

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

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**Georgy Mezhuev**

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**Pocit domova v životě ukrajinských uprchlíků ve věku 15-18 let v  
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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, červenec 2023*

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# Introduction

The topic of my undergraduate work is the feeling of home in the lives of Ukrainian refugees aged 15-18 years old. I chose this topic because I have been working as a social worker with this target group as a social worker for a year and a half. In the quantitative studies available to me, the issues of free time and integration of Ukrainian adolescents have been investigated, but the feeling of home remains a closed topic. Qualitative research on how Ukrainian adolescents create a feeling of home in Pilsen will be an important material for understanding their life in new conditions.

My work is divided into theoretical and practical parts. Further, the theoretical part is divided into two themes: refugees and home. In the chapter on refugees I define the term and on the basis of legislative and statistical data I describe the specific characteristics of Ukrainian refugees' life in the Czech Republic. I focus separately on statistical data concerning adolescents from 15 to 18 years old, as this is the age group my informants belong to. Then, in the second half of the theoretical part, I define the concept of home based on the history of this term in anthropology. In addition, I present the framework of the triadic constellation of home and the concept of multisensory home, the combination of which formed the basis for the structure of my conversations and their subsequent analysis.

In the practical part, I present the research design, deal with the case studies of my informants, and then proceed to the interpretation of the conversations I conducted. The purpose of the study is to understand what practices Ukrainian teenagers use to create a "feeling of home" in Pilsen and how these practices relate to the broader context of emotional attachments, sensory memories, and political institutions. The results of the research will help to better understand how Ukrainian teenagers themselves perceive successes and failures in their adaptation to their new place of residence.

The unique connection I share with half of my informants as their social worker adds an additional layer of complexity to the research. This connection could potentially impact the interview process and the information they choose to share with me. As a researcher, I am aware of this potential bias and will take measures to ensure objectivity and maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

By delving into the experiences of these young Ukrainian refugees, my research aims to shed light on the challenges they face in their pursuit of a sense of belonging and security in a foreign land. The feeling of home is not merely a physical location but a complex interplay of emotional, cultural, and social factors. Understanding the practices they employ to create this "feeling of home" will provide valuable insights into their coping mechanisms and adaptation strategies.

Given the limited research on this specific topic, my work contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of refugee studies and offers a more nuanced understanding of the lives of Ukrainian teenagers in Pilsen. Additionally, the findings will have practical implications for social services and support systems, helping to tailor interventions to better assist young refugees in their integration process.

Throughout the research, I have ensured that ethical considerations are at the forefront. Respecting the rights and dignity of the participants has been paramount, and I have obtained informed consent from each informant before proceeding with the interviews. Anonymity and confidentiality have been maintained throughout the study, ensuring that the identities of the participants remain protected.

# 1. Refugees

In this chapter, I will discuss how the UN Convention determines who is a refugee and how that definition differs from the one I use. I will discuss how a refugee's legal status affects his or her integration in the host country. Then, on the basis of quantitative data, I will discuss the specific situation of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic. This part will help to understand what problems Ukrainians face in the Czech Republic and how this affects their psychological state. I assume that problems with access to basic social spheres — work, medicine, education — have a direct impact on the ability of Ukrainian teenagers to feel "at home" in the Czech Republic. In the last part of this chapter I will focus on the specific problems Ukrainian adolescents encounter.

## 1.1. Defining refugee

Defining a refugee is a complicated matter as it requires taking into account both legal and political factors. Legally, a refugee is defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as someone who is at risk of persecution in their home country due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). However, there can be debates and conflicting interests involved in determining who meets this definition. Additionally, the situation in the individual's home country can be complex, which makes it challenging to determine if they qualify for refugee status. As a result, inconsistencies in the definition can make it challenging for refugees to get the protection they need.

Various jurisdictions have multiple definitions in place, with many states establishing their own definitions based on the framework of the UN Convention. Shacknove (1985) uses four characteristics to describe the concept that unifies most definitions:

- a) a bond of trust, loyalty, protection, and assistance between the citizen and the state constitutes the normal basis of society;
- b) in the case of the refugee, this bond has been severed;
- c) persecution and alienage are always the physical manifestations of this severed bond;
- d) these manifestations are the necessary and sufficient conditions for determining refugeehood (Shacknove, 1985, p. 275).



However, he argues that neither persecution nor alienage fully encompasses the essence of being a refugee. While persecution can be enough to sever the normal social bond, it is not always a necessary condition. Persecution is just one aspect of a larger issue: the lack of state protection for the fundamental needs of its citizens.

## **1.2. Legal status and its influence**

In March 2022, the EU Council introduced temporary protection measures for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, the first time this crisis mechanism was used. Temporary protection is a quick response to a large number of people unable to return home, aiming to ease pressure on national asylum systems and provide unified rights across the EU. These rights include residence, access to work, housing, medical help, and education for children. The decision came after Russian troops invaded different parts of Ukraine, resulting in armed conflict zones and the flight of thousands of people, leading to the Council's determination of a mass influx of displaced persons on EU territory. (Sládeková, 2022)

It is important to note that temporary protection for Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic is only granted for a period of one year. Ukrainians had an opportunity to extend it for another year, but it is not yet known whether such an opportunity will be available next year as well. This has resulted in uncertainty among the refugee population, as they are unable to make long-term plans due to the uncertainty of their status beyond the one-year mark. Such challenges were frequently reported by refugees during my work with them.

Previous refugee crises have been subject to investigation in terms of the impact that a refugee's legal status has on their success in integration. The study made by Francisco Fasani found that legal status had a significant positive impact on the economic outcomes of immigrants, including increasing their employment rates, reducing their reliance on public benefits, and increasing their wages (Fasani, 2014).

However, it is not only important that a person has legal status, but also for how long it is issued. In 2016, the Swedish government modified the asylum regulation to make it more difficult for refugees and subsidiary protection holders to obtain permanent residency, aiming to motivate them to focus on employment. However, a 2020 study found that temporary protection status fosters insecurity, uncertainty, and marginalization among refugees, negatively affecting their integration prospects. Research indicates that refugees prefer to

work but face institutional obstacles that constrain them to temporary jobs, potentially leading to social exclusion. (Averhed, 2020)

### **1.3. Specifics of the situation of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic**

Despite the fact that the interest of my research is Ukrainian teenagers, it is important to discuss the problems faced by adult Ukrainians as well. I hypothesize that the financial and psychological state of parents has the strongest influence on the feelings of adolescents.

Among my clients there are several adolescents who have agreed that their parents will go back to Ukraine and leave their child alone in the Czech Republic after the child turns 18. This is due to the fact that the parents could not adapt to life in the Czech Republic: for example, they could not find a satisfying job. It is important for a growing teenager to feel stability in life, which usually comes from parents. Because of their parents' desire to go back, which children often do not support, Ukrainian teenagers lose their sense of stability and safety.

Temporary protection provides Ukrainians with free access to various sectors of society, including the labor market, education, and medical services. The Czech Republic has also established special refugee assistance centers where Ukrainian citizens can receive free housing and medical insurance, and apply for a social allowance.

However, based on my experience as a social worker, free access to these important areas is not fully realized. For instance, access to medical services is limited to ambulance dispensaries with Ukrainian-speaking staff (UA-Point), which have strict criteria for assistance. People have grown accustomed to only seeking help if their health issues are life-threatening. Based on the report by the insurance company VZP, which provides health insurance to all Ukrainians in the Czech Republic who entered the EU after February 24, 2022, 58% of them did not use any medical care in 2022 (VZP ČR, 2023).

Language barriers also complicate access to doctors, the labor market, and education. According to PAQ Research (2023), only 35% of refugees over the age of 18 attend Czech language courses, and only 27% can handle common situations and understand

written text. 70% of Ukrainian children aged 3 and over can communicate in Czech in at least a few sentences, but only 36% can speak it in everyday situations.

Language barrier is one of the main reasons why 77% of Ukrainian refugees work for less than 150 CZK per hour. Two-thirds live below the income poverty line (below 60% of the Czech median income). Without the humanitarian benefits and free housing subsidies it would be 80% below the poverty line. Humanitarian benefit forms part of the household income for 65% of refugees.

In general, we can say that Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, a year and a half after the start of a full-scale war, are in an extremely vulnerable social and financial situation. In addition, the amount of state aid for Ukrainians changes approximately every six months. In the case of teenagers, specific problems are also added.

#### **1.4. Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 18**

At the end of 2022 there were 27,377 Ukrainians with temporary protection in the Czech Republic between the ages of 15 and 18. In January 2023, META, a nonprofit organization that helps foreigners in the Czech Republic, organized a survey among Ukrainians of this age. META's goal was to find out how Ukrainians aged 15+ spend their free time and how they feel about it. A total of 206 people took part in the survey.

68.9% of Ukrainian teenagers responded that they do not have the opportunity to spend their free time in the Czech Republic as before in Ukraine. The biggest difference can be seen in the possibility of spending time outside with friends. More than 80% of respondents spent time outdoors with friends in Ukraine; after moving to the Czech Republic, only 40% retained this option. Among residents of big cities, which includes Pilsen, there are three main reasons why teenagers can't spend their free time the way they would like to. First, teenagers answer that they have no friends here. Second, they don't know where to find information about the opportunities available in the city. Third, teens say they don't have free time because of school. (META o.p.s., 2023)

It is important to note here that, based on my social work practice, many Ukrainian teenagers continue to study at a Ukrainian school remotely. Sometimes they combine this study with studying offline at a Czech school. In this way school takes up most of the day and energy of the teenager.

In this situation, it is difficult for a teenager to find the energy to socialize with his peers. In addition, there are virtually no spaces for such socialization in Pilsen. Social services are trying to solve this problem, for example, with the help of low-threshold clubs, where Ukrainians can come to play billiards and computer games, but also get help from social workers.

But this is not enough to provide a place of socialization for all Ukrainian teenagers in Pilsen. For example, the low-threshold club Pixla, which started working with Ukrainians at the end of May in the city center of Pilsen, was unable to accept new clients a week later, as many Ukrainians instantly came to the club. Walking around Pilsen, it is not difficult to come across groups of young Ukrainians wandering around the city. As one client told me, such "wandering" is one of the main ways he and his friends spend their time.

The purpose of my research will be to find out if Ukrainian teenagers in such conditions can sometimes feel "at home". And if so, what practices help them to do so.

## **2. Home**

In this chapter, I will explore the concept of home as a complex multi-layered set of feelings, emotions, and social attachments. It is important for me to show how home can be understood in a variety of ways in the context of social research. In the first part of this chapter, I introduce the broad understanding of home that underpins my work. In the second part, I show how the history of anthropological research has come to investigate home as transnational and virtual constructs. The importance of this part of the work will become clear later when analyzing conversations with informants for whom home is not just physical objects, but also memories of Ukraine, online space, and so on. In the last part of this chapter, I discuss two approaches to analyzing the feeling of home in the lives of refugees, which formed the basis for the structure of my conversations with informants.

### **2.1. Defining home**

Home is a multifaceted concept that encompasses both physical and symbolic dimensions. From a physical perspective, home refers to a specific location, such as a house or dwelling, where individuals or families reside and engage in daily activities. It serves as a space for shelter, privacy, and the fulfillment of basic needs.

However, the notion of home goes beyond mere physicality. It carries symbolic significance, representing a sense of belonging, identity, and emotional attachment. Home is a place where individuals establish personal connections, build relationships, and develop a sense of community. It encompasses a range of social interactions, cultural practices, and shared values that contribute to a person's overall well-being and social identity. (Samanani & Johannes, 2019)

Furthermore, home can extend beyond the physical boundaries of a dwelling. It can be conceptualized as a broader geographic region, a neighborhood, or even a country, depending on the scale of analysis. The idea of home also includes a temporal dimension, as it evolves and transforms over time through personal experiences, memories, and historical contexts.

## 2.2. Home in anthropology

The anthropological study of home has a long and rich history, encompassing various theoretical perspectives and research methods. The concept of home holds deep cultural, social, and psychological significance, making it an important subject of inquiry within anthropology.

Early anthropological investigations of home were often rooted in the discipline's interest in kinship, social structure, and material culture. Scholars such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Lévi-Strauss conducted influential studies in the early 20th century that explored the relationship between homes, family organization, and cultural practices. Their work laid the foundation for understanding how homes function as social and symbolic spaces. (Samanani & Johannes, 2019)

In the 1960s and 1970s, anthropologists began to emphasize the symbolic dimensions of home. Scholars like Victor Turner and Mary Douglas explored the symbolic meanings embedded in the physical and conceptual aspects of home. They examined how people use space and objects within the home to express social relationships, power dynamics, and cultural values. (Sadyrin, 2022, p. 152)

More recently, anthropologists have focused on the materiality of home, investigating the role of objects, architecture, and the built environment in shaping social relationships and cultural practices. This approach considers how homes and their material aspects reflect and contribute to identity, memory, and social change. Studies of domestic architecture, interior design, and the consumption of household goods have shed light on the interplay between material culture and social life. (Pink et al., 2017)

With increasing global migration and displacement, anthropologists have turned their attention to the study of home in transnational and diasporic contexts. This research explores how people maintain connections to their homeland, adapt to new environments, and negotiate a sense of belonging. Scholars have examined how migrants and refugees create home in new places, often through practices of cultural preservation, memory-making, and the formation of transnational networks. (Sadyrin, 2022, p. 154)

In the digital age, anthropologists have also started to explore the concept of home in virtual spaces. As online communities, social media platforms, and virtual reality

environments become integral to people's lives, anthropologists are examining how individuals construct and experience a feeling of home in these digital realms. This research investigates the ways in which online spaces shape social relationships, identities, and notions of belonging. (Doná, 2015)

By focusing on both the materiality of homes and the emergence of digital and virtual homes, my research will gain comprehensive insights into the complexities of Ukrainian teenagers' notions of home. These perspectives allow for an exploration of the interplay between physical and digital spaces, shedding light on how individuals create and maintain a feeling of home in the context of rapidly changing social and technological landscapes.

### **2.2.1. Transnational home**

*“The journeys of migration involve a splitting of home as a place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 90).*

Transnational theories of home highlight that migrants can stay connected to their home countries despite living in a different place. Nowadays, people can easily communicate and travel across borders, so migrants don't have to give up their cultural and social identity. Belford and Lahiri-Roy (2019) argue that the dynamic process of migrants' homemaking opens up possibilities for reimagining and redefining the concept of home in transnational contexts. The narratives of transnational migrants, they say, demonstrate how ideologies, cultural beliefs, familial relationships, and intimate connections with 'home' can be questioned and transformed through various emotional experiences and individual choices.

However, geographers Ralph and Staeheli (2011) propose that certain researchers may neglect “stable, bounded and fixed interpretations” of migrants' homes, placing excessive emphasis on mobile interpretations.

*“...home is like an accordion, in that it both stretches to expand outwards to distant and remote places, while also squeezing to embed people in their proximate and immediate locales and social relations. We contend that the fixed and fluid components of home must be viewed as enmeshed and working together, without marginalising either of these qualities”.* (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011, p. 525)

In the context of transnational theories, it is also important to emphasize the theory of "double absence" developed by Abdelmalek Sayad. Sayad investigated the challenging circumstances faced by migrants who arrive in France, feeling forgotten in both their home and host country, and compelled to remain silent (Saada, 2000). This theory emphasizes that transnationalism can indicate not only the existence of social ties in different places around the globe, but also the breakdown of such ties.

## **2.3. Refugees' feeling of home**

The feeling of home in the lives of refugees has been explored many times by social anthropologists and sociologists. But it is difficult to compare these studies, because under the name "refugees" there may be societies and cultures that are nothing alike. Moreover, refugees are forced to live in conditions that can vary dramatically, from detention camps to apartments to individual houses. The form of legalization of their stay in the new country, as was shown in chapter one, also greatly affects life, integration, and, ultimately, the feeling of home in the lives of refugees. In this regard, I suggest that other studies on this topic be viewed not as a source of absolutely relevant information on refugees, but as a source of inspiration for new research.

### **2.3.1. Multisensory home**

Sarah Pink, an anthropologist and researcher, has contributed to the understanding of home through her work on sensory ethnography and the anthropology of the senses. Pink's work explores the sensory and embodied experiences of home, focusing on how people engage with and make sense of their living environments.

She emphasizes the significance of sensory perceptions, such as touch, smell, sound, and sight, in shaping individuals' experiences and understanding of home. Pink suggests that home is not solely a physical space but a multisensory and relational concept. It involves the embodied experiences of individuals, the social interactions within domestic settings, and the sensory engagement with the material and spatial aspects of home. (Pink, 2003)

Furthermore, Pink highlights the importance of considering the cultural and contextual dimensions of home. She explores how different cultural and social contexts influence people's understandings and practices of home, and how these meanings and experiences can vary across diverse communities and individuals.



An analysis of the integration of former refugees and residents of the host community in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand revealed the profound impact of multisensory stimuli on individuals' perception of places and their ability to evoke memories. It was found that former refugees drew upon their past experiences to navigate complex sociospatial environments, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of these individuals. Their ability to construct cultural identities was facilitated by the multilayered connections between their past and present place-based experiences. However, the dynamics of a place can also have negative consequences. The changing dynamics of a place diminished the sense of homeliness for residents of the host society, highlighting the challenges faced by both refugees and the host community in establishing a sense of belonging. (Kale et al., 2019)

According to Probyn (1996), belonging involves a longing to go beyond individual needs and connect intimately with others. This longing is felt when one is isolated and positioned as an outsider. To counteract this, people seek out places and experiences where they feel connected, safe, and valued (Probyn, 1996, p. 6). However, these understandings of belonging as an embodied, sensory process are often overlooked in studies of home.

Moreover, according to the authors of the above analysis, this sensory embodied understanding of home in the context of forced migration “allows researchers to reconsider its privileged ideological construction as safe and special, and to recognize that home can be a place of insecurity, violence, and terror” (Kale et al., 2019, p. 2).

### **2.3.2. Triadic constellation of home**

Brun and Fábos (2015) present a conceptual framework called the triadic constellation of home, which allows for the analysis of home in various contexts of protracted displacement. This framework examines home as both a concept and a set of practices, distinguishing between three elements:

- "home" referring to everyday homemaking activities,
- "Home" representing values, traditions, memories, and emotional connections associated with home, and the broader political and historical contexts in which
- "HOME" is understood within the global order and institutional frameworks.

*“The metaphor of constellations is useful here to demonstrate how human beings turn points of reference into meaningful patterns, but that the same points may be imagined differently from each site of observation”* (Brun & Fábos, 2015, p. 12).

Understanding of home as a complex arrangement spanning multiple scales and timeframes challenges the simplistic division between public and private. To comprehend the intricacies of home formation as a constellation of various factors, it is crucial to contextualize ethnographic studies within a broader framework. (Brun & Fábos, 2015, p. 14)

The significance of reference points in a constellation of home varies according to the specific context, leading to different emphasis placed on these points. Consequently, the constellation of home shifts from one context to another based on the “center of gravity” within its various dimensions. (Brun & Fábos, 2015, p. 13)

This framework, with a special focus on multisensory perception of the home, will be the basis of my research, as it allows us to understand the feeling of home in a broader socio-cultural context.

### **3. Ukrainian teenagers and their feeling of home**

In this chapter, I present the research design, the methodologies I used, and detail the life stories of each of my informants. I then proceed to analyze the interviews conducted in an attempt to answer the main research question: what practices help Ukrainian refugee teenagers create a feeling of home? The chapter concludes with a section entitled "Discussion" in which I summarize the findings of the study and outline questions for future research on this topic.

#### **3.1. Research plan**

The purpose of the study is to understand what practices Ukrainian teenagers use to create a "feeling of home" in Pilsen and how these practices relate to the broader context of emotional attachments, sensory memories, and political institutions. I will be interested in both successful examples of such practices and those that teenagers failed to realize. The main research question is: What practices do Ukrainian teenagers use to feel "at home" in Pilsen? The results of the research will help to better understand how Ukrainian teenagers themselves perceive successes and failures in their adaptation to their new place of residence.

The study was implemented using semistructured conversations with open-ended questions. The structure of the conversation responds to the triadic constellation of home framework I described in the previous chapter. In practice, this means that my questions were divided into three sections: questions about everyday practices ("home"), questions about emotional connections and memories ("Home") and questions about the role of the state and the city in adolescents' feeling of home ("HOME"). In addition, the conversation emphasized the multi-sensuality of understanding home. With the informants, I talked about how their feeling of home was related to smells, sound, and other senses.

Over the past year, researchers in the Czech Republic have conducted several studies on the lives of Ukrainian refugee adolescents. These are, for example, PAQ Research and META studies, which I refer to in the theoretical part of this paper. All the studies available to me on this topic are quantitative, i.e. they are primarily interested in statistical data on how Ukrainian teenagers spend their time. The peculiarity of my research is a qualitative approach with a detailed analysis of case studies. It was important for me to understand how Ukrainian

adolescents form (un)successful experiences of creating a "feeling of home", what features of their life histories are associated with this, and what role the state system plays in this.

## **3.2. Research methods**

In the practical part of my undergraduate thesis, I opted for qualitative research methodology, specifically conducting structured interviews with Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 18 who reside in Pilsen. The interviews were designed with open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives. For the subsequent analysis, I employed a comparative analysis approach.

I analyzed the conversations using the triadic constellation of home framework and a multisensory approach. By combining these two concepts, I identified several common practices of creating a feeling of home, and the ideas and senses associated with them, that are typical for my informants. Also thanks to the framework of the triadic constellation of home, these practices were discussed with informants and analyzed by me in the broad context of the emic view on the Czech Republic as a host country and Ukraine as a home country, with which informants' ideas of home are connected.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research in anthropology goes beyond quantitative data and statistical analysis by delving into the subjective meanings, beliefs, and practices that shape human behavior. It embraces an ethnographic approach, immersing researchers in the cultural contexts they study, and valuing the voices and perspectives of the individuals and communities under investigation.

Qualitative research focuses on studying specific cases in their local and temporal contexts, examining people's expressions and activities. By maintaining flexibility and adaptability, qualitative research enables intellectual and social procedures to meet the needs of unforeseen situations and functions. This approach emphasizes the importance of avoiding excessive stability and being responsive to the evolving nature of research objectives and tasks. (Flick, 2009, p. 29)

However, the success of these methods depends on researchers' ability to formulate precise questions and choose the appropriate blend of methods. Combining methods can

sometimes oversimplify complex phenomena, requiring tradeoffs “between clarity and complexity”. Qualitative approaches that involve interviewing individuals about their behavior and motivations may not always resolve discrepancies between statements, perceptions, and reality. (Obermeyer, 1997, p. 815)

I chose the qualitative method for my research because I am working with a problem that can only be understood in the context of my informants' broader cultural and social relationships. In addition, through the qualitative method, my conversations with informants smoothly continue my communication with informants that began in the social worker-client position.

The qualitative approach allowed me to examine the practices of creating a feeling of home in the context of my informants' memories, ideas, and self-reflections. Thanks to the theory of the triadic constellation of home, my conversations with informants were structured enough to be analyzed comparatively. I will discuss the advantages of semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and the comparative method of analysis in more detail below.

### **3.2.2 Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions**

A semi-structured interview is a research method commonly used in qualitative research to gather data from participants. It combines elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a set of predetermined questions or topics to guide the interview, but there is also flexibility to explore additional areas of interest as they arise during the conversation. (Kakilla, 2021)

The main characteristic of a semi-structured interview is that it provides a framework for the interview while allowing for open-ended responses. The interviewer typically has a list of key questions or topics to cover but has the freedom to deviate from the script or ask follow-up questions to gather more detailed information or clarify responses.

When you have limited opportunities to interview someone, semistructured interviewing is the preferred approach. It combines the flexibility of unstructured interviewing with the use of an interview guide. This method ensures that important topics are covered while still allowing room for open-ended discussion and capturing diverse perspectives.

In my case, I had a pre-prepared list of questions divided into four parts. The first part concerned biographical questions in which I asked the informants to give details of their life, the story of their migration to the Czech Republic and how their life here is going. These questions were of great importance to me because their answers became the basis for the case studies I emphasized in my research. I will explain why case studies were important to me in one of the following chapters.

The other three parts were divided according to the triadic constellation of home framework I described in the theoretical part of the paper. Thus I had two questions for each of the perspectives in which, according to this framework, refugees experience home. The first perspective, "home", contained questions about the informants' everyday practices. The second — "Home" — was about emotions and memories related to the informants' feeling of home. Finally, the third one — "HOME" — dealt with the influence of the state and the city on the feeling of home.

In addition, based on the multisensory theories of home, I tried to ask questions that would encourage informants to talk about the diverse sensory experiences related to their feeling of home.

All questions were open-ended, but with the help of additional questions I tried to guide the informants so that they would not stray from the topic. It was important to me that their answers were directly related to the main question so that I could then compare the interviews with each other.

During the interview, I tried to forget about the framework on which the interview structure was based. In the interview, I wanted to check whether this framework was at all applicable to my problem. In other words, I left it to the informants to refuse to talk about, for example, the role of the state, thus not filling in one of the perspectives described in the framework of the triadic constellation of home.

### **3.2.3. Comparative analysis**

Comparative analysis serves various purposes in research. It helps researchers describe and understand specific phenomena, establish generalizations, create classifications and typologies, explore causal and functional connections, identify sequences of events, and even make predictions and forecasts. This versatile approach enables scholars to gain

comprehensive insights into their subject of interest and draw meaningful conclusions based on the comparisons made across different cases or contexts. (Vodáková & Linhart, 2017)

The Constant Comparative Method aims to blend comprehensive thematic coding with theory generation in analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that just creating codes for everything can limit new hypotheses, while merely inspecting data without coding hinders progress. They propose a hybrid model where the analyst consistently re-examines the codes, identifying similarities and differences. This approach allows for continuous theory creation or refinement in a more systematic and thorough manner.

The term "constant" is crucial here, emphasizing the need for ongoing comparison throughout the process. Qualitative coding is typically seen as a cyclical process. However, with constant comparison, it's essential to apply comparison consistently and not just reserve it for specific analysis points.

In analyzing conversations with my informants, I identified a series of codes through which I was able to analyze similarities and differences in how informants talk about their feeling of home. After I compared the interviews with each other, I compared my results with the triadic constellation of home framework that was the basis for the structure of my interviews. The results of my research will be presented below.

#### **3.2.4. Selection of informants**

My informants were clients of nonprofit organizations with whom I work as a social worker. Three of the informants were selected directly from among my clients, the players of the soccer team I coach. Four other informants are members of a theater group that my colleague runs.

Even before the interview, one problem was obvious to me: I had a long history of communication with the first half of the informants (mostly boys), while I met the second half (only girls) just before the interview. This could have influenced the course of the interview, as boys told me more in-depth details of their lives than girls.

On the other hand, I was not a completely unknown person to any of the informants. All of them either communicated with me directly or knew about me from my colleague. This helped me to gain their trust even before the interview, which was important before talking

about an emotionally difficult topic. Also, in order to get them comfortable with the interview, the first unstructured part of the conversation was not recorded.

All informants were familiarized with the research topic and gave me permission to use their interviews. To make their answers even more open, I promised that their names would be changed in the final paper. The pseudonyms were randomly selected by me according only to the informant's gender.

All interviews, except Elizaveta's, took place in the garden next to the social services office, with which they are all familiar. This was a familiar environment for the informants because the organization conducted different activities for them in this garden. The interview with Elizaveta took place online, as she was in Ukraine at that moment.

All informants were united by their connection with the social service, which, as it turned out later, was also important to them within the scope of my topic of interest. A more detailed individual characterization of each of the informants will be presented in the next chapter.

### **3.3. Case studies**

Alexandra is 17 years old. She is from Kremenchuk, Poltava region. In Ukraine she was involved in many clubs: circus, ballroom dancing, hockey, etc. In Pilsen she is only involved in the theater club. She came to the Czech Republic in the middle of March 2022. Even before the full-scale war started, her father lived in the Czech Republic, having come here for work. Her father's colleagues met Alexandra's family in the Czech Republic and helped them find free accommodation for the first two weeks. From the very beginning of the move, she started learning Czech. Later, the family moved to another boarding house provided to them through their membership in the Catholic Church. Now Alexandra lives with her mother, father and younger brother in a rented apartment in Pilsen. She describes the living conditions as follows: an old house, two rooms, a storage room and a shared bathroom and toilet. Alexandra is in her first year of secondary school in Pilsen studying to become a waiter, which she says is similar to what she wanted to study in Ukraine, although at the same time she states that she thought about applying for a design degree, but at that time the admission was already closed. After graduation, she wants to enter a theater university.



Boris is 16 years old. He is from Lozovaya, Kharkiv region. He studies in parallel at two schools in Ukraine and the Czech Republic. In Ukraine, he was involved in many activities at the same time: music school, table tennis, ballroom dancing, soccer and Thai boxing. In the Czech Republic he is "for now" only involved in soccer, but would like to find ballroom dancing classes. Boris has been living in the Czech Republic for one year and three months. He calls his move to the Czech Republic "random". Before his move, his mother had been living in the Czech Republic for a year. The very next day after his aunt suggested that he move in with his mom, Boris set off. First he lived in Brno, and then he and his mom moved to Pilsen. His younger brother still lives in Brno, their father is in Ukraine. Boris lives with his mother and her partner in a rented two-bedroom apartment, before that he lived separately in a student hostel, but it does not work in summer.

Cyril is 15 years old. He is from Kramatorsk, Donetsk region. He is very critical of his hometown, because there, according to him, he had no opportunity to get a quality education. He describes his home neighborhood as criminal and poor. Kirill has been living in the Czech Republic for a year and a half, since March 2022. He moved to Pilsen with his mother and sister. The move was very difficult for the family: the only person they knew in Pilsen was his sister's friend, who, according to Cyril, "couldn't help, but everyone was relieved that he existed". Now Cyril lives in a dorm together with his mother. He describes his room as "absolute white, like in a hospital." He went to school in Horná Bříza, but stopped going there because he didn't like his major. Now he is not studying anywhere, he did not pass the entrance exams to secondary school this year.

Diana is 18 years old. She is from Kharkov. She has been practicing rhythmic gymnastics for 15 years and is now studying online at a Ukrainian school to become a coach. She has been living in the Czech Republic since March 17, 2022. She came to the Czech Republic from Egypt, where her family went on vacation right before the war started. Without returning to Ukraine, the family traveled to Poland and then to the Czech Republic. Now Diana lives with her mom in a dorm. They live in one room; there are 19 rooms on the floor with them, which share one kitchen, four showers and three toilets.

Elizaveta is 16 years old. She is from Nikolaev. She graduated from Ukrainian high school this year. She also went to school in Pilsen for a year, but plans now to pick up her documents and go to university. She has been living in the Czech Republic for a year and a half. In Mykolaiv she survived the bombings. In Pilsen, Elizaveta's mother had friends who

helped her with a job. Now both her mother and Elizaveta work in an integration center for Ukrainians. Elizaveta teaches English to Ukrainian children. Elizaveta's younger sister lives with them in a "spacious" two-room apartment.

Fiona is 17 years old. She is from Sumy. She graduated this year from a Ukrainian high school with advanced studies in economics and is going to enter the University of West Bohemia to study International Relations. She has been living in the Czech Republic for 5 months. Her mom informed her about the move a week before, but in general she planned to go to study abroad. During the last year she had to combine her studies at Ukrainian school with daily Czech language courses. She recently returned from a trip to her hometown for two weeks. In Pilsen she lives in a dormitory with a roommate. For the first few months she lived with a Czech roommate with whom they had little contact. Now she has a Ukrainian roommate with whom they have become friends.

Igor is 16 years old. He is from Kramatorsk, Donetsk region. Igor studies at a Ukrainian school, and in the summer he found a job at a factory in Pilsen. After graduating from the Ukrainian school he wants to go to university in the Czech Republic. In Kramatorsk he experienced shelling, during which he had to calm his mother and brother. He has been living in the Czech Republic for a little over a year. The family had friends in Pilsen who had moved here as refugees a few months earlier. He lives in a dormitory with his mother and younger brother in one room. They share the shower and toilet with a neighbor in the block.

### **3.4. Data interpretation**

#### **3.4.1. Sensual attachment and the desire to overcome it**

In the part of the interview devoted to the Home dimension (i.e. memories, emotional attachments, traditions), my informants talked mostly about Ukraine. Their sensual associations with home are connected primarily with what was in Ukraine. Only twice, when talking about sounds, tastes, colors, tactile sensations and smells associated with home, informants named something from their life in Pilsen.

My informants' attachment to Ukrainian home traditions is well illustrated by the references to food in our interviews.

*“Often the house smells like meat frying or borscht that mom makes.” (Alexandra)*

*“– What flavor is associated with home for you?”*

*– Borscht.*

*– And explain why.*

*– Because I loved making borscht with my dad very much. And we have a separate kind of borscht. I mean, it's a regular separate kind of borscht. That's what the flavor of home is for me, it's super, it's delicious. And it reminds me very much of the moment when my dad and I cooked borscht together.” (Boris)*

*“Well, I'm eating dumplings. This is very homey.” (Diana)*

At the same time, two of them, Boris and Aleksandra, stated that Ukraine is no longer home for them. This question was asked to them already in the final part of the interview, which was related to the HOME dimension, i.e. the understanding of home within institutions and the state system.

*“I don't really have that kind of coziness at home anymore. It's just that I don't have that kind of coziness anywhere, you could say. I just thought, as I came here, that we would quickly move back, as everyone thought, probably. But now I realize that it makes no sense at all for me to go there [to Ukraine], even if the war ends, because there are more prospects here with European education and, in general, European everything.” (Boris)*

*“Unfortunately, in Ukraine it is no longer for me, because I have no friends or home there. We have refugees in our house there, so it's not so native already, because I'm already here. Probably I won't go back, because we've already moved here, probably permanently, because we don't plan to go back. And I mean, I don't have a school there, I don't have anything. So it's not home for me anymore, and everything is already here.” (Alexandra)*

In addition, Cyril stated that *“home is where I am”*, while Igor said that in principle he saw no point in calling any country his home because *“a state does nothing for you”*.

It is not difficult to see the contradiction in which some of Ukrainian teenagers find themselves. On the one hand, they are sensually and emotionally attached to the Ukrainian home they were forced to leave, but on the other hand they have already resigned themselves to the fact that they have no home there in Ukraine. This confirms the relevance of the triadic constellation of home framework for this group of people, as the informants' home is indeed divided into different dimensions.

At the same time, Diana and Elizaveta described that they still feel that their home is in Ukraine. Both of them referred to the Czech Republic as a temporary place of residence.

*“My home is in Kharkov. It will probably be wrong to call it [Pilsen] home, more like temporary housing of some kind. A hotel. I don't know what it is.” (Diana)*

*“I can call Ukraine my home because I have lived there most of my life, because I have so many memories and so many people connected with it. And basically, everything is connected with Ukraine. I would not call the Czech Republic my home, I would call it more of a temporary residence.” (Elizaveta)*

This raises another additional question: what prevents Ukrainian teenagers from establishing a home in Pilsen? The answer to this question may lie in deeply individual psychological reasons, but I am interested in what external barriers Ukrainian teenagers themselves talk about.

### **3.4.2. External barriers**

In conversations with informants, three main external barriers that prevent Ukrainian teenagers from feeling at home in Pilsen emerged. These are housing conditions, the short duration of residence permits and the attitude of Czechs towards Ukrainians.

*“During the day I'm like a psychopath, sitting in white walls, I just can't see, I swear, when I go outside, I just look at the colors, they become so bright, because the room itself is white, just like snow. I swear, I'm just sitting between four walls like this. And at night it's beautiful, because the lanterns are beautiful, everything is shimmering.” (Cyril)*

*“I have a lot of kids in my dorm and adults too. They come in from work at different times. Some of them rest, some of them scream, some of them smoke. It bothers everyone. So it probably depends on luck. Well, I probably feel it more [home atmosphere] when it's at night.” (Igor)*

In both cases described above, the only escape from the discomfort of living conditions is night time. It is characteristic that this barrier was described by informants living in a dormitory. Those who live in other forms of housing, regardless of its size and comfort, did not describe this barrier.

The theme of relations with the Czechs was evident in almost all interviews. For example, Fiona described how she had a bad relationship with her Czech roommate, and Cyril described how he encountered aggression from Czechs while walking around Pilsen. This barrier was most characteristically described by Boris.

*“I get very annoyed when people, Czechs, say that Ukrainians are bad. I understand that some are bad, but there are Ukrainians who want to stay here, and this gives them some new chances. They want to take those chances. So, for example, I want to finish my studies and work normally either here or go to Europe and work somewhere else.” (Boris)*

The last barrier is the form of legalization of stay in the country. This theme I already raised in the chapter "Legal status and its influence". Because of the uncertainty as to whether Cyril can count on a long-term stay in the Czech Republic, he is not ready to make it feel like home.

*“I can't call it home. Like I feel like home, but I can't really call it home in terms of how I don't have any citizenship here. I know that at any moment without a visa I'd just be turfed out of here. You know, when you feel that feeling, you know, you don't really want to settle here because you're afraid that at some point you're just going to be kicked out of here. But on the other hand I come home and rest easy. Like they say, in your home, the walls heal. It's the same here. I mean I feel comfort, safety. But you're afraid that you'll be thrown out at any moment if they want.” (Cyril)*

These obstacles described by the informants provide important context for the next chapter, in which I discuss the practices through which Ukrainian teenagers build a feeling of home in Pilsen. It is not my goal in this undergraduate work to analyze in detail these obstacles, the reasons for their occurrence, and possible solutions, but I believe that this is an important field for further research on this topic. For my research, a brief list of barriers is important to understand why Ukrainian teenagers are forced to create a feeling of home through virtual or individualized practices.

### 3.4.3. Feeling of home in the everyday life of Ukrainian teenagers

#### 3.4.3.1. Virtual home

When talking about the everyday activities that teens fill their day with and separately those that create a feeling of home, my informants often talked about activities that take place in the online space. Igor gave the most colorful description of how the computer helps to transfer him "into some other world".

*“It helps especially when you are, let's say, by yourself or with your brother in a room, well, in short, with a relative or a friend. And you have no one at home, let's say, at night you have only a screen, a computer, friends, and conversations. And it also helps you to go into some other world. It helps you to concentrate only on this game. And you just forget about everything, because you play if you like it, and there are people who don't like it. Well, in Ukraine I played a lot and it seemed that I didn't need anything else. It was just a pleasure to do it.” (Igor)*

Interestingly, among Igor's important sensory associations with home was "silence," which at the dormitory where he lives is only possible at night. Feeling of home in this way for Igor is linked to the night when he and his brother can fall into a virtual world where he hears the voices of his Ukrainian friends. This shows a deep connection with another theme that recurred in the informants' answers, namely "escapism", to which a separate chapter is devoted. In this case, "virtual home" is one of the ways of "escapism".

Virtual space plays an important role in the lives of the other two informants as well.

*“I sit and play mostly. And there, if mom says something, I go and help. I come back and play again. Until the next day starts, when I have to go to work.” (Cyril)*

*“I go to bed at 03:00. I play with friends from Ukraine, real longtime friends, and do not go to bed until three or do not go to bed at all.” (Boris)*

An important detail in Boris's quote is the way he calls his Ukrainian friends "real", contrasting them with his Pilsen classmates, about whom a few minutes earlier he had corrected himself *"they are not friends, classmates, I have no friends here"*. Thus a certain paradox is formed: all real friends for Boris are concentrated in the virtual world. He also said

that all of them have already left Ukraine, so they can no longer meet together anywhere but the online space.

A feeling of home was associated with the online space by female informants as well. But the specific form in which this theme was expressed in the interviews with them was quite different from what the boys described. For example, for Alexandra, the feeling of home is associated with her brother playing on the computer, which continues the theme mentioned in the previous quotes.

*“– What sound do you associate home with?”*

*– With that sound of your little brother playing games with friends. «Hey, let's go, let's go, let's go». All the time, every day.” (Alexandra)*

In Fiona's case, the place of computer games was taken by a service for watching TV series together. It fulfills the same function as the games for Boris and Igor, namely helping to keep in touch with those who are only available online.

*“Now I have more time to watch some movies. I'm in touch with my friends from Ukraine 24/7. And now there is an app that allows you to watch movies together online or something. We spend time together like that.” (Fiona)*

The virtual home has a different function in the life of Diana, who, answering other questions, says that her home remained in Kharkov and she brought only homesickness here. In her case, the virtual space serves as a source of information about what is happening in her city and whether her physical home still exists.

*“Every day you're watching, waiting for it. Are they gonna hit your house or not? That's just, like, every day. You watch it hit, it hits somewhere near your house or somewhere farther away. And you think at some point it's gonna hit your house, and then you won't have any home.” (Diana)*

The concept of “virtual home” questions the traditional understanding of “home” being synonymous with domestic life and demonstrates that displacement can bring about a transformation in how people create a feeling of home (Doná, 2015, p. 72). For the listed informants, the online space was an opportunity to fill in important components of home that were not available to them now in their real world.

### 3.4.3.2. Inner escapism

Informants talked about how they are forced to be alone with their thoughts because their parents have too many problems of their own. For some this is an unpleasant experience, but for others being alone with themselves is the only way to overcome the discomfort caused by the new environment. For example, Alexandra described withdrawing into her thoughts as a way of not noticing her classmates.

*“I'm more immersed in myself. I pay more attention to my thoughts than to these people. Let's say thinking about what I'm going to do today and being more distracted by what I'm interested in rather than the people around me. Also, for comfort, I can get out into nature somewhere. I like it very much because it is always comfortable in nature and nothing bothers me.” (Alexandra)*

Igor describes the ability to control his thoughts as a positive characteristic that helped him overcome his nostalgia for his Ukrainian home and start a new life in Pilsen. It is impossible to judge from this quote the actual success of escapism as a homemaking practice, but we can say that Igor himself perceives it as a successfully achieved goal.

*“I come to my own conclusions, because I'm used to solving my own problems, to sorting out my own head. And some people can't do that. They are used to needing support, they definitely need to be talked to.” (Igor)*

In Fiona's case, internal escapism was not a positive experience. She recounted in an interview that she even went to a psychologist.

*“It was very uncomfortable when I came here and I didn't have much to do. And here I came, I was alone, and it was quite uncomfortable to be by myself with my thoughts.” (Fiona)*

Inner escapism cannot be called a practice that helps teenagers feel at home, but it is a practice that for my informants is closely related to the feeling of home in their lives. In addition, virtual space, as it was written above, is also a kind of escapism, but collective. Perhaps here lies the answer to the question of how people from the outside (e.g. social workers) can help Ukrainian teenagers feel at home. Social services could create specific spaces in which Ukrainians can feel comfortable and safe, for example, by speaking the same language, being perceived as full participants, and not being burdened by demands.



### 3.4.3.3. Collective activities provided by social services

As I described earlier, all informants were social service clients and went either to soccer training with me or to a theater class with my colleague. I did not ask any specific questions about this, but anyway it was a recurring theme in the interviews. This is most likely due to the fact that it was me who conducted the interview, but it also shows that collective activities play an important role in the lives of these particular teenagers.

Boris's quote shows how collective activities became for him an alternative to virtual space. In addition, Boris mentioned the feeling of a soccer ball in his hands as the tactile sensation that he associates with home.

*"Then, when I didn't have these soccer trainings, I stayed at home and just played on the computer and sometimes went out for a walk once in a while. But when soccer started, I was training more often and I played less on the computer." (Boris)*

A common feature of my informants was that already in Ukraine they were actively engaged in sports or creative activities. Fiona, Boris and Diana said that they felt that in Pilsen they did not have the opportunity to spend their time as productively as they used to in Ukraine. In this way, my informants' words complement the META organization's statistics, according to which 68.9 percent of Ukrainian adolescents aged 15-18 do not have the opportunity to spend their time as they did in Ukraine (see "Ukrainian refugees between the ages of 15 and 18").

At the same time, these collective activities are an important component for teenagers' feeling of home. It's not even that important to them what exactly they do. For example, Diana has been practicing gymnastics for 12 years and is still studying online to become a coach. In Pilsen she does not have the opportunity to practice gymnastics, but the theater club replaced this practice for her.

*"I'm in a theater studio now, we perform sometimes. And that's the very feeling when you go to perform at a competition, well, it's not a competition, but it's still something similar. It feels like home." (Diana)*

### 3.5. Discussion

My small qualitative study cannot provide a comprehensive answer to the question of how Ukrainian refugee teenagers construct a feeling of home and why exactly they do it in this way. I analyzed 7 cases in which I found some common practices and recurring themes and associations related to homemaking. Nevertheless, in combination with statistical data collected for the whole republic and in the broader context of sensory attachments and external barriers, the results of my research can be used as a source of useful information, for example, for social services working with Ukrainians.

I found out that my informants' sensory associations with home are primarily related to the home in Ukraine that they were forced to leave. Despite this, the majority of informants (5 out of 7) are trying to build a new home and speak about Ukraine as a home that is only in the past.

In order to structure my interviews and in their subsequent analysis, I used the framework of the triadic constellation home, which I combined with the concept of multisensory home. To summarize the research, we can say that in the lives of my informants there is a strong gap between the three dimensions described by the authors of the chosen framework. They try to create their own home in Pilsen, but they are still sensually and emotionally strongly attached to the home they have left in Ukraine. The attitude of some part of Czech society and the state towards Ukrainian refugees makes this process even more difficult for them.

"home" (everyday homemaking activities)	5 out of 7 informants are trying to establish a home in the conditions they find themselves in Pilsen. Only two (Elizaveta and Diana) deny the possibility that they will ever feel at home in Pilsen.
"Home" (values, traditions, memories, and emotional)	For all informants, sensory associations with home are related to the home that remained in Ukraine. Only twice, when

connections associated with home, and the broader political and historical contexts)	naming sounds, smells, etc. associated with home, the informants named something associated with their home in Pilsen.
"HOME" (global order and institutional frameworks)	The attitude of the Czech society, short-term guarantees from the Czech state and housing conditions are the main external barriers preventing Ukrainian teenagers from feeling at home in Pilsen.

They fill this gap with virtual space as a form of escapism. Through online games, watching TV series together online or following the news, they stay "in touch" with their Ukrainian home, which physically no longer exists anywhere on the planet. One of the few alternatives to the virtual space are the organized group activities created by social services in the city of Pilsen. In further research on this topic, it is important to talk to adolescents who are not clients of social services.

It can be assumed that virtual space does not help to create new sensory experiences that would help teenagers to build a feeling of home in Pilsen faster. On the other hand, virtual space helps to mitigate the negative experience of separation from the homeland.

The disconnect between teenagers' sensual attachments and desires to build a new home is directly related to the barriers they are forced to confront. For my informants, the Czech Republic in the first days after the move was a place of escape from bombings, shelling and sirens. But a year and a half after the war began, they felt that they were not so welcome here. Informants described how they encountered aggression on the streets, how they could not be sure of their future in the Czech Republic because they did not want their children to be attacked as they were now.

The uncertainty of their future is also related to the fact that the Czech state does not give them any guarantees that they will not be expelled from the country after one year. The recent changes in the laws reducing aid to Ukrainians seem to show that the state believes that it is time for Ukrainians to return. But many of them have nowhere to return to. Ukrainian refugees are forced to feel the constant criticism from the majority, taking

responsibility for the actions of some individuals who get into the media. At the local Pilsen level, leading figures in the city openly say that they do not want to help Ukrainians who may end up on the street because of the new conditions of free housing.

Based on my research, I dare to suggest that it would help Ukrainian teenagers if the Czech state would provide Ukrainians with longer-term guarantees that they will be able to stay in the Czech Republic. In addition, more support for social services that organize collective activities for teenagers could also play an important role in the adaptation of teenagers.

# Conclusion

My undergraduate work focused on exploring the feeling of home among Ukrainian refugees aged 15-18 years old. The study aimed to understand the practices used by Ukrainian teenagers to create a "feeling of home" in Pilsen and how these practices were connected to emotional attachments, sensory memories, and political institutions in the broader context. The research findings aimed to shed light on how Ukrainian teenagers perceived their successes and challenges in adapting to their new place of residence.

My work was divided into theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part focused on the definitions of refugees and home. Also there I described the specific characteristics of Ukrainian refugees' life in the Czech Republic using legislative and statistical data. In the practical part, I presented the research design, case studies of Ukrainian teenagers in Pilsen, and interpreted the conducted conversations.

The topic holds immense significance due to the lack of previous exploration in qualitative studies, making this research a valuable contribution to understanding the lives of these adolescents in their new environment. By employing a thoughtful theoretical triadic constellation of home framework, the study unveils the intricate interplay between sensory attachments and the desire to create a new home in Pilsen while being emotionally anchored to the home left behind in Ukraine.

A noteworthy finding is that the majority of informants, despite their strong sensory associations with their former Ukrainian home, actively endeavor to build a new feeling of home in Pilsen, relegating Ukraine to a home of the past. Nevertheless, there remains a significant gap between these aspirations and their emotional connections to their homeland, prompting the use of virtual space as an escape to sustain ties with their past.

I found that everyday practices of creating a home in the lives of Ukrainian teenagers are played out mainly in the virtual space. It is there that they have an opportunity to at least partially return to those sensual attachments that form for them the "real" home from the past. While virtual spaces offer solace, they might not fully foster new sensory experiences that aid in establishing a profound feeling of home in Pilsen.

On a positive note, organized group activities provided by social services in Pilsen present an alternative to virtual spaces, offering potential support for the adaptation process.

Nevertheless, it is worth considering that informants' willingness to talk to me about these collective activities may be due to the fact that I myself am an organizer of one of them. However, further research should expand its scope to encompass non-client adolescents to attain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

In light of these revelations, the research recommends two pivotal interventions. Firstly, the Czech state must provide Ukrainian refugees with longer-term guarantees of residency, empowering them to envision a future in Pilsen with greater certainty. Secondly, bolstering support for social services that facilitate collective activities for teenagers can play an instrumental role in fostering their adaptation and sense of belonging.

In conclusion, this research acts as a beacon of knowledge, illuminating the struggles and aspirations of Ukrainian refugee teenagers striving to construct a feeling of home in Pilsen. Its insights hold the potential to guide social services and policymakers towards creating a more inclusive and nurturing environment for these young individuals, enabling them to navigate the intricacies of their new lives with greater resilience and optimism.

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## RESUMÉ

This paper focuses on the practices that help Ukrainian refugee teenagers create a feeling of home in Pilsen and analyzes these practices in the broader context of social and political conditions. The study is based on the triadic constellation of home framework and a multisensory approach to the anthropological study of home. Based on the analysis of semi-structured conversations, the author concludes that in the lives of Ukrainian adolescents in Pilsen there is a significant gap between the sensual attachments to the Ukrainian home and the desire to build a new home in the Czech Republic, which is not realized also due to external barriers such as the attitude of Czech society and the state towards Ukrainians. Ukrainian teenagers try to overcome this barrier by immersing themselves in virtual space, which does not create new sensual attachments for them, which makes building a new feeling of home even more complicated.

## RESUMÉ

Tato práce se zaměřuje na praktiky, které pomáhají ukrajinským uprchlíkům ve věku 15 až 18 vytvořit si v Plzni pocit domova, a analyzuje tyto praktiky v širším kontextu sociálních a politických podmínek. Studie vychází z rámce triadické souhvězdí domova (triadic constellation of home) a multisenzorického přístupu k antropologickému studiu domova. Na základě analýzy polostrukturovaných rozhovorů autor dochází k závěru, že v životě ukrajinských teenagerů v Plzni existuje výrazná propast mezi pocitovou vazbou na ukrajinský domov a touhou vybudovat si nový domov v České republice, která není realizována i kvůli vnějším bariérám, jako je postoj české společnosti a státu k Ukrajincům. Tuto bariéru se ukrajinští teenageři snaží překonat ponořením se do virtuálního prostoru, což u nich nevytváří nové smyslové vazby, což budování nového pocitu domova ještě více komplikuje.