Integration of IDPs into the host communities of Ukraine in the context of representation theory and participatory communication

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Abstract

This research explores the process of integration of IDPs into the host communities in Ukraine from Communication for Development perspective. It aims to examine integration process in the context of representation and participatory communication theories. The objectives of this research are threefold. Firstly, it explores the concept of “successful” or finalized integration. Secondly, it investigates existing stereotypes and myths about IDPs in Ukrainian society through the lens of representation theory. Thirdly, it examines promising participatory communication projects in Ukraine aimed at countering these stereotypes. The research is based on semi-structured interviews with IDPs, representatives of host communities, employees of international development organizations and NGO, producer of TV-show and the author of the performance about IDPs. The research finds that establishment of social contacts and engagement into the life of the new community is key to successful integration and that stereotyped perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society comes not from interpersonal experience, but from media and political context and more participatory communication projects are needed for countering it.

Keywords: IDPs, integration, representation, stereotypes, participation
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Introduction

The problem of internal displacement has been alarmingly deteriorating during last decades. Roberta Cohen claims that “estimates of the global population of IDPs (internally displaced persons) increased exponentially, from 1.2 million in 11 countries in 1982 to 25 million in 40 countries by the end of the 1990s” (Cohen, quoted in Mugurusa, Amado, 2017, p. 147).

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 38 million were affected by conflict-induced internal displacement by the end of 2014. This means a 15 % increase in comparison to 2013, including 11 million newly displaced persons during a year. In other words, approximately 30,000 people being forced to migrate a day. The fact that in 2014 90% of the 60 countries monitored by IDMC had people living in protracted displacement for over 10 years gives an indication of the difficulties in finding sustainable solutions to displacement” (Mugurusa, Amado, 2017, p. 145-146)

As defined in the Introduction to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,

Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a
result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (UNHCR, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998)

Two important aspects of the definition which need to be taken into consideration is that IDPs are people who were forced to leave their homes due to the conflict or natural disaster (thus this definition excludes working migrants etc.) and that these people moved within the borders of their own county (otherwise they would be considered refugees and fall under different international protection regulations).

Another important term used in this paper is the one of “durable solution for IDPs”. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IASC 2010), an internationally agreed benchmark for work towards solutions for IDPs, defines it as:

A durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific care and safety needs that are related to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination due to the fact of displacement.

A durable solution can be achieved through:

- Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin, or return
- Sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge
- Sustainable integration in another part of the country (IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons)

Return, when IDPs come back to their hometowns or place of origin, is often the preferred durable solution, but it inclines to be difficult to achieve. Local integration is based on the assumption that IDPs will remain in a firm way in a certain location and should be able to enjoy their rights as the rest of the population. (Re)integration is used to describe the (re-)entry of formerly internally displaced people into the social, economic, cultural and political fabric of their original community or the new community where IDPs have migrated. In both reintegration and integration, long-term help and/or protection may be needed by returning or resettling internally displaced persons. Settlement elsewhere in the country means that IDPs start a new
life not in their place of origin or refuge, but still within the same country. Depending on the reasons and conditions of their displacement, this may be the only reasonable option for some (IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons).

There are 8 criteria that define when a durable solution is achieved. These are long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; acceptable standard of living; access to employment and livelihoods; rebuilding of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public matters; and access to effective remedies and justice (IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons). It totally lacks though social aspect which I will argue later is crucial to what can be considered as “successful “integration.

Problem of internal displacement was left unnoticed or at least less noticed on the international arena and in academic research for a long time, in comparison to refugees and asylum seekers, for instance, partially because it was considered a country’s internal issue.

Globally, refugees receive a lot of attention from policymakers, humanitarian aid workers, the media, as well as the general public. Although there are good reasons for that, it gives the impression that refugees constitute the major group of people on the move for violence. This is not the case. An often overlooked, yet much bigger group is the group of Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Of the roughly 60 million people that are displaced worldwide, about 2 out of 3 people are displaced within their own country (Jacobs, Paviotti, 2017, p. 3)

The situation changed in the 1990s when massive human rights violations and displacement of a significant amount of people caused by internal conflicts attracted the attention of international community.

Internal displacement has got a spot on the international agenda as a result of the convergence of acute humanitarian, regional and international security concerns, broader debates in the field of security and development studies and trends in international law and relations. These trends were giving precedence to the protection of human rights over the sovereignty and integrity of states and challenging traditional conceptions of sovereignty. The perspective on internally displaced from the international community was and still is that they fall within the domestic jurisdiction
and are therefore not covered by the protection normally awarded to those who cross international borders and become refugees (Mugurusa, Amado, 2017, p. 147).

This is one of the reasons why I have chosen internal displacement as an overall topic for my degree project, as I consider this topic slightly under-researched, especially in the Global North context. Another, the more significant reason is that this problem has affected my country, Ukraine, too. Due to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation in March 2014 and start of military actions on the east of Ukraine in April 2014, many people residing in those territories were forced to leave their homes and settle in the new communities in Ukraine.

First IDPs were about 15,000 persons who left Crimea in March 2014 and moved mainly to Kyiv and cities in Western Ukraine. From April 2014, when the actual military actions started on the east and the situation there became highly unstable, with cities and regions being occupied and returned to government control and with no clear line separating government-controlled areas (GCAs) and not government-controlled areas (NGCAs), around 700,000 people were forced to leave. As time passed and the conflict became protracted this number increased significantly. People left these territories for different reasons. IDPs from Crimea were often forced to leave because of political oppression and fear of illegal detention, especially in case of Crimean Tatars, an ethnic minority group residing on the peninsula. IDPs from the eastern part of Ukraine were mainly fleeing the war, being concerned with personal security and safety.

As of 21 May 2018, according to the statistics, provided by Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine there were around 1,5 million (the exact number is 1,506,476) officially registered IDPs from Donbas and Crimea (1,506,476 registered IDPs, 2018). Officially registered means that IDPs have registered at the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and received an IDP card. Unofficial number is considered to be significantly higher. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 6 October 2015, the total number of forcefully displaced Ukrainians reached 2,616,900 persons. Of that number, 1,111,300 were people seeking asylum—or other forms of legal stay—outside the Ukrainian borders (UNHCR, 2017). Globally, Ukraine ranks 8th according to the number of IDPs after Syria, Columbia, Iran, Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria and South Sudan.
Majority of IPDs moved to the neighboring regions — government-controlled areas (DCAs) of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts, Kyiv and Kyivska oblast, Kharkivska, Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka oblasts (see the map below).

Choice of new location depended on economic possibilities, family connections, and housing options. Such uneven geographical distribution of IDPs has put extra pressure on local communities, bordering with conflict line, especially on the local budget, administration, employment market and social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, kindergartens etc.). If we look at demographical statistics of IDPs, 62% of them are female, 40% under age 35. Moreover, 70% of IDPs have a university degree and professional working background. It means that IDPs constitute progressive labor force and can contribute to the development of their new communities.

At the very beginning of internal displacement, the government failed to provide necessary support to IDPs, there was no legislation, no mechanisms of financial support, no help with employment and housing, no understanding of social and phycological needs of IDPs or demographic statistics of IDPs. Now, when four years passed, we can see certain progress in legislation, social benefits, occasional state programs of employment and housing for IDPs, but there are still many problems which need to be addressed, among others, a question of integration of IDPs.
Research design

While designing my degree project, I have done preliminary literature review in general on the issue of internal displacement and specifically on the situation with IDPs in Ukraine and I came to the conclusion that most researchers focus on political aspect of the problem (Solodko, 2016, Doronyuk, 2015, Zhvania, 2015 etc.), legal status and rights of IDPs (Voinalovych, 2014, Krymova, 2014, Shyroko, 2016, Fesenko, 2016, Mykytenko, 2015, Osaulenko, 2016 etc.), economic situation of displaced persons (Schetinina, 2014, Kuznetsova, 2014, Tymchyk, 2014 etc.), social protection issues (Balakireva, 2014, Leonova, 2015, Melnik, 2017, Reut, 2015, Semygina, 2015 etc.), while very few concentrate on such important aspect of solving problem of internal displacement as integration into the host communities (Filyak, 2016, Zavadovska, 2016, Semiv, 2016). Therefore, I have decided to focus on this aspect in my research and contribute to the existing knowledge on the integration of IDPs also by adding Communication for Development perspective.

I wanted to leave myself some space for flexibility in exploring the topic. Therefore, I have applied an adaptive approach to my research. As it is not a rigid, linear approach. It responds – adapts – to the changing circumstances of the project as well as to what the emerging data or evidence indicates or reveals about the concepts used to analyze and explain them. A reassuring feature of the adaptive method allows the researcher to flexibly reconfigure the research objectives in the light of emerging evidence/data (Layder, 2013).

In a way, my research led itself when I progressed with interviews and data collection. When I started to look into the question of integration (which was my primary research question) and collect empirical data, I noticed a tendency that a biased or negative perception of IDPs stemmed not from interpersonal experience, but rather from media and political environment which led my research to the theory of representation. I then investigated how the voice of IDPs is included into the general discourse on the problem of displacement in Ukrainian society and tried to identify some promising participatory projects/initiatives which helped to counter stereotypes against IDPs.
The **overall aim** of the research was to explore the process of integration of IDPs into the host communities of Ukraine through the lens of representation and participatory communication with **three objectives**:

- explore further the concept of integration;
- analyze the reasons for existing stereotypes, myths, biased attitude and discrimination towards IDPs;
- research existing participatory communication projects in Ukraine related to IDPs;

In order to reach abovementioned objectives, I have formulated my **research questions** in the following way:

1. What can be considered as “successful” or finalized integration?
2. What stereotypes and myths about IDPs are the most common in Ukrainian society? Why do they exist?
3. What are some promising participatory projects/initiatives to counter stereotypes against IDPs?

In line with adaptive approach principles, based on selective literature review I have pre-defined “orienting” concepts which I thought might be helpful to explain certain phenomena which I investigated. I complimented them later with “emergent” concepts when certain findings led to certain concepts. More specifically, the theoretical framework for this paper was formed by concepts of local integration, Stuart Hall’s representation theory, and participatory communication theory.

My research was based on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. As conducting a large-scale quantitative survey with the efficient sample of interviews was beyond my time constraints, given the time limits of degree project, I made use of existing quantitative data sets - surveys, official statistics, and public documents. I analyzed available data before designing interview guide and incorporated some of the questions from them into the final guide for cross-checking. My primary research method was semi-structured interviews with IDPs, representatives of host communities and employees of development organizations and NGOs working with IDPs. I used empirical data from the interviews to cross-check information from the existing quantitative data sets, but also to investigate other research areas.
One important aspect of my research was the question of ethical consideration. The topic of internal displacement is rather sensitive to research as it touches upon human destinies, often traumas and stigma, therefore I was very careful with wording and questions during my interviews with IDPs (especially those about discrimination, biased attitude etc.) to avoid their further traumatization and stigmatization.
Literature review and existing research

The research topic of this paper falls under two big multidisciplinary research fields - Refugee and Forced Migration Studies and Communication for Development. Therefore, the selective literature review which I have conducted for the purpose of this degree project was two-folded.

The field of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies arose in the 1980s, partly because of the major refugee crisis in South-East Asia, Pakistan, Iran, African continent as well as a rise in the number of asylum seekers in Europe and North America. Barbara Harrell-Bond, one of the key researchers of the field, introduced the idea that research about refugees should be used for refugees - an idea which is now referred to as researcher’s ‘dual imperative’ to promote academic knowledge and take on an ethical action (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). It’s linked to the idea that there can be no justification for doing research about extreme human suffering if the researcher does not have the easing of suffering as a clear objective of his or her research (Turton, 1996).

One of the main focus areas of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies is human displacement, with the inclusion of an agency of displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers. I tried to incorporate this aspect of inclusion into my research as well. Therefore, since 1980s focus of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies has moved from advocacy and policy-making to action-research on refugees’ needs and rights (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014).

There is no consensus among Refugee and Forced Migration Studies though regarding the boundaries of the field - shall the research be limited only to those who cross international borders or cover also internal displacement, irregular migrants, human trafficking or people at risk of deportation? Nevertheless, most researchers identify study of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, development-induced displaced persons, trafficked persons or any other persons that were forced to move against their will as those who fall under the scope of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014).

For the purpose of the thesis, I have decided to limit literature review only to the topic of internal displacement, durable solutions for IDPs and integration leaving aside more general topic of migration, refugees and asylum seekers as they do not
seem relevant for my research questions. I have also applied another limitation. I focused only on general literature on internal displacement and integration, or limited to the region of the Eastern Europe, excluding research which covered other regions due to its vague applicability for the research purpose. This approach allowed me to concentrate on the key research within the relevant area and perform a selective literature review. I used Google Scholar and Malmo Library Search to find reliable academic sources and literature.

In general, the literature on local integration is characterized broadly by its neglect (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014, p. 560). We know relatively little about the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons which signals about under-research of self-settled and urban refugees (contrary to the recognized settlement structure like encampment).

However, local integration as a durable solution has received a lot of interest recently, particularly in the context of protracted refugee contexts (Crisp, quoted in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014). A growing number of literature has emerged that focuses on self-settled refugees and their strategies towards local integration, recording the economic, social and cultural aspects of integration that have been taking place (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, Briant and Kennedy, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014). Much of this literature highlights the degree to which local integration, particularly economic and social aspects happens despite government and international refugee policy, not because of it, and points out to the ways in which refugees seek out their own forms of protection that official structures fail to provide (Sommers, quoted in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014). But there is also other research concentrating on officially sanctioned local integration processes (Ferris, Harrell-Bond, Crisp, quoted in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long and Sigona, 2014).

I can conditionally divide the literature which I have analyzed into the following groups:
- Research with a focus on general overview of the problem of internal displacement which has helped me to formulate a general picture of the problem under research and identify relevant “orienting” concepts applicable to the research problems, such as

- Policy papers, reports, guidelines and other documents produced by international development organizations which provided useful statistics, terminology and guidelines (UN, UNHCR, OCHA etc.);

- Research papers with a focus on Eastern European context (Brunarska, 2013, Weinar, 2013);


Second research field, directly linked to the topic of my degree project, is Communication for Development which is also a multidisciplinary field with many different paradigms, theories, and approaches. Therefore, I also had to limit the application of Communication for Development literature to the scope of current research and focus on Communication for Development and Social Change, participatory communication and representation theory.

There is no single opinion in the field on how Communication for Development and Social Change can be defined. Servaes (2008) defines it as a multi-dimensional and participatory process through which people are empowered to control their own destinies. Culture plays a special role in the development and deserves greater emphasis in Communication for Development and Social Change. I will talk about it more in the context of representation. Communication for Development and Social Change is a process that includes formal (for example, campaigns) and informal (for example, community participation), direct (for example, media exposure) and indirect
(for example, communication in social networks) forms of communication (Servaes, 2008).

Communication for Social Change can be also defined as a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. Dialogue is a key in communication and it leads to collective problem identification, decision making and community-based execution of solutions to development issues (Servaes, 2008). The notion of participatory communication progressed in the 1980s with an idea that people are to be agents of change and should participate in their own development, “not only because this participation is essential for meaningful change, but its consequences was the empowerment of those who participated to continue to make change” (McAnany, 2012, p. 87). Before the emergence of participatory paradigm, diffusion and modernization theories which focused on linear, top-down communication, prevailed in Communication for Development field. I will talk about these two approaches in the theoretical framework part.
Theoretical framework: main concepts and theories

Applying adaptive approach to my research, during selective literature review I have identified few “orienting” concepts that I considered relevant for addressing my research questions – concepts of local integration and participatory communication. In this process, I was also guided by the knowledge of Communication for Development field which I have obtained during my studies. During analysis of empirical data, when I felt that I can’t properly explain certain phenomena with initially identified concepts, I applied “emergent” concepts, for example, representation theory. I have chosen these concepts because they were relevant to the topic of my research and helped to explain social phenomena which I investigated – integration, a formation of stereotypes, representation of IDPs etc.

The first concept which I have analyzed and tried to develop further during this research was the concept of local integration. In the context of this paper, I focused on the concept of local integration as an only possible durable solution for IDPs in Ukraine because sustainable reintegration or in simple words return to the places of origin is not possible now due to the protracted nature of the conflict. As with the majority of concepts, there is no generally accepted definition. One of the definitions which I found useful described local integration as a process which leads to a durable solution for refugees. It is a process with three interrelated dimensions (Crisp, 2004).

First, it is a legal process, whereby refugees are given a progressively wider range of rights and privileges by the host state. Second, local integration can be regarded as an economic process. For in obtaining the rights and entitlements mentioned above, refugees also improve their potential to establish sustainable livings, to achieve an increasing degree of self-reliance, and to become progressively less reliant on state aid or humanitarian assistance. Third, local integration is a social process, empowering refugees to live amongst the host population, without fear of regular discrimination, intimidation or exploitation by the authorities or people of the asylum country. It is consequently a process that involves both refugees and the host population (Crisp, 2004).

UNHCR defines integration as “a complex and gradual process with legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions. It imposes considerable demands on both the individual and the receiving society” (UNHCR website).
Local integration is a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process between refugees and their hosts in which refugees gradually become integrated members of society legally, economically and socially. The social dimension of local integration uses social and cultural frameworks to enable refugees to access education and social services as well as to participate in the social life of the community. Developing a sense of social and cultural belonging leads to better social cohesion in the long term (UNHCR, 2008). Despite being used in the context of refugees, this definition perfectly suits the needs of this paper.

Within Communication for Development field I have identified two main concepts relevant for my research questions - participatory communication and representation theory. As I mentioned above, there are two main competing paradigms in the field of Communication for Development and Social Change - Roger’s ‘diffusion of innovations’ paradigm (Rogers, 2003) and Freire’s participatory paradigm. The diffusion model, based on Everett Rogers’ diffusion theory, is mostly expert-driven. It sees external agents as main drivers of change and doesn’t provide room for participatory communication. Communication is regarded as linear, monologue and top-down process. This model reads the communication process primarily as a message that goes from a sender to receiver. The summary of this approach fits very well under Laswell’s formula— ‘Who says What through Which channel to Whom with What effect?’ and dates back to research on campaigns and diffusions in the late 1940s and 1950s (Servaes, 2008).

There is a strong consensus among the Communication for Development community that Paulo Freire was the genuine source of thinking about participation in communication for social change (McAnany, 2012). Participatory model is based on Paulo Freire’s liberating pedagogy from the 1960s but updated in the framework of the post-development paradigm. The central focus is on the empowerment of citizens through their active involvement in the identification of problems, the development of solution strategies and their accomplishment. This is a dialogic, bottom-up approach to communication and development (Tufte, 2017)

Paulo Freire refers to participatory model as to the right of all people to speak out. This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone—nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act
which robs others of their words (Servaes, 2008). His model builds on this principle and a broad literature on development communication developed by practitioners, communication activists and scholars (such as Beltrán, Díaz Bordenave, Calvelo, Shirley White, Prieto Castillo, Everett Rogers, Mata, Simpson, Servaes, Portales, and Kincaid). The integrated model draws from a broad literature on development communication that has developed in the early 1960s. In particular, the work of Latin American theorists and communication activists was used for its clarity and rich recommendations for a more people-inclusive, integrated approach for using communication for development.

According to Freire, the core principle of participatory communication is dialogue. He defines it as “the encounter between men in order to name the world”. For Freire, the free and open dialogue whereby people can name the world is voice, the principle of action-reflection-action and horizontal communication (Tufte, Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 10). Another important aspect was consciousness of power relations, therefore Freire insisted that the voice should be given to marginalized people, together with a space to share their concerns, define their problems and identify solutions. As participatory communication is also about visibility and voice in mediated public space.

One of the limitations of Freire’s theory is that it’s more based on group dialogue rather than such amplifying media as radio, print, and television. But, from another perspective, Freire refers to the involvement of “the oppressed” into communication processes which is more relevant to the topic of the research.

There is, however, another approach to participatory communication, based on the concepts of access, participation, and self-management, originating from the UNESCO debates in the 1970s. By access, one means “the use of media for public service” (Servaes, Malikhao, 2005, p. 79). From one perspective, access means that the public has a variety of programs and channels to choose from, from the other – a possibility of the public to give feedback and transmit their reactions to the media. Participation means public involvement in the communication process. It “includes the involvement of the public in the production process, and also in the management and planning of communication systems” (Servaes, Malikhao, 2005, p. 79). It can also have the form of consultation with the public. Self-management is considered to be the most progressive form of participation when the public is fully involved in the design of
communication policies and plans. I have partially applied this approach to my research as well.

Another theory which I found extremely useful for my degree project is representation theory. As Thomas Tufte argues that “the current crisis of development is fundamentally a crisis of participation and inclusion” and “a crisis of representation of the ordinary citizen, and the marginalized citizen in particular” (Tufte, 2017).

Stuart Hall defines representation as “using language to say something meaningful about, or represent the world meaningfully, to other people (Hall, 2013)”. Representation is the process of production and exchange of meaning between members of a culture. It can also be considered as “a production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language (Hall, 2013)”. There are basically two different theories of representation – one which concentrates on the language which produces meaning and another one on the discourse which produce meaning and knowledge. People construct meanings of things they have seen or experienced, but they also form the meaning of things or concepts they haven’t dealt with. That’s crucial to understanding how myths and stereotypes appear in the society.

According to Barthes, myth is the second level of signification when a meaning is linked to a wider theme by the reader. According to Barthes, myths function as a system of representation and is “meta-language”. Within one culture or society meaning often depends on larger units of analysis – tales, statements, groups of images, discourses. Representation in this regard can be also viewed as a source of construction of social knowledge (Hall, 2013).

Foucault, on the contrary, argues that it’s not the language, but discourse that constructs meaning and produces knowledge or objects of knowledge. The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from. It is discourse, not subjects who speak it that produces meaning (Hall, 2013). I will talk later about the representation of IDPs in the analysis chapter.

In line with this, my research focuses on the issue of representation and inclusion of IDPs in communication on their needs and concerns and participatory communication initiatives. Doing the research, I tried to identify whether the voice of people affected by the problem is heard, how they are represented in the society and
whether there are participatory communication projects targeted at countering existing stereotypes or prejudice.
Methodology

In order to answer my research questions, I have decided to choose interviewing, specifically semi-structured interviews, as my primary method of data collection. I have chosen this method as I already had some initial assumptions and anticipated themes and concepts after literature and documents review which I wanted to investigate further, and format of semi-structured interviews perfectly fitted this purpose. One more reason for choosing this method was that the research topic was related to human experiences and perceptions, therefore interviewing was a suitable method to get first-hand information and insights.

Ultimately, I have conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with IDPs (4 persons), representatives of host communities (2), employees of international development organisations (United Nations Development Program, GIZ, SIDA) and NGO (“GoEast”), working with IDP issue in Ukraine (4), producer of TV-show (1) and the author of the performance about IDPs (1). I have chosen this sample as it was realistic in terms of time and representativity. While choosing specific people for interviews, I kept gender, age balance, and expert/non-expert balance because I wanted to hear the opinion of all relevant stakeholders. Often, one interview led to another.

Before conducting interviews, I have developed a written interview guide with a set of open-ended questions. However, I let discussion with every interviewee develop naturally and left room for respondent's more spontaneous answers and narratives. In this way, content and direction of interviews varied depending, sometimes significantly, on the interviewee. Interviews with experts, working with IDP issue, were more in-depth while interviews with IDPs and representatives of the host communities focused mainly on their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. All interviews were done in person, in Ukrainian or Russian language, depending on interviewee’s preferences. Ten interviews were audio-recorded, while 2 interviewees have refused to be audio-recorded and named due to personal security reasons. Therefore, they were done in the form of directed conversation and transcribed from my memory afterward.
I applied an adaptive approach to the analysis of the data and to research as such. As I went through interview transcripts, I assigned particular code labels to particular sets of data. In simple words, I analyzed and grouped data from interviews and survey according to the respective categories or themes of my research. Code labels were pre-defined before I started matching them with data in accordance with general research design and research questions. I distinguished between descriptive labels (which helped to provide a general information and overview about a certain aspect of the problem under research) and explanatory labels, which helped to explain certain tendencies and phenomena. This approach has helped me identify certain patterns and structure data under relevant topics which facilitated its further analysis and explanation.

In other words, I have conducted thematic coding and analysis of information retrieved from interview transcripts. I have segmented, categorized and summarized the empirical data according to certain anticipated themes which I have pre-defined before engaging in coding activity. For example, I structured my findings according to the following themes: integration, perception, discrimination, media representation and examples of participatory communication initiatives. These themes were anticipated in the data set because I included the relevant questions into interview guide. This strategy has helped me to identify relevant patterns within dataset and group it thematically. Coding facilitated also the development of themes and argument-building process. Throughout the analysis, I reconsidered, renamed or added certain themes depending on their relevance to the research question.

While coding data, I was looking at certain connections and correlation between concepts and specific pieces of data. I applied both “orienting” concepts which I pre-defined during literature review (like integration concept or participatory communication theory) and “emergent” concepts, when the findings of research itself clearly led to certain concepts (as in case of representation theory, for example). I also tried to develop further certain concepts, for example, concept of local integration. At every research stage while investigating certain phenomena I asked “why” question which helped to explain the reasons and logic rather than simply describing certain
This way, every part of my research become interconnected and interlinked.

Being aware that results of 12 interviews do not provide solid evidentiary basis to support reliable conclusions, I supplemented interviews with documentary analysis and survey data. I analysed results of public survey conducted by one of the top Ukrainian sociological institutes – Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on perception and attitudes towards IDPs in Ukraine. The survey was conducted in July-August 2016 with a nationwide representational sample of 2,500 people (both IDPs and representatives of host communities). The objectives of the research were, among others, to estimate if the IDPs were satisfied with the coverage of their problems in the mass media and what flaws in particular they saw in the coverage, describe the social position of the IDPs in the host communities and their plans for further migration, including returning to their home location, describe the attitude of the permanent residents of the host communities towards the IDPs and investigate what kind of consequences the citizens of the host communities noticed after the IDPs had appeared in their cities, towns, and villages (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016).

Majority of the conclusions from the survey’s report were supported in the interviews. In this way, I have cross-checked the data received from interviews in the format of so-called “triangulation of information” that empowered me to draw reliable conclusions.

My research strategy and logic was the following. I have started my research from the question of integration of IDPs into the host communities, tried to understand why integration is more or less successful with different groups of IDPs and what obstacles and problems connected to integration exist in Ukrainian society. Then I moved to the analysis of the perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society. In this regard, I looked into the question of attitude towards IDPs and tried to identify main myths and stereotypes in connection to them and analyze the reasons. Finally, I investigated the questions of representation of IDPs and tried to identify promising participatory projects/initiatives aimed at countering these stereotypes.
Analysis

Successful integration: main stages and obstacles

The main focus of my research was on the issue of integration of IDPs into their new communities in Ukraine. While researching this topic, I looked into what can be considered as successful integration, tried to understand if there is a difference in integration for different groups of IDPs and what are the main obstacles to integration.

In theoretical framework part, I have provided different view and definitions of local integration as a durable solution for IDPs. In general terms, integration can be viewed as “a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process between IDPs and their hosts in which IDPs gradually become integrated members of society legally, economically and socially (UNHCR, 2013)”.

During my research, I came to the conclusion, that exactly last aspect, the social integration, establishing social connections with the members of new communities is crucial to what can be considered as “successful integration”. Because simply owning an apartment or having work is not considered by the majority of my interviewees as sufficient for them to have a feeling of “belonging” to the new community which is basically equal to integration.

There is, however, a category of IDPs who failed to make first steps to integration such as finding a job and solving housing issue and had to return to their places of origin despite the on-going conflict. Therefore, all aspects of integration (legal and economic) are important, but the social one is decisive in what I can determine as full integration. My research has helped me to develop the concept of integration further and suggest that this process is multi-staged. In a way, it reminds me of Maslow’s pyramid with the hierarchy of needs which he used to describe the stages of human growth. Similarly, I would argue integration entails the following stages:

- Legal stage (when the internally displaced person registers himself/herself on the new place of residence and gets IDP card, which allows him or her to renew documents, apply for job or studies, open bank account etc.)
- Economic stage (when an IDP finds a job or other means to sustain himself/herself financially and solves an issue of accommodation)
- Social stage (which is linked directly to the question of social contacts, but also establishing certain routines and engagement into the life of the new community)

I argue that first two stages constitute basic integration level and are a pre-condition for not returning to the places of origin. The third stage constitutes an advanced level of integration as it is connected to settling in the new society and development of the feeling of belonging. In my opinion, this feeling develops only when a person is engaged in the life of the community, and the only way how it can be reached is through interaction and interpersonal communication. As UNHCR states in one of its policy documents “developing a sense of social and cultural belonging leads to better social cohesion in the long term (UNHCR, 2008).

My interviewees also confirm this argument:

“I don’t feel integrated at all. Yes, we have money and we have a house. But we don’t know anyone here, we are all by ourselves. If the conflict was over, I would return back to Donetsk”, 60-year old female IDP from Donetsk

“Would I return to Donetsk? No, I have my job here, I have my friends and social life. My life is here”, 28-year old female IDP from Donetsk

These quotes also support another tendency which I have noticed during research, which is also supported by survey results – elderly people integrate more difficult than young people. Partially it’s connected to the fact that older people are usually staying home and receiving pensions while young study or work which lead them to new social contacts and establishing routines which are a key to successful integration.

Another conclusion I came to is that issue of integration is directly linked to the question of return. For me, this was a cross-check question if IDPs whom I interviewed couldn’t answer the question of whether they are fully integrated into their new community. Most of the people who answered that they would return to their hometowns if circumstances allowed showed signs that they were not fully integrated, specifically socially.
If we take these two factors – a willingness to return and the establishment of social connections as key factors defining successful integration and compare to the survey results, this leads us to an interesting conclusion on whether IDPs are in general well-integrated in Ukraine.

According to the survey, 74% of IDPs have established relations with host communities, only 23% of IDPs do not regularly interact with their new community. This number is higher in the big cities. For example, in Kyiv, 71% of respondents do not have regular contacts with Kyiv citizens (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016).

From another perspective, 48% of respondents do not plan to return to their previous homes once the conflict is over, while 36% plan to do so when circumstances allow and 11% still haven’t decided. More inclined to return to their hometowns are older people (54% of 60+ respondents have expressed the willingness to return) (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016).

Combined, these two statistics, lead us to a tentative conclusion that 60-70% of IDPs are rather well integrated into Ukrainian society. The overall number is quite high, but still, almost every third displaced person in Ukraine hasn’t established social contacts with the host community and/or want to return to their hometowns, thus not fully integrated.

This conclusion made me explore the question of why that 30% haven’t fully integrated into their new communities. What are the main problems and obstacles to integration process?

To answer this question, one has to keep in mind that IDPs is not a homogeneous group. They belong to different social groups and have different needs. One of my interviewees who work at UNDP has presented to me rather interesting typology of IDPs in connection to their willingness or unwillingness to integrate:

1) The first group of IDPs is those who have moved not far from their homes, most often to the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts (to their relatives, summer houses). For them it was a temporary solution, during 2015-2016 they didn’t even want to talk about integration, only when they realized that the conflict is protracted, they started to integrate.
2) The second group consists of IDPs who moved together with their companies. Since the conflict on the east started, many companies and businesses moved from the area together with their employees (to the big industrial cities around the conflict line). These people do not want to integrate as they heavily rely on their employers and if the latter would move somewhere else or return, they would follow.

3) There is also a specific group of IDPs with clearly pro-Russian views who do not favor national policy. Most of these people moved to Kharkiv, the big city not far from the contact line. Obviously, they don’t want to integrate and have hope that Kharkiv will change its position from pro-Ukrainian to pro-Russian one day.

4) The fourth group of IDPs have moved to Kyiv or to western regions of Ukraine. They are well integrated and don’t consider a return as an option. In their view displacement was a good personal development trigger and forced them to start new, often better lives in the new places.

   From the interview with UNDP employee

Therefore, there are many reasons for non-integration and obstacles to integration. I have tried to code main ones from the data gathered during interviews.

One of the most often mentioned obstacles to integration is because of existing stereotypes, myths and sometimes even discrimination, IDPs are not inclined to be active citizens of the society, establish social connections and “voice” their concerns and needs. They prefer to keep low-profile. I will address this issue in more detail in the following chapter.

One of the other reasons for non-integration or slow integration is that IDPs often communicate within their closed social groups, consisting of IDPs which prevents them from establishing broader social contacts:

“Yes, IDPs often communicate within closed communities of IDPs. It helps to take away psychological trauma, as these people have undergone similar experiences and they understand better each other. But this also hinders integration”, the employee of NGO working with IDPs.
Some people, especially older generation have, nostalgia for the “golden years” of Donetsk. Many people left before the main destruction took place and still have “ideal” image of their hometowns and communities which they want to return to.

During my research, I came to the conclusion, that exactly last aspect, the social integration, establishing social connections with the members of new communities is crucial to what can be considered as “successful integration”. Because simply owning an apartment or having work is not considered by the majority of my interviewees as sufficient for them to have a feeling of “belonging” to the new community which is basically equal to finalized integration.
Perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society and question of representation

Survey results show that perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society is rather positive in general (66% of respondents haven’t faced prejudice in connection to their status, and out of the remaining 34% only 3% experienced it continuously, 20% occasionally and 11% seldom) (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016), but certain myths and stereotypes still exist, even if people realise their stereotypical nature, they are still aware of them. Every single person whom I interviewed, even though he or she didn’t have prejudice or negative perception of IDPs, still was able to name 2 o 3 stereotypes which he heard either from his acquaintances or media. Most of these stereotypes were repeated which led me to the conclusion that there is a stereotypical “cloud” surrounding issue of IDPs in Ukraine.

I have coded the most often named stereotypes and myths and ranked them according to the frequency of mentions during interviews:

- **IDPs are associated with the previous political regime of President Yanukovych** (7 people)
- **IDPs are to be blamed for the conflict** (6 people mentioned this myth)
- **IDPs don’t speak Ukrainian and don’t want to learn it** (4 people)
- **IDPs belong to so-called “working class”, as Donbass is an industrial region, they don’t have their own culture** (4 people)
- **IDPs have pro-Russian views and don’t accept national policy** (3 people)
- **IDPs are “foreigners”** (2 people)
- **IDPs take jobs, places in schools and kindergartens**
- **IDPs are helpless, only receive social help from state and humanitarian aid**

Some of the existing stereotypes are controversial as, for example, some people think that IDPs only receive social help, while others claim that IDPs increase competition on the labor market. This also confirms that people know very little about IDPs, their demographics, and needs. Partially, this ranking mirror results of the public survey which show that majority of representatives of the host communities do not see either negative or positive results of the influx of IDPs into their communities. Only 22% of respondents do see the negative outcomes (such as large number of people,
lines, crowds, increased competition for jobs, increase in crime rates, disrespect to the representatives of host communities, extra-budgetary spending on IDPs etc). Despite some negative trends, the general perception of IDPs is neutral (44%) or positive (43%). Only around 5% have a negative attitude towards IDPs. Nevertheless, there are certain disturbing facts in the survey results. For example, 29% of respondents think that only IDPs with clearly pro-Ukrainian position shall receive help, 27% partially blame IDPs for the conflict in the east (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016).

An interesting tendency which I have noticed during interviewing is that perception and attitude towards IDPs from Crimea is significantly better than the one of IDPs from the East. Partially it is explained by the fact, that people consider those who left Crimea to be more patriotic than those who fled the war on the east:

“You need to understand differences in situations, Crimea was annexed relatively peacefully and there are state attributes there, system functions, while on the east real military operations and shelling took place. Now it’s basically “no-man’s land”, no judicial, banking system, no jobs. People who left these territories were not always guided by feelings of patriotism and nationalism. They were fleeing the war and chaos”, from the interview with UNDP employee

Some of my interviewees mentioned a stereotype that IDPs are “foreigners”, meaning they are different from representatives of host communities. In the society discrimination often takes place against people who for some reasons differ from the generally accepted vision of being normal and these people are perceived as “others”. Others are considered to be a homogeneous group artificially cut out of the society based on the conditional division “we” vs “they”. Moreover, this “otherness” is often represented in mass media, cinemas, books, the internet which reinforces it and leads to further stigmatization. Representation of otherness is based on stereotypes dominating in society about Others and Selves, making a significant contribution to their reinforcement (Markina, 2016).

When I have started conducting interviews, I have noticed that the problem is highly stigmatized. IDPs are considered a vulnerable group in general which is not exactly right. They belong to different groups, including vulnerable ones– people with
disabilities, single mothers, pensioners. By assigning all of them to the vulnerable group, we stigmatize them even more. I could feel it myself when I asked a person I interviewed whether he or she considered oneself an IDP, he or she didn’t feel easy with such self-identification:

“Please, don’t call me IDP. It is humiliating”, IDP from the interview

“IDPs are objects of stigmatization. But stigma comes from political and media context, not from people”, UNDP employee

Stereotypes exist in every society. Stereotypes, or deliberately simplified notions about socially significant things, individuals, groups, social relations, are formed in the process of cognition by the subjects of their everyday world and have a useful adaptive function: "The stereotyped picture of the world may not be complete, but it is a picture of a possible world to which we have adapted "(Lippman, 2004, p. 108).

Stereotypes about others are formed at the interface of the processes of representation and differentiation, at the point of collision of phenomena of otherness, power and inequality. Since there are no real boundaries separating the “others’ from the rest, a person or group needs imaginary delimiters to create and maintain a sense of the objective and irresistible difference between Selves and Others (Gilman, 1985, p. 17).

So, the process of stereotypes formation is natural, inevitable and even necessary, however, S. Gilman focuses attention on the essential difference between his pathological and non-pathological forms. The main difference lies in the purpose of these practices. In the first case, a division is made in order to ascertain objective dissimilarity, otherness and simply to delimit oneself from Others. In the second case, stereotypes arise as the first protective reaction to the arising alarm; when anxiety is overcome, stereotypes are revised and discarded as unnecessary (Markina, 2016). In my view, stereotypes about IDPs has non-pathological forms as they were the first reaction towards unknown phenomena:

“Ukraine has faced for the first time such massive forced displacement of people in its history”, a producer of TV-show about IDPs
Pathological perception is characterized by the inability to reflectively reflect on the stereotype later and insists on its objectivity. It is consolidated under the influence of various strategies of representation, in particular, silence - the deprivation of minorities by attention, ignoring the voices of the Others themselves. I will talk about this in more detail in the subsequent chapter (Markina, 2016).

Others are perceived through the discourse about them as if everything that is represented is an objective reality, a "truth" (Gilman, 1985) for example, the perception of "blacks" through discourse created about them by "whites" or "migrants" through representations, produced from the position of "local". The greatest danger of pathological stereotyping lies in the fact that the created representations of otherness, which are of a stigmatizing nature, are exhibited as genuine knowledge (Markina, 2016).

I have done similar coding of answers to the question why stereotypes about IDPs exist. The following explanations were most often mentioned:

- Distorted media coverage, emphasis on term IDP as a shame sign (3 people)
- Ukrainians like to blame and transfer responsibility (2 people)
- Long artificial division East-West in Ukraine (2 people)
- An absence of tolerance, especially towards strangers

In reality, stereotyping and stigmatization of IDPs not only hinders their integration into the new communities, is also leads to discrimination which is unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people. According to survey results, 30% of respondents have experienced discrimination and violation of their rights in connection to their IDP status, and 30% heard of such cases. The most common sphere of discrimination is connected to receiving social benefits (52% of respondents named it). The second sphere is rent of apartments and the third one is employment. Other spheres are voting rights and healthcare (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016).

Answers from my interviews with IDPs and representatives of host communities confirm survey results. Most commonly people named the following spheres where discrimination took place:

- People do not want to lease apartments to IDPs (2 persons)
- IDPs do not have right to vote or be elected in local elections (2 persons)
- They don’t have access to healthcare if they don’t receive IDP card and change their registration address (2 persons)
- Social payments and pensions (checks every 2 weeks)
- Problems with employment
- Registration (receiving IDP card)

One of the most important tendencies which I have noticed during my research was that members of host communities whose friends or relatives are IDPs have better attitude towards IDPs in comparison to those who do not have personal contacts with them. It means that people who have had personal contact with IDPs have better perception of the latter. For example, respondents who didn’t have personal contacts with IDPs named increase in crime rates and IDPs’ unwillingness to work more often as negative outcomes of IDPs influx in Ukraine than those who had personal contacts (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016). This tendency has been confirmed in both survey results and my interviews:

“On personal level there is no perception problem. Messages from media create stigma, as they focus on problems and vulnerability and create a negative image of a displaced person. People often lack critical thinking when it comes to media consumption and that’s how perception of IDPs is formed”, UNDP employee

This tendency led me to the issue of representation of IDPs in Ukrainian society, first of all in media. According to survey, around 28% of people do not like the coverage of the topic of IDPs in the media, among most frequently named problems – distortion of facts or omission of some information (46%), superficiality (44%) and lack of useful information. 18% of respondents also noticed prejudice and stereotypes in media coverage of IDPs (KIIS, results of the survey, 2016). IDPs are often displayed as miserable, problematic and in need of help:

“On most TV-channels IDPs were represented through “key-hole” in a sensationalist news format. Often these were stories about crimes or misconducts committed by IDPs. Commercial TV-channels care only about ratings, not social problems”, producer of TV-program about IDPs
Therefore, one of my main research findings is that biased and stereotyped perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society comes from media and political, directly connected to the question of representation of IDPs. As Stuart Hall (2013) defines it “representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture”.

People construct meanings of things they have seen or experienced, but they also construct the meaning of things or concepts they haven’t dealt with. In our case, people construct the meaning of IDPs, even if they haven’t had personal contacts with them. In a culture meaning often depends on larger units of analysis – narratives, statements, groups of images, whole discourses. Representation can be also viewed as a source of production of social knowledge. Foucault’s “regime of truth” means that it doesn’t matter whether some ideas are true if people consider them to be true, then they are real: “Each society has its regime of truth, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (Hall, 2013). Thus, if people consider IDPs to be a threat or a burden, despite the real facts, then they will have a negative or biased attitude towards them.

My further research led me to the conclusion that in Ukrainian society there is clearly a gap of representation of IDPs – in Hall’s terms a gap between a "true meaning" and media representation. Stuart Hall argues that meaning of object or phenomena doesn’t exist until it’s represented. It’s also rarely one generally accepted meaning. So, the concept of “true meaning” is questionable in itself.

According to Hall, the media are by no means the only way meaning is exchanged. Personal communication is still the primary mode of exchanging meaning, but our complicated technology circulates meaning in a particular way and has its own kind of power. That’s why the results of the survey are rather positive. It means that in the majority of cases representation through personal communication takes over media representation (Hall, 1997).

One of the main findings of this research is that existence of stereotypes and myths about IDPs is directly linked to the question of representation of IDPs in society. My
research has proved the link between personal contacts and better perception of IDPs thus explaining existing stereotypes by distorted media image of displaced persons.
Participatory communication projects about IDPs

The issue of representation or rather a misrepresentation has led my research to the next questions – who voices the concerns of IDPs and whether they participate themselves in communication about the problem of internal displacement? In order to answer these questions, I looked into promising participatory communication projects which exist in Ukraine and try to counter existing stereotypes about IDPs. I have used participatory communication theory as a guiding theory during this stage of the research.

I tried to identify projects where communication on the issue of internal displacement included the agency of IDPs with an emphasis on dialogic communication rather than on linear one, when there is a shift from the person who communicates to a person who receives, with the focus on the creation of a meaning or knowledge rather than information transmission. Having analyzed data, received from interviews, I identified 3 main participatory communication initiates which incorporated the voice of internally displaced persons and represented them in a right way – a talk-show about IDPs “Polylogue”, “Theatre of IDPs” and performance “Sand. Return”.

Talk-show “Polylogue”

![Image of Polylogue event]

It is an exclusive program on TV and is crucial to the representation of IDPs at a larger scale as TV remains the main source of information and news in Ukraine (around 80-85% of people use TV to get news and information on a daily basis).
The internal slogan of the program is that it’s a project for IDPs, about IDPs and done by IDPs. Remarkably, the program team consists mainly of journalists and the crew from Donbass and Crimea, who had to leave their homes because of the war or illegal annexation. In a way, it reflects the definition of participation and even self-management within the second approach to participatory communication. As participation “includes the involvement of the public in the production process, and also in the management and planning of communication systems” (Servaes, Malikhao, 2005, p. 79), while self-management means that the public is fully involved in the design of communication policies and plans.

The "Polylogue" project aims, through the lens of specific stories of internally displaced persons, with the advice of experts - MPs, lawyers, public organizations - to seek and find ways to solve their main problems:

"We have 2 million internally displaced persons. We want to gather IDPs and people living in the villages and cities where IDPs arrived and discuss specific problems. We want them to work together, learn to negotiate. The project is called "The Polylogue." Ukraine has heard already enough monologues. We have learned to conduct a dialogue, a polylogue is a conversation of many, in which compromises new ideas and solutions are born (5th channel, news, 2016)”, - said leader of the project Pavel Novikov.

This interconnects majorly with Freire’s focus on dialogic communication as primary aspect of participatory communication. For him, dialogue as “the encounter between men in order to name the world” is a process of giving voice to marginalized people.

The main goal of the program is to fight existing stereotypes and showcase success stories of IDPs:

"We didn’t tell negative or tragic stories, we showed success stories of IDPs who began everything from scratch, opened their businesses and even started giving jobs to other people. We tried to show that displacement is an opportunity for development and search for new solutions” - producer of the talk-show.
This approach is perfect for countering existing structures and media coverage when mostly IDPs are represented as victims or burden. Paulo Freire refers to participatory communication model as to the right of all people, especially marginalized ones, to speak out. Therefore, this talk-show is a good example of inclusive, bottom-up participatory communication, when IDPs are provided with a platform where they can speak out and represent themselves in a proper way. Given that the team of the program consists of IDPs, it even reinforces this approach.

Moreover, as central focus of participatory communication is on the empowerment of citizens through their active involvement in the identification of problems, the development of solution strategies and their accomplishment (Tufte, 2017), I believe this talk-show provided opportunities for IDPs not only to voice their problems but also to identify suitable solutions with the help of experts. In some episodes, they returned to the previously discussed problems and showed what happened to IDPs, how they managed to solve their problems, find jobs or contribute in other ways to the life of their new communities.

“Theatre of IDPs”

The idea of Theatre of IDPs was to create a space for testimonials. It was initially designed as a theatre without actors and as a platform for IDPs and people affected by war to voice their problems and concerns. It was opened in 2015, one year
after the start of the conflict. The objective of the project was to give a possibility to people who were forced to leave everything behind to be heard and to make the problem of internal displacement more human through real stories of IDPs. From another perspective, it was designed as space where IDPs could live through their psychological traumas and find new life perspectives.

Theatre of IDPs is a documentary theatre which addresses current acute social and political problems in Ukraine – internal displacement and war.

“Modern theatre has to perform a social and therapeutic function. In current reality to engage in pure art is a bit weird. We answer with our activities to acute social problems. We do not only create plays based on the stories of displaced persons, we also give them jobs and psychological support. Dramaturgy doesn’t stem from dramaturgy, it stems from reality. And displacement is the worth reality not only in Ukraine but worldwide (Vergelis, 2016)”, - Georg Jeno, theatre director and founder.

Nowadays, a theatre has transformed from its classical drama function into the new, participatory, media:

“When your audience relays itself to the play, onto the stage, then a theatre becomes a media. Theatre can amplify the voice of people who undergo certain problems. It can raise problems, mediatize them, provoke public discussion”, Director of Belarusian free theatre [noted during his lecture at Lviv Media Forum]
This performance is based on the stories of internally displaced people through the language of modern dance, folk music, and poetry. Stories and words of real people, through interviews with them, are voiced during the performance.

The author of the idea during interview mentioned, that while creating it, she and her team were looking for new visual ways to address such a complex problem as displacement. That’s why they have combined dance, poetry, folk music and classical play into one performance.

It also has links to African experience of displacement and finding new homes:

“Dance is a well-known method of trauma therapy in Africa, including therapy of psychological traumas, caused by displacement. There are many common dots between our experiences. Our goal was to show that migration is a global phenomenon and it’s a positive process, as a result of integration society changes for good.”, author of the performance

The main idea of the performance was to voice words of IDPs, interviewed before the performance was created. It’s interesting that actors had long discussions about whether they had moral right to do it, to voice somebody else’s concerns and wishes. In the end, they decided to read them from papers and in this way be simple transmitters of IDPs’ messages and distance themselves from the actual messengers.
This interconnects largely with the problem I have discussed in the previous chapter of my work and deals with the moral right of people not involved into the problem to communicate about it.

Summing up, I would say that there are few excellent participatory communication projects which try to include IDPs and their voice into the general discourse and help in a way counter existing stereotype, but they are very few. My interview experience shows that average people don’t know or hear about any participatory communication intervention which I presented before, and even people engaged in one, didn’t know about the others. The reach of these projects is also limited. Even if we take 9 million audience of TV show and much more limited reach of theatre and performance, it still leaves around 30 million residents of Ukraine who haven’t seen or heard any of this.

Therefore, as a general conclusion and recommendation of the research is to initiate more bottom-up, participatory communication projects in Ukraine with the inclusion of an agency and voice of IDPs into the projects.
Conclusions

Applying adaptive approach has proved to be a suitable strategy for my research as it developed naturally, with the explanation of one research question leading to another one and thus interconnecting my whole research. Having initially started with investigating the issue of integration, I came to the conclusion that successful or finalized integration is only possible if IDPs establish social connections with the members of new communities and develop the feeling of belonging to their new homes. I have developed further the “orienting” concept of integration and suggested that this process is multi-staged. I have drawn parallels with Maslow’s pyramid with the hierarchy of needs which he used to describe the stages of human growth. In line with this, I have argued that integration process consists of basic and advanced stages. Legal and economic stages form the basis for integration and should be considered as pre-condition for not returning to the original places of residence. While advanced, social stage, connected to the establishment of social contacts, routines, and engagement into the life of the new community, leads to “successful” integration. Remarkably, social and psychological adaptation is not mentioned in UNHCR’s list of eight criteria that define when the durable solution (and local integration is one of the ways) is achieved.

I have also identified another factor which influences integration - willingness to return. Empirical data and observations from the interviews have proved that this factor can be used for cross-checking of the question whether IDPs are well-integrated into their new communities. Having combined these two factors – willingness to return and the establishment of social connections and compared them with the survey results, I have come to the conclusion only 2/3 of IDPs are well-integrated in Ukraine.

Having reached this conclusion, I explored the obstacles for the final, social, level of integration which led me to another assumption that because of existing “stereotypical” cloud around this problem in Ukraine, some IDPs prefer to keep low-profile and not to involve actively into the life of their new communities. Based on the results of the interviews I have analyzed and mapped the most often named stereotypes and myths about IDPs:
IDPs are associated with the previous political regime of President Yanukovych (7 people)
- IDPs are to be blamed for the conflict (6 people mentioned this myth)
- IDPs don’t speak Ukrainian and don’t want to learn it (4 people)
- IDPs belong to so-called “working class”, as Donbass is an industrial region, they don’t have their own culture (4 people)
- IDPs have pro-Russian views and don’t accept national policy (3 people)
- IDPs are “foreigners” (2 people)
- IDPs take jobs, places in schools and kindergartens
- IDPs are helpless, only receive social help from state and humanitarian aid

One of the most important tendencies which I have noticed during my research was that members of host communities whose friends or relatives are IDPs have a better attitude and better perception of IDPs in comparison to those who do not have personal contacts with IDPs. This led me to one of my main research findings - that biased and stereotyped perception of IDPs in Ukrainian society comes not from interpersonal experience, but from media and political context, which, in its turn, led me directly to the question of representation of IDPs. I argued that stereotypes about IDPs have non-pathological forms as they were the first reaction towards unknown phenomena, first large forced migration of people in the history of the country. Non-pathological stereotypes can reverse when anxiety is overcome. I also argued that misrepresentation often takes place when the voice of people affected by the problem, especially if they are stigmatized and “othered”, is not included in the information space of the society. Combined these factors lead to the conclusion that for stereotypes to resolve themselves, IDPs shall be represented in a right way and their voice must be heard in the media environment of Ukrainian society.

Having reached that conclusion, I tried to identify who voices concerns of IDPs and how their agency is included in the media space of the country. Even though I have managed to identify 3 communication projects with clear participatory communication elements (inclusion, dialogue, space for IDPs to speak out and voice their concerns, bottom-up approach, right representation), my final argument is that their reach is limited and not sufficient for countering existing stereotypical perception of IDPs. My
interview experience shows that average Ukrainians haven’t heard much about these participatory communication interventions, and even people engaged in one, didn’t always know about the others. Most of the communication about IDPs is linear and top-down, often sensationalized, distorted or false. IDPs are presented as problematic or dangerous, in need of help. The term itself is highly stigmatized and misused, especially in media headlines. Clearly, more participatory communication elements shall be incorporated into the communication on the topic of IDPs, with special emphasis on dialogue and not mediated forms of communication, especially on the community level. Critical thinking, as well as special training for journalists, would also help to avoid further stigmatization of IDPs and improve their representation.

Therefore, more dialogic, horizontal participatory communication projects on the topic of internal displacement shall be launched in Ukraine.
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Appendix 1. Interview guide

1. Is topic of internal displacement still acute in Ukraine? What main problems in connection to IDPs in Ukraine have you heard about?

2. Have you experienced/heard of discrimination, biased attitude and/or misperception towards IDPs? If yes, what are the reasons for that?

3. Are there any differences in attitude towards IDPs from Donbass and from Crimea? Why?

4. Have you heard of any myths about IDPs?

5. Have you seen negative, biased or false publications in connection to IDPs in Ukrainian media, including social media?

6. How can biased attitude towards IDPs be changed?

7. Are you/IDPs integrated into host communities in Ukraine? If not, what are the main obstacles towards successful integration and social adaptation? What can be considered as “successful integration”?

8. Do you think problems of IDPs are communicated enough in Ukrainian society?

9. Have you heard of any communication initiatives directed at changing attitude towards IDPs in Ukraine?

10. Have you heard of any projects initiated by IDPs at changing their perception and tackling their own problems?

11. What recommendations can you give for improving communication on the problem?