(In)visibility of the Displaced Populations: the Blind-Spot Effect

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Abstract. In this paper, conflict-triggered internal displacement is reviewed through the visibility of migration-affected groups, as well as their access to decision-making. The blind-spot effect in the migration studies extends the cognitive and social implications of the systems theory, and engulfs both hypovisibility through anopticism and pseudoassimilation, and hypervisibility through panopticism and excessive control of the displaced citizens. In the context of the impact of IDP status on visibility assessment, I suggest supplementing the migration-studies' concepts of "phlogiston" and "witch" with that of "ethanethiol", thus starting a discussion on the role of the otherness marker in the migrantising of citizens. The case of protracted internal displacement in Ukraine due to the Russia-backed armed conflict serves as an illustration of the displaced populations' visibility challenges and solutions.

Keywords: internal displacement, visibility, anopticism, panopticism, Ukraine.

Priverstinai perkeltos populiacijos (ne)matomumas: aklosios zonos efektas

Santrauka. Straipsnyje aptariamas klausimas, kaip valstybės viduje vykstantis gyventojų perkėlimas iš karinių konfliktų zonų veikia perkeltųjų grupių socialinį matomumą, o sykiu jų galimybes dalyvauti priimant sprendimus. Norint išplėsti sistemų teorijos pažintines galimybes ir pritaikomumą migracijos studijoms, siūloma įvesti „aklosios zonos efekto" sąvoką. Ji leidžia įveikti teorinę priešpriešą tarp perkeltųjų gyventojų hipervizualumo, kurį sukelia panopticizmas ir perteklinė socialinė kontrolė, ir jų sąlyginio nematomumo, kurį lemia anopticizmas bei pseudoasimiliacija. Migracijos studijose, kai, svarstant perkeltųjų grupių statuso poveikį jų socialiniam matomumui dažnai pasitelkiamos konceptualios „flogistono" ir „raganos" metaforos, tikslingiau vadovautis „etantiolio" vaizdiniu, kuris daug geriau nusako šalies viduje migruojančių piliečių kaip kitoniškos grupės ženklinimą. Teoriniai svarstymai apie perkeldintų grupių socialinio matomumo problemas ir galimus sprendimus iliustruojami pavyzdžiais, kaip Ukrainoje vyksta vidiniai gyventojų perkėlimai, nulemti Rusijos remiamų karinių konfliktų.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: vidiniai gyventojų perkėlimai, matomumas, anopticizmas, panopticizmas, Ukraina.

Introduction

Conflict-related internal displacement, either forced or voluntary, as well as further adaptation to the host community, imply a wide problematic field including the issues of decision-making, otherness, communication, and visibility.

With modern warfare acquiring the features of a hybrid war, like in the case of the Russia-backed aggression against Ukraine, internal displacement ceases to be an escape from the area of armed combat only. Instead, de/reterritorializing is associated with counteraction to both physical and informational dangers. Thus, it becomes relevant for philosophical study not only because of retrospective analysis of the mythologemes having led to vulnerability and splits in society. If regarded in terms of futures studies, due attention must be paid to the reconciliation and reintegration scenarios enabled by the territorializing patterns.

If we consider the chess and Go comparison, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, conflict-related displacement, for instance, in Ukraine, seems to result from Go-like invasion, both military and semiotic:

> In Go, it is a question of arraying oneself in an open space, of holding space, of maintaining the possibility of springing up at any point: the movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival. […] The difference is that chess codes and decodes space, whereas Go proceeds altogether differently, territorializing or deterritorializing it (make the outside a territory in space; consolidate that territory by the construction of a second, adjacent territory; deterritorialize the enemy by shattering his territory from within; deterritorialize oneself by renouncing, by going elsewhere…). Another justice, another movement, another space-time. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; 353)

The Deleuzean unity of chaos, abode and escape can be applied to protracted internal displacement when both return and adaptation to the host community are possible. The dynamic localness acquisition becomes a refrain of adjustment and rejection, on several levels: (1) systemic adaptation to the new place of residence and the norms associated with the IDP-status; (2) interpersonal communication, such as trust and the reliance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on locals, the transition from newcomer to new local; (3) unanchoring from the former place of residence and embedding into the host community through transformations in the sense of belonging (Bazaluk and Balinchenko 2020; Balinchenko 2021).

The protracted character of internal displacement also leads to changes in institutional and imaginative contexts, and therefore, in IDPs' visibility in agendas both on local and national levels. Visibility-related contradiction, hitherto called the blind-spot effect, is the invisibility of IDPs in host communities and, at the same time, the super-visibility of IDPs in terms of the inspections associated with the distribution of benefits. Both distortions of visibility can be regarded as discourse-related misadaptation and are related to social-philosophical issues of social responsibility, in terms of doing and allowing harm to the displaced populations (Hillier-Smith 2020).

This article addresses this complex of problems from several angles. Firstly, the assumption is that IDPs' visibility distortions could affect the tailoring of adequate durable solutions

and social cohesion recovery projects. Secondly, on the community level, the visibility distortions endanger the exact estimation of the displacement-specific needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs; these will be addressed from the discourse-principle perspective. As for the article's limitations, the distinction between the integration and pseudoassimilation of the displaced citizens requires further analysis to outline the localness transformations associated with the displacement-intensified otherness of the IDPs.

Thus, the primary research question is: *What are the means that define the visibility of a vulnerable group in the migration context?* The question can also be formulated more specifically as follows: *What are the institutional and imaginative contexts that shape the livelihood of internally displaced persons in terms of visibility, access to power and decision-making, sense of belonging to a place, and estimation of perspectives together with other members of the host community?*

The research subquestions cover a range of issues, including the estimation of IDPs' visibility and its effects, the correlation of visibility with decision-making, and also its impact on reintegration policies: *which practical discourses have an impact on the visibility of a group in the conflict-related migration context? How can the (in)visibility of IDPs in Ukrainian host communities be considered by policy-makers in Ukraine?*

Hence, the novelty of the paper is that it addresses the deviations in the visibility of the displaced persons in conflict-affected communities as a complex communicative issue of life-world colonization by the system (Habermas 1987 [1981]; 325). The practical problem-solving focus is to assess the impact of IDP status on the visibility of the group, which can find further application in surveys and action plans on internal displacement.

Materials and methods

The study is based on data obtained from regional and national surveys, reports, and legislative acts describing the IDPs' status, visibility, and impact on the host communities in Ukraine. The 2018–2020 survey data on the sense of belonging and visibility of IDPs has been drawn from the UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, and the National Monitoring System Reports on the Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (UN Ukraine 2017; 2018a; 2018b; IOM Ukraine 2018; 2020).

The main objectives of the paper are as follows: (1) to consider the specifics of IDPs' visibility through migration studies and discourse studies; (2) to study the imaginative and institutional contexts shaping the routines and solutions concerning the internal displacement situation in Ukraine.

As for the methodological basis of the paper; firstly, Bridget Anderson's (2019) methodological approach is taken up, where is there is a move away from regarding migration as a problem. Methodological de-nationalism is not fully applicable to the IDPs' visibility issues; nevertheless, national subjectivities, as described by Anderson, "matter to how we imagine ourselves and who belongs" (Anderson 2019). The temporal controls and movement limitations within citizenship, for instance, "allow some citizens their rights of free movement", while "others are immobilized, fenced in or fenced out" (ibid.), making it possible to move the methodol-

ogy beyond immigration studies and apply it to the situation of internal displacement in the government-controlled (GCA) and non-government-controlled (NGCA) areas of Ukraine.

Secondly, as the problem of IDPs' visibility is a multidimensional one, causal layered analysis (CLA) methodology (Bussey 2014; Inayatullah 2004) and the results describing the specifics of the methodology applied in the Ukrainian context of democratization have been considered as well (Turchyn et al. 2020). In the context of the CLA levels in multiculturalism and migration studies – litany, systemic causes, worldview, and myth/metaphor – Sohail Inayatullah mentioned that "migration policy is shaped not by social or economic factors but the confluence of political and myth factors" (Inayatullah 2004; 36). The suggested myth/metaphor of "move from fight or flight to the relaxation response, creation of a new story" (ibid.) is of high applicability to conflict-triggered internal displacement situation as well.

The terms used in the article should be understood as follows. As IDPs are participants in migration-related discourses, their visibility is reviewed through the discourse principle and its implementation in practical discourses. The *discourse principle* implies that norms claim validity if they meet or could meet with the approval of the participants in practical discourse, and if the consequences could be accepted by the affected persons (Böhler 2014; Habermas 1974; Thomassen 2010). The *practical discourses* of interactions between IDPs and host communities are viewed in the article through the tools and means shaping policies and, therefore, social reality, such as social myths, language, and symbols determining conceptions of necessities, possibilities, and strategies (Gaventa 1980); state-imposed imaginative contexts (Unger 2004); capacities, timing and dynamics of strategies (Ganz 2004); evaluation of the marginalized groups as being neglected, and the further influence of the indicator on populist leadership means-forming (Müller 2014); bridging and bonding social capital, both on intergroup and intragroup levels (Putnam 2000). *Visibility* refers to IDPs' representation in host communities and participation in decision-making in Ukraine. Thus, visibility, following Andrea Brighenti and Barbara Perry, is understood as a "property that can be used to divide marked and unmarked persons" (Brighenti 2007; 334; Perry 2015) and is applied to the legislative and practical aspects of shaping and managing IDPs' adaptation to host communities, to support Brighenti's thesis that "The exercise of power is always an exercise in activating selective in/visibilities" (Brighenti 2007; 339). The concept of *blind spot* was considered in the systems and observation theory (Luhmann 2000; Chkhaidze 2017; Salem 2014); however, the observation possibilities and limitations caused by positive and negative codes in the situation of internal displacement evolve from the self-referential orientation of the newcomers evaluation by the host community members and the context-driven prerequisites for this evaluation. *Imaginative contexts* are understood after Roberto Unger as comprehensive sets of explanatory practices and imaginative preconceptions that shape routines (Unger 2004). *Institutional contexts* imply institutional arrangements and frameworks (ibid.). The imaginative contexts can be replicated institutionally and thus have an impact on durable solutions.

The visibility of groups is closely connected with the deviations of power implementation, such as anopticism and panopticism (Dale 2017; Foucault 1995 [1977]). The host community

and IDPs' blind spots mismatches can have an impact on the adaptation and trust issues and cause the IDPs' visibility distortions. In the study, *anopticism* refers to a power implementation leading to the vulnerable group of displaced persons being regarded as integrated or assimilated into the host community, and therefore invisible, despite the specific needs arising from the situation of resettlement. The invisibility is considered through institutional regulatory means, based on national legislation and official survey data. The concept of *panopticism* is used to indicate the ways in which power implementation leads to making the vulnerable populations hyper-visible and detached from the local community, through limitations in decision-making and freedom-of-movement restrictions, or through status-related evaluations based on the agenda of safety protection and displaced persons' retrospective links with their former communities in the now non-government-controlled areas. Therefore, *integration* in the migration context is considered as opposed to insertion, inclusion, or adaptation (Favell 2019); both as a governance technique (Hadj Abdou 2019); and as "an analytical concept to study the (outcomes of) interaction between newcomers and receiving society" (Penninx 2019).

Thus, the study addresses the "reconciliation gap" between the projects of future post-conflict solutions and present social contradictions in Ukraine in the context of the ongoing war. For instance, vertically imposed victimization of IDPs, in the form of anopticism or panopticism, presumes the group to be a passive community of fate that does not belong to the host community, resulting in partial exclusion from local decision-making processes and in IDPs' lack of participation in the practical discourses necessary for successful reconciliation and reintegration. Therefore, the discourse perspective of internal displacement suggests a possibility for bridging opposing groups with different experiences in the past, challenges in the present reality and expectations of the future, as well as refocusing on the constructive imaginative contexts of common social-capital development to be achieved.

Integration of internally displaced persons as a visibility issue

The study of IDPs' visibility requires considering the personal, community-based and institutional factors that influence the decision to migrate and the further decision to keep to the new place of residence and seek participation in the life of the new community.

The vision of a cohesive society as the "one where citizens feel they can trust their neighbors and state institutions" (OCHA 2020; 21) implies that displacement needs and issues are addressed through a consideration of all the groups that can potentially be affected by the applied regulatory mechanisms or the decision-making outcomes.

While social capital involves shared knowledge, understanding, and patterns of interaction (Ostrom 1996; 31–32), it becomes vulnerable in a situation of displacement and deteriorates easily when the context becomes unfavorable or problematic for practical discourses. Loss of family links and community cohesion, as well as adaptation to the context typical for the host community are challenging factors that can be viewed either constructively or destructively. The difference lies in newcomers either being perceived as contributing new knowledge and

social experience to the recipient community or in terms of extra pressure on local resources. Describing the CLA-based vision of migration, on the systemic level, Inayatullah points out the same constant debates "if government policies favor [migrants] over others who are economically disadvantaged" (Inayatullah 2004; 36). On the other hand, systemic frames, such as those imposed by the democratic system both globally and locally, are aimed at inequalities reduction in democracy, as an endless and rather unpredictable process (Dralus 2020).

Exploring possibilities and looking for durable solutions, reconciliation scenarios and other process maps of the kind can be evaluated through future studies models. Christopher Groves stresses that "the present subjects are related to the future unevenly and differentially through attachments and commitments that anchor them in the political field here and now" (Groves 2018; 923). Thus, the consequences of conflict-triggered displacement, relevant for IDP visibility study and for estimating the necessary changes, can be reviewed through "questioning the present for the future" (ibid.; 916).

From the perspective of such questioning, the practical discourses emerging from conflict-related displacement should be addressed with due attention to the discourse participants and principles as discussed in the framework of a public sphere in its communicative perspective (Habermas 1974), and through discourse-related responsibility issues (Böhler 2014).

For instance, the consequences should be accepted by all affected participants of a discourse, after discourse D-principle, since whenever the participants enter into a discourse, they "sign up to the norms of the discourse" (Thomassen 2010; 89), and the above-mentioned regulative idea requires them to accept the consequences freely in the course of real communication. J. Habermas defined the public sphere in general as a realm of social life in which something approaching public opinion in its complex function of criticism and control can be formed (Habermas 1974; 510–512). It involves an idea of public discussion and accessible information enabling the implementation of responsible solutions, within the framework of the solutions being potentially freely acceptable by the affected persons. At the same time, the complexity of the environment can be correlated with the systems' filters activation and selectivity increase (Chkhaidze 2017; 33). Therefore, the design of the long-term solutions comply with the selectivity contexts, terms and desired outcomes.

The imaginative and institutional contexts shaping the routines and durable solutions concerning the internal displacement situation in Ukraine can be reviewed based on Roberto Unger's social-reconstruction programme describing imaginary contexts in general as comprehensive sets of explanatory practices. Thus, social ideals (among which those concerning democracy and social life, e.g. community) "are defined by implicit assumptions about the arrangements and practices that realize the ideals" (Unger 2004; 10). The aspects of IDPs' interactions with the state based on visibility imply the social ideals of social cohesion and participation of the population in community decision-making, regardless of IDP status or other displacement-related restrictions.

Visibility as a social-science category has been widely explored in international migration studies. In 2007, Andrea Brighenti described the empowering and disempowering potential

of visibility, and outlined the distortions in social representation through visibility (Brighenti 2007). In the Ukrainian context, there are sporadic publications on IDPs' invisibility and registration-related limitations, IDPs' interactions with host communities, the social policies concerning displacement-specific needs, and social support for IDPs (Bulakh 2017; Smal 2016; Додонова & Додонов 2018; Шевцова & Тищук 2020).

Following Brighenti (2007), recognition and regulation define social-type and control-type visibility accordingly. Visibility is believed to encourage identification by social category and individual features (Brighenti 2007; 333); this is relevant to vulnerabilities study, as "the Other must be made visible before they can be justifiably set outside the parameters of normalcy" (Perry 2015; 7). Moreover, the limitations in a vulnerable group recognition add to the understanding of the visibility, as, due to its unavoidability, the blind spot in observation requires explication (Salem 2014; 31). The lower and upper thresholds of visibility are understood as the limits of social inclusion; thus the distortions in visibility become critical for the representation and subordination of groups in society as normal or abnormal, feared or supported ones (Brighenti 2007; 329–330; Perry 2015; 6).

Both the lack of visibility, anopticism, and excessive visibility, panopticism, are connected with control and domination issues, either through population visibility and exercising power through detachment and avoidance of groups, or by decision-making understood in the philosophical and historical sense (Dale 2019). Panopticism was described by Bentham and then Foucault as a situation where each individual "is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault 1995 [1977]; 200). Anopticism, in its turn, can be perceived as an imposed or adopted invisibility. This aspect of anopticism interpretation is relevant for our study as it discloses, beyond the means of resistance or domination, a policy dip where equality claims lead to vulnerable groups with specific needs being institutionally omitted from agenda-setting.

Debates on integration and superdiversity reflect the visibility issue of marked and unmarked populations through the evaluation of migration-specific vulnerabilities. For instance, one main question at hand, relevant for the visibility study of the paper, has been suggested by Hadj Abdou as follows: "*Which ends do governments, and more broadly, governance actors, have in mind when they 'manage' integration?*" (Hadj Abdou 2019).

On the community level, displacement-associated group interactions have recently been scrutinised by Hendriks and Burger (2019) in terms of the expectations of newcomers, and of host communities' reality counteracting perceptions of the displaced, thus forming a mismatch between ideal and real communities. In the context of the internal displacement situation since 2014, the estimated five-year length of stay, and the impact of both subjective well-being and living standards on the length of stay, are also of relevance in the evaluation of resettlement processes in Ukraine. The protracted internal displacement situation in Ukraine has been caused by a relatively new type of international conflict, a hybrid war, and recent studies of displacement-related issues dwell upon the perception of newcomers in host communities and their legal status (Bulakh 2017; Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017; Яцкевич 2015; Крахмалова

2016). These studies are relevant for understanding migration-affected populations' visibility deviations and the indicators of visibility, as well as the extrapolation of the image and attitudes of the residents of the non-government-controlled areas onto the displaced persons originating from the region.

Despite the coverage of the topic of internal displacement and visibility in scientific publications, surveys, and reports, there is still a theory gap. Visibility and its deviations as the result of institutional and imaginary contexts have not been investigated in the context of a protracted displacement. The lack of visibility or excessive visibility of the displaced populations, if understood as the results of state policies towards internal displacement regulation, can also be studied further beyond local communities' communication specifics, as factors having an impact on durable solutions, reconciliation and reintegration scenarios on national and international levels.

Therefore, the study of the institutional limitations caused by the disappearance of displacement-related topics from agendas and the forces counteracting colonisation of the lifeworld in the migration context can fill the visibility-related gap in the debates on the integration and victimisation of migrants and displaced persons.

Discussion. Displacement-related aspects and the blind-spot effect

Phlogiston, Witch, or Ethanethiol?

As IDPs do not fit into the migrant-or-citizen opposition, being both, in protracted displacement displaced populations are prone to dissolving into not-migration-related groups of citizens. The blurring of distinctions between locals and newcomers over time is often considered positively in reports, although the specific problems of domestic registration, loss of property, and the disintegration of social links and family relations associated with conflict-triggered displacement make it necessary to address the integration aspect from the angle of visibility.

The visibility of displaced populations can be marked by IDPs' representation in relevant agendas or by their omittance from them. Both anopticism and panopticism imply either ignoring or following up on vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, on the imaginary-apprehension scale of displacement-related issues, it is a shift from policy-forming to an irrelevant position that creates the blind spot of social visibility.

Under the blind spot, one can understand the position of a vulnerable group in a community when its situation-specific vulnerability is not eliminated but rather substituted with some general vulnerability. Thus, an analogy with *discus nervi optici* can be used to describe the "inactive zone" of social visibility, resulting in a state of displacement-unaffected community members' lack of awareness of the particular problems being absent from the community agendas.

IDP status/registration, being necessary as a source of statistic data on the migration, paradoxically, fails to support the visibility of group members. Within the context of migrantising the citizens (Anderson 2019) due to illegalising based on registration in the conflict-affected

area, as well as on extra restrictions and inspections, it can be useful to refer to Mills's 'witch' and 'phlogiston' concepts in their interpretation by Anderson (2019) not towards the race issues but in the migration studies context. Phlogiston is proved not to exist, therefore, it does not have an impact on science; witches do not exist either but the concept still is used in cultural and political narratives (ibid.).

On the one hand, the IDPs are citizens with the same rights as other citizens but they have an experience of displacement. Therefore, to single out a group based on IDP status means to make it an imaginary *phlogiston-like* object for control through panopticism. For instance, in the situation of the conflict-related displacement, the abstract association of the group with the factious region in practical discourses can lead to implementation of additional safety measures and movement restrictions that are not applied to the general population from the other regions.

On the other hand, though the displacement of the IDPs to government-controlled territory, in the case of Ukraine, could also be considered as "voting with their feet" (Balukh 2017), the association with the IDPs' former place of residence is considered as impurity due to the war, separatism, and 'Russkiy mir' (the Russian world) connotations. Thus, the IDP status serves as an otherness marker, and IDP registration can be used in official and media discourses in a *witch-like* context describing the negative social impact or economic burden of the internal displacement on the receiving communities.

Thus, IDP status as a visibility means can be socially toxic, especially in a protracted displacement situation where the syndrome of postponed life is rooted in a lack of decision-making access on the local level. To mark the specific double nature of internal displacement markers, the metaphor of *'ethanethiol'* can be used. Ethanethiol is a gas with a distinct smell that aids awareness of odourless toxic-gas leakage. IDP status registration works as an ethanethiol-like indicator of the influx of populations from fractious regions to the government-controlled ones; at the same time, it neither gives an idea of the long-term vulnerabilities associated with the distinction of the group in the current place of residence nor does it promote social cohesion. Therefore, the blind-spot effect appears as the IDPs' visibility illusion through their status and as an actual absence from agendas. The concept of 'ethanethiol', in this context, raises methodological questions for approaches to studying internal displacement in terms of migration and otherness effects on citizenship.

The Case of the IDPs' Visibility in Ukraine

Since 2014, Ukraine has been heavily affected by the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, and by the mass internal displacement resulting from Russia-backed armed conflict in the Eastern region of the country. The NGCA engulfs parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. There are 1,467,720 IDPs from the temporarily occupied territories in Ukraine, as of May 2021 (IOM Ukraine 2021).

According to the 2020 National Monitoring System Report on the Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (NMS report) data, 89% of IDP respondents reported that they had fully or partly integrated into the host communities (IOM Ukraine 2020; 32); by comparison, the

share was 79%, in 2018 (IOM Ukraine 2018; 46). Moreover, in one of the 2020 NMS report interviews, the level of integration could be described by the respondent as follows: "If there were no social benefits for IDPs, I and many of my acquaintances would not even remember that we are IDPs" (IOM Ukraine 2020; 32).

Before that, in 2017, among the USE data streams on social cohesion in eastern Ukraine, there were defined the units as follows: psychological functioning, civic behavior and values, governance and human security, and intergroup relations (UN Ukraine 2017; 2). The USE Index is directly aimed at defining the strategic outputs for formulating the decisions and programmes promoting social cohesion (UN Ukraine 2018a; 1), with the focus at different groups with competing and counteracting attitudes on the reintegration and reconciliation solutions. Nevertheless, the displacement-related problems got dissolved in general tolerance, migration, and social responsibility issues. Therefore, the specific alterations in the social and cultural space due to the protracted displacement context were omitted from the list of relevant indicators and seemed to merge into the identity-based and structural social exclusion indicator (ibid.).

In a situation where a *blind spot* appears and contexts become "imprisoning" in Roberto Unger's terms (Unger 2004; 32), unstable and long-term consequences and unsustainable solutions might become the basis for systemic lifeworld colonisation.

In the case of Ukraine, there emerge the blind-spot hazards of IDPs' pseudoassimilation into communities. For instance, IDP status in Ukraine might be considered beneficial in the short-term perspective, though ineffective from the perspective of protracted displacement, as IDP registration as a social-category visibility means keeps persons marked within the community into which they could otherwise have integrated (UN Ukraine 2020; 2).

As for the current situation, in the 2020 UN Briefing Note on IDPs' inclusion in Ukraine (UN Ukraine 2020) and 2020 NMS report (IOM Ukraine 2020), both the hypervisibility and invisibility of the group tend to be addressed.

On the one hand, the panopticism is rooted in IDP and domicile registration issues and can be traced when cumbersome access to benefits and services turns displacement into a permanent status that is maintained even after the factual integration of the IDPs into the receiving communities has taken place. For instance, the system of physical checks of IDPs by social service officers to prove the IDPs' living in the government-controlled regions and lack of intentions to move to the occupied territories serves as an otherness marker in the host communities due to the fact that the local beneficiaries get the same social benefits, for instance, lifelong pensions, without undergoing the migration-related inspection. Another IDP status-based distortion appears when IDPs' children born in the host communities are registered as IDPs by the authorities, and therefore become displacement-marked. Thus, due to the IDP registration, there appears the paradox of "a new generation of the internally displaced, who never experienced displacement" (UN Ukraine 2020; 2). The domicile registration reform in Ukraine is much needed as well, and it implies decentralization and implementation of the notification-based registration system resulting in IDPs' access to local services and decision-making, to lift the otherness associated with the newcomers' status (ZMINA 2020; 20–21).

On the other hand, the anopticism can be traced through the IDPs' employment issues. The employment of IDPs significantly dropped from 63% to 46% (IOM Ukraine 2020; 11) after their displacement to areas with job opportunities different from those of the industrial region. Among the migration-specific contexts, the non-proportional financial burden of housing rent on the IDPs' households (IOM Ukraine 2020; 21), lack of social links, and a high share of women in single-person households (73%) become the displacement-intensified disadvantages when unattended in the communities or dissolved in general unemployment rates. For instance, in 2020, the share of employed IDP women aged 20–65 was 50%; by comparison, the general share of 62% of employed women within the same age range in Ukraine (ibid.; 12). The 2020 quarantine deepened the vulnerability of IDPs, and the discrimination of IDPs in the communities, concerning employment, was reported by 51% of the IDP respondents facing discrimination, in June 2020; by comparison, the share was 30% in March 2020 (ibid.; 34).

The imaginative context of the "strain and burden to the host communities" has been attached to the IDPs' situation in the official documents, since 2014. The public reaction to the "burden" conceptualizing was especially acute in 2020 (Міністерство 2020; 10). Nevertheless, the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons has kept to the rhetoric of lifting the "burden of internal displacement" from the host communities in the renewed Strategy of IDPs' Integration and Durable Solutions for 2021–2023 (ibid.), thus provoking the local authorities to exercise anopticism-like practices towards the group.

The further study of the perspectives of IDPs as members of the receiving communities can be helpful to avoid the blind-spot effect, and to promote reconciliation and mediation processes in Ukraine.

Conclusions and recommendations

Applicability. This study of the blind-spot effect resulting from the hyper-/hypo-/invisibility of displaced populations in communities of displacement is focused on instruments of visibility-balance assessment so as to prevent the extremes of both supervising and ignoring of the migration-affected populations. As for its theoretical applicability, the study can be viewed as an attempt to start a discussion on the visibility distortions and the victimisation of IDPs in practical discourses.

The study's further practical applicability, through public and academic discussions of the issue, can be considered as follows: (1) prevention of the pseudoassimilation of a vulnerable group due to its disappearance from agendas; (2) empowering the subjects to participate in decision-making, for instance, in tailoring sustainable durable solutions such as reconciliation and reintegration, which require free agreement on the consequences from all involved populations.

Adjustment. The relevant issues of the visibility of migration-affected persons and groups, their access to decision-making and agenda-setting, and the sense of belonging to the current or former community, as well as the common perspectives that have an impact on intergroup relations within host communities, require further theoretical and empirical study. Integration and social cohesion-related questions for future studies could be formulated as follows:

Can the lack of visibility of displaced persons in a host community be regarded as an indicator of successful integration?

Thus, the suggested discussion of the blind-spot effect implies the need for surveys and analyses of the issues emerging from a discourse-principle realisation within the communicative space of communities receiving displaced persons. Further findings on the markers of anopticism and panopticism can be helpful in outlining the conditions for migration-affected communicative actors to be seen, and for their arguments in the relevant practical discourses to be heard.

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