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THE "NEW WAVE" OF RUSSIAN EMIGRATION TO TÜRKİYE

The study delves into the intricate migration dynamics within «Türkiye» , with a specific focus on Istanbul and Antalya, where Ukrainian refugees and Russian émigrés intersect. It investigates the recent upswing in emigration from Russia, with a particular emphasis on the influential role played by Russian digital nomads who opt for «Türkiye» as their destination. Using an analytical framework to connect research, policy, and practical implications, the study employs a qualitative methodology that integrates policy analysis, ethnographic observations, and interviews conducted with government officials and representatives from international organizations in «Türkiye» .

This research is particularly noteworthy for its contribution to addressing a gap in both descriptive and explanatory studies related to the migration of Ukrainians and Russians to «Türkiye» . It provides valuable insights into the nascent cases and evolving structures within the migratory landscape. «Türkiye» , positioned between European and Eurasian migration systems, emerges as a distinctive host for both demographic groups.

Preliminary findings illuminate the emergence of novel cases, evolving structural patterns, and dynamic relationships that extend beyond the confines of Europe. The study underscores the transformative impact of Russian digital nomads in shaping the current trajectory of migration from Russia. In essence, it highlights «Türkiye» 's role as a unique and evolving hub for diverse migration patterns, emphasizing the multifaceted dimensions introduced by the presence and activities of Russian digital nomads.

Key words: Türkiye, Russia, emigration, Russian émigré.

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Ресейлік эммиграцияның Түркияға қоныс аударуының «жаңа толқыны»

Зерттеу украиналық босқындар мен ресейлік эмигранттар қиылысатын Стамбул мен Анталияға ерекше назар аудара отырып, Түркия ішіндегі күрделі көші-қон динамикасын қарастырады. Ол Түркияны баратын жер ретінде таңдаған ресейлік цифрлық көшпенділердің ықпалды рөліне ерекше назар аудара отырып, Ресейден эмиграцияның жақында өршуін зерттейді. Зерттеулерді, саясатты және практикалық салдарды байланыстыру үшін аналитикалық негізді пайдалана отырып, зерттеу Түркиядағы мемлекеттік шенеуніктермен және халықаралық ұйымдардың өкілдерімен жүргізілген саясатты талдауды, этнографиялық бақылаулар мен сұхбаттарды біріктіретін сапалы әдістемені пайдаланады.

Бұл зерттеу украиндар мен орыстардың Түркияға қоныс аударуына байланысты сипаттамалық және түсіндірме зерттеулердегі олқылықты жоюға қосқан үлесімен ерекше назар аударады. Ол көші-қон ландшафтында пайда болған жағдайлар мен дамып келе жатқан құрылымдар туралы құнды ақпарат береді. Еуропалық және Еуразиялық көші-қон жүйелері арасында орналасқан Түркия екі демографиялық үшін де қабылдаушы мемлекетке айналады.

Алдын ала нәтижелер жаңа жағдайлардың пайда болуына, дамып келе жатқан құрылымдық модельдерге және Еуропадан тыс динамикалық қатынастарға жарық түсіреді. Зерттеу ресейлік цифрлық көшпенділердің Ресейден көші-қонның қазіргі траекториясын қалыптастыруға трансформациялық әсерін көрсетеді. Бұл негізінен Түркияның әртүрлі көші-қон үлгілері үшін бірегей және дамып келе жатқан орталық ретіндегі рөлін атап көрсетеді, ресейлік цифрлық көшпенділердің қатысуы мен қызметіне қатысты көп қырлы аспектілерді көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: Түркия, Ресей, эмиграция, орыс эмигранты.

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«Новая волна» российской эмиграции в Турцию

Исследование посвящено сложной миграционной динамике внутри Турции, с особым акцентом на Стамбул и Анталию, где пересекаются украинские беженцы и российские эмигранты. В нем исследуется недавний всплеск эмиграции из России, с особым акцентом на влиятельную роль российских цифровых кочевников, которые выбирают Турцию в качестве места назначения. Используя аналитическую основу для увязки исследований, политики и практических последствий, в исследовании используется качественная методология, которая объединяет анализ политики, этнографические наблюдения и интервью, проведенные с правительственными чиновниками и представителями международных организаций в Турции.

Это исследование особенно примечательно своим вкладом в устранение пробела как в описательных, так и в объяснительных исследованиях, связанных с миграцией украинцев и русских в Турцию. Оно дает ценную информацию о зарождающихся случаях и развивающихся структурах в миграционном ландшафте. Турция, расположенная между европейской и евразийской миграционными системами, становится своеобразным принимающим государством для обеих демографических групп.

Предварительные результаты проливают свет на появление новых случаев, эволюционирующие структурные модели и динамичные взаимоотношения, которые выходят за пределы Европы. В исследовании подчеркивается преобразующее влияние российских цифровых кочевников на формирование текущей траектории миграции из России. По сути, это подчеркивает роль Турции как уникального и развивающегося центра для различных моделей миграции, подчеркивая многогранные аспекты, связанные с присутствием и деятельностью российских цифровых кочевников.

Ключевые слова: Турция, Россия, эмиграция, русский эмигрант.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to deepen the knowledge about the dynamics of the Ukrainian "refugee crisis" by reconciling macro and micro level of analysis, in the context of the unique case of Türkiye where both Ukrainian refugees and Russian émigrés bond in two magnet cities Istanbul and Antalya. In order to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice, particularly this article provides an analytical tool to understand "new wave" of emigration from Russia by focusing on the case of Russian digital nomads in Türkiye. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, nearly one-third of the population of Ukraine remain forcibly displaced from their homes, fleeing to neighbouring countries, mostly to the European Union (EU), but also Russia and Turkey. As of November 28, 2023, more than 6.3 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded in Europe (Statista 2023). To manage the volatile situation, on March 2022, the EU responded swiftly by activating the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) that is designed rapidly to provide displaced persons with urgent services such as accommodation, access to healthcare, employment, and education. The EU directive was adopted in 2001, in the aftermath of the large-scale displacement experienced in Europe due to the armed conflicts in the Western Balkans, in particular from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. On 27 September 2023, ministers reached a political agreement on the extension of the temporary protection until 4 March 2025. According to Eurostat (2023), on 30 September 2023, almost 4.2 million non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine had temporary protection status in EU Member States. Particularly, Germany (1 194 900 people), Poland (958 655 people) and Czechia (357 960 people) are the main EU Member States, hosting beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine.

On the other side of the coin, Russia is currently experiencing the largest wave of politically driven emigration in its modern history. According to the statistics of Russia and host countries, between 700 000 and 1 200 000 people allegedly left Russia from 24 February 2022 to 24 February 2023 (Gulina 2023). Some left shortly after the open hostilities broke out on 24 February 2022, while others left after mobilisation was declared on 21 September 2022 (Gulina 2023). Ultimately, the new waves of emigration from Russia directed firstly to neighbouring

countries (Finland and Estonia), then Central Asian countries, Serbia, Montenegro, as well as Türkiye, United Arab Emirates and Israel, with fewer people choosing more distant parts all over the globe (Mexico and Argentina). All in all, Türkiye became a significant hub for migration flows that occurred not only from Ukraine but also from Russia. At this background, as a meeting point, Türkiye's position suggests unique set-up for the researcher to comprehend newly emerging emigration/migration flows, their volume and structure and a fascinating case study on Russian emigration, its transformation over time as a result of changing economic, social and political contexts at the global and local levels.

The Turkish Ministry of Interior declared that at least 20 550 Ukrainian citizens were evacuated to Türkiye between the dates of 24 February and 7 March 2022 (Dünya Doktorları Derneği, 2022). Vasily Badly (Ukraine's Ambassador to Türkiye), in his interview on 24 September 2022 noted that more than 400 000 Ukrainian citizens have already entered Turkey but most of them returned to Ukraine or other countries (T24 2022). The state officials from the Ministry of Interior and the representatives from some of the civil society

organizations that I have interviewed underscored the rapid implementation of the temporary protection directive in the EU as the primary factor for Ukrainian's decisions on return. As Hasan Basri Bülbül stressed in his article (2022), although most Ukrainians arriving Türkiye can meet the requirements of international protection, it remains to be seen how the Turkish authorities and courts will evaluate the individual applications of Ukrainians. Due to often long-lasting and tiring procedures and no guarantee of success, mainly Ukrainians in Türkiye have preferred not to engage in international protection application (Bülbül 2022). As seen in Table 1, even though Ukraine ranked second in the list of countries from which citizens applied for international protection in Türkiye in 2022, according to official data released by the Presidency of Migration Management, regarding the residing Ukrainian population in Türkiye, the number of applications remain low. As an easy alternative offered by the Turkish government, Ukrainians mostly apply for residence permit (short, long and humanitarian). All in all, 42,875 Ukrainian citizens are temporally residing in Türkiye, (as of October 2023, ODP 2023).

Table 1 - First 3 Nationalities Application for International Protection (2022)
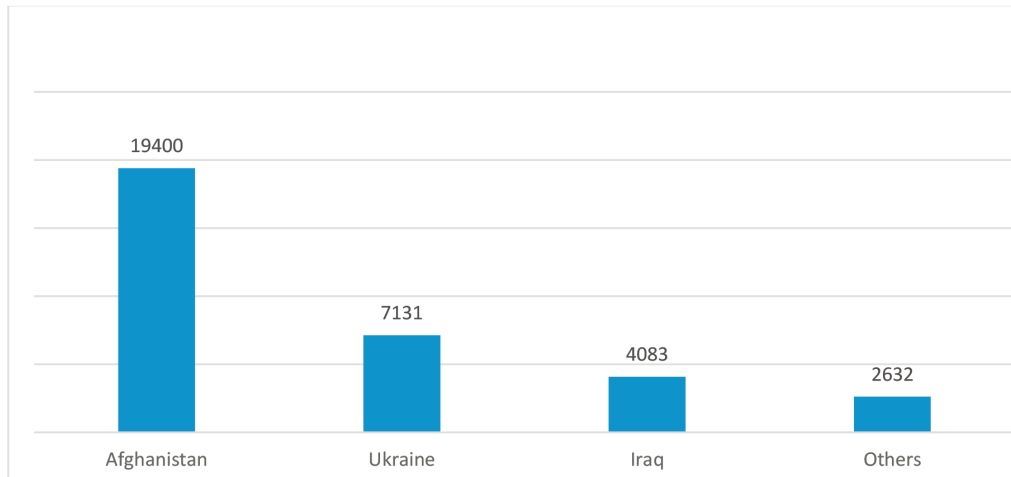
**Source:** Presidency of Migration Management

On the other hand, for thousands of Russians that have fled the country since the invasion of Ukraine, Türkiye has been a choice of destination. According to the governor of Antalya province, a popular sea resort destination for Russians, since

Putin's announcement of partial mobilization, the daily number of Russians arriving to Antalya has reached 19 000. The Ministry of Tourism indicates that some 800 000 Russian citizens arrived in Turkey in September 2022. According to the Ministry

of the Interior, as of data on November 3, 2022, Russian citizens are the second highest number of foreign residents residing in Turkey on long term (115 365) and short term (95 431) residency permits, after Iraqi nationals. In consistency with this data, investment by Russians in the housing market in Turkey increased by 199 percent in the first two quarters of 2022. Hand in hand with the rising house sales to Russian citizens, through the influx of qualified workers and the relocation of income-generating businesses, Türkiye had witnessed "business relocation" of representations of international and Russian companies that left Russia. Together with Central Asian countries, Türkiye have become the place for relocation for the majority of small and medium-sized businesses from Russia. During the first half of 2022, 720 Russian companies registered in Türkiye. By the end of the same year, this figure grew to 1,300 (+670 per cent compared to 2021) (Gulina, 2023).

In 2022, the number of Russians applying for short-term and long-term permits in Türkiye was steadily growing, even after the end of the tourist season (Gulina, 2023). Despite the growing tendency in residence permit application, according to the interviews conducted with government officials in Türkiye "the number of those who are applying for residency is low, in comparison to the high number of arrivals. As, a lot of people that have arrived in Türkiye since the invasion and after mobilization see Türkiye as a temporary hub/location with a visa-free regime plus with established social and cultural networks among the existing Russian-speaking community. Still, citizens of Russian Federation took the first place in the foreign immigrant population in 2022 with 25% of the total foreign population. They were followed by citizens of Ukraine with 8.1%, Iran with 6.5%, Afghanistan with 5.4%, respectively.

Table 2 - Top 5 Countries by the citizenship of immigrants (%), 2022
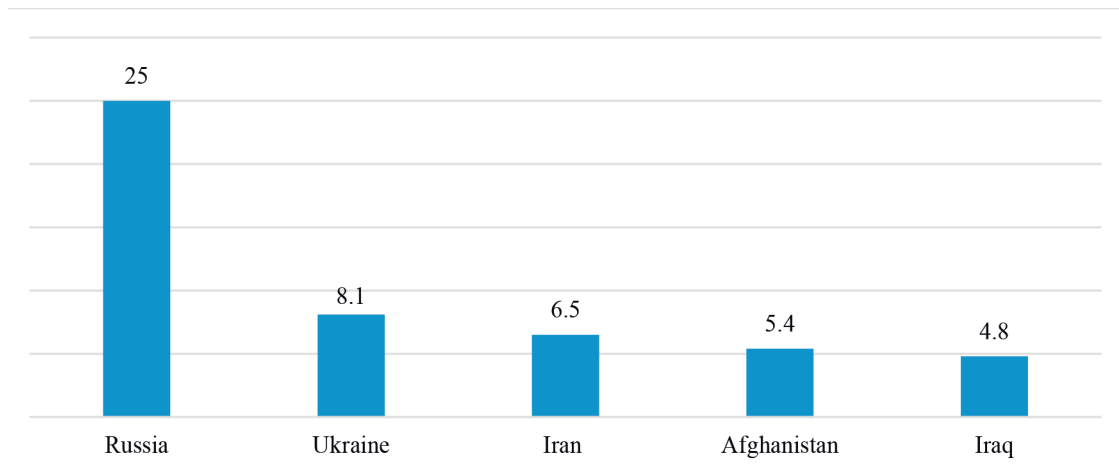
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) (2023)

Research Methods

There is neither a descriptive nor an explanatory study previously carried out on Ukrainian refugees and Russian émigrés in Türkiye. Therefore, the research seeks to construct an exploratory study. Based on a qualitative approach combining policy analysis, ethnographic observations, and interviews, the study combines information of various types.

These are: (1) all available secondary data; (2) on-site observation and inquiry; (3) primary data from semi-structured and in-depth interviews with, (a) government representatives, and (b) international and inter-governmental organization representatives. By sharing the preliminary findings of this research, I focus on new and emerging cases, structures, and relations beyond Europe and contextualize them in the larger framework of changing migra-

tion patterns on the spheres of Europe. In between European and Eurasian migration systems, Türkiye offers an original and understudied migratory environment hosting both Ukrainian refugees and Russian émigrés.

Literature review

As the novel study that concentrates on Russian émigré in Türkiye, the analysis of the research explore**s** the volume and structure of current migration flows from Russia to Türkiye. At this background, with the aim of understanding Russian émigrés, in uncertainty, I have chosen to look at their transformational experiences through the more focused theoretical lenses of liminality. Liminality refers to different processes of transformation, either on individual or larger societal level, which voluntarily or involuntarily push a person from one identity to another, temporally lasting from short intervals to lifelong or even inter-generational states (van Gennep 1960; Turner 1974; Thomassen 2015; Szakolczai 2009, 2017). The general discourse around refugees/migrants is often focused on victimhood, humanitarian aid distribution or suspicion, all reducing the refugee to a role of an object (Bauman 2006; Howarth & Ibrahim 2015). At this background, I present Russian émigrés' main characteristics, and how they are using digital technologies to cope with im(mobility)/uncertainty conditions in daily life in Türkiye. Along this line, I present new profiles that these flows have generated: remote workers and digital nomads as agents of virtual migration.

Aneesh Aneesh (2006) with his challenging book on "virtual migration" opens up an analytical debate on new forms of migration, labour and governance. According to him, physical labour migration, which is just a body shopping, presents the "old" economy, where world is divided into nation-states with borders, barriers, and prejudices. But virtual migration offers "migration without migration", thus ignoring such obstacles and offering a new channel as well as symbol of globalization (Tsapenkoa, and Grishina 2022). In the context of the epidemic and the closure of the territorial borders of states, the permeability and openness of their information space gave additional impetus to virtual flows (Tsapenkoa, and Grishina 2022). With spread of remote work, digitalization of economy and gig economy, a new class of entrepreneurs arose – digital independent work-

ers. Its ulterior form so far is digital nomads, who travel the world with limited or no fixed abode – and this is not a marginal group (Tyutyuryukov and Guseva 2021). Indeed, as part of the broader phenomenon of location-independent work, the debate on digital nomadism was started prior to the pandemic (Makimoto and Manners 1997; Schlagwein 2018) and affected by namely digitalisation, economic accumulation, general freedom of movement, and the increase in knowledge-based economies and the so-called "gig economy" (Cohen and Stanik 2020; Thompson 2019).

Results and Discussion

At this background, the interviews that I have conducted indicate that the current emigration wave from Russia to Türkiye mostly consists of middle-class representatives, as highly educated, urbanized, and politicized citizens, including political opponents (mostly journalist and politicians) tech workers (digital nomads), investors or oligarchs. As a result, Istanbul and Antalya -two magnet cities-turned into a popular choice for Russian émigrés who can arrive without a visa or get short-term residency permits. The closure of European airspace to Russian flights and other sanctions that effectively reduced the possibility of Russian citizens to enter the EU made Türkiye one of the few remaining hubs left. Furthermore, Mir card system for electronic fund transfers that was developed by Russia was active in the Turkish banking system, therefore this active card became another dynamic for coming to Türkiye. However last year Turkish banks stopped processing payments after the US threatened to level sanctions against them. The most popular safe haven destination for Russian oligarch-owned super yachts is also Türkiye. Recently, according to a New York Times analysis (2023) at least 32 yachts owned or associated with Russian oligarchs and sanctioned entities have found shelter in Turkish ports along the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts. However, the skyrocketing rental prices have raised concerns about the Russian émigrés. Public discontent is particularly on display in İstanbul and Antalya, which host a sizable Slavic population of Russians. Increasing housing and rent prices, fuelled by the increasing demand and payments in Euro all of which were among the important reasons behind the complaints of locals.

Following the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine, digital nomads and remote workers have generated a distinct feature along with new wave of emigration from Russia to Türkiye. Recent studies on digital nomadism have concentrated on defining this novel concept; on understanding their working conditions (non-working lives of nomads; co-spaces) and their digital nomad lifestyle (mobility practices) (Cohen and Stanik, 2020). Accordingly, in Istanbul and Antalya hubs as hotspots for them are already established and provided them co-working spaces, networking events, and social activities in the digital nomad lifestyle. They provide an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, share insights, and collaborate on projects, but again in the virtual world. Digital nomads have replaced their usual office and started to work and travel without a clear destination. They utilize their skills to work via internet, and get in communicating through social networks, computers and mobiles. With the increasing acceptance of remote work, recently this trend has extended its popularity in line with the developments in technology. Working from coffee shops, co-working spaces, or even beaches, they prefer to explore new cities, connecting their careers to their laptops (virtual world). As they work from anywhere, they are to merge work and travel so that a new lifestyle has emerged. Accordingly, they have expanded their community, through gathering a network of like-minded individuals who share resources, suggestions, and experiences.

However, the problem is the existing tax rules based on residence criteria. It implies that the people living in a particular area contribute to local public goods, while the remote work may disrupt the relation between the budget revenues from the income tax and the budget expenses on the local infrastructure. As paying taxes in one region while using public infrastructure in another one results in higher budget expenditures in the second region not offset by respective tax yield.

In their thought-provoking book entitled ***Digital Nomads*** in ***1997***, Tsugio ***Makimoto*** and David ***Manners*** emphasized the importance of that new technologies, work arrangements, and growing entrepreneurial practices that would directly affect daily lives, as differences between work, leisure, home, and travel would be blurred. Balaji Srinivasan's book (2022) entitled "The Network State: How to Start a New Country" referred to shift network states and cloud countries, as including a highly aligned online community with a capacity for collective action. Some traditional nation-states such as Estonia have already shifted towards operating digitally.

Conclusion

Through this analysis, I showed that while emigration flows from Russia to Türkiye still constitute a relatively understudied domain. Migration from Russia to Türkiye is increasingly diverse. However, existing international migration statistics and in particular labour migration statistics in neither Türkiye nor Russia do not fully represent this diversity due to problems with data collection but more so with the recording of national/international migration. In this article, I presented the evolution and diversification of emigration flows from Russia to Türkiye since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. What is needed for further research is a more detailed analysis of the micro factors, the critical role played by pioneer émigrés and agents, the processes forming transnational/virtual spaces and networks. Russian émigrés unique position in particular in the IT sector, generated further conceptualization in the field of migration: network state, digital nomad, remote work, virtual migration. All require further qualitative analyses and fieldwork since existing migration statistics do not fully capture the diversity of current emigration flows. My findings and interviews show that particularly in the case of digital nomad and remote work while further analyses are required.

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