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The Evolution of Multi-Level Governance in French Refugee Crisis Management: A Comparative Analysis of the 2015 and 2022 Crises.

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Abstract

In 2015 and 2022, Europe faced two major refugee crises. The first followed conflicts in the Middle East, and the second followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Both these crises led France to adapt its highly centralised asylum system. This thesis examines how France responded to these crises through the lens of Multi-level Governance (MLG) and collaborative crisis management to uncover the collaboration efforts between the actors and the flexibility of the governance to deal with the crisis. It asks: To what extent have the management strategies during the 2015 refugee crisis influenced the development of the approaches during the 2022 refugee crisis, and did these adaptations lead to improved outcomes? To answer this question, the research uses a qualitative research method through document analysis coupled with process tracing and Most Similar Research Design. The findings reveal a significant evolution in France's MLG approach between the two crises. Indeed, the 2015 crisis, while exposing shortcomings in coordination and resource allocation, led to policy changes that fostered greater collaboration and flexibility in the following years. These changes were evident in the 2022 response which proved to be more efficient, particularly in the reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees. Nevertheless, challenges are still observed in 2022, especially in ensuring equitable treatment for all refugees.

Table of content

Abbreviations	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Literature review	7
2.1. <i>Migration crisis in France</i>	7
2.2. <i>Ukrainian refugee crisis management in other countries</i>	8
2.3. <i>Multi-level Governance in France for the COVID-19 crisis</i>	10
2.4. <i>Gap in the literature and academic relevance</i>	11
3. Definitions	13
4. Theoretical framework	15
5. Research Design	20
5.1 <i>Methodology</i>	20
5.2 <i>Case selection</i>	22
5.3 <i>Data Selection</i>	22
5.4 <i>Operationalisation</i>	23
5.4 <i>Limitations:</i>	25
6. Background information	26
6.1 <i>The evolution of French Immigration & Asylum policy</i>	26
6.2 <i>The different actors of the French refugee crisis management</i>	27
7. Results	29
7.1 <i>The management of the 2015 refugee crisis in France</i>	29
7.1.1 National level	30
7.1.2 Regional level – The prefecture as liaison between national and local	32
7.1.3 Local level – Case studies	33
a. Paris	33
b. Calais	35
7.1.4 Challenges	36
Observations.....	37
7.2 <i>The aftermath of the 2015 migration crisis</i>	38
Observations.....	41
7.3 <i>The management of the 2022 refugee crisis in France</i>	42
7.3.1 National level	42
7.3.2 Regional level.....	45
7.3.3 Local level	45
7.3.4 Remaining challenges.....	47
Observations.....	49
8. Discussion	50
8.1 <i>Summary of the findings</i>	50
8.2 <i>Limitations</i>	52
8.3 <i>Policy Implications and recommendations</i>	53
8.4. <i>Theoretical implications</i>	56
9. Conclusion	57
References:	59

Abbreviations

- APS - Temporary residence permit
- CAO - Reception centre (Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation)
- CCAS - Social and health services (Centres communs d'action sociale)
- CDAD - Departmental councils for access to rights (Conseils départementaux d'accès au droit)
- CEAS - Common European Asylum System
- Ceseda - French Code on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile)
- CIC - Interministerial crisis cell (Cellule interministérielle de crise)
- CNDA - National Court of Asylum Law (Cour nationale du droit d'asile)
- DAEEN - Directorate of Reception, Accompaniment, and Nationality (Direction de l'accueil, de l'accompagnement et de la nationalité)
- DGEF - Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (Direction générale des étrangers en France)
- DIAIR - Inter-ministerial council focusing on asylum, immigration, and integration (Délégation interministérielle à l'accueil et l'intégration des réfugiés)
- DNA - National Reception Initiative (Dispositif national d'accueil)
- DRIHL - Regional and Interdepartmental Directorate for Housing and Accommodation (Direction régionale et interdépartementale de l'hébergement et du logement)
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office
- EU - European Union
- EUAA - European Union Asylum Agency
- HUDA - Emergency housing for asylum seekers (Hébergement d'urgence pour demandeurs d'asile)
- IPCR - Integrated political crisis response
- MLG - Multi-level governance
- MSSD - Most Similar System Design
- NGO - Non-governmental organisation
- NOTRe - New Republic Law (Nouvelle loi République)
- OFII - French Office for Immigration and Integration (Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration)
- OFPRA - French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides)
- TFEU - Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
- TPD - Temporary Protection Directive
- UNHCR - UN Refugee Agency
- WASH - Water, sanitation, and hygiene

1. Introduction

In 2015, the European Union (EU) and its member states faced a sudden surge of refugees fleeing from conflicts in the Middle East. This unprecedented crisis led to the rise of various debates across the EU member states about border controls, asylum policies and social integration (Wagner, 2015). France has a long history of welcoming migrants and has often been referred to as a country of immigration. Its migration and asylum policies, however, have gradually become more conservative since 1974 (Hollifield and Héran, 2022). Thus, this crisis challenged the French asylum and integration system which welcomed around 80,000 refugees (Baumard, 2016). Seven years later, in 2022, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia created a second sudden increase in refugees arriving in Europe. This second crisis was just as challenging as the previous one regarding the logistics and the coordination mechanisms amongst the actors, as over 100,000 Ukrainians found refuge in France (OFPRA, 2023b).

France's response to these crises was highly influenced by its centralised governance system. Indeed, although decentralisation has been a growing trend in the past few years, the decision-making processes remain entirely in the hands of the central government (Hollifield and Héran, 2022). Nevertheless, according to the Multi-level Governance (MLG) theory, the management of such crises requires efficient coordination and collaboration between the actors at different levels. This thesis aims to examine the evolution of France's MLG approach to refugee crisis management between 2015 and 2022. It seeks to answer the following research question: To what extent have the management strategies during the 2015 refugee crisis influenced the development of the approaches during the 2022 refugee crisis, and did these adaptations lead to improved outcomes?

To answer this question, the thesis conducts a qualitative document analysis on primary and secondary sources, such as policy documents, official reports, and speeches, as well as academic and non-academic articles. In addition to document analysis, process tracing and Most Similar System Design (MSSD) are used to compare the outcome of the two crises and explore the evolution of the management strategy.

The data is then analysed through the lens of the MLG theory and the collaborative crisis management theory. MLG was introduced by Hooghe and Marks in 2004, and this concept investigates on the cooperation of various actors on different levels of governance. Within crisis management theories, the one presented by Lele (2023) highlights the importance of coordination and cooperation between various actors, which makes it interesting to combine with MLG. Nevertheless, these two theories have not been merged yet,

which is what this thesis aims to do. By combining these two theories, it allows us to understand the coordination and collaboration processes across various levels of government and with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that play a crucial role in answering the basic needs of the migrants when the state cannot. The academic relevance of this research also lies in the fact that although various research has been conducted on the refugee crises in France, none use MLG (Castelli Gattinara and Zamponi, 2020; Braud et al., 2018; Ribémont, 2018). Yet, MLG has been used in this regard case studies of other countries such as Poland (Podgórska et al., 2023; Błaszczuk et al., 2024; Byrska, 2022) but not in France. In fact, this theory was only used to research on the French management of the COVID-19 crisis crises (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021; Or et al., 2021; Hassentuefel, 2020).

The societal relevance of this research lies in its ambition to inform scholars and politicians about developing efficient and inclusive crisis management strategies. Indeed, by building on past crisis management successes as well as failures, policymakers can create improved strategies that ensure an adequate reception for refugees in the future. By improving the reception system, integration can be bolstered which might help reduce social tensions around asylum. Moreover, this research contributes to the existing literature filling a gap in regarding the application of MLG to migration crisis management. It also merges MLG with collaborative crisis management theory, which allows us to further understand the coordination and collaboration processes across various actors.

The thesis is structured as follows: it first discusses the existing literature relating to the management of migration crises in France, the management of the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Poland, and the MLG mechanisms in time of the COVID-19 crisis. It then presents MLG as a theoretical framework along with crisis management theory to guide the development of the hypotheses guiding the research. Next, the thesis explains the research methodology that was utilized. The fourth chapter examines the management of the 2015 refugee crisis by looking at institutional structures, policy frameworks, and the actors involved to evaluate how well it was managed. The fifth chapter examines the institutional and political modifications implemented from 2015 to 2022 to evaluate the enhancements in the asylum management system. In the sixth chapter, the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis management is examined and assessed through a similar structure to the one of 2015. The sixth and last chapter of the thesis will showcase the results of the study, as well as analyse the impacts on future refugee crisis management in France.

2. Literature review

This literature review focuses on providing a comprehensive description of the existing literature on migration crisis management in France from an MLG perspective. No research could be found on that specific topic in the existing literature. Thus, this review aims to present related research to provide a broad understanding of the topic. Each section contributes uniquely: the first part examines existing research on migration crises in France and how they were portrayed in the media and the political sphere, while the second section offers insights from crisis management regarding the Ukrainian refugee crisis in other countries, which provides valuable comparative perspectives. Lastly, the third section depicts research on MLG in France through the COVID-19 crisis.

2.1. Migration crisis in France

Most of the literature on migration crises in France focuses on the media and political framing. Indeed, migration has led to the rise of many debates in the past, more specifically in 2015, due to the negative connotations associated with migrants and asylum seekers.

Castelli Gattinara and Zamponi (2020), examine how the rise of the migrant influx in Europe, and the negative media and political framing around it, impacted European integration. The authors argue that in 2015, migration and asylum policy were at the core of the political agenda, both on the European level and on national levels. The crisis not only highlighted the notion of solidarity and burden sharing, but it also showed the lack of authority and capacity of the EU to deal with such a crisis, thus leading to the rise of nationalism of border control (Castelli Gattinara and Zamponi, 2020). The authors also take a closer look at France and explain that the French Government's response to the crisis was seen as inefficient. Thus, social activism played a major role in managing the arrival of refugees, by providing a more concrete response to material needs (Castelli Gattinara and Zamponi, 2020). A study made by Braud et. al., (2018) complements this approach by studying the impacts of the political and media framing of the 2015 migration crisis on a local level, taking Bordeaux as a case study. The authors present findings that align with the previous study, as they claim that the poor management of the crisis and the dehumanisation of the asylum seekers led to the rise of ad-hoc initiatives. Indeed, new actors on the local level get involved due to emotional motivations (Braud et. al., 2018). Moreover, the study has an indirect MLG approach as it explains that these local initiatives were later built on by the government. Indeed, the authors explains that in 2016 the Government implemented a program to make it easier for citizens to welcome asylum seekers in their homes. Eleven

associations were partnered with on a national level to host refugees with locals, although no details were communicated regarding the cooperation mechanisms (Braud et. al., 2018). The authors conclude that, however, such collaboration remains insufficient to properly implement the reception and accommodation criteria (Braud et. al., 2018).

The research conducted by Ribémont (2018) takes a different approach to the management of the 2015 migration crisis, as he focuses on the political implications. He explains that the laws of July 2015 and September 2018 were implemented during very tense political debates around migration policies and specifically asylum rights. Although the laws aimed at improving the conditions of asylum seekers in France, the author argues that the conditions of reception were indeed improved, but the rights of asylum seekers were reduced, to follow an overall policy of restriction of incoming migration. Indeed, he claims that the true goal of this bill is to reduce the number of asylum seekers in France both by making the country less attractive and by making it easier to reject unsuccessful petitioners (Ribémont, 2018). Although this research focuses solely on the government level, it reinforces the arguments made by the two aforementioned studies discussing the inefficiency of the government's actions. Gemenne and Thiollet (2022) go further in the analysis of the political and media framing's impact on the management of the 2015 crisis by comparing it to the one of 2022 with the Ukrainian refugees. They argue that the 2022 response to the Ukrainian refugees was much more open than in 2015, potentially due to the geographical and cultural proximity to Ukraine, as well as the media and political framing of Ukrainians as heroes. Moreover, the welcoming of refugees to be framed as in line with liberal political values as it aims to fight the authoritarian aggression made by Russia. This contrasts with the 2015 crisis in which France faced challenges in managing and accommodating the refugees which is depicted both in this research and the previous studies discussed. The authors argue that the overall narrative focused on reducing the refugee flows due to the perceived capacity limits and political tensions. Overall, the authors argue in favour of a more universal, integrated and consistent asylum policy to benefit both migrants and asylum seekers (Gemenne and Thiollet, 2022).

2.2. Ukrainian refugee crisis management in other countries

Although there is a lack of research regarding the crisis management of Ukrainian refugees in France, related research has been conducted in other EU Member States. This section thus aims at presenting MLG mechanisms and crisis management strategies in Poland, to

understand the roles of the actors involved in welcoming the refugees as well as the dynamics between the different actors.

For instance, Podgórska et. al. (2023), investigate the structure and resilience factors linked to the management of the Ukrainian refugees in Lubin, Poland and Lutsk, Ukraine. They study two regional urban centres with similar demographic, adaptation and absorption potential aiming to identify social resilience factors. Relying on MLG and social resilience, they identify different groups of common success factors for successful humanitarian crisis response: previous local experience in emergency response, empowerment of social actors, the diversity of actors and their relationships, and the management and coordination of the work of individual actors. The authors also emphasize the emergence of an increasing legitimacy of voluntary organisations (Podgórska et. al, 2023).

Byrska's (2023) article complements this research by providing an overview of the crisis management strategy in Poland. It presents an outlook on the evolution of the strategy, starting with the emergence and management of an early humanitarian and relief response, later followed by a state response. The author argues that the first response was initiated by citizens on social media which led to the creation of volunteer-based groups on site to organise accommodation for the refugees. The response from the Polish state was very limited for the first few weeks after the invasion, and the management of the refugees was handled by NGOs and individuals (Byrska, 2023). The author also note that the special Act voted by the Polish Government later improved the situation by providing financial assistance. However, the network of organisations does not include international organisations as they were not present on site. Thus, the support from the government was limited, especially at the beginning of the war and remains overall insufficient (Byrska, 2023).

The article by Błaszczuk et al. (2024) completes the two other studies by providing a focus on the municipalities and their capacity to respond to the influx of refugees. More specifically, it looks at the flexibility and adaptation efforts of the municipalities. The results of this research join the previous articles mentioned, as it recognises three main actors: local authorities, NGOs and grassroots volunteers. It highlights, however, that public-private partnerships have emerged voluntarily to help in receiving the refugees, and it also notes the emergence of more formal cooperations through municipal authorities. The authors also note that the collaboration of various stakeholders raised tensions, particularly between institutions and volunteers. One of the points of tension was the fact that the emergency led the volunteers to prioritise effectiveness over procedures (Błaszczuk et al., 2024). Lastly, the article distinguishes four main phases in the management of Ukrainian refugees. First is the direct

response to an emergency threat, characterized by a bottom-up approach. Second is the framing of the reception of the refugees by the local authorities, where institutions take over the responsibility of welcoming the refugees. Lastly, the third phase refers to the stabilisation and professionalisation of operations, where the local government manages the reception system more globally but disengages from frontline activities which are left to the NGOs (Błaszczuk et al., 2024). Although this study has less of a negative outlook on the strategy of the government, it still highlights various shortcomings such as the insufficient cooperation and collaboration between the various actors as well as the lack of a structured governmental strategy (Błaszczuk et al., 2024). These insights into the roles of various actors in Poland's response to the crisis will be valuable for analysing the effectiveness of France's MLG approach in managing its own refugee crises.

2.3. Multi-level Governance in France for the COVID-19 crisis

Although the management of the pandemic is not directly related to migration crisis management, such research remains interesting to understand France's crisis management mechanisms from an MLG perspective, which is lacking in migration crisis studies. Thus, this section aims to present findings on the MLG mechanisms present in France in a recent crisis such as COVID-19.

Du Boys and Bertolucci (2021) assess the failures and successes linked to the MLG of the COVID-19 crisis in France. In their article, they argue that the French Napoleonic tradition of governance leaves little space for local governments and makes France a clear example of centralism. Indeed, the authors claim that the management of the first wave of the pandemic was highly centralised. During the second phase, from May to mid-July 2020, some actions of the government have been witnessed to create a new action framework to improve the cooperation with local governments (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021). However, during the third period leading to October 2020, the authors argue that the government's difficulties in decentralizing decisions caused renewed tensions in MLG (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021). Indeed, the article shows that the third period was characterized by a lack of consideration of the government for the local authorities when implementing stricter measures. The lack of intergovernmental cooperation was highly criticized, and it was argued to be the cause of the poor management of the crisis (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021).

The article by Or et. al. (2021), complements this research by arguing that the centralisation of decisions allowed for a quick response to the crisis. However, they argue that this level of responsiveness also meant a lack of consultation, transparency, and cooperation

between the main actors both at the central and at the local level. Although the response was quick, the authors argue that it lacked coordinated actions and space for the local solutions to be shared. This crisis has thus highlighted the structural weaknesses of the French crisis governance approach which is characterized by a high level of bureaucracy overlooking local solutions and problems, a lack of coordination between the actors at different levels, and a weak prevention culture (Or et. al., 2021).

The research by Hassentuefel (2020) goes further in the criticism of the centralised strategy of the French Government. Indeed, he argues that the government was relying on territorial representatives although they have no direct competencies regarding health measures. Thus, their main role was to report to the Regional Health Agencies (Hassentuefel, 2020). This lack of consideration for the territorial actors has been highly criticised by organisations and local elected officials, as mentioned by Du Boys and Bertolucci (2021). Territorial actors were, however, more included in the decision-making process once the lockdown was lifted, although this inclusion remains limited. Nonetheless, this centralised management strategy led to high criticism and distrust (Hassentuefel, 2020). The author highlights that the *presidentialization* of political authority in France creates more weaknesses than strengths in the case of crisis management, as it leads to the centralisation of blame and strengthens distrust, public resistance, and protests (Hassentuefel, 2020).

2.4. Gap in the literature and academic relevance.

The existing literature offers various insights on how migration is portrayed on the political level and in the media, and governmental responses to migration crises in France. However, there is a notable absence of studies examining MLG mechanisms in crisis management in France (Castelli Gattinara and Zamponi, 2020; Braud et al., 2018; Ribémont, 2018). Despite mentions of local-level initiatives and governmental programs, there is limited analysis of how different levels of governance interact, coordinate, or collaborate in managing migration crises (Braud et al., 2018). Moreover, despite evidence from other countries suggesting the importance of multi-level coordination, collaboration between stakeholders, and the role of local authorities in dealing with the Ukrainian refugee crisis, no research could be found on how these factors apply to the French context (Podgórska et al., 2023; Błaszczuk et al., 2024; Byrska, 2022). Lastly, research on the COVID-19 crisis management in France offers great insights into MLG dynamics and challenges (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021; Or et al., 2021; Hassentuefel, 2020), there is a notable absence of studies directly examining the application

of MLG to migration crisis management in France. Despite parallels in governance structures and challenges between the two crises in terms of centralized decision-making and coordination issues, there is limited analysis of how these MLG mechanisms operate in the context of migration crises (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021; Or et al., 2021). In summary, the existing literature highlights a common gap in the literature: the absence of studies examining the MLG mechanisms employed in managing migration crises in 2015 and 2022 in France. This gap underscores the need for research that explicitly investigates the roles and dynamics of the different actors involved in crisis management, which is what this thesis aims to fulfil.

3. Definitions

To address the complexities of migration crisis management, it is essential to establish clear definitions for key terms and concepts used throughout this thesis. This section provides precise definitions for "migrant," "asylum seeker," and "refugee," terms that are often used interchangeably but have distinct legal and practical implications. By providing these definitions, this section aims to clarify the specific statuses and rights associated with each group. The definitions are retrieved from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which is a recognised UN agency. These definitions aim to facilitate the understanding of the subsequent analysis of the management strategies employed during the 2015 and 2022 migration crises. Furthermore, this section identifies the primary needs of refugees, which are critical for understanding the necessary responses required from the host country, which in this case is France.

Migrant:

“An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes several well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.” (IOM, n.d.).

Asylum seeker:

“An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.” (IOM, n.d.).

Refugee:

“A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (IOM, n.d.).

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) defines various basic needs for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees: access to essential services and support in areas such as healthcare, food, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), shelter, energy, education, and the access to information/orientation. It also includes domestic items and specialized services for individuals with specific needs. Additionally, the UNHCR highlights the importance of considering long-term well-being which includes protection, sustainable livelihoods, and durable solutions (UNHCR, n.d., p.1).

This section has defined key terms related to migration, highlighting that migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees have distinct legal statuses and associated rights, which is important to understand the findings of this research.

4. Theoretical framework

In times of crisis, effective governance becomes crucial for managing complex challenges such as large migration influx. MLG offers a lens through which we can understand the coordination, collaboration, and decision-making processes across various levels of government and non-governmental actors. This theoretical framework aims to explore the role of MLG in crisis management contexts.

The goal of a theoretical framework is to establish a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and theories relevant to the research topic. It serves as a guide for the analysis and interpretation of empirical data, helping to contextualize findings within established academic theories (Lederman and Lederman, 2015). This section defines MLG and its relevance to managing migration crises. It examines the evolution of MLG, highlighting the redistribution of authority from supranational to local levels. Drawing on key scholars such as Hooghe and Marks (2004), the framework details how MLG operates in practice and its significance in effective crisis management. The framework also distinguishes between Type I and Type II MLG (Hooghe and Marks, 2004), as well as vertical and horizontal coordination (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Incorporating crisis management theory, this framework shows how MLG enhances responsiveness and adaptability. Collaborative crisis management, involving various governmental and non-governmental actors, requires efficient responses (Lele, 2023). Finally, this theoretical framework proposes a hypothesis to guide the research. The hypothesis aims to test the effectiveness and evolution of MLG mechanisms in France's response to migration crises.

MLG refers to the system of coordinated interactions and decision-making processes among actors at different territorial levels, including supranational, national, regional, and local (Peters & Pierre, 2001). The definition of MLG chosen for this research is the one presented by Schmitter (cited in Piattoni, 2015):

“MLG can be defined as an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors private and public at different levels of territorial aggregation in more-or-less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority to any of these levels.” (Piattoni, 2015, p. 323).

Marks (2023) argues that the emergence of MLG is due to the increasing role of subnational levels in decision-making (p.392). He notes it as the result of a long process of decentralisation within states, institutional creation, and decisional reallocation. Various

functions that before were the state's responsibility are now up to the supra-national level, like the EU, or down to the local and regional level (Marks, 2023). Since the 1980s, an increase in multilevel democracy has also been witnessed. Indeed, a vast majority of EU Member States now have direct elections for national assemblies, including France (Hooghe and Marks, 2021, p.28). Bauer and Steurer (2014) argue that regions can mediate between national and local actors as they can link different policy areas and participate in developing tailored solutions to fit different local realities. Moreover, actors on the regional and local levels can provide specialised knowledge (Homsy and Warner, 2013, p.296). The emergence of MLG allows for the inclusion of these crucial actors in both the decision-making process and the implementation of policies. However, Hooghe and Marks (2021) note that such inclusion might create “governance gaps’, inter-jurisdictional conflict, and mismanagement” (p. 30).

To counterbalance this risk, MLG highlights the importance of coordination between the different levels and different types of actors to cross the existing boundaries, as it is the only way for MLG to achieve effective policy outcomes (Adam et. al., 2019). Two types of coordination are distinguished: vertical and horizontal. Vertical coordination refers to coordination between different levels of government to capture the territorial reach of the policy outcomes. It can distinguish priorities and solutions, enhance the capacity of local actors and facilitate collaboration. To work efficiently, it needs to include both top-down and bottom-up approaches to allow the co-production of knowledge and solutions to respect the diversities of the different regions. Horizontal coordination refers to interactions across different sectors such as the state, market, and civil society, as well as across territorial and functional jurisdictions. (Ansell and Gash, 2008, p.500). It involves various government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and other stakeholders that work together to address common challenges. MLG also entails more informal forms of policy coordination regarding interdependence, information and knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and resource exchange (Adam et. al., 2019, pp. 550-501). Adam et. al., (2019) also highlight that the lack of effective coordination between policymakers and implementers is an important source of shortfalls in designing and implementing policies (p.500).

Hooghe and Marks (2004) distinguish between two types of MLG. Type I reflects federalist ideas, as authority is limited to a set number of levels such as international, national, regional, and local. These jurisdictions are general-purpose, meaning that each deal with a variety of policy responsibilities. The jurisdictions, however, do not intersect. Type II of MLG conceives jurisdictions as specialised, meaning they each serve a specific purpose but are also

larger in number. Such jurisdictions are much more flexible than in Type I and can be created and dissolved depending on the need. The table below summarizes the two types of MLG.

Table 1. Two types of MLG.

Type I	Type 2
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Non-intersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdictions at a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

(Hooghe and Marks, 2004, p.17).

The MLG mechanisms present in the French system to deal with the migration crises of 2015 and 2022 would be best described as a combination of Type I and Type II. Indeed, France has a centralised system of government with clear boundaries between national, regional, and local authorities (OECD, 2018, p.39). However, the reception of refugees involves a wide variety of specialised actors, including civil societies, organisations, and private actors. The diverse stakeholders coordinate with the government through various mechanisms. Moreover, the governance strategy used to deal with such crises is flexible, as the creation of crisis cells, involving various ministries, local authorities, and non-government organisations, helps enhance the coordination (OECD, 2018).

The crisis management theory goes hand in hand with MLG for this research. Hermann (cited in Alas and Gao, 2012) defines a crisis as “an event which includes a surprise, a threat, and short response time.” (p.1). Not only does a crisis impact the system of an organisation, government, policy area, etc. but it also influences the societies, which is why they require a prompt and efficient response. Crisis management induces institutional complexity, as it has both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Indeed, it concerns various actors within the government, either on the same or on different levels, as well as nongovernmental actors (Lele, 2023). When responding to a crisis, scholars are divided on the best way to respond. On the one hand, some argue that to be efficient, a response must be decisive and centralised. On the other hand, some claim that because of the multifaceted causes and effects of a crisis, the response must be more localized to fit the different contexts (Lele, 2023). Collaborative crisis management aims at linking these two positions by creating an “arrangement where multiple stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds work together to manage a crisis.” (Lele, 2023, p. 28). This approach allows for the sharing of

knowledge, information, resources, and experiences, which resonates with MLG. Moreover, such a type of crisis management increases the legitimacy of policies, governments, and states (Lele, 2023).

The MLG approach involves both vertical and horizontal coordination to produce more effective policies. However, a “decoupling” has been witnessed in migration studies between local and national governments due to different interests and needs (Dimitradis et. al, 2021, p.256). As the national government decides on a nationwide strategy, there is little space left for local governments to take action based on their specific needs and resources. Nevertheless, local actors make up an essential part of the welcoming and integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Local actions are tailored to the unique demographic and socio-economic contexts of each city, and local governments are more likely to work collaboratively with organisations to find suitable solutions for the migrants. Thus, there is a growing disconnect between national and local strategies, with local actors increasingly taking independent actions to address integration challenges in ways that reflect local realities, and to address the gaps in national policies (Scholten and Penninx, 2016, p.100). We have seen, however, that collaboration and cooperation between actors are crucial to operating a successful crisis management strategy (Lele, 2023), as well as efficient horizontal and vertical cooperation (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

Considering the French centralised style of governance as well as the crucial role of local authorities, civil societies and NGOs, we can conclude that an efficient collaboration and coordination between the government and local-level actors is a crucial factor for a successful crisis management strategy. With this theoretical grounding, the following hypotheses are proposed to guide the research and analysis:

Hypothesis 1: The 2015 refugee crisis has led to the development of a more flexible and collaborative management strategy.

Hypothesis 2: The flexible and collaborative management strategy developed in response to the 2015 refugee crisis led to improved outcomes during the 2022 refugee crisis.

Given the theoretical emphasis on the need for coordination between different levels of government and various stakeholders (Ansell and Gash, 2008), this hypothesis suggests that over time, mechanisms for better vertical and horizontal coordination have been developed and implemented in France. This hypothesis is grounded in the theories of MLG that highlight the increasing role of subnational levels (Marks, 2023; Homsy and Warner, 2013). The second hypothesis derives from the first one. Indeed, Piattoni (2015) and Ansell

and Gash (2008) highlight the importance of structured vertical and horizontal cooperation in MLG for an effective management strategy. Nevertheless, it is possible that despite the efforts to implement MLG mechanisms, the centralization of decision-making in France has continued to pose challenges for effective crisis management based on the persistent issues of centralization noted in both migration and COVID-19 crisis management in France (Du Boys and Bertolucci, 2021; Or et al., 2021; Hassenteufel, 2020).

5. Research Design

Before delving into the analysis, the research design is defined to explain how this thesis is conducted. Indeed, this section aims to set out the strategy for causal identification. To do so, this section first explains the methodology used. Second, it defines why the 2015 and 2022 migration crises are chosen for this study. Third, it describes the data selection process. Fourth, the variables used for the research are operationalised. Lastly, the limitations of the research design are mentioned.

5.1 Methodology

The methodology for this thesis combines qualitative document analysis with process tracing. Document analysis involves examining the content of documents and interpreting their meaning to identify patterns and draw conclusions (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is based on finding, selecting, making sense of, and synthesising the information collected (p.28). Moreover, it can allow the author to track any changes and developments, such as in policies or political strategies. Additionally, it allows for a detailed examination of document content, enhancing the reliability of the findings. Indeed, document analysis has many benefits; it is a rather efficient research method as it can be less time-consuming than other methods and involves data selection rather than data collection. Many documents are publicly available (Bowen, 2009, p.31). This availability combined with the cost-effectiveness of document analysis, makes it a popular choice for qualitative researchers. Moreover, unlike other research methods, documents are unobtrusive and non-reactive, meaning they are unaffected by the research's presence. Lastly, they also offer broad coverage, encompassing a long period, numerous events, and various settings (Bowen, 2009, p.31).

In this research, document analysis is coupled with content analysis. Content analysis involves categorizing information based on the research question. It requires an initial review of documents to pinpoint significant and relevant text passages or data. Then, the researcher must be able to discern and isolate relevant information from what is irrelevant (Bowen, 2009, p.32). Lastly, the data sampling method is purposive, meaning that documents are selected based on their perceived informativeness by the researcher (Tenny et al., 2021). The documents analysed in this research are mainly official documents, both at the EU level as well as in France, that are used to understand the crisis strategies as well as the MLG mechanisms implemented.

The documents and the data are analysed through the method of process tracing. Process tracing is defined by Collier (2011) as the “systematic examination of diagnostic

evidence selected and analysed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator.” (p. 823). In other words, process tracing involves parsing out the causal mechanisms of interest, meaning distinguishing the steps or processes that connect the cause to the outcome. As process tracing focuses on analyses of sequences of variables as well as potential changes in trajectories and causation, careful description is crucial (Collier, 2011).

To complete the analysis made via document and content analysis as well as process tracing, the Most Similar System Design (MSSD) is used. It is a research method where researchers select cases (like countries, regions, or organizations) that are very similar in many ways but have different outcomes in a specific area of interest. The goal is to figure out why these similar cases have different results, which helps the researcher understand the relationship between different factors and rule out other possible explanations. In MSSD type 1, the two cases must be similar but have a different outcome, that can be explained by a variation in the main explanatory variable (Toshkov, 2016, pp. 263-263).

To test the first hypothesis, about the impact of the 2015 refugee crisis on future management strategies, official documents are analysed to find evidence of policy changes that indicate a shift towards more flexible and collaborative approaches. Thus, the 2015 crisis management strategy is first analysed. Indeed, the analysis seeks to uncover initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration between different levels of government and stakeholders, such as the creation of new coordination bodies or the allocation of funding for collaborative projects. Moreover, evaluations of the 2015 crisis response that highlight the need for greater flexibility and collaboration will also be examined. Next, the new policies and laws implemented from 2015 to 2022 are analysed to see if the shortcomings of the 2015 crisis were tackled in later policies or strategies. If there is no significant evolution towards a more coordinated and flexible management strategy, then the hypothesis is rejected.

To test the second hypothesis, about the improvement of management strategies in 2022 compared to 2015, official documents are analysed to examine the management strategy in 2022. This implies looking at how the mechanisms developed after 2015 were applied. Additionally, the analysis will compare the outcomes of the two crises, seeking to demonstrate potential improvements using MSSD. If no positive evolution in the effectiveness of the management strategy between 2015 and 2022 can be observed, then the hypothesis is rejected.

By systematically applying document analysis and process tracing to both crises, evidence can be gathered to either support or refute the hypotheses. The goal is not only to identify the presence or absence of MLG mechanisms but also to understand how they were

developed, implemented, and ultimately influenced the effectiveness of crisis management in France.

5.2 Case selection

The cases selected for this research are the 2015 and the 2022 refugee crises. Thus, the data selected focuses mainly on these two timeframes. Both the 2015 and 2022 migration crises in France were significant in terms of the number of migrants involved and the challenges they posed to the country's infrastructure. In 2015, around 80,000 Syrian migrants applied for asylum in France (Baumard, 2016), whereas 115,000 Ukrainian refugees were welcomed in France in 2022 (Les Echos, 2023). Both the 2015 and 2022 migration crises occurred within the broader context of global migration patterns that were caused by wars or violent conflicts forcing the populations to seek refuge in other countries. Moreover, the governance system remained the same for both crises, as they were both managed under the same centralised French government system which had to coordinate with EU mechanisms as well as with regional and local actors. Indeed, the same actors were involved in managing both crises: the EU, the French government including the various ministries and its agencies, the prefectures, and the local level actors (such as cities, NGOs and citizens). These similarities enable a focused analysis of how the same legal and institutional structures responded to two distinct migration crises and explore if the outcomes of the two crisis management strategies are different.

5.3 Data Selection

The data selected for this research is based primarily on primary and secondary sources. The main primary sources are official documents published by the French Government, such as official legislature documents published by the National Assembly and the *Sénat*, as well as statements made by members of the government, interviews of elected officials, reports from ministerial meetings, and official statements published on an official website of the Government called *Vie Publique*. In addition to official documents, newspaper articles as well as academic and non-academic articles are used for this research. Although official documents are prioritised for the data selection, secondary sources are used to either reinforce the findings, complete the research, or create a contrast between the narrative of the official documents and the one of the local realities.

Considering the original purpose and the target audience of the document is essential, as this can impact the representativeness and accuracy of the information. For instance, political statements and speeches can be biased to fit a political agenda. In this case, it is important to compare it with other types of documents. It is also crucial to ascertain the authenticity, credibility, accuracy, and representativeness of the selected documents, which is why official documents and renowned media are prioritized.

Regarding the management strategy on a national level, official documents are used to determine the coordination mechanism implemented between the various actors, as well as to determine a potential evolution between 2015 and 2022. Lastly, articles published by the media or reports made by NGOs are analysed to examine coordination mechanisms between local actors and to assess the overall efficiency of the national policies by looking at the reception of refugees on the local level.

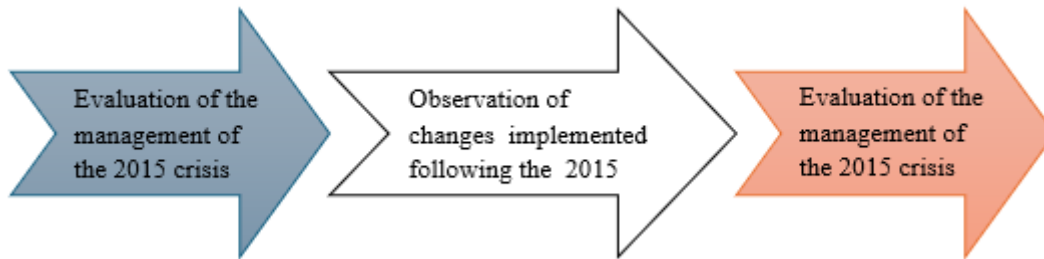
5.4 Operationalisation

The goal of this section is to define and specify how the key variables of this research will be measured and analysed. Operationalization transforms abstract theoretical concepts into measurable elements, allowing for systematic investigation and empirical testing (Mahé and McLaunchlin, 2021). This section outlines the dependent variable, the independent variable, and other potentially causal variables to test both hypotheses. The variables are then summarized in Figure 1 and Table 2 to ensure easy comprehension. By clearly defining each variable, this section aims to ensure that the research is based on measurable and observable phenomena. It also enhances the transparency and reliability of the research.

To answer the research question, both process tracing and MSSD are employed. Through process tracing, the dependent variable is the management of the 2015 crisis and the independent variable is the management of the 2022 refugee crisis. The mediating variable is policy changes implemented between 2015 and 2022. Thus, through process tracing, we aim to find out if there is a correlation between the 2015 refugee crisis and the changes in strategy afterwards. Second, we aim to explore the management of the 2022 refugee crisis based on the new strategies. Through MSSD, we then compare the outcomes of the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises to test if there is an improvement in the efficiency of the management strategy. In this case, the independent variable is the management of the crisis, and the dependent variable is the level of efficiency of the management. Various confounding variables, however, have been identified. Indeed, depending on whether the refugees were perceived positively or negatively, the willingness to welcome the refugees might change. Moreover, the

refugees did to obtain the status the same way. Although migrants in 2015 had to make a standard request for asylum and wait to see if their request would be accepted or rejected, the Ukrainian refugees in 2022 were automatically granted asylum under the TPD after requesting it at the prefecture.

Figure 1: Operationalisation of the process tracing.



Note: Figure created by the author

Table 2: operationalisation of MSSD

Variables	2015 refugee crisis	2022 refugee crisis
Independent variable	MLG management strategy	MLG management strategy
Similar Variables	Nature of the conflict. Influx of refugees. Actors involved in the management.	
Confounding variables	Reluctant political, media and public opinion narratives towards welcoming refugees	Solidarity-based political, media and public opinion narratives towards welcoming refugees
	Refugee status granted through standard asylum request	Refugee status granted through TPD
Outcome	Limited success due to a lack of vertical and horizontal coordination	Effective coordination and success of crisis management

Note: Table created by the author.

5.4 Limitations:

While the research design outlined above offers a structured approach to examining the impact of the management of the 2015 refugee crisis on crisis management outcomes in 2022, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations of the methodology and data selection process.

First, the use of purposive sampling for document selection may introduce bias into the study. As the documents are chosen based on their perceived informativeness, it is possible that other sources might be excluded or overlooked, thus leading to an incomplete representation of the data. Second, the reliability of the document analysis can be questioned. Indeed, although official documents from the French Government are considered reliable, they may contain inherent biases and can be tailored for political agendas. Second, despite efforts to control the confounding variables, they may influence crisis management outcomes. Thus, they might complicate the attribution of effects to the management strategies. To counterbalance the status variable, the reception of non-Ukrainian refugees in 2022 will also be explored. In addition, the data availability on the local level is limited. Interviews with staff of the prefectures, NGOs involved or even refugees themselves were unavailable in the timeframe in which this research was conducted, thus limiting the findings. This could introduce limitations regarding reliability and representativeness. Moreover, the process tracing method involves interpreting sequences of variables and identifying causal mechanisms, which may introduce subjectivity. The author's biases may influence the identification and interpretation of causal mechanisms. Additionally, as the original documents are in French and are translated by the author, this may cause translation inaccuracy and increases the potential biases in the research. Lastly, the focus of the research is the 2015 and 2022 migration crises in France which allows for an in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other migration crises or other countries. The development of a clear methodology and operationalisation aim at counterbalancing these limitations.

6. Background information

This section provides background information on the evolution of French immigration and asylum policy, decentralisation in France and on the actors involved in refugee crisis management. By doing so, it provides context to understand the analysis of the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises in France.

6.1 *The evolution of French Immigration & Asylum policy*

This section presents the general context of immigration and asylum policy in France since the end of the 20th century to help understand the approach taken by the government regarding the management of refugees in 2015 and 2022 explained later in the paper. Moreover, this part explains the evolution of the decentralisation process of the French governance system and the changes in the power of the local powers and their relationship with the state.

Although France was historically portrayed as a country of immigration, its immigration and integration policies became much more restrictive in 1974 (Hollifield and Héran, 2022, p.229). In the 1980s, a crisis of national identity led migrants to be seen as a threat. The policies implemented until now stayed in line with this more closed regime, aiming at reducing immigration and the number of asylum seekers. (Hollifield and Héran, 2022, pp.231-246).

Decentralization has been gradually increasing in France, notably since the 1980s. According to Boko (2002), “decentralization refers to the transfer of authority from a central government to a sub-national entity.” (p.1). France has been largely a highly centralised style of governance, especially since the 18th century with Bonaparte, who removed local elected political officials to replace them with government-appointed civil servants called *préfet* who remain a crucial actor to this day. It was only after the First World War that decentralisation started with the Vichy Government. Only in 1982 did decentralisation improve significantly, as local authorities became self-governing through elected councils instead of being nominated by the state (Collectivités Locales, n.d.). With the slow evolution towards decentralisation, an excessive number of communalities were noticed, leading to a reorganisation of the regions in 2014 cutting them down from 21 to 12 (Vie Publique, 2019b). In 2015, the law NOTRe more clearly established the responsibilities of each level of the territorial powers. Regions now have more power in terms of transport, employment, coordination with public actors, housing, education, as well as identity and language promotion (Vie Publique, 2019a). Nevertheless, the regions remain constrained by the weakness in their normative power, and the state remains the sole actor possessing ‘the

competence of competences’, meaning that it is the only actor to determine its own competence and the ones of other public institutions (Vie Publique, 2021).

6.2 The different actors of the French refugee crisis management

This section aims to provide an overview of the various actors involved in managing the refugee crisis in France, defining distinct roles and responsibilities. The section also highlights the pivotal role of prefectures as local representatives of the state before developing the role of other non-governmental actors such as NGOs, universities and local associations.

Migration and asylum policies are implemented by the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas which deal with various elements ranging from visas, entries, residence, employment, integration, and citizenship to the fight against illegal migration and employment. The Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (DGEF) implements the guidelines set by the Minister and acts at the international and European level, as well as with other ministries and with inter-ministerial structures (European Migration Network, 2023, p.8).

The Ministry of the Interior and Overseas is also assisted by two state operators: the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII), and the French Office for the Protection of the Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). The OFII is responsible for managing immigration procedures as well as monitoring compliance with immigrants' legal obligations in France. It also manages funds allocated by the government to support immigrant integration programs. Additionally, the OFII collaborates with a variety of actors, both governmental and non-governmental such as local associations to implement effective immigration and integration policies (OFII, n.d.). Moreover, the OFII handles the National Reception Initiative (Dispositif National d’Accueil – DNA), which includes assigning temporary accommodations and distributing the specific economic allowance designated for asylum seekers (OECD, 2018). Working alongside the OFII, the OFRPA examines asylum applications and ensures the full respect of the Geneva Convention, the New York Convention and the French Code on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (Ceseda). Moreover, the OFPRA provides legal and administrative protection to recognized refugees, stateless persons, and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Lastly, the OFPRA offers advisory services to the Ministry of the Interior as to whether a request for entry into the French territory on asylum grounds is unfounded or not (OFPRA, 2023a).

A crucial actor in the management of migrants and refugees in France is the prefectures. Indeed, the préfet is the representative of the state on the local level. Its role is to

ensure the services of the State in the department or region, as well as the coherence and efficiency of the actions on the territory (Préfecture du Rhone, 2017). The first step taken by a migrant seeking asylum is to go to a prefecture, which is the only place at which the initial request can be made. The information regarding the request is then sent by the prefecture to the OFPRA (Info Droits Etrangers, 2022).

Municipalities, or communes, represent the lowest level of subnational authority and constitute the most localized tier of government. They are managed by an elected city council under the leadership of a mayor. Their responsibilities are varied and encompass social and health services provided through the Centres Communs d'Action Sociale (CCAS) (OECD, 2018). Other crucial actors on the local level are asylum centres and integration schemes, which are managed by NGOs and associations (European Migration Network, 2023). Indeed, they play a crucial role in providing daily necessities such as food distribution, healthcare, and clothes. They can also provide other crucial services such as legal support, administrative orientation, training, and language courses (OECD, 2018).

7. Results

This section aims to answer the research question about the evolution of the MLG mechanisms between 2015 and 2022 and their effectiveness. To do so, it first analyses the MLG mechanisms employed during the 2015 crisis to highlight its shortcomings. It explores the decisions made at the national level as well as the coordination mechanisms with the other actors involved before presenting case studies through which the efficiency of the strategy is assessed. Then, it delves into the changes made between 2015 and 2022 to see if there have been any changes made to answer the shortcomings found in the 2015 crisis. Lastly, it analyses the management of the 2022 refugee crisis in a similar structure to the 2015 crisis analysis. It first delves into the national strategy and the coordination mechanisms with the actors at the national, regional, and local actors. Lastly, the success of the management is contrasted with the ongoing challenges experienced by non-Ukrainian refugees.

7.1 The management of the 2015 refugee crisis in France.

The 2015 migration crisis, which saw over a million asylum seekers arrive in Europe, put immense pressure on member states and EU institutions. In response, the EU implemented emergency measures such as relocation programs and the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR), aimed at improving burden sharing and information exchange. However, most decisions regarding refugee reception and integration remained the responsibility of national governments (European Council, 2024). This section delves into France's response to the migration crisis of 2015. As France was faced with a surge in asylum requests, it became evident that its existing system was ill-prepared to handle the influx. This section explores the legislative and strategic adjustments made at the national, regional, and local levels to address these challenges. It analyses the changes in asylum laws, the establishment of reception centres, and the coordination efforts among various stakeholders. It examines the responses at different levels of governance, from national legislation to local implementation. By doing so, this section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the MLG approach in managing the 2015 refugee crisis.

Before diving into the French response to the migration crisis of 2015, it is important to address how the crisis was portrayed in the media and political discourses. Indeed, in France and many other western countries, the asylum seekers and migrants were referred to as 'the other' by the reader, leading to little empathy and raising suspicion. Little attention was given to the reasons for the migrants leaving their countries, and instead, the crisis was framed

with a focus on the consequences their arrival had for the citizens. In France, mentions of defensive measures such as closing borders, tighter registration procedures and an increase in military presence were largely more prominent than caring measures (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017, p.12).

7.1.1 National level

This section examines the French government's response to the 2015 refugee crisis. It explores the legislative reforms, strategic planning, and resource allocation across the governmental and non-governmental actors involved. Moreover, it explores the role of key institutions like the OFII and OFPRA, analysing their capacity building and resource allocation in response to the crisis.

As an attempt to efficiently respond to the refugee crisis, France adopted a revised legislation on asylum rights on July 29th, 2015. This law had three main objectives: shorten the asylum application review process; improve and better distribute the reception of asylum seekers across the territory; and finally, strengthen the rights of asylum seekers per European standards (Cazeneuve & Bussereau, 2015). In addition to the revision of the asylum system, the Government voted a law in June 2015 to prepare a strategy to face the increasing influx of migrants, mostly focusing on the fight against irregular and economic migration. This law included a strategy for increasing the funding of the OFII and OFPRA to make the asylum request process more efficient (Bockel, 2015, p.7). Both new legislations are set in a broader strategy of increasing cooperation and coordination with various actors on different levels (Cazeneuve & Bussereau, 2015).

Due to insufficient budget, the welcoming centres lack space to accommodate all the refugees and asylum seekers. (Cazeneuve, 2015a). In September 2015, France counted 25,000 spots in the welcome centres for the migrants recognised as refugees. Experts, however, argued that at least 20,000 more would be necessary to face the migration crisis (Bockel, 2015, p.18). In addition to the 4000 additional spots in the welcoming centres for asylum seekers created in 2013 and 2014, 11 000 more were planned for 2015 by the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Housing to help offer not only enough but also correct accommodation solutions (Cazeneuve, 2015d). In October 2016, thus a year after the peak of the migrant influx, the Minister of the Interior announced that the spots in emergency centres increased from 22.000 in 2012 to 40.000 in 2016. Moreover, he announced that additional welcome centres were to be created (Cazeneuve, 2016b). In addition to housing opportunities, refugees also benefit from various rights. Indeed, they have access to an *allocation* which is a

stipend of 11,45 euros per day if they are not provided with a housing solution (Cazeneuve & Sicard, 2015). Nevertheless, at the beginning of 2015, it would take a minimum of 24 months for an asylum seeker request to be processed although the European guidelines request for it to be no longer than 9 months (Cazeneuve, 2015a).

Although the State has the sovereign power over migration and asylum, various actors are involved in welcoming and managing the arrival and integration of refugees in France. The ministry responsible for the management of refugees is the Ministry of the Interior, led by Bernard Cazeneuve between April 2014 and December 2016. Collaboration with the ministry of Housing was crucial during the crisis to develop a strategy to accommodate refugees (Cazeneuve et al., 2015). Although they were less involved in the strategy planning and decision-making, other ministers participated through various Council of Ministers in 2015 (Fabius et al., 2015; Cazeneuve et al., 2015; Cazeneuve & Bussereau, 2015).

The main actor within the government regarding welcoming asylum seekers, however, remains the OFII. As a response to the migration crisis, the OFII increased its staff by 5% in 2015 and by 20% in 2016 (OFII, 2017, p.55). Most of the new staff was appointed to the asylum and integration division to bolster its capacity to act and its efficiency, which was proven to be lacking during the crisis. Moreover, a large majority of the new fixed-term contracts were appointed in the Territorial Divisions, which highlights a broader strategy to bolster the decentralisation and the overall capacities of the offices on the regional level (OFII, 2017, p.55). The OFPRA followed a similar strategy of increasing the staff capacity (OFPRA, 2016, p.24). Moreover, new internal policies have highlighted the importance of training the staff. In the aftermath of the 2015 crisis, 195 new positions were created, including 100 positions specifically targeted for the management of the migration crisis and to gain efficiency regarding the asylum request processes (OFPRA, 2017, p.69). Moreover, the training program for new employees has been reviewed and ameliorated to provide better services to asylum seekers (OFPRA, 2017, pp. 90-91). The OFII's and the OFPRA's efforts to increase their capacity and improve their efficiency through staff and budget increases are indicative of the adaptability and responsiveness of the French asylum system at the national level.

In conclusion, the French government's response demonstrated efforts to build a coordinated strategy across various ministries and agencies. Moreover, the legislative reforms and the increased resources demonstrate some degree of flexibility. Nevertheless, the efficiency of these reforms remains to be assessed. Moreover, the lack of a clear structure for

inter-ministerial collaboration and coordination highlights the need for a more formalized approach.

7.1.2 Regional level – The prefecture as liaison between national and local

The préfets, representing the government at the local level, played a central role in the management of refugees in 2015. This section explores their role in managing asylum seekers and refugees by working with various actors. It highlights the importance of prefectures in expanding housing capacities and supporting the integration of asylum seekers.

During the 2015 migration crisis, the Minister of the Interior decided to nominate Mr Kléber Arhoul as national coordinator within the préfets to bolster dialogue and communication among the préfets and with the ministry (Cazeneuve, 2015e). In addition, the Minister also required the nomination of an official coordinator within each prefecture to organise the work with associations, non-governmental organisations, and specialised organisms. All the state-related actors, such as the ministers, préfets, regional coordinators, DGEF, OFPRA, OFII and others, were gathered on multiple occasions to discuss the national strategy for the management of the refugee crisis (Bockel, 2015). The communication between the government and the prefectures was particularly crucial when it came to deciding on an equitable distribution of asylum seekers over the territory (Cazeneuve & Sicard, 2015). With the increase of refugees, the prefectures were appointed the responsibility of doing an inventory of available spots whether in welcome centres, emergency centres or private accommodations. Thus, within three weeks at the end of September, more than 4,800 housing spots were listed by the préfets (Cazeneuve, 2015f). Taking the example of the prefecture of the Bas-Rhin in the North-East of France, they opened 1016 housing spots, which is an increase of 52% compared to 2014. Moreover, 306 emergency housing spots were transformed into asylum seekers' welcoming centres (Préfecture du Bas-Rhin, 2016).

The prefecture of Loire-Atlantique, in the Mid-West of France, welcomed over 1600 people coming from the hot spots in Italy or Greece in 2016. The prefecture notes that over 51% of the people initially located in an emergency housing solution were reoriented to more long-term housing solutions by the end of the year. Moreover, it increased its welcoming capacity over the year to achieve 1319 housing spots, including 780 targeted for asylum seekers, 281 for temporary stay and 258 for emergency housing (Préfecture de la Loire-Atlantique, 2017).

In conclusion, prefectures played a crucial role in managing the crisis by expanding housing capacities and coordinating their actions with various actors. The appointment of

coordinators, communication mechanisms, and collaboration with stakeholders shows great coordination between the actors. It is important to note, however, that the capacity to act in the prefectures remains limited due to the high centralization of the asylum policies.

7.1.3 Local level – Case studies

While national and international frameworks provide overarching guidelines and policies, the implementation and day-to-day management often fall to regional and local authorities. This section explores the MLG mechanisms used to manage the 2015 refugee crisis at the local level in France, focusing on Paris and Calais. By examining these two case studies, it assesses the presence and effectiveness of vertical and horizontal cooperation among various actors.

a. Paris

Paris stands out as a unique administrative entity in France, as it functions both as a municipality and a department. This dual role grants Paris extensive competences in both municipal and departmental matters. However, the city's governance is complicated by its integration into the larger Metropolitan area of Paris (MGP), which encompasses 123 municipalities and 6.7 million residents. The MGP holds responsibilities for economic, social, and cultural development, as well as urban planning and housing. The interplay between these different actors emphasizes the need for strong collaboration and coordination between various actors (OECD, 2018).

Within the Ile-de-France prefecture, the Regional and Interdepartmental Directorate for Housing and Accommodation (DRIHL) has the responsibility of housing and temporary accommodation, thus managing both demands and offers of emergency shelters. According to the Municipality of Paris, the budget for migrant integration has gone up by 25.7% from 2015 to 2016, reflecting the attempt of the city to adapt to the influx of migrants and refugees. In 2015, the budget for migrants' integration represented about 10% of the total budget for the social action of the region Ile de France (Mairie de Paris, 2017).

In 2015, the Municipality released an 18-point plan called *Mobilisation of the community of Paris to welcome refugees*, which was developed in collaboration with 90 non-governmental organisations (Mairie de Paris, 2015). The plan focused on protecting vulnerable people, improving access to rights, and providing housing and comprehensive support for asylum seekers (Mairie de Paris, 2015). Although it is the competence of the government, the municipality decided to build additional accommodation facilities (OECD,

2018). The city also tried to improve its collaboration with civil societies, NGOs, solidarity associations and Parisians themselves, thus strengthening horizontal MLG. With the implementation of the strategy, an external platform called “Qui accueille”, gathering various non-governmental actors, was created. Nevertheless, the members called for further strengthening of the coordination mechanisms between NGOs and the municipality. Moreover, the associations requested a coordination platform to divide the work by geographic area and type of public between all the operators (OECD, 2018).

The Direction of Democracy, Citizens and Territories (DDCT), working within the Municipality of Paris, granted 770,000 euros to NGOs in 2016 for projects relating to migrants’ integration. However, it has been noted that this budget was divided into very small amounts for various projects, leading the organisations to divide their services into smaller sections to fit the different criteria of the small grants. Thus, NGOs such as Emmaüs, France Terre d’Asile and the Red Cross were calling for an improvement of the grant system for a more coherent approach and allow more flexible projects and grants (OECD, 2018).

In addition to the cooperation with NGOs, the city of Paris also strengthened its cooperation with citizens. A mechanism for short-term housing via private accommodations was created thanks to a wave of solidarity, which aimed at hosting 1000 refugees. Through the mechanism ELAN, citizens could make their housing available to asylum seekers and refugees while benefiting from social, sanitary, and professional support provided by associations (OECD, 2018). Next to it also exists the platform “Solidarity renting in Paris” in which citizens could propose an apartment to rent to migrants and refugees. In 2015, this platform allowed the housing of 2900 people (Paris.fr, 2022).

Despite the efforts, the living conditions of many migrants in Paris remain disastrous. Various unofficial camps have emerged around the city, with the biggest one being at Porte de la Chapelle. Hundreds of migrants live there in unsanitary conditions, having to sleep on the ground and amongst waste (Magnenou, 2017). These migrants are surviving thanks to the services provided by the organisations. Despite more than thirty sheltering missions organised by the city from 2015 to 2017, the problem persists as around 35 new migrants arrive at the camp every day. According to Ismail Mansouri (cited in Magnenou, 2017), the government does not have the necessary capacities to welcome these migrants and there is no equitable distribution across the territory. Various centres have been opened in Paris and its region, but they remain largely insufficient (Magnenou, 2017).

b. Calais

The region of Calais has been a focal point for migration crises in France, particularly during the peak periods of 2015 and 2016. Indeed, in June 2015, the area around Calais counted 4486 migrants, which escalated to 6901 in August 2015 (Lexpress, 2016). However, two independent associations declared to have counted around 9000 migrants (Renault, 2021). By the end of 2016, the Calais ‘jungle’ was dismantled when it still counted around 8000 migrants (Javey and Schelcher, 2019). Thus, Calais presented itself as a real challenge for the French Government. This section examines the specific strategies and measures taken, highlighting the key actors and their impacts to highlight the MLG mechanisms implemented.

In response to the dramatic humanitarian situation in Calais, the French government, under the leadership of Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and Prime Minister Manuel Valls, initiated several exceptional measures. Recognizing the humanitarian needs of the asylum seekers, the French government established the Jules Ferry Centre, which provided daytime services and accommodations for vulnerable groups such as women and children. This centre is funded with over €10 million from the state and the European Union (Cazeneuve, 2015c). It served approximately 2,000 meals each day and provided around 500 showers daily. Moreover, in collaboration with the prefecture, 112 points of access to water were created, as well as 60 latrines and six garbage bins. Additionally, the Government decided on the creation of new reception centres aimed at accommodating asylum seekers more effectively. The establishment of temporary housing included 500 tents from the Civil Protection Service, 400 places for vulnerable individuals, and 1,500 places in 125 containers equipped with water, heating, and electricity (Cazeneuve, 2016a).

By 2016, the government had created 93 reception centres across France, facilitating the relocation of 2,375 migrants from Calais. The reception centres (Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation - CAO) played a pivotal role in the decentralized approach to managing the crisis. Indeed, the CAOs were managed by experienced associations and provided migrants with a humane environment to initiate their administrative processes and eventually help them transition to more permanent housing solutions. Moreover, the state collaborated with various organisations such as France Terre d'Asile, Groupe SOS, Acted, and La Vie Active, and allocated €44 million to support the efforts made at the local level. These organisations provided the migrants with daily necessities, meal distribution, healthcare, and legal assistance to migrants (Cazeneuve, 2016a). Lastly, various organisations collaborated to create a platform through which citizens could propose their accommodations to migrants in need. For instance, Réfugiés Bienvenus links families with asylum seekers. In exchange for

free housing, the asylum seeker can help around the house such as with cleaning (Roynard, 2017).

Despite the various efforts of the state, local authorities and NGOs, the management of the crisis in Calais remains insufficient. Indeed, Human Rights Watch warned about the inhumane conditions imposed on the migrants in Calais, as the authorities try to humiliate and harass them as part of a dissuasion strategy. Many migrants live in the woods, in abandoned factories, or under bridges. Moreover, there have been reports of the police tearing down the tents of the migrants (Le Monde, 2021). The Human Rights defender, Jacques Toubon, claims that various services were only temporary and were since removed such as the water points, highlighting the disregards of basic needs (Toubon, 2017). An article published by Amnesty International (2021) shows that 71% of the citizens of Calais find that the actions of the state are insufficient and argue that there is poor management of the situation. Moreover, the article also highlights the lack of horizontal coordination between the different organisations and the authorities (Amnesty International, 2021).

Comparing the two cases, we can see that they reveal distinct challenges and approaches. In Paris, the city's dual role as a municipality and department, along with its integration into the larger Metropolitan area, facilitated extensive collaboration among municipal, regional, and non-governmental actors. We can see that the city's proactive measures, including budget increases and strategic plans involving numerous NGOs, highlighted horizontal and vertical cooperation. Nevertheless, NGOs were still unsatisfied with the horizontal cooperation and walled for a revision of the grants system (OECD, 2018). Calais, however, experienced a more intense crisis, thus explaining the stronger involvement of the State rather than the city and the prefecture. Although the Government invested around 44 million euros towards NGOs, the centralised approach to crisis management led to a less efficient horizontal coordination. Overall, both cases showed that horizontal coordination was lacking and needed improvements.

7.1.4 Challenges

The management of the 2015 migration crisis revealed several critical shortcomings which hindered the effective handling of the unprecedented influx of asylum seekers. This section evaluates the management of the 2015 migration crisis from an MLG perspective. It discusses the inadequacies at the national level such as in the asylum system, the coordination

challenges, and the specific difficulties faced by local authorities, especially in Paris and Calais. This analysis aims to reveal the governance issues that impact crisis management.

Both the previous and the reviewed asylum system were ill-prepared to handle the increased demand. Indeed, the country faced a severe shortage of accommodation in welcome centres. By September 2015, France had 25,000 spots in these centres, but experts estimated that at least 20,000 more were needed to adequately address the crisis (Bockel, 2015). This number, however, was not achieved (Cazeneuve, 2015d). Regarding vertical coordination, we can see that although improvements were attempted, shortcomings are still observed. As we already discussed, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Housing were collaborating to develop a strategy, and the different ministries often met to discuss the overall strategy. Nevertheless, there was no clear structure of cooperation within the ministries. Additionally, the prime minister appointed a coordinator for the different prefectures (Cazeneuve, 2015e), but we can see that the equitable distribution of asylum seekers across the territory remains as Calais and Paris were overwhelmed with migrants.

Local authorities have different resources and capacities, which leads to uneven and inadequate distribution of resources and services across regions. The prefectures were responsible for managing local responses and welcoming the asylum seekers in cooperation with NGOs. Nevertheless, the centralised system hinders their capacity to properly respond to the influx, as the grants system was proven to lack efficiency. Paris, with its unique administrative structure, developed an 18-point plan involving collaboration with NGOs and citizens. However, despite efforts to coordinate, many migrants were still unable to access welcome centres and ask for asylum or receive housing and have their basic needs met (Magenou, 2017). The situation in Calais highlighted the extreme challenges faced by local authorities in managing large numbers of migrants with limited resources and support from the national government. The lack of effective horizontal coordination among local and national exacerbated the humanitarian crisis (Amnesty International, 2021).

Observations

To conclude, the response to the 2015 migration crisis exposed critical shortcomings, particularly in vertical and horizontal cooperation. The lack of a clear structure for inter-ministerial collaboration and the uneven distribution of resources across regions underscored systemic inefficiencies. Local authorities faced challenges due to inadequate support and a

centralized system that lacked flexibility. The 2015 crisis highlighted the limitations of France's Type I MLG structure (Hooghe and Marks, 2004). Indeed, the rigid division of responsibilities between different levels of government hindered effective coordination and collaboration. To enhance future crisis management, France must improve its coordination mechanisms. Indeed, vertical cooperation must be improved towards a more flexible strategy to ensure equitable resource distribution and foster more cooperative governance structures.

7.2 The aftermath of the 2015 migration crisis

The 2015 migration crisis led the EU to prioritize external cooperation to reduce irregular arrivals, increase border security, and initiate reforms of its asylum system (European Council, 2024). These evolving EU policies have shaped France's own responses to migration challenges, which will be examined in the following section. The year 2015 marked various changes in the legal and organisational structure of asylum and immigration policies which are examined in this section using process tracing. Indeed, the changes in the asylum and immigration strategies are investigated in chronological order from 2018 to 2021.

The year 2018 is crucial regarding asylum policies as it marks the first year since 2015 in which the immigration and asylum laws were reviewed. Indeed, in addition to the creation of an inter-ministerial council focusing on asylum, immigration, and integration (DIAIR, 2018), 2018 also marks the implementation of the September 2018 law. Its goal was to update its immigration and asylum policies to better fit the changing immigration demands. This law aimed at making the asylum request processes more efficient and work towards a more successful integration. It was developed around three main pillars: reduce the processing times for asylum applications, strengthen the fight against illegal immigration and improve the reception of asylum seekers (LOI N° 2018-778 Du 10 Septembre 2018 Pour Une Immigration Maîtrisée, Un Droit d'asile Effectif et Une Intégration Réussie, 2018) The following analysis focuses on the first and third pillars. As part of the new legislation, the government aimed to redesign its welcoming capacities. Indeed, the goal was to increase the housing capacities through the creation of new centres and spots, redesigning the processes and structure to create a more cohesive system and improving the management of refugees on the territory. The law set the objective to reduce the processing time from around fourteen months to six months, which also induces a tighter timeline for the OFPRA to make an initial decision. Moreover, it introduced a national scheme in which the government coordinates with the regions to set a quota of welcoming centres capacities for each region as well as a

quota of asylum seekers that must be received in each region to achieve a more equitable distribution of the asylum seekers around the territory. This distribution by region must be determined based on economic indicators such as the poverty rate, the number of available housing units, etc. A version of this scheme is also developed on the regional levels to determine the resources and needs of each region. Moreover, according to the 2018 law, each migrant who wishes to apply for asylum has the right to be admitted to a welcome centre to guide them in the process. In addition to the social and administrative support, asylum seekers now also have the right to legal support (LOI N° 2018-778 Du 10 Septembre 2018 Pour Une Immigration Maîtrisée, Un Droit d’asile Effectif et Une Intégration Réussie, 2018).

Regarding more practical changes, it is also important to note that spots in emergency and welcoming centres doubled between 2012 and 2018, achieving 86,510. According to a report from the Ministry of the Interior (Molina, 2018, p.3), the objective set for 2019 was to achieve 97,000 spots. Moreover, the emergency centres CAO created in 2015 were replaced by a more comprehensive system called HUDA (*Hébergement d’Urgence pour Demandeurs d’Asile*). The implementation of the HUDA welcoming centres was coupled with a decentralisation strategy. The prefectures are now completely in charge of the welcoming centres in their region, except for emergency centres which remain under the authority of the Asylum Direction of the government (Molina, 2018, pp. 4-5). Moreover, decentralisation is enhanced by the implementation of a regional scheme under the responsibility of each préfet, who is also in charge of the financing of the regional policy of asylum. On the departmental level, recurrent meetings were also implemented. These meetings concern all actors involved in the process of welcoming migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including the local office of the OFII, the representatives of the welcoming centres and emergency centres, local representatives such as municipalities, civil servants, and local organisations. The goal of these meetings is to enable enhanced information sharing in a more structured way to then relay them to the national reception system department (Molina, 2018, p.10). Moreover, in 2018, the Government further promoted citizen initiatives for the reception and housing of refugees. Indeed, these initiatives were deemed to be beneficial to both increase the capacity to host refugees and asylum seekers and to make integration more efficient. Thus, the Ministry of Housing decided to create a more structured system to experiment with this system across the territory (Ministre de l’Interieur, 2021).

The years 2019 and 2020 were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced new challenges and necessitated further adaptations in the asylum system. In 2020, the health crisis and the mobility constraints complicated efforts to redistribute asylum

seekers more evenly across regions. In response, the decision was made to fully decentralize the management of the national reception system (DNA) to the territorial directions of the OFII, in collaboration with state services, making all places available to locally registered applicants. This measure led to a notable increase in the occupancy rate of the reception system (now over 98% compared to 95% previously). Additionally, the number of staff at OFPRA increased by 200 positions, including 150 protection officers, and the CNDA by 59 positions (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2020, pp.6-7). Moreover, in 2020, multiple CDADs (departmental councils for access to rights) specialised justice points (22 in 2020) aimed at foreign and immigrant populations. These justice points assisted with document preparation offered information on rights and obligations, and oriented individuals to appropriate administrative bodies and support structures. These services were often staffed by specialized associations, both local and national. In total, more than 78,300 individuals received assistance at these justice points in 2020, including approximately 21,900 in the houses of justice and law located mainly in large cities (Ministre de l'Intérieur, 2021, pp.64-65). Although this change does not mark a direct improvement towards a more cooperative and flexible governance style, it shows a trend of wanting to open the management of refugees to more actors and develop a more flexible governance system.

Starting in January 2020, the Government reviewed its budgetary system to create a more cohesive and efficient system as the operational services are now managed at the level of the préfets and are consolidated into a single budgetary framework. Additionally, the programme 147 called City Policy was tasked with ensuring equality between territories under the authority of the Directorate General for Local Authorities National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (Ministre de l'Intérieur, 2021, p.80). This falls in the strategy to build a new territorial state and give more power and resources to the prefectures to act, as well as increase vertical coordination. Horizontal coordination was also part of the 2020 strategy, as various calls for projects involving ministerial delegations concerning asylum and integration aimed at increasing the participation of NGOs. Indeed, around twenty organisations were involved in the development of projects relating to welcoming people who have obtained refugee status into private homes and creating shared housing between refugees and members of civil society. This initiative has received a budget of 906,000 euros from the government. An impact study confirmed the effectiveness of this initiative in terms of integration as well as access to housing and employment (Ministre de l'Intérieur, 2021, p.88).

Despite significant progress in reception capacities and a high occupancy rate, the national reception system for asylum seekers only accommodated about half of the asylum seekers in

the process due to a lack of available places in 2020. Moreover, the disparity in accommodation rates across regions remained significant despite the Government's efforts. Indeed, 93% of asylum seekers received housing in Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, compared to only 30% in Île-de-France. This reflected an uneven distribution of asylum demand, with a significant concentration in Île-de-France. Paris and its region received 46% of the asylum request but it only has 19% of the national reception system's capacity in 2020 (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2020, p.6).

The strategy for the following year remains along the same lines as the previous ones, focusing on decentralisation, coordination and increasing the reception capacities. The year 2021 marks important changes regarding asylum and immigration strategies. Indeed, the implementation of the National Scheme for Asylum Seekers and Integration, published in 2020, sets out the strategy for the following years, sometimes building and formalizing the temporary solutions developed in the previous years. Its objectives remain the same as the last few years: to improve the welcoming capacities and making more efficient the distribution of asylum seekers in the different regions (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2020). Moreover, the creation of the Public Service for Street to Housing marked a significant reorganization of the central state administration as the Interministerial Delegation for Housing gained more autonomy. This new service was coupled with the implementation of a five-year plan for mobilizing housing for refugees and asylum seekers. Each year, an objective for mobilizing housing for refugees is set for the prefects by the Ministers of the Interior and Housing. To achieve this, an eleven-million-euro fund from the programme was distributed to the regions. Moreover, from 2021 onwards, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of the Interior, the ministerial delegations for housing and welcoming of refugees, and local authorities, aimed at implementing a closer dialogue with non-governmental services, associations, and operators to achieve the set targets (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2020).

Observations

In conclusion, the aftermath of the 2015 migration crisis led to significant policy changes. Indeed, it prompted legal and organizational reforms to streamline asylum processes and improve integration. The series of reforms and structural changes from 2018 to 2021 reflects a clear evolution towards improved horizontal and vertical cooperation in the management of asylum and immigration in France. The emphasis on decentralization, increased involvement of civil society, and improved coordination between various levels of government and local actors underscore a shift towards a more flexible and responsive asylum

system. Thus, these efforts could be analysed as a shift from the Type I MLG witnessed during the 2015 crisis towards the Type II MLG according to the definitions of Hooghe and Marks (2004). As seen in 2020, however, shortcomings remain regarding the repartition of asylum seekers across the territory as well as limited housing capacities (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2020). Overall, the post-2015 period has driven substantial policy evolution, leading to greater cooperation and flexibility in migration management. The efficiency of these changes, however, remains to be evaluated.

7.3 The management of the 2022 refugee crisis in France.

This section delves into the responses to the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis. By examining the strategies employed at both levels, it aims to provide an analysis of the MLG structures implemented to deal with the refugee crisis. It looks at the vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms as well as the degree of flexibility in the governance. This section mainly focuses on the initiatives implemented for the reception of the Ukrainian refugees, but it also compares the experience of the Ukrainians to non-Ukrainian asylum seekers arriving in France in 2022, revealing potential ongoing limitations in the French asylum system.

In response to the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis, the EU Member States demonstrated a significant shift in their approach to migration management compared to the 2015 crisis. Indeed, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) for the first time in history, providing immediate and harmonized rights to those displaced by the war (European Commission, n.d.). Just as in the rest of the European Union, France responded to the invasion of Ukraine with a wave of solidarity. Indeed, just after the war, President Macron made a speech expressing the wish of the French Government to help Ukraine, both through material support and by welcoming Ukrainian refugees (Euronews, 2022). Over 100,000 Ukrainian refugees found shelter in France, including around 20,000 children who were welcomed in French schools. At the end of October 2022, the director of the DGEF estimated that about 109,000 people benefited from the French system. As men between the ages of 18 and 60 did not have the right to leave Ukraine, the refugees were about 90% women and children (Dechambre, 2023).

7.3.1 National level

This section outlines the French government's national response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis of 2022. It explores the establishment of a coordinated strategy across the government

to manage the influx of refugees. The section explores the pillars of the strategy and highlights the roles of the ministries and agencies. By doing so, it aims to provide an overview of the measures implemented to support Ukrainian refugees.

In response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, the French government rapidly established a national strategy to ensure a coordinated and effective response at all levels of government. Indeed, on the 9th of March 2022, the government published a national strategy focused on the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees which was based on the TPD guidelines. This strategy relies on five pillars: access to housing, education, healthcare, social rights and the job market (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). Through cooperation with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Housing, and the Minister of the Interior, the Government implemented a scheme that allows for the creation of housing spots to welcome the 100,000 Ukrainian refugees estimated to come to France (Castex, 2022a). By Mai 2022, the Government identifies around 80,000 spots in non-governmental structures such as hotels and holiday resorts (Wargon, 2022). Nevertheless, these structures are put in place as only temporary with a maximum allowed stay of fifteen days. Ukrainian refugees also have the opportunity to be hosted by emergency collective housing or by the citizens (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). The second option seems to be the most popular amongst Ukrainian refugees as only 30,000 of them were admitted in the state-led housing initiatives (Wargon, 2022). Yet, the government spent a total of 263,4 million euros for the creation and management of these 30,000 housing spots.

As part of their rights as refugees under the TPD, the Ukrainian refugees can claim the daily allowances of 14,20 euros per adult until they have stable living conditions and employment (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). The OFII estimated the cost of the allocations to be 27 million euros per month (Dechambre, 2023). In addition to the housing offers and the daily allowances, the Government, with the help of the Ministry of Youth and National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, also initiated a programme that allows Ukrainian students to continue their education in France. Indeed, more than 8000 spots in schools and universities were funded to welcome the Ukrainian youth (Castex, 2022a).

These various initiatives required the coordination of various ministries. Thus, on the 2nd of March 2022, the Prime Minister gathered all relevant ministers in an interministerial cell to coordinate the efforts. This crisis cell was led by the Minister of the Interior and the coordinator of the préfets, Joseph Zimet (Castex, 2022a). It also included various relevant delegations: the General Directorate for Foreigners in France, Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, General Directorate for Social Cohesion, General Directorate for

Employment and Professional Training, General Directorate for School Education (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). This crisis cell, called CIC-Ukraine, had three main responsibilities. First, its purpose was to coordinate the actions of the different ministries with other actors such as the OFPRA and the OFII, prefectures, territorial collectivities, and NGOs, to create a coherent strategy on a national level. Secondly, its task was to synthesise the data and information collected by the various actors to then share national reports with the relevant actors. Thirdly, its goal was to anticipate any events, risks and necessities such as massive arrivals, departures or reaching the limits in accommodation capacity. Moreover, the CIC-Ukraine was used to guide people through various platforms, especially in Ukrainian, to local partners such as elected officials, France services centres, associations, etc. Additionally, it was the main communication platform for local actors to contact and share their struggles at the national level. Thanks to the programme, the regions that were overloaded with refugees, such as Île-de-France, Grand Est and Provence-Alpes-Côte-D'azur, could receive additional support and the government was able to work on the relocation of various refugees (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). Next to the CIC-Ukraine, the Prime Minister also implemented various liaison committees between 2022 and 2023 involving the Senate president, the National Assembly president, and the leaders of all parliamentary groups, to review France's support for Ukraine (Borne, 2023).

Analysis complete

The French state also actively aimed at establishing horizontal coordination with local actors and associations for the reception of Ukrainian refugees. This was demonstrated by the establishment of the "Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine" platform, which mobilized considerable resources in terms of accommodation, particularly from individuals (Le Drian et. al., 2022). This platform played a crucial role in welcoming the refugees, which will be developed later in the analysis. In addition, the government expressed its commitment to financially support associations and local authorities in their reception efforts, recognizing their crucial role in managing the crisis (Castex, 2022b).

The national strategy was built on collaboration across various levels of government, which highlights the efforts towards vertical cooperation. Simultaneously, horizontal coordination was evident through partnerships with local actors and associations, as demonstrated by initiatives like the "Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine" platform.

7.3.2 Regional level

During the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis, the French prefectures played a pivotal role in managing the influx of refugees and ensuring a coordinated response at the regional level. This section details the roles and actions of the prefectures in addressing the crisis.

Prefectures were instrumental in coordinating the efforts of institutional and private actors. They mobilized state services and associations to ensure the suitability and safety of accommodation offers. One of the primary responsibilities of the prefectures was to process temporary residence permits under the TPD. The authority to grant temporary residence permits (APS) was extended to allow prefects to issue permits valid nationwide rather than being limited to departmental jurisdictions. Moreover, the crisis necessitated the implementation of new operational responses. Prefectures, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, established 80 reception hubs in major urban centres. These hubs acted as multidisciplinary platforms offering emergency shelter, social and medical diagnostics, administrative procedures, and longer-term housing coordination (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023). A notable initiative was the "Escale Ukraine" hub in Paris, capable of accommodating up to 1,000 people daily at the peak of the crisis. Similarly, in Marseille, a ferry was repurposed to house over 800 refugees (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2023).

Significant entry points for Ukrainians included cities like Nice, Strasbourg, and Paris. For instance, 45% of the refugees, amounting to approximately 13,000 individuals, arrived through Nice and the Alpes-Maritimes region. In response, the prefectures mobilized all necessary services, including state services, city services, and associations such as the French Red Cross, which provided the initial reception. In Nice, for instance, the staff was increased, and the prefecture located 250 housing spots in just a few days (Castex, 2022b).

The prefectures' response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis underscored their critical role in managing the emergency. Moreover, they demonstrated significant coordination and flexibility by mobilizing services, processing temporary residence permits, and establishing 80 reception hubs for emergency shelters.

7.3.3 Local level

This section examines the actions taken at the local level for the management of the Ukrainian refugees by looking at Strasbourg, Gap and Paris. Indeed, it explores the strategies taken to

respond to the sudden arrival of refugees. Moreover, this section highlights the significant role played by citizens in providing accommodation and support to refugees.

In Strasbourg, a unique "one-stop shop" was established to centralize aid and facilitate the reception of refugees. This centre was operated under the responsibility of the prefecture in cooperation with various NGOs such as the local branch of the Red Cross. It provided comprehensive support, including social assistance, administrative guidance, and access to collective accommodation (Valera, 2022). This centre was crucial in welcoming and orienting the 130 refugees that were arriving daily in the city.

In the city of Gap and its surroundings, France Terre d'Asile, an association specializing in refugee support, was entrusted with coordinating the reception of Ukrainians (France Terre d'Asile, 2022). They established a dedicated phone line to answer questions from institutions, associations, and individuals, and to collect offers of volunteering and donations. In addition, emergency accommodation was set up in a hotel in partnership with the Coallia association to provide a place of respite for those arriving and access to necessities (France Terre d'Asile, 2022).

In Paris, France Terre d'Asile also played a crucial role in managing a reception centre for Ukrainian refugees at the Paris Event Center (Mairie de Paris, 2023). This centre provided initial assessment and orientation services to refugees, directing them to appropriate solutions based on their needs. In 2022, the welcome centre received over 13,000 refugees (France Terre d'Asile, n.d.). The city also mobilized resources to support the reception efforts, including providing premises for associative activities and storage of donations, family consultations and psychological support, and nearly 1,000 housing places as part of the regional prefect's scheme (Mairie de Paris, 2023).

It can be argued, however, that the main actors at the local level in the reception of Ukrainians were the citizens. The government quickly realised the potential of citizen housing and decided to implement a strategy to increase the cooperation between the citizens and the state (Pascouau et al., 2024). Amongst the 100,000 Ukrainian refugees in France, 26,000 were hosted in either solidarity housing (living with citizens without the supervision of the state or organisations) or citizen housing (being supervised and following specific guidelines). Moreover, a report from the UNHCR claims that many of the 50,000 Ukrainian refugees for which the housing situation was unknown were probably staying with family or friends (Pascouau et al., 2024, p.41).

Only a few days after the start of the war, the State registered around 40 000 propositions of housing by citizens through the platform 'Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine'. The

DIHAL quickly published a document entitled "Citizen hosting of displaced persons from Ukraine. Framework elements, feedback and best practices", which aimed at providing guidelines (Pascouau et al., 2024, p.43). Nevertheless, the reliance on associations, such as France Terre d'Asile, to coordinate and support citizen housing proved to be essential. These associations provided expertise in refugee reception and integration, ensuring that both hosts and refugees received adequate support and guidance throughout the process. Despite the overall success of citizen housing in providing a significant number of accommodation places for Ukrainian refugees, the implementation process faced some challenges. The coexistence of multiple platforms in some areas led to confusion and potential discouragement among citizens willing to offer accommodation. Additionally, the time it took to operationalize the system led to a delay in accepting offers and potentially demotivated some citizens (Pascouau et al., 2024).

The management of the Ukrainian refugee crisis at the local level demonstrated a high degree of both vertical and horizontal coordination. Indeed, the cities collaborated closely with the prefectures, various NGOs and with the citizens. Moreover, the experience with citizen housing in France highlights the importance of an MLG approach and the high flexibility shown by the Government to swiftly adapt its strategies. Nevertheless, improvements are to be made regarding the state's coordination with citizens, as highlighted by the UNHCR report (Pascouau et al., 2024).

7.3.4 Remaining challenges

This section aims to discover the different situations experienced by the non-Ukrainian refugees in 2022 to compare them with the Ukrainian refugees and assess the overall efficiency of the system. Indeed, contrary to the efficient reception of Ukrainian refugees, the management of other asylum seekers in France in 2022 exposed various shortcomings and persistent challenges.

While Ukrainian refugees were granted the TPD, non-Ukrainian asylum seekers faced an overburdened system fully focused on welcoming the Ukrainian refugees. The number of asylum applications increased by 28% in 2022, reaching 155,773 (France Terre d'Asile, 2023). Nevertheless, asylum seekers arriving in France in 2022 still must wait nine months or more for their applications to be processed (Veillard and Pédech, 2022). This overwhelmed the state services that were already operating with limited resources, which led to prolonged processing times and inadequate reception conditions for the asylum seekers who mainly

came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey (France Terre d'Asile, 2023). For instance, in Paris, some asylum seekers or even refugees, find themselves living in tents in the streets nearby welcoming centres for Ukrainian refugees (Pascual, 2022). Moreover, the city of Calais, known for its 'jungle' during the 2015 refugee crisis, still experiences the constant development of unsanitary camps where migrants find refuge. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, a centre was opened to welcome 130 refugees, whereas other migrants still have to live in those camps that are being dismantled violently by the authorities regularly (Courtois and Mavieux, 2022).

The year 2022 was marked by a major contrast between the exceptional TPD granted to Ukrainian refugees and the less favourable treatment of other asylum seekers and refugees. While the French government highlighted its commitment to asylum and protection for all (Darmanin and Bensaid, 2022), the reality on the ground reflected a different story. Indeed, various NGOs criticized the "two-tiered" system, highlighting the significant differences in reception conditions, access to services, and integration support between Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian refugees (Veillard and Pédech, 2022). For instance, Ukrainian refugees were often housed in hotels or dedicated reception centres, and within only a few days more than 100 000 housing solutions, while non-Ukrainian asylum seekers still lacked access to adequate accommodations (Pascual, 2022; Courtois and Mavieux, 2022).

Furthermore, the TPD offered to Ukrainians, including immediate residency permits and access to employment, were not extended to other asylum seekers, even those fleeing other extreme and dangerous situations (France Terre d'Asile, 2023). An example can be the migrants fleeing Afghanistan after the country was overtaken by the Taliban (Courtois and Mavieux, 2022). This led to accusations of discriminatory practices based on nationality and origin by various NGOs, denouncing underlying racism in the French system (Rodier, 2022).

In conclusion, the management of non-Ukrainian refugees in 2022 exposed the shortcomings and inequalities present in France's asylum system. The exceptional treatment accorded to Ukrainian refugees showed the capacity of the state to provide adequate and efficient solutions to a large and sudden influx of refugees. Nevertheless, the contrast in the initiatives implemented for both groups highlights the need for a more equitable approach to asylum and refugee protection. The challenges faced by non-Ukrainian asylum seekers in 2022 could be seen as a reminder that the progress made in welcoming Ukrainian refugees should not overshadow the need to improve the system to allow all refugees, regardless of their nationality, to benefit from such a welcome.

Observations

In conclusion, the management of the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis in France demonstrated a significant evolution in the country's MLG approach compared to the 2015 crisis. Compared to 2015, the government rapidly established a national strategy. Quickly after the start of the war, the government created an inter-ministerial crisis cell and demonstrated enhanced vertical coordination among various ministries, its agencies as well as the prefectures. This allowed for the implementation of more streamlined decision-making and ensured a more cohesive and efficient response at the national level. The prefectures, acting as regional coordinators, played a crucial role in mobilising resources, processing temporary residence permits, and establishing reception hubs. Moreover, the active involvement of NGOs and civil society in the crisis cell, as well as increased funding towards the local actors allowed them to provide essential services and support to refugees. This showed a strong horizontal coordination. The "Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine" platform marked a great improvement regarding the coordination with citizens. This facilitated a more structured citizen housing, which played a remarkable role in hosting refugees. In contrast, the 2015 crisis was characterized by a lack of coordination, and the resource allocation was fragmented.

In 2022, the government's willingness to adapt and learn from past experiences led to a more flexible style of crisis management strategy. Nevertheless, the preferential treatment towards Ukrainians created a contrast with the experiences of non-Ukrainian asylum seekers, who continued to face challenges. Thus, the 2022 refugee crisis clearly showed an improvement from the 2015 crisis management and highlighted the capacity of the government to provide efficient solutions. However, these initiatives must be broadened to all refugees and the government must its system towards a more universal and inclusive approach.

The increased involvement of NGOs and citizens in the 2022 crisis response, as evidenced by the NGO participation in the CIC-Ukraine and the online citizen platforms, demonstrates a greater emphasis on horizontal coordination. Following the research of Ansell and Gash (2008), this is crucial to increase the efficiency of the MLG structure. Moreover, this can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the response, aligning with Lele's (2023) concept of collaborative crisis governance

8. Discussion

The discussion section aims to synthesize the main findings of this thesis. It compares and contrasts the management of the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises in France to highlight key differences and potential improvements. Moreover, it highlights the limitations discovered during the research. Lastly, it mentions the policy implications of the research.

8.1 Summary of the findings

By examining the evolution of MLG mechanisms, coordination efforts, and policy outcomes, this section seeks to determine whether the 2015 crisis led to a more flexible and collaborative management strategy, and if these adaptations resulted in improved outcomes in 2022.

The analysis of the French government's response to the 2015 refugee crisis reveals a mixed picture regarding the development of a more flexible and collaborative management strategy. Although some efforts were made to improve coordination and resource allocation, significant shortcomings were identified. The creation of new reception centres and the allocation of additional funding to the OFII and OFPRA showed a degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the crisis. Nevertheless, the lack of a clear structure for inter-ministerial collaboration and the lack of equal distribution of refugees across regions highlighted proved systemic shortcomings. The centralised governance system of France limited the autonomy of local authorities and hindered their ability to adapt their responses to local needs. Moreover, the reliance on NGO initiatives and the emergence of informal camps in cities like Paris highlighted the limitations of the reception system.

In contrast, in the aftermath of the 2015 crisis, we saw a series of policy changes aimed at addressing these shortcomings. Indeed, the 2018 law introduced a national scheme for coordinating reception and asylum seeker distribution across regions. The decentralization of the national reception system to territorial OFII offices in 2020 further empowered local actors. Moreover, increased collaboration with NGOs demonstrated a growing recognition of the importance of horizontal coordination. However, despite these efforts, challenges persisted, particularly in achieving a balanced distribution of asylum seekers and ensuring adequate housing for all.

The management of the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis in France showcased a notable improvement in the country's MLG approach compared to 2015. The government's rapid establishment of a national strategy, the creation of an inter-ministerial crisis cell, and enhanced coordination among ministries and prefectures demonstrated a more efficient

response. The activation of the TPD at the EU level facilitated a more coordinated and humane approach to refugee reception. Significant improvements regarding horizontal coordination and citizen engagement were proved through the creation of an online platform as well as the active involvement of NGOs and civil society in the CIC-Ukraine. The mobilization of citizen housing and the establishment of online collaboration platforms in Paris highlighted that the management strategy was more efficient and collaborative.

Although the response to the 2022 crisis was proven to be more efficient than in 2015, it also showed that there are still some limitations in the system. Indeed, non-Ukrainian refugees still face many challenges such as long processing times, inadequate accommodation, and limited access to services. Thus, it can be argued that there was preferential treatment in favour of Ukrainian refugees. While the favourable treatment can be understandable given the specific context of the conflict, it contrasted with the experiences of non-Ukrainian asylum seekers. This difference underscored the capacity of the government to efficiently respond to a refugee crisis, as well as the need for a more universal and consistent approach to refugee protection that benefits all refugees.

A summary of the findings is presented in the table below.

Table 3. Outcomes of the MSSD on the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises.

Variables	2015 refugee crisis	2022 refugee crisis	Outcome
<i>MLG mechanisms</i>	Limited coordination, centralized decision-making	Enhanced coordination, decentralized elements	Dissimilar
<i>Influx of refugees</i>	80,000	115 000	Similar
<i>Nature of the crisis</i>	Wars and conflicts in the Middle East	War in Ukraine	Similar
<i>Actors involved</i>	Government, prefectures,	Government, prefectures,	Similar

	and local actors	and local actors	
<i>Public narrative</i>	Negative	Positive	Dissimilar
<i>Status of the refugees</i>	Standard procedure	TPD	Dissimilar
<i>Outcome of the management strategy</i>	Slow asylum processing, uneven distribution of refugees, reliance on ad-hoc local initiatives, emergence of informal settlements	Faster processing (for Ukrainians), more structured reception, increased citizen engagement, persistent challenges for non-Ukrainian asylum seekers	Dissimilar

Note: Table created by the author.

8.2 Limitations

This section aims to touch upon the limitations experienced during the research, such as the confounding variables, the lack of transparency from the government and further policy developments in France in 2023.

In the table presented above, we can see that the confounding variables (status of the refugees and public narrative) are also dissimilar. Indeed, the distinct regions of origin (Middle East/Africa vs. Ukraine) might have triggered different societal and political reactions, thus potentially impacting the level of support and resources provided as a response to the crisis. It is difficult to fully assess the impact of media and political framing on the management of the crisis, and their precise influence on outcomes is hard to isolate. Although both narratives were explained for each crisis, it is difficult to detangle them from the other variables. While comparing Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian asylum seekers in 2022 provides some insights, it is not enough to control their impact on the difference in outcome.

The speeches made by government officials for both crises highlighted the efforts made by the government to successfully adapt to the crisis, which depicted a positive image of the management strategy. However, the research conducted on the local level revealed a less positive image, highlighting various shortcomings of the management that were not

reflected in the national narrative. Thus, it can be concluded that the reliability of the official documents, although valid when examining the evolution of the strategy, was not representative of their efficiency. Moreover, during the 2022 refugee crisis, the political discourse on asylum focused solely on the management of Ukrainian refugees without mentioning the situation of other refugees, which was criticized by various NGOs such as France Terre d'Asile (2023). It should also be noted that, although in both cases inter-ministerial cases were organised, the minutes of the meetings were not made available to the public. Even if the CIC-Ukraine, which involved the préfets and various other local actors, their inclusion in the development of the strategy cannot be verified. This lack of transparency then hinders the reliability of the results. The lack of transparency was not only apparent with the government but also with the prefectures. Indeed, limited information was found about the actions of the prefectures, and despite various attempts to contact them, there has been no response. Although this could be attributed to various causes, such as the lack of time of the staff or lack of resources, it shows inaccessibility. Due to the inaccessibility of official documents regarding the regions, the findings were limited and had to be compensated with the use of media sources.

Although this study focuses on the time frame of 2015-2022, recent developments regarding the French asylum and immigration laws. Indeed, a new legislation aiming at controlling immigration and improving integration was implemented in 2023. The law provides for the gradual deployment of territorial centres called "France asile" to replace the single counters for the reception of asylum seekers. Moreover, the organization of the National Court of Asylum Law (CNDA) is also reformed, with the creation of territorial chambers of the CNDA (Vie Publique, 2024). These changes prove the continuous commitment of the government to improve decentralisation in the refugee reception system which could not be analysed in the scope of this research.

8.3 Policy Implications and recommendations

Analysing France's responses to the refugee crises in 2015 and 2022 shows different policy implications. The results prove that despite significant improvements in inter-governmental coordination and collaboration by the French government after the 2015 crisis, there are still ongoing obstacles. The special treatment given to Ukrainian refugees highlights the need for a fair and consistent approach to receiving and integrating refugees. This study also indicates that giving local authorities more decision-making power and resources would allow for a more efficient response. The following recommendations aim to address the identified

shortcomings within the current system while building upon the observed strengths and the lessons learned from both crises.

Building upon the progress witnessed in 2022, further decentralization of the asylum system is recommended. It has been proven that this not only allows for more efficiency of the services, but it would also reduce the spending (Djibrine, 2023). Moreover, granting local authorities more autonomy and resources allows them to tailor solutions to the specific needs of refugees within their jurisdictions, which increases the system's adaptability. Homsy and Warner (2013) explained that local actors provide specialised knowledge that is important to taking into account in developing policies (p.296). Both crises illustrated the important role that both local authorities and NGOs had in organising the reception of refugees, delivering vital services and building local refugee support. Thus, it is important to formalize the participation of NGOs in structured partnerships and include them in the development of nation-wide strategies. Moreover, it is crucial to increase and stabilize their funding so that they can improve their services. This idea is also supported by the OECD study, as they explain that long-term funding would make the work of NGOs more efficient and sustainable (OECD, 2018, p.14). Moreover, the study of the OECD (2018) highlights the importance of the communication between NGOs and local authorities (pp.13-14). Indeed, communication and coordination channels must be improved to be simpler and more efficient. These recommendations could also be potential solutions to reduce the growing disconnect between the national and the local level mentioned by Scholten and Penninx (2016). In this perspective, the implementation of the 2023 law on immigration and asylum would be interesting to investigate.

Within the same lines, it is important to establish permanent inter-ministerial crisis cells and improve the vertical coordination between ministries and prefectures. As Adam et. al. (2019) mentioned, coordination is the only way to create efficient policy outcomes. They argued that the lack of coordination between policy makers and implementers is the main reason for shortfalls within policy implementations (p.500). Indeed, coordination allows to foster cohesive and efficient responses during crises. Moreover, it has been witnessed during the research process that the transparency and accessibility of official documents and data was very limited, both at the national and at the regional level. The following recommendation is then to ensure the publication of summaries or key outcomes of inter-ministerial meetings and consultations with NGOs. This also allows to foster public trust, helps with the understanding of the decision-making processes and bolsters the accountability of the actors involved. Lele (2023) explained that collaborative crisis governance, and the involvement of various actors,

increases the legitimacy of policies. In this case, transparency allows us to ensure that the various actors are indeed involved in the process.

It has been shown in this study that public engagement initiatives are necessary to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for refugees. Existing platforms like "Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine" have proven their efficiency in increasing the country's capacity to host refugees. This research argues that they could be adapted and broadened to encompass all refugee groups instead of a specific platform for Ukraine. This could allow the government and the relevant actors to create a long-term network of citizens willing to host, which could create a longer-term solution for refugees. The UNHCR claims that including citizens initiatives is the only way to face the current and the future migration crises (Rummery, 2017). Vignon (2017) also notes that citizens initiatives are a vital tool for the success of integration of migrants. He explains that the two worlds meeting, the refugees and the citizens, transforms social action and improves not only the reception of the migrants but also their integration into society (Vignon, 2017).

Lastly, as seen during the 2022 crisis management, a comprehensive revision of policies is needed to ensure consistent and equitable treatment for all refugees. This includes standardizing the provision of support services and integration measures to all asylum seekers, irrespective of nationality or geopolitical context. This recommendation has implications at both the French and the EU level. Indeed, it would be beneficial to develop a stronger common European system for asylum regarding the reception of refugees. Furthermore, the Left in the European Parliament has issued a statement arguing in favour of equal treatment for all refugees, claiming that all refugees, as well as humans in general, are born equal (Giese, 2022). In 1975, the International Labour Organization has published the Convention (No. 143) concerning migrations in abusive conditions and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers (International Labour Organization, n.d.). Nevertheless, France is not part of the 28 countries that have ratified this Convention (International Labour Organization, n.d.).

In conclusion, this study highlights the need for a more decentralized, inclusive, and equitable asylum system. Decentralization, strengthened local capacities, and robust partnerships with NGOs, as well as improved inter-agency coordination, transparency, and public engagement are essential for efficient policy strategies. Lastly, a comprehensive policy overhaul is needed to guarantee consistent support for all refugees, regardless of origin. By implementing these recommendations, France can build a more resilient, equitable, and effective system for managing future refugee crises.

8.4. Theoretical implications

This research significantly contributes to the theoretical understanding of MLG in the context of crisis management, particularly within the realm of refugee crises. The findings have shown that increased flexibility and collaboration in governance can create improved outcomes, which is in line with the MLG theory presented by Adam et. al. (2019) . The enhanced coordination and adaptability observed in the French government's response to the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis compared to the 2015 crisis, highlights the potential of MLG frameworks to facilitate a more efficient crisis response. However, the preferential treatment of Ukrainian refugees in 2022, despite improvements in coordination, highlights the potential for systemic biases and inequalities to persist within MLG structures. Furthermore, the study's integration of crisis management theory with MLG offers a more comprehensive framework for analysing the dynamics of intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder interactions during crises, which confirms the arguments made in the Theoretical Framework based on the research of Lele (2023) as well as Ansell and Gash (2008). Indeed, these authors claimed the importance of collaboration of various level for crisis management and of horizontal and vertical cooperation. This interdisciplinary approach enriches the theoretical discourse on both MLG and crisis management and provides a more holistic understanding of the factors that can contribute to effective crisis response.

In sum, this research not only validates the potential benefits of MLG in crisis management but also exposes its potential pitfalls and limitations. It underscores the importance of continuous adaptation, learning, and a commitment to equitable treatment in the implementation of MLG frameworks. By highlighting these complexities, the study contributes to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of MLG's role in addressing complex humanitarian challenges.

9. Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of MLG in the context of refugee crises in France. It was guided by the research question: How much did the management strategies in the 2015 refugee crisis impact the development of management approaches in the 2022 refugee crisis, and did these changes result in better outcomes?

The study shows a distinct change in how France deals with the refugee crisis from 2015 to 2022. The surge of asylum seekers during the 2015 crisis revealed major deficiencies in coordination, resource allocation, and France's capacity to manage mass migration. Indeed, the government had a centralized structure, insufficient resources, and a lack of clear collaboration between ministries in 2015 that hindered successful crisis management. Local governments, especially in places such as Paris and Calais, faced significant obstacles because of limited resources and inflexibility in the management.

In reaction to these difficulties, the French government made several policy adjustments and changes following the 2015 crisis. The goal of these alterations was to improve cooperation, delegate some asylum system responsibilities, and boost partnerships with NGOs and civil society. In 2018, a law was implemented that established a nationwide program to coordinate the reception and distribution of asylum seekers among different regions. Following this, in 2020, the national reception system was decentralized, giving more authority to local entities. These changes, along with more financial resources and partnerships with NGOs, were designed to establish an asylum system that is more adaptable and faster to react.

The handling of the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis demonstrated the beneficial effects of these changes. An efficient and effective response to the crisis. The implementation of a national strategy, the formation of an inter-ministerial crisis cell, and improved coordination showed a more effective and synchronized response than in 2015. The implementation of the TPD at the EU level helped make the process of welcoming refugees more efficient and compassionate. Platforms were implemented enabling citizens to participate in housing mobilization, while NGOs and civil society are actively engaged in crisis response, underscoring the increasing significance of horizontal coordination and collaboration.

According to this research, the initial hypothesis suggesting that the 2015 refugee crisis resulted in the formation of a more adaptable and cooperative management approach has been proven correct. The results show a noticeable change towards more coordination, decentralization, and collaboration in the period after the 2015 crisis. While the reception and

integration of Ukrainian refugees were significantly enhanced, the experiences of non-Ukrainian asylum seekers remained problematic. Indeed, the response to the crisis for Ukrainian refugees showed quicker processing, better reception systems, and higher citizen involvement, demonstrating a more efficient and compassionate strategy than in 2015. Nevertheless, non-Ukrainian asylum seekers still encountered difficulties in accessing services and housing, highlighting the necessity for additional reforms to guarantee equivalent treatment and assistance for all refugees. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is only partially supported, as it revealed ongoing limitations in achieving equitable treatment for all refugees.

To summarize, this thesis shows how the 2015 refugee crisis prompted major policy changes and reforms in France's management of refugee crises. The positive evolution of the country's MLG mechanisms is demonstrated by the increased flexibility, collaboration, and decentralization seen in the 2022 crisis response. Yet, challenges remain, especially in ensuring fair treatment for every refugee.

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