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## Political and Socio-Economic Dimensions of Modern International Migration: The Case of Ukraine

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the study of current trends in the field of international migration processes and how the socio-economic phenomenon that acquires new dimensions and becomes one of the key factors influencing the economy, business, labor market and social status of migrants. The article provides a theoretical and methodological substantiation of the essence and socio-economic paradigm of modern international migration, which affects donor countries, recipient countries, labor markets, demographic shifts, entrepreneurship and business in connection with geopolitical challenges, namely, political instability, military conflicts, social problems and environmental crises. A study of the impact of Ukrainian migrants on the host countries economies was conducted, which shows positive macroeconomic indicators of GDP on labor market conditions in the absence of a universal system of regulation of migration processes of states and especially illegal migration; analytical information on the return of Ukrainian immigrants, the impact of international migration processes in the context of war and labor migration on Ukrainian companies, businesses and their challenges, including working hours, workload. Despite the negative and positive aspects of the spread of international labor migration, the authors propose to implement, through the development of effective strategies, the main ways of reforming international labor migration, taking into account the post-war development of the country. It is concluded that the issue of international migration is a multilateral, complex and controversial phenomenon that requires further research and allows for the determination of their priorities in the future. In general, the cases reviewed show international migration, labor migration in particular, as an integral part of the globalized world playing an important role in shaping political, socio-economic and cultural processes in the context of the latest geopolitical challenges.

**Keywords:** migration, international labor migration, entrepreneurship, global business, labor market, migration policy, donor countries, recipient countries




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## Introduction

Contemporary international migration is an integral part of the modern globalized world, playing a vital role in shaping socio-economic, political, and cultural processes. The growing scale of migration flows and their multifaceted impact on donor countries, recipient countries, and the global economy are further intensified by challenges such as political instability, armed conflicts, and environmental crises, all of which significantly influence the intensity and direction of migration. The issue of international migration processes is particularly relevant in the context of global changes in the world economy, the rising influence of transnational corporations, the formation of new labor markets, and demographic shifts. Understanding the interconnection between migration trends and business is especially important, as these factors affect the economic development of countries, the availability of skilled labor, and innovation potential (*Kulishov et al., 2024*).

The characteristics of labor migration in conditions of geopolitical instability and wartime in Ukraine have created a number of challenges and obstacles in managing migration flows in the labor market, economic impacts on entrepreneurship, and the socio-economic development of countries. Consequently, issues of migration policy are becoming increasingly relevant and require in-depth research, aimed at deepening our understanding of society's social dynamics under the influence of recent geopolitical challenges.

## Materials and Methods

In the course of conducting this research and writing the article, various sources of information were used, including the scientific works of leading domestic and international scholars focused on the essence, features, policies, and socio-economic paradigms of modern international migration. The methodology included comparative analysis, empirical methods such as statistical data processing, and expert assessment methods used to identify current problems and challenges in international migration policy amid geopolitical upheavals. Additionally, methods of analysis and synthesis were applied to explore the theoretical foundations of international labor migration policy and integrate them into the context of their impact on the labor market, entrepreneurship, business, and the socio-economic development of countries.

## Results

International migration encompasses various categories of individuals, such as economic migrants, refugees, political asylum seekers, students, family members, and others. As a phenomenon, it represents a crucial component of the modern globalized world and significantly influences the economy, sociocultural dynamics, political structures, and other spheres of life in both host and origin countries (*Chernobay et al., 2023*).

Migration can be temporary or permanent, occur through multiple channels, and carry diverse social, economic, and political consequences for both sending and receiving states. This process not only fosters cultural diversity but also makes a substantial contribution to the development and evolution of societies and economies at the international level.

The objects and subjects of international migration can be analyzed from various perspectives depending on the context and scope of the research. Taking into account the multidimensional nature of migration, Table 1 outlines the main objects and subjects of this phenomenon.

The main drivers of international labor migration are unsatisfactory economic conditions faced by the working-age population in emigration countries. These include, among other issues, low wages, unemployment, poor living standards, and widespread poverty.

In the case of Ukraine, the issue of migration and its impact on the country's economic state and human resource management in business is critically important, as it directly affects the future of

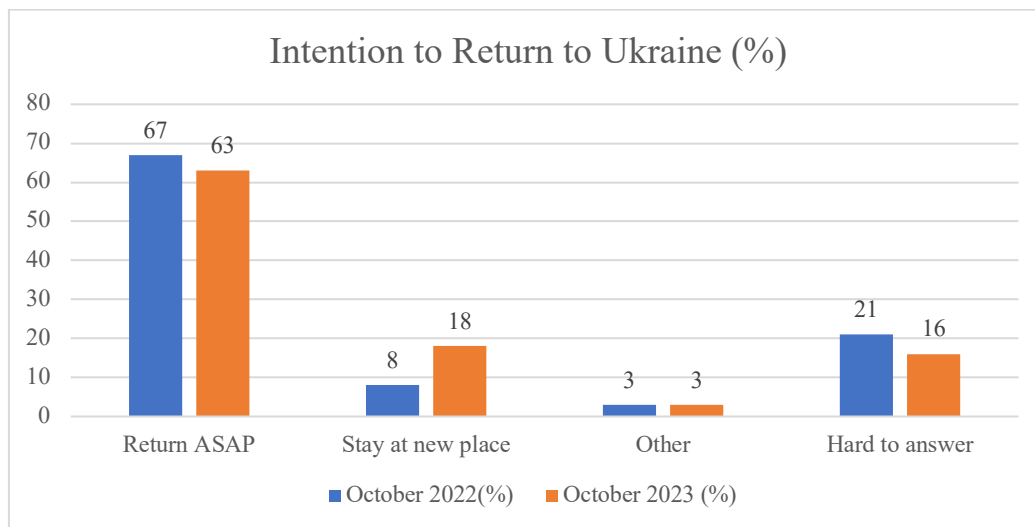
the country's post-war recovery. Gradus Research, a research company, conducted surveys in 2022 and 2023 on behalf of the Kyiv International Economic Forum among Ukrainians who emigrated abroad after the beginning of the full-scale invasion, as well as among the business community.

**Table 1. Objects and Subjects of International Migration**

Objects	Subjects
<b>People.</b> The primary object of migration is individuals relocating from one country or region to another.	<b>Migrants.</b> Individuals who physically move from one location to another.
<b>Families.</b> Migration may affect family structures and cohesion, facilitating the relocation of entire families or specific family members for reunification purposes.	<b>Receiving countries.</b> States that receive migrants and where they plan to reside or work.
<b>Migrant groups.</b> These may include communities sharing cultural, religious, or social characteristics, migrating together based on shared motivations.	<b>Sending countries.</b> States from which migrants depart for various reasons (economic, political, social, etc.).
<b>Migration flows.</b> The large-scale movement of people from one region or country to another, which can be seasonal, temporary, or permanent.	<b>International organizations.</b> Such entities as the United Nations or the International Organization for Migration, operating in the sphere of migration policy and the protection of migrants' rights.
	<b>Social and non-profit organizations.</b> Non-governmental and charitable institutions providing migrants with adaptation support, guidance, and services.

Source: developed by the authors based on FitzGerald, 2022.

According to nearly half of the respondents (45%), the main reason for leaving the country during the full-scale war was the safety and well-being of their families. Most respondents relocated to Poland (29%), Lithuania (16%), and Germany (10%). Nearly two-thirds (62%) reported that they were able to adapt fully or relatively quickly to life in the host country. The most frequently mentioned adaptation challenges included the local language (40%), financial difficulties (28%), and housing issues (24%) (Fig 1).

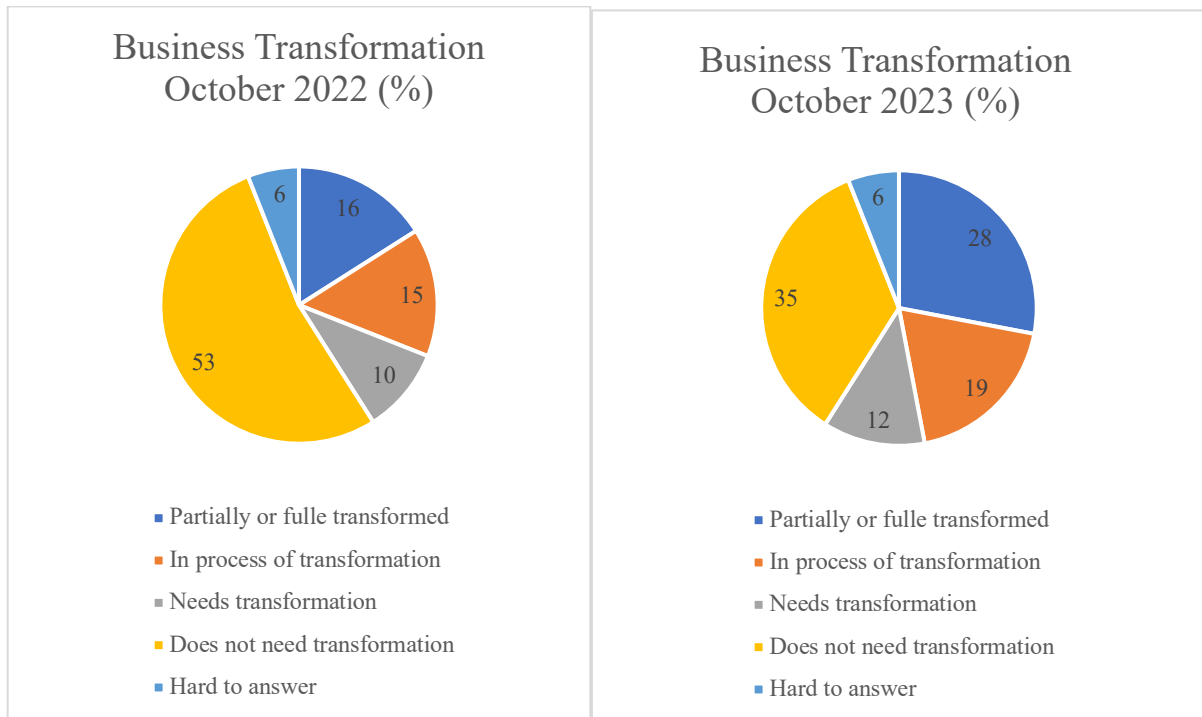


**Figure 1.** Survey on the Intention to Return to Ukraine

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Gradus Research data, 2023.

The survey results on employment indicate a high level of engagement among Ukrainian immigrants. Among Ukrainians who emigrated since the beginning of the war, 70% are employed: 54% work in the host country, 12% work remotely for Ukrainian companies, and 4% work remotely for foreign companies. The main barrier to employment mentioned by respondents is the language barrier.

Regarding Ukrainian businesses during wartime and under the influence of labor migration, it is noted that two-thirds (66%) of Ukrainian companies continue to operate as they did before the war, while the remaining third (34%) operate partially. Notably, there has been a significant increase in the share of businesses that have undergone, or require, partial or full sectoral transformation. As of October 2023, this figure stands at 59% (Fig 2).



**Figure 2.** Sectoral Transformation of Ukrainian Businesses

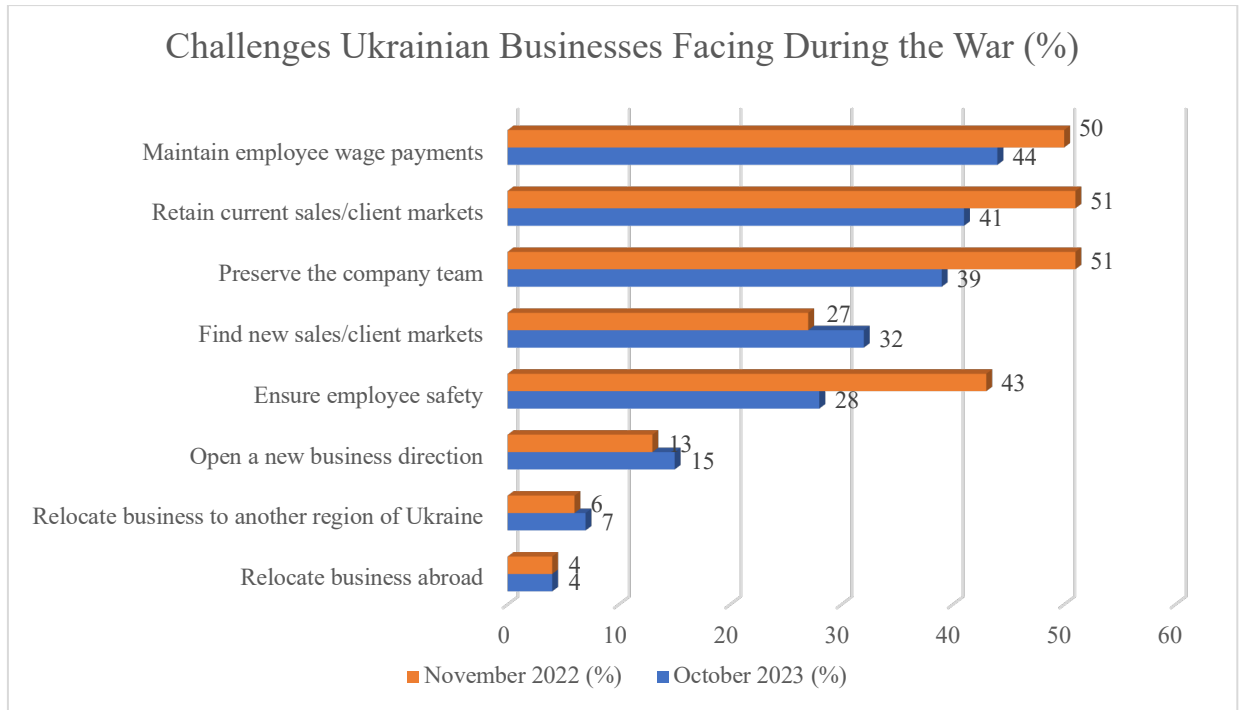
Source: Compiled by the authors based on Gradus Research data, 2023.

In terms of business workload, over a quarter of surveyed companies (26%) report being 100% or more operational, while half (52%) are operating at more than 50% of their capacity. Furthermore, three-quarters (76%) report that their average monthly income has been maintained during the full-scale war period.

However, according to the business community survey, only a quarter (24%) of the companies report a shortage of personnel. The key challenges identified by businesses during the war include maintaining salary payments (44%), retaining markets and customers (41%), and ensuring business continuity during power outages (43%) (Fig 3).

“The results of the study suggest that the current stage of Ukrainian migration abroad, driven by the full-scale Russian invasion, is starting to have a tangible impact on the functioning of Ukrainian companies. Businesses see the issue of labor shortages as a key future risk and expect the government to be proactive and solve the problem through tackling corruption, supporting entrepreneurship, and creating new job opportunities,” - Yevheniia Blyzniuk, sociologist and founder of Gradus Research, comments (Gradus Research, 2023). Thus, the horizon of businesses planning during wartime has significantly shortened. Most companies (71%) plan no more than one year ahead. Nevertheless, more than half (53%) are optimistic and include active or moderate growth strategies in their planning. The primary risk cited by companies is employee mobilization (39%). To counteract potential human capital challenges, businesses plan to attract new employees within Ukraine (41%), enable remote

work (34%), and offer competitive financial conditions (32%).



**Figure 3.** Challenges Ukrainian Businesses Facing During the War

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Gradus Research data, 2023.

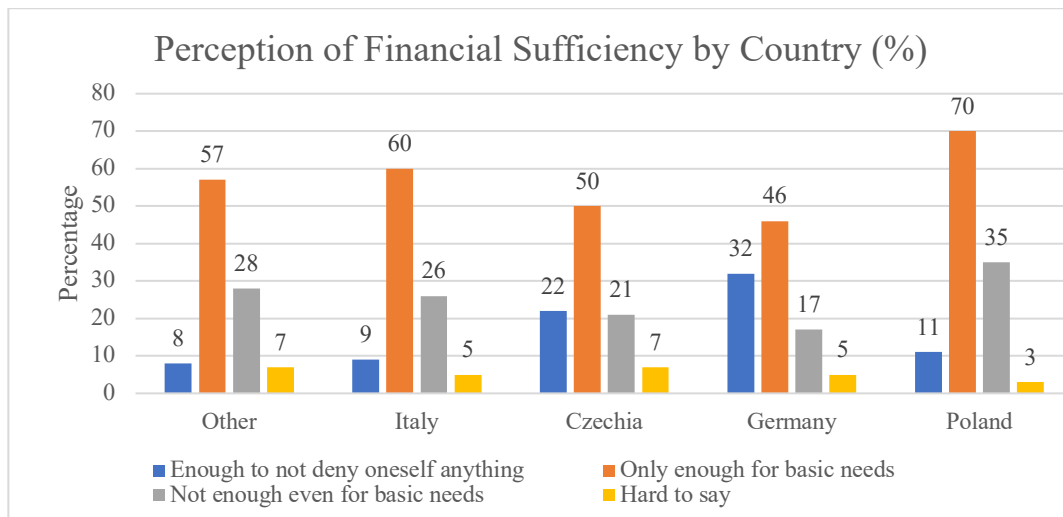
Therefore, migration processes bring both positive and negative socio-economic consequences for donor and recipient countries. They promote economic growth, cultural exchange, and labor market expansion, but also introduce challenges such as social tension, inequality, and demographic imbalances. Effective migration governance is critical to balancing the interests of all parties and ensuring sustainable development in the face of modern geopolitical challenges (*Hushko et al., 2021*).

The consequences of war for international labor migration are complex and multifaceted. It is crucial to regulate and foster cooperation between countries, institutions, and organizations to uphold the rights of immigrants and address humanitarian issues. Moreover, the type of conflict significantly influences migration patterns—violent or occupation-based conflicts often result in large numbers of forced migrants, creating serious challenges for domestic security, asylum systems, and economic stability in host countries. On the other hand, war may also increase labor demand in sectors such as defense, reconstruction, and infrastructure recovery, which can attract migrants with relevant skills and experience.

In general, the impact of war on international labor migration is a multifaceted and contradictory phenomenon that requires in-depth research. Scholars, policymakers, and civil service organizations must dedicate efforts to studying the causes, effects, and strategies for managing migration during armed conflicts in order to protect civilians and stabilize both host countries and countries of origin (*Pavlov, 2022; Gorny, 2024*).

Besides, the research shows that Ukrainian immigrants have a positive effect on host economies. A study by Melnik & Gubitsky (2022) revealed that from 2013 to 2018, the average annual increase in Poland's labor force due to Ukrainian immigration was 0.8%, contributing approximately 0.5% to Ukraine's GDP. Based on OECD projections, Ukrainian immigrants are expected to positively impact other European economies as well. For example, the projected annual GDP growth contribution is estimated at 1.2% for countries like the Czech Republic, Poland, and Estonia, and 0.8% for Latvia and Hungary. However, these estimates may be understated due to the forced nature of recent migration and the resulting demographic shift in 2022, which can hinder integration (Fig 4).





**Figure 4.** Living conditions of Ukrainian migrants.

Source: compiled by the authors based on open data (Statista, 2023)

The forecasts of Oxford Economics adopt a more conservative approach (Oxford Economics, 2022). For instance, if 650,000 Ukrainian immigrants remain in Poland, the labor force will increase by an additional 210,000 (1.2%) by 2030, and the potential GDP will grow by 1.2% compared to the baseline scenario of Oxford Economics. Should 1 million people migrate to the country, the labor force would expand by 370,000 (2.1%), while the total potential GDP would rise by 2.0% by 2030. Ultimately (by 2050), the positive effect will intensify, with the potential GDP increasing by 1.7% under the second scenario (+2.5% under the scenario of 1 million migrants).

The Deloitte report also notes that the integration of internally displaced Ukrainians in Poland may lead to an annual GDP growth of 0.2–3.5 percent during the first five years (Deloitte & UNHCR, 2023). This will depend on the quality of Poland's integration strategy, particularly its labor market flexibility and ability to address housing challenges.

Research conducted by Kancs and Lecca forecasts that an inflow of approximately 2.3 million immigrants into the EU by 2040 would raise the region's GDP by an average of 1.3%, assuming full integration of all immigrants (Kancs, 2018). Additionally, the long-term fiscal benefits of migration are expected to outweigh the short-term costs associated with welfare, language training, education, and employment.

These studies, thus, confirm the positive impact of Ukrainian immigrants on the economies of host countries through increased private consumption and overall GDP growth. While estimates vary depending on the assumptions and calculation models used, the economic influence of Ukrainian immigrants across recipient countries is generally positive.

IMF study from 2020 estimates that, all other factors being equal, the output of goods and services in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Estonia will be 2.2–2.3% higher than in the baseline scenario without migration, due to the contribution of Ukrainian migrants (Bayer, 2022). In Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, production of goods and services in 2026 is projected to be 0.6–0.65% higher than in a no-migration baseline scenario, attributable to the impact of Ukrainian immigration. UN survey data indicate that 87% of forcibly displaced persons are women with children. The proportion of migrants aged 18–59, Ukraine's fertility rate (1.2 children per woman), and the assumption that 70% of workers remain employed throughout the observed period were all taken into account.

Despite the favorable effects of migration, there are also certain aspects associated with it. For example, the spending of Ukrainian immigrants has become an additional factor contributing to inflation in European Union countries. In 2022, energy prices rose significantly, leading to a new era of record-high costs. In Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Hungary, inflation exceeded 20% year-over-year (Van Tubergen et al., 2024). In the Czech Republic and Poland, inflation reached around 18%.

Additionally, the presence of Ukrainian immigrants also influenced the real estate markets in host countries.

As a result, while the migration of Ukrainian citizens brings benefits, it is important to account for potential negative consequences, including demographic shifts, high inflation, rising housing prices in some receiving countries, and especially the impact of political and environmental factors on modern migration (*Tucha et al., 2022*). These two factors—political and environmental—often interact, triggering waves of migration involving millions of people.

Thus, it can be argued that political and environmental factors are key driving forces of contemporary migration. Armed conflicts, political persecution, and environmental crises force millions of people to leave their homes in search of safety and better living conditions. These processes call for a global approach, in particular, cooperation among international organizations, governments, and civil society to address the root causes of migration and to provide humanitarian support to those affected (*Kamardina et al, 2024*).

As practice shows, there is no universal system for regulating migration processes globally, and each state adopts its own approach to this issue. Nevertheless, three major challenges concern many countries:

- first, the reception of refugees in countries involved in armed conflicts. War and conflict are primary causes of mass migration, as people seek safety and asylum. This situation poses a range of challenges for host countries, including the provision of adequate assistance and the integration of refugees into local communities;

- second, the eradication of human trafficking, which remains a serious problem and negatively impacts the rights and dignity of individuals. This criminal activity results in exploitation, sexual violence, forced labor, and other forms of human rights violations. International coordination and cooperation are crucial in addressing this issue;

- third, the regulation of temporary labor migration. The growing number of workers seeking opportunities abroad has raised concerns about their rights and working conditions. A key task is to develop mechanisms that ensure fair and effective systems for temporary employment.

Ukraine's state migration policy up to 2025 has been oriented toward increasing the migration of Ukrainian citizens for employment abroad, particularly in neighboring border regions. This migration typically takes the form of seasonal labor migration, which is cyclical by nature, though it may also lead to a shift from temporary to permanent migration—especially to more distant countries. Labor migration is the largest form of migration and affects the Ukrainian population across many domains. On one hand, it provides a source of income for foreign states, while the transfer of knowledge and experience can alleviate pressure on the domestic labor market, improve the welfare of many families, and contribute to national development. However, in certain regions, labor shortages have emerged, negatively affecting family relationships and the country's demographic situation. Migrants' consumption-driven incomes can also lead to increased expenditures, inflation, and income disparities (*Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2017*).

Consequently, it is important to note that, as the significance of international migration grows, the role of international organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) in regulating these processes is also expanding. This is reflected in the growth and diversification of the activities of international organizations with general jurisdiction, as well as in the establishment of specialized organizations focused on migration issues.

In this regard, the Ukrainian government must urgently undertake migration reform, drawing upon international experience and proposals for the implementation of social standards in the country. The primary goal of this reform is to facilitate the return of labor migrants and internally displaced persons fleeing conflict by ensuring their security and improving living conditions.

Moreover, the issue of illegal migration has become more acute due to war and conflict. Many people affected by such circumstances attempt to cross borders without proper documentation or take dangerous routes involving smugglers and illicit organizations. This situation poses security risks, undermines migration control, and increases the potential for illegal employment practices (*Gremi Personal, 2020*).



Despite both the positive and negative aspects of migration, the spread of international labor migration during wartime must be approached with careful consideration and implemented through effective strategies which include ensuring the safety and protection of the rights of displaced persons; securing access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing; providing protection from exploitation or violence; the creation of international institutions that support immigrant rights.

In order to achieve long-term development during periods of conflict, efforts must be focused on integrating immigrants into new countries. It includes providing opportunities for education and professional development, which allow immigrants to thrive and contribute to the economic growth of their host nations.

At the same time, support and reintegration programs aimed at facilitating the return of displaced persons to their local communities are crucial for fostering positive social reintegration.

Finally, the international community must strive to create mechanisms for conflict resolution, war prevention, and peacebuilding in affected regions, as these are key to reducing migration volumes and promoting sustainable development (Nikitina *et al.*, 2020; Rybchak *et al.*, 2024; Atamaniuk *et al.*, 2024).

Furthermore, future considerations regarding international labor migration in the context of war require awareness of the following key aspects:

- *humanitarian aid and regional development*: national and international humanitarian organizations must continue their efforts in conflict zones, providing assistance and essential services to those in need. At the same time, greater attention should be given to the development of vulnerable regions, with the goal of reducing population outflows and fostering the conditions necessary for the growth of the local economy;
- *development of comprehensive policies*: host countries must design and implement policies that effectively promote the integration, adaptation, and assimilation of migrants;
- *restructuring and expansion of labor markets*: labor market systems need to be adjusted and expanded to absorb new workforce segments and ensure fair employment opportunities;
- *information campaigns and education*: educational and awareness-raising campaigns play a crucial role in increasing public understanding of labor migration during wartime. Advocacy and international cooperation should aim to disseminate objective information about the causes of migration and the value migrants bring to both developing and host countries;
- *investment in development*: to improve the prospects of migrants both in host countries and in their countries of origin, it is vital to invest in the development of economic and social infrastructure. This includes support for infrastructure projects, small and medium-sized enterprises, education and vocational training, and the creation of sustainable conditions that reduce the need for migration and generate new opportunities within local regions.

## Conclusions

The peculiarities of international migration—and labor migration in particular—in Ukraine during the war have become an extremely relevant issue today. Due to military conflicts and geopolitical instability, many Ukrainians are forced to leave their homeland in search of protection and employment abroad.

International labor migration is substantial and carries significant consequences for both host countries and the region as a whole. Its impact is multifaceted and complex, requiring coordinated efforts by states, organizations, and civil society to implement appropriate regulatory measures and ensure the protection of migrants' rights, as well as to address emerging humanitarian crises.

In this context, the Government of Ukraine must enhance its migration reform by taking into account international consensus and recommendations regarding the implementation of social standards. The principal objective of this reform is to facilitate the return of labor migrants and displaced persons who have fled the conflict by ensuring their safety and improving the population's quality of life. However, the success of such reforms will depend on the resolution of the conflict and the potential long-term consequences it may entail.

A particularly important issue is the economic integration of immigrants. International labor migration introduces new labor force into host societies, which can intensify tensions and competition between local populations and newcomers. Migrants frequently face difficulties with employment and lack adequate social protection, which can provoke negative attitudes toward them and escalate social tensions.

In summary, the growing scale of international labor migration necessitates a comprehensive and cooperative international approach. It requires effective governance, the safeguarding of human rights, and the development of measures aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. Delivering humanitarian aid and security to displaced persons, regulating migration processes, preventing conflicts, eliminating underlying causes, fostering social empathy and tolerance, promoting public awareness and education, protecting the rights of displaced individuals, and allocating resources toward development—all constitute essential components for improving the conditions and outcomes of labor migration during wartime. The successful integration of refugees, along with the prevention of humanitarian crises, contributes to stability and development in both conflict-affected regions and host countries. Overall, the cases examined demonstrate a broader trend: international migration—and labor migration in particular—is an integral feature of a globalized world and plays a crucial role in shaping political, socioeconomic, and cultural processes in the face of emerging geopolitical challenges.

Further analysis of the social and professional trajectories of Ukrainian labor migrants in host countries remains highly relevant, as does the examination of the impact of large-scale migration on Ukraine's demographic resilience and labor market. Equally important is the development of reintegration strategies for returnees. A promising avenue for future research lies in the interdisciplinary exploration of the interconnections between migration, security risks, and economic recovery in the context of a protracted war. A key limitation of the present study is the predominantly qualitative nature of its generalizations and the absence of recent empirical data, which stems from restricted access to comprehensive official statistics during martial law. Consequently, future authors' research will be focus on the quantitative analysis of migration flows, the assessment of state policy effectiveness in the areas of migration and integration, and the study of transnational support networks for Ukrainian migrants across various global regions.

## **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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## **Authors contribution**

Conceptualization: M.I. and E.I.; Methodology: K.V.; Formal analysis: M.I. and E.I.; Visualization: G.O.; Revision and editing: K.V. and V.K. All authors have read and agreed with the published version of the manuscript.

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