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EXPLORING EU'S POLICY ON UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS: EXAMINING THE OPTIONS FOR REPATRIATION

Abstract

Over 10 million people left Ukraine for nearby nations right after the war started, with the European Union taking in a sizable percentage of these refugees. The EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) because of the surge to help these people. Here I will be examining the prospect of sending refugees back to Ukraine. This study applies the securitization theory to assess the strategies the EU is exploring for repatriation. The research tries to identify prospective regulations that might be enacted for repatriation by examining secondary data, polls that are accessible online, and official papers. The essay considers the policies' larger ramifications and how they could affect both refugees and the EU. The purpose of this research is to provide light on alternative policy options and how they could affect the refugee issue in the EU.

Keywords: *TPD, Ukrainian migrants, repatriation, securitization, war*

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Aİ-nin Ukraynalı Miqrantlarla bağlı Siyasətinin Tədqiqi: Repatriasiya variantlarının araşdırılması

Xülasə

Müharibə başlayandan dərhal sonra 10 milyondan çox ukraynalı qonşu ölkələrə qaçmağa məcbur oldu və Avropa Birliyi bu miqrantların önəmli bir hissəsini qəbul etdi. AB artan insan axını idarə etmək üçün Müvəqqəti Müdafiə Direktivini (MMD) qüvvəyə mindirdi. Bu yazıda mən həmin miqrantların geri dönüş seçimlərini analiz edəcəyəm. Bu araşdırma AB-nin repatriasiya üçün araşdırdığı strategiyaları qiymətləndirmək üçün sekuritizasiya nəzəriyyəsini tətbiq edir. Tədqiqat ikincil məlumatları, onlayn əldə edilə bilən sorğuları və rəsmi sənədləri araşdıraraq repatriasiya üçün qüvvəyə minə biləcək perspektivli qaydaları müəyyən etməyə çalışır. Esse siyasətlərin daha böyük nəticələrini və onların həm qaçqınlara, həm də AB-yə necə təsir göstərə biləcəyini nəzərdən keçirir. Bu araşdırmanın məqsədi alternativ siyasət variantları və onların Aİ-də qaçqınlar məsələsinə necə təsir göstərə biləcəyinə işıq salmaqdır.

Açar sözlər: *MMD, ukraynalı miqrantlar, geri göndərilmə, sekuritizasiya, müharibə*

Introduction

Following the Russian military's aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, many individuals fled the country, seeking refuge in other countries. The EU implemented the Temporary Protection Directive to address the needs of these refugees. However, scholars have identified instances of racial discrimination by member states and officials, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the directive. Additionally, investigations into security concerns of member states have also been conducted (1).

Security is commonly understood as the absence or reduction of threats to important values, but according to securitization theory, security is a social construct that involves framing issues as

existential threats, which can lead to the use of exceptional measures to address them. This subjective perception of security is shaped by political actors and society, and it can be used to justify authoritarian measures. Securitization theory highlights the role of power and discourse in shaping security and suggests that security is not objective, but rather a subjective perception (Emmers, 2013: 13).

Although EU officials have not explicitly stated it, it is widely understood that it is not feasible to provide for the needs of over 10 million refugees. As a result, some think tanks and individuals have already begun considering the possibility of repatriating refugees with the financial support of the EU.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used to analyze the options related to the repatriation process of Ukrainians affected by the war in Ukraine. The data sources will include official government documents, survey results, and previous research studies. The independent variable in this research is the war in Ukraine, while the dependent variable is the repatriation process of Ukrainians.

The research will be divided into several parts, including an abstract, introduction, analysis and findings section, conclusion, and a list of literature cited. The abstract will briefly summarize the study's purpose and findings. The introduction will provide background information on the topic, research objectives, and methodology used. The analysis and findings section will present the results of the research in an organized manner with relevant supporting data. The conclusion section will summarize the study's main findings, discuss their implications, and suggest recommendations for future research.

Analysis and Findings. The influx of Ukrainian refugees into host countries can pose security concerns, particularly related to border control, identification, and assimilation. This is because some refugees may have fake identification documents, which can compromise the security of the host country. Additionally, refugees are at risk of being exploited, including forced labour and human trafficking, which can also affect the safety of the host country. Furthermore, the arrival of refugees may worsen existing social tensions and increase the likelihood of conflict due to cultural and linguistic barriers that can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust. Despite being received more positively than previous refugee waves, Ukrainian refugees and migrants are still viewed as a potential security risk to the European Union.

The European Union is also worried about the return of about 10 million Ukrainian refugees to their country. According to a recent sociological survey by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the main reason cited by 86% of Ukrainian forced migrants for not returning to their homeland is the danger posed by the ongoing war in Ukraine. Even if the conflict ends, other significant challenges will remain, such as unemployment (mentioned by 32% of migrants), substandard housing (13%), lack of necessities (12%), and limited access to quality education for their children (10%) (3).

Franck Düvell (2022) proposed six scenarios for returning refugees in Ukraine. In the first two scenarios, the eastern part of Ukraine is heavily damaged, but most refugees would return to their homes, with an estimated 1.65 million or more settling in the EU. The third scenario involves Russia occupying some parts of Ukraine, leading to 4.5 million people being displaced, with 1.44 million fleeing to the EU and a total of 3.48 million Ukrainians settling in the EU long-term. The fourth scenario sees a large-scale displacement of up to 12-14 million Ukrainians, with 4.8 million becoming refugees in the EU. The fifth scenario depicts a complete Russian occupation, with up to 20.9 million Ukrainians aspiring to flee the country, leaving over 18.8 million seeking refuge in the EU. The final scenario provides no specific details but suggests that most Ukrainians would not have the aspiration to return (4).

In a 2022 survey of Ukrainian refugees in Poland, 42% wanted to return to Ukraine after the war, 17% aimed to settle permanently in Poland, and 11% planned to earn enough money to return. Some refugees expressed an urgent desire to return to Ukraine due to difficult living conditions. Only two refugees expressed interest in Polish citizenship, while two others planned to apply for

official refugee status. Approximately 16% of respondents did not provide a clear future plan, and 5% selected "Other" (5). A survey conducted in Slovakia found that around 65% of Ukrainian refugees expressed their intention to return to Ukraine once the situation improved, while around 21% did not have any clear long-term intentions and 9% planned to remain in Slovakia (6). In Romania, almost half of the surveyed refugees (47%) intended to return to Ukraine as soon as possible, while 28% planned to stay in Romania for a more extended period, and almost one-fifth expressed their intention to continue migrating to other countries (Zymnin, Kowalski, Sielewicz, Vlk, Focica., 2022). In Hungary, 44% of respondents expressed a desire to stay in Hungary for an indefinite period, while 31% did not know how long they wanted to stay, 15% expressed a desire to stay permanently, and only 10% reported wanting to stay for a fixed period. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary may have long-term settlement aspirations in the country (8).

The surveys suggest that:

- Ukrainian refugees share a desire to return to their home country as soon as the situation improves.
- Some refugees plan to remain in the host countries for a period of time to accumulate financial resources before returning to Ukraine.
- Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the hospitable environment provided by the host countries.
- The refugees left Ukraine mainly due to the ongoing war.

Conclusion

Concerns about border control, identity, and integration have been raised because of the migration of Ukrainian refugees into host nations. Despite being welcomed more favourably than earlier refugee waves, Ukrainian migrants and refugees have been seen as a possible security danger to the European Union. While most Ukrainian refugees hope to return home once conditions improve, some have plans to stay permanently in their host nations, work to save money before leaving, or go to new countries. Significant obstacles, such as unemployment, inadequate housing, a lack of basics, and restricted access to high-quality education, face Ukrainian exiles returning to their country of origin.

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