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Multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands

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Multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands

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Abstract

During the 2015-2016 refugee reception crisis in the Netherlands, amidst a severe housing shortage, several community-driven housing initiatives emerged. These included innovative solutions such as converting prisons into housing and utilising holiday homes, recreational parks, and institutional accommodations to shelter migrants, students, and the elderly. Some of these initiatives remain active today, supporting emergency situations, including the reception of Ukrainian refugees.

The war in Ukraine, leading to the largest refugee flow since World War II, intensified the Netherlands' housing crisis, necessitating new cooperative housing strategies. A private reception system for Ukrainian refugees emerged, with platforms connecting refugees to host families. This thesis examines the housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees, focusing on the role of governmental and non-governmental actors and collaboration dynamics between them, in the situation of a pre-existing housing shortage in the Netherlands. It specifically analysed the arrangements in the Safety Region Gelderland-South, which includes Nijmegen and surrounding five municipalities. The research conducted highlights that community-based housing initiatives, such as repurposing existing facilities and utilising alternative accommodations, were instrumental in addressing the urgent housing needs of Ukrainian refugees. Despite facing challenges such as logistical issues and resource constraints, municipalities in the Safety Region Gelderland-South adapted through enhanced cooperation with private entities. Consequently, the role of mayors and safety regions was crucial in implementing these housing arrangements, with their strategies significantly impacting the overall effectiveness of refugee reception.

Key words: housing, municipal shelter, refuge housing, multi-stakeholder collaboration, Ukrainians.

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1. Introduction and problem statement

The Russian war in Ukraine forced millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes in search of safety and protection. It is estimated that around 6,5 million Ukrainians could find a refuge around the world, with 5, 942, 300 Ukrainian refugees recorded in Europe (IOM, 2024). There are 108 900 Ukrainians have been registered in the local Dutch municipalities (Rijksoverheid, 2024). Such an influx of refugees created an additional pressure on an already existing problem with overcrowded asylum centres in the Netherlands. It is important to note that even before the Russian war in Ukraine, Dutch asylum centres (Dutch: Centraal Opvang Azielzoekers, COA) had already been full for months due to an earlier increase in refugees from other countries. Even though the number of refugees coming in is stable (around 43,000 people per year), Dutch officials still blame cutbacks following the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the closure of some refugee centres and placed additional pressure on others, leading to the overcrowding at the refugee centre in Ter Apel (DW, 2022).

On March 4, 2022, the European Union activated the Temporary Protection Directive via a Council decision (Parliamentary Papers 32 317 and 36 045, no. 750). People fleeing the war in Ukraine received protection in the member states of the European Union, including the Netherlands. According to the Directive the responsibility for the reception of Ukrainian refugees therefore laid on the shoulders of COA- governmental body responsible for emergency reception locations. However, on 31st of March 2022, Articles 2c and 4 of the Population Relocation Act came into force and as a result of it the mayors have been given the legal task of taking care of the reception and of displaced persons from Ukraine. This decision is based on the fact that COA was struggling with a large shortage of reception places, so as a result, municipalities were made responsible to arrange emergency shelter for displaced persons from Ukraine (The Hague Academy for Local Governance, 2022). The government has approached the reception of refugees from Ukraine as a national crisis, which would allow ministries to work together better and faster by simplifying all the procedures around arranging the reception for Ukrainians refugees. Municipalities were given the responsibility for identification of the shelter, for stuffing/furnishing those shelter locations: from sanitary facilities to furniture and consumer items, psychosocial care and education of the children, etc. (The Hague Academy for Local Governance, 2022). Additionally, Safety Regions were given a task to coordinate the realisation of reception locations within the safety region. In order to increase the number of accommodation places, the Cabinet of Ministers urged municipalities to convert the existing properties for accommodation purposes, such as offices or industrial buildings (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2002). Besides the municipal shelter, the reception of refugees from Ukraine was provided also by private individuals- Dutch host families. Thousands of Dutch private individuals have come forward to take Ukrainians refugees into their homes. A large part of the private reception was coordinated by the matching platform RefugeeHomeNL. Many services and

operations have been established to connect refugees with Dutch people willing to host them and to provide the facilitation in hosting them, like *Takecarebnb*, who were working effectively alongside initiatives such as *Room for Ukraine*, *Share My Home* and *Onderdak Oekraïne* (Nazaruk, 2022). Great societal involvement can be also seen by other actors involved in and willing to help with the arranging the reception places for displaced persons from Ukraine. Owners of empty company buildings, business owners (hotels and cruise-ship hotels), volunteers, charity organisations, housing associations and others played a role in creating the reception solutions. Those solutions significantly depended on the housing situation and different actors available in the area. As the conflict in Ukraine continued, the urgent need for immediate shelter was and is still rapidly evolving into a requirement for more sustainable, long-term housing solutions for refugees. The initial response, although effective for immediate needs, underscores a broader issue within the Dutch housing landscape, particularly the chronic shortage of accommodations. This ongoing crisis has propelled municipalities, in coordination with national bodies like the COA and local governments, to innovate beyond traditional emergency housing solutions. The activation of the Temporary Protection Directive and subsequent legislative changes have shifted significant responsibilities onto municipalities, not just for immediate reception but also for the longer-term integration and housing of refugees. With the COA grappling with capacity limitations, municipalities have been compelled to utilise available resources, such as repurposing offices or industrial buildings and collaborating with private citizens, local businesses and civil organisations.

In this process, Safety Regions played an important role in coordinating municipalities in the beginning of the crisis and remain an intermediary between municipality and national governments, therefore this thesis is **aimed** to analyse the process of shelter arrangements for Ukrainian refugees within one Safety Region. Depending on the novelty of the given research topic, familiarity with the region and better access to information and data, the Safety Region of Gelderland-South will further be investigated in this research. In Gelderland-South, the collaborative efforts between municipalities, private stakeholders, and humanitarian organisations underscore a multi-faceted approach to housing refugees. In order to explain the role of this multi-stakeholder collaboration in shelter arrangements for refugees from Ukraine, reception in municipalities of Berg en Dal, Beuningen, Druten, Wijchen, Tiel and Nijmegen within the Safety Region of Gelderland-South in the situation of national housing shortage will be investigated. This will be done by looking into the preparation and arrangement processes of accommodations, the guidelines that have been applied in those processes and how the Safety region and municipalities within this region navigated through it. Based on the aim of this paper the **research question** was formulated as follows:

What is the nature and efficacy of multi-stakeholder housing/shelter arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Safety Region of Gelderland-South (Gelderland-Zuid)?

In order to answer the research question the next **sub-questions** have been developed:

- 1) *What are the key components of the Temporary Protection Directive implementation in the Dutch local context?*
- 2) *What was the process of shelter arrangement for Ukrainian refugees in the region/municipality?*
- 3) *Which role did stakeholders play in shelter provision for Ukrainian refugees?*
- 4) *What is the experience of Ukrainian refugees with regard to housing arrangement?*

1.1. Societal relevance

The Ukrainian refugee crisis has significantly challenged the Dutch refugee housing system, particularly testing municipalities' capacity to accommodate large influxes of displaced persons. The decentralised nature of the response led to considerable variations in how different municipalities managed housing provisions, resulting in inconsistent quality and standards of accommodation. This situation underscored the importance of cooperation between various levels of government and local actors, especially given the scarcity of housing options for refugees. The recent influx of refugees has further exposed the challenges municipalities face in providing sustainable and secure housing, raising questions about the effectiveness and preparedness of the current refugee housing system. This thesis aims to address these critical issues by examining the decentralised approach to refugee housing across six municipalities in the Gelderland-South region. By highlighting diverse practices and outcomes, the research aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on how to enhance the refugee housing system in the Netherlands. This discussion has become increasingly urgent due to rising demand, limited availability, and the complex challenges of accommodating a growing refugee population. The relevance of it is especially presented in the recent media coverage on housing solutions for refugees. For instance, the article called "Dutch Municipalities at the Centre of the Ukraine Refugee Response" (2023) by Hague Academy for local governance focuses on the critical role of Dutch municipalities in coordinating and providing housing and support for Ukrainian refugees. It highlights how municipalities, under the guidance of the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), have been at the forefront of the Dutch response, including the creation of shelters and integration efforts, while also collaborating with different local actors and citizens in accommodating refugees. The housing issue is a central theme in the article, demonstrating the essential role that local governance plays in addressing the refugee crisis. Policymakers are also actively seeking better decisions and best practices, which has led to the initiation of numerous studies. For example the ongoing research titled "The Application of the Temporary Protection Directive: Challenges and Good Practices in 2023," examines how EU member states manage various aspects of temporary protection, including housing (besides other topics like education and employment, healthcare, and social services). It provides an overview of the challenges and good practices across member states. Additionally, the EMN Netherlands conducts a benchmark study that

offers a detailed comparison between Dutch policies and those of other EU member states. This report underscores the need for improved decentralised approaches and successful practices (EMN Netherlands, 2024). Considering all said above, this thesis aims to contribute to this relevant critical discussion by offering insights to enhance decision-making and improve refugee housing arrangements. Followingly, the lessons from this thesis can inform better decision-making and improve housing provisions for refugees, both within the studied municipalities and nationwide. By documenting effective practices and areas for improvement, the research provides guidelines for municipal workers to optimise housing arrangements, enhancing the refugee experience and streamlining responses to future crises. Overall, this study not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to broader discussions on crisis management and housing policy, offering insights that can improve both national and global approaches to displacement challenges.

1.2. Scientific relevance

There is an urgent need to address the issues facing refugees in relation to their housing opportunities and housing pathways. Housing has always had a close association with migration, particularly for involuntary migrants, who have been forced to move from their homes in their country or place of origin, due to an experience or fear of persecution, to seek sanctuary elsewhere (Brown, 2021). As Flatau et al. (2015) have observed, 'housing plays a fundamental role in the journey of refugees following resettlement in a host country'. The access to housing is seen as a major resource to be manipulated by governments in order to manage the movement of refugees. There is general agreement that housing is a key pillar of integration for refugees (Ager & Strang, 2008), yet it remains an area for which there is little attention in housing studies. Despite some knowledge present and new attempts to research in this field, the knowledge base about housing and its impact on refugees lacks cohesion. Amongst many issues there remains a lack of understanding about the role and impact of housing systems and policies, housing quality, tenure, housing support workers and how the diversity of the refugee population is reflected in this evidence (Brown, 2021). Moreover, there is a lack of understanding about what gaps there are in our knowledge base. Due to the existing gap and the political sensitivity surrounding refugee movements, along with the renewed interest from policymakers in this field, it is crucial to gather information and evidence on the topic. This is particularly important because, as Hauge et al. (2017) point out, "the built environment plays a role in either promoting or hindering the recognition of different groups as equals within society." There is a clear and obvious gap in knowledge about many aspects of refugee housing. This paper is aimed to provide an insight into the systems, quality and stakeholders involvements into refugee housing provision in the Netherlands. Since Ukrainian refugee crisis is a present-day challenge and this research is characterised by the precedence, the analysis of multi-stakeholder arrangements for

Ukrainian refugees in Gelderland-South adds to the existing literature on stakeholder collaboration in refugee housing, and helps in providing a basis for better solutions and further research in this field.

The remaining structure of this thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the theories on refugee housing as fundamental to refugees' sense of belonging and integration, emphasising both physical and social dimensions of it. It further delves into the power dynamic between national and local levels of government to align the reception policies and how those policies are in the end implemented on the ground, focusing on the cooperation among various stakeholders involved in housing provision. Based on the combination of those theories and framework the thesis further establishes the conceptual framework that underpins this study. This chapter sets both the theoretical and conceptual foundation for understanding the challenges and solutions identified in the research. **Chapter 3** outlines the research methodology, including the approach used to analyse the decentralised housing strategies employed by the six municipalities in the Gelderland-South region. **Chapter 4** presents the findings, highlighting the diverse collaborative practices and outcomes observed in these municipalities. This chapter also includes the experiences of Ukrainian refugees regarding the different housing options available to them, providing valuable insights into their perceptions and challenges faced. Additionally, the results shed light on broader topics beyond housing, such as social integration, which will inform the subsequent discussion on how housing intersects with wider aspects of refugee settlement and inclusion. Finally, **Chapter 5** concludes the thesis by summarising the key contributions of the study and reflecting on its impact on the ongoing discourse surrounding refugee housing and municipal crisis management. It also provides recommendations for improving refugee housing arrangements based on the research insights and outlines potential areas for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is centred on understanding the complex dynamics involved in refugee housing, multi-level governance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Theory of refugee housing explores the significance of home and housing for refugees, emphasising their role in fostering belonging, security, and social integration, while assessing the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder housing arrangements in Gelderland-South in addressing the comprehensive needs of Ukrainian refugees and contributing to their long-term integration and well-being. The analysis then extends to multi-level governance, applying Etzioni's (1975) model to understand how national policies are implemented at the local level, particularly in the context of refugee housing. Finally, the framework incorporates principles of collaborative governance, highlighting the critical role of cooperation among various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and local communities, to effectively address the challenges of refugee housing provision.

2.1. Refugee housing

It has been suggested that establishing a new home is crucial for refugees' sense of belonging (Kale, 2019). The saying "one's house is one's home" is especially relevant for those who have experienced extreme insecurity and have often been deliberately deprived of a stable home in their country of origin (Brun, 2001). Traditionally, home has been viewed as a stable, physical centre of an individual's world—a safe haven to depart from and return to, and a primary focus of personal concern (Ahmed, Castada, and Fortier, 2003; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). It is regarded as a fundamental right or entitlement (Rapport and Dawson, 1998) and is closely linked to the formation of identity (Cooper Marcus, 1997; Netto, 2011). However, in postmodernity, the concept of home has evolved. It is now seen as fluid, mobile, and shifting with multi-valenced and transnational identities. From this viewpoint, the individual shifts between various homes, finding a sense of belonging through constant movement. Consequently, place, with home as one of its components, becomes a focal point where social relationships and activities converge, unrestricted by time and space (Massey, 1995).

Despite this shift in the conceptualization of home, the physical and social elements of housing remain inextricably linked. The connection to a particular place imbues the concept of home with meaning and serves as the focal point around which emotions and relationships revolve (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013). Even as the idea of home shifts, housing's role in facilitating social and economic integration remains central. Architectural studies have shown that one's immediate physical environment, such as a house and garden, significantly influences emotions, behaviours, and social interactions (Cooper Marcus, 1997), and the physical and mental health benefits of appropriate housing are well-documented (Searle, Smith, and Cook, 2009). Easthope (2004), drawing on Heidegger and Bourdieu, explores the connection between "house" and "home" through the concept of "place," arguing that "home" is a vital type of "place" where physical space and social-emotional connections intertwine to shape identity and well-being. This understanding aligns with the Ager and Strang's (2008) integration framework, which identifies housing as one of ten key domains necessary for the successful settlement and integration of refugees. Housing is seen as attaining "a degree of self-sufficiency, to participate in the social and economic life of the community and to retain what might be described ... as a degree of personal identity and integrity" (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1991). Ager and Strang (2008) note that the material aspects of settlement, such as housing, along with employment, education, and health, are built upon social connections, which are facilitated by language, cultural knowledge, safety, stability, and a foundation of rights and citizenship (Fozdar, 2013). Refugee integration into new societies is heavily influenced by several key factors, among which housing is paramount. Housing provides not just physical safety but also a platform for social engagement and access to essential services, thereby influencing the integration process significantly.

In academic discussions on refugee housing, a rights-based approach underscores the necessity of aligning shelter and housing provisions with international human rights norms, focusing on security, dignity, and peace for all residents. The United Nations identifies secure, habitable, and affordable housing as a basic human right (UN, 1991). Housing for refugees is often listed as one of the crucial elements in successful settlement (Ager & Strang, 2008). Successful settlement includes four key goals—restoring safety, attachments and social connections, and meaning (UNHCR, 2002). Additionally, the integrated approach highlights the importance of embedding refugee housing within broader urban development plans. This method promotes inclusivity by ensuring refugees have access to essential services like healthcare, education, and employment opportunities close to their living areas. Both approaches emphasise creating sustainable, supportive environments that go beyond mere accommodation, aiming for the holistic integration of refugees into host communities while respecting their rights and dignity (Phillimore, 2011; Davies & Isakjee, 2015). The importance of considering other dimensions such as mental health, cultural adaptation, and economic self-sufficiency alongside housing is highlighted by Phillimore (2011), who argues that focusing solely on housing solutions can overlook the broader complexities of refugee integration. Housing intersects materially and socially in the settlement process, presenting a complex challenge that necessitates coordinated efforts from various stakeholders including governments, NGOs, and local communities (Robinson, Andersson, & Musterd, 2003).

In exploring refugee housing, the framework delves into the importance of home and housing as fundamental to refugees' sense of belonging and integration, emphasising both physical and social dimensions of it. In this thesis, refugee housing theory is used to emphasise that housing goes beyond providing physical space, encompassing social integration, security, and access to essential services. This theory is crucial for assessing whether the multi-stakeholder housing arrangements in Gelderland-South effectively address the multi-dimensional needs of Ukrainian refugees. By applying this framework, the thesis evaluates the comprehensiveness and sustainability of these housing solutions and explores how they contribute to the long-term integration and well-being of refugees in the region.

2.2. Multi-level governance

This thesis utilises the multi-level governance framework to explore the intricate interactions and power dynamics among various levels of governance involved in the provision of refugee housing. This approach provides a comprehensive analysis of how the EU Temporary Protection Directive and its Dutch counterpart, the Regulation for the Reception of Displaced Persons from Ukraine, were applied at the local level. The study delves into the roles of different governance entities, such as national authorities and safety regions, in facilitating the Directive's implementation within municipalities, and examines the collaboration or conflicts that emerged throughout this process.

Traditionally, studies on multi-level governance have employed frame analysis, focusing on the narratives and philosophies behind policy implementation, and how these differ between local and national levels (Emilsson, 2015). In contrast, this thesis employs a method that emphasises the power dynamics between national and local government levels, which in turn influence the discretion exercised at the local level in reception policy. The evolution of multi-level governance is often described as resulting from three broad trends: upward, downward, and outward shifts (Pierre and Peters, 2000), or as a combination of vertical and horizontal dimensions of governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). This thesis specifically applies these concepts to explore the relationship between the state, local governments, and the role of Safety Regions.

Scholarly literature notes that responsibilities for certain policy areas have increasingly shifted downwards to regional and local political levels (Hooghe and Marks, 2001), with traditional forms of governing being replaced by governance. This raises the question of whether this trend applies to reception policies. This thesis adopts a multi-level governance framework inspired by Etzioni (1975), originally designed for comparative analysis of complex organisations. The strength of Etzioni's model lies in its ability to capture the power dynamics between actors of different ranks, focusing on compliance as a key organisational element (Emilsson, 2015). Compliance relationships, according to Etzioni, are inherently asymmetric and vertical, reflecting how subordinate actors respond to the power of others, and how those in authority ensure adherence to their directives. While Etzioni's model is primarily applied to internal organisational dynamics, it has also been adapted to study how states govern local authorities (Vedung, 1991). This thesis focuses on the relationships between the state and local governments, viewing them as part of a shared organisational structure, where local governments hold varying degrees of power depending on their national context, but remain subordinate to the central government. Etzioni's model, with its emphasis on compliance through coercive, remunerative, and normative instruments, is particularly useful for assessing how these governance techniques are employed to meet refugee housing targets and support integration in Gelderland-South.

Etzioni's framework provides a distinct perspective on multi-level governance, differing from traditional frame analysis by examining governance techniques and policy instruments (Dekker et al., 2015). As noted, the central issue in Etzioni's model is compliance, with the state seeking local government adherence to national policies and political goals, often employing a mix of instruments to achieve this. In the context of refugee housing, these instruments can be combined to enforce compliance at the local level. For example, the compliance with national reception policy, particularly regarding Ukrainian refugees, was largely driven by financial incentives rather than coercive. The state used targeted funding to encourage municipalities to provide refugee housing, and safety regions were tasked with coordinating and overseeing these efforts, thus adding a layer of regional

coordination to the multi-level governance framework and ensuring better alignment between national policies and local execution. Safety regions served as intermediaries, bridging the gap between national expectations and local actions, enhancing compliance without direct punitive measures. Also the consequences of non-compliance with the reception policy were not clearly outlined in the regulations; hence, the national government provided financial incentives and coordinative support to encourage compliance and facilitate the implementation of these policies.

Etzioni's model is particularly effective in illustrating the multiple ways central governments exert power over local governments, extending beyond the traditional understanding of decentralisation and centralization of resources and responsibilities. This model captures the steering mechanisms associated with both governance and government (Kjær, 2004). While an alternative theoretical model by Goldsmith (2002) could have been used, it focuses primarily on control and does not fully account for the economic and normative instruments of central government (Emilsson, 2015). The multi-level governance framework was chosen over federalism or decentralisation theory due to its ability to account for the complex and overlapping interactions between various governance actors. Unlike federalism, which emphasises constitutional divisions of power, multi-level governance provides a more fluid understanding of how national governments, local authorities, safety regions, and NGOs interact, negotiate, and sometimes conflict during policy implementation. The framework's emphasis on governance techniques and policy instruments (Dekker et al., 2015) is particularly relevant, as financial instruments and regional coordination were key in driving compliance and ensuring policy goals were met at the local level. Policy Implementation Theory might also have been useful in understanding refugee housing provision by highlighting the gap between policy goals and actual outcomes. It offers insights into bureaucratic processes, local governance challenges, and the role of street-level actors in executing national policies. However, its key limitation—emphasising linear, top-down processes—may overlook the complexity of multi-actor collaboration and the decentralised nature of refugee housing provision. This limitation has been considered in this thesis, and to address it, the multi-stakeholder collaboration framework and collaborative governance are employed.

2.3. Multi-stakeholder collaboration and collaborative governance in Refugee Housing provision

The provision of housing for refugees, especially in contexts like the Netherlands, where governance is distributed across multiple levels and sectors, demands a nuanced understanding of how various actors interact, negotiate, and collaborate to achieve common goals. Multi-stakeholder collaboration theory is applied to investigate how these policies are implemented on the ground, focusing on the cooperation among various stakeholders involved in housing provision. This approach enables the evaluation of the overall efficacy of the housing arrangements, considering both the structural governance aspects and the collaborative dynamics at play. Initially, both frameworks emphasise the importance of cooperation among various actors to solve complex societal issues. But to be more

precise: collaborative governance focuses on how different governmental and non-governmental actors engage in decision-making and policy implementation processes. Multi-stakeholder collaboration theory complements this by delving into the specific interactions between these diverse actors, including how they negotiate, share resources, and align their goals. Specific features of the collaborative governance framework and multi-stakeholder collaboration theory are strategically combined, focusing on structured interactions between government levels and the dynamics of negotiation and resource sharing. These selected elements are applied to the case study, as explained in the following sections, to analyse the effectiveness of refugee housing arrangements in Gelderland-South.

Building on this, the drive to solve complex societal challenges, such as refugee housing, has significantly influenced the fields of democratic participation and collaborative decision-making. As societal problems grow increasingly wicked (Churchman, 1967), the rise of open innovation and collaborative systems allows for collective intelligence to effectively tackle these issues. Collaboration, particularly across boundaries and involving multiple sectors and actors, becomes essential in achieving defined common purposes. Poocharoen and Ting (2015) further illuminate this by comparing collaboration at the organisational level with co-production at the individual level, underscoring the multi-faceted nature of these interactions. In co-production, an individual or organisation can act as both the producer and the consumer of a service at the same time (Czischke, 2017). From this perspective, collaboration is a more encompassing concept than co-production, as it includes "all forms of relationships between entities to accomplish tasks". This diversity often entails a high degree of complexity, encompassing different motives, institutional logics and behaviour (Czischke, 2014). The concept of 'collaborative management' describes 'the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organisational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or solved easily by single organisations' (Agranoff, 2004). This broad conception of collaboration has clear links with the notion of networks. Extensively researched and theorised over the last few decades, networks can be broadly defined as 'structures involving multiple nodes - individuals, agencies, or organisations - with multiple linkages' (McGuire, 2006). Network structures are typically intersectional, intergovernmental, and based functionally in a specific policy or policy area. Recognising the many linkages between these different concepts, Poocharoen and Ting (2015) posit that 'most co-production processes are usually part of a larger set of relations within a public service delivery network. Thus, in order to be able to see and study these relationships clearly, the researcher must either 'zoom in or zoom out' when necessary' (Poocharoen and Ting, 2015, p. 595). As part of wider collaboration and network settings, co-production involves a variety of individual and institutional actors or stakeholders with different motives and institutional logics. In order to understand those actors and their interaction the stakeholder onion diagram by Alexander and Robertson might be a way of visualising the relationship of stakeholders to a project goal. A

‘stakeholder’ can be defined as someone who gains or loses something (could be functionality, revenue, status, compliance with rules, and so on) as a result of that project. A stakeholder can be someone who finances the project; someone whose skill is needed to build a product; an organisation whose rules develop whose rules developers must obey;

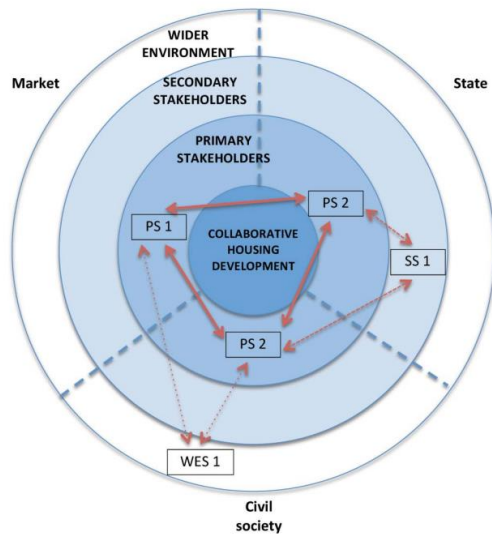


Figure 1. Combined collaborative housing development diagram by Alexander and Robertson (2004), and Sudiyono (2013), developed in the study by Czischke, 2017

or an external organisation that can influence project success (Alexander, 2004). The diagram allows the identification and characterization of each stakeholder’s role in the process. A stakeholder who is involved only indirectly—such as a regulator—is positioned further from the centre of the diagram, while those with direct operational involvement are located closer to the core. Sudiyono (2013) applied the stakeholder onion model in his study of co-housing projects in Berlin. Starting from ‘the co-housing project’ at the centre, he categorised stakeholders into three different roles, each assigned to one of the diagram’s layers according to factors such as their relative legitimacy, control over essential resources, and whether they held a veto over decisions. Moreover, Sudiyono’s diagram (2013) distinguishes between three domains in which stakeholders operate: market, state, and civil society. He drew dashed lines from the centre outward, dividing the diagram into three pie slices that represent these distinct domains. Focusing on the interaction between market, state, and civil society actors, this theory aligns with the decentralised nature of refugee housing provision in the Netherlands. It allows for an examination of how stakeholders negotiate, collaborate, and sometimes conflict, uncovering the roles, power dynamics, and synergies that shape housing outcomes. Moreover, it sheds light on the motivations and institutional logics driving stakeholders' priorities. This framework also explains the challenges in aligning agendas across diverse actors, where negotiation and compromise are often necessary. Tools like the stakeholder onion diagram help identify key players and their roles, revealing deeper structural dynamics in housing provision. In contexts like refugee housing, where traditional top-down enforcement mechanisms may fail,

collaboration is not just beneficial but essential (Czischke, 2014). This framework was selected for its ability to map out these actor interactions and emphasise the collaborative efforts needed to achieve policy goals within decentralised governance settings.

The dynamic between those actors in this thesis is supported by a framework for collaborative governance (Emerson et al., 2012), which claims the effectiveness of collaborative activities between actors depends largely on the interaction between principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint action. This theoretical approach is particularly well-suited for studying refugee housing arrangement in the Netherlands and the decentralised approach it took. Particularly because it highlights the necessity of cooperation among actors with different motives, resources, and institutional logics (Czischke, 2014). While other frameworks, such as policy network theory or co-production theory, could have been applied to this analysis, the collaborative governance framework offers a more holistic view by considering not just the structural aspects of collaboration but also the relational dynamics that influence the effectiveness of these interactions. Policy network theory, for instance, primarily focuses on the structure and connections within a network, whereas collaborative governance addresses how actors build trust, negotiate common goals, and mobilise resources to achieve shared outcomes.

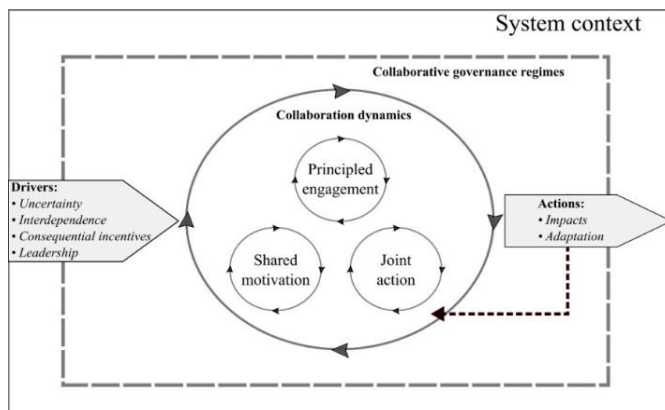


Figure 2. Collaborative governance diagram bt Emerson et al., 2012

In line with Emerson's (2012) collective governance framework, Hossu et al. (2019) suggest that each of the three key elements necessary for successful collaboration comprises four distinct concepts. Principled engagement involves the capacity of participants to identify critical information related to the issues at hand. This includes discovery (where parties engage in joint fact-finding and analysis), definition (where common goals are established), deliberation (where dialogue is fair and respectful), and determinations (where a shared strategy is agreed upon). Shared motivation encompasses mutual trust (as parties build trust), mutual understanding (where differences are recognized and respected), legitimacy (where interests align), and commitment (where parties remain engaged and work together towards common outcomes). Joint action involves procedural and institutional arrangements (rules

and protocols to enhance efficiency), leadership (with roles such as mediator, sponsor, and expert established), knowledge (collaboratively generated and clear information), and resources (where parties provide the necessary resources to support the collaborative process). These concepts serve as a foundation for setting calibration score rules. The inclusion of Emerson et al.'s (2012) collaborative governance model is also particularly relevant because it emphasises the dynamic interactions between stakeholders that are crucial for the success of refugee housing projects. The concepts of principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint action provide a framework for understanding how stakeholders can move beyond their individual interests to achieve collective goals. This is especially important in refugee housing, where collaboration is often required to overcome resource limitations, legal constraints, and differing institutional logics (Pache & Santos, 2013). Collaborative governance theory provides a robust framework for analysing the complex, multi-actor interactions involved in refugee housing provision. Its emphasis on the collaborative efforts needed to achieve policy goals within decentralised governance settings makes it particularly suited to understanding the challenges and opportunities in the housing arrangements for refugees in the Netherlands. By applying this framework, this thesis aims to explore how different stakeholders interact to provide housing for Ukrainian refugees in the safety region of Gelderland-South, offering insights into the efficacy of these multi-stakeholder arrangements.

2.4. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework presented in the paper is based on the framework proposed by Czischke (2017), who combined elements from Alexander and Robertson (2004) original model with Sudyono's (2013) applied version of the former and proposed a diagram that illustrates co-production in collaborative housing.

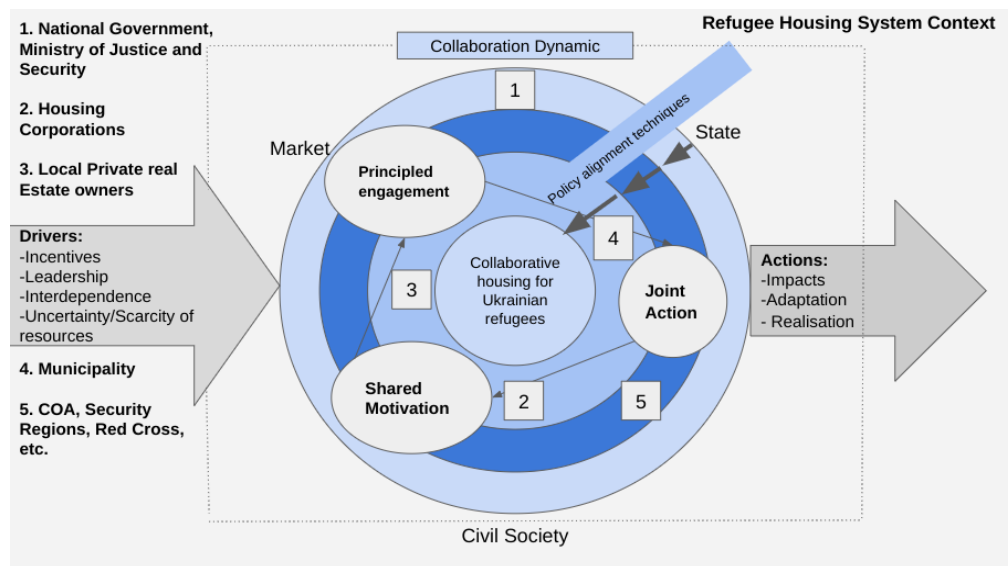


Figure 3. Conceptual framework

In this paper the framework has been adjusted to the multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Safety Region Gelderland-South and proposes three levels of analysis, from centre to the outer circle. The stakeholder onion diagram (Alexander, 2004) is a way of visualising the relationship of stakeholders to a project goal. The diagram allows the identification and characterisation of each stakeholder's role in the process. Three different levels of stakeholder involvement by Sudiyono's (2013) are also included in the diagram, making a distinction between market, state and civil society actors. This distinction can shed light into the motives, agendas and institutional logics (Mullins, 2006; Pache & Santos, 2013) of the different types of stakeholders. This is also particularly helpful to distinguish what types of housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees took place and relationships between those. The dynamic between those actors is supported by a framework for collaborative governance (Emerson et al., 2012), which claims the effectiveness of collaborative activities between actors depends largely on the interaction between principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint action. The outermost box, depicted by solid lines, represents the surrounding system context (Refugee Housing System Context) or the host of political, legal, socioeconomic, environmental and other influences that affect and are affected by the collaborative governance dynamic. This system context generates opportunities and constraints and influences the dynamics of the collaboration at the outset and over time. From this system context emerge drivers, including leadership, consequential incentives, interdependence, and uncertainty, which help initiate and set the direction for a collaborative governance framework. The drivers are crucial conditions that set the stage for collaboration. These include:

Uncertainty: This refers to the complexity or unpredictability of the issues being addressed, which often compels stakeholders to collaborate because no single actor can fully resolve the problem independently.

Interdependence: Stakeholders rely on each other for resources, knowledge, or support to achieve collective outcomes. This mutual dependence encourages cooperation and collaboration across different sectors and organisations.

Leadership: Effective leadership is essential in convening stakeholders, managing relationships, and guiding the collaborative process. Leaders often play a pivotal role in maintaining focus, facilitating dialogue, and resolving conflicts.

Incentives for Collaboration: These are the motivations or rewards that encourage stakeholders to participate in the collaboration. Incentives can be tangible, such as financial benefits, or intangible, like increased influence or shared values.

These drivers motivate and sustain collaborative efforts, helping stakeholders to overcome differences and work towards shared goals. The establishment of three levels of stakeholders in the collaborative governance diagram serves to categorise stakeholders based on their proximity to the core of the collaborative effort and their roles in the process. These levels help clarify the varying degrees of involvement, influence, and responsibility that different actors have in the collaboration.

Moreover, the framework also identifies three principles of interactions that are essential for effective collaboration among diverse actors: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. To be more precise:

Principled Engagement: This involves meaningful interaction among stakeholders, including discovery, definition of common problems, deliberation, and determination of collective goals.

Shared Motivation: This driver focuses on building mutual trust, understanding, commitment, and legitimacy among participants, ensuring that all parties are aligned in their objectives and are motivated to collaborate.

Capacity for Joint Action: It refers to the ability of the stakeholders to work together effectively, supported by shared resources, leadership, knowledge, and institutional structures that facilitate collective decision-making and action.

These principles of interaction create a dynamic process in which collaboration becomes more effective and sustainable, leading to better policy outcomes. The relationships between actors and their role in collaborative dynamics are going to be established later in the research, due to the scarcity of the secondary data on this topic. Policy alignment techniques are added as well, in order to see whether policies align or not between government levels and in which way. It is done by looking at governance techniques and policy instruments used by the Dutch state to align housing policies on the local municipal level.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, this research' methodology will be discussed. In the first paragraph will be an elaboration of the research philosophy. The second paragraph will discuss the research approach, followed by a research strategy and data collection strategy. Lastly, the data analysis is touched upon in paragraph four, closing up with the reflections on ethics.

3.1. Research philosophy

Holden and Lynch (2004) in their paper "Choosing the Appropriate Methodology: Understanding Research Philosophy" stated that research should not be methodologically led, rather that methodological choice should be consequential to the researcher's philosophical stance and the social science phenomenon to be investigated. Several philosophical approaches are possible in the science of research and an intermediate philosophical approach allows the researcher to match philosophy, methodology, and the research problem. It is indeed also reflected in the book Moses and Knutsen (2012), mentioning that Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology are like three musketeers of metaphysics, the trio of philosophy of science. They emphasise important thought that the ontology and epistemology of the particular research may also change, depending on what the one wants to do

and where to go. It means that there are different types of knowledge and they all can be studied in different types and that they are not unrelated to the interest. Social science research has a great range of philosophical traditions and philosophical components to different methodologies. But turning back to the approach that Moses and Knutsen (2004) described, where social science research is dominated by two methodological traditions: naturalism and constructivism (also called positivism and interpretivism). This research has an constructivist (interpretative) approach towards the gained knowledge and provided information, which means that all knowledge is socially constructed and interpreted by the researcher and the respondents, who took part in this research. There are no real facts, but every statement is value-laden and ‘truth lies in the eyes of the observer, and in the constellation in power that and force that supports it’ (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). This interpretative approach also corresponds to the idea of constructivism and emphasises that realities are mental constructs (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this research those realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures (reflection on surveys held among Ukrainians displaced people), and dependents for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.2. Research approach

Research approaches refer to the systematic and structured ways that researchers use to conduct research, and they differ in terms of their underlying logic and methods of inquiry (Taherdoost, 2022). The approach in this research has an abductive nature- combination of deductive and inductive approaches. This type of research starts with a problem or a phenomenon that is not fully understood, and the researcher develops a theory or an explanation that can account for the data. The researcher then tests the theory through the collection and analysis of more data. The goal of this approach is to generate a plausible explanation or theory that can be further refined or tested. This also is reflected in the methods the combination of those approaches uses, in this research. From a deductive approach surveys and questionnaires are used- to collect data from a large sample of participants, while interviews from inductive collect in-depth data and explore individual experiences and perspectives (Hassan, 2024).

Additionally, in constructivist research, knowledge accumulates in a relative sense through the development of increasingly informed and refined constructions, achieved via the hermeneutical/dialectical process, where different perspectives are compared and contrasted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) further emphasise that a key mechanism for transferring knowledge from one context to another is the provision of vicarious experience, often facilitated

through case study reports. For this approach or stance towards research, narrative approaches are suited best (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). Important to note is that this study primarily adopts a qualitative approach, focusing on gathering in-depth insights from interviews and qualitative responses in the survey. While the primary emphasis is on understanding the perspectives of Ukrainian refugees through qualitative data, the survey also provides complementary quantitative data on housing solutions. This study highlights qualitative analysis, which is complemented by a descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey data to offer a more comprehensive view of the refugees' experiences. Therefore, this thesis employs a narrative-driven mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. By means of qualitative data from open-ended questions and quantitative data from close-ended questions from the survey with Ukrainian refugees, a holistic view on the outcomes of reception policies for refugees from Ukraine is provided supporting the narrative approach of the research. When conducting an in-depth analysis, the participants' perspective can also be understood better (Harrison et al., 2017). This enables the researcher to provide a less value-laden view on a subject, which ensures that a more objective view towards the subject can be made (Pandey, 2014). In this study, perspectives from both, municipalities and Ukrainian refugees are presented, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the housing solutions provided, from both key stakeholders.

3.3. Research strategy

The research strategy serves as the blueprint for the entire study, encompassing all methodological decisions. It provides a framework that makes certain research methods and techniques more appropriate than others. Research methods in this case refer to the way data is gathered or collected (Hart et al., 1998), which in detail will be discussed below. Van Thiel (2014) distinguishes four main types of research strategies: the experiment, the survey, the case study and desk research. This research is represented by the case study research strategy. Case study research involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yin, 2003). Case study research is applicable to a wide range of topics and objectives (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Steward, 2014). However, its primary purpose lies in enhancing the understanding of complex phenomena (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Often exploratory or explanatory, case studies are employed to investigate issues within real-world contexts and are particularly useful for addressing how and why questions, and occasionally what questions (Flybjerg, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Steward, 2014; Yin 2014).

Given that, the case study strategy allows in-depth and multi-faceted explorations of complex issues of multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. Moreover, it

reduces the risk that conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method, and allows the one to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations developed. The case study was adopted for illustration purposes, to provide a clearer view of how the theoretical framework of multi-stakeholder collaboration role in refugee housing could be applied in an empirical setting of multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees. Since the case study has an interpretivist approach (trying to understand individual and shared social meanings), it was conducted to provide an illustrative demonstration and application of the multistakeholder collaborative framework to the housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees for extrapolating further insights (Eisenhardt, 1989). In practice this applied by defining the scope of the case study as Safety Region of Gelderland-South and six municipalities within it (Nijmegen, Beuningen, Druten, Wijchen, Tiel and Berg en Dal), relevant social groups- as municipality representatives involved in housing provision and realisation for refugees from one side and Ukrainian refugees from another. Time scope- to investigate the housing arrangement process from the beginning till the point of conducting the interview and surveys. The types of evidence to be collected, and the priorities for data collection and analysis are defined by the aim and research question.

Case Selection

This study focuses on the reception framework for Ukrainian refugees in six municipalities within the Safety region of Gelderland-South, a region chosen for its relative lack of investigation compared to the more frequently studied areas in the west of the Netherlands, particularly the Randstad. While much of the existing research and policy analysis centres on the densely populated and economically significant regions of the west, Gelderland-South offers a contrasting perspective that is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the national implementation of refugee reception policies. By examining Gelderland-South, this research aims to shed light on the unique challenges and practices in a less scrutinised area, thereby contributing to a more balanced and inclusive analysis of the Netherlands' response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The selection of six municipalities of Berg en Dal, Beuningen, Druten, Nijmegen, Tiel and Wijchen was guided by several key criteria aimed at ensuring the feasibility and richness of the research. First of all is the *accessibility*. The ability to easily access this municipality and establish contact with its representatives was a crucial factor. Accessibility ensured that the research could be conducted efficiently, with minimal logistical barriers.

Another significant criterion was the presence of *existing contacts* within Beuningen, Berg en Dal and Nijmegen municipality. These pre-established connections facilitated initial communications and coordination, making it easier to arrange interviews and gather data. The familiarity with local

contacts also ensured a level of trust and cooperation that might not have been possible in municipalities where such relationships did not exist.

The methodological approach of this study is characterised by its exploratory nature, which influenced the choice of sampling techniques. Snowball sampling was employed due to its suitability for exploratory research. The exploratory nature of this study aims to gather qualitative insights rather than achieve statistical representativeness. As such, nonprobabilistic sampling methods like snowball sampling are particularly appropriate. This approach enables the study to delve deeply into specific cases, uncovering detailed and nuanced information. That is why this method involved using initial contacts to identify and gain access to other relevant participants. Starting with Berg en Dal and Beuningen made it possible to leverage these initial connections to obtain referrals to other municipalities, thereby enriching the data set and ensuring a broader range of insights.

Physical proximity was a critical factor in the selection process. Being in relative proximity to all municipalities facilitated more effective and efficient data collection through on-site visits and direct interactions with representatives and community members. This proximity was particularly important for gaining better insights into housing arrangements and distributing surveys within the Ukrainian community. In addition, those six municipalities were chosen to ensure geographic balance, representativeness, and diversity in the number of Ukrainian refugees accommodated.



Figure 4. Municipalities of Safety Region Gelderland-South (Veilig Thuis Gelderland Zuid, 2024)

This approach allows for the examination of policy implementation across different local contexts, providing insights into both commonalities and unique challenges faced by each municipality. The selected municipalities reflect a mix of urban and rural settings, in order to understand how different types of municipalities manage the reception of refugees and implement the Temporary Protection Directive. This approach allows for the identification of best practices and areas needing improvement across varied local contexts. The municipalities chosen for this study—Nijmegen, Tiel, Beuningen, Berg en Dal, Druten, and Wijchen—represent a range of urban, rural, and mid-sized town characteristics, providing a comprehensive view of the varied challenges and demographic impacts

associated with hosting Ukrainian refugees in the Gelderland region. Each municipality presents a unique set of conditions that influence their capacity to accommodate refugees and the specific support services required. The six municipalities differ significantly in the number of Ukrainian refugees they receive. Some municipalities host a large number of refugees, while others accommodate fewer individuals. This variation is included below in the bullet points and is essential for an inclusive analysis as it highlights the different scales of operation and resource allocation required. It also helps in identifying how municipalities with varying capacities and infrastructures respond to the influx of refugees and manage their wider social support. Municipalities selected are Nijmegen, the largest municipality in the region and the tenth largest in the country, has a population of 187,049 and hosts 1,000 refugees. Tiel, a medium-sized town, shelters 200 refugees among its 42,390 residents. Beuningen and Berg en Dal, smaller communities with populations of 26,725 and 35,474 respectively, provide refuge to 208 and 267 Ukrainians. Druten, with a population of 19,590, and Wijchen, home to 41,545 people, both offer support to 130 and 200 refugees respectively. These municipalities face various challenges, from scaling up services to dealing with geographic isolation and resource scarcity. The selection of them offers insights into the diverse approaches and strategies necessary to support Ukrainian refugees effectively. Each setting demands tailored responses to accommodate the specific needs of refugees while considering local capacities and resources. This study aims to highlight the adaptive measures and innovative solutions implemented across different municipal contexts to enhance the support framework for refugees in the Safety Region Gelderland-South.

3.4. Data collection strategy

Since the research aim of this thesis is to gain insight into the refugee housing arrangements and include the refugees' perspectives a mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection was applied. Mixed methods research allows for the integration of qualitative and quantitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. To be more precise, the descriptive quantitative data collection method was incorporated as a complementary approach to enhance the qualitative analysis. This was done not only to enrich the narrative-driven understanding of refugee housing arrangements but also to probabilistically identify patterns and relationships within the data. As was previously mentioned, combining these methods, this thesis aimed to provide a more comprehensive insight into the complex dynamics of refugee housing and the collaborative efforts between the various actors involved in the process.

Given the primary research question and the resources available, the research strategy in this paper includes both secondary (desk) research and primary case study research. The primary case study research involves interviews with municipality representatives and surveys with displaced people

from Ukraine. This approach, often referred to as triangulation, enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by corroborating data from multiple sources (Denzin, 1970; Kaplan & Duchon, 1988) and allows for a robust analysis of the research problem from multiple perspectives. It has frequently been noted (e.g., Benbasat et al., 1987) that no research methodology is inherently superior to another, with many scholars advocating for the use of multiple research methods to enhance the validity and reliability of studies (e.g., Kaplan and Duchon, 1988). That is why the combination of following methods was chosen in this research.

Desk Research

Desk research was performed in the form of a literature review and was chosen to thoroughly analyse existing information, structure it, and identify gaps that this paper aims to fill. This research focused on European and Dutch national policy documents related to housing regulations for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. Specifically, documents such as the European Union Temporary Protection Directive, the Regulation on Reception of Displaced Persons from Ukraine (Regeling opvang ontheemden Oekraïne), the Guidance on Municipal Reception (Regeling gemeentelijke opvang Oekraïners), the Guidance on Private Reception (Prive opvang ontheemden Oekraïne), and letters from the Minister of Justice and Safety were analysed. Through desk research, the legal frameworks for the reception of refugees from Ukraine, who fall under the European Temporary Protection Directive, were mapped out.

Interviews

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand certain themes in the life world of the subjects. In qualitative research, the degree of structure in interviews can vary. Given the purpose and exploratory nature of this research, semi-structured interviews were applied. An interview guide with 15 open-ended and closed-ended questions was prepared beforehand. In total there were 5 interviews conducted with 6 different municipality representatives. In the case of Wijchen and Druten municipalities, one interview on the reception experiences of the both of them was conducted. It is explained by the approach that municipalities have chosen, to merge the civil service organisation in the process of reception in crisis. One civil servant has represented two different municipalities, with two separate city councils, boards and reception processes.

Semi-structured interviews, guided by a pre-prepared interview guide, allowed for flexibility in response to the interviewees' answers (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The interview questions reflected the main research question and three sub-questions (1, 2 and 3), while sub-question number four was addressed through the survey with displaced persons from Ukraine. The interview guide also included related questions to delve deeper into the research problem, for instance questions on related processes in the municipality, dynamics within the municipality itself, crisis teams, the local situation, and etc. The interview guide for the interviews with local governments can be found in Appendix I.

Survey

An online survey was chosen to include the experiences of Ukrainian refugees and gain insights into their experiences with municipal shelter arrangements. The survey design began by stating the research question and selecting an appropriate study design. Given that there are two main types of surveys—descriptive and analytic—a descriptive survey was applied in this research. Descriptive surveys do not assume a hypothesis but instead collect data to report overall trends, incidence, and prevalence of the outcome of interest. The online survey included 30 questions, with a mix of open-ended (qualitative), close-ended, and multiple-choice (quantitative) questions focused on capturing the experiences of displaced Ukrainians during the reception process. The overview of questions included in the survey can be found in Appendix II. Initially, a printed announcement about the research was distributed at municipal locations to quickly reach a large number of participants. This was followed by posts on social media channels and in groups of people residing in specific municipal locations. From the distributed surveys, a total of 57 responses were received, with the breakdown as follows:

- Beuningen- 14 responses;
- Berg en Dal- 27 responses;
- Nijmegen- 9 responses;
- Wijchen- 7 responses;

3.5. Data Analysis Design

By employing a mixed-methods approach and triangulation, this research aims to provide a comprehensive and reliable analysis of refugee housing arrangements and the experiences of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. This robust data analysis design ensures that the findings are well-substantiated and reflective of the multifaceted nature of the research problem.

Qualitative Data Analysis

This research has employed desk research, analysing the EU and Dutch reception policy documents, in order to provide a contextual framework and background for the primary data collected. The content analysis of those documents included identifying the key themes with regard to housing provision of Ukrainian refugees and detailing the specific provisions of each policy and any requirements they place on different stakeholders. By drawing together the main points from this analysis, key policy directions, stakeholder implications, as well as gaps and inconsistencies were identified and further described in chapter 4.

The open-ended survey responses and interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and insights related to the refugee experiences and municipal arrangements. Semi-structured interviews were analysed using Atlas.ti, a powerful tool for handling complex

qualitative data. A total of 92 codes were generated from 5 semi-structured interviews, and main themes were subsequently analysed in accordance with the conceptual framework. The codes were grouped into themes and sub-themes that reflect the core issues and strategies mentioned by the interviewees. After that the data was compared across different interviews to identify commonalities and divergences in municipal approaches. The themes identified were additionally cross-validated with data from desk research and survey results to ensure consistency and reliability.

Open-ended survey responses were analysed in Microsoft Excel, involving organising, coding, and interpreting the text data to extract meaningful insights. This approach was chosen due to the relatively small sample size, making it feasible to manually sort and categorise responses to identify recurring themes and patterns. The data was grouped based on similarities in responses, identifying key patterns and insights directly related to the research questions, which allowed for an organised thematic analysis. This method facilitated a straightforward interpretation of the qualitative data, providing nuanced insights into the respondents' experiences and perceptions. Qualitative findings were further integrated in analysis with quantitative data to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of refugee experiences.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The closed-ended and multiple-choice questions were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This analysis involved descriptive statistical tests to summarise the data and provide a clear overview of the distribution of responses. This method was instrumental in understanding the general trends within the collected data and assessing the demographic and contextual factors influencing the responses.

Limitations

It is important to note that no significant relationships were found between the variables. This absence of significant findings could be attributed to the limited scope of data collected, as responses were not obtained from all targeted municipalities. The small sample size may have also restricted the ability to detect meaningful patterns or correlations that could be statistically significant. These limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation of the analysis results and suggest that outcomes from this study should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive. Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

3.6. Approach to data analysis, reflections on validity of research and reliability of findings

This chapter outlines the data analysis strategies adopted for this thesis, chosen to align with the diverse data types collected and the corresponding research questions. The primary methodologies include qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, and mixed methods analysis. Given the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data in this research, a mixed methods approach was deemed most suitable. This approach facilitates a comprehensive analysis by allowing for the integration and cross-validation of data from different sources and formats. This approach not only aligns the data analysis with the research objectives but also ensures that the findings are robust, comprehensive, and well-substantiated.

Nevertheless it is important to consider that most qualitative methods texts devote considerable space to the strengths and limitations of particular data collection methods (Maxwell, 2009). By integrating desk research, interviews, and surveys, this study employs a mixed methods approach that utilises triangulation to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings. This comprehensive strategy ensures that the insights gained are well-rounded and reflective of the perspectives of both municipal representatives and displaced persons from Ukraine. Triangulation as a method in this research was used to reduce the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific process and allowed a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops. Moreover, multiple municipalities within the Safety Region were chosen to study due to the fact that it increases the methodological rigour of the study through "strengthening the precision, the validity and stability of the findings," (Miles, 1994), particularly, because "evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling (Yin, 1994).

Case studies are often criticised for their lack of generalizability (Woodside, 2010). Another common critique is related to external validity, which is closely associated with generalizability (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). Unlike quantitative studies, the generalisation in qualitative research is typically not based on sampling a specific population, but rather on developing theories that can be applied to other cases (Ragin, 1987). Yin (1994) refers to this as "analytic" rather than statistical generalisation. For this reason, Guba and Lincoln (1989) prefer the term "transferability" over "generalizability" in qualitative research. The goal of case studies is often to generate hypotheses (Yin, 2012a) rather than to establish statistical facts. Cronbach (1975) describes these hypotheses as "working hypotheses" (p.125), meaning each case study either supports or challenges the hypotheses, contributing to their refinement or leading to new ones. According to Kennedy (1979), case studies rarely provide definitive answers but instead offer evidence that either confirms or contradicts. While statistical results typically generalise to populations, case studies generalise to other contexts through in-depth analytical reasoning (Yin, 2012b). As Yin (2012b) points out, case studies are not meant to generalise "from samples to universes" (p.18), as is common with qualitative surveys. The claims derived from case study generalisation should not be seen as statistical "proof" but rather as theoretical insights that

can be applied to similar situations. When multiple case studies produce comparable findings, they can reinforce the hypotheses and contribute to theory development (Yin, 2012b). This approach is referred to as "analytic generalisation" (Lincoln, 2002).

Reflection on ethics

Ethics are fundamentally embedded within the constructivist paradigm because the research process incorporates the values of participants. This begins with the existing perspectives of respondents—such as municipal representatives and displaced persons from Ukraine—and aims to enhance both their understanding and that of the researcher by developing more detailed and sophisticated constructions. Transparency is crucial; concealing the researcher's intentions can undermine the goal of revealing and improving these perspectives. Additionally, the hermeneutical/dialectical methodology provides a robust, though not infallible, safeguard against deception. However, the close personal interactions required by this methodology can lead to complex issues related to confidentiality, anonymity, and other interpersonal challenges (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore, it is essential for researchers to remain aware of these ethical considerations and regularly reflect on them throughout the research process.

4. Results

4.1. Policy Framework Governing Refugee Housing System for Ukrainians.

This chapter examines the key aspects and implementation of the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) activated on March 4, 2022, in the Netherlands. It explores how the Dutch response, mandated by a specific regulation from April 1, 2022, required municipal mayors to provide housing and support services for Ukrainian refugees. This analysis details the interplay between central directives and local execution, highlighting how municipalities adapted to these responsibilities amidst legislative changes and operational challenges. This section corresponds to the system context in the broader diagram, illustrating mostly political, but also legal, socioeconomic, and environmental factors that influence and shape collaborative governance dynamics.

On 4 March 2022, the European Union activated the **Temporary Protection Directive** via a Council decision (Parliamentary Papers 32 317 and 36 045, no. 750). People fleeing the conflict in Ukraine received protection in the member states of the European Union, including the Netherlands. The Directive established the minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons (Council Directive, 2001). *Article 13* of the directive states that The Member States ensured that persons enjoying temporary protection have access to suitable accommodation or, if necessary, receive the means to obtain housing. Nevertheless, the Directive does

not determine what kind of accommodation displaced persons are exactly entitled to, hence it is up to every member state to decide. According to the Directive the duration of temporary protection should be one year, although it may be extended by six monthly periods for a maximum of one year. Member states may only extend temporary protection if displaced people are displaced for the same reasons and from the same country or region of origin. What in practice has already taken place, since the temporary protection status for Ukrainians refugees has already been extended two times. Due to the recent changes Ukrainians are allowed to stay under TDP till march 2026 (IND, 2024). Temporary protection ends when the Council establishes that the situation in the country of origin is such to permit the safe and durable return of those granted protection.

Important to note, the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive, initially designed to provide short-term relief to Ukrainian refugees, has been extended three times, with the current extension lasting until 2026. (Government of the Netherlands, 2024). Originally, the Directive was meant to offer temporary protection for one year, with the possibility of extension in six-month increments for up to one additional year. This framework, by its nature, grants Ukrainian refugees a relatively limited status, which results in a significant degree of uncertainty for the individuals it aims to protect. Instead of transitioning to a more stable or less restrictive status, the recent extensions have continued within the same temporary framework, without providing alternative solutions that might offer more security or permanence to the refugees' situations. This ongoing reliance on temporary measures underscores the precariousness of the protection afforded under the Directive, leaving Ukrainian refugees in a continual state of uncertainty about their future.

Nevertheless, as reaction to TPD Directive **Regulation for the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine** (dutch: Regeling opvang ontheemden Oekraïne) came into force on 1 April 2022. The regulation obliges mayors of municipalities to receive refugees from Ukraine and specifies what is meant by reception, such as housing, providing financial resources and offering education (Government of the Netherlands, 2022). This regulation contains the rules that have been established on the basis of Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Population Transfer Act (**Wet verplaatsing bevolking** - hereinafter: Wvb). According to Article 4 of the Wvb the influx of displaced people from Ukraine was so high that the Netherlands became unable to offer them (emergency) shelter within the existing reception structures for asylum seekers and refugees that fall under the Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) (Population Transfer Act, 2022). Consequently, at the beginning of March 2022, municipal mayors and the chairmen of each safety region (thus, fulfilling a coordinating role under the Safety Regions Act) were asked by the central Dutch government to provide the required shelter. Pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 1, mayors were given the statutory duty to ensure the reception, including housing (understood as shelter), care and registration of displaced people from Ukraine, as well as the preparations for this.

Additionally, RooO was not published as a complete and integral document, given that some important changes were made afterwards, during the next year. The letter to parliament dated on March 30, 2022 explained that given the urgency of the problem, the emphasis in drawing up the RooO was on speed and practical feasibility. Offering shelter and facilities to displaced people from Ukraine was a new, additional task for municipalities and the Association of the Dutch Municipalities (hereinafter: VNG), therefore, they contributed constructively and proactively to the drafting of the RooO. The importance of feasibility and speed is reflected in the choices made in the regulation in March 2022. For example, rounded amounts, a fixed amount per person without taking into account the size of the household that is paid out on a single reference date (no graduated scale applied), no mandatory link between the payment of financial benefits after BRP registration and a simple consequence for income from work (the living allowance stops for a displaced person who has job). This letter to parliament also indicates that when the regulation came into force on April 1, 2022, it was already known that this could have a number of undesirable effects, but these effects have been accepted for the short term in order to enable rapid implementation (Ministry of Justice and Security 2022). That is why later on, some of the changes were applied to the document.

For instance, as of **December 1, 2022**, the regulation changed a few technical points. Certain words have been explained in the new regulation, such as ‘displaced person’, ‘municipal reception facility’, ‘private reception facility’. Municipal reception facility from then on is understood as the reception facility for displaced people offered or made available by or on behalf of the mayor. According to the changes, private reception facilities are explained as being any type of location other than the municipal reception facility, homes of a displaced person (if they find their own housing) and houses of the family member of the displaced person (the house of the family of the first line, spouse, parent or a child are not considered to be a reception facility). As of December 1, 2022, refugees from Ukraine can temporarily leave the shelter for a maximum of 28 days while retaining their monthly financial allowance. After this period, the mayor can stop their benefits (Rijksoverheid, 2022).

According to the latest changes on the RooO, of February 1, 2023, the living allowance for displaced people from Ukraine will be more equal to that of other groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees and people on welfare. The amounts for food and clothing have been taken from the Regulations for Asylum Seekers (RVa, 2005). According to the new changes, the definition of family members has been specified (it influences the allowance distribution) as:

- spouses or partners treated as married persons;
- their minor children;
- a parent or guardian who, according to Dutch law or practice, is responsible for the minor and unmarried children.

Since February 1, 2023, the living allowance has stopped, if an adult family member works or receives benefits, such as unemployment benefits, not only for the displaced people themselves, but for the entire family. This situation has no influence on the right for the municipal shelter for displaced people (Rijksoverheid). To be more precise, if the person loses the job and resides in the governmental-run shelters, he/she could still stay in the shelter, yet, if the person is staying in a rented house - he/she might have difficulties in transferring to the municipal shelter - this will be decided by the regional safety region authorities (distribution), or the municipality itself. Consequently, it may contribute to the vulnerability of the displaced person outside governmental facilities.

An important takeaway from this brief policy analysis is that displaced people from Ukraine who fall under the TPD, according to the Dutch law, are not entitled to social housing or any type of *housing*, other than municipal *shelter*. In the **Housing Act from 2014** (Huisvestingswet, 2014) it is clearly stated that only those who went through the asylum procedure and obtained a residence permit are entitled to social housing. In that case social housing is provided by Dutch law to *status holders (refugees)* by municipalities. It also means that municipalities cannot “rent” the shelter accommodation to displaced people (or require any type of rent payment for the offered shelter housing) since in that case the situation will interfere with housing rights which displaced people are not entitled to. However, on 28th of February 2024 State Secretary Van der Burg (Justice and Security) proposed a temporary law to regulate the reception of Ukrainian refugees. According to the temporary law Ukrainian refugees who work in the Netherlands would have to pay their own contribution to the reception costs. The bill to the law does not intend to introduce additional or different tasks or powers compared to the current temporary emergency legal framework. However, the bill no longer assigns this reception task to the mayor, but to the mayor and aldermen (Tweede Kamer, 2024). On 14th of March 2024 House of the Representatives of the Netherlands (dutch: Tweede Kamer) has already voted for those temporary changes in law and now it is in a process of figuring out the practical application, feasibility and risks estimation.

- *Guidelines to Municipal Reception of Ukrainians*

In order to continue helping municipalities set up and manage reception locations, on March 13, 2022 the Ministry of Justice and Safety, together with the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport, Education, Culture and Science, Social Affairs and Employment, the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Association of Dutch Municipalities and other partners outside the national government have drawn up Guidelines to Municipal Reception of Ukrainians (dutch: Gemeentelijke Opvang Oekrainers, hereinafter: GOO). The Guidelines offer tools that support municipalities in the organisation and implementation of the GOO. The starting point is that the Municipal Reception is accessible to all displaced people from Ukraine. The Guidelines also describe the components and aspects that apply to every municipality in the organisation, design and deployment of the GO

(Handreiking GOO, 2022). Important to note that its contents are based on the changes in RooO or/and on the basis of new information, policy developments or reactions from municipalities, safety regions or other parties involved. Part of the amended regulation in RooO entered into force on December 1, 2022, the other part on February 1, 2023 and were reflected in the guide. The last version (7th) of the Guide **from February 24, 2023** has also been worked out in accordance with changes in the RooO, e.g. the amount of living allowance, conditions in which living allowance can be stopped, payments to the supervisor of the underaged displaced Ukrainians, etc. In general, the guide to municipal reception covers the topics of:

- setting up and managing the municipal locations;
- organising other services under the responsibility of the municipality, for example, in the field of education and care.

According to the Municipal reception guide (dutch: GoO) mayors must provide: shelter, a monthly cash allowance for food, clothing and other personal expenses, recreational and educational activities, insurance against the financial consequences of legal liability and the possible payment of extraordinary costs. The GOO further elaborates on the registration (Basic Registration Persons, access to the GO), financing of GO (the starting point is that the government fully reimburses the costs incurred by municipalities) and conditions of the stay and departure from the municipal shelter, the guide also provides the information about, for example, what to do in a situation when the reception of displaced people from Ukraine does not fit in with the local zoning plans and the requirements for fire-safe use of the location (Handreiking GOO, 2023). In this case the advice is to legalise the use of the reception place as soon as possible and to opt not to take enforcement action before then on 'contrary use' with the zoning plan. Meaning that in such an extraordinary situation the regular procedures of getting the permit, for example, can be shortened and arranging the reception prioritised. Furthermore, the protected status of displaced people from Ukraine can be terminated in case the person leaves the country for more than 28 days. The reception place in GO can be terminated after 14 days, if the person has not been seen there. Together with that, if an unannounced departure is detected, the right to shelter, living allowance and other benefits can be terminated as of the date of confirmed departure. If a displaced person returns to the Netherlands, he or she must report again to the municipality or municipal reception centre. Another regulation in the guide is with regard to the access to the GO; it says that it is possible to deny people access to the GO. No matter what the reason is why someone wants to enter the location. An owner or user of the location, in this case the municipality has full freedom and can regulate access to the building, by applying its own 'access policy' (Handreiking GOO, 2023).

- *Private reception guidelines*

Alongside governmental shelters, displaced people from Ukraine can also be accommodated by

private hosts (**Particuliere Opvang (hereinafter: PO)**). Since the outbreak of war in Ukraine, many private initiatives have been launched to support displaced persons from Ukraine, for example by making goods or services available (Letter from the State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Safety, 2022). Individuals collected money and goods and opened their homes to displaced people from Ukraine. Any private household in the Netherlands can temporarily accommodate a guest from Ukraine in their house or other suitable location that they own. As a response to the private hosting initiatives that were not monitored or regulated by the local or national governing bodies. The Red Cross, the Netherlands Council for Refugees, the Salvation Army and Takecarebnb have united in a consortium under the name of RefugeeHomeNL (RHNL) to work together and facilitate the access to private housing for displaced people from Ukraine. On **March 13, 2022** the national government in collaboration with the Association of the Dutch Municipalities (VNG) and RefugeeHomeNL drew a guide for individuals who want to host refugees from Ukraine. Besides many other provisions, the guide contains registering procedures and regulates private reception, the website launched in May 2022. Depending on the fact that the private reception was not regulated in the beginning and in order to make safe use of private shelter, the Red Cross, the Dutch Council for Refugees and the Salvation Army join forces together and work on recruiting, screening and supervising host families and/or housing for municipalities (Letter from the State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Safety, 2022). Before someone can become a host and offer private reception within the governmental framework, they are screened. The stay period lasts 3 months, but it can be extended by mutual agreement of both parties involved (in the framework of the RefugeeHomeNL). The Salvation Army volunteers are available as guest household support if they might have any questions (Handreiking POO, from 24.02.2023). On March 18 2022, the Dutch Council for Refugees, SparkOptimus and NAVARA, together with various other organisations, launched the RefugeeHelp.com platform. This platform contains a lot of practical information for Ukrainian displaced persons residing in the Netherlands. The information on the platform is verified by the Council for Refugees and pertains to housing, legal issues, activities, education, work and more. The platform refers to various organisations that work for displaced persons from Ukraine. In addition to information provision for Ukrainians, private individuals can also offer their assistance via the platform. According to the State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Safety, the organisations taking part in the RefugeeHomeNL initiative have a reliable network of partner organisations and sufficient deployable staff and volunteers who can carry out short-term tasks (Handreiking POO, 2023).

To support private shelter, municipalities receive €210 per month per person in private shelter (PO) to cover implementation costs, such as costs for registration in the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP), WA insurance and extraordinary costs in the private reception facility, such as certain travel expenses. The €93 of those €210 are given as an allowance for the person residing at a private shelter. The financial allowance of €93, received by the displaced person in private reception facilities

consists of an amount for food, clothing and other personal expenses and a housing component (RooO, 2022).

According to the guidelines (Handreiking POO, 2023), private shelters include :

- Room(s) with a host family;
- Holiday home or house where the host family does not stay;
- Housing provided by a company or institution, not financed by the municipality.

In the initial phase of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, as the war in Ukraine escalated, the first wave of refugees arriving in the Netherlands found their immediate shelter not through municipal arrangements but predominantly in private reception facilities. This included accommodations provided by NGOs, churches, and other organisations committed to refugee support. The data from interviews and surveys suggests that before the official municipal locations were operational, these private entities were the primary sources of refuge for the Ukrainians fleeing the conflict. The timing of events plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of early refugee reception. Analysis of the dates when the first municipal shelters opened (Table 6) reveals a gap during which private reception played a pivotal role. Despite the legal obligation for municipalities to provide reception falling squarely on their shoulders, it was the private sector and non-governmental organisations that initially shouldered the responsibility. As of 2023, it is estimated that around 20,000 Ukrainian refugees have relied on such private reception facilities across the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2023). This number may have increased since then, reflecting the ongoing reliance on and the critical role of private and non-governmental sectors in the humanitarian response. This scenario underscores a significant aspect of the refugee crisis management where private initiative complements or, in early stages, even supersedes governmental action due to immediate needs and logistic realities.

On the other hand, during the interviews conducted with representatives from all 6 municipalities, it became apparent that there is a general reluctance to view the support of Ukrainian refugees in Private Reception (PR) as a direct municipal responsibility. The representatives often indicated that their involvement with individuals in PR is typically limited to providing information and responding reactively when issues are brought to their attention by the refugees themselves. A common sentiment expressed was: *“We have too little contact with people in PR, and from the beginning, it has been said that we are from municipal reception, not PR.”* Neither the Directive, nor the RooO include the information on a division in responsibilities depending on the place of residing. This stance underscores a significant gap in proactive engagement and support. Responsibility for the well-being of refugees in Private Reception is often deferred to organisations such as TakeCare B&B Ukraine, Refugee Help, Samen voor Oekraïne, Red Cross, the Dutch Council for Refugees and the Salvation Army. However, this approach conflicts with the RooO regulation, which explicitly assigns statutory

responsibility for these individuals to the mayors of municipalities. This discrepancy highlights a systemic issue where the legal obligations of municipal leaders are not fully aligned with their practical actions or perceptions, potentially leaving a vulnerable population without the support that people in municipal shelters are able to receive.

4.2. Drivers of cooperation

Drawing on Emerson et al.'s (2012) Collaborative Governance framework, leadership as a driver for cooperation is crucial for convening stakeholders, managing relationships, and steering collaborative efforts, with leaders playing key roles in maintaining focus, facilitating dialogue, and resolving conflicts. This chapter examines the impact of decentralisation on local municipalities' responses to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, emphasising the critical role of mayors in initiating reception processes. It highlights how variations in the timing and types of initial housing, detailed in Table 6, arose from differences in mayoral leadership and the absence of specific legislative penalties or deadlines, leading to a diverse array of responses across municipalities. Those drivers arose from the system context of housing provision for Ukrainian refugees prescribed earlier.

Decentralisation significantly shaped local municipalities' responses to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, particularly in how they handled the "call" for reception of displaced persons. As discussed in the previous chapter, mayors were legally mandated to oversee the reception and care of displaced persons from Ukraine. However, the absence of specified penalties or deadlines for non-compliance in the legislation led to varied responses across the municipalities. This variation was evident in the disparities in the timing and types of initial housing provided by the six municipalities, as outlined in Table 6.

Name municipality	Date	Type of location
Berg en Dal	March	Former hospital office building
Beuningen	March	Sport hall (HUB)
Druten	May	Cruise ship
Nijmegen	March	Sport hall (HUB)
	March	Cruise ship
Tiel	May	Former hospital building
Wijchen	April	Former municipal house

Figure 5. Dates and types of the first municipal locations

Beuningen and Nijmegen municipalities have decided to offer a Crisis Emergency Shelter (dutch: Crisis Noodopvang) already in the first weeks after the Russian attack on Ukraine. Crisis Emergency shelter, also called HUB, was usually a sports hall or a big building, where people could sleep and eat, get first hand necessities, and was intended to host refugees for a maximum of a week to nine days. From the HUB Ukrainian refugees were supposed to be spread and hosted within the municipalities in the region, in this way it was supposed to ensure that Ukrainian refugees find a place in a more permanent location as soon as possible. At the moment that municipalities have received a task from the national government to receive refugees from Ukraine, many Ukrainians have already fled to the Netherlands, staying mostly with family, friends or in Dutch host families. Meaning that this decentralised approach not only resulted in different start dates for providing shelter but also influenced the type of accommodations available. Such discrepancies underscored a broader issue with private reception (PR, Dutch: PO).

In the beginning of the crisis the movement of people was chaotic and for municipalities it was not possible to keep a track of the people coming to the Netherlands and respectively to their municipalities. Organising HUBs created the possibility to take control over the process of reception, but also creating an additional time buffer to organise more suitable reception places. At a certain point it became apparent for the municipalities that there was less need for Crisis Emergency shelter places, but rather for (municipal) emergency shelter places. The last The Central shelter (HUB) for refugees from Ukraine in the Jaarbeurs, Utrecht, was temporarily closed on February 27, 2024. It was explained by the government that the Jaarbeurs was full and there is also insufficient reception space in the Netherlands to move on to (Municipality of Utrecht, 2024). This might specify no capability and/or no willingness to create more reception places within municipalities.

The process of arranging the reception places for the big influx of refugees was complicated and time consuming. Municipalities were not prepared, but sometimes also not willing, to prepare the shelters immediately. Not willingness to immediately respond to the crisis is a complex issue, however it is important to take into account that since the beginning of the influx, the national government also did not clarify whether the displaced Ukrainians fall within the share of migrants (asylum seekers) that municipalities already receive, making it confusing for municipalities, where the share of “statushouders” (people, who went through the asylum procedure and have received a Dutch residence permit) is already sufficient. Moreover, the political debates about the law to oblige the municipalities to also host asylum seekers were already relevant, which is of course a pressuring issue for the municipalities, which were not willing to cooperate with COA in providing sufficient reception places. Municipality of Tiel, for example, mentioned that their share of people with residence permits is already sufficient, so creating a more sustainable municipal shelter option for Ukrainians, which can after be used for other migrant groups is not justified. On February 1st 2024 a new

“Spreidingswet” (Distribution law) was voted for and now municipalities are therefore given a legal task in the reception of asylum seekers (Rijksoverheid).

Municipality of Beuningen indicated that in their municipality there was no suitable places to offer as the reception place, but the availability of the sports hall “De Tinnegieter” created the possibility to open the HUB in the beginning:

“... the municipality of Beuningen does not own any buildings that we could convert into shelters. And yes, we actually had no companies or other options for converting buildings.”

Representative of Beuningen municipality

From Table 6. it is visible that some municipalities provided the shelters faster than others. The disparities in response to the crisis and the dates when the first locations were open has a great deal to do with the proactiveness of the mayors within the municipalities. For example, at the time when the war in Ukraine began, the mayor of Nijmegen was the chairman of the Security Council, so he had direct contact with the ministry and the municipality was always at the forefront of everything (Representative of Nijmegen municipality). The decision and initiation to react to the crisis came from the mayor, which resulted in the Emergency Crisis Shelter being open in the 3d week of March, as well as reception on the cruise ship at the end of March. After those intermediate options were ready, the municipality continued looking for more suitable options. Same situation was in the municipality Berg en Dal. In the first days of war, the mayor initiated the reception of Ukrainians, creating a call for the municipality to prepare the shelter as fast as possible. Berg en Dal is a much smaller municipality than Nijmegen, nevertheless, the municipal shelter was also ready at the end of March.

“ There was also the mayor calling everybody. And since the beginning, he was organising all the work”

Representative of Berg en Dal municipality

In Beuningen the situation was respective, as the representative of the municipality mentioned:

“The response from the municipality came mainly from the mayor. The mayor actually decided quite quickly after the outbreak of the war and the first flow of refugees: “We as Beuningen also have to do something, I think we should start receiving refugees in the sports hall or start receiving refugees””.

Initiation from the mayor was particularly effective due to the possibility of using simplified procedures. Normally speaking the procedure of taking decisions within municipalities is complex and demands time, but also differs per municipality. Generally speaking, the civil servants prepare the proposals or plan that the municipality decides on on a particular date. They do this on behalf of the

council, after which the council meets every week. There the mayor and aldermen make decisions about such a 'council proposal'. The decision has therefore been taken in a number of cases and after being implemented by the officials. This process takes somewhere between two weeks up to two months (ACTIZ, 2017). Of course, after the influx of refugees from Ukraine was not characterised as a “crisis”, it transformed into the “project” and the processes returned to normal. Nevertheless, being in the crisis mode made it possible for the mayor to use their authority to make decisions for which no further approval from a college or a council was needed. According to this mandate those three municipalities started acting immediately, without long bureaucratic processes. The importance of mayor in the first response to the reception is unquestionable, and as the representative from Beuningen municipality accurately underlined:

“ At the moment you have a mayor or a council that says- “we are going to do this”, and the official apparatus will just arrange things, then everyone will get to work. But the moment you as a municipality say, well, you know, why should we be the first? ... then... that is of course also a choice... ”

Important to add, even though the national government has urged the municipalities to shelter refugees from Ukraine, after more than two months there was still no clarity about the financial compensation for arranging the reception. According to research by the Dutch Institute of Public Security (dutch: Netherlands Institute Publieke Veiligheid, NIPV), conducted in May 2022, this unclarity was causing great frustration among municipalities at that time. The document stated that : “Despite all the efforts they have made - the government has still not provided clarity about the financial compensation that has been promised.” (NIPV, 2022). It means that municipalities were urged to create the reception for refugees in the situation of complete obscurity about who will bear the financial responsibilities for it. As the representative of Beuningen municipality claimed that they have been arranging the reception on the trust that it will actually be reimbursed by the national government:

“The arrangement wasn't ready yet. The government had promised that all costs incurred as a municipality would be reimbursed. So with that confidence we just started.”

Research by NIVP has respective data to the information conducted in this research not only in terms of financial responsibilities. According to their research on 2 municipal secretaries, 5 safety region directors and 13 mayors, 6 of whom are chairman of a safety region, the arguments for doing less than other municipalities included:

– These other municipalities have many empty office buildings or many large holiday parks or a port where a cruise ship can be moored.

– There is still support in the municipality for the reception of Ukrainians, but this is much less the case for the reception of asylum seekers and the housing of status holders.

Those claims about why municipalities were hesitant to respond to the national crisis of high influx of refugees from Ukraine corresponds to the information collected for the purpose of this research from the interviews with six municipalities and previously described in this chapter.

4.3. Policy alignment techniques

This chapter discusses policy alignment techniques used by the government to ensure municipalities' compliance in providing shelters for Ukrainian refugees. The national policy of providing shelters for Ukrainian refugees primarily utilised financial incentives rather than coercive methods, with targeted funding encouraging municipalities to meet housing goals. To enhance the effective implementation of these measures, the national government delegated coordination responsibilities to safety regions, which served as intermediaries to align local actions with national expectations.

Normally, the emergency shelters for refugees fall under the responsibility of the Central reception of asylum seekers (dutch: Centraal opvang Asielzoekers, COA) and are intended for six to twelve months. During the 'Ukrainian' crisis emergency shelter became the responsibility of municipalities. The way in which coordination took place between central government and decentralised authorities shows similarities with the way in which this was done during the corona crisis (Wijkhuijs et al., 2022). The Netherlands took a coherent way to manage the Ukrainian influx with numerous national structures involved: coordination and decision-making on the entirety of measures and provisions that must be made in collaboration with the public and private partners involved – with a view to a coherent approach' (MvJV Burg van der, 2022). On 7 March 2022, the cabinet instructed the safety region chairpersons to create a total of 50,000 reception places: 2,000 per safety region, of which the first 1,000 reception places should be ready within two weeks. For the benefit of the cooperation between the State, the safety regions and other actors involved (such as the VNG, the Red Cross and the COA), the so-called Node Coordination Information Ukraine (KCIO) was set up in Zeist. The cabinet additionally approached the Security Council (in this case the chairpersons of the safety region) to coordinate the preparation of reception locations for Ukrainian refugees.

Depending on the fact that the process of reception of refugees from Ukraine was decentralised, municipalities played a crucial role in finding and preparing reception locations for Ukrainians. In the first days, these were mainly locations for crisis emergency shelter (in sports halls, etc.), while after that more work was done on finding and releasing more suitable forms of housing. Particularly in the first few weeks, the responsible ministers shared extensive information with the members of the Security Council. The chairpersons of the safety region have been assigned a coordinating role in the

implementation of the assignment that the State Secretary of Justice and Security has imposed on municipalities to organise shelters for Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers. Normally to say, the chairman of the safety region is officially responsible for the crisis regulation, like it was with Covid (Overheid, 2022).

- *Cooperation dynamic between Safety region and municipalities*

Since the beginning of the conflict the Safety region chairmen have been assigned a coordinating role in the implementation of the assignment that the State Secretary of JenV has imposed on municipalities to organise reception places for Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers (Rijksoverheid). Practically speaking, the tasks of the SR (Safety Region, dutch: Veiligheidsregio) were to provide general information about the numbers of locations and refugees in the region, criteria for reception, choices made, etc. (JenV). According to the interview with representatives from six municipalities, the role of SR in facilitating the reception and in cooperation with those municipalities varied. The representative of Berg en Dal municipality, while reflecting on the cooperation with SR, clearly specified the role of SF Gelderland-South in the reception process:

“ The Safety Region said: “Well, we're taking control and every municipality has to offer us a list of uh, like I think it was about 10 places that could be used for housing people in large numbers, such as gymnasiums or office buildings that were empty and stuff like that. And there was a list made, which locations were at the top and which were not so suited. And then the SR told every subregion how many people they should host, and then it was on the municipality to house them.”

This also reflects in the experiences of other municipalities. As it was specified by the representative of Druten in the beginning they have been able to receive an offer from the ship company to use one of their ships as the reception place, which was done through the Safety region coordination network. At the municipality of Wijchen, while preparing the first municipal reception location at the former municipal house, the municipality has asked the Safety region to inspect the building, and declare whether or not it is suitable to become a shelter. At the time that the HUB was open at the municipality of Beuningen, the Dutch private initiator was picking up people with the buses from the Polish border and was bringing them to the Netherlands. Depending on the fact that at Beuningen there was no municipal shelter yet, their HUB became a first reception point, from where people were spread further to other municipalities. Therefore, Wijchen and Druten municipalities were agreeing with the Safety Region on the amount of people they would need to receive and their reception capacity. The representative from the municipalities explained that it was rather helpful for municipalities, since all the refugees needed to be registered and receive living allowances at the municipality. All those additional processes demanded time and municipalities have asked Safety region for a more gradual influx of people:

“... 50 people this week, 50 next week, so we have those buildings to fill up slowly.”

Representative of Wijchen municipalities

On the other hand, the municipality of Tiel has communicated that they have no contact with the Safety region. Very occasionally the communication takes place via their own network, for example about fire safety in the buildings. At the time that the first municipal location was going open, the Safety region facilitated the furnishing of the location, for the rest their cooperation did not further take place. According to the municipality their primary contact in the process of reception was Regional Coordination Center for Refugee Distribution (dutch: Regionaal Coördinatiecentrum Vluchtelingen Spreiding, RCVS), which was established as coordination network of municipalities in the a particular region in order to support the Safety region in the tasks of effectively distributing refugees from Ukraine. The coordination and distribution of Ukrainian displaced persons across regions took place through the Regional Coordination Center for Refugee Distribution (RCVS). The RCVS mediated in (inter)regional transfers, kept an overview of available places and was in cooperation with national partners. If there was shelter available in the municipality, the municipality would contact the Regional Coordination Center for Refugee Distribution (RCVS). If there are no reception places available in the region, the RCVS were supposed to submit a request via an automated request to the Ukraine Coordination Information Node (KCIO) / National Center for Refugee Distribution (LCVS). (Rijksoverheid). Representative from Tiel indicated as a response to the a question of the role of Safety region in facilitating the reception in the municipality:

“They never did that. They don't do that at all anymore. They no longer do any scale in the municipality”

On the other hand, Safety regions have repeatedly communicated that the tasks they were given have exceeded their capabilities. Already after half a year into the war in Ukraine there were already messages coming that Safety regions experience coordinating the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine as a difficult task. They needed clearer guidelines and guidance from the central government, according to conversations that the Justice and Security Inspectorate (JenV Inspectorate) held with representatives of fourteen safety regions. (JenV, 2022). The research by NIVP from 2022 has also stressed this issue. The chairman of Safety regions at the time, Wouter Kollf, indicated that there is a need to discuss a question of which types of crises Safety regions want to be responsible for. The fact that the problems in Ter Apel (which have been going on for a long time) now suddenly have to be solved by the safety regions seems inappropriate and there is a risk that the government will also go the way of the safety regions for other problems that are not solved nationally. (NIVP, 2022).

“The safety regions will become the workhorse of the cabinet.”

Chairman of Safety regions Council

Consequently, from July 1st 2023 the Security Council was no longer responsible for coordinating (emergency) reception of asylum seekers, but it still kept being responsible for reception places for refugee Ukrainians. Coordination of reception capacity was transferred to the provincial management tables and the executive tasks fell to the municipalities within a province, in collaboration with the COA. The 25 chairmen of the safety regions also indicated that they will continue to look for additional places for refugees from Ukraine. (Veiligheidsberaad, 2023). Nevertheless, the effort of SR in coordinating and facilitating the reception and distribution of refugees from Ukraine, but also the necessity in fulfilling this role also became less with the time. Commonly, SR structures are activated in times of a disaster or a crisis, outside of those times the role of Safety regions comes to actively monitor the current situation in the region on developments and events that may have an impact on safety and health within the region. (Regionaal Crisisplan Veiligheidsregio Kennemerland, 2022). Respectively, this is what happened in 2023, when reception of refugees from Ukraine transformed from crisis mode to a “project mode”. The representative from Berg en Dal municipality described this transformation of the need in coordination from SR in the following way:

*“And so it's taking longer and you can't be in crisis for more than a year. That's absurd. So we have to dial it back.... And now we want to do what is necessary within the constraints of the “gemeente”.
So not not in a crisis mode, but in business as usual mode.”*

Position of the representative from Nijmegen municipality was respective, as soon as the influx of refugees from Ukraine was not defined as the crisis anymore, municipality pursued to focalize the reception process even more within the contains of municipality:

“So we have defined everything in a project. We have a small project group of municipal officials who do all the substantive development and follow and implement national regulations.”

4.4. The process of municipal shelter arrangement for Ukrainian refugees

The first step in the shelter arrangement process began with crisis teams being set up and looking for the relevant buildings in the area, which could be suitable to host Ukrainian refugees. The necessity to find the suitable building was urgent, so the buildings which came to be in the municipal property were the first options to decide on. It means that the municipalities, which had the building as their property benefited the most in the process in terms of rapidly arranging the reception places. The municipality of Nijmegen was even a step ahead and could make good use of their “future proof” strategy with regard to the available housing. A year earlier, Nijmegen had started making an inventory of the buildings that might be suitable for the reception of asylum seekers. The municipality had a signal from the mayor (who was the chairman of the Safety Regions Council at the time) that it could well be that when Covid-19 is over, many asylum seekers will come to the Netherlands again. So the municipality decided to take a look at the available buildings in Nijmegen that are still suitable

for asylum seekers. The entire list of possibilities had been made and that was of course, as the representative of the municipality mentioned: “was worth its weight in gold”. Simply because the municipality could immediately take that list and take a look at which buildings are the most suitable to become reception shelters for Ukrainians. Most suitable and preferred options for the municipalities were former office or hospital buildings, where a large number of people could be placed simultaneously. Municipalities clarified that it was easier for them to have people accumulated at one location, where they could, for example, more efficiently spread the information, provide necessary assistance and offer the services. Representative from Tiel municipality have indicated as follows:

“ (at those locations)... you can reach your residents faster, so that means that the coordinators are actually always at a location. And the residents know how to find us. I can organise more things faster for larger groups, than communication faster, so that is why we choose this...”

Important to note that owning or building the location was overall a more preferred option for the municipality rather than renting them, since it would not demand the expenses for the third parties and the finances could be put into improving the locations or other processes around the reception (language courses or mental health programs). And also in the cases if local businesses or non-commercial organisations were not present in the area or did not own the suitable options for converting, municipalities decided to build their own locations (Beuningen, Tiel, Wijchen). The municipality of Tiel preferred to purchase the buildings, in a case if it was possible. In the location where one of their three municipal shelters is situated, there were long-term plans to build homes. At the time that municipality was looking for the reception place, this building was occupied as an anti-squat building, from where people left or their contracts were terminated. As a result the municipality purchased that building and converted it into the municipal reception. Afterwards, the municipality decided to build housing units in another area, which they have also purchased themselves. Housing units can be understood as a form of housing where the dwelling unit, the building location or the inhibition period are temporary. Flex-housing developed and often used as a potential stop-gap solution in Dutch housing policy, to temper the acute housing shortages in the country and provide accommodation to a set of vulnerable groups of residents (refugees, migrants, homeless youth, etc.) (Druta, 2023). The flex housing includes all the forms of temporary and mobile housing, such as module houses, chalets or container type houses. In the municipality of Tiel those units set up on the terrain that they have received from the local school. In contrast to residential care buildings, the funding of primary education housing is still largely supply-driven and is shared between municipalities and school boards. The municipality makes buildings available and pays for new construction and expansion. The school board is responsible for management and maintenance, and since 2015 also for external maintenance. The ownership of a school building and territories around it can of course lie with various parties, namely: the competent authority (the school council), the municipality and a third party (Po-Raad). So in the cases that the buildings were not created with government funds at the time, then both the economic and legal ownership thereof lie with the school

board. However, most of the schools in the Netherlands were still built with the public money, the renovations or investments are mostly done by the municipality. The amendment to the Constitution was elaborated in the Primary Education Act 1920. This act included an obligation for the Municipal Council to provide money to a legal entity if it wanted to establish a special primary school and needed a site or building for this purpose. The Act therefore also stipulated that if the school function of the building or land was discontinued, its ownership would revert to the municipality. This was later called the economic claim right (Verus, 2023). According to the representative from the Tiel municipality, the municipality was able to buy this land from the school and repurpose it as a flex housing area. With or without the possibility of economic claim, the relationships between the municipality and schools over the territory and building in school possession are often tightly knitted. Buildings of hospitals and schools are considered to be social real estate buildings (including nursing homes, libraries, theatres, fire stations, etc.). Commonly, those buildings are used to provide services of great social importance and the service provision (including the necessary housing) is fully or partially publicly or obligatorily-collectively funded (Plan Bureau van Leefomgeving, 2017). So in the case of a crisis this system makes it more likely for the municipality to utilise buildings with which they have been more involved and over which they have some economic claim.

Other municipalities chose to set up the flex housing not only because they preferred to provide reception places within municipal ownership, but also due to various other factors. For example, in the municipality of Beuningen, the local circumstances made it particularly suitable to construct chalet-type flexible housing for Ukrainian refugees. A representative from the municipality explained that they had explored numerous options; however, the municipality did not possess any buildings that could be repurposed as shelters. Furthermore, there were no appropriate buildings available from commercial or non-commercial stakeholders that could be converted into suitable accommodations. Despite these challenges, the municipalities did have some land at their disposal, which they saw as a viable solution to address the urgent need for refugee housing. Additionally, there were local companies capable of facilitating the construction of the chalets. These included building companies, planning and consultancy firms, and companies specialising in site preparation, among others. Consequently, the municipality decided to utilise available piece of land to build the necessary accommodations, which also demonstrates the necessary commitment to finding a practical solution amidst limited resources and options.

As previously detailed in Table 6, the municipality of Beuningen initially provided crisis emergency shelters (HUB) for Ukrainians refugees. It wasn't until the sixth month of the Russian war in Ukraine that chalet accommodations were made available to receive Ukrainian refugees. From July 2022 the municipality had been slowly receiving people in those chalets, until the half September 2022, when the locations were completely full. Slow process of letting people in the location was explained by the necessity to arrange many other procedures around the reception. Additionally, the availability of the

HUB in the municipality in the first week of the war made it feasible for the municipality to open the reception place amid the sixth month into the war. Moreover, the HUB also allowed for the gradual and more measured distribution of individuals at the location. The same role as the cruise ships played in immediate reception, for the municipality of Beuningen the HUB became an intermediary option to create time and possibility for more suitable and efficient options. Ultimately, the municipality expressed great satisfaction with their decision to build the chalets. Each chalet accommodates one family, is equipped with its own facilities, and is suitable for long-term use. As in comparison to the municipality owned or proposed by the local business owners “antikraak” buildings, with chalets there is no rental contract that could expire and they can be seen as the multi-functional housing solutions. The representative from the municipality communicated:

“We also said, maybe the war will last half a year and people can go back very quickly. We will put the chalets there for five years, then we can possibly use them there for other target groups, for ordinary house seekers or perhaps other refugees.”

Building on this perspective, the use of flex housing, such as chalets, has become not just a long-term housing solution but also a strategic response to the limitations of standard temporary municipal locations. Most municipal shelters are initially created according to the standard provided by the Temporary Protection Directive as short-term housing solutions. The temporary nature of these housing solutions often means that they are not equipped to provide the stability necessary for longer-term settlement and integration into the community. For instance, temporary housing facilities may lack adequate space for families, insufficient privacy, and minimal access to personal cooking and sanitary facilities, which are crucial for maintaining dignity and a sense of normalcy. As it was communicated by the representatives of five municipalities (except for Beuningen), the prevalent issue in municipal shelters is the lack of privacy, the necessity to share facilities like bathrooms and kitchens, and the close quarters living conditions, which pose daily challenges to the dignity and comfort of the residents. This temporary setup of locations intensifies stress and conflict, especially as these facilities are shared among individuals who have not chosen to live together and may have vastly different backgrounds and needs. Moreover, the shelters have seen a spectrum of mental health issues, often exacerbated by the lack of privacy and the stress of communal living. Many residents arrived with pre-existing psychiatric conditions, which were previously managed but became uncontrolled due to the disruption of their routines and medical care caused by displacement. Next to it, the big issue is the misuse of alcohol, which often exacerbates underlying tensions among residents. This has led to interpersonal conflicts and, in some cases, serious family disputes requiring intervention. For example, situations of domestic violence have necessitated the separation of individuals to different locations for safety reasons. As a direct consequence of these temporary limitations, municipalities and supporting organisations are continually in a reactive mode, scrambling

to address not just the immediate shelter needs but also the social issues that arise from such unstable living conditions.

Continuing from the challenges posed by the temporary nature of housing under the Temporary Protection Directive, survey data from Ukrainian refugees themselves provides critical insights into their housing preferences and underscores the pressing need for more suitable accommodation options. Notably, when asked about their reasons for wanting to move, the majority of respondents indicated a strong desire to live separately. The survey revealed that the primary motivation to move from the current living place was the aspiration for independence and privacy. 19 respondents specifically expressed a preference to not share living spaces with strangers and 4 a specific desire to live together in a separate setting with a family member or partner, highlighting the importance of having their own, private living areas.

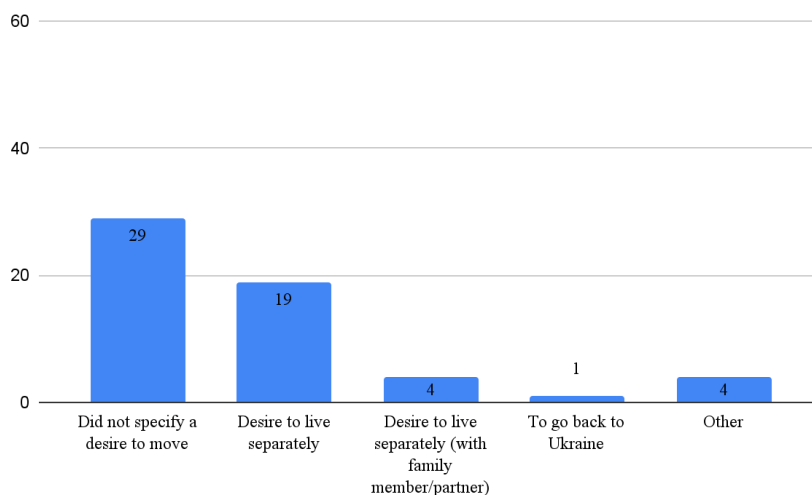


Figure 6. Desire the relocate from current living place

The need for privacy (which entails living in close quarters with others, often in settings lacking adequate personal space, leads to tensions and conflicts with neighbours) emerged as a significant factor for a desire to move, for the respondents that indicated the desire to move. Most of the responses indicating a desire to move came from municipalities with short-term housing arrangements, which often lack privacy and are prone to conflicts due to their temporary nature. In contrast, fewer desires to relocate were reported in municipalities like Beuningen (1 among the share), where the shelter arrangements are specified as long-term solutions that offer more privacy. However, it's interesting to note that 29 respondents did not specify a desire to move. This could suggest a level of satisfaction with their current arrangements, or it might indicate a resignation to their circumstances, possibly due to a lack of awareness of available alternatives or a feeling of uncertainty about the feasibility of moving. The absence of a stated desire to move could also reflect a wait-and-see approach, where individuals are holding out hope for improvements in their current situation or for the conflict in Ukraine to resolve so they can return home. This variance in satisfaction levels

highlights the crucial role municipalities play in shaping the living conditions and overall well-being of refugees. Building on this, the second chapter delves deeper into the proactive and central role municipalities assume in the reception and accommodation of Ukrainian refugees. As primary actors, municipalities not only initiated the reception processes but also controlled the allocation of resources, managed logistics, and directly interacted with other stakeholders to ensure the efficient setup and maintenance of refugee accommodations. Those interactions are described in more detail below. Important to note, that municipalities were not only crucial for pooling resources and expertise but also for integrating a wide range of services necessary for comprehensive refugee support.

- *Central role of municipalities in the process of shelter arrangement*

The reception of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands can certainly be described as decentralised and marked by the central role of the municipalities. The roles in the reception process were distributed such that the practical implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive was assigned exclusively to mayors and their municipalities. Safety Regions were presumed to coordinate the process, however, depending on the previous chapter it is visible that whether or not they fulfilled this role differed per municipality. Meaning that the accumulation of the resources available in the area to arrange the reception was solely the assignment of the municipality. This process normally began at the point, when the municipality decided to actually take Ukrainian refugees in and arrange the shelter for them. As it was previously described, the decision would come at different points of time, depending on the willingness and proactivity of the mayor. When the decision was already in place, the formation of the crisis teams began. Crisis teams within the municipality were active mostly in the beginning and were consisting normally from the civil servants available and necessary at the moment to realise the reception places. When the crisis mode of the reception was not in place anymore, the crisis teams were not active anymore and all the responsibilities of the crisis team went to the project team. Commonly, the project team has a project manager, which coordinates the governmental workers, necessary for the process of running the municipal locations for Ukrainian refugees. The interviews conducted for the purpose of this thesis were primarily with the project/program managers for refugees, mainly responsible for the reception (the placement, the management of the locations and setting up new locations) of various target groups, including Ukrainians. Together with that, if there are governmental workers necessary for the project, they are engaged in the process and are covered by the expenses for the project covered by the national government. As the municipality of Nijmegen specified:

“In addition, there are also people who are involved with us, from the civil affairs or financial department, or lawyers, who are paid per hour. So those hours that they work are covered by project costs.”

Followingly, the Dutch national government created the conditions for the municipalities, where their financial needs to arrange the shelters were fully covered, leaving them with the responsibility and possibility to use and engage all necessary resources for that. All the municipalities have communicated that the costs they receive for the reception of Ukrainians are sufficient to fully cover the expenses made for reception. When being asked about the biggest challenges in the process of arranging the receptions, expenses for the reception were not mentioned by any of the municipal representatives. At the same time two municipalities did comment that the lack of willingness of some municipalities to arrange the reception for Ukrainian refugees and/or receive more of them in the municipality can not be justified by the financial expenses for it, since the national government fully covers them. Therefore, the clarification from the national government in the letter from the minister of Justice and Safety about the expenses to be fully covered, did provide the necessary secure conditions for some municipalities to start the process of shelter arrangement.

4.5. Role of Market and Civil Society in Refugee Housing Cooperative dynamic

- Private business owners

The dynamic between municipalities and other actors such as local businesses, non-commercial organisations, and churches is also critical. Municipalities often collaborated with these entities to utilise available properties for refugee housing. This collaboration can range from utilising anti-squat buildings to setting up chalet-type flexible housing, depending on local circumstances and availability. With regard to involving the local business owners, in the case that municipalities did not have the building in their possession, they started looking for other options or turned to different stakeholders in the area for the corresponding types of buildings. Sometimes municipalities were offered particular options from the private owners in the area. Often those were (cruise ship) hotel owners. In the beginning, those options have also been in favour of municipalities, since those were “ready-to-use” options, without the need to refurbish or/and furnish them. Because of the Covid those cruise ships were completely at a standstill, as no one was allowed to sail at that time. Owners have offered these options because they were not generating income from them otherwise, and renting them to the municipality was considered a rational choice. In addition, they were completely ready to receive the people, with the crew also being prepared. That is why hotel ships were the first place where municipalities have arranged shelters, even at the municipalities, which had their own building in possession. This occurred because most of the buildings needed to be prepared to accommodate the people first, whilst hotels gave the opportunity to rapidly host them. Moreover, placing Ukrainians refugees at the cruise ship hotels gave the municipalities so much needed time to prepare other reception options. However, municipalities, which have made use of those options, did indicate that cruise ships can not be a long-term choice. Most of the time the rooms of ships are small, for two people maximum. Cruise ship hotels are catered, without a possibility for people to cook and have

control of their own nutrition. Additionally, these options are more expensive due to the lack of many necessary provisions that need to be supplied for people living there. The high cost from receiving Ukrainians stems not only from the rental of the ship but also from personnel (crew) costs, cleaning, location for the ship to be moored, and involvement of an intermediary for mediation. The municipality of Nijmegen has also respectively indicated that those are “expensive and temporary solutions”.

The municipality of Berg en Dal did not have any other options in the area and made use of the options proposed by the private businessmen, who owned numerous properties. The owner came forward with the proposition to conclude a rent agreement with the municipality for a certain period of time. The municipality representative has explained that this owner has already submitted the plan to demolish those buildings and build new ones at that place and that he was still waiting for the decision. In the meantime he was not making any profit from those buildings and, as the municipality representative quoted the owner, that he “might as well get paid by renting them to the municipality to host Ukrainian refugees there”. The lease contract was concluded for one year with the possibility to prolong it for another year. Depending on the fact that those buildings were supposed to be demolished, the contract contained the details about six and three months' notice, in the case of the plans to renovate the area were confirmed and people would need to be replaced to another location. So basically those buildings used to host Ukrainians were “antikraak” (squat) buildings- commonly buildings that were originally used for another purpose and converted into temporary living space (old school buildings and business premises, but also country houses, an old gymnasium or an old hospital or institution) (Huurwoningen.nl). Taking everything into account, if the municipality did not have any suitable buildings to accommodate Ukrainian refugees, renting a building from private business owners was a useful and practical solution. However, in other cases the preference was still to have or to buy the location for the municipal possession and not renting them from other parties. Financial component to organise the municipal reception for Ukrainian refugees definitely played an important role in the choices municipalities made. The representative of Nijmegen municipality mentioned that they are always cautious about private initiatives and that they wanted as many buildings as possible to be already owned by the municipality, as “there is no company that does not want to make money. That is simply part of being a company”.

Nevertheless, in the realm of collaborative dynamics between municipalities and private actors, the experiences were not always positive or effective, as illustrated by a specific case involving a local entrepreneur and a Beuningen municipality. A local entrepreneur in Beuningen traditionally provided housing for seasonal workers, including Ukrainians. Normally, his facilities were used to house migrant workers during the harvest season, but when the war broke out seasonal workers from Ukraine chose not to return to Ukraine at the end of the season. This transitioned him from an employer to a private host. However, the entrepreneur's temporary housing permit also did not cover year-round residence, prompting him to seek guidance and assistance from the local municipality

when the workers expressed a desire to stay. The municipality, however, found itself in a difficult position. While they recognized the unique circumstances, they were constrained by regulations that did not allow for such exceptions, as making one could potentially create broader issues with other seasonal housing provisions. As the discussions unfolded, it became apparent that there were additional concerns, including the well-being of the children involved, who had not been attending school for months. The entrepreneur, unfamiliar with the full scope of responsibilities required in guiding and supporting long-term residents, had not facilitated educational opportunities for the children. In response, the municipality explored alternative solutions and successfully arranged for the group to be relocated to a regional emergency housing location in Berg en Dal. This intervention also ensured that the children were enrolled in school, addressing an immediate educational gap. This scenario illustrates the complex dynamic that can arise between municipalities and private actors in the refugee reception process. While the entrepreneur did not act with ill intentions, his lack of experience in long-term guest management led to a situation that required municipal intervention. It highlights the importance of clear communication and cooperation between private actors and municipal authorities to navigate the regulatory landscape and ensure the welfare of all individuals involved.

Building on this foundation of collaborative engagement, in cases of specific needs, municipalities also proactively initiated cooperation with various other actors to ensure comprehensive support for refugees. These collaborations include for example hiring private *translators and interpreters*, given the language barrier or not ability of welfare organisations present at the location to provide the one. What is worth mentioning is that in several instances, municipalities have opted to use Russian speakers residing locally as translators (but also those coming from former Soviet Union republics). This decision, however, raises significant concerns given the cultural and political sensitivities associated with the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine. The engagement of Russian translators without considering the potential discomfort or distress it may cause to Ukrainian refugees can undermine the trust and safety refugees feel in their new environment. Moreover, many discussions that need translation, such as those concerning health issues, involve highly personal information. The ability of translators to handle such sensitive information with the necessary discretion and empathy is critical. From interviews with municipal representatives, it emerged that during the crisis, the focus was predominantly on addressing more immediate, practical needs. Consequently, the subtleties of cultural sensitivity and the personal nature of certain discussions were often overlooked.

Further services that municipalities would involve would be *catering* at the locations, in the case of the absence of the kitchen or possibility to provide the opportunity to cook. Practically all six municipalities have made use of companies providing catering services for people at the locations. Mostly in the cases when people reside on the cruise ships or when the municipal location is not

suitable by the safety standard to provide cooking facilities. However, it is important to note that from the survey conducted among Ukrainian refugees, it was revealed that a significant number of respondents, specifically 27 out of 58, expressed a strong preference for having their own kitchen facilities at their accommodation. This desire underscores the cultural importance of home cooking within the Ukrainian community, where preparing meals is not only a daily activity but also a cherished tradition that fosters familial bonds and comfort during times of displacement. The ability to cook independently significantly enhances the quality of the reception experience for these individuals, as it provides them with a sense of autonomy and normalcy. Providing kitchen facilities at refugee accommodations can therefore play a crucial role in improving the overall well-being and satisfaction of displaced Ukrainians.

Most municipal locations have also hired *security personnel*, in order to maintain order and ensure safety at refugee accommodations, municipalities may employ security staff. This is especially important in larger shelters or in situations where tensions might arise due to the close quarters and stresses faced by the displaced individuals. Municipalities have mentioned that hiring the security personnel was also initial for protecting people from human trafficking or exploitation. Often security services would be the most costly services to provide on the location. While most municipal locations have prioritised hiring security personnel to maintain order and ensure the safety of refugee accommodations—particularly in larger shelters or where tensions may arise—the municipality of Beuningen has taken a different approach. Recognizing the absence of significant conflicts, Beuningen has decided to discontinue its security services. Instead of investing in security, the funds have been redirected to provide language courses for the refugees. Municipality representatives specified that the language empowerment is a more effective use of resources, contributing positively to the refugees' adjustment and reducing the perceived need for security measures.

- *Civil Society (Non-commercial local organisations and churches)*

In addition to local business owners, local hospitals have also been instrumental in assisting the municipalities. For instance, in the municipalities of Tiel and Berg en Dal, local hospitals took the initiative to offer buildings under their ownership for use. These buildings, located in both Tiel and Berg en Dal, were classified as "antikraak" properties and were slated for demolition in the long term. Since 2009 hospitals have been financially responsible for their investments in buildings and the ownership has been processed in the balance sheet at a fair value. Meaning that since 2009 and onwards hospitals became the sole owners of the buildings they possessed or have purchased. Profits from the sale of land or buildings could be thus used to strengthen the equity or finance investments, at the same time allowing hospitals to become less dependent on government approval or funding for new projects. Therefore, hospitals could operate more autonomously from national government

bodies, functioning as quasi-commercial entities while maintaining their non-profit status. As a result of that, local hospitals have been able to make buildings available for the municipality to arrange the reception of Ukrainian refugees there. Through the Safety Region, the municipality established contact with the hospital administration. This led to the hospital offering the municipality the opportunity to purchase the available building. Not only the building themselves, at the municipality of Tiel the process of receiving and on site supporting people went in cooperation with hospital staff.

At the municipality of Nijmegen the reception places from Ukrainian refugees also took place in the former church building, which was partially converted into the municipal shelter. This building was the property of the local church corporations and the municipality was able to rent this building from the cooperation. The representative from the municipality has also communicated that in many smaller municipalities of the Safety region of Gelderland-South the reception of Ukrainian refugees was often provided by the churches. Frequently, the church in those smaller communities is almost as important as the municipality

“Those churches do pay more attention to it (understood as support of refugees) also because of course the people are asked by the church to do that.”

Municipality of Nijmegen

In many instances the churches in those municipalities were also responsible for guiding the process of reception as well. Therefore, the local charities and communities were also playing a crucial role in providing the reception for refugees from Ukraine. Representative from Nijmegen has also communicated that renting the buildings from the church corporations was also a more preferable option, since they are not private individuals, nor is it a commercial organisation involved in accumulating the profit. The costs for renting out from the cooperative were smaller, that from renting from the local business owners. Comparingly to the social real estate, religious real estate, thus the church and the church building, almost always form one structural unit, ownership of which can be held by different parties – certainly in older complexes. The church building is often owned by a religious community, while the civil community owns the tower. In these often complex schemes church cooperation can act as housing corporations (from Dutch: *woningcorporaties*), having the right to rent out the building, but are also restricted by the law from profit accumulating activities (Krabbendam, 2024). Additionally, due to new regulations, renting religious buildings to third parties has become quite complicated (VNG, 2024). In contrast, renting them to the municipality is a simpler and less risky process, making it more plausible for both sides to cooperate in the situation of a need.

Along with local non-commercial organisations, the collaboration between municipalities and key humanitarian organisations, such as the Red Cross, VluchtelingenWerk (Refugee Work), the Salvation Army, and various local welfare and healthcare organisations, has been crucial in the comprehensive response to the housing needs of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. These

organisations have played a pivotal role not only in private reception scenarios but also within municipal shelters, enhancing the support system available to refugees. In particular, Vluchteling Werk since the beginning of the war in Ukraine has supported people in the municipal locations. Vluchteling Werk is a refugee aid organisation, which has a long history of cooperation with Dutch municipalities in supporting refugees in integration and participation in society. With regard to the Ukrainian refugees, the organisation has provided speaking hours with Ukrainian refugees, helped to educate and inform refugees about their rights and available resources. Instead of VluchtelingenWerk such support was also often provided by other local welfare organisations. The municipalities often employed a care coordinator from a welfare organisation, who would be dedicated exclusively to working with Ukrainian refugees. This care coordinator played a critical role in directly assessing and addressing the individual needs of the refugees, including handling severe family conflicts and arranging appropriate care. Care coordinators normally still have meetings with refugees to discuss their concerns and needs. With their comprehensive knowledge of the social care system, care coordinators facilitate access to necessary services. For example, if a refugee needs psychiatric help, the coordinator can arrange for them to see a psychiatrist. These professionals play a crucial role in addressing complex social issues that refugees may face upon resettlement. Positioned within the welfare organisation, these care coordinators engage directly with refugees to provide tailored support and guidance. Also the critical role of the Red Cross in supporting Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands cannot be underestimated. Notably, a significant proportion of the refugees, with 27 out of 38 respondents, reported being placed in shelters by the Red Cross, which underscores the organisation's pivotal role in the reception and accommodation process. The Red Cross has been instrumental in the operation of Hub reception centres, where they have taken on the responsibility of supporting Ukrainian refugees upon their initial arrival. In those Hubs the Red Cross coordinated with various Dutch municipalities to facilitate the distribution of refugees to different locations. This collaboration has been essential in ensuring that the transition of refugees to their new temporary homes is as smooth and efficient as possible. Typically, the cooperation between the Red Cross and Dutch municipalities involves a well-structured approach where the Red Cross helps in the initial reception and registration of refugees, providing immediate needs such as food, shelter, and medical care. Following this, they assist in the more complex process of relocating individuals and families to municipal accommodations, ensuring that each municipality is prepared to receive and support the new arrivals adequately. This process often includes ongoing support and monitoring to address any emerging needs or challenges faced by the refugees. The collaboration between the Red Cross and municipalities serves as a model of how humanitarian efforts and local governance can come together to manage large-scale crises effectively, ensuring that those affected receive the support and care they need swiftly and efficiently. These smaller, community-based groups were also instrumental in addressing the unique and immediate needs of refugees, complementing the broader efforts with localised support and resources. In Beuningen, “Stichting Perspectief”, the local welfare organisation,

played a significant role in mobilising community resources and volunteers, especially during the initial stages of the crisis. They coordinated efforts that involved local volunteers who worked closely with the location coordinators at refugee shelters. These volunteers, alongside a team of Ukrainian interpreters, were facilitating communication between municipality and refugees. They have been particularly useful during complex issues and discussion, to ensure that the needs and concerns of Ukrainian refugees were rightfully addressed.

The municipality of Nijmegen has established a cooperative arrangement with a local addiction care centre to provide specialised guidance and support. This collaboration marks Nijmegen as potentially the first municipality to organise such a partnership independently, aimed at addressing the needs of individuals struggling with addiction and psychological issues within the refugee population. The municipality has also explored the possibility of extending this collaborative model to other municipalities within the region, enhancing the overall effectiveness of care coordination across multiple areas, including Wijchen and Berg en Dal. This approach includes placing individuals who cannot remain at the municipal shelter due to behavioural issues related to alcohol or psychological problems into a specialised department where they receive dedicated support from the addiction care institution. Certainly, with the extension of the Temporary Protection Directive until 2026, municipal shelters are set to continue operating in various capacities, ensuring ongoing collaboration with different stakeholders. This cooperation is crucial as it supports targeted approaches to complex challenges within the shelter system. For example, this approach includes placing individuals who cannot remain in the general shelter environment due to behavioural issues related to alcohol or psychological problems into a specialised department, etc. However, the limited status granted by the Directive raises concerns about the long-term effectiveness of these continued services.

4.6. The experience of Ukrainian refugees with regard to housing arrangement

This chapter explores the limitations of the temporary protection system in fully meeting the evolving needs of Ukrainian refugees, particularly in terms of housing and integration. It also examines the role of employment opportunities and geographic location in refugees' integration, emphasising the need for a housing policy that supports long-term well-being and economic stability.

The temporary nature of the protection may not fully accommodate the evolving needs of the refugees or the systemic adjustments required for sustained care and integration. Moreover, despite the provision of some form of housing under the Directive, there is a strong desire among Ukrainians to rent their own places, seeking more independence and privacy. Survey data reveals a strong preference among Ukrainian refugees for renting their own apartments, primarily driven by the desire for increased privacy- a recurrent theme identified as the main reason for moving away from municipal locations. This preference underscores the importance of 'personal living space,' which

respondents explained as having at least a private room, ability not to share living space with neighbours, such as kitchen and bathroom, ability to choose with whom to share the living space (family member/partner/pet).

Furthermore, the survey highlights significant preferences for housing features that promote refugees' independence and community integration. High value is placed on proximity to essential services such as educational institutions and healthcare facilities, as well as access to public transportation and employment opportunities. These preferences are aligned with findings from a chi-square analysis that indicates an association between refugees' employment status and their municipality of residence, illustrating the impact of geographic location on employment opportunities and as a result on the broader social integration. Particularly noteworthy is the age composition of the respondents in the survey predominantly between the ages of 25 and 44.

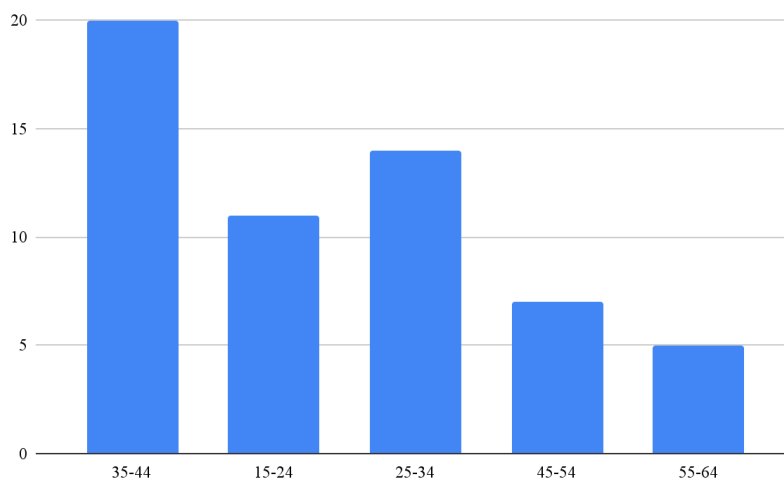


Figure 7. Age of respondents

Moreover, around 54,4% of respondents, or 31 out of 57 individuals, also reported being fully or part time employed at the time of the survey.

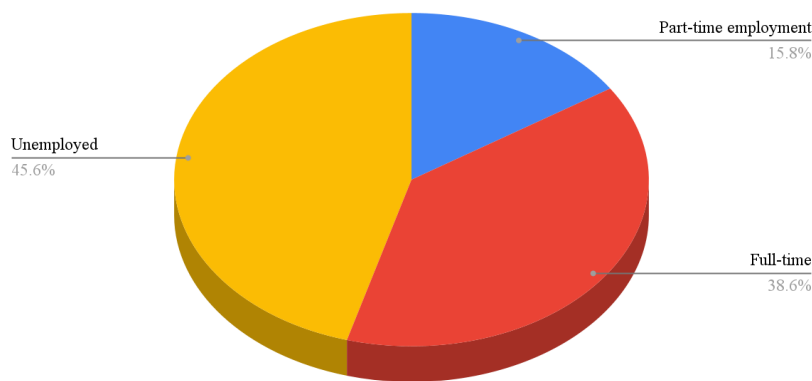


Figure 8. Employment status of respondents

This demographic represents an active working population, underscoring the importance of employment opportunities in their settlement and integration process. The substantial representation of this age group highlights their potential significant contribution to the local economy and the critical role that employment and employment opportunities in the area play in their overall well-being of refugees and integration into the community.

Additionally, respondents were queried about potential improvements to their current living conditions. A recurring theme centred on the enhancement of social and economic opportunities, specifically the availability of work and community ties. Respondents emphasised the importance of having accessible information about the labour market and potential employment opportunities within the region.

Those insights combined point to the necessity of a refugee support approach that goes beyond immediate housing provisions. Effective support must consider the long-term well-being and economic stability of refugees, advocating for a housing policy that not only meets immediate needs but also respects and enhances refugees' dignity and integration. Nevertheless, the ongoing housing crisis and the scarcity of available housing options pose significant challenges, making the current shelter system an essential, albeit limited, housing solution for Ukrainian refugees for the foreseeable future.

5. Conclusions

To address the research question regarding the nature and efficacy of multi-stakeholder shelter arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the safety region of Gelderland-South, this study has examined the multifaceted dynamics of these arrangements within the 6 municipalities in the region.

To begin with, understanding multifaceted cooperation in housing arrangements required an in-depth analysis of the system context in which these arrangements occurred. Thus, the key components of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) in the Dutch context were analysed, highlighting that the decentralised approach to shelter arrangements for Ukrainian refugees placed significant responsibilities on municipalities, demonstrating how this system context can create both opportunities and constraints. On the one hand, decentralisation has allowed for flexible, locally adapted responses. Municipalities like Nijmegen, for instance, have effectively utilised pre-existing resources and "future-proof" strategies, showcasing proactive leadership and planning. On the other hand, this approach has led to inconsistencies in the quality and type of shelter provided across different municipalities, reflecting variations in resource availability, strategic foresight, and levels of preparedness.

The Dutch implementation of the TPD highlighted the challenges of translating EU directives into local actions, balancing the need for rapid response with the complexities of long-term refugee integration within a structured legal framework. The literature notes that responsibilities for certain policy areas have increasingly shifted to regional and local levels, replacing traditional governing with governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). However, in times of crisis, the relationship between the state and local governments required local governments remaining subordinate to the central government, while still holding varying degrees of power based on the decentralised system in the Netherlands (Vedung, 1991). Followingly, the process of shelter arrangement involved a layered approach where municipal mayors were legally mandated to provide housing, financial resources, and other support services for Ukrainian refugees. This legal mandate included the national government employing a combination of financial incentives, decentralised coordination through Safety Regions, and establishment of coordination centres (HUBs) to align refugee reception policy. The effectiveness of these tools was influenced by local leadership, resource availability, and the clarity of national guidelines shaped the process of shelter arrangement for Ukrainian refugees. Despite providing those policy alignment techniques there were no legislative penalties or strict deadlines from the national government for non-compliance with reception policies, leading to significant variability in how and at which point into the crisis the municipalities responded.

Not only policy alignment techniques, but also local coordination had a significant impact on the response. Operating in crisis mode, alongside a pre-existing housing shortage, created a complex situation in which municipalities had to arrange housing. As discussed in the theoretical framework, societal problems are becoming more difficult to address (Churchman, 1967), and open innovation and collaborative systems offer collective solutions. The effort to resolve issues like refugee housing has greatly influenced democratic participation and collaborative decision-making. In this thesis, this dynamic is reflected in the emergence of private reception initiatives by Dutch host families and local

businesses, which played a key role when municipal shelters were not yet operational. Additionally, the limited capacity of municipal shelters led to greater reliance on private and non-governmental actors for shelter arrangements. These findings highlight the critical role of collaboration and networked decision-making in tackling complex challenges like refugee housing. Partnerships with local NGOs, businesses, and civil society, often referred to as private reception, exemplify the principles of co-production, where diverse stakeholders collaboratively contribute to and benefit from housing solutions. This approach directly addresses the question of the roles various stakeholders play in providing shelter for Ukrainian refugees.

In addition to providing the physical housing solutions, theoretical frameworks on refugee housing suggest that housing is not merely a physical space but a vital component of social and economic integration, closely tied to a refugee's sense of belonging and identity (Kale, 2019; Brun, 2001; Ager & Strang, 2008). The data from the survey reflects this, as Ukrainian refugees express a strong preference for renting private accommodations over municipal shelters, motivated by a desire for independence, privacy, and control over their living environment. This mirrors the theoretical assertion that a "home" is a place where physical space and social-emotional connections intertwine (Easthope, 2004), reinforcing the notion that personal living spaces, especially private rooms or the ability to choose housemates, are central to both well-being and identity formation. Respondents' emphasis on proximity to services like healthcare, education, and employment aligns with Ager and Strang (2008) integration framework, which sees housing as key to social participation. This highlights the need to embed refugee housing in urban plans with access to social and economic infrastructure (Phillimore, 2011). The strong presence of working-age respondents (25–44 years) and a 54.4% employment rate indicate an eager labour force, showing that integration goes beyond shelter to economic participation. This ties into the broader concept of "home" as a place of opportunity and security, crucial for refugees' long-term well-being (Cooper Marcus, 1997). Those findings reflect the sub-question regarding Ukrainian refugees' experiences with housing arrangements by showing their clear preference for private, independent living spaces and the integration of housing with essential services to support their social and economic well-being.

Limitations of the research

This research has several limitations that future studies could address: 1) *Scope and Generalizability*, since the research focuses on six municipalities within one safety region (Gelderland-South), which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries with different governance frameworks, resource levels, or social dynamics. The research has also a 2) *short-term focus* of crisis reception and transition phase from crisis to “project”. The study provides insights into the immediate responses to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, but it does not fully explore the long-term integration

outcomes of different housing arrangements. The temporary nature of the TPD and the evolving needs of refugees suggest that further longitudinal research is needed to assess the sustainability and impact of these policies. The study does not compare the Dutch implementation of the TPD with other countries or regions that have employed different approaches. 3) *A comparative analysis* could offer a broader understanding of best practices and areas for improvement.

Building on those limitation and the findings of the current study on multi-stakeholder housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Safety Region of Gelderland-South, several areas of **future research** can be recommended to further enhance understanding and improve responses in similar crisis situations:

Longitudinal Studies on Integration Outcomes

Future research could focus on longitudinal studies that track the long-term integration outcomes for refugees who benefit from various types of housing arrangements. This would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different housing strategies over time, including their impact on social integration, employment, educational attainment, and psychological well-being.

Impact of Temporary Protection on Social Cohesion

Research could explore how the temporary nature of protection under directives like the TPD affects social cohesion and integration, both within refugee communities and between refugees and host communities. This would help understand the social dynamics at play and the potential for conflicts or integration based on temporary versus permanent housing solutions.

Comparative Analysis Across Different Regions

A comparative study involving multiple safety regions or countries could be undertaken to assess the efficacy of different legislative frameworks and multi-stakeholder approaches. This could help identify best practices and potential areas for policy improvement in the reception and integration of refugees.

Recommendations for local and national government

Enhanced Preparatory Planning

The results of this thesis have indicated that municipalities that were better prepared, like Nijmegen, could respond more rapidly and effectively to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. By having an updated inventory of potential shelter sites, such as former office buildings, hospitals, or school properties, Nijmegen capitalised on its "future-proof" strategy. This prior planning allowed them to immediately assess which locations could be converted into reception shelters, eliminating delays and logistical confusion that might have occurred if such preparations were lacking. Other municipalities, like Tiel,

also benefited from owning or quickly acquiring buildings suitable for conversion, allowing for more control over the reception process and enabling investment in improvements rather than spending on rent and third-party agreements. Therefore, municipalities should engage in more robust preparatory planning that includes the inventory of available resources and potential shelter sites well in advance of crises. This would enable a quicker and more efficient response when emergencies arise. The need for enhanced preparatory planning is underscored by the challenges faced by municipalities that had not identified or secured suitable shelter options beforehand. In such cases, local governments had to scramble to find locations, sometimes resorting to costly or less ideal solutions, such as renting private properties or hastily constructing temporary shelters. This reactive approach often leads to inefficiencies, higher costs, and suboptimal living conditions for refugees. In order to address this local governments should establish **a centralised, regularly updated database** that includes a detailed inventory of potential shelter sites across all municipalities. This database should include information, like: types of building, current ownership and availability, condition, etc. This also might be enhanced by facilitating the **inter-municipal collaboration** in a form of a regional committees that bring together representatives from neighbouring municipalities to discuss shared resources, cross-border shelter planning, and coordinated responses.

Long-Term Housing Strategies that include also Integration and Community Support Services

The housing solutions for refugees must be sustainable, ensuring long-term security and stability (Davies & Isakjee, 2015), although the ongoing housing crisis and shortage of available homes in the region indicate that municipal shelters, while necessary in the short term, are not sufficient for addressing the full scope of refugees' needs. In addition, the effective refugee housing must go beyond immediate shelter to address long-term social, economic, and emotional needs. The preferences expressed by Ukrainian refugees for privacy, independence, proximity to services, and employment opportunities demonstrate the need for a more integrated housing policy that fosters not just survival, but full participation in society. However, the ongoing housing shortages suggest that achieving these goals will require sustained collaboration between governments, NGOs, and private actors to create housing solutions that are both comprehensive and sustainable, aligning with the principles of co-production and collective intelligence outlined in the theoretical framework. Therefore, given the temporary nature of the Temporary Protection Directive, long-term housing and reception strategies are necessary. These should include options that allow for more privacy and independence, such as the flex housing models successfully implemented in some municipalities. Besides physical shelter, integration efforts such as language training, employment facilitation, and psychological support should be integrated into the housing programs to support the holistic needs of refugees.

To practically realise long-term housing strategies that include integration and community support services, governments can take the following steps:

Implement Long-Term Policy Frameworks: Develop clear policies and guidelines that encourage local governments to plan for both immediate and long-term refugee needs. This includes setting targets for permanent housing units, establishing funding mechanisms, and providing technical support for municipalities to develop comprehensive integration plans.

Facilitate Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage collaboration between municipalities, NGOs, private developers, and local businesses to co-produce housing solutions. Governments can offer financial incentives, tax breaks, or grants to private actors who invest in affordable housing or provide additional support services for refugees.

Integrate Housing with Social and Economic Services: Co-locate housing with essential services like language training centres, employment support, healthcare, and childcare facilities. This can be achieved by converting unused public buildings or developing new mixed-use projects that combine residential, educational, and commercial spaces.

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Appendix I. Interview guide with municipality representatives

Dear [Interviewee's Title and Name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. My name is Tanay Kozak, and I am a Master's student in Spatial Planning at Radboud University. I am currently working on my thesis, which focuses on the topic of 'Multi-stakeholder Housing (Shelter) Arrangements for Ukrainian Refugees in the Netherlands.'

The aim of this study is to analyse the housing arrangement processes for Ukrainian refugees across various municipalities within the Safety Region of Gelderland-South, particularly in the context of the national housing shortage and the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in these processes.

Your perspective is invaluable to this study, as it helps to encapsulate the experiences and strategies from those directly involved in regulating and managing the housing process. I am particularly interested in the insights from municipalities, given their regulatory roles and responsibilities, and from stakeholders who have been instrumental in leading and supporting these efforts.

This interview is a semi-structured interview, meaning I have a set of questions prepared (which you have previously received), but if clarification is needed, I may ask additional questions. It will take around 45 min up to 1 hour, any question you feel uncomfortable with, you may dismiss. This interview is completely anonymous, I can also send you the transcription of the interview and the end version of this research.

Do you agree if I audio record this interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

If you are ready we can begin with the first question:

1. What is your current position in the municipality and role in organising shelters for Ukrainian refugees? What stage did the municipality step in? How national politics drove it.
2. Since the beginning of the reception of Ukrainians who was involved with arranging the shelters for the Ukrainians?
3. Which organisation have been/are still involved in the process or housing arrangements for Ukrainians?
4. *Which guidelines did you follow in this process? How have those changed since the beginning till now?*
5. Were there private initiatives involved in housing/shelter provision for refugees in the municipality? Were they encouraged by the municipality or did the municipality take over the organisation of shelters from private initiators?
6. Which organisation or private actors were those initiators? (possibility to get contact details of those people?).

7. What was the process through which the housing arrangements came into place and how did the various actors contribute in the developmental stages?
8. *How many municipality shelters do you have and how many people do live there?*
9. *What type of locations are those (kitchens, catered, how many people in rooms)?*
10. *How many people still live in private housing in the municipality?*
11. *How is the municipality involved with people who live in private locations?*
12. *For how long can people still stay in GO and what will happen after the contract runs out?*
13. *What were the main difficulties in arranging shelters for the Ukrainians and how did the municipality overcome those?*
14. *Does the current housing situation of Ukrainians represent the vision/aim the municipality/region had on the beginning of the arrangement process till now, in terms of the way shelters are arranged, capacity of the municipality to receive Ukrainian refugees, parties involved, etc.? (Which aims did the region/municipality put regarding housing arrangement for Ukrainian refugees and what has been achieved with regard to those aims?)*

Thank you once again for your participation and for sharing your insights, which are crucial to the depth and accuracy of this research. If any questions occur, I will be glad to answer them via the contacting email.

Appendix II. Survey Details

- Questionnaire

Housing situation of displaced persons from Ukraine

This survey is conducted to investigate the housing situation of displaced persons from Ukraine in the Netherlands. The research is part of the Master's thesis on the topic "The role of Multi-stakeholder cooperation in housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands in the Safety region Gelderland-South".

1. Do you agree with the processing of your data?

Background information

2. In which municipality do you currently live?
3. How old are you?
4. Your gender?
5. In which region did you live before coming to the Netherlands?
6. How many adults (18+) are there in your family in the Netherlands (living in the same house as you, including you)?
7. Do you have a source of income?
8. Do other members of your family with whom you share the family budget work?
9. Do you have children?

Housing situation and journey:

10. From which country did you move to the Netherlands?
11. Why did you decide to move to the Netherlands from another country?
12. What is your housing situation at this stage? (*in a hosting fam private room with private facilities, *in hosting fam private room no facilities; governmental shelter with own kitchen/catered, own bathroom/shared bathroom; living with relatives/friends; rented apartments; own apartment rented; own apartment municipality; catered).
13. How do you evaluate the work and ability of the managers of your location to solve your urgent problems?
14. Why are you satisfied or not? (problems of what nature were/were not fully resolved?)
15. How did you find/get the housing you currently live in?
16. Have you had to move from one place of residence to another?
17. Why did you have to move?
18. Do you want to move from your current place of residence?

19. Why do you want to move from your current place of residence and where?
20. If you want to move and are looking for housing, how? (select all that apply)

Housing needs

21. Do you have ideas for improving your social life in the location where you currently live, how could you contribute to the fact that you would continue to live there?
22. Do you have any special housing needs? (select all that apply)
23. What problems did you encounter when looking for housing?
24. Do you have a social circle where you live? (select all that apply)
25. Please describe the important and desirable aspects of living conditions in the Netherlands for you (for example: location, price, region, availability, number of rooms, other)
26. Do you plan to return to Ukraine after the end of the war?
27. What are the reasons why you want to return to Ukraine?
28. If you want to stay in the Netherlands, how could your local municipality help you with this?
29. If Temporary Protection in the Netherlands is extended for another year, where do you see yourself?
30. Why?

- Post on Social Media

Your Living Experience in the Netherlands and Ways to Improve It

NL UA The purpose of this survey is to investigate the housing situation, along with the associated challenges and barriers faced by displaced persons from Ukraine in the Netherlands. The research is part of the Master's thesis on the topic "The role of Multi-stakeholder cooperation in housing arrangements for Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands in the Safety region Gelderland-South".

👉 This survey aims to enhance communication between municipalities and Ukrainians living in 'shelters' (locations provided by local municipalities).

Important ! :

📄 The survey results may also be used to improve the quality of policy decisions regarding Ukrainians living in the Netherlands.

Also:

🕒 Completing this survey will take no more than 15 minutes.

👤 The study is completely anonymous, each voice is valued!

👉 To participate in the survey, please follow the link:

<https://forms.gle/VvsxyoXpbWNRhcoKA>