

Navigating Boundaries: The Resilience of Civil Organizations in Hungary in Refugee Affairs - A Case Study of Government-Third Sector Dynamics in Hungary, From Post-Communism to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

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Abstract:

Introduction:

This research aims to investigate the operation and activities of civil organizations involved in refugee affairs in Hungary, spanning from the post-communist period to the present Ukrainian refugee crisis. A pivotal factor influencing the functioning of these civil organizations is their relationship with the government and the institutional environment (including legal framework, financial support etc) in which they operate. To analyze this relationship, the study will apply Najam's four Cs model, examining the dynamics of cooperation, confrontation, complementarity, and co-optation in the context of refugee affairs.

Objectives:

The research will be structured around three distinct periods, each exhibiting varied patterns of collaboration between the government and the third sector in the realm of refugee affairs. The post-communist era witnessed complementary cooperation, with civil organizations filling essential roles in public service provision until the establishment and stabilisation of the state refugee institution. Concurrently, analyses from that time suggest occasional confrontations, particularly between law enforcement entities (police and border control agencies) and humanitarian civil organizations, highlighting the coexistence of confrontational collaboration. In the early 2000s, as international situations stabilized and formalized cooperation structures between the government and NGOs emerged, a consolidated partnership between state and civil entities in refugee affairs developed.

However, a turning point occurred after 2010, marked by an active collaboration shift. This change became notably pronounced during the influx of refugees, leading to stricter government restrictions on civil society organizations, especially those supporting refugees.

Methodology:

The study will primarily rely on legal documents, government records, and in-depth interviews with representatives of civil organizations. By analyzing the evolving political landscape and the impact of governmental restrictions on civil organizations, the research will assess how these organizations adapt and develop survival strategies amid increasing limitations, reduced support, and resource constraints.