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School of Political and Social Sciences, University of Sydney**MOVING OUT OF "THEIR PLACES": MIGRATION INTO AUSTRALIA**

*Using a combination of migration literature analysis and practical experiences of Ukrainian migrants in Australia this paper examines the character of post-independence Ukrainian migration to Australia. Through comparative analysis of Ukrainian immigration waves to Australia, the paper looks back to origins of such immigration, briefly reflecting on the history of Ukrainian arrivals, and explains trends in current immigration movement. Particularly, using interview materials with Ukrainian migrants who came to Australia in the post-independence period (from 1991 until 2013) this paper identifies the main immigration streams popular among Ukrainians that form three groups of migrants: economic migrants "zarobitchany", tourist-visa over stayers (from illegal migrants to refugees) and high skilled migrants. The focus is on the logic of the post-Soviet immigration wave, which is formed and explained not only by socio-economic rationale behind migration, but also by relations inside Ukrainian community, which have significantly changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Complex relations between post-war Ukrainian migrants and their Australian descendants on one hand, and post-independence Ukrainian migrants on the other, is argued to be rooted in the difference in qualitative characteristics and historical conditions, rather than in simple withstanding of political versus economic migration waves.*

**Keywords:** post-independence Ukrainian migration, Australia, types of migrants, Ukrainian community, political migrants, economic migrants.

**Introduction**

The fate of the Ukrainians in the 20th Century, like that of many other Central and Eastern European [CEE] nations, has gone through several sharp turns and tragic twists. This paper looks into two important turning points, the after effects of which are still visible today: [1] the collapse of Soviet rule in August 1991 and [2] the massive emigration from Ukraine since 1991 [immediate response to social change]. These events have deeply touched every Ukrainian family, laid the foundations for the development of the surviving self-consciousness of several generations. Further they have caused more than 22 years of economic, political and social struggle for citizens in the Ukraine and for those in the destination countries of immigration. Besides the two historical turning points, the twists in history of Ukrainian immigration have also shaped the mode of current post-independence Ukrainian migration to Australia. This research paper, firstly, presents a brief history of Ukrainian immigration to Australia, giving an insight into its origins. Secondly, it refers to empirical data indicating the main migration streams popular among Ukrainian migrants and explores its determinative characteristics. This article then provides a closer look at the controversial relations within Ukrainian community in Australia, which form and help to understand the logic of the post-Soviet immigration wave. Complex relations between post-war Ukrainian migrants and their Australian descendants on one hand, and post-independence Ukrainian migrants on the other, is argued to be rooted in the difference in qualitative characteristics and historical conditions, rather than in simple withstanding of political versus economic migration waves. Particularly, comparative analysis of post-war and post-Soviet Ukrainian immigration brings to the front the distinctive characteristics of the current wave of immigration in terms of age, socio-economic background, values and rationale.

**Brief History of Ukrainian Immigration to Australia**

Ukrainian immigration to Australia has a long history. The first ethnic Ukrainians from Western Ukraine are known to have settled in Australia as early as 1860. Historians indicate that immediately after the World War I Australia settled first wave- the first organized group – of immigrants from Ukraine, which strengthened the existing Ukrainian communities by infusing them with members from political, scientific, and cultural backgrounds. However, scholarly works suggest that before the World War II their total number was very insignificant and most of them were not aware of their national belonging.

The second wave of Ukrainian immigration to Australia traces its substance to the arrival of post-World War II refugees from war torn Europe which has reasonably affected the increase of the Ukrainian Diaspora in 1945-1950s. These refugees were termed "displaced persons"

and began arriving in 1948, refusing to return to the USSR. Therefore, the origin of the organized life of the Ukrainian diaspora in Australia dates back to the first years after World War II, when Ukrainians, who remained in the Western occupation zones of Germany and Austria, had an opportunity, additionally to the traditional countries of immigration, to move to the distant overseas country Australia. In 1948-1950 the total number of Ukrainian immigrants was more than 20 thousand people, or 10% of the total Ukrainians who had left at that time Germany and Austria. According to the official census in 1954 there were approximately 17.500 Ukrainians in Australia. Analyzing social truncation of the post-war Ukrainian community, it should be noted that about 30-40 percent were political refugees, the rest were workers who were taken to Germany and decided not to return to the motherland. Immigrants aged from 20 to 40 signed a two-year contract to work in a variety of industries and the service sector [Yekelchuk, 2001: p. 13]. While the men worked, their women and children remained in special organized camps. After the successful completion of work contract immigrants were eligible for the right to permanent residence in Australia. Five years in the country gave the right to citizenship. The law did not allow Ukrainians, as well as other newcomers, to work in their prewar areas of specialization. For example, farmers could not work in agriculture, instead they were granted a job in the industry. Despite this fact, post-war Ukrainian immigration proved their abilities in various jobs from Sydney City Rail construction to complex engineering designs, which today Australians are proud of. An integral feature of the post-World War II Ukrainian immigration to Australia is the demonstrative self-awareness as a political emigration.

In subsequent years, due to the closeness of the Soviet Union from the world, the number of immigrants to Australia from Ukraine was insignificant, except streams of Jewish immigration. However, at the end of 1980s the immigration has shown a slight intensification that resulted in a new wave of immigration in the 1990s. This was a period of "perestroyka"[restructuring] in Soviet Union, which is related to the later destruction of the USSR. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS, 2001], the total number of Ukrainians in Australia in this periods approximately 34 000 people, representing 0.2% of the total Australian population [ABS, 2001].

Consequently, the 1990s saw a third wave of Ukrainian immigration to Australia. Over a period of five years the flow of Ukrainian emigration to Australia included 4.5 thousand persons, and in 1996 the number of persons born in Ukraine was 13.5 thousands. Up to 2001 the flow of Ukrainian immigration to Australia increased by 5%, with 14.1 thousand persons [Serbin, 2006: p. 307]. Today, there

is a vibrant albeit small Ukrainian community of between 30 and 50 thousand people, predominantly living in Melbourne and Sydney. The vast majority of people born in Ukraine, live in the states of Victoria - 5.8 thousand, New South Wales - 5.0 thousand, South Australia - 1.5 thousand and Queensland - 880 people [ABS, 2001]. More specifically, according to the 2011 census data most of the Ukrainian speakers were born in Ukraine [43.2%], followed by Australia [34.0%]. Nationally, <0.1% of people were born in Ukraine [ABS, 2012].

#### **Post-independence Ukrainians in Australia: Who are They?**

Post-independence Ukrainian community in Australia is a mixed group. Between November 2012 – April 2013, I conducted 51 semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian migrants who came to Australia in the post-independence period [from 1991 until 2013]. All respondents were aged over 18 and were the main applicants for immigration to Australia [in case of coming with family member as dependent]. All interviews were conducted in NSW [Sydney & Wollongong]. Due to complicated accessibility of this group, which is passive in the community life and can hardly be reached during community events and at the church, snowball sampling technique made it possible to reach the hidden populations which are difficult to access [Gubrium and Holstein, 2002: p. 152].

Based on these interview materials, I identified three main immigration streams popular among Ukrainian migrants who arrived in the post-independence migration period. These streams formed three main groups: economic migrants "zarobitchany", tourist-visa over stayers [from illegal migrants to refugees] and high skilled migrants.

The post-independence immigration wave was originally driven by economic motives rather than political ones comparing to the post-war immigration. That's why the majority of Ukrainian migrants who came in the early 1990s can be called economic migrants. The economic hardship and poverty that overwhelmed Ukraine after the collapse of Soviet Union made it imperative for migrants to quickly stabilize their financial situation in the country of settlement. They needed to do so in order to help relatives who remained in Ukraine and were trying to survive and overcome the negative social consequences of unsuccessful reforms of the Ukrainian economy. However, this doesn't mean that the recent Ukrainian migrants can be indiscriminately called "zarobitchany" [labour migrants, workers] with all its negative implications of low-skilled migrant workers from less developed regions in more advanced. This term can be relevant only to those who come to Australia for work solely with the purpose of inevitable return home with money. In the general Australian immigration structures of the last decades the biggest share of migrants who return back home after work in Australia are migrants from Britain. However, neither the press nor any official UK documents do not have any derogatory epithets against this part of immigrants. If to consider the number of returns home in the structure of Ukrainian migration, then primacy belongs not to employable young people but to pensioners. Under Australian law, people of retirement age who receive a pension in Australia are allowed while maintaining Australian citizenship to receive their pension overseas. These opportunities were used by hundreds of representatives of postwar immigration wave. The phenomenon of international labour migration, defined as the movement of people from one country to another for the purpose of employment, is relevant for current Ukrainian migrants in Australia in a special way. The number of Ukrainians coming to Australia on a working visas is relatively small. Firstly, it is extremely hard for Ukrainians to

find a job in Australia being in Ukraine. Secondly, The Working Holiday and Work and Holiday programs allowing young people to have an extended holiday supplemented by short-term employment are not opened for Ukrainians. Thirdly, Australia is geographically a distant country, which makes it costly, in terms of time and money, to move back and forth between the homeland and the country of labour. Therefore, Ukrainians who have economic reasons behind their migration have to find their "special" way to come to the country and become legally employed. In other words, the term "zarobitchany" applied to Ukrainians who came to Australia on PR visas, family or student visas, having an economic rationale, has different tone when used for Ukrainian migrants in European Union or Russia. In the last countries the majority of Ukrainian migrants are labour migrants ["zarobitchany"] in the true sense of the word - they migrate solely for economic reasons, do not try to integrate into the society [do not learn language, do not make local friends] and whose behaviors, consumption, and lifestyle in the country of immigration are measured in the direction of maximizing income.

Another group of Ukrainian migrants in Australia are overstaying tourists who often contribute to the group of illegal migrants. It is interesting, that usually there are two schemes used by Ukrainians to try and stay in Australia for purpose of temporary employment. The first is that they overstay their tourist visas and start working illegally; when the required amount of money is earned they return home. One Ukrainian immigrant who came to Sydney in 1999 on a tourist visa tells:

*"I came on a one year tourist visa. Unlike America, here [In Australia] you have to have permission for work, you have to have permission for everything. I had nothing. I stayed in Australia for a year and then did not return home. I became illegal, so I continued to live and work this way... Quite for a long time, for 7 years. Through a friend I found work in construction. It was one year and two months until it was finished, when I realized that have only two choices -or work for myself, or leave the country. I realized it was impossible to make good money, if I continue working this way. I earned \$600 per week, the rent was \$220. It was barely enough for food, after I send money home, to my parents. It was hard, but I made it" [Volodia, 49 y.o, painter].*

The second typical scenario of overstaying tourist visas is to claim asylum after one month of staying in the country. The fact that the bridging visa is given to everyone, who is awaiting for a decision on their refugee status, enables Ukrainians to work officially until their application is processed. Initially, some Ukrainians are not interested in staying in Australia long-term and do not consider themselves being genuine refugees. They use their bridging visas solely for purpose of legal employment and after 3-4 years [the usual refugee application processing time] return to Ukraine. When applying for asylum, some Ukrainians are aware that their chances of getting permanent residency are very low. One of my respondents who successfully received PR, claiming asylum, says that his case is a rare one and he just got lucky. According to his words, only around 25 out of 100 Ukrainian refugee applications are successful.

*"In fact I did not want to go to [specifically] Australia, I basically did not care much where to go. I didn't plan to emigrate, I wanted just to make money. I think I was just lucky to get PR, as I did not really wanted. Many of my friends failed to stay here permanently, out of 5 of us, who arrived together, I am the only one who managed to stay" [Volodia, 55 y.o, builder].*

Consequently, they take as much as possible of money and skills from the years of official employment in the country on bridging visas. Subsequently, the majority of current Ukrainian labour migrants in Australia are recruited from the group of overstaying tourists, the size of this group increased significantly after the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

Another group who make up the post-1991 wave of migrants is tertiary educated professionals, who come to Australia with status of permanent residents. The period of "head hunting" for highly educated personnel from Ukraine has recently received its revival after a slight termination. For several years the list of specialties for Australian immigration included less highly skilled professions compared to amount of low-skilled. In the middle of the 2000s Australia was in need for people with specialized secondary education [nurses, hairdressers, cooks, builders, etc.]. Since the 2010 the focus of the mainstream immigration policy has shifted back to highly skilled professionals, specifically engineers and experts in information technologies. Among interviewed Ukrainians who came to Australia through independent high-skilled migration stream, the majority are IT professionals, aged over 28 y.o. with more than 5 years of experience in IT.

Nowadays there is a noticeable aging of Ukrainian immigration to Australia. It is caused not only by natural factors but also political, since the federal government of Australia has increased the requirements for immigration from Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union. Ukraine for many years was on the list of countries with excessive risk on illegal immigration. The situation has changed just recently. According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC] review of visa risk assessment levels which took effect on 24 March 2012, Ukraine's assessment level decreased to level 2 making the procedure of obtaining visa to Australia easier [DIAC, 2012]. By now, more than a thousand of Ukrainian citizens are in line for permission to immigrate to Australia. Cur-

rently in Australia the second wave [post-war wave] of Ukrainian immigration quantitatively dominates with the average age of 64 years, when the average age in Australia does not exceed 36 years [ABS, 2012].

In this period the gender structure of Ukrainian immigration is dominated by women: for each one hundred women there are 80 men [Serbin, 2006]. The data from 2011 census suggests that total population of Ukrainian speakers in 2011 was made up of 58.4% females and 41.6% males, compared to the overall national figures of 50.6% female and 49.4% male. Moreover, there is an interesting gender segregation in earnings: most male Ukrainian speakers [15.5%] earned \$200-\$299 weekly [\$10,400-\$15,599 annually], while most females earned \$300-\$399 weekly [\$15,600-\$20,799 annually] [27.5%] [ABS, 2012]. Subsequently, Ukrainian women appear to be more successful in money-making for their households. The aging trend within Ukrainian community is confirmed by the following data: 1] the largest age demographic for male Ukrainian speakers was 60-64 years [12.8%]; 2] for females, the largest age demographic was 85-89 years [17.9%] [ABS, 2012].

New immigration, which arrive here from Ukraine for permanent residence, creates all social and economic indicators of a sedentary life: buying real estate property, family formation, childbearing, obtaining qualifications, learning English language and, of course, employment that cannot be seen only as "migration solely for profit". The demographic statistics of 2006 in Sydney discovered a new trend of moving the center of sedentary settlement of immigrants from Ukraine in western suburb Lidcombe, which concentrates mainly working population, to North Sydney and Vaucluse - south-eastern district, which is home to wealthier and highly educated residents of Sydney [Serbin, 2006: p. 308]. Moreover, interview map [Fig. 1.] indicating the suburb residence of my interviewees is representative of current settlement patterns.



Fig. 1. Interview Map [NSW, Australia]

This trend signifies that Ukrainian migrants are trying to do their best in improving their economic situation and successfully complete this goal. Naturally, big amount of the earned income is sent to the family members in Ukraine. According to the estimations of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, in 2000 Ukrainian migrants from all over the world transferred more than 6 billion US dollars to Ukraine [Malynovska, 2011]. It is an essential help not only to the families of immigrants, but for the Ukrainian economy on a whole.

The post-World War II and post-independence Ukrainian immigration waves: political vs. economic migrants

Current relations inside Australian Ukrainian community slightly remind "generational contradiction between parents and children", where the role of parents, "patrons" and creators of the organized community life belongs to the post-war II immigrants and their descendents, while the representatives of the post-independence wave are viewed as not altruistic and not patriotic successors of the Ukrainian cultural heritage in Australia.

Post-war immigration communities with a great enthusiasm were building Ukrainian life in Australia, constructing churches, schools, preschools, clubs, concert halls, houses of various youth organizations, financial cooperatives, publishing houses and other kinds of facilities, which eventually need upgrades, repairs and preventive constant care. However, not only buildings went old, but also people who founded them. Much of the Ukrainian community passed away. Some NGO expressing concerns about the future of Ukrainian organized settlements, seeking opportunities to fill the half-empty rooms of the Ukrainian National House in Sydney by renting them out to different ethnic groups which are not related to the Ukrainian community.

At the same time some elements of contradiction are expressed to newcomers [post-war immigrants call post-independence migrants "newcomers" with a slightly negative implication]. The negative coloring of the "newcomers" label comes from the attitude to all post-Soviet migrants as those who have only material values and all their relations are build around money and better life for themselves, while ignoring the community values such as patriotism, strong identification with Ukraine and maintenance of the pure "Ukrainity" [Ukraynskostij]. Post-war II migrants were forced not to return to Soviet Ukraine, while the choice to emigrate from Ukraine, made by current immigrants, is viewed by the post-war migrant's part, as voluntary, demonstrating a lack of patriotism and betrayal of Motherland. One of my respondents remembered:

"Once I went to Ukrainian church and asked an old man from post-war migrants: "Does Ukrainian Diaspora help newcomers? Perhaps with work or housing?" You know what he answered me, what was his reaction. He said: "Why are you all coming here? You must be in Ukraine, you must stay, develop and build it up from ruin!" In shock and anger I replied: "And why wouldn't you yourself gather all your money, all your millions, and go to Ukraine, to raise it. You think I, in my 41, have left my family, my house and went hell know where escaping a good life?!" The old man turned red and stared at me in amazement. It was then, when I was told that he was one of the richest in our Ukrainian diaspora. Since then, I have no wish to join Ukrainian community" [Vladimir, 52 y.o., builder].

Subsequently, interrelations between these two immigration waves are less then welcoming, ending up in absence of contact and weakening of Ukrainian community in Australia. The existing gap is formed by huge differences in values: the post-war migrants and their activities were driven by the idea of Ukrainian independence and freedom. Their main motive for emigration of that time was persecution and oppression of Ukrainian language, culture and religion in Soviet Ukraine. In 1991 Ukraine became independent, and many of diaspora's postulates and beliefs lost their relevance and sense. The fight against Soviet regime and promoting "independence of Ukraine" in the international media where no longer needed. Diasporas stopped to be seen as the main place for preserving, keeping and practicing Ukrainian traditions, language and culture. Particularly, the difference in reasons for emigration from Ukraine between post-war and current post-independence immigration waves is the main source of misunderstanding and miscommunication and therefore, unsustainable relations inside the community.

At the same time it is believed that the new wave of immigration may be the most active element, which could give new stimulus not only to Ukrainian public life, but also can contribute to the development of social and cultural institutions of Ukrainian diaspora in Australia, access to which is rather limited for newly arrived immigrants.

Relations between the previous generations of Ukrainian diaspora and the new wave are detected in rare contacts of various Ukrainian diaspora organizations with single immigrants, who are still not permitted to acquire rights of cofounders of communities, institutions and clubs.

Some of the post-war immigrants and Australian born Ukrainians believe that the representatives of the third wave are politically denationalized, at heists, too mercenary, that besides their own material well-being, virtually they have no other interest. However, proponents of the latter view are not hamed to openly exploit newly arrived immigrants to care for their children and elders, ill people, as well as in heavy construction works and the works that are harmful to health. Moreover, the post-war Ukrainian migrants and their descendants are not very willing to share with their social and economic networks and capital. They are strongly convinced that newcomers won't value their help and are not interested in preserving Ukrainian identity, culture and language. New immigration in its turn tends to exaggerated financial capabilities of the previous Ukrainian immigration waves, and the lack of expected support has led to the fact that relations between them cooled.

### Conclusion

This paper began by noting that new wave of Ukrainian immigration to Australia began in 1991, when Ukrainians had to go through two sharp twists in history reflected in their daily lives: [1] the collapse of Soviet Union and [2] large scale emigration from newly formed and independent Ukraine. Through the entire history of Ukrainian nation there are three periods – "Ukrainian migration waves" to Australia: [1] post-World War I and the Russian Civil War; [2] post-World War II [the end of 1940s– the early 1950s]; [3] post-independence [the early 1990s – present].

The post-independence Ukrainian immigration differs from the previous post-war arrivals, in first turn, with its character, being driven by economic motives rather than political. According to statistics, the number of Ukrainians living in Australia varies between 30-50 thousand. It is a vibrant albeit small Ukrainian community, predominantly based in Melbourne and Sydney. Post-independence immigration is a mixed group represented by different migration streams, the most distinguishable are: economic migrants "zarobitchany", tourist-visa overstayers [from illegal migrants to refugees] and high skilled migrants.

The current wave of Ukrainian immigration can be characterized as such that: [1] creates all social and economic indicators of a sedentary life and cannot be called "migration solely for profit"; [2] moves the center of sedentary settlement of Ukrainian immigrants from its western suburb Lidcombe, which concentrates mainly working population, to North Sydney and Vacluse, which is home to wealthier and highly educated residents of Sydney; [3] aging of Ukrainian immigration, due to domination of post-war migrants in combination with long-term restrictions to migrants from Ukraine [due to risk of illegal migration]; [4] the gender structure of Ukrainian immigration is dominated by women.

Given the complex relations within Ukrainian community in Australia aggravated in the early 1990s, rethinking of the immigration history and understanding the specifics of the post-Soviet migration flow to Australia is critical for the further development and prosperity of the Ukrainian community. This paper emphasizes the importance of mutual compliance and succession between different immigration waves which has a crucial impact on the current post-independence arrivals.

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**РУХАЮЧИСЬ З "ВЛАСНИХ МІСЦЬ": МІГРАЦІЯ В АВСТРАЛІЮ**

*Спираючись на поєднання аналізу міграційної літератури та практичного досвіду українських мігрантів, ця стаття розглядає характер пост-радянської української міграції до Австралії. Через порівняльний аналіз декількох хвиль української міграції до Австралії, дана стаття аналізує витоки такої міграції, стисло відображаючи історію українських мігрантів, а також пояснює сучасні тенденції даного еміграційного руху. На основі 51 глибинних інтерв'ю, проведених з мігрантами які емігрували до Австралії в період після здобуття незалежності з 1991 до 2013 року дана стаття визначає популярні серед українців імміграційні потоки, які у свою чергу формують три групи мігрантів: економічні мігранти "заробітчани", група тих, хто приїжджає по туристичних візах і залишаються як "tourist-visaoverstayers" (нелегальних мігрантів чибіженців) та група висококваліфікованих мігрантів. У центрі уваги даної статті – логіка пост-радянської хвилі української міграції, яка формується і пояснюється не тільки соціально-економічними чинниками, але і відносинами есередини української спільноти Австралії, які істотно змінилися з моменту розпаду Радянського Союзу. Складні відносини між післявоєнними українськими мігрантами та їх австралійськими нащадками з одного боку, та українськими мігрантами доби незалежності з іншого, розглядаються з огляду не лише простого співставлення хвиль політичної та економічної міграції, але виходячи з різних якісних характеристик та історичних умов.*

*Ключові слова: українська міграція доби незалежності, Австралія, групи мігрантів, українська спільнота, політичні мігранти, економічні мігранти*