінансові, культурні, мовні, соціальні та інші, ви стикаєтеся в Оломоуці чи Ґоттінгені?*
   - What kind of support mechanisms are available to deal with these problems? *(Які механізми підтримки доступні для вирішення цих проблем?)*

Higher Education Attendance *(Участь у вищій освіті)*

5) Which factors did you motivate to attend a higher education institution in the Czech Republic or Germany? *(Які фактори вас мотивували вступити до вищого навчального закладу в Чехії чи Німеччині?)*

- Why did you choose Palacký University or the University of Göttingen? *(Чому ви вибрали Палачкого університет чи Університет Ґеттінгену?)*
- Could you describe your experience while enrolling at Palacký University or the University of Göttingen? (Можете описати своє досвіду під час вступу до університету Палачкого чи університету Ґеттінгену?)

6) Which obstacles did you face while accessing higher education? *(З якими перешкодами ви зіткнулися при доступі до вищої освіти?)*
- Could you describe what kind of obstacles did you encounter? *(Можете описати, з якими конкретно перешкодами ви зіткнулися?)*
- Where did they come from, or which factors did trigger them? *(Звідки вони виникли, або які чинники їх викликали?)*

7) Which opportunities and facilitators did help you to access tertiary education? *(Які можливості та сприяльники допомогли вам отримати доступ до вищої освіти?)*
- Could you elaborate what kind of opportunities did you benefit from? *(Можете розкрити, з яких саме можливостей ви скористалися?)*
- Which organisations (university, municipality, government bodies or NGOs) did provide these opportunities? *(Які організації (університет, муніципалітет, урядові органи чи НУО) надали ці можливості?)*

Experience in Higher Education *(Досвід у вищій освіті)*

8) Could you share your experience in terms of your studies and social environment at Palacký University or the University of Göttingen? *(Чи можете ви поділитися своєю досвідом щодо навчання та соціального середовища на університеті Палачкого чи університеті Ґеттінгену?)*
- To what extent are you satisfied with your studies? *(У якій мірі ви задоволені своїм навчанням?)*
- Is the academic environment familiar to you? *(Вам знайоме академічне середовище?)*
- How is your relationship with your classmates? (Які ваші відносини з однокурсниками?)
- How do you find the attitudes of the lecturers/professors towards you? *(Як ви сприймаєте ставлення викладачів/професорів до вас?)*

9) Could you elaborate on the challenges you encounter while pursuing your studies? *(Чи можете ви розширити про труднощі, з якими ви зіткнулися під час навчання?)*
- What kind of challenges (academic, bureaucratic, etc.) have you faced so far? *(Які ви зазнали труднощі (академічні, бюрократичні тощо) до цього часу?)*

10) What kind of support mechanisms help you in your studies? *(Які механізми підтримки допомагають вам у навчанні?)*
- Where did you receive support to overcome these problems? What kind of opportunities do you benefit from? *(Звідки ви отримали підтримку для подолання цих проблем? Які можливості ви використовуєте для цього?)*
- Are you satisfied with these support mechanisms? *(Чи задоволені ви цими механізмами підтримки?)*

Integration *(Інтеграція)*

11) To what degree do you feel that you have integrated into Czech or German society? *(На якій мірі ви відчуваєте, що ви інтегрувалися в чеське чи німецьке суспільство?)*

- Do you feel that you belong to Czech or German society today more than in the past? *(Чи відчуваєте ви, що ви відносите себе до чеського чи німецького суспільства більше, ніж в минулому?)*
- Were there any significant events that appeared in time to affect your integration into the country? *(Чи були які-небудь значущі події, які з'явилися з часом і вплинули на вашу інтеграцію в країну?)*
- Have you experienced any discrimination during your stay in the Czech Republic or Germany? *(Чи ви відчували будь-яку дискримінацію під час перебування в Чехії чи Німеччині?)*
- What kind of reactions do you get from the locals most of the time? *(Які реакції ви переважно спостерігаєте від місцевих мешканців?)*

12) How does higher education impact your integration process? *(Як ви оцінюєте вплив вищої освіти на ваш процес інтеграції)*

- What kind of positive effects has attending higher education in the Czech Republic or Germany brought to you? *(Які позитивні ефекти вам принесло отримання вищої освіти в Чехії чи Німеччині)*
- Do you realise any drawbacks attending tertiary education has caused? If yes, could you name them? *(Чи ви помічаєте недоліки, які виникли внаслідок отримання вищої освіти? Якщо так, можете їх назвати?)*
- How do your studies help you feel like you to belong to the Czech Republic or Germany? Could you share a specific example? *(Як ваше навчання допомагає вам відчувати, що ви відносите себе до Чехії чи Німеччини? Можете поділитися конкретним прикладом?)*

13) Do you believe that higher education will enable you to <u>fully</u> integrate into Czech or German society in the future? *(Чи ви вважаєте, що вища освіта дозволить вам <u>повністю</u> інтегруватися в чеське чи німецьке суспільство в майбутньому?)*

- Are there any other positive and negative factors that influenced your integration process? *(Чи є інші позитивні та негативні фактори, які вплинули на ваш процес інтеграції?)*

14) What are the most significant challenges you face while integrating into Czech or German society and culture? *(Які є найбільш значущі труднощі, з якими ви стикаєтеся під час інтеграції в чеське чи німецьке суспільство та культуру?)*

- What kind of challenges (financial, cultural, linguistic, etc.) do you face? *(Які труднощі ви зазнаєте (фінансові, культурні, мовні тощо?)*
- How do they affect your integration in the short, medium, and long terms? *(Як ці труднощі впливають на вашу інтеграцію в короткостроковому, середньостроковому та довгостроковому планах?)*

15) Which factors and support mechanisms facilitate your integration into the country? *(Які фактори та механізми підтримки сприяють вашій інтеграції в країну?)*

- Could you name these mechanisms, and where do you receive them? (Можете назвати ці механізми та звідки ви отримуєте їх підтримку?)
- Are there any social networks and events that help you integrate into society? *(Чи є які-небудь соціальні мережі та події, які допомагають вам інтегруватися в суспільство?)*
- Do you find them helpful and enough for integration? *(Чи ви вважаєте, що це корисні та достатні інструменти для інтеграції?)*

Conclusion (*Заключення*)

16) What are your expectations and plans after graduation? *(Які у вас очікування та плани після закінчення навчання?)*
- Would you like to stay in Czechia or Germany or locate another country? *(Чи б ви хотіли залишитися в Чехії чи Німеччині, чи шукати іншу країну для переїзду?)*
- How do you feel about your future? *(Як ви відчуваєте щодо свого майбутнього?)*

17) Would you like to share or add something? *(Чи б хотіли ви поділитися або додати щось ще?)*
- Is there any part that you would like to clarify? *(Чи є якась частина, яку ви б хотіли роз'яснити?)*

9.2 Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for the Interviews conducted within the MA Thesis titled
"Ukrainian University Students in Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Göttingen,
Germany."
*(Форма Інформованої Згоди для Інтерв'ю, проведених у межах магістерської
роботи "Українські студенти університетів в Оломоуці, Чеська Республіка, та
Геттінгені, Німеччина.")*

Name of the Researcher *(Ім'я Дослідника)*: Selin Akbaş

Programme (Програма): Erasmus Mundus Master of Arts Euroculture: Society, Politics
and Culture in a Global Context
*(Еразмус Мундус, магістр мистецтва "Єврокультура: Суспільство, Політика та
Культура в Глобальному Контексті")*

Universities the Researcher enrolled *(Університети, в які дослідник вступив)*:
Palacký University of Olomouc (Czech Republic) & University of Strasbourg (France)

Supervisors *(Супервайзери)*: Natalia Mishyna & Eva Dohnalová

A. Introduction & Purpose

This interview is carried out by Selin Akbaş, a graduate student in the Erasmus Mundus
Master of Arts Euroculture, as part of her master's thesis titled "Ukrainian University
Students in Olomouc, Czech Republic, and Göttingen, Germany." The study aims to find
obstacles and opportunities brought about by the tertiary education of Ukrainian
university students in the Czech Republic and Germany and its impact on integration into
Czech and German societies. You were selected to participate in this interview as you are
a Ukrainian student enrolled in higher education in the Czech Republic or in Germany.

A. Вступ та Мета

*Це інтерв'ю проводить Селін Акбаш, аспірантка магістратури Еразмус Мундус,
магістр мистецтва Єврокультура, в рамках написання своєї магістерської роботи
під назвою "Українські студенти університетів в Оломоуці, Чехія, та Геттінгені,
Німеччина." Мета дослідження – з'ясувати труднощі та можливості, які
виникають у зв'язку із вищою освітою українських студентів у Чехії та Німеччині,
а також вплив цього на їхню інтеграцію в чеське та німецьке суспільство. Ви були
обрані для участі в цьому інтерв'ю як український студент, який навчається
вищому навчальному закладі в Чехії чи Німеччині.*

B. Procedures

The interview will be conducted via video call or in person and will last approximately
one to one and a half hours. Questions will be asked of you regarding your experiences
and thoughts on accessing higher education, its impacts on obstacles and challenges faced
as a Ukrainian university student in the Czech Republic and Germany, and your
integration into Czech and German societies.

B. Процедури

Інтерв'ю буде проведено за допомогою відео дзвінка або особисто і триватиме приблизно одну годину до півтори години. Вам будуть задані питання щодо ваших досвіді та думок щодо доступу до вищої освіти, його впливу на труднощі та виклики, з якими стикається український студент у Чехії та Німеччині, а також вашої інтеграції в чеське та німецьке суспільства.

C. Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you will not receive any payment. You have the right to withdraw from the study before and during the interview. If you feel uncomfortable, you can refuse to respond to any question. You can ask any questions regarding the study, confidentiality, and use of data before the interview starts.

C. Добровільна участь

Ваша участь у цьому дослідженні є добровільною, і ви не отримаєте жодної оплати. У вас є право вийти з дослідження перед та під час інтерв'ю. Якщо ви відчуваєте дискомфорт, ви можете відмовитися від відповіді на будь-яке питання. Ви можете задати будь-які питання, пов'язані з дослідженням, конфіденційністю та використанням даних перед початком інтерв'ю.

D. Confidentiality

The interview will be recorded for accuracy and reference, with your consent. The researcher will keep the interview data confidential on her personal computer. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports based on this study. A pseudonym will be used to refer to you.

D. Конфіденційність

Інтерв'ю буде записане з вашої згоди для точності та посилання. Дослідник буде зберігати дані інтерв'ю в конфіденційності на своєму персональному комп'ютері. Ваша особистість не буде розкрита в жодних звітах на основі цього дослідження. Для посилання на вас буде використовуватися псевдонім.

E. Use of Data

Your data and responses will be used for academic purposes only. Your data will not be published or shared with any other organisations, or public and private institutions except for use in academic publications based on this study. Your confidentiality will be secured as stated in Section D of academic publications. You have the right to withdraw your permission for the use of your data and responses in this study within 5 days after conducting the interview. In this case, please contact the researcher via the email address provided below to withdraw your permission.

E. Використання Даних

Ваші дані та відповіді будуть використовуватися лише в академічних цілях. Ваші дані не будуть опубліковані чи передані іншим організаціям, або публічним та

приватним установам, окрім використання їх у академічних публікаціях на основі цього дослідження. Ваша конфіденційність буде забезпечена, як вказано в розділі D у наукових публікаціях. У вас є право відкликати свою згоду на використання ваших даних та відповідей у цьому дослідженні протягом 5 днів після проведення інтерв'ю. У цьому випадку, будь ласка, зв'яжіться з дослідником за адресою електронної пошти, наведеною нижче, для відкликання вашої згоди.

F. Benefits and Risks

Your participation and contribution to the study will enable us to expand the existing knowledge about the situation of Ukrainian university students in the Czech Republic and in Germany. Since the findings of the study will be shared publicly, your contribution may enhance policies, facilities, and support mechanisms for Ukrainian students attending tertiary education in the Czech Republic and Germany. There are no potential risks within the study.

F. Користь та Ризики

Ваша участь та внесок у дослідження дозволять нам розширити існуючі знання про ситуацію українських студентів у вищих навчальних закладах в Чехії та Німеччині. Оскільки результати дослідження будуть оприлюднені, ваш внесок може сприяти розробці політик, покращенню умов та механізмів підтримки для українських студентів, які отримують вищу освіту в Чехії та Німеччині. У рамках дослідження не передбачено потенційних ризиків.

I, ………………………………………………, hereby confirm that, (*Я .... цим підтверджую це,*)

1. I have informed and understood the explanation provided to me in writing and I had the opportunity to ask any questions about the study. *(був інформований і зрозумів надане мені пояснення письмово, і у мене була можливість задати будь-які питання щодо дослідження.)*
2. I agree to voluntarily take part in the study and I am aware that I will not be paid for my participation. *(Погоджуюся добровільно взяти участь у дослідженні, і я усвідомлюю, що мені не буде сплачено за участь..)*
3. I understand that I can withdraw my participation at any time before and during the interview. *(Розумію, що я можу відкликати свою участь у будь-який час перед і під час інтерв'ю.)*
4. I have been informed that I can refuse to respond to any question during the interview if I feel uncomfortable. *(Мені повідомлено, що я можу відмовитися від відповіді на будь-яке питання під час інтерв'ю, якщо я відчуваю дискомфорт.)*
5. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my permission for the use of my data and answers in the study within 5 days after interviewing by contacting the researcher via the email address provided below. *(Мені повідомлено, що я можу відмовитися від відповіді на будь-яке питання під час інтерв'ю, якщо я відчуваю дискомфорт.)*
6. I agree that my interview will be recorded for research purposes with my consent. I am informed that the recorded data will be kept and secured by the researcher. *(Я згоден(згідна), що моє інтерв'ю буде записано для наукових досліджень*

за моєю згодою. Я інформований(інформована), що записані дані будуть збережені та захищені дослідником.)

7. I accept that my identity and confidentiality as a participant in the study will remain anonymous and secure in any reports based on this study. *(Я погоджуюсь на те, що моя особистість та конфіденційність як учасника дослідження залишиться анонімною та захищеною у всіх звітах, що ґрунтуються на цьому дослідженні.)*

For inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher: s.akbas@live.com
Для запитань, будь ласка, не соромтеся звертатися до дослідника:
s.akbas@live.com

Signature of the Participant *(Підпис учасника)*:

…………..…………………………………………………

Signature of the Researcher *(Підпис дослідника)*:

…………..…………………………………………………

Place and Date *(Місце і дата)*:

…………..…………………………………………………