THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Approaches for analyzing the
local governance of forced migration

Melissa Weihmayer

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Melissa Weihmayer
Department of Geography and Environment
London School of Economics and Political Science

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis examines the intersections between local governance and forced migration, specifically how local governments understand and develop their responses to forced migration. I intervene in debates within (forced) migration studies that problematize the dominance of central governments in decision-making, extending this to internal displacement scholarship. I do this by analyzing local government decision-making structures, processes, practices and ideas that shape responses using three empirical cases: emergent local responses to internal displacement in eastern Ukraine in the under-researched period from 2014 until 2022, policies regulating the administration of emergency humanitarian assistance for victims of Colombia's internal armed conflict, and processes through which local governments improve their asylum responses in London, United Kingdom since 2020. Each case develops concepts that elucidate key mechanisms through which local governments take on (more) responsibility for the governance of forced migration. These concepts are local governance and the building of a local social contract, multilevel governance systems, and capacity-building processes. The project overall contributes novel ideas to forced migration literature by employing a 'governance lens', drawing from political geography, public administration, and urban governance fields. This lens analyzes how dilemmas within forced migration policymaking processes affect governance and vice versa. I also place responses to forced migration within their broader governance context to relate policy areas affecting the wider population with those affecting forced migrants specifically. I argue that changes in governance and responses to forced migration productively inform each other. I demonstrate that strengthening ties between displaced populations and their local state requires a rebalancing of central-local power relations. As local government actors undertake political work in their responses to forced migration, they also interrogate their role in broader state-society relations, demonstrating potential for transformational change. This builds foundations for more bottom-up responses to forced migration.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 The local governance of forced migration: debates and research questions

This PhD thesis examines the intersections between local governance and forced migration. I understand these intersections in two ways: first, as the local governance *of* forced migration, meaning the local-level decision-making processes undertaken by a wide network of government and non-governmental actors to determine policies, programs and services affecting forced migrants. This may or may not include civil society groups and/or representatives of communities of displaced people. Second, I consider the effects of forced migration on local governance in general. Local governance *in* a context affected by forced migration means analyzing the 'normal' local governance structures, processes, practices and ideas that are somehow altered by forced migration. This views the arrival of forced migrants as an external shock that local actors must adapt to. While the next two chapters of this PhD focus on the local governance of forced migration, the final chapter explores local governance in a context affected by forced migration.

Several interrelated debates on the governance of forced migration motivates this research: 1) the urban migration governance paradox, 2) the overlooked role of local governments within forced migration responses, 3) the particularities of studying urban internal displacement, and, alongside all of these, 4) the power dynamics between central and local levels that befuddle roles and responsibilities within responses to forced migration.

The 'urban migration governance paradox' posits that cities are disproportionately affected by migration movements and policies. Yet city actors have little recourse for influencing the global governance of migration, or even migration policymaking at national levels (Stürner-Siovitz, 2022). This paradox explains the source of tensions between local and central governments on the aims of migration policy, with local levels more focused on making integration work while central levels attempt to strengthen borders and 'control' migration. Tensions have given rise to a movement of city diplomacy in migration (Stürner-Siovitz, 2022; Triviño-Salazar, 2023) and in other areas where cities are seeking greater leverage, like climate action (Klaus, 2020). The paradox draws on a rich literature reflecting a 'local turn' (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017) that attempts to mitigate a history of methodological nationalism in migration studies (Schiller & Simsek-Caglar, 2011; Wimmer & Schiller, 2003). This work pushes back on the primacy given to central governments both as decision-makers and as the

analytical lens for studying migration policy and governance. Refugee studies is similarly pushing back on methodological nationalism (Betts et al., 2021), albeit more recently. I now apply this shift to internal displacement scholarship and prioritize the vantage point of local governments.

Empirical research on official, state-led responses to internal displacement at subnational levels, including regional, city and local levels, is sporadic and has yet to contribute to wider theorization of how these are governed. This suggests that local responses to internal displacement are being designed with little guidance and documentation of effectiveness (Global Protection Cluster, 2023). In practice, local governments are said to be the 'frontline responders' whether they plan for it or not (Archer, 2018; Earle et al., 2020). This can mean that they respond reluctantly (Hammond, 2021, p. 27) or with too few resources to make any impact (Beyani, 2011).

What are the implications of this? If we assume some level of autonomy within city and local governments, confronting forced migration becomes a new site of politics that can span from regressive to progressive depending on the motivations and capacities of its decision-makers. For example, Darling (2017) demonstrates the contrasting accounts of cities creating new internal borders for migration surveillance and those providing at least discursive overtures towards sanctuary and welcome. Similarly, experiments in urban governance through such mechanisms as 'urban living labs' can serve to reinforce the status quo rather than seek radical change (Bulkeley et al., 2018). How city and local governments react towards forced migration and/or 'improve' their governance practices therefore requires deeper empirical inquiry.

To examine these puzzles, I ask the following overall research questions:

1. How do local governments understand and develop responses to forced migration?
2. How do changes in (local) governance affect responses to forced migration, and how do changes in forced migration affect (local) governance?
3. How can power relations within the governance of forced migration be understood theoretically and studied empirically?

These overall questions translate to specific research questions in the three subsequent chapters that comprise this PhD thesis. This introductory chapter summarizes the PhD thesis contributions and explains its underlying research framework and methodological approach.

In general, each chapter develops concepts that elucidate key mechanisms through which local governments take on (more) responsibility for the governance of forced migration. These concepts are local governance and the building of a local social contract, multilevel governance systems, and capacity-building processes. The project overall contributes novel ideas to forced migration literature by employing a 'governance lens'. This approach stems from academic literature within political geography, public administration, and urban governance fields. I employ case study methodology to develop three empirical cases: a 'most likely' case of local government intervention in eastern Ukraine, a 'paradigmatic' case of local government intervention in Colombia, and a 'least likely' case of local government intervention in the United Kingdom. Though these span different geographic and displacement contexts – with two focused on the governance of responses to internal displacement and one on the governance of the reception of asylum-seeking populations – the focus on local government decision-making structures, processes, practices and ideas unites the three cases.

1.2 Background on urban (internal) displacement

This section outlines the relevance of studying forced migration in cities and addresses the question of why local governments have been overlooked in internal displacement scholarship.

a. *Urbanization and forced migration*

Research and policy discourse now generally accepts that forced migration is an increasingly urban phenomenon (Earle, 2023a; for example in the Middle East: World Bank, 2017a). Regardless of the challenges of quantifying this phenomenon, in particular for internal displacement (Earle, 2023a; Cotroneo, 2017; Huang & Graham, 2019; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020, p. 77), it is important to understand the mechanisms by which forced migration[1] and urbanization relate. Forced migration is 'urban' in several ways. First, people that have been forcibly displaced from their homes increasingly seek out refuge in urban areas (Cotroneo, 2017; Crisp et al., 2012; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006; Landau, 2014; Saliba et al., 2022). They do this in part because of social networks, but also because of the possibility of livelihoods and services, and in some cases even the protection afforded by

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[1] I use the terminology 'forced migrant' and 'displaced person' interchangeably within this PhD thesis. For a definition of internally displaced person, I base this on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, in which people internally displaced are "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border" (UN Commission on Human Rights, 1998).

anonymity; camps by contrast segregate displaced people and tend to inhibit integration (Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Sanyal, 2017). However, settling in a city introduces a series of new challenges, in particular to those without networks and skills that can help them enter formal or informal job markets (Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Havryliuk, 2022). Housing is a major issue, relegating many forcibly displaced people to informal settlements with precarious tenure arrangements and high eviction rates (for example in Mogadishu, Somalia: Bakonyi et al., 2019; Banadir Regional Administration, 2016; Lindley, 2013; or in Beirut, Lebanon: Sanyal, 2017).

Second, displaced people shape urban environments. By settling in cities, literature has gradually explored the agency forcibly displaced people exhibit in navigating their new homes. Sanyal (2014), for example, stresses how displaced populations transform the city's built environment and politics, much as migrants are considered to engage in 'city-making' (Simsek-Caglar & Schiller, 2018).

Third, the city itself produces displacement. Most visible is the disproportionate levels of damage experienced by cities during internal and international armed conflict, such as the 'urbicide' of Homs in Syria (Kusiak & Azzouz, 2023), an urban interpretation of 'domicide' (Porteous, 2001), which prevents displaced people from returning to their homes and communities. Less visible but no less important are forms of intraurban violence that force people to move to other parts of the city for safety (CIPPDV, 2019; Vidal et al., 2011). Urban development projects also cause displacement by evicting people from their homes for the sake of modernizing urban infrastructure or increasing economic value, an issue addressed more fully by gentrification literature within urban studies than by humanitarian and forced migration studies (see for example Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Ghertner, 2014; Soederberg, 2021). Homeless populations in and around cities are at especially high risk of (repeated) displacement (Gillespie et al., 2021; Speer, 2018).

Fourth, responses to forced migration can affect the urban landscape. The governance of asylum accommodation in the United Kingdom is structured primarily through a national 'dispersal system' that moves displaced people to areas where there is presumably more available housing, which tends to be cities (Darling, 2024). This policy has been shown to negatively affect some deprived areas, which in turn exacerbates the social and economic marginalization of both 'new refugees' and other residents (Hynes, 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006). Housing is another mechanism through which cities can be affected;

allocating specific housing for the resettlement or temporary stay of forced migrants takes it out of the wider housing stock and/or a rapid influx of people can affect rental prices (e.g. Sukhomud & Shnaider, 2022).

Urbanization and forced migration are framed as interrelated processes. Academic and policy publications alike frequently cite the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs figure that "By 2050, the United Nations estimates that the world's population will be 68% urban" to argue that numbers of forced migrants in cities will increase proportionally (e.g. Earle & Ward, 2021). Yet this claim overlooks the specific ways in which forced migration contributes to urbanization (perhaps disproportionately so), urbanization produces certain kinds of forced migration, and urbanization creates both challenges and opportunities for forced migrants seeking refuge. Because of these dynamics, city and local governments take on new relevance for their potential to support or exclude displaced populations.

b. *Links between refugee studies and internal displacement scholarship*

I contend that the subnational scale has been overlooked in internal displacement literature due to similar trends within refugee research. Using refugee studies literature as a reference point (e.g. Van Hear, 2000) has disadvantages when studying internal displacement. Several characteristics from refugee studies are key here, namely its longtime conceptual focus on camp populations, its tendency to undervalue the city as a scale of analysis, and its overly simplified conceptualizations of the state (Darling, 2017b; Gill, 2010). While these affect the problem-solving space for refugee responses, these hinder responses to internal displacement even more because they reinforce a logic of outside intervention. This undermines the primary responsibility of states for assistance and protection. It also invokes a national bias that limits thinking about the role and potential of local governments.

The camp focus slowed efforts to bring urban internal displacement to the attention of the international humanitarian community, leading to what Fielden called its relative 'invisibility' (Fielden, 2008). Refugee camps are seen as sites situated outside the reach of the state. This reduces people seeking refuge there to apolitical bodies of 'bare life' in need of humanitarian intervention (Sanyal, 2014 critiques this perspective, engaging with Malkki, 2002 and Agamben, 1998). Though some internally displaced people (IDPs) do live in camps, for example in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Khedir, 2020) and northern Uganda (Oosterom, 2016), the majority do not (Kälin, 2014, p. 165). Demonstrating camps as the default departure point, urban IDPs were often referred to in publications as living in 'non-camp settings' rather

than in urban areas, such as in the Brookings Institution report *Under the Radar: Internally Displaced Persons in Non-Camp Settings* (Brookings Institution, 2013). This focus reflected the massive mobilization required to adjust humanitarian responses to internal displacement, saying that working outside of camps "challenges traditional ways of working and requires creative thinking about new approaches and programs" (Ibid, p. i).

The camp focus of humanitarian action in general also precluded a more nuanced understanding of the situation of urban IDPs. The same claim of 'invisibility' gave rise to the assumption that urban IDPs are too dispersed within cities to find, and therefore present insurmountable methodological challenges to understanding their needs (Fielden, 2008; Grayson & Cotroneo, 2018). This is however possible to overcome with strong partnerships with local organizations in the design and implementation of data collection (Earle et al., 2020; Pantuliano et al., 2012; Refstie & Brun, 2012). Other assumptions produced by the camp focus is the expectation that those living outside of camps must be doing so because they do not need the services that camps offer and are therefore better off (Grayson & Cotroneo, 2018), something discounted in various cases of protracted displacement (Earle, 2023b). Lastly, urban IDPs may be considered as having similar problems as the urban poor, leading to the assumption that they are indistinguishable population groups, particularly in contexts of urban violence (Vidal et al., 2011). In fact, it is useful to nuance the category of 'urban IDP' to distinguish between those urban poor that have experienced or are vulnerable to forced evictions and those displaced by conflict or specific acts of violence because of the different legal avenues available for protection (Enobong Roberts, 2022). I attribute these assumptions in part to a dearth of robust comparative studies on urban IDPs that can explain "how their situation differs from and impacts that of their non-displaced neighbours" (Cotroneo, 2017, p. 316). Fortunately, comparative studies have increased in both academic (e.g. Aysa-Lastra 2011) and practitioner-led research (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020 discussed in Chapter 2) over the past decade.

Though the literature is more extensive on refugees in cities, the city scale is only starting to be recognized as an important locus of decision-making. A growing area of research explores urban refugees (Darling, 2017b; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006; Landau, 2019; Lyytinen, 2015; Pantuliano et al., 2012; Pasquetti et al., 2019; Sanyal, 2012; Te Lintelo & Liptrot, 2023), increasingly recognizing that urban refugees affect cities as much as cities affect the opportunities and challenges they experience. Calls to adapt humanitarian responses accordingly in urban settings grow progressively urgent (Alcanya & Al-Murani, 2016; Dicker,

2017; Earle, 2019; Ferris & Ferro-Ribeiro, 2012; Maynard et al., 2018; Sanderson, 2017; Sanyal, 2021; Wanjiku Kihato & Landau, 2016), responding in part to a sluggish effort at institutional change within the UN Refugee Agency (Crawford, 2021; Crisp et al., 2012). These do not necessarily focus on the actions of local governments, however, but rather on how international humanitarian actors can adapt their practices and policies to collaborate more effectively with a variety of local actors. Hence, large research gaps remain in our understanding of the governance of forced migration in cities and beyond.

1.3 Research framework

In this PhD thesis, I examine the way governance affects and is affected by forced migration by employing a 'governance lens'. I explain here what this lens entails and how it differs from other approaches, before developing the methodological approach used in this thesis.

a. Governance perspective on forced migration

I understand 'governance' as the interrelated structures, processes, practices, and ideas that inform decision-making in the public sphere (Bevir, 2011; Healey, 2009b; Marks & Hooghe, 2004; Rhodes, 2007). How a local government responds to a situation of forced migration serves as the case through which I analyze changes in governance. Much of the analysis conducted in this PhD thesis revolves around a series of tensions or dilemmas that emerged inductively from empirical material. These reinforce the understanding that governance is a relational and dynamic concept. It evolves when traditions are confronted by new problems, for example exogenous shocks or new groups of stakeholders with diverse viewpoints, which create a dilemma for policymakers that cause them to rethink rules and practices (Rhodes, 2007). Demographic changes caused by immigration is likely to create dilemmas influencing governance, making forced migration a key site for analyzing governance transformations.

The 'governance lens' views responses to forced migration within a broader governance context, where issues such as decentralization processes, public sector finances, political change, human resources, and bureaucratic structures and cultures affect a wide variety of policy areas simultaneously and possibly in different ways. Certain policy areas, such as land administration (Tahir, 2023) and housing policy (Brun, 2015; Sukhomud & Shnaider, 2023), have a greater effect on the conditions encountered by forced migrants than others and therefore merit particular attention.

With this perspective I critique existing literature on forced migration in two ways: first, I posit that forced migration issues are not necessarily exceptional amongst a wide array of policy challenges. Second, I critique humanitarian responses by specialized 'migration actors' as being overly narrow. Indeed, their specific training and focus on the migration dynamics and (forced) migrant populations risks conflating problems affecting only displaced people and/or migrants with those affecting the entire population. Interventions that only target migrants or displaced populations could well be ineffective and/or produce new tensions because others view the 'special treatment' as unfair. The main objective of a governance perspective is therefore to distinguish between these two – challenges that uniquely affect displaced people and the governance of responses to their situation, and challenges that affect wider populations and broader policy areas.

Studying the governance of forced migration is related to undertaking a political economy analysis. Applied to internal displacement, for example:

> "a political economy approach considers the ways that arrangements of power and the pursuit of particular economic and political interests by different actors influence the ability of individuals and communities to exercise their rights as citizens and to live safely and securely" (Hammond, 2021, p. 16).

Both interrogate the distribution of power and resources, but focusing on the governance itself highlights the structures, processes, practices, and ideas within the decision-making of formal state institutions and formal and informal civil society networks. As an example, Lindley (2013) applies a political economy lens to her analysis of displacement in various parts of Somalia, focusing on local-social relations, macro-political structures and the international humanitarian regime as three "broad axes of governance" (p. 294) affecting diverse situations in places of refuge. Though I uphold the relevance of these contextual elements, the object of my analysis remains the policymaking spaces themselves. These ultimately create policy pathways to support the inclusion or marginalization of displaced people into local communities. Exploring the diverse influences affecting policymaking can help to inform interventions specifically on governance structures, processes, practices and ideas, such as widening stakeholder access to such spaces or increasing collaboration.

b. Forced migration perspective on governance

Studying responses to forced migration contributes productively to the field of governance studies by providing cases in which complex problems interact. Situations of forced migration

feature a variety of different types of policymaking challenges that lack ready-made solutions and often require political debate. These can be described as 'intractable problems' featuring substantial disagreement and divergent problem-framing between stakeholders (Schön & Rein, 1994, cited in Scholten, 2013) or 'wicked problems' that are so complex and interconnected that they defy clear policy solutions (Head, 2022; Rittel & Webber, 1973). Even amongst less contentious stakeholders, the reception of migrants and other newcomers can produce 'ethical policy dilemmas' that "involve a conflict between two morally worthy goals that cannot be hierarchically ordered and therefore cannot be easily reconciled" (Bauböck et al., 2022, p. 433). Examples include the provision of services to one group deemed vulnerable at the expense of another given limited resources. Making these determinations demonstrates how 'frontline workers' play an inherently political role (Piccoli & Perna, 2024).

To reflect the multilayered activities undertaken at local levels, I employ Ataç et al.'s (2020) definition of 'local responses' to forced migration as capturing both service provision as well as political positions. They view local responses as:

> "on the one hand, the welfare services that are (still or a fortiori) offered at the local level despite restrictive national policies and, on the other hand, the political responses of local governments to challenge these policies or even broaden their mandate" (p. 116).

In this way, I assume responses to forced migration at local levels to have both operational and political dimensions. The fact that such operational and political dimensions are highly visible within forced migration responses attunes us to observe these in the design and delivery of state services in general. This contrasts the view that local governments act as 'humanitarian actors' (e.g. Saliba, 2024) when responding to forced migration; rather than seeing their responses as exceptional, I view them as embedded within and problematizing broader state governance practices at different scales.

1.4 Methodological approach

a. *Motivation for embarking on this research*

My interest in studying the governance of forced migration, specifically how local governments respond to forced migration, is policy and practice driven. I was inspired by challenges faced by policymakers and practitioners intervening in, and displaced populations seeking refuge in, urban areas as opposed to rural or camp-like settings. While working with the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) from 2015 until 2019 – an interagency project that provides technical

support for gathering evidence on internal displacement situations – I collaborated with a variety of partners to inform processes for developing laws and policies for the protection of people internally displaced. Initially, this work engaged national level government stakeholders aiming for national-level responses. After a couple of years, the focus of the work shifted towards cities. In part due to slow political processes at national levels, the demand for evidence on internal displacement increasingly came from sub-national and even city stakeholders who sought to design their own strategies and programs to respond to what they perceived as urgent needs of their urban residents. The demand also came alongside greater interest and involvement of international organizations specialized in urban development, such as UN-Habitat. Urban dimensions to the drivers of displacement became apparent in these city-level contexts, such as gang violence and territorial control in Honduran cities and the destruction of entire cities in Syria. The variable impacts of displacement on urban residents and sources of support for those seeking refuge in cities also appeared uniquely urban, mediated by local government actors in different ways.

Colleagues generally assumed that data collection processes could follow the same methodological approach in cities as in country-level studies, the main difference being that the collaborative platform driving the research would include a diverse group of city stakeholders instead of national-level ministries (Jacobsen & Cardona, 2014). However, I felt that this ignored a wide array of city-specific displacement challenges and operational realities that merited a stronger understanding of the urban governance and political context. Additionally, the data needs of city stakeholders were different because of the different types of interventions at their disposal. This knowledge gap inspired my decision to investigate policymaking processes of local governments for addressing urban displacement in an in-depth PhD project, thereby complementing practitioner experience with more academic forms of inquiry.

b. Developing a research approach

I needed to consider several issues in selecting empirical cases for a PhD project on local government responses to forced migration. From a wider universe of cases of cities affected by internal displacement, I identified a list of cities that had a known nascent response (either because they were known to my professional networks, or they had been featured within policy and practitioner reports). The two main variables I considered were 'political will', understood here as an intention by local government actors to respond, and 'capacity', understood here as

the ability to take some steps towards either designing or implementing a response. These two variables needed to be observable within the structures, processes, practices and ideas that I attribute to the concept of governance. This meant that I focused on cases in which there were already some governance dynamics to study, as opposed to analyzing the decision-making processes of local governments in cities affected by displacement that chose not to respond or did not recognize the issue. Though studying overt and less overt forms of non-response could serve as a useful avenue for future research, I felt that the lack of observable features of governance would hinder progress on my research questions.

In addition to political will and capacity to respond, I also considered security issues and operational access to field sites. These considerations required substantial changes to my methodological approach: to maintain flexibility, I split the PhD into three separate empirical projects, each with their own research design, instead of undertaking one comparative and/or multi-sited study. I had hoped to focus on a secondary city in Colombia demonstrating a nascent municipal response in the face of new displacement dynamics (MMC / MMC, 2022).[2] But my ability to travel to Colombia was thwarted by the travel restrictions and other limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

To adjust, I shifted my approach to an analysis of the laws and policies governing Colombia's responses to internal displacement, focusing on the mechanisms it had developed for coordinating between central and local levels. I aimed to conduct virtual interviews with government stakeholders as part of this project, but the stakeholders I contacted lacked time while they were adapting to new pandemic work practices and priorities. I instead selected a corpus of twelve documents on the official state response that included decrees, national laws, a constitutional court decision and training materials developed by government agencies. These were selected based on their relevance to coordination debates. After a thematic analysis of these documents, I conducted a deep reading of one document, the 2015 'Strategy of Co-Responsibility', which I analyzed employing concepts from critical discourse analysis and political anthropology. The relevant excerpts from the larger corpus and the Strategy of Co-Responsibility were coded in NVIVO software and thematically analyzed. As secondary literature, I relied on three existing studies on local government responses to internal displacement and local action plans from the capital city of Bogotá for insight on local

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[2] I had originally sought to conduct a multi-sited ethnographic project with fieldwork in Mogadishu, Somalia and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. But with security concerns in each location, I instead shifted my preferred field site to Barranquilla, Colombia, where I could also compare the municipality's role in navigating responses to victims of Colombia's internal armed conflict with its responses to Venezuelan refugees.

government perspectives on coordination challenges and successes. A monitoring and evaluation report from the office of the Attorney General for the implementation of the cornerstone 2011 'Victim's Law' demonstrated the extent to which the policies governing coordination mechanisms were implemented in practice (see **Appendix 1** for a complete list of sources consulted).

As the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions subsided somewhat in 2021, I sought to complement the analysis of multilevel governance structures and processes in Colombia with a focus on local governance processes and practices. Based on prior networks developed while a practitioner at the Joint IDP Profiling Service, I reached out to contacts working in the displacement-affected region of eastern Ukraine. I initiated a collaboration with the humanitarian NGO Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to support them in developing the tools for a new collaborative data collection exercise planned for the Donetsk *oblast* (province). We agreed that I could travel to Kyiv, Ukraine to work with the civil-military structures managing the areas of Donetsk included in the study for the purpose of jointly analyzing the data. This would enable me to examine how these data processes contributed to the development of policies and programs to support people internally displaced and their hosts seeking refuge just beyond an active conflict zone. But again, my ability to travel to Ukraine was delayed first by COVID-19 restrictions and then by the 'full-scale invasion' by Russia on February 24, 2022, which dramatically expanded areas in active conflict and triggered a new series of displacements. My immediate concern was for the wellbeing of the NRC staff that I had lost communications with as they sought safety in different parts of Ukraine. But their change in focus to emergency operations also halted our collaboration on the analysis of the household survey data collected in the preceding months.

To adjust, I shifted my approach to an analysis of the emerging local governance practices observable before the 2022 invasion. To do this, I combined former practitioner experience with document analysis and literature review. The practitioner experience entailed four weeks spent traveling between Kyiv and the small, secondary eastern Ukrainian city of Severodonetsk, which had become the temporary seat of the regional government for the Luhansk oblast after 2014. This travel was split over two separate trips from June to August 2019. During each trip, I facilitated workshops and conducted bilateral meetings with a variety of local actors with the aim of informing the methodology and tools for a collaborative data collection exercise in five urban settlements, including Severodonetsk. I had collected 'grey literature' during this period that provided context for the challenges and data needs of the local

and regional government partners, including internal reports as well as publicly available reports from humanitarian and international organizations. While revisiting this literature, I complemented this with a document analysis of several key government policies such as the 2018 'National Strategy and Action Plan for the Integration of IDPs and Implementation of Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement'. I manually coded and thematically analyzed grey literature and reports since they were relatively few and hence manageable in number (see **Appendix 2** for a complete list of sources consulted). These were also thematically analyzed to explore the role that local governments were (and were not) playing within integration discussions. An in-depth reading of academic scholarship provided necessary context to the practitioner experience and policy developments. This literature included academic studies on the impacts of internal displacement in Ukraine, and on on other factors influencing the governance of internal displacement, especially decentralization, housing policy, and reconstruction efforts, revealing the underlying challenges that affected their options for responding to internal displacement.

Alongside investigating local governance processes in Ukraine, I sought opportunities to engage directly with local government actors responding to forced migration. I worked part-time from October 2021 through March 2022 with the Mayor of London's Greater London Authority (GLA) as a Senior Projects and Policy Officer within the Migration Team of the Communities and Social Policy Unit. My role involved the design and planning of a new program called Asylum Welcome. The project aimed to support the social integration of people seeking asylum living in the capital by building the capacity of local councils to support this diverse group with complex needs and policy hindrances (such as prohibitions on the right to work in the United Kingdom). A modality used in several concurrent and past GLA-funded programs, Asylum Welcome was planned as a 'design lab' with a toolkit component at the end. I undertook a series of consultations with local councils to develop the objectives of the program and explore how design labs could best accommodate the competing demands of local council officers and elected representatives (see **Appendix 3** for a list of consultations conducted during this period).

I consider this six-month period as insider-research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). This afforded me a lens into the practices and ideas that influenced a variety of key stakeholders in London's migration governance, including the GLA's Migration Team. I also needed to embody these practices and critically engage with these ideas in the production of my own deliverables. After this period however, I continued engaging with the GLA and the Asylum Welcome program in

a different form. I transitioned my relationship from paid employee to (unpaid) research collaborator, clarifying the objectives of my research project and formalizing our arrangement by confirming data sharing protocols, confidentiality terms, and our ways of working together with the GLA, as well as obtaining ethics approval from my own university. The GLA thus consented to my ongoing participation in the Asylum Welcome program. I framed seven key representatives of the following organizations, each with different roles within the Asylum Welcome program, as my 'collaborators': the GLA's Migration Team, a cross-party organization that represents the interests of London's borough councils called London Councils, and the two organizations implementing the design labs, the charity Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP), and the immigration think tank British Future.

I employed a variety of qualitative methods as part of this collaboration to follow the Asylum Welcome program from planning meetings in autumn 2022 to the launch of the final toolkit on February 19, 2024. I was not evaluating the implementation of the program (e.g. measuring progress towards its objectives), but rather observing various ways the participants – roughly twenty-five council officers at various levels from eleven London borough councils – and my collaborators engaged with its content and process, as well as each other. Participant observation during five day-long 'design lab' workshops, each roughly one month apart, served as the core primary source for my qualitative material. In addition, I analyzed consultations conducted by collaborators from REAP and British Future with local council officers before and in between each of the workshops, in which the council officers could discuss their council's specific challenges and progress developing a 'pilot project' to help address a prioritized challenge. My collaborators specifically requested and received consent from the council officers to share the recordings with me for my research. I also attended five webinars on specialist topics such as communication strategies and job training, and several iterations of an 'introductory briefing session on asylum', all developed and conducted by my collaborators from REAP and British Future as optional sessions for the participants of the Asylum Welcome program. Alongside these Asylum Welcome program components, I also conducted ten semi-structured interviews with a mix of pan-London migration stakeholders, local council officers, and one central government stakeholder. These are distinct from what I refer to as 'consultations' as these were explicitly intended for research purposes, while the consultations were conducted primarily for the Asylum Welcome program, and its benefits for research were secondary. The notes from the consultations and participant observation at workshops and

webinars, and the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were coded in NVIVO software and thematically analyzed (see **Appendix 3** for a complete list of sources consulted).

To summarize, the empirical projects on London and Ukraine both featured elements of primary research. Working directly with local government stakeholders in London (Chapter 4) enabled interviews and observation at in-person workshops and events as well as virtual webinars, meetings and consultations. Primary research during practitioner experience facilitating workshops and conducting bilateral meetings in Ukraine (Chapter 2) took place in 2019 (see **Appendix 1** for a list of workshops and meetings from this period). The empirical project on Colombia, by contrast, employed mainly secondary research (Chapter 3). However, I was able to conduct one interview with a former Advisor of the government agency coordinating the response (the 'Victim's Unit') and held discussions by email with a current member of the same agency (see **Appendix 3**). These more informal interactions helped clarify the governance structure of the response and ensure I was not overlooking key secondary sources.

c. *Secondary research elements*

I embarked on this research during a period which included a global pandemic, and ongoing and new insecurity in Colombia and in Ukraine. These circumstances prevented me from physically traveling to either Colombia or Ukraine to engage directly with local government actors. I therefore employed remote methods to study these two contexts, diverging from my original research plans. Remote methods in the case of Colombia (Chapter 3) included detailed secondary research focused on official laws, court cases and associated training materials (see **Appendix 2**). Selecting the most relevant laws and court cases to analyze was clear from the rich existing academic literature on Colombia's official state response to internal displacement (Sánchez-Mojica, 2020), but my contact with one current and one former member of the Victim's Unit helped to identify further sources that were less well-known, especially the training materials and monitoring and evaluation reports. Three academic studies on local government responses, though over a decade old, also yielded key insights from municipal actors.

Remote methods in the case of Ukraine (Chapter 2) required secondary research to complement practitioner insights by thematically analyzing grey literature and published reports (see **Appendix 1**) with the support of academic scholarship. Conversations with Ukrainian scholars working on displacement and governance again helped to identify less well-known scholarship

(such as Udovyk et al., 2023). As is the case for a lot of research on internal displacement, relevant scholarly literature could also be found in area-studies journals, in this case the Europe-Asia Studies 2020 special issue 'War and Displacement: The Case of Ukraine'.

Finally, though not remote, I also analyzed secondary sources for contextual information on local council responses to asylum and the experiences of people seeking asylum in and beyond London (Chapter 4). These could also be classified as 'grey literature', for example two internal reports commissioned by the GLA, meeting minutes and lobbying letters by networks of local government actors (see **Appendix 3**). I gained access to internal documents because of my insider-research status and subsequent agreements with the GLA.

In each of these empirical projects, I identified relevant secondary sources through a combination of literature review and discussions with experts from the contexts under study. I incorporated these secondary sources into my analysis with clear questions in mind as they either helped to contextualize primary sources and grey literature or provided a key perspective missing from academic literature.

d. Language and positionality

Remote empirical projects led to a certain degree of discomfort with my positionality as an outsider. I partially mitigated my language limitations by actively seeking out scholarship outside of anglophone academic journals and reaching out to Colombian and Ukrainian scholars and practitioners for discussions about their work, aware of the risks of 'epistemic imperialism' (Sonevytsky, 2022 cited in Hendl et al., 2024). When investigating policies in Colombia, I felt hindered in my ability to reach out to a variety of central and local government stakeholders to conduct remote interviews given limitations in my spoken and written Spanish language skills. I felt that in-person interactions in Spanish would have been easier and more fruitful for developing trust and expanding my network of contacts. Reading and comprehension was sufficient for analyzing sources in their original Spanish; however, I sought assistance from native speakers to discuss terminology and translations when in doubt[3]. When working in Ukraine, I depended on partners from NRC to translate any meetings in Ukrainian or Russian into English. This practice of 'live translation' slowed our interactions and added a level of formality to our conversations, but to my knowledge did not negatively affect the objectives of the meetings. My inability to speak Ukrainian or Russian did inhibit informal conversations with local and central government stakeholders and other local governance

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[3] I am grateful especially to Santiago Bolaños Signoret for research and translation support.

actors. However, several of the Ukrainian representatives from local and international NGOs spoke fluent English, leading to fruitful side conversations and deeper insights.

Though in London language was not a problem, I was still perceived as an outsider within the Asylum Welcome program because of my academic affiliation as well as my status as a migrant in the United Kingdom. These positions distinguished me from the participants and my collaborators but did not inhibit frank discussions in interviews. Reminding participants that I was involved in the preliminary stages of the design of the Asylum Welcome program as an employee of the GLA helped them accept my presence as an insider to some degree.

e. *Case study methodology*

This PhD combines various qualitative approaches: aspects of case study methodology, ethnographic methods, collaborative research, and (critical) discourse analysis. It is useful to discuss each in turn in order to elaborate on the rationale and challenges of undertaking and combining these approaches.

The three cases explored in this PhD thesis – Ukraine's responses to internal displacement from 2014 until 2022 (a collection of interrelated local governance processes), Colombia's 'System of Co-responsibility' (a case of multilevel governance), and a selection of London borough councils' emerging responses to asylum (a capacity-building process) – were selected using a case-based rather than a variables-based logic. While variable-oriented research aims to "establish generalised relationships between variables", case-oriented research aims to gather rich descriptions of a few instances of a certain phenomenon to unravel complexity (Della Porta, 2012), a characteristic of local governance given its many interlinked networks of stakeholders and decision-makers. Lund (2014) explains that a case is a choice, which represents "an edited chunk of empirical reality where certain features are marked out, emphasized, and privileged while others recede into the background" (p. 224). Hence identifying and analyzing cases serves as a method of inquiry, with a case representing an 'analytical construct' which we can compare with other instances of that case.

The three cases represent different case study designs (Yin, 2018, pp. 49–51). Specifically, Chapter 2 employs a 'most likely' case of local government intervention in eastern Ukraine in which political will was present to serve as the impetus for nascent responses to internal displacement. Chapter 3 employs a 'paradigmatic' case of state-led responses to internal displacement in which the Government of Colombia's over 200 laws and policies on internal displacement has been considered an example for other contexts of conflict-induced internal

displacement globally, showing how tensions persist despite a robust policy landscape. Chapter 4, by contrast, employs a 'least likely' case of local government intervention in the United Kingdom because local governments are not given responsibility towards responding to people seeking asylum, yet they still see the need to create a role for themselves within this highly political policy area. These three different case study designs enable transferability to other local and city contexts within decentralizing unitary states confronting forced migration.

f. Approximating ethnography

Because agency and meanings are central to how governance networks function and what rules they create (Rhodes, 2007), studying local governance processes benefits from an interpretivist approach informed by ethnographic methods. Van Hulst (2008) argues that ethnographic methods are particularly relevant for studying local governance: they bring out the variety of ways in which local government actors experience reality and make meaning or sense, and they also uncover the processes behind the policies and published decisions. My aim in participating in workshops with London borough councils (Chapter 4) was broadly to undertake an ethnography of the state at the city level. In this I followed Mountz' (2010) interest in "[t]he study of states as daily, embodied entities" in which their activities demonstrate how "narratives that structure the routine work of bureaucrats" connect with human migration (p. xxiii). Observing and questioning work thought of as 'routine' enabled productive discussions on its opposite, namely the lack of routines in certain areas that required processes of adaptation and change.

Opportunities for participant observation and interviews were initially limited because of my focus on responses to asylum. Outside the Asylum Welcome program, I received few replies to discuss asylum, though I did manage to speak with officers responsible for refugee resettlement programs who were eager to showcase their activities. Elite networks making decisions on asylum have been considered "closed structures" in other contexts (Cintra de Oliveira Tavares, 2023) and I found similar hesitance in London. Additionally, no UK Home Office officials agreed to participate in interviews, limiting my ability to incorporate central government governance processes into the research design. Though I observed several meetings between council officers, civil society members, and UK Home Office officials while employed at the GLA, I could not include those transcripts in my thematic analysis due to lack of consent.

g. *Academic-practitioner collaborations*

Restricted access to the everyday work of local governments required that I develop different kinds of relationships to embed myself into their meaning-making processes. But in this process, I encountered challenges common to academic-practitioner collaborations (Durose et al., 2017; Ooms et al., 2023), especially giving up some 'academic autonomy' for 'relevance' and access (Orr & Bennett, 2012). To build trust in my empirical work in London, I needed to regularly demonstrate the value of our research collaboration by articulating the alignment between my longer-term research objectives and the objectives of the Asylum Welcome program. I also needed to develop a form of exchange that provided value to my collaborators' shorter-term objectives. For example, I drafted five 'internal memos' summarizing salient points from each workshop both as documentation for my collaborators and as a starting point for 'debrief' discussions that fed into their design of the subsequent workshop. I openly encouraged participation from my collaborators in my research objectives and sought their feedback on the research questions, methods of data collection, and review of policy-oriented outputs. Though the project was not fully 'participatory' or 'co-produced', we were jointly creating knowledge that answered complementary short-term and longer-term questions around how to improve responses to asylum, drawing from ideas of coproduction that bring alternative forms of knowledge to public administration in the United Kingdom (Orr & Bennett, 2012) and to transforming urban governance (Richardson et al., 2018).

Academic-practitioner collaborations using both current and prior institutional affiliations proved essential for access. However, this also introduced a certain bias and limitations on my ability to critique those actors I depended on as collaborators, gatekeepers, and respondents. Given that insights in Ukraine relied on prior employment at the Joint IDP Profiling Service, I likely overrepresent the importance of this organization's work and underestimate the influence of my role as a prior UN-affiliated external actor. In interviews in London, I invited discussion on the role and efficacy of the GLA in supporting borough councils in their responses to asylum and refugee resettlement. But my research questions did not explicitly interrogate these dynamics, given that I sought a degree of 'approval' on the objectives of my research from my GLA collaborators. They however welcomed such critique informally.

h. *(Critical) discourse analysis*

I remained attuned to the role of discourse for shaping governance processes throughout. Descriptions of Russian aggression as a 'frozen conflict' in eastern Ukraine before 2022 likely

hindered response efforts from local and central state actors. Analyzing the language that council officers in London used to describe those for whom their services were designed reflected a certain ideology and shaped their practices. The labels of 'service users', 'guests', and 'asylum-seeking residents' contrasted the politically-charged central government rhetoric on 'illegal migrants' (e.g. UK Parliament, 2023). Analyzing the discourse within the laws and decrees governing Colombia's state-led response to internal displacement proved especially revealing of central government ideology and practice.

I employ critical discourse analysis within this PhD as a way of empirically analyzing power relations. The aim of critical discourse analysis is to uncover the power relations implicit in language describing cultural, social and political acts that groups in society consider to be normal and natural. Van Dijk explains this as "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). Critical discourse analysis assumes that discourse and social acts are mutually constituted (Fairclough, 2003). Official state policy language is therefore both shaped by existing power relations and shapes them in turn.

In Chapter 3, I bridge theories on the multilevel governance of migration with principles from the discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). I identify the tensions, underlying ideologies, and their impact on power relations within the 'Strategy of Co-responsibility' to show how the central level defines its relationship with the local level. With this approach, I hope to demonstrate the value of critically interrogating the discourse within IDP laws and policies, a gap in both the sociolegal literature on forced migration and policy debates (Cantor & Woolley, 2020). Inspired by critical discourse analysis in Chapter 4, I go beyond the policy frames literature, or 'frame analysis', which focuses on how problems are framed and how this framing relates to proposed policy solutions (van Hulst & Yanow, 2016; see for example Broadhead, 2020; Spencer & Delvino, 2019). Frame analysis does not delve into the contextual influences on the frames and the practices such frames enable. By contrast, I highlight the role of discourse within problem-solving processes, for example how the concept of 'long-term residents' helped resolve a key dilemma for council officers. Such discourse underlies policy frames, and I argue contributes to practices that are themselves political, even if not communicated widely to the public.

i. Learning from experiences of displacement

While considering local government and other forced migration policymaking processes as my research objects, the outcomes of their activities and policies on the everyday experiences of

people seeking refuge remain critical (Lindley, 2013). I relied on ethnographic and other work to gain insight into the connections between governance processes and everyday experiences[4], what I call in Chapter 2 'governance interactions'. In London, I had the privilege of hearing REAP members' reactions to workshop discussions, enriching my own research process and findings (Chapter 4). Their insights – drawing from personal experiences and the experiences of others relying on them for support – often surprised the council officers around them and pushed them to reconsider taken-for-granted approaches to service provision.

1.5 Thesis summary

The following chapters implement the 'governance lens' to study the local governance of forced migration. They do so by expanding several interrelated concepts: local governance and the building of a local social contract, multilevel governance systems, and capacity-building processes.

a. Contributions by chapter

Chapter 2, 'Analyzing the local governance of internal displacement: an emerging (local) social contract in eastern Ukraine since 2014'[5], investigates nascent internal displacement responses in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022, an under-researched context and period. The empirical case of eastern Ukraine reveals the possibility of 'bottom-up approaches' to internal displacement responses, which gradually build a social contract between internally displaced people and their local state. Based on a combination of practitioner experience, document analysis and literature review, I identify three governance processes that helped to 'visibilize' internally displaced people to municipal actors and local policy networks – voting reforms, data collection processes, and participatory forums. I explain the relevance of these processes within the context of wider governance processes, especially decentralization reforms and housing policy: I find that the former created new opportunity for responding while the latter severely limited response options.

Conceptually, the chapter advances two claims: first, if we conceive of the 'local governance of internal displacement' as the vehicle through which people internally displaced can exercise

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[4] Helping me contextualize the effects of forced migration responses more generally, I engaged with people with lived experience of forced migration outside of research settings. I volunteered to teach English as a second language in London and supported friends working tirelessly to overcome significant barriers to integration in other parts of Europe.

[5] A revised version of Chapter 2 is planned for publication with the journal *Environment and Urbanization* for their special issue 'Forced Displacement and the City'.

their rights and obligations, among other activities, this must be initiated by governance reforms that build a formal relationship between displaced populations and their local (not just central) state, such as the three processes I highlight. Doing so visibilizes internal displacement (Polzer & Hammond, 2008) in particular ways, especially peoples' locally-specific experiences and socioeconomic inequalities, all the while building foundations for political participation. Second, I propose a local social contract as a gradual process towards developing trust in state institutions at local levels, which can be scaled up for greater trust overall. The chapter ultimately opens more nuanced avenues to conceptualizing state-led responses.

Shifting from local levels to the interactions between levels of government, Chapter 3, 'Multilevel governance "from above": Analyzing Colombia's system of co-responsibility for responding to internal displacement'[6], explores how the state shares responsibility for responding to internal displacement between different levels of government. Colombia serves as a useful case for examining the evolving coordination between national and local governments because of the extensive legislative and institutional structures in place since 1997. I draw on concepts from critical discourse analysis and political anthropology to analyze its 2015 'Strategy of Co-responsibility' assigning responsibility for the administration of emergency humanitarian assistance to local levels. This policy, a presidential decree issued by the national level, encapsulates over a decade of debate on how to coordinate responses. I argue that the Strategy represents a delicate compromise between enforcing minimum standards and respecting local autonomy. The compromise however largely reaffirms existing vertical power relations, while also creating incentives for horizontal multilevel governance that places political pressure on municipalities to act.

Empirically, I find the Strategy's use of the language of 'co-responsibility', a technocratic action-planning process, and capacity-building initiatives as key discursive and governance techniques through which the national level enacts its vision of coordination. Conceptually, I expand frameworks from the multilevel governance of migration to identify the conditions for coordination between levels to emerge, bridging multilevel governance literature with forced migration literature. In so doing, I enable a systematic analysis of coordination structures to question whether and how they reinforce or contest existing power relations. Reflecting on the lack of an explicit discussion of power within multilevel governance frameworks (Marquardt, 2017), I propose the quality and quantity of interactions between levels of government as well

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[6] Chapter 3 has been published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (Weihmayer, 2023).

as the flattening or widening of hierarchies within those interactions as ways of assessing opportunities for power dynamics to change through coordination structures. The limited space for dialogue and collaboration within Colombia's official IDP response indeed did not appear to transform central-local relations, though this has been more promising in Ukraine's recent recovery efforts (Udovyk et al., 2023).

Chapter 4, 'Proactive local government: how London borough councils build capacity to respond to asylum'[7], transitions from the governance of internal displacement to the governance of asylum. This chapter focuses on capacity-building processes within local governments as conduits for policy design but also policy contestation. With significant increases in the numbers of people seeking asylum being accommodated in London as of 2020, London's local councils are finding new ways to respond. I question the mechanisms enabling a shift from 'reactive' responses to more strategic and 'proactive' responses in some boroughs. Based on insider research and participant observation in a series of 'design lab' workshops, as well as semi-structured interviews with migration stakeholders, I analyze key dilemmas faced by council officers: how to plan despite a rapidly moving population and how to uphold standards within the asylum accommodation system and the monitoring of central government contractors. I find that the way council officers resolve these dilemmas is indeed building both capacity and confidence in this policy area. I conclude that these changes are contesting asylum policy in two ways: by affirming people seeking asylum as local residents under local duties of care, and by developing a practice of proactive problem-solving, thereby countering 'crisis policymaking' practices (Temenos, 2022).

Conceptually, I contribute capacity-building as a multistage and nonlinear process of 1) resolving dilemmas to ascertain local governments' role and goals, 2) developing confidence through knowledge and partnerships, and 3) developing skills to mobilize existing and new resources. I claim that this process enables proactivity, which is a governance practice with implicit political implications. Ultimately, I view the development of responses to asylum as illustrative of local government capacity for solving complex and emerging urban governance problems in and beyond migration policymaking, countering central government dominance in decision-making.

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[7] Chapter 4 was submitted for review to the journal *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* in May 2024.

b. Overall contributions

I make several broader contributions to academic knowledge on the governance of forced migration. Overall, I argue that changes to governance structures, processes, practices and ideas are difficult, time-consuming and inherently political. But they are also worthwhile and promising for opening new avenues for response. Much of the difficulty of designing and implementing governance interventions and reforms lies in the need to rebalance existing power relations; local governance, multilevel governance and capacity-building therefore cannot remain power-neutral.

Based on the empirical findings of this PhD, I argue that responding to the 'presence' of newcomers requires substantial transformation. This is the case even in 'most likely' situations, in which citizens and residents internally displaced have a legal claim to certain state entitlements and protection, even where there is 'political will' and some degree of 'capacity' to address those claims. Challenges in the governance of forced migration at local levels demonstrates the fixity of administrative systems in two ways: they are difficult to change and they assume a fixity in the populations they administer ('sedentary bias'). Indeed, this stems from "a broader philosophical question around how to define political community in both spatial and chronological terms" (Landau et al., 2013, p. 114). This 'philosophical question' is evident from local authority discomfort and confusion in having to plan for a 'transient population' like asylum-seekers discussed in Chapter 4. Administrative systems in Ukraine also required substantial changes despite and in part because of its 2014 law for the protection of those internally displaced, for example reforms to its voting registration process discussed in Chapter 2 that previously disenfranchised part of its voting populace. We can think of this challenge as the local state grappling with the 'politics of presence' (Darling, 2017). By their 'presence' in a particular place, displaced populations demand both avenues for political participation as well as freedom of movement (p. 190) internally within a state. I contend that the fixity of administrative systems place these demands in tension with one another. Additionally, as all three chapters demonstrate, changes to the governance structures and ideas required to reconcile these implies longer time horizons than those assumed in existing literature and policy debates.

I also propose that negotiations between government levels can be recast as a normal part of unitary (and likely federal) state systems because they can be beneficial for confronting emerging problems. Debates that arise from policy areas which are inherently multilevel are often framed as a problem, or even a 'crisis', as is often the case with migration (Lindley, 2014).

However, as Rhodes described in his seminal 1981 text, these tensions can also be highly productive (Rhodes, 1999), especially in the mode of 'cooperative multilevel governance' (Scholten, 2013). The decades-long debate in Colombia over which level of government is best suited to administering humanitarian assistance to those displaced by armed conflict fundamentally changed when such services were framed in terms of restoring basic rights, a mission for which all levels of government are 'co-responsible' (see Chapter 3). But this reframing prompted municipal actors to flag the imbalance in financial resources between levels of government that hindered their ability to undertake such a responsibility. By connecting forced migration responses to so-called 'incomplete decentralization' (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008), municipalities could debate wider structural issues affecting their capacity for responding.

c. Policy implications

This PhD thesis views responses to internal displacement and asylum as opportunities for the contestation and potential innovation of existing governance structures, processes, practices and ideas. The implications of this are to consider a wider suite of policy solutions that extend far beyond a specific service intended for IDPs, refugees or asylum-seekers.

Lessons from Colombia, Ukraine and London demonstrate that there is a need to include displaced people into services and administrative processes available to all citizens as well as to develop specific programs that mitigate the effects of their displacement for them to locally integrate (Cotroneo, 2017). This requires consideration of the wider governance context that necessarily affects how the state interacts with a variety of displaced groups, but also the general populace. There is also a need for local and city governments to adapt to highly mobile populations in general (Landau et al., 2013). Interventions enabling this are not necessarily at the city or local scale, however. For example, moves towards digital governance platforms that allow for mobility, such as Ukraine's 'State in Smartphone' initiative, may have greater impact for helping IDPs access services than any specific IDP program (Kuzemska, 2021) when scaled up across the country.

Additionally, the potential for local governments to play a 'convening' and 'steering' role within responses to forced migration (Broadhead, 2020a) has been traditionally overlooked by humanitarian action. This PhD thesis supports the argument that local government officers can and should be considered, at minimum, partners in decision-making for supporting displaced populations. They can furthermore take the lead to design policies for their assistance and even

protection (Durmuş, 2020). The possibility of bottom-up approaches described in Chapter 2 supports an argument for expanding funding modalities in the humanitarian sector. Few funds exist that can directly support local authorities in implementing policies and programs for displaced populations[8]. Such a change would make it easier for local authorities to budget for and overcome political challenges in financing responses to forced migration (UN-Habitat et. al., 2021).

I contribute conceptual and empirical findings to a variety of policy audiences given the ongoing and rapidly changing debates on the empirical cases examined by this PhD thesis. I applied multilevel governance concepts from Chapter 3 to structure a session in a 'Cross-Regional Forum on Implementing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement' convened in June 2023 by the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs, UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster (Global Protection Cluster, 2023). I developed a case study from Colombia's 'System of Co-responsibility' for the 2024 'Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement' (forthcoming). Based on Chapter 4, I outlined different methods for building the capacity of local governments in a policy brief that conveys the potential for local governments in the United Kingdom to innovate as they take on asylum responses (Weihmayer, 2024). I incorporated these ideas into a toolkit with options for developing an 'asylum team' and coordination structures (Greater London Authority, 2024). I furthermore discussed processes for evidence-based policymaking within local governments, drawing from the case of asylum, with other councils in the United Kingdom and networks of local governments elsewhere. These policy outputs highlight the ways in which governance issues and forced migration responses interrelate and productively inform each other.

1.6 Related research and ways forward

Research on the local governance of forced migration produces a series of new questions and potential for expansion. Empirically, this PhD thesis investigates different geographic contexts affected by conflict-induced (internal) displacement. It does not compare them within its scope but creates foundations for comparative studies in future research. I intend for such studies to follow a tradition of comparative urbanisms that views 'ordinary cities' (Robinson, 2006) as sources of learning and values a multiplicity of urban realities (Robinson, 2023) given the diversity of contexts affected by forced migration. This PhD thesis demonstrates, for example,

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[8] The 'Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees' administered by the transnational organization Mayor's Migration Council is a small but notable exception, with a total budget of 8 million USD (MMC, 2023).

potential connections between local governance challenges in the eastern Ukrainian city of Severdonetsk and large capital cities like Bogotá and London.

I envision three areas of future research on the local governance of forced migration. First, there is scope to investigate how local governance structures, processes, practices and ideas differ depending on whether displacement results from conflict, violence, other human rights violations, development projects, and/or natural and manmade disasters. The work must acknowledge the often artificial binary created between voluntary and forced movements (Turton, 2003) as well as the multi-causal nature of displacement (Zetter, 2019). Indeed, these complexities suggest that local government processes of categorization of a particular group of people as displaced (or not) merits investigation and critique. Though a longtime focus within academic scholarship (Bakewell, 2008; Crawley, 2018; Polzer, 2008), these categorization debates privilege central government legal and policy categories. The political implications of different displacement 'drivers' differ immensely, and hence this comparison would provide a valuable opportunity to question the interaction between politics and the feasibility of responding.

Secondly, future research could interrogate the persistence of crisis-framings in internal displacement and asylum contexts alike (Lindley, 2014), and the effects of such framings on local governance. Asking if local levels perceive themselves to reach a 'crisis-point' in the absence of national acknowledgement of the problem, and vice versa, could help to differentiate between the influence of national-level rhetoric and local level operational challenges on experiences of crisis within public sector institutions.

Thirdly, comparative studies between different local authorities in the same geographic context responding to forced migration would help to nuance the institutional and social factors that contribute to political will, capacity, and lack thereof. Examples include ongoing work comparing concepts of 'integration' employed by municipalities to support people internally displaced in different cities in Ethiopia (Albin, 2026). This work builds from existing comparisons of responses to internal displacement in the Colombian cities of Cali and Bogotá (Vidal et al., 2013), among others.

Common to each of these potential future projects is the shared appreciation of the wider governance context and its influence on how forced migration is conceived of and governed at local levels. In summary, given the various ways in which forced migration and urban environments interlink, it is critical that our research unravels the challenges that cities face in

general from those influenced by and interfacing with forced migration. Only then can we begin to identify solutions that minimize detrimental outcomes and disrupt processes of marginalization for urban residents and (displaced) newcomers alike.

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Chapter 2. Analyzing the local governance of internal displacement: an emerging (local) social contract in eastern Ukraine since 2014

2.1 Introduction

> "On account of their direct contact with IDPs, and their immediate role in the provision of local services, and formulation of local development strategies, local authorities are often the best placed to identify and assist IDPs outside camps living in their communities" (Beyani, 2011, p. 15).

As early as 2011, a Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons described the unique potential of local governments in responses to internal displacement, especially for assisting internally displaced people (IDPs) who 'self-settle' outside of camps. Yet over a decade later, the tendency to overlook this level of government persists.

While there is a lack of attention on internal displacement in general within both research (Cantor & Woolley, 2020; Ferris & Kerwin, 2023; McAdam, 2018; Polzer & Hammond, 2008; Zetter, 2019) and policy debates (Zeender & Yarnell, 2020), this is especially true for the role of local governments when responding to the needs of those internally displaced living within their jurisdictions. This may be explained by a lack of normative guidance on this issue. The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, for example, affirm the primary duty and responsibility for the protection of IDPs lies with 'national authorities' (UN Commission on Human Rights, 1998, Principle 3.1). Though other 'competent authorities' are called upon to ensure that services are provided to enable IDPs to enjoy at minimum an adequate standard of living (UN Commission on Human Rights, 1998, Principle 18.2), this still assumes that decision-making rests with the national level, and other roles remain underdefined.

There is growing recognition of the importance of the local governance of internal displacement, however. Three points raised in the landmark report published by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement demonstrate this: the centrality of nationally owned responses, the call for 'whole-of-government' approaches, and the recognition of the role of municipal actors in service provision (United Nations Secretary-General, 2021). Indeed, the report argues that the requirement for 'effective Government

action' to resolve internal displacement stems from the presumption that citizenship and residency implies a relationship with government at all levels. It states that:

> "recogniz[ed] as citizens and residents of a country, IDPs should be the responsibility of all parts of government, from the highest levels of political leadership to local and city authorities and across all relevant ministries" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2021, p. 13).

I respond to this call for a 'whole-of-government' approach by presenting a more nuanced understanding of the State and its responsibility, recognizing that displacement is always experienced in locally specific ways (Brun, 2003). I acknowledge the diverse networks of civil society, private-sector, regional, national and international actors engaged in local-level decision-making alongside the local state. Whether and how local governments play a role within these networks becomes an empirical question. This paper asks: how do state responses to internal displacement emerge at the local level?

To address this question, I analyze the governance context, processes and interactions within internal displacement responses in Ukraine. I focus on the under-researched period between 2014 and 2022, before the so-called 'full-scale Russian invasion'[9]. Ukraine is relevant as an example of a decentralizing unitary state facing unprecedented levels of conflict-induced internal displacement. The political will of local actors make its emergent responses pre-2022 a 'most likely' case of local government intervention, yet significant structural challenges remained. This case encapsulates a 'bottom up process' of internal displacement response.

This paper argues overall that situations of internal displacement are especially relevant to investigate from a local government perspective. This means examining local governance processes that impede, restore or create a relationship between IDPs and their local state in places of refuge. Ignoring these undervalues bottom-up state-led responses to internal displacement.

First I explain how local governments feature in existing literature on internal displacement. Then I outline three salient governance processes within Ukraine's response: voting reforms, collaborative data collection to inform response decisions, and the development of participatory forums. These show different ways that a relationship between IDPs and their

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[9] 'Full-scale military attack' or 'invasion' is terminology often used by Ukrainian scholars (see for example Udovyk et al., 2023). I also refer to Russia's military provocations in February 24, 2022 as the 'second Russian invasion' throughout the article to remind readers that it is a continuation and amplification of actions taken in 2014 and earlier (Hendl et al., 2024).

local governments was being created, negotiated, and potentially reconfigured. I conclude by discussing the relevance of a local 'social contract' and the implications of bottom-up responses.

2.2 Overlooked local government

a. *Local government within internal displacement research*

With the realization that roughly two-thirds of those internally displaced by conflict and violence reside in cities (UNHCR, 2019a), there is a nascent discussion on internal displacement in urban areas (Cotroneo, 2017; J. M. Crisp Tim; Refstie, Hilde, 2012; Earle et al., 2020; Fielden, 2008; Landau, 2014; Lyytinen, 2009). This literature recognizes the challenges in understanding urban displacement, including its scale and its consequences, emphasizing disappointment with the state of the evidence that has only been partially rectified by reports shedding new light on this issue (Anzellini & Leduc, 2020; Cotroneo, 2017; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020). It also reflects on the need for international humanitarian actors to shift their approaches to working in cities with complex existing governance structures. But though this literature advocates for developing partnerships with local authorities (Alcanya & Al-Murani, 2016; J. Crisp et al., 2012), there are few empirical examples investigating their specific role within responses or what incentivizes them to engage.

The studies that do exist on local government responses to internal displacement raise significant concerns over confusion in their roles and responsibilities (Brun (2003) in Sri Lanka; Ibáñez & Velásquez (2008) and Vidal et al. (2013) in Colombia; Kamungi (2013) in Kenya; Funke (2022) in Georgia). Two contexts most transferrable to the Ukrainian case due to their middle-income status and unitary but partially decentralized and democratic structures are Colombia and Georgia. In Colombia, though all levels of government were given a role in supporting people displaced by its internal armed conflict in its landmark legislation in 1997, a minimum budget allocation for humanitarian assistance and services to IDPs was never defined. Any budget reserved for IDPs was therefore seen as funding taken away from other vulnerable populations (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008). Hence responses to displacement were politically unfavorable, especially in poorer municipalities (Vidal et al., 2013). This gradually changed as the central government offered more autonomy in exchange for clear reporting processes and the potential for capacity-building and joint-funding opportunities (Weihmayer, 2023). Georgia faced similar budget restrictions that limited integration support at local levels. Though there was a strong national law protecting IDPs issued in 1996, its focus on returning

those IDPs to their places of origin oriented any local government interventions towards implementing temporary fixes such as small pots of emergency cash assistance and building new settlements with limited infrastructure far from jobs (Funke, 2022). Lack of a clear role and dedicated funding for what is now often referred to as 'support for durable solutions'[10] for IDPs relegated municipal actors to a "minor supporting role" (Funke, 2022, p. 178).

The confusion around roles and responsibilities for municipal actors is not unique to internal displacement responses, as it stems from a long history and literature describing multi-faceted challenges for local governments. These include limitations on their autonomy (OECD, 2019), often severe financial constraints from a lack of local revenue and obstacles to fiscal reforms (UN-Habitat, 2015), political challenges such as local conflict or opposition to central government parties (Khalaf, 2015; Lowndes & Polat, 2022; Vidal et al., 2013), relations with other municipalities and civil society actors (Ataç et al., 2020), and capacity concerns (Weihmayer, 2024).

Decentralization may bring more fiscal, administrative and/or political autonomy to local governments, but the benefits to local democracy are mixed, in particular during and after conflict (Jackson, 2016). Though local governments may be given a strong role in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, the elite capture of local budgets and powers (Tahir, 2023) and the reaffirmation of strong central government control are also likely outcomes. Jackson (2016) argues positive outcomes depend on the "politics of local government and the political framework in which it operates, including the dynamics of the conflict itself" (p. 749). Peacebuilding literature cautions us from taking an overly rosy view of local government and what constitutes the 'local', and instead critically examine local governments' diverse roles across and within countries (Mac Ginty, 2011).

b. Justifying outside intervention

Repeated discussion of local government failures generally supports an argument for international actors to intervene (Carr, 2009) in place of building local capacity or supporting state-led responses. National state-led responses to internal displacement are indeed hampered

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[10] A 'durable solution' concretely refers to three options for settlement after a person is displaced: integrating locally, resettling elsewhere in the country, or returning to one's place of origin. However, these options have been argued to imperfectly reflect the wide spectrum of settlement patterns experienced by those internally displaced (see for example Brun & Fábos, 2017; Long, 2014; Tete, 2009). IDPs are said to have 'reached a durable solution' if their human rights have been restored, including security, livelihoods, housing land and property rights, and participation in public affairs, among others, and they have overcome displacement-related vulnerabilities (Inter-agency Standing Committee, 2010).

by structural issues around inadequate funding and, related to that, a general lack of capacity to both plan and implement programs and services for IDPs to the levels expected by international legal frameworks. Literature on internal displacement posits international organizations and NGOs as the capacity-building force for national authorities, with the presumption that capacity then trickles down to local levels through comprehensive national-level laws and policy initiatives (e.g. Adeola & Orchard, 2020; Nicolau & Pagot, 2018).

In addition to low capacity, the idea of insufficient 'political will' is frequently raised as a barrier to both the adoption of laws and policies as well as their implementation (de Aquino Barbosa Magalhães et al., 2020). But its theorization remains superficial (Crisp, 2018), especially at local levels (Earle et al., 2020). Earle et al. (2020) propose cultural, social and political factors to be significant: "Where there is a lack of or limited political will to recognize IDPs as full citizens, this may be a result of entrenched cultural attitudes, misconceptions, misinformation, or politicization of internal displacement" (Earle et al., 2020, pp. 499–500). Additionally, the lack of capacity to generate political will is overlooked; viewing political will and capacity as mutually constituted is more productive (Nicolau, 2022; OECD/UNU-CPR, 2024). But if we assume that governments either lack the capacity (they cannot respond) or lack the political will (they can but choose not to respond), then the only solution to designing any response that supports IDPs becomes outside intervention. This quagmire makes a state-led response seem unlikely at any level of government.

c. *Bringing in a differentiated State*

Investigating the role of local governments complicates notions of the State. There is growing recognition that our understanding of 'states' needs to be more nuanced in relation to displacement debates (Gill, 2010), acknowledging especially its multi-layered governance systems. Gill demonstrates that asylum and refugee research tends to essentialize the state such that the state is seen to be a separate entity from the social, even "standing apart from society and acting upon it from a distance" (Gill, 2010, p. 627). This treatment of the state presents it as a homogenous entity with a unified set of interests. It fails to account for the agency of individuals, such as mayors or other elected officials, or even the influence of networks of actors like political parties and transnational organizations. Indeed, Gill argues the reifications of the state precludes critical questions on state behavior as certain practices are assumed to be state-driven rather than socially-driven in particular ways. This is countered by rich political

geography discussions that refute fixed definitions of the state because of the dynamic social forces constantly reshaping it.

Importantly, internal displacement scholarship has yet to embrace this view. For example, political theory literature makes a normative case that IDPs are owed support because, like a refugees' relationship to his or her country of origin, IDPs have experienced a rupture in the relationship between a person and his or her state (Draper, 2021). Though a useful conceptualization of displacement, this member-state relationship remains simplistic. It reifies the state as a monolith that does not account for the governance processes involved in establishing and undertaking responsibility for the protection of IDPs at different levels of government and in particular locations.

Indeed, the process of "opening the black box of the state" (Bevir, 2011) goes beyond questions of how national laws and policies domesticate international legal frameworks (e.g. Nicolau, 2022) to comparisons of different subnational laws and policies, as well as how these are and are not implemented in practice. Questioning networks of state actors becomes relevant here, as well as relationships between state actors and civil society at different levels. Drawing on international relations scholarship, Funke (2022) for example brings in the concept of 'organized anarchies', highlighting that responses to internal displacement in Georgia "do not consist of one unitary, rational actor" (Funke, 2022, p. 65). This leads to a situation in which state actors at all levels are not fully aware of the broader problems within the response, do not know what they seek to accomplish, and therefore make decisions based on preferences and individual experience (and limited data gathering resources) that do not fully align between levels. For more grounded scholarship on state behavior within internal displacement responses, I propose studying the governance context, processes, and interactions that manifest in the inclusion or exclusion of IDPs.

2.3 Analyzing local governance

Based on a more general definition of *local governance* from the UN Development Programme, I understand the local governance of internal displacement to encompass the "combined set of institutions, systems and processes at the subnational level" through which people internally displaced can "articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations" (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016, p. 3). This contributes to the development or restoration of a relationship between citizens and institutional environments in places of refuge. Note that this definition does not necessarily

assume that such exercise of rights and obligations must be done through state institutions, leaving open the role for civil society to act as service providers and rights-enablers.

Other governance concepts emphasize different aspects of these relationships. *Multilevel governance* stresses the interactions between nested levels of government and between government and a wide range of non-government actors that enable or hinder joint decision-making in the public sphere (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2018; Marks & Hooghe, 2004; P. W. A. Scholten, 2013). It attunes us to the interdependencies but also contestations between different networks engaged in policymaking, including civil society and the private sector. For example, Ukraine's post-2022 reconstruction and recovery planning represents a complex web of multilevel governance that reveals a strengthening central authority (Udovyk et al., 2023). *Hybrid governance* focuses more on the ways in which governance in a conflict or post-conflict context is managed and constantly reshaped by a dynamic set of actors. These actors span from local to international and differ in how they enable or subvert a state of 'liberal peace' (Mac Ginty, 2011).[11] Khalaf's (2015) study on non-government-controlled areas in Syria, for example, demonstrates the importance of nuancing our understandings of civil society in cases where the state is absent, as its diversity often comes with many competing political agendas. In her case, hybrid governance manifests as potential misalignment between local level governance priorities and those imposed by international actors. While this resembles a 'decoupled' mode of multilevel governance (P. W. A. Scholten, 2013), the fragility of peace and disruption to most formal governance structures necessitates a different concept.[12] Ideas from both concepts inspire my analysis. However, local governance remains most applicable because I prioritize interactions between IDPs, civil society and local government and I focus on places of refuge that are not experiencing the massive flux of live conflict (at least during the period of study) in a context with heavily bureaucratic structures.[13]

The aim of studying the local governance of internal displacement is to reveal the governance issues affecting the entire population and those affecting responses to internal displacement specifically, and ultimately how these issues affect IDPs. To study this empirically, I propose

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[11] This concept helps to "more easily recognise the agency and diversity of local actors in peace and conflict situations" (Mac Ginty, 2011, p. 10).

[12] Brown & Ahmed (2016) provide another useful example from Karachi, Pakistan in which local government dissolved, exacerbating conflict dynamics. This work suggests that formal local governance structures serve an important role in maintaining peace in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

[13] Processes of hybridization likely would be relevant for studying practices of local governance in Ukraine's non-government-controlled areas, now transformed into 'occupied territories'. Researchers cannot currently access these areas.

delineating between the governance context, processes and interactions affecting the response to and experience of internal displacement. Within this I am particularly interested in the role that local governments play (or not) among the many actors that could influence outcomes for IDPs.

First, understanding the overall *governance context* within which displacement responses emerge (or not) assumes that some responses to internal displacement are impeded not by resource constraints and capacity alone but by wider governance challenges at different levels of government that affect all policy areas. Investigating the governance context implies engagement with public administration, spatial planning, and urban politics literature to outline the legislative landscape, bureaucratic practices, and institutional cultures specific to that geographic region. For example, some contexts are characterized by more formal, hierarchical institutional environments while others are less formal or leave more discretion to local levels.

Second, conducting an in-depth investigation of the specific *governance processes* reveals how decisions on the response are made, paying attention to the actors involved in the process. This attunes us to the voice that displaced people have within decision-making in their places of refuge.

Finally, analyses of processes are complemented by a focus on *governance interactions*, or the experience of IDPs in navigating this category and citizenship rights. These could reveal how everyday encounters with bureaucracy affect the IDP experience, for instance Bulakh's (2020) account of how Ukrainian IDPs face bureaucratic hurdles when receiving state pensions that others do not face. In this way the IDP category "develops particular local meanings at different locations and commonly also itself becomes a social category and identity" that can integrate or alienate depending on the context (Brun, 2003, p. 380). Both processes and interactions provide a more holistic picture of not only what produces a relationship between IDPs and their local state, but whether IDPs feel a sense of social and cultural belonging in their new place of residence (or not). Scholars of the situation in Ukraine, for example, have pointed to this operating differently for different groups of IDPs, creating "hierarchies of belonging" (Sasse & Lackner, 2020; Sereda, 2020). Important here is the agency and capacities of those internally displaced. As Sereda explains, "More needs to be known about the conscious and productive efforts of displaced people to rebuild their lives in the new receiving communities" including their inclusion in civil society networks (Sereda, 2023, p. 32). Because of her and others' valuable work on this in the Ukrainian context both before and after 2022 (Bulakh, 2020;

Krakhmalova, 2019; Lazarenko, 2019; Sereda, 2023), I focus on the governance context and processes within the scope of this article.

2.4 Case and methods[14]

Studying the effects of Russian aggression in Ukraine before the second invasion on February 24, 2022 is important for a variety of reasons (Hendl et al., 2024; Knott, 2023), but here two are most salient: first, despite the high levels of displacement, the government had few resources for dealing with it. In addition to over 43,000 deaths recorded by 2019 (OHCHR, 2019), the Ukrainian Ministry for Social Policy figures cited 1.8 million officially registered IDPs at its highest point in 2016.[15] Even with these staggering figures, attention on the conflict was wavering at best; it was referred to as a 'forgotten crisis' and a 'neglected crisis on Europe's doorstep'(Bulakh, 2020 referencing Stylianides, 2016 and Bociurkiw, 2017). This period therefore demonstrates how a local governance of internal displacement emerged despite scant resources and a weak central government response (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 12). Second, this period created the foundation for the response to internal displacement still in place today, with nearly 5.1 million people estimated to be internally displaced in May 2023, down to 3.7 million by December 2023 (IOM, 2023a, 2023b). Hence analyzing its (local) governance provides important lessons for responding to conflict-induced internal displacement of different scales in decentralizing unitary states.

The conflict has been ongoing since April 2014, when 'separatists' claimed territory in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region to establish the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics, just months after the occupation of Crimea by Russia. While a practitioner visiting the Donbas region, local humanitarian and UN partners often referred to the situation between 2014 and 2022 as a 'frozen conflict', appropriating assumptions in Western foreign policy that did not foresee the second Russian invasion (Coker, 2023). This resulted in growing fatigue with continued displacement but also a lack of urgency for dramatic reforms to the national policies in support of IDPs. Though the government passed a national law for IDPs by October 2014, which formally established 'internally displaced person'[16] as a status in Ukraine, amendments were needed in the following years to align the law with international legal frameworks and develop action plans to support its smooth implementation (Council of Europe, 2016; Ferris et

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[14] See Appendix 1 for a full list of sources analyzed.
[15] This is expected to be an underestimate (Sasse, 2020).
[16] The common term used is *pereselentsi* or 'relocated people' (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2016) but the official designation in Ukrainian is 'внутрішньо переміщені особи'.

al., 2015). Implementation included the establishment of a new government ministry, the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons[17], which struggled with insufficient funding and political voice within national-level debates (Van Metre et al., 2017, p. 3). In 2018, the government developed a *National Strategy and Action Plan for the Integration of IDPs and Implementation of Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement*. But this only remained valid until 2020, leading to significant uncertainty around the future of the Strategy. The Regional IDP Action Plan in the Luhansk *Oblast* (province, located in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine), for example, was not adopted until June 2019 and was already set to expire in 2020 (Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020, p. 5). There was significant variation in the integration programs available to IDPs in different oblasts (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2021). Some municipal and regional governments let local action plans lapse while awaiting new guidance from the national level on priorities and benchmarks, showing the expectation of local levels that central government would steer the response. The new National Strategy was finally released by October 2021.[18]

Despite the languid policy landscape, the case of municipalities in eastern Ukraine represents a 'most likely' scenario for the development of IDP responses at the local level. I argue this is because support for IDPs was strong among local government officials, demonstrating high levels of political will. By 'most likely' I mean that the conditions are favorable for a certain outcome to occur, and if the phenomenon does not manifest here, then we can conclude that it would likely not manifest in similar contexts. Examples of this approach to selecting small-n case studies have been applied to migration contexts.[19] It is not necessarily the scale of displacement that drives this research – at the time, the top displacement-producing country was Syria with 6.1 million people internally displaced (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020) – but rather the complexity of the governance structures that makes this a useful small-n case to "shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts or principles" (Yin, 2018, p. 92) of local governance.

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[17] This ministry was later renamed the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine.

[18] The National Strategy was updated to reflect the increased scale of the conflict and internal displacement in April 2023 (Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, 2023).

[19] Bonjour (2011) asked why liberal states accept unwanted migration, arguing that if a 'most likely' liberal social welfare state like the Netherlands transitions from a country of emigration to a country if immigration, then this is likely to happen in other European states as well.

Both in my professional experience and in policy reports, local governments demonstrated surprisingly strong support towards IDPs. It was my first time working in a context of internal displacement in which the local government partners were mostly themselves displaced. This led them to speak from their own experiences or recall challenges faced by relatives during workshops and meetings, reflecting a dual-role as 'victim-bureaucrats' (Krystalli, 2023). This extended beyond my own interactions, prompting a Council of Europe report to say, "Many regional and local authorities in communities receiving IDPs have also demonstrated solidarity with IDPs and actively responded to their concerns, often doing so in the absence of adequate resources" (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 12).

To develop this small-n case study, I combined practitioner experience with document analysis and literature review. A review of research, reports, and government plans on the response to internal displacement in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022 explains two elements: the opportunities and barriers that internally displaced populations faced while integrating into different parts of the country, and the nascent policies attempting to remedy these challenges (especially Danish Refugee Council Ukraine, 2021; Havryliuk, 2022; Mikheieva et al., 2023). I thematically analyzed this literature, focusing on the role that local governments were playing within integration discussions. Broader academic literature on Ukraine's institutional reforms since 1991 moreover helps situate local government activities within decentralization debates.

I embed three specific governance processes - voting reforms, data processes and participatory forums – into this case study because of their prominence within and around discussions held while I traveled to the displacement-affected eastern Ukrainian city of Severdonetsk in the Luhansk oblast over four weeks in 2019. As an Information Management Officer with the Joint IDP Profiling Service, I collaborated with the international humanitarian NGO Norwegian Refugee Council's Severodonetsk field office to organize a series of bilateral meetings and workshops with a wide range of local partners, including various departments of the Luhansk Regional State Administration. My role was to lead discussions that would inform methodological decisions in the sampling approach and household survey design for a data collection exercise known as a 'profiling of the displacement situation'.[20] As I did not speak Russian or Ukrainian, I communicated with collaborators in English and relied on Norwegian Refugee Council partners for live translations during meetings and workshops. Though the

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[20] This is a collaborative process and methodology for data collection in displacement situations developed by practitioners (Chemaly et al., 2016; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2008; Jacobsen & Cardona, 2014; Joint IDP Profiling Service, 2020).

majority of the workshop attendees were white and female like myself, I was perceived as an external technical actor from a 'western' (and UN-affiliated) institutional context. Practically, this positionality afforded me access to some high-level meetings but limited my participation in informal discussions. Analytically, it risks 'epistemic imperialism' (Sonevytsky, 2022 cited in Hendl et al., 2024), which I partially mitigate through deep reading of multi-disciplinary Ukrainian scholarship.

2.5 Local governance of internal displacement in Eastern Ukraine

This section outlines the governance context and three governance processes that demonstrate how a relationship can emerge at the local level.

a. *Governance context*

Two aspects of Ukraine's governance context are especially relevant for understanding its displacement responses: decentralization and housing policy. Decentralization processes are not simply a backdrop; they interact with displacement responses and in some cases the conflicts that cause displacement (e.g. Steele & Schubiger, 2018). Ukraine had been transforming away from a highly centralized state authority since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 (Tyminskyi, 2022). This was seen as necessary, as the political and administrative structures in Ukraine were thought to be 'out of step' with its strong regional identities. It underwent a political, administrative and fiscal decentralization reform in 2014 (around the same time as the first Russian invasion) that consolidated and reshaped municipalities. This was seen as one of the most successful areas of reform to date and was combined with regional development initiatives in the hopes that it would avoid other secession conflicts (Krawchenko, 2023). The decentralization aimed to improve municipalities' capacity to provide basic services to its populations. Crucially, the reform granted municipalities powers to negotiate local budgets with their regional counterparts; not only did local budgets increase but the reforms incentivized collaboration between local and regional administrations. Some argue that the reforms exceeded expectations in boosting local democracy and improving 'general resilience', internal cohesion, and 'Europeanization of the Ukrainian State', giving the reforms geopolitical implications (Rabinovych & Shelest, 2020; Tyminskyi, 2022). However, the reforms left especially rural municipalities with insufficient capacity and resources, and some confusion in the division of responsibilities with the regional level, meaning that "ongoing work is needed" (Krawchenko, 2023, p. 5).

The municipality's dilemmas around the provision of shelter and housing for IDPs stems from a loss of social housing and a wider stagnant housing market (for an in-depth discussion, see Sukhomud & Shnaider, 2022). The state played a leading role in the provision of housing under the Soviet regime. But the state's retrenchment from housing provision after 1991 through 'giveaway mass privatization' meant a significant drop in its stock of social housing and a high owner-occupancy rate. This sets the groundwork for a highly unequal housing market in which those unable to afford mortgages and those who have lost homes due to war are left behind financially and face insecurity as renters with few protections. Local governments are left scrambling to implement emergency measures such as housing people in temporary accommodation for indefinite periods. Instead of finding permanent solutions that support their integration (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016; UNHCR, 2019b), IDPs struggle to pay high rents in places of refuge or resort to poorly serviced collective shelters (Sukhomud & Shnaider, 2023). While the decentralization reforms brought greater autonomy, the broader housing challenges nonetheless imposed severe limitations on local government planning and programming to support integration (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2021).

b. *Voting reform*

National voting legislation has important local implications. Local governments are more likely to support newcomers given the political and economic incentive to do so (Landau et al., 2013). Excluding or including IDPs in local elections can be one such mechanism influencing these incentives. In democratic contexts like Ukraine, this conceivably serves as a pathway to equal rights in line with international principles. Woroniecka-Krzynanowska and Palaguta (2016) argue that voting rights for IDPs goes even beyond the general principle of equality before the law and political equality (equal opportunity to influence decision-making bodies). Indeed, if inclusive of national minorities and IDPs, democratic elections can contribute to the process of "national healing and restoring stability" in conflict settings (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska & Palaguta, 2016, p. 29).

In the case of Ukraine, participating in elections could only be done in the location where voters were officially registered. For IDPs, this meant that any IDP that had left their electoral voting district could not fully participate in the location where they sought refuge. Special legislation needed to be passed before they were allowed to change their official voting residence to a temporary residence. For anyone to change this permanent residence was "administratively extremely burdensome and in practical terms almost impossible" (Congress of Local and

Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019, p. 16). This additional administrative burden is thought to have reduced participation of IDPs in the 2014 parliamentary elections, though the actual number of IDPs that managed to vote is difficult to ascertain. IDPs also faced an added complication. Their administrative place of residence while in displacement was linked to the place where a person registers officially as an IDP, appearing on his or her IDP certificate. Hence there were concerns raised that changing one's administrative place of residence could invalidate a person's IDP status (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019, p. 41). Some people also chose not to register as an IDP in their first location of refuge in case they had to move again later. The administrative limitations of the IDP certificate were therefore seen to limit freedom of movement internally within Ukraine (Sereda, 2023). The Council of Europe flagged this issue of IDP disenfranchisement during the 2015 and 2018 local elections, providing recommendations so that this issue could be rectified before the next round of local elections in 2020 (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019).

The reason this inability to vote locally causes such a problem for the local governance of internal displacement is not just that it marginalizes IDPs and contravenes international legal principles (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019, p. 11). It fails to provide local authorities with incentives but also the practical tools to represent the interests of IDPs. With fewer people registered as voters locally, performing key local functions such as managing housing policy becomes difficult when they do not have accurate figures on how many people live in the area under their jurisdiction. A resolution passed in May 2020 finally rectified the issue of voter registration by making it easier to change one's address. UNHCR argues that this reform benefits not only IDPs but represents "an important reform for an increasingly mobile population" (UNHCR, 2020). Though participation in local elections itself does not assume local governments will develop policies and programs benefiting IDPs, it can be considered a prerequisite for more locally owned responses to internal displacement.

c. Collaborative data collection processes

Data on the scale and scope of internal displacement in eastern Ukraine was not tailored to local governments. National datasets[21] have been used in various quantitative studies analyzing

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[21] The two main data sources on the internally displaced population in Ukraine are the Ministry for Social Policy's database of registered IDPs, and the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), a repeat monitoring system that combines key informant interviews with randomly sampled phone surveys, managed and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In addition, a variety of humanitarian and UN organizations also

the heterogeneity among the IDP populations as well as the causal mechanisms that impede integration.[22] But these data are primarily collected to inform humanitarian operations. This created a gap for local authorities for whom the data was not granular enough for their decision-making. Other surveys also did not cover their jurisdictions. The rapid needs assessments were generally relegated to the area 20km from the "contact line" dividing the government-controlled (GCA) from the non-government-controlled territories (NGCA) because this is where the main humanitarian donor – the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) – prioritized its relief efforts. This left gaps in understanding the experiences of those displaced living in denser settlements in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts of the GCA.

To overcome this, the Norwegian Refugee Council developed a collaboration with the Social Protection Department of the Luhansk Regional State Administration[23] to collect data "with the primary objective to support local decision-making in [the] Luhansk region in devising various strategies aiming to support durable solutions for IDPs" (Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020). A survey of 2,361 households compared the socioeconomic situation of IDPs and non-IDPs in five urban areas in February 2020: Severodonetsk, Rubizhne, Lysychansk, Kreminna and Starobilsk.

The process collaboratively engaged a wide group of partners from various local government offices, local humanitarian NGOs, and UN organizations to decide collectively what information to prioritize and how to contextualize the tools (Welsch & Weihmayer, 2019). This led to discussions that guided the household survey to focus not just on the humanitarian needs of the presumed vulnerable groups, which in this context were generally assumed to be elderly IDPs, but rather incentives that might attract working-age IDPs to stay instead of moving on to larger urban centers like Kyiv or Kharkiv. The partners prioritized barriers to finding suitable employment and affordable housing, among other topics more related to socio-economic integration. These discussions demonstrated a longer-term strategy: attracting working-age IDPs was expected to increase local tax revenues to enable supporting more vulnerable populations over time. Indeed, the results revealed that the majority of working-age IDPs in those areas had previously lived in cities and had a university degree (54%), flagging difficulties for the local authorities to match them to suitable local jobs in a more agricultural

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conduct 'rapid needs assessments' and more specialized surveys on sanitation, food security, fuel shortages and other issues.

[22] For example, REACH data used by Vakhitova and Iavorskyi (2020); IOM data used by Balinchenko (2021).

[23] Also with the support of the Joint IDP Profiling Service.

area. The majority had also left behind housing in the NGCA, often traveling back and forth to maintain it in the hopes of being able to return (Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020). This prompted discussions around rental subsidies to offset the jump in rental prices in Severodonetsk and other locations of refuge.

The data that resulted from this process did indeed help the local and regional government plan a nascent response for those internally displaced in their region. They implemented a 'Regional Targeted Program for Support and Adaptation of IDPs' (Order No. 65, Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020) with greater understanding of the needs of various IDP subgroups. Differentiated needs and interests were furthermore raised through the development of participatory forums.

d. Developing participatory forums

Gaps in the state-led responses since 2014 were partially overcome by strong civil society mobilization. The mobilization featured both formal registered NGOs as well as less formal mutual aid groups, sometimes representing IDPs and other times serving as networks to channel donations for IDPs elsewhere (Sereda, 2023).[24] These organizations remained quite separate from the state response. However, the development of a participatory forum called the 'IDP Council' was a notable exception. IDP Councils "serve as platforms for facilitated dialogues between authorities, hosts and IDP communities" to enable IDPs to engage in the local legislative and policy proposals that will affect them (Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020, p. 24). The Luhansk IDP Councils were established as part of a pilot project from an NGO called the Stabilization Support Services, alongside similar councils in the city of Kramatorsk and the regional administration in the Kharkiv Oblast. The Luhansk IDP Council "became a natural counterpart to validate and operationalize the data collected throughout the profiling process" (Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk Regional State Administration, 2020, p. 24), giving an example of how the IDP Councils could meaningfully engage in policymaking. Because of their affiliations in the IDP community, they also added legitimacy to the conclusions drawn from the data collected to support advocacy.

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[24] There were over 3,000 registered civil society organizations of all kinds in the Luhansk oblast by December 2020 according to the Ministry of Ukraine, though only 281 were considered 'active' by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) (Sereda, 2023, p. 40).

The Luhansk IDP Council creates a formal relationship between IDPs and their local state because this platform is institutionally embedded in the local and regional government. A decree from the Luhansk authorities officially established the IDP Council on February 28, 2020. It is chaired by the Head of the Social Protection Department and includes representatives of other departments as well as civil society organizations representing IDPs. This sets the precedent that the responsibility for responding is shared more widely beyond the Social Protection Department and is also shared between the government and (some) civil society actors. The extent to which participatory forums merely engage IDPs in tokenistic ways or serve as meaningful spaces of dialogue and activism has been the subject of debate in other IDP contexts (Lemaitre & Sandvik, 2019; Schouw Iversen, 2022), meriting study here. The Stabilization Support Services cites a long list of principles guiding the mission of these IDP Councils that range from simply promoting the participation of IDPs in public affairs to ambitious strategic visions such as building social cohesion and establishing a stable democracy.[25] However, their function of "strengthening the capacity of local government for the integration of IDPs" (Stabilization Support Services, 2020) is most concrete, suggesting that local governments were benefitting from the capacity within civil society rather than the other way around.

These IDP Councils have since evolved from an emerging governance process to a more formalized governance structure that is now embedded in the national response. On September 2, 2023, the Ministry for the Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories convened a meeting of the 'Coordination Headquarters for Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons' with a wide array of ministries as well as regional military administrations. The Deputy Prime Minister publicized two main agenda points, allocating a budget for housing subsidies for IDPs and the importance of establishing IDP Councils within local authorities across Ukraine. These, she argued, "will help implement the regional policy on internally displaced persons. In particular, their adaptation and integration into host communities" (Government of Ukraine, 2023b).[26] This demonstrates a process of scaling up a mechanism of local governance deemed critical for long-term IDP integration. From the initial three piloted, 529 IDP councils were established by November 2023 (Government of Ukraine, 2023c).

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[25] The original funding for the pilot project by the Stabilization Support Services came from the Democracy Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine; like the profiling exercise these local governance processes relied on international funding sources, at least initially.

[26] Regulations for IDP Councils are outlined in (Government of Ukraine, 2023a).

Developing a relationship between IDPs and their local government in eastern Ukraine was a gradual and some would argue belated process (Sereda, 2023), but ultimately a promising one. Though it was interrupted in 2022[27], several of these processes were taken up more widely by the central government and are still important today. This therefore depicts a bottom-up state response. It benefited especially from an active civil society but also outside funding and engagement from international NGOs, building some local government capacity and enabling local government to make better use of multilevel governance structures for advocacy and policymaking.

2.6 Creating a social contract at local levels

These three governance processes demonstrate that state responses emerge at the local level through specific types of visibilization of internally displaced people. The relative 'invisibility' of IDPs has been noted in the literature, especially those in more urban areas (Cotroneo, 2017; Fielden, 2008). Polzer and Hammond prompt us to question how making IDPs visible as displaced persons, rather than as citizens, "mak[es] the same individuals visible and actionable to different institutions, under different rules and with different outcomes" (Polzer & Hammond, 2008, p. 417). Here the key issue is that making IDPs visible to the central government inadvertently distanced them from their local government and communities. IDPs were given the option to claim the legal status of IDP as of late 2014; once in receipt of their certificate, they became administratively visible to the central government. This enabled the Ministry of Social Policy to quantify the scale of internal displacement to some degree. It also created a mechanism by which the central government could transfer pensions and provide a small subsidy for utilities. But it created administrative burdens on IDPs, did not produce sufficient material benefits to outweigh these burdens and convince all IDPs to register, and in some cases served to isolate and marginalize, for example being unable to vote in one's place of refuge. Their relationship with the state came to be perceived as conditional rather than reciprocal. Sereda describes interviews with IDPs in which they "complain[ed] that the state was 'invisible' when they needed assistance with resettlement, but rather was imposing new barriers and limiting their rights" (Sereda, 2023, p. 34).

Over the eight years between 2014 and 2022, gradual steps towards building a relationship between those internally displaced and state functions at the local level created new and

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[27] Severodonetsk for example has now been heavily bombed and is an occupied area of eastern Ukraine as of the writing of this article (Tondo, 2022).

different kinds of connections. New programs helped to support longer-term integration efforts like job matching and increasing the availability of social housing. Voting reforms enabled people to register in local elections where they were seeking refuge regardless of the conditions of their IDP certificate. This rendered IDPs politically and administratively visible to their local governments at a time when local governments also experienced increased budgets and powers from decentralization reforms.

Data collection processes bringing together local and regional authorities with civil society and international humanitarian organizations helped to establish a platform for debate on what data was most needed for local decision-making. The 'profiling exercise' itself filled gaps in 'urban IDPs' by focusing on urban settlements. Moreover, it did not intend to measure the scale of the phenomenon; rather this data sought to contextualize the socioeconomic situation of those internally displaced by comparing certain indicators to local non-displaced populations. The results identified key barriers to integrating locally such as access to stable and affordable rental accommodation. Hence socioeconomic challenges, including both needs and vulnerabilities of those internally displaced in Luhansk's urban settlements within government control were made visible to the local authorities and wider local governance actors.

The parallel fostering of IDP councils that promoted the civic engagement of individuals and communities of IDPs insisted on their political and administrative participation in local affairs. These councils provided a platform for collaboration, in which the local government served a convening rather than a decision-making role. This specific IDP council was able to make clear demands not only through the local government to central government actors, but also more widely to the international community, for example through a list shared with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. It called for the digitalization of services and legislative amendments delinking access to pensions from the IDP registration, among other demands to adapt state services and systems to the situation of those displaced, thereby pushing for visibilization on the IDP Councils' own terms.

These processes can gradually rebuild a 'social contract' with those displaced. Brun (2003) discussed this concept in relation to internal displacement, invoking Hobbes and Walzer. More recently, this language has been adopted by policy discourse. The High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, for example, frames displacement as a breakdown in state-society relations, painting 'solutions to internal displacement' as a restoration of a social contract:

> "In many contexts, displacement is unplanned, arbitrary and represents a breakdown of the *social contract* between States and their citizens and residents – a breach of the promise and obligation of the State to keep its people safe from harm… [R]ecovery from displacement is thus also about recovering the trust and confidence of populations in the State" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2021, p. 4, emphasis added).

A 'social contract' here is not merely transactional, e.g. an opportunity to claim entitlements from the state, but a gradual process towards developing trust in state institutions. The focus on the responsibility of the State to fulfil its social contract towards its citizens and residents (as opposed to the international community) has become a cornerstone of a more development-oriented approach to responses to internal displacement (e.g. World Bank, 2017). But as Elie (2024) points out in his study of a climate-induced context of internal displacement, these expectations omit the potential for civil society to drive restorations in a social contract, and moreover specifically a social contract at local levels. A mobilizing civil society can lend capacity and legitimacy to local authority activities, as experienced in the Luhansk Oblast's early IDP councils. Through their demands, they are advocating for a more reciprocal relationship with their local and central state, a social contract in which the state supports their rights as citizens, provides for certain entitlements as IDPs, and thereby earns their trust.

The first step in a 'bottom-up approach' is therefore the visibilization of IDPs in specific ways and building trust between displaced people and their local state. This then anchors a wider state-led response so other levels, including international actors, can complement the support offered locally. But what are the drawbacks to this approach? With the variability in budgets and capacities of municipalities, not to mention housing availability, a highly differentiated response to internal displacement becomes likely. Municipalities with higher capacities and greater political will can provide support that other municipalities cannot (or choose not to). Within this paradigm, central-level policies and funding can mitigate these disparities and bring some consistency to local level responses, especially through a dedicated fund for internal displacement (UN-Habitat et. al., 2021). Capacity-building is also a long-term project that requires deeper engagement with human resources and university training in public administration. The public sector cannot rely on civil society and communities to fill capacity gaps indefinitely.

2.7 Conclusions

Defining the local governance of internal displacement as a combined set of subnational institutions, systems and processes through which people internally displaced can exercise their rights attunes us to the many factors that influence the relationship between displaced people and a multi-faceted, multilevel state. When displacement disrupts this relationship, specific governance processes are needed to restore it, both in places of refuge and origin.

Though interest in urban internal displacement is growing, academic literature has thus far overlooked subnational responses to internal displacement; research on this topic has yet to build a comprehensive picture of the role of local governments. Studying how the relationship between IDPs and local governments is built at the local level is one step towards explaining how this happens (or does not happen) in practice.

I proposed centering analyses of local governance on the governance contexts, processes and interactions that affect everyday realities for those internally displaced. National voting reforms enabling IDPs to vote in local elections, data collection exercises engaging a variety of local stakeholders, and IDP councils creating formal spaces of participation for civil society groups are examples of such processes emerging from eastern Ukraine.

This approach is relevant not only for Ukraine, but for other situations of conflict-induced internal displacement in which the role of local government is being actively negotiated and redefined, including through its interactions with civil society and other levels of government. Rather than assuming that internal displacement responses must be top-down, the analysis of the local governance of internal displacement opens the possibility for various bottom-up responses.

To this end, hopes for local governance are high, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Indeed, the local level is seen as the fulcrum around which state legitimacy builds, where "the state intersects with society and the point at which national policies meet local aspirations" with the potential to "reshape the social contract and make it an engine of peacebuilding, statebuilding and recovery" (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016, p. xiv). The case of eastern Ukraine demonstrates that this is not only possible but effective for developing governance processes that can be scaled up. In this way, I propose that we conceive of the local governance of internal displacement in Ukraine as a source of learning for other displacement contexts addressing ruptures in state-society relations.

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Chapter 3. Multilevel Governance 'from Above': Analyzing Colombia's System of Co-Responsibility for Responding to Internal Displacement

3.1 Introduction

In the municipality of Ituango in late July 2021, threats of violence and forced recruitment by non-state armed actors forced over 4,000 residents to leave their homes in the span of a week (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021). Early alert systems triggered a state response to this mass displacement within a few days. A Local Committee for Transitional Justice was convened to coordinate the humanitarian response, featuring the mayor of Ituango, the police force, the ombudsman, and the 'Victim's Unit',[28] among others.

Over twelve years earlier, solutions for coordinating responses to internal displacement at the local level seemed untenable. At a workshop convened by *Acción Social* (precursor to the Victim's Unit) and other partners,[29] a diverse array of municipal authorities outlined their frustrations. Though there was consensus that providing adequate housing and supporting the integration of people internally displaced was best managed at the local level, the municipal authorities lamented lacking the data, resources, and the autonomy to fulfil this obligation (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2008, p. 12). Without such resources, limited municipal budgets would need to make a difficult political decision between funding programs for those internally displaced and other poor or needy groups. Though the situation has improved since then, as demonstrated in Ituango, tension between different levels of government persist, hindering implementation. This stems from lack of trust, perceptions of low capacity, and accusations of corruption (Ferris, 2014).

With the compounding challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, substantial numbers of Venezuelans seeking refuge in Colombia, and continued violence such as in the case of Ituango, coordination between various levels of government to respond to these complex problems is as important as ever. The response to internal displacement is now transitioning

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[28] The government agency leading the national response is the Unit for the Attention and Comprehensive Reparation to Victims (*Unidad para la atención y reparación integral a las víctimas*), henceforth referred to as the 'Victim's Unit'.

[29] This included the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, and academic partners.

from a peacebuilding initiative into a long-term welfare program, given that its cornerstone 2011 Victim's and Land Restitution Law (*Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras*, Law 1448, Colombia: Congress of the Republic, 2011; hereinafter referred to as 'Victim's Law') has now been extended to 2031. This makes it an important moment to analyze Colombia's national–local coordination as a case of multilevel governance.

In this article, I seek to understand how the national level attempts to resolve tensions between levels. I also explore how literature on the multilevel governance of migration helps to explain the conditions needed for more coordinated responses to emerge in situations of internal displacement. Concretely, this article examines Colombia's official state policies coordinating the national, regional, and local levels. It focuses on the 'System of Co-responsibility', the approach for administering emergency humanitarian assistance to Colombians displaced by decades of armed conflict. While other aspects of the internal displacement response are managed by national government agencies operating locally, this is the main expectation placed on municipal governments. I ask three questions: (1) How does the System of Co-responsibility reflect and further shape power dynamics between levels? (2) How does it create conditions for multilevel governance (or not), according to frameworks from the multilevel governance of migration? And (3) what does this reveal about the multilevel dimensions of internal displacement responses more broadly?

To respond to these questions, this article adopts a qualitative approach based on an analysis of the 2015 'Strategy of Co-responsibility' (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015), supported by a thematic analysis of key state documents and secondary literature. The article proceeds as follows: first, it assesses the multilevel dimensions of internal displacement. It then explains the relevance of multilevel governance as an object of study, not just as a description of a complex policy context. Next, it reviews the existing literature on forced migration and multilevel governance to demonstrate the gap for internal displacement responses. The empirical section analyses the discourse and content of the Strategy of Co-responsibility, placing it within its historical, socio-political, and administrative context. It examines the development of the concept of co-responsibility, an action-planning process, and capacity building practices. Finally, it interprets Colombia's approach to national–local coordination through conceptual frameworks on the multilevel governance of migration.

Consequently, the article contributes to the forced migration literature by providing the first discussion of internal displacement response as a case of multilevel governance. But it also

connects dilemmas in forced migration with wider governance issues. I argue overall that the multilevel dimensions of internal displacement require a delicate compromise between enforcing minimum standards for local responses and respecting local autonomy. The System of Co-responsibility does this by largely reaffirming existing power relations, illustrating how internal displacement responses are embedded within broader decentralization debates.

3.2 The Multilevel Dimensions of Internal Displacement

This section explains why responding to large-scale internal displacement creates both political and spatial challenges with multilevel dimensions. Nascent literature on the urban dimensions of internal displacement demonstrates a need to overcome the relative 'invisibility' of urban internally displaced people for local, national, and international actors alike (Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Cotroneo, 2017; Earle et al., 2020; Fielden, 2008; Landau, 2014; Lyytinen, 2009). With the majority of people internally displaced seeking refuge in urban or at least in 'non-camp' settlements (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019a), they are likely to encounter the local state in its varied forms, even in the absence of a planned state response.

Bringing internal displacement into multilevel governance discussions overcomes a national bias in the scholarship on internal displacement responses. Sociolegal literature assumes decision-makers reside primarily at the national level, with local-level actors relegated to an 'implementer' role (Ferris et al., 2011, p. 75). Though in some cases the dissemination of the laws and policies to local levels has been considered the problem (Carr, 2009; Ferris et al., 2011), more common is that local governments are blamed for any failures in implementation, with frequent references to their lack of capacity. Meanwhile, evidence is growing that local government engagement in the design as well as the implementation of responses is critical for adapting to local political dynamics and concerns (Earle et al., 2020; Lopera Morales et al., 2009). This suggests that greater collaboration between levels in this policy area is both feasible and beneficial.

Underpinning the complications of roles and responsibilities are the inherently political dilemmas of internal displacement responses. A response requires balancing tailored programs and services for the displaced with those benefiting entire communities. For local governments, this implies struggles to ensure equity among constituents: '… municipal authorities face an ethical problem: assisting the displaced population is done at the cost of assisting vulnerable

populations (such as the historical poor)' (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2008, p. 12). This concern relates to a contentious debate within forced migration research that questions the relevance of the category of 'internally displaced people' (Brun et al., 2017; Daley, 2013; Polzer & Hammond, 2008). The category, developed over time and in response to confusion around the authority of the United Nations to intervene within internal armed conflicts (Cohen, 2007; Mooney, 2005; Orchard, 2016; Phuong, 2004; Weiss & Korn, 2006), singles out a group of citizens as exceptional. This special category may seem reasonable given that citizens forced to flee situations of conflict or violence likely need specific services and protections not available to the rest of the population. But it also becomes problematic in contexts where their needs become indistinguishable from others living in the same areas, as is often the case in precarious urban peripheries (Cotroneo, 2017; Landau, 2014). In the districts of Suba and Ciudad Bolivar in Bogotá, for example, most residents live in poverty with daily exposure to urban violence, yet those that qualify officially as internally displaced benefit from certain services that the host community does not (Vidal et al., 2011). This can produce tensions between displaced and host communities.

In addition, different regions experience the impact of displacement differently, making a tailored response critical. For example, Colombia's Constitutional Court documented cases of municipalities losing half their population while others gained more than 20% in a short amount of time (Vidal et al., 2013, p. 1). Such volatility represents a significant spatial challenge that makes it difficult for national governments to intervene in the place of greatest need. This is underpinned by uneven economic development that leaves some municipalities better equipped for responding than others. Any response to internal displacement must therefore not only acknowledge these spatial differences but develop processes for understanding and adapting to them as the situation changes over time. This necessarily requires that different levels of government and society be actively engaged in the response's overall governance.

3.3 Facing Multilevel Problems with Multilevel Governance

This section reviews the literature on multilevel governance to demonstrate its relevance for forced migration contexts. Though some problems clearly have multilevel dimensions, it is not necessarily the case that their governance will be multilevel. Governance can be understood as processes of binding decision-making in the public sphere (Marks & Hooghe, 2004). At its simplest, multilevel governance can be observed as 'some form of coordinated interaction

between various government levels' (P. W. A. Scholten, 2013, p. 220), as well as between government and civil society, that enables joint decision-making (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2018). Marks and Hooghe (2004) distinguished between interactions vertically between different levels of government and those horizontally between government and civil society actors (Bache & Flinders, 2004). Indeed, horizontal relations have become increasingly important in the governance of migration in general (Ataç et al., 2020). This is because it is widely believed that the State no longer has the authority to make these decisions on its own (Behnke et al., 2019) and must rely on networks of various kinds of stakeholders for both policymaking and implementation (Bevir, 2011; R. A. W. (Roderick A. W. Rhodes, 1997; Zurbriggen, 2011). How openly the State acknowledges interdependencies between levels of government and with civil society organizations in their policy discourse is an empirical question, which I examine through the System of Co-responsibility in Colombia.

Literature specifically on the multilevel governance of migration has blossomed in the last decade (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2018; Panizzon & van Riemsdijk, 2019; Scholten, 2016; Scholten et al., 2018; Scholten, 2013). This literature underlines the relevance of multilevel governance in migration contexts because migration creates a series of 'intractable controversies' in which the problem definition is inherently contested (Schön & Rein, 1994 cited in Scholten, 2013, p. 219). Hence, much work must be done to achieve a shared framing of the problem both within and outside of government to clarify who is responsible for solving it and how. In addition to the complex problem-framing, many authors have noted that the locus of power has shifted to other scales. Migration policymaking was assumed to be exclusively the responsibility of the national level, but now there is growing recognition of the agency of local levels (Oliver et al., 2020; Scholten, 2013; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). These now extensive debates, referred to as the 'local turn', are countered by compelling arguments that the study of national-level policies and their influence should not be forgotten (Emilsson, 2015) and that the local turn is not as promising as it initially seems given restricted local autonomy (Bernt, 2019). These shifts demonstrate the relevance of studying the interactions between the local, regional, and national levels rather than overemphasizing one or the other. The concept of multilevel governance enables this.

Illustrating the presence of vertical and horizontal interactions helps to describe relations in a complex policy process, but alone it fails to explain the implications of those relations. These are questions such as whether and how multilevel governance increases problem-solving

capacity, the legitimacy of policy decisions, or democratization in general (Bache & Flinders, 2004; Griffin, 2012; Piattoni, 2010; Stephenson, 2013; Stubbs, 2005). Multilevel governance involves trade-offs, for example between efficiency and legitimacy: involving more actors in a policymaking process could produce wider input and buy-in, but requires additional resources to coordinate (Marquardt, 2017). We therefore need to avoid normative claims on the implications of multilevel governance.

This prompts the question of how multilevel governance shapes and is indeed shaped by power relations (Marquardt, 2017). Multilevel governance assumes some degree of power-sharing between actors, but the nature and extent of that power-sharing varies and changes over time. Methodologically, this suggests the need to not just describe multilevel governance arrangements but rather "seek to uncover the extent to which [they] challenge or consolidate established power relationships and governing traditions" (Polat & Lowndes, 2022, p. 57). Bringing this back to internal displacement responses, this acknowledges that the state and non-state actors developing those response structures are embedded within asymmetric political landscapes. The structure of the response itself has the potential to reaffirm or alter existing power relations. It does this through the way it distributes decision-making power and resources, influencing which individual, entity, or level of government has the capacity to use those resources (Marquardt, 2017). Individual relationships between actors also matter, because "power relations are not preset in models, territories or networks: they are made and remade in relationships, exchanges and interactions" (Griffin, 2012, p. 209). I later present and adapt a framework from Peter Scholten to propose that consensus-building through regular interactions and the flattening of hierarchies between levels can lead to a cooperative mode of multilevel governance.

3.4 Multilevel Governance of Displacement Responses

This section bridges multilevel governance literature with forced migration literature. Though multilevel governance is now well-established in migration policymaking, its traction in refugee studies is sparse by comparison. Refugee reception and integration literature is starting to build on these foundations (Oliver et al., 2020) but mostly in the context of European cities. Outside this context, some studies view multilevel governance as the assumed context within which actors operate without interrogating its dynamics (see for example Betts et al. 2021). This reflects a broader refugee literature that acknowledges the unique urban dimensions of

refugee policy and politics, in its own version of the 'local turn' (Brumat et al., 2021; Darling, 2017a; Irgil, 2022; Landau & Amit, 2014; Lowndes & Polat, 2022; Maas et al., 2022; Pasquetti et al., 2019). While important for analyzing the gap between policy and implementation at local levels, we need to ask how sharing responsibility for implementation is negotiated in the first place. Two studies focus explicitly on the multilevel governance arrangements of refugee responses (outside Europe) that start to rectify this gap: Fakhoury (2019) in Lebanon and Jordan and Polat and Lowndes (2022) in Turkey, both analyzing responses to Syrian displacement.[30]

Polat and Lowndes' research provides a useful counterpoint for the Colombian response. They argue that in the Turkish context, with its highly centralized political system and weak local government, multilevel governance arrangements emerged ad hoc for responding to the arrival of Syrian refugees. This arose out of an absence of central government resources and interventions, driving local NGOs to collaborate directly with international NGOs to fund, design and implement programs. This in turn built some capacity for local government activities as they took on a critical convening role. However, this capacity was not transformative; rather, "existing power relationships and governing traditions of the Turkish polity are largely (although not exclusively) reproduced" (p. 52). For example, there was no evidence that local governments could influence national government refugee issues (Polat & Lowndes, 2022, p. 67). With the Colombian case, by contrast, I focus on the national-level policies attempting to establish multilevel governance arrangements and their potential to rebalance power relations. After a brief overview of Colombia's response to internal displacement, I will outline my methodology.

3.5 Colombia's Response to Internal Displacement: Case Selection

Here I explain the relevance of focusing on internal displacement responses in Colombia. While working as a practitioner in various internal displacement contexts in Central America, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East from 2015 until 2019, Colombia's state-led response served as the benchmark by which to measure the comprehensiveness of responses elsewhere. Colombia's response to internal displacement presents ample evidence on the different ways they can be governed in a (decentralizing) unitary system. First, the legislation passed to

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[30] Marti (2019) also studies multilevel governance of migration in Singapore but applied to domestic migrant workers rather than forced migrants.

establish a state-led response is comprehensive because it covers not only humanitarian assistance but also development programs, prevention of new displacement, return of land, and reparations. Second, the sheer duration of the armed conflict and internal displacement that ensued has elicited a wealth of civil society and academic research (Ferris, 2014; Sánchez-Mojica, 2020) that enables a deep analysis of secondary literature. Third, compared to other contexts with internal displacement, international humanitarian actors have had a comparatively small role. Colombia's response has been touted as a model to follow, with other internal displacement contexts incorporating its features such as its official government registry (European Commission, 2018), making it a clear originator of policy transfer and learning. This has also extended to its work with other displaced groups. An estimated 2.48 million Venezuelans have sought refuge in Colombia since 2014 (Cancillería, 2023),[31] the majority arriving in 2018 and 2019. In 2021, Colombia began a process to grant them Temporary Protection Status, making Colombia 'an example to the world' according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Rossíasco & de Narváez, 2023; UNHCR–IOM, 2021).[32]

Despite being the 'model context', significant gaps remain in the implementation of its response to internal displacement (Aparicio, 2017; Carr, 2009; Cronin-Furman & Krystalli, 2021; Ferris, 2014; Ibáñez, 2008; Ibáñez & Moya, 2010a, 2010b; Meza & Ciurlo, 2019; Ruiz Romero, 2015; Wong, 2008). This is particularly the case for internally displaced people living in urban settings (Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Carrillo, 2009; Sánchez Mojica, 2013; Victim's Unit, 2021b; Vidal et al., 2011). The numbers remain significant, and increasing every year, albeit at lower rates than at the height of the displacement crisis in 2000–02. The official government registry reports 9.54 million victims of the armed conflict, of which the majority are victims of forced displacement (8,498,363 people according to August 2023 figures: Victim's Unit, 2023).[33] This means that roughly one out of every six Colombians has been displaced internally since 1985. As in the case of Ituango, prevention measures have been unable to stop new

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[31] *Migración Colombia*, a special administrative unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cite 2,477,588 Venezuelans residing in Colombia as of 28 February 2022. This includes Venezuelans with: 'regular status', temporary protection status, in process for temporary protection status, and 'irregular status'. As of the date of this article's publication, this is the latest government-issued figure available for total numbers of Venezuelans that arrived since 2014, though registration for Temporary Protection Status is ongoing.

[32] By the end of 2022, 1.6 million Venezuelans in Colombia had received temporary protection permits (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023, p. 75).

[33] As of 2011, 'victims' are defined as the people who individually or collectively suffered harm after 1 January 1985 as a consequence of infractions of international humanitarian law or grave and manifest violations of international human rights norms, which occurred on the occasion of the internal armed conflict (Colombia: Congress of the Republic, 2011: Article 3). This includes forced displacement and forced dispossession of land but also homicide, kidnapping, sexual violence, exposure to explosive remnants of war, and others.

displacements (CODHES, 2019; Oslender, 2007, 2016). Additionally, though budgets have increased, so have the needs, with 15.1 trillion Colombian pesos (approximately 3.95 billion USD) allocated to IDPs in 2020 (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2021, p. 13).[34] This mixed picture suggests that the state response is both ambitious, stretching state capacity, and yet also insufficient, and makes Colombia an important case to revisit.

3.6 Methodology[35]

To explore Colombia's national–local coordination policies, I selected twelve documents on the official state response based on their relevance for coordination. This included decrees issued by the national level, national laws, a landmark 2004 Constitutional Court decision (*Sentencia T 025/04*), and guidelines developed by the Victim's Unit. It is important to note that there is no mention of multilevel governance within the policy documents; rather the term 'coordination' is used to cover a broad range of relationships and negotiations between the local and national levels.

I conducted a thematic analysis of these documents, coding them in NVIVO software. I followed Attride-Stirling's (2001) process of moving from basic themes close to the text to organizing themes and then onto global themes that "tell us what the texts as a whole are about within the context of a given analysis" (p. 389). Basic themes identified responsibilities assigned to the local level, to the national level, responsibilities shared between levels, and how various 'principles of governance' were described. I also identified any descriptions of administrative decision-making processes to determine how responsibilities could be negotiated between levels. I organized these into indications of competition and collaboration between levels. These revealed, as global themes, how key tensions were understood by the national level, and how they envisioned overcoming them.

Of this larger corpus, I conducted a deep reading of the Strategy of Co-responsibility (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015; hereinafter referred to as the 'Strategy'), a presidential decree issued by the administration of former president Juan Manuel Santos in 2015. This decree represented the culmination of decades of debate on how to manage

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[34] This represents approximately 0.53% of GDP in 2021 (OECD, 2021).
[35] See Appendix 2 for a full list of sources analyzed.

national–local relations in this policy area. For this reason, the empirical material presented in this article centers around the discourse and content of this Strategy.

Contextualizing information on the shape of the national response was given by an interview with a former Advisor in the Victim's Unit, and the Victim's Unit website subsection '*Nación Territorio*' (Victim's Unit, 2021c). Three existing studies on the role of municipalities in Colombia's internal displacement response were also essential to situate the corpus in its historical and social context (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008; Lopera Morales et al., 2009; Vidal et al., 2013). This gives some understanding of how the national-level policy narrative compares with the challenges experienced and expressed by municipalities. Additionally, I reviewed local action plans (*Plan de Acción Distrital*) from the capital city of Bogotá covering 2016–20 and 2020–24 as more recent examples of the response to national-level directives (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2016, 2019).

In my analysis of the Strategy, I was inspired by two other methodological approaches. First, critical discourse analysis' interest in making the implicit explicit helps ask how assumptions underpinning discourse can be used to legitimize control and naturalize certain power relations (Fairclough 1985 cited in van Dijk, 1993). The discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Reisigl, 2016) prompted me to take a close examination of the text. I followed their process of identifying the tensions that lie within the text, connecting these to the ideological positioning of the policy, and asking how these shape power relations through the identities, behaviors, and understandings the text promotes. Second, rather than evaluating whether the policy achieved its stated aims, I was more interested in the question prevalent in the field of political anthropology: "What work did this policy do?" (Tate, 2020, p. 87). In this, I treated the Strategy as a 'policy narrative' of the national level describing the future it envisions for national–local relations. Such narratives "make political action legible, locating specific programs within broader spheres of political value, as well as erasing and obscuring alternatives" (Tate, 2020, p. 86). Hence, these approaches enable me to respond to calls from Polat and Lowndes (2022) and Marquardt (2017)[36] to examine the power relations more explicitly within multilevel governance structures.

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[36] Marquardt argued for the importance of conceptualizing power within multi-level climate governance. Because of the similar levels of complexity, variety of stakeholders involved, and multilevel dimensions of internal displacement, I view Marquardt's arguments for climate action as transferrable to forced migration responses.

3.7 The Strategy of Co-Responsibility: A Process towards Multilevel Governance?

This empirical section addresses the question of how the System, through its 2015 Strategy of Co-responsibility, reflects and further shapes existing power dynamics. This Strategy can be usefully read as a policy for multilevel governance 'from above', contrasting Scholten et al.'s (2018) study 'Multilevel governance from below: how Dutch cities respond to intra-EU mobility'. Though from the vantage point of the national level, I argue that the Strategy offers a compromise between a top-down and a bottom-up arrangement.

I identify three tactics the Strategy uses to negotiate responsibility-sharing: the language of 'co-responsibility', implementing an action-planning process, and offering joint-funding opportunities alongside capacity-building initiatives. These attempt to respect local autonomy while also incentivizing a tenuous local ownership of the response. It does this by creating space for tailoring local responses while enforcing minimum standards and confronting disparities in governance capacity between municipalities. I argue that this compromise relies on technocratic decision-making processes to depoliticize multilevel tensions.

a. The Language of Co-Responsibility

The level responsible for funding emergency humanitarian assistance and other local programs for people displaced internally has been a longstanding debate. This must be understood within broader decentralization processes that Colombia has been undergoing since the 1980s. The 2015 Strategy acknowledges and in part regulates how decentralization is managed in this policy area. It does this by discursively separating the concepts of co-responsibility and subsidiarity. First, I explain how the concept of co-responsibility came about.

The language of co-responsibility stems from the groundbreaking constitutional court ruling *Sentencia T-025/04* (Corte Constitucional, 2004) in 2004 that judged the state response to internal displacement unconstitutional given that the basic rights of those internally displaced were not being filled. The ruling considered the lack of coordination mechanisms and ambiguity of roles and responsibilities in the initial Law 387 as key impediments. In an associated order the court called for the national government to create a "model of *co-responsibility* with the territorial entities for the attention of the displaced population" (Corte Constitucional, 2013, Section 1.2; emphasis added). This model was seen as a key task for the national government to design.

A resurgence of the concept of co-responsibility came in 2010 in the form of a publication entitled *Establishing an integrated system of co-responsibility between the Nation and the Territories*.[37] In its prologue, director Romero Silva calls the adoption of such a system imperative given the state's complex, unitary but decentralizing structure (CODHES, 2010, p. 10), making a clear link between internal displacement and decentralization processes. He furthermore called for decentralization to be strengthened through this system, by which he likely meant that more funding should be made available from the national level for municipalities in this policy area. The result, in the 2011 Victim's Law, initiates this process but notably does not allocate new resources. It reforms the National System with the purpose of:

> "guaranteeing the adequate coordination between the Nation and its local entities, and between these, for the exercise of their competencies and functions within the System in accordance with the constitutional and legal principles of *co-responsibility*, coordination, concurrence, subsidiarity, complementarity and of delegation" (Colombia: Congress of the Republic, 2011, Art. 161; emphasis added).

The main principles of decentralization mentioned above are listed in the 1991 Constitution— coordination, concurrence, and subsidiarity (Art. 288). These are meant to guide the distribution of competencies between national, regional, and local levels in the absence of clearer directives. The laws for territorial planning (e.g. Law 1454 of 2011; *Ley Orgánica de Ordenamiento Territorial*) do not establish a process for distributing functions and competencies to the appropriate level (Duque Cante, 2012). This means that for the most part, competencies are expected to be outlined on a law-by-law basis. If this is not done clearly, this risks confusion across various functions of subnational government in Colombia, especially between the municipal and departmental levels.

While the other principles relate to all policy areas, the concept of 'co-responsibility' is different. It is specific to guaranteeing and protecting human rights. Its legal basis is in Decree 4100 of 2011 (Art. 4), which declares actions to respect and guarantee the protection of human rights and application of international humanitarian law to be the responsibility of all public entities, at national and subnational levels (Cancillería, n.d.). The principle of 'co-

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[37] This publication was developed by the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento*, henceforth referred to as 'CODHES'), a civil society organization with high-profile academics and policy advisors.

responsibility' creates a normative argument for local levels to 'do their part' for people displaced internally and other victims of the conflict. This makes the case that responsibility sharing for the protection of human rights applies regardless of progress towards decentralization (or lack thereof).

In addition to this normative framing, the Strategy nudges compliance from the local level by limiting how the other principles of decentralization can be applied in this context, especially the application of subsidiarity.[38] Generally, the responsibility for a certain policy area is expected to lie 'as locally as possible'; subsidiarity involves a takeover of responsibilities of one level of government by another when the lower level is unable to implement the policy (Colombo, 2012). The Strategy emphasizes repeatedly the short-term nature of this option, highlighting its 'transitory form' (*forma transitoria*) (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015, Art. 2.2.8.3.1.13). Its invocation is exceptional; indeed, the regional level should support the municipalities within its jurisdiction and only if absolutely necessary could they seek further support from the national-level entities. While this could be seen as respecting local autonomy, it is also a reaffirmation of a hierarchical relationship between the national and subnational levels. The Strategy gives the national level the opportunity to define subsidiarity for this policy area and moreover the processes by which it is applied.

The System of Co-responsibility thus paints over gaps created by partial decentralization. The structure of its response to internal displacement is not decentralized, instead it is 'deconcentrated'.[39] The legal concept of administrative de-concentration (*desconcentración administrativa*) means that national agencies establish branches in different departments and municipalities. Decentralization (*descentralización*), by contrast, transfers both authority and budgets to subnational levels. The 2011 Victim's Law established the new shape of the 'deconcentrated' National System, which includes 46 national government entities involved in various aspects of the response. The Victim's Unit coordinates among the many national government and subnational entities. Its presence at subnational levels included 99 'service points' and 20 subnational headquarters in places with large numbers of victims. The Victim's

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[38] The other principles of decentralization are less contentious. The principle of coordination requires that the competencies of different levels of government be exercised "in an articulated, coherent and harmonized manner" (Colombia: Congress of the Republic, 2011, Art. 26), while the opportunity for concurrence arises when two or more levels of government combine their specific competencies and resources to implement a certain activity or program.

[39] Interview, former Advisor in the Victim's Unit.

Unit itself had a staff of around 4500 as of 2014, with over half working outside of Bogotá (Ferris, 2014, p. 21).

Though the response overall is managed by the national level, the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance is the exception. It is municipalities, not the Victim's Unit or other government levels, that are legally responsible for administering emergency humanitarian assistance to victims upon arrival. This includes temporary accommodation, food and clothing for three months, extendable to six. These services are expected to meet victims' most urgent and basic needs after displacement, and hence are framed as a critical first step on the pathway to restore their rights (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2018). In theory, this gives local governments autonomy over this policy area. In practice, municipalities contested this arrangement because no additional funding was allocated to them to match their increased obligations (Vidal et al., 2013). The National System, established in 1997, required that all levels of government be involved in the response. This did not sufficiently outline activities that should be taken by local authorities (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008, p. 34) and failed to specify a minimum budget that municipalities should allocate to services for those internally displaced, resulting in their being grouped in with other vulnerable populations (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008, p. 23). This led to confusion at best, negligence at worst. Local levels were not able to and, in some cases, not willing to implement policies to support victims of the armed conflict.

Because obligations generally did not match their budgetary capacity, Ibáñez and Velásquez (2008) described these arrangements as a negative by-product of 'incomplete decentralization'. Indeed, the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance could be construed as an example of an 'unfunded mandate', which has been shown across the world to have adverse effects on economic growth (Rodríguez-Pose & Vidal-Bover, 2022). Delegating responsibility over a policy area like humanitarian assistance without adequate resources potentially undermines the legitimacy of the local level. This seems paradoxical given that decentralization is a cornerstone of Colombia's 1991 Constitution. It was intended to "consolidate democracy, develop a direct and participatory democracy, and to increase governability" (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008). Political decentralization came first with the direct election of mayors and governors, then financial decentralization also prompted by local levels, and much later administrative decentralization pushed by the national level (Falleti, 2010). This is relevant to internal displacement because decentralization sought to respond to structural issues underlying the conflict such as unequal political representation, landgrabs by agribusiness, and

uneven local revenues (Ballvé, 2012; Ch et al., 2018; Steele & Schubiger, 2018). But existing spatial differences affected both internal displacement and its response. Underlying disparities in the economic development of Colombia's regions (Franz, 2019) affect the revenues and capacities available for administering welfare services (Vidal et al., 2013). Political incentives to respond to displacement also vary by municipality. Vidal et al.'s comparative study (2013) demonstrates improved clarity on roles and responsibilities between 2008 and 2011. But this did not solve key issues and, in fact, increased tensions as municipalities could still not fulfil their roles. The study compares the responses to internal displacement in the cities of Bogotá and Cali, the former hosting of the majority of the internally displaced in the country and the latter serving as the main place of refuge for most people fleeing violence in the southwest. It found that politics in each of the cities mattered; the more leftist leadership in the capital enabled spending local revenues on program for those internally displaced. By contrast, the center-right city of Cali faced greater political pushback internally and struggled to maintain regular contact with national government actors from a different political party. However, local politics had a marginal impact, as both cities faced substantial resource gaps that were difficult to overcome, even with the capital's greater administrative capacity and resources. Though local politics matter, this comparison suggests that a lack of dedicated funds for the response outweighed other hindrances.

The national level tried different approaches in the past to require municipalities to budget for emergency humanitarian assistance and other programs. Law 1190 passed in 2008 uses firm, almost coercive language to oblige the local and regional levels to meet their responsibilities. The national-level agencies must intervene, taking actions that "*guarantee* commitments from the territorial entities for the fulfilment and materialization of the people displaced by violence in their respective jurisdictions" (Colombia: Congress of the Republic, 2008, Art. 2; emphasis added). Local response plans were made obligatory, though there was arguably little the national level could do to sanction local entities if the plans were not followed. A year later the constitutional court was given authority to grant certificates to reward municipalities for implementing their plans as a form of soft incentive (Vidal et al., 2013, p. 3). By contrast, the Strategy takes a new approach by reaffirming the local level's responsibility for the protection of human rights and places limits on subsidiarity. The language of co-responsibility is thus a reminder to the local level of their existing obligations. It enables the national level to skirt decentralization issues and hence limit the resources it spends on emergency humanitarian

assistance. But the result is that structural issues underpinning coordination challenges and disparities in responses remain largely unresolved.

b. *Technocratic Action-Planning Process*

The problem that the Strategy responds to is one of 'coordination'. Instead of addressing the highly political and/or budgetary challenges presented by local actors, the Strategy focuses generally on 'which level does what and when'. This presumes the clarification of roles and responsibilities and the alignment of planning processes will bring all levels onto the same page in fulfilling their obligations in an efficient and timely manner.

How the Strategy chooses to do this depicts a practice of technocratic problem-solving. This technocratic approach is apparent in other features of the internal displacement response, especially its reliance on indicators to measure progress. Urueña (2012) frames this as a Colombian drive towards "rationalizing administrative action. . . a never-ending quest to achieve efficient bureaucracies, where technocrats would populate the administration, and exercise power rationally and predictably" (p. 277). This stems from new public management approaches that prioritize efficiency and transparency in decision-making. This also reflects a history of incorporating 'good governance' principles introduced and at times imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on Latin American governments as part of its neoliberal interventions in the 1990s (Franz, 2019; Zurbriggen, 2011). The Strategy demonstrates its technocratic ideology through the planning process it formalizes.[40] The Strategy establishes a process by which the municipalities formulate their action plans (*Plan de Acción Territorial*). By standardizing this process, the Strategy regulates the behaviors and expectations of the local level. The action plans must include the local entity's programs and projects with the resources they set aside for this (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015, Art. 2.2.8.3.1.5). This is to prevent the action plans from becoming a long 'wish-list' of desired programming that cannot be budgeted for (Procurador General de la Nación, 2019, p. 391), which has been highlighted as a problem in the past (Ibáñez & Velásquez, 2008). Based on the review of those action plans, the national level can assess several things: the need for intervention and joint programming, specific projects to co-finance, needs of the population, and capacities of the municipalities to respond.

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[40] I say 'formalizes' rather than invents because a similar process had been used by some municipalities, called the *Plan Integral Único*, since 2004 (Acción Social, 2008; Lopera Morales et al., 2009), with varying degrees of success and investment.

Evaluating these plans combines a rights and needs-based logic. Emergency humanitarian assistance is framed as restoring the rights of its residents to have their minimum subsistence needs fulfilled (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2018). The action plan must therefore explicitly respond to the gaps in fulfilling these rights (these are the 'needs'). These are quantified by indicators for the 'effective enjoyment of rights' (*Goce Efectivo de Derechos*). Depending on the extent to which a person meets certain indicators, how recently a person was displaced, and whether they have been registered in the official government registry, a person may be eligible for one of three aid packages from the municipality.[41] This creates seemingly apolitical criteria for assessing needs. These indicators and the data informing them are managed by the national level.[42] It serves to give the national level a framework with which to guide local governments to fulfil the basic needs of those displaced, an otherwise abstract endeavor. The reporting process for these action plans is a form of coordination. Action plans must be shared with the national level within certain timeframes, in the format of a log-frame style template called the *Tablero Plan de Accón Territorial* or 'Tablero PAT'. The Tablero PAT guides the municipalities to put all relevant information into a consistent format to aggregate the action plans into a 'unified report' (*Reporte Unificado del Sistema de Información, Coordinación y Seguimiento Territorial*). This serves as a tool for the Victim's Unit to monitor and evaluate overall progress in the response. This process becomes a vertical form of communication between the local and the national-level entities. This communication reaffirms hierarchies because it is not a two-way dialogue; there is no mandated space for verbal exchange or debate on the subtleties of the local context and possible resource constraints faced.

c. *Capacity-Building and Joint-Funding Opportunities*

The action-planning process must adapt to the mixed capacities of municipalities. This again sidesteps political issues and favors a technical solution. The Strategy addresses the underlying disparity between regions by offering limited funding for joint-initiatives and training to the municipalities that need it. One function of the Tablero PAT is to identify the municipalities in

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[41] These are urgent humanitarian aid (*Ayuda Humanitaria Inmediata*), emergency humanitarian care (*Atención Humanitaria de Emergencia*), and transitional humanitarian aid (*Ayuda Humanitaria de Transición*) (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2018, pp. 8–9).

[42] This includes not just the official government registry administered by the Victim's Unit but also input from the annual socioeconomic household surveys administered by the National Planning Department (*SISBEN*).

which the documented needs exceed the resources available, meriting some help from other levels. The national level considers the following criteria when deciding whether to intervene:

> "the capacity of the local entities, the dynamics of the conflict and the conditions of the population of victims, and additionally they will consider the information submitted by the local entities and the information that the national entities themselves have available" (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015, Art. 2.2.8.3.1.15).

The local entities would need to make a strong case through their Tablero PATs for relinquishing any responsibility for implementation. Even then they may not have their requests met, for example if the information available to the national entities does not correspond to that which has been submitted by the local level. The counter is also possible; the national-level monitoring may reveal that some municipalities indeed have "the capacity for investment and a high number of victims, that yet do not allocate resources for their attention" (Ibid). These would be reported to the Ministry of the Interior and the Victim's Unit "as an input for the development of the plans for improvement of the local entities" (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015, Art. 2.2.8.3.1.23). This describes what the national level would consider 'misbehavior' showing that the process altogether serves to self-regulate the local entities, sanction them if needed, and gives the national level the final determination on where and to what extent they should intervene.

The process of developing the action plans and Tablero PATs can be considered as a self-reported capacity assessment by the local entities. Both their ability to adhere to the process and the action plans' content—the budgets and plans presented and how well these can be expected to respond to needs—make their 'capacity' legible. The Strategy interestingly does not define 'capacity'. Instead, it gives the Ministry of the Interior and the Victim's Unit the authority to "design a strategy for local intervention to offer tailored technical assistance to the local entities" (Colombia: President of the Republic, 2015, Art. 2.2.8.3.1.19) which "should be holistic and address the particularities, potential and necessities of each local entity". The Strategy thus establishes new practices for capacity building. The Interinstitutional Technical Assistance Team (*Equipo Interinstitucional de Asistencia Tecnica Territorial*) is charged to carry this out. This Team is a sub-directorate of the Victim's Unit and has increased its activities every year since the Strategy came out. For example, in 2020, it conducted "35 days of technical assistance. . . that assisted 805 municipalities and 31 departmental governments"

(Victim's Unit, 2021a). Framing 'low capacity' as a key problem to be fixed, the Strategy flags a technical solution, namely training.

These three tactics attempt to overcome the impasse between national and local levels. While the national level is still the agenda setter (Lukes, 2004), this compromise importantly leaves some space for local autonomy by leaving it fairly open how the local entities are expected to arrive at their decision-making. The local entities can tailor their specific plans as they see fit, within the parameters set, and if the plans 'meet the needs'. Indeed, the process of developing the plans themselves may yield political benefits, as in the city of Medellín, where the precursor to the action-planning process was piloted (Lopera Morales et al., 2009). This process brings some legitimacy to local level actors (Ibid). It can also benefit local governments either by supporting horizontal multilevel governance, expanding networks with non-state actors, or by supporting vertical multilevel governance under certain conditions by giving them space to assert their value to the response overall. This is exemplified by the Bogotá action plan describing in detail how their adherence to the Strategy affirms their "effective articulation" with the national level entities (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2019, p. 26) and "convert[s] Bogotá into a reference of peace and reconciliation" (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2016, p. 6). In this way, Bogotá links their response to victims with the city's identity. Indeed, local and regional identity is a key though underexplored factor affecting engagement in multilevel governance structures (Kleider, 2020).

However, the same difficulties that differentiate poorly from well-resourced municipalities likely affect their ability to participate equally and adequately in these processes, and therefore their potential to benefit politically from them. A monitoring commission convened by the Office of the Attorney General claimed that even four years after the adoption of the Strategy, the processes and tools it formalized have not (yet) managed to overcome the 'structural deficiencies' that the Strategy was developed to address (Procurador General de la Nación, 2019, p. 398). This points to possible limitations but also demonstrates the high stakes and expectations for this System of Co-responsibility.

3.8 Conceptualizing Multilevel Governance in Colombia's Response

This section considers how to adapt the multilevel governance of migration literature to internal displacement responses. I argue that this requires explicit discussion of the power dynamics

within multilevel governance structures and policies. Doing so helps to demonstrate the absence of vertical power rebalancing opportunities within Colombia's response. The System of Co-responsibility potentially enables the redistribution of power at the local level rather than between local, regional, and national levels.

First, I adapt a conceptual framework from Peter Scholten's work to better account for power dynamics. I will then demonstrate how a certain kind of multilevel governance is prioritized over others in Colombia's response, namely horizontal relations at the local level.

In applying multilevel governance to migration challenges, Scholten's (2013) framework outlining various 'modes of governance in multi-level settings' has become a reference point. He argues that it is critical to view multilevel governance within a context of various ideal-type modes of governance in multilevel settings. Only one of these ideal types is the 'cooperative' mode of governance that we commonly associate with discourse on multilevel governance (Spencer, 2018). The other three modes are top heavy governance ('centralist'), bottom-heavy governance ('localist') or a situation in which interests between levels are completely at odds and conflict is imminent ('decoupled').

Building upon this typology, I propose to visualize how these different modes relate to one another. Specifically, I suggest locating the different modes of governance on a spectrum between centralist and localist. For these two modes, the locus of decision making is agreed-upon and clearcut. Anything in between is subject to bargaining, negotiation, and power-sharing between levels and hence represents multilevel governance. **Figure 1** shows these associations.
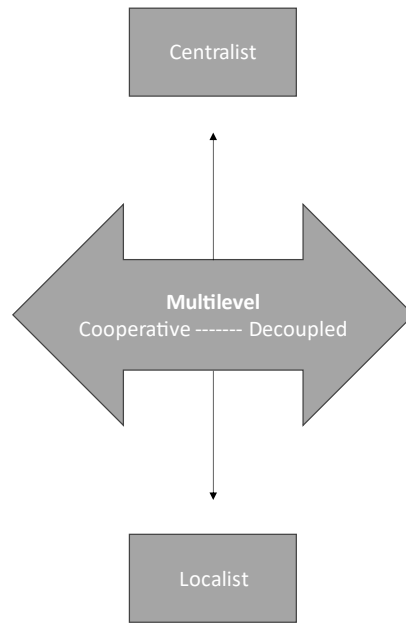
Figure 1. Relationships between modes of governance in multilevel settings

I furthermore propose that both cooperative and decoupled modes of governance be considered as part of a broader category of multilevel governance. Indeed, both modes imply bargaining and negotiation among the institutions and actors involved, albeit with different policy results.[43] By contrast, in centralist and localist modes, power-sharing is generally less relevant or not in dispute. As is generally assumed in the literature, these modes do not remain static. In addition to changes between modes over time, it is important that we allow for combinations of different modes within the same complex response. This is the case in Colombia's response to internal displacement, as it is largely centralist except for the administration of emergency humanitarian assistance.

Going deeper into cooperative multilevel governance, I bring various conceptual contributions from Scholten and others together to show certain conditions that enable this form of multilevel governance to emerge. **Figure 2** summarizes Scholten's four 'modes of governance' in the lefthand column (Scholten, 2013) and builds from this in the shaded areas.

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[43] These conform to Caponio and Jones-Correa's (2018) 'minimum conditions' for considering a specific policymaking arrangement to be an instance of multilevel governance. These are that the arrangement challenges vertical, state-centered formal hierarchies, that there is interdependency among actors such that no one actor can design or implement the policy alone, and that power-sharing terms are not fixed, e.g. there is bargaining and negotiation between the actors involved.

Modes of governance in multi-level settings (Scholten, 2013; 2016)	Preconditions		Observable outcome
	Agenda alignment (Scholten, 2013)	Power relations (based on Scholten *et. al.*, 2018)	
Centralist – central level sets agenda, formulates policy and monitors division of labor for implementation	Problems are defined as central problems requiring central solutions	Clear, top-down hierarchical relations between levels of government (and civil society)	Policy consistency
Localist – local level sets agenda, formulates and implements policy	Problems are defined as local problems requiring local solutions	Strong local leadership and may have strong links between localities	Policy diversity
Cooperative – central, regional and local levels decide jointly on complementary policy directions	Alignment in problem, political and policy agendas	Regular interaction and flattening of hierarchies to enable joint decision-making	Policy convergence (Scholten, 2016)
Decoupled – tense negotiations or disagreement leading to contradicting or conflicting policy directions	Misalignment in problem, political and/or policy agendas	Absence of interactions and/or contesting hierarchies between levels of government (and civil society)	Policy divergence (Scholten, 2016)

Figure 2. Modes of governance in multilevel settings. Adapted from Scholten, 2016; Scholten et al., 2018; Scholten, 2013. The shaded areas indicate my interpretation building from these different studies.

Scholten (2013) theorizes that the conditions for cooperative decision-making arise when: (1) the multilevel character of a policy problem is explicitly recognized and (2) actors operating on different levels align their problem, political, and policy agendas. This means aligning the issue at stake, the political feasibility and benefits of addressing the issue, and the institutional incentives and capacity to address the issue. Alignment of these agendas can lead to policymaking processes that result in 'policy convergence', or a suite of policies that create a 'division of labour' (Scholten, 2016, p. 978) to respond to the same problem in complementary ways.

Assessing how this convergence occurs is key for understanding the strategies that different levels of government use to create the conditions for multilevel governance. In general, the quality and quantity of interactions between levels must be sufficient for a variety of actors to

align their agendas and agree on how to collectively solve a problem. These interactions can be informal or formal, but the opportunity must be created deliberately. In other words, "specific venues or forums are required for vertical interaction and cooperation" (Scholten et al., 2018, p. 2014). These opportunities for interaction also do not necessarily originate from the national level. Scholten et al. (2018) provide the example of a shift from localist towards a cooperative multilevel governance in migrant integration policies in the Netherlands. Yes, acceptance of cooperative multilevel governance was triggered by a leadership change at the national level, but this was in recognition of the contributions that municipalities were already making. They had demonstrated their concerns and expertise in this policy area through a practice of local entrepreneurship (Scholten & Penninx, 2016) and lobbying different levels of government on various aspects of migrant integration, a strategy called 'vertical venue shopping' (originally described by Guiraudon, 2000). This led to 'intensive contact between the municipalities of Rotterdam, The Hague, Westland and the Ministries of Social Affairs and Internal Affairs' (Scholten et al., 2018, p. 2024), eventually creating formal collaborative structures to organize their work. These 'vertical' national-local collaborative structures created policy that was eventually adopted by the national level. Their policy work was more attuned to the local specificities of the different municipalities participating in the process. Hence, a cooperative form of multilevel governance emerged because of initiatives from both above and below.

But more than that, they were enabled by a redistribution of power within these policymaking structures. I define these power relations not just as the extent of interactions between different levels of government but also as the widening or flattening of hierarchies in decision-making within those interactions. These power relations can be shaped by municipalities, for example through building alliances between different municipalities to strengthen their negotiating position with national governments (Ataç et al., 2020), or even by civil society, for instance to encourage interdependence between municipalities and local nongovernmental organizations (Polat & Lowndes, 2022; Spencer, 2018). I therefore expand on Scholten (2016) and Scholten et al. (2018) to argue that agenda alignment and power relations interact to shape the governance mode. These create different observable policy outcomes; in addition to policy convergence and divergence discussed by Scholten, I add policy consistency from centralist modes and diversity from localist modes.

The System of Co-responsibility creates important but limited conditions for cooperative multilevel governance. The principle of subsidiarity should make the distribution of emergency humanitarian assistance a decidedly localist policy area. But decades of negotiations demonstrated that this did not enable local action in many municipalities, especially those far from Bogotá and with sparse local revenues. Introducing the action planning process alongside capacity building creates certain kinds of interactions between levels. This includes regular interaction based on annual reporting timelines, but not necessarily the flattening of hierarchies between levels of government. Working as designed, the processes incentivize local responses through alignment in problem framing and policy agendas. This goes far beyond the soft incentive of a court-issued certificate of compliance that existed before; however, there seems to be nothing in the Strategy itself that promotes the alignment of political agendas between levels.

It is possible that this happens through other mechanisms. First, the Strategy establishes a platform for horizontal multilevel governance that can bring a crucial infusion of capacity from other non-state actors. It gives one local-level entity, the Local Committee for Transitional Justice (*Comite Territorial de Justicia Transicional*), power over the municipality in its role to approve the local plans and conduct follow-up monitoring. Each of the municipalities has its own such committee that brings together local government, civil society organizations, and service providers to coordinate responses at local levels. It also has the important function of liaising with victim's advocacy groups, which could increase political pressure for prioritizing the response (Lemaitre & Sandvik, 2019). But this is a slow process of building coalitions and increasing civic participation. Indeed, shifting political incentives is a longer-term endeavour, much more complex than introducing new technocratic processes and practices. Second, local leadership may play an important role. Ibáñez & Velásquez (2008) remarked that the leadership of mayors and other local officials was crucial in this policy area. This continued to be a priority for the Victim's Unit nearly ten years later. After the 2016 local elections, the Victim's Unit developed detailed guidance to explain the rights of victims specifically for newly elected municipal officials. While not a guarantee, targeted guidance could serve as a pathway towards aligning political agendas to enable a cooperative (vertical) multilevel governance in addition to a nascent horizontal one.

3.9 Conclusions

The Strategy of Co-responsibility responds to demands for clarity on roles and responsibilities in the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance, the first step in restoring basic rights to those internally displaced due to Colombia's longstanding internal armed conflict. To do this it provides a normative framework for applying the principles of decentralization, emphasizing joint responsibility for the protection of human rights, and limiting subsidiarity. This regulates and puts pressure on municipal authorities to act in the absence of other incentives.

Other tactics that the Strategy of Co-responsibility uses to nominally respect local autonomy while nudging compliance from the local level are the formalization of an action-planning process and combining capacity building with joint-funding opportunities. I demonstrated how these are depoliticized and presented as technical solutions, enabling the Strategy to sidestep the call to further decentralization through the internal displacement response. Frameworks and examples from the multilevel governance of migration reveal possible alternatives for producing policy convergence and complementarity between levels. These require acknowledging and rebalancing existing power asymmetries and aligning political agendas. This is, however, a long-term endeavor.

The analysis of the System of Co-responsibility reveals the benefits and limitations of coordination policies 'from above'. In general, the System reproduces existing hierarchies of a unitary government; subnational governments do not (yet) have power to influence the overall structure of the response to internal displacement. But it does respect local autonomy by at least discursively encouraging local ownership of the response, and by introducing incentives for horizontal multilevel governance. In general, this reveals that resource allocation within internal displacement responses is a highly contentious issue in contexts severely affected by conflict. The multilevel governance structures likely cannot solve the bigger structural issues of uneven economic development and governance capacity. But if roles and responsibilities are clear and support is available in poorly resourced areas, then cooperative multilevel governance in the response to internal displacement can gradually increase trust between levels of government. This has the potential to improve coordination and governance more widely.

Asking what the multilevel governance literature means for forced migration contexts and vice versa opens a variety of new avenues for research. This research corroborates Polat and Lowndes' (2022) findings that multilevel governance "need not imply any weakening of the state or any empowerment of local actors. Rather, MLG denotes increased complexity. . . and

the presence of new central government control strategies" (p. 68). This suggests useful comparisons between the governance of internal displacement and refugee responses. This research also serves as a starting point for comparative analyses of internal displacement responses in federal and unitary but decentralized contexts of conflict-induced internal displacement.

For policymakers, multilevel governance frameworks inform proposals for strengthening a 'whole-of-government' approach to internal displacement responses (United Nations Secretary-General, 2021). Though central to the final report of the United Nations High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, it remains unclear what engaging all levels of government means (and costs) in practice. A Cross-Regional Forum on Implementing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement convened in June 2023 by the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs, UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster brought together ten governments facing internal displacement to discuss this exact question. Colombia may provide a model to follow with the compromise it conceives as co-responsibility. But I propose that confronting the multilevel dimensions of internal displacement and the power dynamics within internal displacement responses alongside Scholten's framework could contribute meaningfully to implementation debates. Finally, for practitioners, strategies for aligning problem, politics and policy agendas generates ideas around how to encourage collaboration among stakeholders in a highly politicized context.

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Chapter 4. Proactive local government: how London borough councils build capacity to respond to asylum

4.1 Introduction

After the final session of a series of workshops with local government officers from different boroughs in London, Nima, a participant with lived experience of asylum, talked about the issues facing the asylum-seekers that rely on him for support.[44] "What people seeking asylum really need," he explained, "are three basic things. The knowledge, the confidence to access the knowledge, and the tools to use the knowledge." By 'knowledge' he meant information about specific services and support available, but also a greater contextual understanding of the asylum process, local policies, and ways to adapt to life and culture in the United Kingdom.

Nima's perspective emphasizes agency, asserting that people seeking asylum can learn to navigate some aspects of their situations if administrative processes are made more transparent. But I was struck by his mention of 'confidence'. This supposes that providing information is insufficient; more is needed to empower people to use that information. Though life circumstances clearly differ, the local government officers I spoke with also demonstrated a lack of confidence. A sense of futility prevailed, especially in early workshops as they struggled to navigate rapidly changing asylum policy. Creating positive impact for both people seeking asylum and the communities in which they live often felt out of reach. Yet the workshops demonstrated that progress was possible.

This research investigates capacity-building processes of local governments that operate within restrictive migration policy contexts. Asylum in the United Kingdom is one such context that offers a 'least likely case' of local government intervention (Oliver et al., 2020) because local governments have no clear role within asylum governance and little funding to provide services. Examining London borough councils' activities proves especially interesting because of an increase in asylum-seekers housed in the capital since 2020. Council responses to asylum differ because its thirty-two borough councils implement migration policy somewhat independently, revealing intra-city variation.

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[44] Nima, volunteer in the charity Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP), permits the use of his name in this article.

Based on observation of a six-month 'design lab' learning process with eleven London borough councils, six months of insider research, and semi-structured interviews, I observe changes to the internal capacity of some councils to respond to this emerging and pressing issue while others struggle to adapt.

I draw on public administration and urban planning literature to explore how capacity was developed. I propose that a council moves from 'reactive' towards 'proactive' responses by building both capacity and confidence. 'Confidence' invokes the subjective and objective sense of power that underpins capacity. Councils develop this through gaining expertise and political leverage through partnerships. But they must also resolve key dilemmas before they can assert a role for local governments in this policy area.

I argue that by aiming for proactivity in asylum responses, local governments are contesting central government through their practice. They do so by affirming people seeking asylum as local residents under local duties of care. This intervenes in the politics of asylum governance as local governments demonstrate their suitability for taking on more responsibility in this policy area, thereby countering crisis narratives. Ultimately proactivity in asylum makes a case for greater local autonomy in confronting a range of uncertain and wicked problems.

This paper proceeds as follows: first, I explain the rationale for revisiting the local government's role within asylum policy. After discussing London's asylum context, the empirical section analyzes the steps that councils take towards proactive responses. It examines two dilemmas that council officers grappled with during the design labs. Resolving these dilemmas, complemented by a mix of confidence-building and capacity-building, enabled shifts towards more proactive responses. A discussion section follows to explain how this contests asylum policy, creating potential for systemic change.

4.2 Decoupled landscape

The growth in research on sources of support to migrants in 'superdiverse' cities like London (Vertovec, 2007) tends to overlook the role of local government, instead folding it into an abstract category of the local state. The work on 'arrival infrastructures', for example, often assumes local governments play a small or non-existent role, focusing instead on the influence of voluntary sector organizations and existing migrant networks (see Wessendorf, 2022). These perspectives beneficially view the city from the vantage point of diverse and fluid migrant groups, as the ways they interact with the city are not confined to district boundaries. But they

underemphasize interactions with state structures, and how policies aiming to regulate migration are resisted and/or transformed by local governments. Asylum is one such policy area in which the local government role is poorly understood.

Migration policy has increasingly become part of a 'decoupled' multilevel governance landscape (Scholten, 2013) across Europe, with persistent tensions between the central and the local level (Broadhead, 2020). The local level experiences the impacts of rapid changes to its communities but has few policy tools it can use to mitigate these. By contrast, the central level uses immigration policy as a tool for managing its geopolitical priorities, defining who can enter its borders, belongs, and can claim resources from the 'nation-state' (El-Enany, 2020). This creates what Stürner-Siovitz (2022) calls the 'urban migration governance paradox', which posits that cities are disproportionally affected both by migration movements and migration policies negotiated at other scales.

Governments in the Global North have issued increasingly restrictive asylum policies that aim to provide the least level of service at the lowest cost (Oliver et al., 2020). Despite this, and in part because of it, local actors "have a major role in the practical management of asylum seeker reception" (Ibid, p. 5). This includes the local government, whether assigned this responsibility or not. Indeed, cities in the United Kingdom have an expanding role in integrating resettled refugees, but their work towards integrating those in the asylum system, even once they obtain refugee status, has been mixed. Broadhead (2020) points out that this leads to differential outcomes for those individuals, as well as a "disparity in governance arrangements over the two schemes and the lack of institutional and policy coherence between and within them" (p. 4).

4.3 Local governments in UK asylum governance

Asylum policy in the United Kingdom is highly centralized. Asylum support, in the form of financial payments and accommodation, is managed by the Home Office and its private sector and charity contractors. Despite this, local governments have intervened in asylum for different reasons, including to comply with separate statutory regulations such as their 'duty of care' to vulnerable children and adults. The City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network described local authorities as being:

"committed to playing our part in welcoming and safeguarding the welfare of all people in our communities, including people seeking sanctuary and people granted leave to remain. In doing so we are firmly determined to meet our obligations as per the Children's Act, Care Act, Equalities Act, Housing Act 2004, amongst other relevant legislation" (Tapsfield, 2023).

Local governments' role in asylum governance has varied over time due to changes in the implementation of national-level policy as well as local governments' capacity to engage. Research on the asylum accommodation system attributes changes in asylum policy to a gradual process of neoliberalization (Darling, 2016). This process centralizes power and bypasses, even undermines, local governments. It not only changed the way that asylum accommodation is governed, but also the way asylum is perceived and valued in society. Discursive strategies produced "a shared understanding of asylum as a political and economic concern, most notably maintained through the rhetorical positioning of asylum seekers as a 'burden' on both public and private stakeholders" (Ibid, p. 231). Changes to the implementation of asylum policy were therefore justified as cost-saving measures. These took responsibility for the care of people seeking asylum away from both the public sector and the public gaze (Darling, 2022a; Hynes, 2011), making it more difficult for local governments to learn of asylum-seekers in their jurisdictions let alone provide oversight. Mechanisms of outsourcing and contractualism enabled this.

Outsourcing asylum accommodation to private sector providers fundamentally changed the local authority's involvement in asylum issues (Darling, 2022a). In the early 2000s, local authorities were given funding to manage asylum accommodation. This had practical benefits, for example putting to use housing that could not be sold off (Darling, 2022b). But it also enabled more holistic support to people seeking asylum. Building on existing relationships as a landlord, they could connect asylum seekers to other services and work on issues like social cohesion in their communities. Darling (2022a) traces how local governments lost capacity to manage this policy area since 2012 as local authority housing consortiums were outbid during the outsourcing process. The Home Office instead contracted six private sector accommodation providers, collectively called COMPASS (Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support). As a result of this lost funding and reduced responsibility, local governments quickly lost staff with expertise in this area, with some going to the private sector accommodation providers but then leaving within a year (Darling, 2022a).

This private-sector for-profit model of service provision is maintained through the practice of contractualism. Decisions around whether an asylum-seeker's requests or needs can and should

be met are made according to contractual agreements negotiated on 5-to-10-year timeframes (Darling, 2022a). Importantly, local authorities are unable to influence the terms of these contracts. The contracts were renewed in September 2019, with a combined value of £4 billion over 10 years (UK Home Office, 2019). In London, the accommodation provider contracted until 2029 is called Clearsprings Ready Homes, a stakeholder mentioned frequently within our workshops.

Countering these losses of autonomy is a practice of employing discretion. Darling (2022b) defines this as the capacity of local authorities to make decisions despite a restrictive policy landscape; it is a form of influence that is often hidden (p. 2). In employing discretion, they are pushing the boundaries of their authority but, he argues, in very pragmatic and small ways and "at the cost of wider critiques" (Ibid, p. 8). Darling still views discretion as operating within a neoliberal framework: it is a 'governance tool' that helps to manage the tensions of national policymaking and local level implementation (Ibid, p. 2). Accordingly, local authority powers of discretion in the asylum space are deliberately reduced over time.

It is through these practices that asylum-seekers experience 'slow violence' as they navigate poverty in their everyday alongside the effects of state control (Mayblin et al., 2020). Combined with incessant waiting, uncertainty, and an inability to have complaints heard and dealt with, this lack of control leads to a 'politics of exhaustion' that inhibits resistance and opposition (Darling, 2022a). The same applies to local governance actors (Mayblin & James, 2019). Lost local state capacity resulted in placing undue burden on the voluntary and civil society sector to fill gaps, making exhaustion "a common condition within dispersal, not only for those dispersed, but also for those seeking to support asylum seekers" (Darling, 2022a, p. 187). This extended beyond asylum to welfare provision in general, as literature on the effects of austerity since 2010 attests (Clayton et al., 2016; Dagdeviren et al., 2019). A loss of capacity created greater demand that led to further losses in capacity as organizations and those working in them burnt out. The detrimental impacts and high stakes on local actors and asylum-seekers alike suggests that the relationship between discretion, capacity, and the politics of asylum merits revisiting.

4.4 Discretion and capacity

Neoliberalization outsourced state services like asylum accommodation to new actors while austerity programs dramatically reduced local government budgets (Featherstone et al., 2012; Lowndes & Gardner, 2016). These trends together suggest a delinking of asylum from the local

state. Despite this, practices of discretion are possible; indeed, I contend that Darling underestimates their significance. Spencer refers to similar types of activities as 'shadow politics' to describe the ways in which local authorities are navigating central government restrictions (Spencer, 2018). She reads outsourcing of certain work to voluntary sector organizations not as a technology of neoliberalism but as a strategic move to circumvent austerity constraints. Additionally, local government officers have been shown to demonstrate 'municipal activism' in their promotion of specific policy frames to guide their work (Spencer & Delvino, 2019). Some frames counter the rhetoric of viewing migrants as a 'financial burden'. These are an 'efficiency' frame highlighting the financial costs of inaction and a 'socioeconomic' frame emphasizing the economic and social harm of excluding migrants long-term. By invoking inclusive policy narratives around migration, Broadhead (2020) similarly concludes that UK local governments are increasingly demonstrating leadership both as a convenor and place-shaper. This suggests greater potential within the discretionary activities of local government in shaping asylum conditions and policy.

In addition to underestimating discretionary capacity, Darling (2022b) does not explain why some local governments are better equipped for exercising discretion than others. Indeed, lack of capacity potentially undermines local governments' roles in asylum. Broadhead (2020) finds that local government leadership is limited for two reasons: its ability to influence and improve service delivery remains broadly insufficient, and it struggles to maintain active and equal partnerships with the voluntary sector. Both shortcomings are influenced by a lack of capacity in some form.

But what capacities are needed for expanding discretion and developing innovative solutions to asylum? Colloquially, 'capacity' tends to be used as shorthand for funding to hire new people, or time available to spend on a given project. 'Capacity-building' as an activity is also often used synonymously with 'training'. But by focusing on capacity-building simply as the acquisition of new information, and capacity as the product of increased funding, we fail to examine the structural power imbalances that create capacity gaps in the public sector. Capacity is not power-neutral. Arts & Tatenhove (2004) describe it as "the ability of actors to mobilize resources in order to achieve certain outcomes in social relations" (p. 343), making capacity-building an exercise of empowerment. In this work I present capacity-building as a process with the potential to reshape power relations within and between different levels of government.

4.5 Asylum in London

Asylum policy disperses asylum-seekers across the United Kingdom, historically to poorer areas and away from London (Hynes, 2011). This has changed since 2020 with increased arrivals but also long processing backlogs, leading to the introduction of hotels as asylum accommodation (Walsh & Sumption, 2023). By March 2023, the period in which this research was conducted, over a fifth of people seeking asylum supported by the government (23.2%) were accommodated in London, up from 14.2% in March 2020 (UK Home Office, 2023a). Two thirds of those (16,337 people) were being accommodated in hotels of different types and the remaining third in community-based (commonly referred to as 'dispersal') accommodation.

The increase in numbers as well as hotels present new challenges for local authorities across the United Kingdom, but especially in London. These impacts are not felt evenly across London as the procurement of hotels is guided by their availability rather than consideration of asylum-seeker preferences, the local area or local authority capacity. The London boroughs of Hillingdon and Hounslow, for example, together host 20% of people seeking asylum supported by the government in London (UK Home Office, 2023a) due to the prevalence of hotels close to Heathrow Airport. This creates high variance between boroughs. Boroughs thus have different 'asylum profiles', comprising of the number of people seeking asylum, type of accommodation, and demographics of the asylum-seeking population. Because each borough's situation differs, clearcut guidance for council responses is tricky.

The asylum system is at a turning point in the United Kingdom overall. The asylum dispersal policy is transitioning from opt-in to a system of 'full dispersal' with every local authority in the United Kingdom taking part based on quotas decided by region (Barnsley, 2023). At the same time, repeated advocacy attempts to change funding levels for services to people seeking asylum. Consequently, the Home Office has provided small 'Asylum Dispersal Grants' to councils: one-time payments for each asylum-seeking resident present at a specific date in 2022 and 2023 (UK Home Office, 2022a), as well as £3500 for each new bedspace added for dispersal accommodation (UK Home Office, 2022b). Surprisingly disconnected from these policy changes is the proposed dismantling of the asylum system under the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act and the 2023 Illegal Migration Act. These together deny people seeking international protection access to the United Kingdom's asylum system, subjecting them instead to detention and/or removal. Singer explains these acts as a 'criminalesque approach to asylum' because people arriving irregularly in the United Kingdom are rendered inadmissible

and their very entry treated similarly to that of suspected criminal migrants (Singer, 2024). The material effects of the Illegal Migration Act are in some respects still unclear (Morris & Qureshi, 2023). While the Act faces ongoing legal challenges and the absence of implementation plans, local authorities expect an increased demand for their support and a significant increase in homelessness (Greater London Authority, 2023). This makes questions around local authority capacity and their ability to plan amidst significant uncertainty especially urgent.

4.6 Methodology[45]

I used a multi-stage, qualitative and pan-London research design to explore how London borough councils develop capacity to respond to asylum. A challenge in working with local government is navigating and maintaining access to spaces that are otherwise closed to the public (M. J. van Hulst, 2008). To overcome this, I developed networks through a mix of work experience and outreach as a doctoral student. I was an 'insider-researcher' (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007) from October 2021 until March 2022 while employed part-time at the Greater London Authority (GLA). I became an observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011) and at times a facilitator of knowledge exchange (Broadhead, 2020b) during the implementation of the GLA-funded Asylum Welcome program from January to June 2023. I observed its five 'design lab' workshops, which sought to enable experimentation and learning to improve outcomes for people seeking asylum in the city.[46]

The eleven borough councils participating in the program applied to do so, implying they wanted to either develop or improve their responses to asylum.[47] Politically, two were Conservative councils, one was Independent, and the remaining were Labour-controlled. A mix of central and outer-London boroughs as well as boroughs with hotel and/or dispersal accommodation was intentional within the criteria for accepting council applications to enable discussions across different asylum profiles and geographic contexts. Additionally, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with council officers and other migration stakeholders to understand how they experienced changes in asylum policy since 2020.

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[45] See Appendix 3 for a full list of sources analyzed.

[46] The program was implemented by the think tank British Future and the charity Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP). Also participating was London Councils, a cross-party organization that represents the interests of London's borough councils.

[47] Though a third of London's councils, this is not a representative group. Non-participating councils likely already had a sufficiently developed response, did not see the relevance for setting one up, and/or lacked time and resources to participate. Councils requested that their names not appear in this publication.

Using thematic analysis to inductively analyze my empirical material, I first developed categories addressing the general question: how are councils responding to asylum? These produced a list of the types of responses proposed and enacted, which I separated into reactive and proactive approaches (Weihmayer, 2024). I then explored the factors, conditions and activities that enabled council officers to perceive they were responding more proactively. This revealed capacity-building to be a multi-layered, nonlinear process. Finally, I explored policy dilemmas they confronted throughout the design labs. This "problem-oriented, 'bottom-up' approach with a specific focus on policy dilemmas" seeks to avoid the further politicization of migration policymaking (Bauböck et al., 2022). A cornerstone of a decentered analysis of governance, dilemmas illuminate how governance evolves as a product of changing beliefs, traditions, and practices (Rhodes, 2007).

4.7 Building capacity to respond to asylum

a. Capacity-building as a process

Definitions of 'capacity' evolved to nuance the types of capacity needed for public sector institutions to function. Drawing on public administration literature, Wu et al. (2015) define 'policy capacity' as the set of skills or competences and resources or capabilities necessary to perform policy functions (p. 2). They envision policy capacity as the combination of analytical, operational, and political skills and competences operating at individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Though they argue this is comprehensive and avoids certain traps such as definitions of capacity "focus[ing] on what can be done with it" rather than what it constitutes (Ibid, p. 2), it nonetheless assumes the expected policy functions are clear. By contrast, for asylum responses at local levels the policy functions are both unclear and in dispute. I contend that supporting the integration of people seeking asylum belongs in a category of issues that emerge as an "urban governance concern" (Mendes, 2008, p. 943) over time from strong civil society advocacy and changed material circumstances in cities.

For asylum in the United Kingdom, lacking a mandated role for city and local governments underpinned other challenges. It made resolving dilemmas a precursor to unlocking capacity. This required substantial analytical capacity for understanding the situation based on limited information, and political capacity for getting buy-in from senior-level decision-makers to act. All this was needed before operational capacity – or the skills required to adequately resource and implement the policy (Wu et al., 2015) – could be developed and improved.

Based on borough council responses to asylum, I therefore propose capacity-building as a process that moves from reactivity towards proactivity. It involves three different but interrelated stages: 1) resolving dilemmas to ascertain local governments' role and goals, 2) developing confidence through knowledge and partnerships, and finally, 3) developing skills to mobilize existing and new resources (see **Figure 3**).
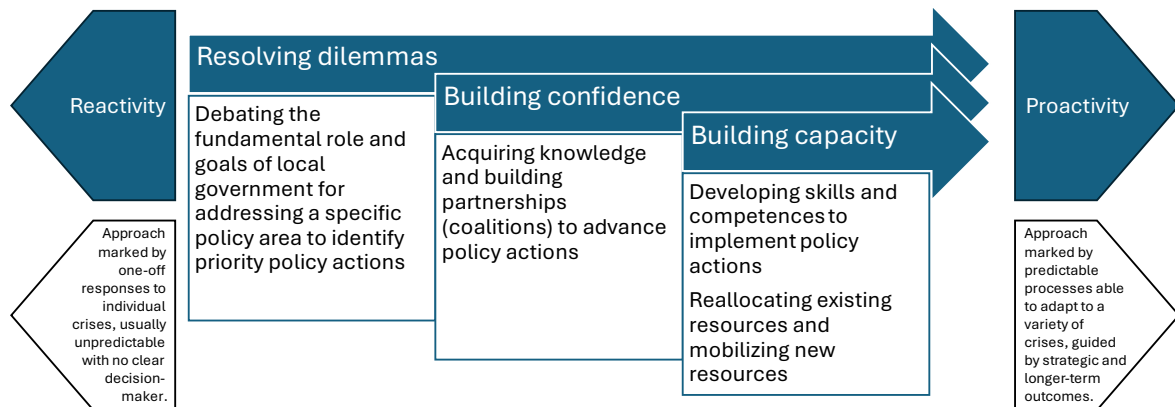
Figure 3. Capacity-building as a process aiming towards proactivity.

Complicating the oft-repeated claim that local governments struggle due to 'low capacity', this process assumes capacity to be dynamic rather than a natural or fixed state. I argue that this process better describes the way that local governments adapt to emerging urban governance challenges in which roles and responsibilities are continuously negotiated. It furthermore demonstrates how local government officers are doing political work that reshapes the role of local government and pushes back on key tenants of UK asylum policy.

b. *Moving towards proactivity*

The strategic aims of an asylum response varied by council and sometimes by departments and/or individuals within each council. The Asylum Welcome program promoted the concept of 'social integration' as a key analytical frame, based on the Mayor of London's *All of Us* strategy (Greater London Authority, 2018). This posited that improving the social integration of people seeking asylum was normatively valuable for London as a whole. But there was confusion around what this meant in practice. This is unsurprising given the conceptual differences in understandings of integration (Rutter, 2015, pp. 66–68) as well as the feasibility of meaningfully 'integrating' a group of people restricted in their rights to work and live where

they choose. Council officers were given the challenge to propose their council's 'working definition' of integration for people seeking asylum to then explore how they could implement it. Hence, the process for tailoring the concept to council-specific goals was more important than conforming to an established vision of integration for the city.

Through this process borough councils reflected on the limits of their support to integration. One officer supported the idea that the council can help with integration in certain domains, such as improving the experience of a person that has arrived and settled, but added that "housing and income, we can't do much about that". This suggested only minor interventions in the lives of asylum-seekers centered on social connection in lieu of rights claiming and economic stability. But other officers developed strategic objectives that went beyond mere hospitality and connected with a broader 'ethos' of their boroughs. These included goals of equity, parity and inclusion; safety and care; and preventing residents from reaching a crisis.

Despite disagreement on the extent to which councils can meaningfully support the integration of people seeking asylum, most agreed on how they wanted to respond: proactively. Design lab participants generally expected to learn from and with other councils with the intention of shifting to a more proactive approach. This goal also featured in the rationale for the Asylum Welcome program. Though reactivity and proactivity were originally described as binary, workshop discussions enable me to conceptualize these as a spectrum. No single activity distinguishes a council's response as being reactive or proactive; rather, different activities move the response towards proactivity in opposition to contextual elements and capacity gaps that elicit reactivity.

Participants distinguished between reactivity in specific cases and reactivity in general. In specific cases, they defined a reactive response as a one-off response to an unexpected incident or a crisis. As such it described a practice and an approach to service provision. Reactivity in general, or being 'stuck in a reactive mode', referred to failures in planning at the institutional (and even systemic) level. This entailed an inability to anticipate arrivals and needs over time, which meant that officers had to face whatever arose unexpectedly and without clear objectives. An officer explained:

> "our work in this area has always been very reactive, which is understandable to an extent because an emergency happens, people kind of end up in the borough, and we have to address it. But we haven't ever really had a vision for how we would approach this area of work."

Reactivity was partially caused by rapidly changing asylum policies. By mid-2023 various policies introduced by the Home Office sought to reduce the backlog of so-called 'legacy cases' of people seeking asylum. Subsequently, many asylum-seekers received their refugee status around the same time, placing sudden pressure on council housing departments. One officer expected over 200 people to present as homeless within weeks. He explained they were frantically trying to work out "just what on earth we are going to do". Reactivity therefore represents a lack of any ready solution, and moreover, not having the capacity to find a solution.

None of the councils participating in the design labs had a dedicated strategy for addressing the needs of people seeking asylum in their boroughs, though several hoped to develop one through the workshops.[48] Establishing a strategic vision was central to proactive responses.

Proactivity also relates to capacity. As a pan-London stakeholder summarized:

> "… up until this point, it has been a lot of firefighting, a lot of crises. And it's not enabled people to think ahead too well; they may be thinking ahead, but they don't have capacity to actually implement those plans. So I think some of the structures that we're trying to create now, hopefully, it will allow for that space to think a bit more about long term strategy."

Here, the process of thinking ahead is an important but insufficient marker of proactivity; developing the capacity to enact plans is equally needed. Reactivity therefore can be interpreted as the lack of capacity, and proactivity as the development of it.

Broadly, proactive responses address short term needs while aiming towards longer term objectives and outcomes. These could more holistically consider needs of people seeking asylum based on a deeper understanding of their situation and anticipated changes to the policy landscape. Though the concept emerged from practitioners in this context, it evokes two ideas familiar to local government scholars: the longstanding emphasis on creating 'responsive local governments' that learn based on feedback from their environment and innovate by critically analyzing problems (Stewart, 1974), and the shift towards efficiency and accountability promoted by new public management approaches (Lowndes, 1997). Proactivity is also decidedly future-looking, aiming to be one step ahead of problems before they arise.

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[48] One council had developed an Action Plan encompassing all migration-related activities while another borough had an endorsed 'Borough of Sanctuary' Strategy, but none were asylum-specific.

However, the reactivity / proactivity spectrum alone does not explain what moves councils towards proactivity. They need to intentionally solve problems at both operational and strategic levels to overcome policy impasses. Hence, a key stage in capacity-building involved grappling with dilemmas that officers perceived as impediments to their proactivity. For some councils, solutions to these dilemmas bolstered a rationale for responding at all, while for others they supported expanding their response beyond statutory obligations and prioritizing new areas of response. Resolving these dilemmas shaped how these local authorities understood their role within migration policymaking.

c. Affirming 'a local need'

A challenge all councils faced was the movement of the asylum-seeking population. The asylum accommodation system creates this situation as asylum-seekers cannot choose where they are housed[49], and they are often moved with little notice[50]. Accordingly, people may not manage to create a connection with their local authority before they are sent to live somewhere else. In fact, the constant threat of moving was seen to impede ties to one's location. While this has dire consequences on short-term wellbeing (Refugee Council, 2022), this also presents logistical difficulties: local authorities and service providers struggled to plan. For example, local authorities worked with local NHS branches to ensure that everyone is given a health check when they arrive at a hotel. But they could not estimate how many would be arriving and how many would stay close enough for follow-up care, making it unclear when and how to set up these checks.

A West London officer felt this rendered people seeking asylum into a 'transient population':

> "Compared to the resettlement programme (the 'gold standard'), which has a strong foundation and link with the voluntary sector, gives enough information to plan and follow individuals throughout their journey, and is funded, the asylum seeker population is inherently *transient*. There's no way of knowing how long they will be staying in accommodation, so you are planning for people 'without a particular cohort'. When you then talk about local authority services, [they] tend to respond to a local need and you haven't necessarily got a local need. You've got a transient population that are coming

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[49] "The overriding principle when allocating accommodation is that it is offered on a 'no choice basis'" (UK Home Office, 2024, p. 5).
[50] The Home Office is expected to give a minimum of 5 days' notice, though this has not always been done in practice (Royal Borough of Greenwich, 2023).

in and going out. How do you build an infrastructure around a transient population? It's difficult to have any other response than a reactive one."

This creates a spatial dilemma, in which local authorities must decide what does and does not constitute 'a local need'. This officer questions how long a person stays in the borough before their needs becomes the responsibility of the council. She also assumes that accommodating a non-traditional 'local need' would be costly.

The diversity of the population in addition to its 'churn' made it harder to build a relationship. A different council's officer described:

> "that focus on forming that relationship with a mass of individuals who are all very, very different and getting moved around all over the place, which is ultimately one of the most important things, but also present with this churn and turnover, one of the most difficult."

The workshops largely dispelled the view that providing services to people seeking asylum was operationally too difficult[51]. A conceptual shift facilitated this reframing. In contrast to their 'transience', a North London council proposed considering people seeking asylum there as 'long-term residents':

> "As long as they're in [North London Borough] we consider them to be long-term residents because that approach allows us to be less reactive. The programmes we put in place will anyway benefit them in the longer term too, even if they get moved out. If they go elsewhere then those skills and knowledge is transferrable to another borough."

Notably, this officer saw being less reactive as a worthy goal unto itself. This affirmation not only of asylum-seekers being 'residents' but moreover 'long-term residents' helped to establish consensus that the local authority could and should take responsibility for their care even beyond immediate needs. This helped them make the case internally for using existing funding to commission two charitable organizations to provide support in hotels. Additionally, this position reimagines integration as belonging to a different spatial scale: newcomers integrate into the United Kingdom rather than into a specific local authority. It posits that any services and support provided to people seeking asylum in one location still helps with integration overall.

By taking a more holistic geographical view of integration, participants saw the benefits of intervening despite the churn. This conceptual reframing made it easier to discuss a variety of

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[51] Because of the challenging discussions around this issue, the implementing partners developed a 'Note on Churn' to acknowledge and list the many difficulties this presented.

interventions later in the process. It provided the rationale for developing welcome packs for newcomers, as well as advising on accessing employment and the private rental sector for people soon expecting refugee status, regardless of whether they planned to leave the borough or even the city (a likely outcome given the high cost of housing in London). Adapting to churn informed the process for operating more proactively: strategies and plans had to be flexible enough to withstand changing numbers, but also the changing needs of people seeking asylum over time.

Councils were also pushing back on the churn. One council officer described an asylum-seeker in a serious health condition. The Home Office directed this person to be relocated to a different borough, but this person's general practitioner refused to discharge the patient. The council, working as an intermediary between this local NHS branch and the Home Office, requested and was granted a 14-day stay for that person to recover (after which they were moved). The officer expected the continuation of care to be tenuous after that point and bemoaned the inability to follow-up with patients once they left the borough. This suggests that churn not only causes difficulty for planning services, but also disrupts service provision while breaking the link to the council. More formal political advocacy also raised objections to central government. A lobbying letter signed by twenty-two London councils outlined why the churn was damaging both to asylum-seeker wellbeing and to the provision of support (Royal Borough of Greenwich, 2023). Reframing asylum-seeker needs as 'local needs' led to proactivity in several ways: it justified clearer council responsibility and intervention and supported wider objections to asylum policy.

d. Monitoring central government

Issues around 'safeguarding' exemplifies how council officers grappled with their relationship to central government. Design lab participants agreed that at a minimum local government needed to meet its statutory requirements in developing their responses, which included providing adequate safeguards for its more vulnerable residents such as people seeking asylum. The practice of safeguarding, defined generally as "protecting people's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect" (Local Government Association, 2019, p. 3), is broader than a duty to care and can include activities seeking to mitigate vulnerabilities that could lead to exploitation, human trafficking, or domestic violence. This area of work is therefore explicitly proactive. Council officers interpreted it as a core role of local government for which they had substantial expertise that the Home Office did not. Officers debated how to ensure private-sector providers and other Home Office contractors abided by minimum safeguarding

standards. This meant holding private-sector providers accountable to the terms of their contracts (contractualism) but also highlighting potential risks faced by people seeking asylum and the ways in which Home Office policies were not being carried out as intended. Safeguarding created a clear rationale for questioning Home Office policies and monitoring the work of other providers.

Three instances discussed in the workshops show what kinds of issues prompt such monitoring from councils. The first pushed back on the conditions in and procurement of new hotels. An East London council was consulted by the Home Office about the procurement of a hotel, to which an officer expressed surprise ("It's the first time that we were actually consulted, if I'm honest"). The council conducted a risk assessment to provide an informed reply. This risk assessment notably involved a range of partners: the council's Chief Executive fed into the process as did the local branch of the Metropolitan police. Criteria within a 'safeguarding toolkit' developed by a North London council informed the assessment, showing collaboration between councils. In the end, the council objected to the procurement on account of prior links with people smuggling networks and other safety issues. The priority the council placed on safeguarding standards and the multistakeholder engagement of its risk assessment enabled the objection.

When the Home Office announced that room-sharing would become a requirement in hotel accommodation in June 2023 (UK Home Office, 2023b), several councils raised concerns from their 'environmental health teams' about the risk of overcrowding. One council managed to arrange an in-person meeting with Home Office contacts in which its officers physically held up a tape measure to underscore the absurdity of placing beds so close together. This was perceived as a particularly effective way of raising objections so they could not be ignored.

A third instance of a council asserting a monitoring role involved the interrogation of activities by hotel managers. Council officers were concerned about the low numbers of notifications they received for incidents in the hotels, known as 'safeguarding referrals'. As one officer described, any safeguarding issues reported to Clearsprings Ready Homes are escalated directly to the Home Office "so in that case we don't really know what comes of it". Instead, the process preferred by local authorities is to have safeguarding concerns referred to their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs that are specifically organized for this purpose. Council

officers suspected that hotel management did not explain this process to asylum-seeking residents and/or bypassed or were unaware of council protocols.

To solve this problem, councils saw a need to build a relationship with hotel managers to nudge them towards improved practices. One West London council designed a training on safeguarding, especially identifying instances of domestic violence. This was well received by hotel staff. Though the officer reported that the hotel management has its own training, hotel managers were keen for training from the council to "upgrade and extend their knowledge". This training served as a relationship-building opportunity and enabled the council to better understand the extent of hotel staff expertise in working with people seeking asylum. An officer explained:

> "Hearing their views and how they look after residents and the terminology they use, I personally think they would benefit from broader knowledge. I think that would inform the way they behave and their principles in hotels so they would not need council training in the future."

The relationship helped the council influence the behavior of a central government subcontractor and key stakeholder in asylum accommodation who has direct impact on the everyday experiences of people seeking asylum. This activity can be viewed as increasing proactivity because its intent was to prevent safeguarding concerns, build partnerships, and improve overall service delivery long-term.

Asserting a monitoring role, however, came with substantial tensions. In response to the description of the lack of safeguarding expertise amongst hotel staff, an officer from a different council proclaimed, "But this is totally in contravention of their contract!" Still, delivering a training to make up for these gaps was justifiable because it supported the council's work and safeguarding obligations. Another council had done the same: "We also delivered a training to them on this. We know that we shouldn't have to do it but we also know that it would improve their work". Council officers debated the scope of their monitoring role because of the dilemma it presented: do they continue to use limited forms of influence to pressure for changes, or do they attempt to fix the problems in the interim? The latter would risk accusations of a duplication of resources and potentially justify central government 'offloading' certain responsibilities to councils without providing the necessary funding and support.

The tension between asserting a distinct role for councils within asylum responses and pushing central government actors to fulfil their stated roles more effectively represented a type of wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). These wicked problems, or complex problems which are "unruly and intractable" (Head, 2022, p. 22) because they represent divergent framings and viewpoints by a variety of stakeholders, cannot be easily resolved "on the basis of scientific evidence, expert plans, and competent project management" (Ibid, p. 14). Asserting a distinct role for themselves implied pushing back on certain aspects of asylum policy. By contrast, holding central government accountable to their policies and obligations implied tacit agreement to some degree with asylum policy and its terms. They acknowledged this tension by taking, as one council officer put it, a "dual role of holding people accountable to what they should be providing, but also collaborating". Council officers are making 'critical judgments' that are prerequisites for 'strategic work' (Healey, 2009a, p. 440) as they confront and resolve dilemmas facing their decision-making. Debate was necessary to navigate these tensions before councils could identify how to allocate their existing capacity and expand it to implement their responses.

e. Capacity and confidence

The design labs built new skills and competences, per Wu et al.'s (2015) definition, especially through pilot projects adapted to the needs of each borough. These enabled reflexive learning through experimentation and information-exchange (Weihmayer, 2024). Other activities helped council officers consolidate and expand their resources. Officers adjusted council structures to bring needed expertise into their growing 'asylum teams' and/or created coordination platforms across the council. Some also managed to redesign their service delivery by identifying and using existing resources differently (especially data, partnerships, and funding). These new skills created access to new resources, showing how individual-level capacities can incrementally produce organizational capacities in a virtuous cycle.

But this necessitated building confidence to make judgments and propose new ideas, implying that capacity and confidence are closely intertwined. Confidence-building stemmed from learning and gaining expertise. An officer explains:

> "so the idea that it ends up not just being three people in the middle of the
> council that know but you've got a quite a wide, potentially a larger raft of

> people who feel confident they've got the essential facts, which means you've got more people you can work with."

Spreading knowledge enables inter-departmental working. Indeed, developing new partnerships both within and outside the council produces a stronger political voice. The East London council's risk assessment made its case to the Home Office with the help of a wide coalition of local partners, noting especially the insight and legitimacy contributed by local police branches. Such examples show that confidence-building measures through information-gathering and partnerships can motivate coalitions to demand wider change. Other frameworks on capacity support this idea, complementing the development of skills and competences with the ability for both learning and mobilizing stakeholders towards collective action (Busengdal et al., 2023; Healey et al., 2000; Van Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022). These elements of capacity suggest mechanisms towards systemic change.

4.8 Implications of proactivity

Steps towards proactivity have profound implications beyond asylum. Local governments can initiate change in migration governance through their practice, not just their political advocacy. Striving towards proactive responses has its own political dimensions, which contest certain elements of asylum policy.

First, proactivity asserts the relevance of integration for people seeking asylum, as opposed to the creation of a parallel system of service delivery. Asylum policy is designed to prevent integration (Bakker et al., 2016; Darling, 2022a) until people receive refugee status. The system is furthermore designed to be hostile as a deterrent to others, gradually transforming accommodation into detention. In the meantime, London's councils are working towards the integration of this population both within their local authorities and in the United Kingdom as a whole because early intervention enables proactivity. They are working to treat those seeking asylum like other long-term residents by, for example, connecting them to healthcare, preventing exploitation and ensuring housing standards are met. This resembles the workings of an 'activist municipality' in which actions that facilitate access to services for migrants are taken in spite of, and to a degree mitigating, restrictive national legal and policy frameworks (Spencer & Delvino, 2019, p. 27). But this is influenced by adherence to other policy frameworks, such as the 1989 Children's Act, highlighting the imperative of meeting statutory obligations and contradictions between welfare and immigration policy. People seeking asylum

entail a 'local need' and are embedded within local geographies; they are not exceptions to the (local) state's duties of care.

Second, proactivity suggests that managing asylum is not a 'crisis'; it is a learning process. 'Crisis policymaking' is "the socio-political conditions and processes through which government decision-making happens under the ever-increasing burden of ongoing and multiple crisis states" (Temenos, 2022, p. 730). This process has four main characteristics, all of which are being actively experienced but also resisted by London council officers: increased speed in decision-making, opacity of decision-making processes, revanchist policies developed in reaction *to* the crisis rather than planning *for* the crisis, and a degree of experimentation to find new solutions to both long-standing as well as immediate problems (Ibid). The 'multiple crisis states' here includes not only rhetoric on the increases to migration, but also structural crises that affect all local government policy, such as housing and public sector finance. Local governments are adapting to the crisis policymaking of other levels of government. They are doing this by accepting, accounting for and even preparing for uncertainty and ambiguity. Situations framed as migration crises enable state-building projects central to geopolitical strategies (Lindley, 2014). Mountz and Hiemstra (2014) argue that "States mobilize the language of chaos to affect lasting reconfigurations of geographies of sovereignty" (p. 383). In this situation we are seeing the opposite, a gradual practice-oriented shift away from chaos and towards manageability.

4.9 Conclusion

London borough councils are transforming their approach to asylum. Though their strategic objectives and role were unclear at the outset of the Asylum Welcome program, they all sought to respond more proactively. I explain capacity-building as a process towards this goal. This entails first resolving dilemmas to better define the role and goals of local governments in asylum, then building confidence through learning and partnerships, and finally developing skills and competences to implement policies. Existing frameworks on capacity focus on the last element without giving sufficient weight to the first two in emerging urban challenges that are politically fraught. They also omit the process by which capacity is built (Van Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022).

For asylum responses, we are witnessing a turning point both in the motivations of local governments to respond as well as their capacity for doing so. Council officers are not simply

framing policy agendas and convening networks of voluntary and civil society organizations. They are overcoming dilemmas in the local governments' role in a highly restrictive policy area. They are also building skills and expanding resources in new ways, moving beyond the mere exercise of discretion.

In urban governance literature, Bulkeley et al. (2018) describe 'urban living laboratories' as transformative spaces. They prompt us to ask how these spaces "identify conditions that require some form of improvement and seek to establish capacity in order to observe and document such changes for different forms of political purpose" (p. 322). The improvement promoted through the Asylum Welcome program envisioned a different and proactive practice of asylum response. While this may not achieve systemic change in asylum policy itself, it counters the absence of a role for local governments within asylum policy, strengthens arguments for integration, and strongly contests crisis policymaking tactics.

Responding to asylum has the potential to enable local governments to bring proactivity to other policy areas. This likely extends beyond migration policymaking towards a range of emergent urban governance challenges, including unexpected events such as heatwaves, flooding, and public health emergencies, or longer-term multi-sectoral issues affecting cities. This underscores the importance of understanding the implementation of asylum policy within a wider context of evolving local governance.

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171.

Appendix 1. Sources analyzed for Chapter 2

Chapter 2: "Analyzing the local governance of internal displacement: an emerging (local) social contract in eastern Ukraine since 2014"

	Laws and policies		
Source	**Source name**	**Author or institution**	**Date published**
Primary	Law of Ukraine: "On ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons"	Government of Ukraine (unofficial translation in English: Brookings Institution)	2014
Primary	Letter of the Meeting of the Regional IDP Council under the authority of the Luhansk regional state administration - regional civil-military administration	Luhansk Regional IDP Council	Sep-21
Primary	Strategy for Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and Implementation of the Mid-Term Solutions as to Internal Displacement until 2024	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	Oct-21
Primary	National Strategy and Action Plan for the Integration of IDPs and Implementation of Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	2017/2018
Primary	Strategy on the Government Policy on Internal Displacement till 2025	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	Apr-23
	Secondary sources for thematic analysis		
Secondary	Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani	United Nations Human Rights Council	Apr-15
Secondary	Off to a Shaky Start: Ukrainian Government Responses to Internally Displaced Persons	Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement	May-15
Secondary	Enhancing the National Legal Framework in Ukraine for Protecting the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons	Erin Mooney project lead, Council of Europe	Jun-16
Secondary	Voices from the East: Challenges in Registration, Documentation, Property and Housing Rights of People Affected by Conflict in Eastern Ukraine	Norwegian Refugee Council	Jan-17

Secondary	The Displaced Ukrainians: Who are they, and what do they think?	Gwendolyn Sasse, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) Report	Mar-17
Secondary	Conflict in Ukraine: Socio-economic Impacts of Internal Displacement and Veteran Return	World Bank	May-17
Secondary	Desk Research of the Surveys of IDPs	Inna Volosevych and Tetiana Kostiuchenko, prepared for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Dec-17
Secondary	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine: Skills and economic security	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	2018
Secondary	Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement: A desk review to inform programming and project design	World Bank	Jun-18
Secondary	2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	Dec-18
Secondary	Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 May to 15 August 2019	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR)	2019
Secondary	Regional IDP integration programmes in Ukraine in 2018 - 2019	Stabilization Support Services	2019
Secondary	Economic Security Assessment: Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts within 20km of the contact line	REACH	Mar-19
Secondary	National Monitoring System Report - Round 14	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Jun-19
Secondary	JIPS Technical Mission to Luhansk Oblast, Ukraine, July 2019	Joint IDP Profiling Service	Jun-19
Secondary	Analysis of Humanitarian Trends: Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts within 20km of the contact line	REACH	Jul-19
Secondary	JIPS Technical Mission to Luhansk Oblast, Ukraine, June 2019	Joint IDP Profiling Service	Aug-19
Secondary	National Monitoring System Report - Round 15	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Sep-19

Secondary	Together we will find housing solutions for IDPs: Recommendations of the Cities of Solidarity Forum Kharkiv	UNHCR	Oct-19
Secondary	Durable solutions for internally displaced persons: a way forward	Guiding Principles 20 Years Meeting convened by UNHCR	Nov-19
Secondary	Profiling of IDP situation in Luhansk Region, Ukraine	Norwegian Refugee Council and Luhansk State Regional Administration	Dec-20
Secondary	IDPs Integration in Ukraine: Criteria and Indicators	Danish Refugee Council	2021
Secondary	Mapping of the Regional Integration Policies for IDPs	Norwegian Refugee Council	May-21
Secondary	Online conference: "Looking forward: Integration for IDPs in Ukraine"	Danish Refugee Council, Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories (MRTOT)	Jun-21
Secondary	Briefing Note: Inclusion of Internally Displaced Persons	United Nations Ukraine	Jun-21
Secondary	Submission to United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons on The Right of Internally Displaced Persons to Participate in Elections	International Foundation for Electoral Systems	Sep-22
Secondary	Action Plan for Ukraine 'Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction' 2023 - 2026	Council of Europe	Nov-22

Fieldtrip to Ukraine: June 2 - 12, 2019 and July 24 - August 2, 2019				
Format	**Location**	**Title and organization**	**Roles**	**Date**
Meeting	Severodonetsk	Norwegian Refugee Council Planning Meeting	Profiling Coordinator; Monitoring and Evaluation Team	June 3, 2019
Meeting	Severodonetsk	UNOCHA Coordination Meeting	Head of UNOCHA Luhansk	June 4, 2019
Meeting	Severodonetsk	Luhansk State Regional Authority Briefing	Deputy Governor of Luhansk Oblast at interim, Social Protection Department, IDP Affairs Counsellor	June 4, 2019
Meeting	Severodonetsk	Luhansk Regional Statistics Office Meeting	Head of Office, Deputy Head of Office	June 4, 2019
Workshop	Severodonetsk	Workshop for Developing Methodology for Profiling Exercise to Measure Progress Towards Durable Solutions for IDPs	Department of Employment, Social Policy, R2P, NRC Monitoring and Evaluation Team, Caritas, Luhansk Regional Statistics	June 6 - 7, 2019

			Office, Ukrainian Red Cross, UNHCR	
Meeting	Kyiv	Ministry of Social Policy Meeting	Head of the Expert Group of the Directorate of Social Services and Integration	June 10, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	IOM Meeting	Emergency Stabilization Unit	June 10, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	UNHCR Meeting	Deputy Representative; Information Management Officer	June 10, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories	Head of Department for Internally Displaced Persons	June 11, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	State Statistics Service of Ukraine Meeting	Adviser to the Chair	June 11, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	Norwegian Refugee Council Debrief	Head of Programmes and Interim Director; Protection and Advocacy Coordinator	June 11, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	UNDP Ukraine Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine Meeting	Team Lead; Project Data Analyst	June 11, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	REACH Meeting	Country Coordinator	June 11, 2019
Meeting	Remote	IOM Technical Meeting	National Monitoring System Project Specialist	Jun-19
Workshop	Kyiv	Indicator Working Session with Technical Partners	NRC, IOM, UNOCHA	July 25, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	Meeting on Sampling Approaches at Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine	Head of Department of Modelling of Social and Economic Processes and Structures	July 26, 2019
Meeting	Kyiv	Norwegian Refugee Council Meeting	Housing, Land and Property Specialist	July 26, 2019
Meeting	Severodonetsk	UN Women Meeting	Head of UN Women Office	July 29, 2019
Workshop	Severodonetsk	Data Collection and Tools Workshop	Department of Employment, R2P, UN Women, NRC Monitoring and Evaluation Team, Caritas, Starobilsk and Rubizhne Civic Organizations	July 30, 2019
Meeting	Severodonetsk	Joint Monitoring Mission by donor, Directorate General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations (DG-ECHO)	DG-ECHO, Luhansk Regional Authority partners, UNHCR, UNOCHA	July 31, 2019

Appendix 2. Sources analyzed for Chapter 3

Chapter 3: "Multilevel Governance 'from above': Analyzing Colombia's System of Co-Responsibility for Responding to Internal Displacement"

Corpus for discourse analysis			
Source type	**Source name**	**Author or institution**	**Date**
Corpus for discourse analysis	Strategy of Co-Responsibility (Estrategia de Corresponsabilidad de la política pública para las víctimas del conflicto armado interno), Decreto 2460	President of the Republic (República de Colombia)	2015
Corpus for discourse analysis	Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras, Ley 1448	Congress of the Republic (República de Colombia)	2011
Corpus for discourse analysis	Ley 1190 de 2008	Congress of the Republic (República de Colombia)	2008
Corpus for discourse analysis	Auto 119 de 2013	Constitutional Court of Colombia (Corte Constitucional)	2013
Corpus for discourse analysis	Sentencia T-025 de 2004	Constitutional Court of Colombia (Corte Constitucional)	2004
Corpus for discourse analysis	Ley 387 de 1997	Congress of the Republic (República de Colombia)	1997
Corpus for discourse analysis	Decreto Numero 250 de Febrero 7 de 2005	Congress of the Republic (República de Colombia)	2005
Corpus for discourse analysis	Ley 1454 de 2011 Nivel Nacional	Congress of the Republic (República de Colombia)	2011
Corpus for discourse analysis	Guide for the application of the Strategy of Co-Responsibility (Guía para la aplicación de la estrategia de corresponsabilidad de la política pública de prevención, protección, atención, asistencia y reparación integral de víctimas del conflicto armado)	Home Office (Ministerio del Interior) and Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2016

Corpus for discourse analysis	Guide for the formulation and adjustment of action plans in departments and municipalities (Guía para la formulación y ajuste de los planes de acción departamentales, municipales y distritales para la, prevención, protección, atención, asistencia y reparación integral a las víctimas del conflicto armado)	Home Office (Ministerio del Interior) and Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2012
Corpus for discourse analysis	General guidelines for the inclusion of public policies for victims of the armed conflict within mayoral and gubernatorial programs (Lineamientos generales para la inclusión de la política pública de prevención, protección, atención, asistencia y reparación integral a las víctimas del conflicto armado, en los programas de gobiernos de candidatos a alcaldías y gobernaciones para el periodo 2016 -2019)	Home Office (Ministerio del Interior) and Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2016
Corpus for discourse analysis	Guide for the formulation of local action plans (Orientaciones para la formulación del plan de acción territorial para la prevención, atención, asistencia y reparación integral a las víctimas)	Home Office (Ministerio del Interior) and Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2016
Secondary sources for context			
Secondary sources for context	Comisión de Seguimiento y Monitoreo a la Implementación de la Ley 1448 de 2011 "Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras"	Procurador General de la Nación	2019
Secondary sources for context	Informe Presupuestal de la Política Pública Dirigida a la Población Víctima del Desplazamiento Forzado 2020-2021	Departamento Nacional de Planeación	2021
Secondary sources for context	Respuesta del Estado Colombiano a Cuestionario sobre "La administración local y los derechos humanos"	Government of Colombia Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Cancillería)	n.d.
Secondary sources for context	Hablemos del Plan Integrado Único (PIU)	Acción Social	2008
Secondary sources for context	Informe sobre estado de la medición de Indicadores de Goce Efectivo de Derechos de las víctimas del conflicto armado en Bogotá D.C.	Alta Consejería para los Derechos de las Víctimas, la Paz y la Reconciliación, Alcaldía de Bogotá	2018

Secondary sources for context	Plan de Acción Distrital 2020	Alta Consejería para los Derechos de las Víctimas, la Paz y la Reconciliación, Alcaldía de Bogotá	2019
Secondary sources for context	Plan de Acción Distrital 2016—2020	Alta Consejería para los Derechos de las Víctimas, la Paz y la Reconciliación, Alcaldía de Bogotá	2016
Secondary sources for context	Plan de Acción Distrital 2016—2020	Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)	2010
Secondary sources for context	Protecting the Displaced in Colombia: The Role of Municipal Authorities	Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement	2008
Secondary sources for context	La política pública para atender a la población desplazada: ¿Cuáles deben ser las funciones de las autoridades locales?	Ibáñez, A. M., & Velásquez, A.	2008
Secondary sources for context	Las políticas públicas territoriales como redes de política pública y gobernanza local: La experiencia de diseño y formulación de las políticas públicas sobre desplazamiento forzado en el departamento de Antioquia y la ciudad de Medellín	Lopera Morales, J. E., Naranjo Giraldo, G. E., & Granada Vahos, J. G.	2009
Secondary sources for context	Desplazados Internos Fuera de los Campos. El papel de las autoridades locales en Colombia. Estudio comparado en Bogotá D.C. y Cali	Vidal, R., Atehortúa, C., & Salcedo, J.	2013
Secondary sources for context	Desplazamiento interno en los centros urbanos: Prevención, Protección y Soluciones	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2021
Secondary sources for context	Nación Territorio [Official Government of Colombia Website]	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2021
Secondary sources for context	Asistencia técnica [Official Government of Colombia Website]	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2021
Secondary sources for context	Registro Único de Víctimas (RUV) [Official Government of Colombia Website]	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	2023
Informal interviews			
Primary	Virtual interview with Former Advisor, External Relations	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	Nov-20
Primary	Email communications with Sub-director, National-Local Coordination, Directorate for Interinstitutional Management	Victim's Unit (Unidad para las Víctimas)	Nov-20

Appendix 3. Sources analyzed for Chapter 4

Chapter 4: "Proactive local government: how London borough councils build capacity to respond to asylum"

Insider-research phase: employed by Greater London Authority October 2021 until March 2022

Source	Source format	Source details	Interviewee role or document/event details	Date
Primary	Consultation 1	Borough Council, North London	Management, Executive Director	20/12/2021
Primary	Consultation 2	Voluntary sector organisation	Senior Management Team Member	24/11/2021
Primary	Consultation 3	Borough Council, East London	Borough council officer, Policy Officer	17/11/2021
Primary	Consultation 4	Borough Council, South London	Borough council officer, Programme Manager	23/11/2021
Primary	Consultation 5	Borough Council, West London	Borough council officers (5) in Housing, Skills and Work, and Public Health departments	24/11/2021
Primary	Consultation 6	Borough Council, North London	Borough council officers (2), Deputy Head of Service and Project Manager	23/11/2021
Secondary	Internal Report	Prepared for the Greater London Authority	Asylum Welcome in London: A Review of the Asylum Procurement Framework Agreement - Background, Evidence and Recommendations	20/09/2021
Secondary	Meeting Minutes	Coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by the Greater London Authority	London Asylum Group	16/09/2021
Secondary	Meeting Minutes	Coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by the Greater London Authority	London Strategic Migration Partnership quarterly meeting	28/09/2021

Secondary	Meeting Minutes	Coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by the Greater London Authority	London Strategic Migration Partnership quarterly meeting	07/12/2021
Primary	Observation and meeting minutes	Coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by the Greater London Authority	Civil Society Forum on Afghanistan response (discussion with variety of voluntary and civil society sector organizations)	25/01/2022
Primary	Observation and meeting minutes	Coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by the Greater London Authority	Civil Society Forum on Ukraine response (discussion with variety of voluntary and civil society sector organizations)	02/03/2022

Asylum Welcome program implementation phase: researcher June 2022* until February 2024

*Approval for research collaboration with Greater London Authority granted 21 December 2021

Semi-structured interviews				
Source	**Source format**	**Source details**	**Interviewee role**	**Date**
Primary	Semi-structured interview 1	Pan-London stakeholder	Policy and Programme Officer (Migration)	06/07/2022
Primary	Semi-structured interview 2	Pan-London stakeholder	Policy and Programme Officer (Migration)	29/07/2022
Primary	Semi-structured interview 3	Pan-London stakeholder	Project Manager (Social Services)	09/08/2022
Primary	Semi-structured interview 4	Pan-London stakeholder	Project Manager (Wellbeing and Care)	13/02/2023
Primary	Semi-structured interview 5	Central government stakeholder	Deputy Director	13/09/2022
Primary	Semi-structured interview 6	Borough council, North London	Borough council officer, Deputy Head	23/09/2022
Primary	Semi-structured interview 7	Borough council, North London	Borough council officer, Policy Lead	15/05/2023
Primary	Semi-structured interview 8	Borough council, West London	Borough council officer, Program Manager	08/11/2022

Source	Source format	Event details	Topic	Date
Primary	Semi-structured interview 9	Borough council, West London	Borough council officer, Head of Service	26/05/2023
Primary	Semi-structured interview 10	Borough council, East London	Borough council officer, Project Manager	02/10/2023
Participant observation in Design Lab workshops, webinars and meetings				
Source	**Source format**	**Event details**	**Topic**	**Date**
Primary	Participant observation	Core design lab workshop 1	Overview and assessments - identifying priorities	13/01/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Core design lab workshop 2	Recently arrived asylum-seekers - forming initial connections and access to basic support	07/02/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Core design lab workshop 3	Establishing local connections and building effective local relationships	21/03/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Core design lab workshop 4	Settling and increasing agency - preparing to move on; towards greater integration	27/04/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Core design lab workshop 5	Conclusion – cases and lessons for strategy and action	07/06/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Specialist webinar for design lab participants 1	Connecting with Asylum Seekers: communication, engagement & voices	03/03/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Specialist webinar for design lab participants 2	Responding to Vulnerability: safeguarding, supporting families & children	13/03/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Specialist webinar for design lab participants 3	Access to health & mental health, support for wellbeing	29/03/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Specialist webinar for design lab participants 4	Employment and employability	03/05/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Specialist webinar for design lab participants 5	Community relations and strategic communications	18/05/2023

Primary	Participant observation	Webinar for participating design lab councils and associated staff	Introductory briefing on asylum	04/04/2023
Primary	Facilitator	Virtual meeting for design lab participants (borough council officers), British Future	Asylum governance structures and capacity building	20/09/2023
Primary	Facilitator	Roundtable discussion at the London School of Economics with collaborators from Greater London Authority, London Councils, British Futures, Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)	Capacity Ecosystem for responding to asylum in London	14/07/2023
Primary	Participant observation	City of Sanctuary Network webinar 1 for City of Sanctuary local authority network	Thematic Meeting on Legal Advice	09/05/2023
Primary	Participant observation	City of Sanctuary Network webinar 2 for City of Sanctuary local authority network	The Illegal Migration Act and what it could mean for Local Authorities	19/09/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Civil Society Forum coordinated and facilitated (virtually) by Greater London Authority	Discussion with variety of voluntary and civil society sector organizations on asylum response	03/05/2023

Source	Source format	Source details	Document details	Date
Primary	Participant observation	Civil society meeting coordinated and facilitated by Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)	Mental Health Support in London	19/04/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Virtual summit coordinated and facilitated by the Greater London Authority	Implications of and Preparing for the Illegal Migration Act	25/05/2023
Primary	Participant observation	Launch event coordinated and facilitated by the Greater London Authority at London's City Hall	Asylum Welcome Toolkit Launch	19/02/2024
Secondary materials providing context for Asylum Welcome program				
Source	**Source format**	**Source details**	**Document details**	**Date**
Secondary	Report - internal	Prepared for the Greater London Authority	Research Study on the Needs, Experiences & Capacities of People Seeking Asylum in London	May-22
Secondary	Report	Prepared for the Greater London Authority	Asylum Welcome Design Lab - Summary Report	Feb-24
Secondary	Online toolkit	Prepared for the Greater London Authority	Asylum Welcome Toolkit	Feb-24
Secondary	Lobbying letter	Greenwich council letter to Home Office	Asylum seekers living in hotels: Action needed	Mar-23
Secondary	Lobbying letter	City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network	Concerns about accommodation provision for people seeking sanctuary	Sep-23
Secondary	Lobbying letter - internal	Borough council letter to Home Office	Financial burdens from accommodating asylum seekers in contingency hotels	Sep-21
Secondary	Notes - internal	Design lab supporting documents	Adverse and proverse impacts of support when asylum seekers are vulnerable and facing crises or shocks	Jan-23

Source	Source format	Source details	Interviewee role	Date
Secondary	Notes - internal	Design lab supporting documents	Planning around churn in asylum accommodation - the scale and issues raised by the flow of arrivals and departures	Mar-23
Consultations conducted as part of Asylum Welcome program by collaborators British Future and Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)				
Source	**Source format**	**Source details**	**Interviewee role**	**Date**
Secondary	Consultation 7	Borough council 1	Borough council officer, Head of Service	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 8	Borough council 2	Borough council officer, Coordinator	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 9	Borough council 3	Borough council officer, Head of Service	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 10	Borough council 4	Borough council officer, Head of Service	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 11	Borough council 5	Borough council officer, Head of Service	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 12	Borough council 6	Borough council officer, Manager	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 13	Borough council 7	Borough council officers (3), Director; Director of Service; Head of Service	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 14	Borough council 8	Borough council officer, Manager	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 15	Borough council 9	Borough council officer, Strategy Lead	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 16	Borough council 10	Borough council officer, Project Manager	Dec-22
Secondary	Consultation 17	Borough council 11	Borough council officer, Manager	Dec-22