

CHAPTER «PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES»

KEY DETERMINANTS OF FORCED MIGRATION OF THE UKRAINIAN INTELLECTUAL ELITE AND THE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR RE-MIGRATION

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Abstract. A comprehensive analysis has been conducted of the causes, trends, and consequences of the forced migration of Ukraine's intellectual elite under the conditions of the full-scale Russian–Ukrainian war, with particular attention devoted to possible pathways for their re-migration. The subject of the study encompasses the socio-demographic, political-economic, and cultural-educational determinants of mass displacement of Ukrainians abroad after 2022, as well as the conditions that could enable the return of highly qualified professionals. The research focuses simultaneously on the global context of migration processes and on the specific Ukrainian situation, where demographic risks, social traumas, and prospects for the restoration of human capital converge.

The methodological foundation of the research is an interdisciplinary approach that integrates methods of social philosophy, demography, political science, and the sociology of migration. To achieve its objectives,

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the study employed both qualitative and quantitative tools, including in-depth interviews, surveys, psychometric test analysis, and secondary examination of statistical data provided by UNHCR, IOM, and the European Commission. The theoretical framework was informed by the works of Ukrainian scholars (such as E. Libanova, V. Dubrovskiy, among others) alongside international studies, thereby situating the Ukrainian experience within broader European and global perspectives.

The aim of the research is to provide a theoretical interpretation of the key determinants of the forced migration of the Ukrainian intellectual elite and to elaborate conceptual approaches to a re-migration policy capable of reducing socio-demographic and economic losses. Particular emphasis is placed on value-based and motivational factors influencing the willingness of young people and highly qualified specialists to return to Ukraine. This group constitutes the bearers of critical intellectual potential essential for the country's effective post-war reconstruction.

The central argument of the study is that the forced migration of Ukrainians represents a multidimensional phenomenon which cannot be reduced merely to a demographic issue or an economic challenge. Instead, it is a complex socio-humanitarian process encompassing the transformation of social structures, educational practices, cultural identity, and politico-legal mechanisms. Alongside its threats, migration also carries certain potentials—such as the creation of new transcultural networks, the expansion of opportunities for cultural diplomacy, and the accumulation of knowledge and experience by Ukrainians in international academic and professional environments. At the same time, the preservation and return of this potential depends on targeted state policies that integrate measures of social support, economic incentives, and cultural integration.

The findings of the research reveal that more than two-thirds of young Ukrainians studying abroad assess their standard of living as higher than in Ukraine, yet a significant proportion continue to maintain academic ties with Ukrainian universities. The study identifies several core motivational factors that could stimulate re-migration: prospects for professional development in Ukraine, guarantees of personal security, the availability of adequate social infrastructure, and a sense of belonging to the process of national recovery. Thus, embedding re-migration policies within the framework of national security and socio-economic development is not only desirable but

also critically necessary. Addressing the challenge requires a synergy of interstate cooperation, European integration coordination, and a targeted national strategy aimed at restoring human and intellectual capital. Only the combination of short-term support measures for migrants with long-term re-migration programs can safeguard Ukraine's intellectual potential, foster social cohesion, and lay the foundation for sustainable post-war recovery.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of forced migration of Ukrainians following the outbreak of the full-scale war has posed a strategic challenge for both the state and society – not only to provide support for compatriots abroad but also to create conditions for their return (re-migration). The scale of population outflow is unprecedented: according to UNHCR and Eurostat, more than six million Ukrainians have been granted temporary protection in European Union countries, while millions more remain internally displaced. Should a significant part of this human capital fail to return, Ukraine risks facing a demographic crisis, labor shortages, and the loss of intellectual capital.

The objective of this study is to provide a theoretical understanding of the key determinants of the forced migration of the Ukrainian intellectual elite in the context of full-scale war, as well as to identify pathways for re-migration to mitigate socio-demographic and politico-economic consequences.

State of Research. The study of forced migration among Ukrainians and the prospects of their return has received considerable academic and expert attention in both domestic and international literature. Within scholarly and public discourse, several analytical directions are distinguished: economic, demographic, sociological, humanitarian, and legal.

A systematic generalization of international experience is presented in the collective work of V. Dubrovskyi, V. Cherkashyn, A. Vakhitova, and O. Hetman (2024), which analyzes global practices in addressing the consequences of war-induced migration and the specificities of the Ukrainian case. The authors emphasize the need to develop strategies that combine support for citizens abroad with measures aimed at creating favorable conditions for their return, while also addressing the risk of losing human and intellectual capital.

The psychological and motivational dimension is represented in the publication by O. Ivanov (2022), which examines the impact of missile strikes on the decision of Ukrainian women to either leave or remain in Ukraine. This study illustrates motivational factors and behavioral strategies of particular social groups, thereby complementing the broader picture of migration processes. In the work of D. Karpliuk (2023), emphasis is placed on the magnitude of the migration crisis, which, according to UN estimates, has become the largest since the Second World War, thus granting the problem a truly international dimension.

Sociological analysis and systemic projections are reflected in the research of E. Libanova, who, in a series of studies, comprehensively examines the demographic challenges associated with large-scale migration. She identifies the risks of population decline and underscores the importance of both the return of migrants and the attraction of external labor resources as prerequisites for the sustainable development of Ukrainian society.

A profound analysis of the attitudes of Ukrainian refugees is presented in the publication by D. Mykhailyshyn (2024), which substantiates the reasons behind the declining willingness of migrants to return to Ukraine. This strengthens the prognostic dimension of the problem, pointing to the necessity of state policies oriented toward maintaining ties with the diaspora and creating incentives for re-migration. The humanitarian dimension of the phenomenon is examined in the work of A. Murlikina (2023), which highlights the experience of housing loss and social exclusion, as well as in the publication by O. Yankovskyi and O. Badiuk (2023), which addresses the challenges of protecting the property rights of Ukrainians in the occupied territories.

A significant contribution to the academic discourse is the study conducted by the International Organization for Migration (2023), which explores issues of social cohesion and civic trust under conditions of war-induced displacement.

These works outline both general trends (demographic risks, the scale of migration, social challenges) and specific aspects (migrants' behavioral strategies, psychological factors, rights protection, and support for economic activity). At the same time, further elaboration is required on long-term mechanisms of re-migration, the development of a comprehensive integration policy, and the alignment of national strategies with the

European context of migration regulation – particularly with regard to the return of intellectual capital, which holds strategic importance for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the phenomenon of migration became one of the dominant factors of global transformations. Migration processes increasingly shape the new contours of the world order, influencing the economy, politics, social relations, and the security sphere. For the European Union, they represent a serious challenge, as the scale and unpredictability of migration flows complicate integration processes, provoke domestic political tensions, call into question the sustainability of social security systems, and at times undermine fundamental European values. Analysts note that migration today not only accompanies globalization but also largely determines its direction and pace.

In this general context, migration from Ukraine has acquired particular urgency with the outbreak of the full-scale Russian–Ukrainian war. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of early 2025, more than 6.3 million Ukrainians are abroad with refugee or temporary protection status, while about 3.6 million remain internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Ukraine. Thus, every fourth citizen of the state has, in one way or another, experienced forced displacement. This is the largest migration crisis in Europe since the Second World War, which has altered not only Ukraine’s demographic balance but also the configuration of the European migration space [3].

2. The Multidimensional Nature of Ukrainian Forced Migration

A distinctive feature of Ukrainian forced migration is its multidimensionality. First, it entails large-scale social and humanitarian consequences: the disruption of family and professional ties, loss of housing, fragmentation of local communities, and the traumatization of certain population groups. Second, the economic dimension manifests itself in the loss of labor force, reduction of domestic demand and tax revenues, while simultaneously generating new financial inflows through remittances from Ukrainians abroad. Third, the cultural and educational aspect concerns the integration of Ukrainian children and students into European educational systems, which creates both challenges of adaptation and prospects for the formation of a new generation with dual cultural experience.

For European countries, the reception of millions of Ukrainians has become a test of their ability to implement a policy of solidarity. The EU Directive on Temporary Protection, adopted in March 2022, became a unique mechanism for integrating a large number of refugees, granting them the right to reside, access to the labor market, healthcare, and education. At the same time, in practice, it has generated a number of challenges: from the overloading of social systems to the need for long-term integration should the war be prolonged. The European Commission emphasizes that Ukrainian migration is not a temporary phenomenon but a factor that will influence European development for decades to come.

For Ukraine, both external and internal migration constitute a challenge to national security. Research by Ukrainian scholars (the Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, think tanks such as the Razumkov Center and Cedos) identifies the risk of losing a significant part of the working-age and educationally active population, particularly young people and highly qualified specialists. At the same time, a positive aspect is also noted – the expansion of the Ukrainian diaspora in Europe, the strengthening of cultural diplomacy, and the creation of new transnational networks capable of becoming a resource for the future reconstruction of the state [4].

Forced migration of Ukrainians also has an important politico-legal dimension. It raises issues of adapting Ukrainian legislation to European standards of protection for internally displaced persons and refugees, the need to develop a comprehensive strategy of support for Ukrainians abroad, as well as the integration of migration policy into the national security system. In academic discourse, increasing attention is paid to the concept of “migration capital” – the aggregate of knowledge, skills, and social connections that Ukrainian migrants may transfer back to their homeland.

Thus, the phenomenon of Ukrainian forced migration after the outbreak of the war is a multidimensional reality that requires comprehensive interdisciplinary reflection. It concerns not only demographic changes but also the transformation of the social structure, the education system, the labor market, and cultural identity. This phenomenon has become a powerful catalyst of global and regional processes, compelling both Ukraine and the European Union to develop new strategies of adaptation, cooperation, and security protection. Scholarly analysis of these processes makes it possible

not only to understand current challenges but also to outline prospects for the utilization of migration potential in the reconstruction of Ukraine and the strengthening of the European community.

The phenomenon of mass forced migration of Ukrainians after the outbreak of the full-scale war in 2022 has confronted the state with fundamentally new challenges. Whereas in previous decades Ukraine largely faced labor migration driven primarily by economic reasons, today the issue is a large-scale population exodus caused by threats to life, destruction of infrastructure, and social instability [1].

In this situation, the key task is not only the integration of Ukrainians abroad but also the development of policies aimed at their return. Re-migration—that is, the reverse movement of migrants back to their country of origin—emerges as a strategic condition for preserving human potential and restoring the state.

Within the framework of the research project “Improving Practices of Social Partnership and Tolerance in Order to Counteract Academic Migration from Ukraine”, a team of Ukrainian researchers from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv conducted an empirical study of mechanisms to counter academic migration from Ukraine through a survey of respondents drawn from a representative sample. In total, more than 500 students participated in the study. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 22 years. The group consisted of young people currently residing abroad but continuing their studies in Ukrainian higher education institutions, as well as students pursuing higher education in their countries of temporary residence. Most of the sample was composed of students living in European countries: Lithuania (Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Kaunas University of Medicine, Vilnius University); Poland (SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Tadeusz Kościuszko Cracow University of Technology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Wrocław University of Science and Technology); Finland (University of Helsinki, Åbo Akademi University in Turku, University of Vaasa, Novia University of Applied Sciences in Turku), among others. Some students resided and studied in the USA (Boston University, University of California, Berkeley, Louisiana State University), Canada (University of Winnipeg), and South Korea (Seoul National University, Yonsei University).

3. Research empirics

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. At the preparatory stage, a diagnostic questionnaire was developed. To this end, structured interviews were conducted, which made it possible to identify the most common constructs regarding the reasons for students' relocation abroad and the factors that could encourage their return to Ukraine. All respondents had experience studying both in Ukrainian higher education institutions and in universities of their temporary host countries. Based on the identified constructs, the main questions of the diagnostic questionnaire used in the study were formulated.

To reduce the likelihood of socially desirable responses, two standardized psychometric tests were employed in the questionnaire: the "Motivation of Professional Activity" inventory by K. Zamfir as modified by A. Rean, and the Terminal Values Questionnaire by I. Senin, adapted by L. Malimon and A. Ptashkina. These methods made it possible to determine the value-motivational profiles of the respondents.

Among the study participants, the majority were female (67%) and pursuing a bachelor's degree (80%) (Table 1). Sixty percent of respondents had resided abroad for one to two years, while 40% had lived abroad for more than two years. Of those surveyed, 70% continued their studies at a Ukrainian higher education institution, whereas 30% were enrolled at a university abroad. In response to the questionnaire item "Has your standard of living changed abroad?", 83% of respondents answered "Yes, it has improved," while 17% indicated that their standard of living had remained unchanged.

The respondents were asked to answer the question: *"I will return to Ukraine for permanent residence if..."* with the following response options:

- the war ends,
- completion of studies at a foreign university,
- the possibility of employment with a high level of remuneration,
- at the present moment I do not plan to return to Ukraine,
- please specify your own response.

According to the collected data, the participants selected only two options:

1. *"I will return to Ukraine after the war ends";* and
2. *"At the present moment I do not plan to return to Ukraine."*

Table 1

General Characteristics of the Sample (Frequency Analysis)

Variable	Categories	Percentage	Number of respondents
Gender	Female	67%	377
	Male	33%	183
Age	17–19 years	40%	224
	20–22 years	60%	336
Educational degree	Bachelor	80%	448
	Master's degree	20%	112
Duration of residence abroad	1–2 years	60%	336
	More than 2 years	40%	224
Studying at a university in the host country	Yes	48%	269
	No	52%	291
Studying at a Ukrainian higher education institution	Yes	70%	392
	No	30%	168
Change in living standards abroad	Yes, improved	83%	465
	No, unchanged	17%	95

Table 2

Respondents' Answers to the Question: "I will return to Ukraine for permanent residence if..."

Response option	Percentage	Number of respondents
After the war ends	40%	224
At the present moment, I do not plan to return	60%	336

Thus, 40% of respondents considered the possibility of returning to Ukraine after the end of the war, while 60% of those surveyed did not plan to return to Ukraine at all. The findings suggest that the war is the principal determinant of young people's continued stay abroad. However, the majority of respondents indicated that they did not intend to return to Ukraine regardless of the eventual outcome of the war. Therefore, it was essential to identify the specific socio-economic and individual-psychological reasons why young people do not plan to return, as well as the factors that could influence their decision.

To determine the predictors that may affect the likelihood of students' return to Ukraine, a binary logistic regression analysis was conducted.

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The dependent variable was the decision to return to Ukraine, while the independent variables consisted of indicators derived from two psychometric instruments: the “*Motivation of Professional Activity*” questionnaire by K. Zamfir (modified by A. Rean) and the *Terminal Values Questionnaire* by I. Senin (adapted by L. Malimon and A. Ptashkina).

Table 3

Predictors of Regression Analysis

Variable type	Description
Dependent variable	0 = I will return after the war ends 1 = At the present moment, I do not plan to return to Ukraine
Independent variables (test scales)	- <i>Intrinsic motivation</i> - <i>External positive motivation</i> - <i>External negative motivation</i> - <i>Personal prestige</i> - <i>High material status</i> - <i>Creativity</i> - <i>Active social contacts</i> - <i>Self-development</i> - <i>Achievements</i> - <i>Spiritual satisfaction</i> - <i>Preservation of one's individuality</i>

The “ENTER” method was applied to construct the regression model.

Table 4

Variables in the Equation

Variable	Value	Statistical Significance (Sig.)
Constant	0,405	0,042
External negative motivation	0,106	0,744
External positive motivation	0,002	0,852
Intrinsic motivation	0,714	0,398
Personal prestige	0,907	0,048
High material status	0,923	0,040
Creativity	0,675	0,411
Active social contacts	0,159	0,690
Self-development	0,078	0,780
Achievements	0,096	0,756
Spiritual satisfaction	0,965	0,046
Preservation of individuality	0,085	0,293

The following variables were found to have a statistically significant impact on whether students would return to Ukraine:

- the value of personal prestige (*sig* = 0.048)
- the value of spiritual satisfaction (*sig* = 0.046)
- the value of high material status (*sig* = 0.040)

Table 5

Regression Analysis Model

Step	-2 Log-likelihood	Cox & Snell R ²
1	,000 ^a	0.740

^a Estimation terminated at iteration number 18 because an ideal fit was detected.

The *Cox & Snell R Square* coefficient demonstrates that, under the influence of independent variables, the value of the dependent variable varies between 0 and 1. Thus, the three identified independent variables (personal prestige, spiritual satisfaction, and high material status) exert the greatest influence on respondents' decisions regarding their return to Ukraine. It can be argued that, when making decisions about returning, students primarily relied on their value sphere – their desires and aspirations – which they believe can be realized in their homeland. Foremost among these is the value of personal prestige and self-realization, the opportunity for which young people see precisely in Ukraine.

Table 6

Valid Variables in the Regression Equation

Step	Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
1	Spiritual satisfaction	-52,021	11480,890	,000	1	,000
	High material status	78,290	18121,025	,000	1	,000
	Personal prestige	-49,184	11065,641	,000	1	,000
	Constant	386,279	103177,818	,000	1	,000

The variable “*High Material Status*” decreases the likelihood of respondents returning to Ukraine, since students understand that, given the war and the economic crisis in the country, the possibility of achieving financial independence is significantly higher in their current country of residence than at home. Considering respondents' earlier answers regarding the improvement of their standard of living, it may be assumed that the

financial and economic factor exerts a strong influence on the decision of whether to return to Ukraine. By contrast, the variables “*Personal Prestige*” and “*Spiritual Satisfaction*” increase the likelihood of young people returning to Ukraine after the war ends.

It was established that the most significant influence on the decision to return to Ukraine is exerted by the “*Personal Prestige*” scale ($sig = 0.048$). High scores indicate young people’s aspiration for respect, recognition, and positive evaluation from others, particularly from authoritative figures. Respondents believed that achieving the desired outcomes would be easier in Ukraine, where their contribution to the country’s development would be duly acknowledged. The results suggest that the aspiration to realize one’s personal and professional potential in the homeland is the decisive factor in making the decision to return to Ukraine. However, it is crucial to create conditions that correspond to students’ expectations – conditions in which young people will be actively involved in the post-war reconstruction of the country and will have a real voice in administrative and political decision-making.

The reasons for respondents’ relocation to other countries were also identified. Participants were asked to rank the reasons that prompted them to move abroad according to their level of importance, where 1 denoted the most significant reason and 23 the least significant. An analysis of mean values was conducted to identify the most important determinants of relocation abroad.

Table 7

**Reasons for Moving Abroad among Respondents
(Descriptive Statistics)**

Reason for Moving Abroad	Number of people	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Outbreak of full-scale war (24 February 2022)	560	1,00	3,00	1,8000	1,01419
Conduct of active hostilities in your city/region	560	1,00	2,00	1,8000	,41404
Dissatisfaction with the quality of education in Ukraine	560	1,00	3,00	1,8000	7,00204
Fear for one’s life and the lives of relatives	560	1,00	3,00	1,8000	1,01419

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Reason for Moving Abroad	Number of people	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Support from a foreign university in job placement (employment assistance)	560	1,00	3,00	1,8000	,77460
Desire to gain better knowledge	560	4,00	15,00	7,2000	4,31277
Dissatisfaction with socio-economic living conditions in Ukraine	560	4,00	17,00	8,2000	4,78390
Free education and financial support during the entire study abroad	560	4,00	15,00	8,4000	4,79898
Occupation of previous place of residence	560	1,00	21,00	8,8000	8,74398
Lack of funding for student initiatives/projects by the state or university	560	6,00	17,00	10,0000	4,48808
Higher wages abroad	560	6,00	16,00	10,2000	3,42679
Desire to obtain a foreign university diploma	560	5,00	19,00	10,2000	4,95984
Employment opportunities abroad	560	8,00	15,00	11,2000	2,65115
Inability to realise professional potential in Ukraine	560	7,00	17,00	12,0000	3,98210
Ability to travel freely	560	8,00	19,00	12,6000	4,06729
Better material and technical provision in foreign universities	560	10,00	18,00	12,8000	3,02844
Desire to get to know new countries, their culture and traditions	560	7,00	21,00	13,0000	5,02849
Desire to live closer to relatives	560	12,00	21,00	16,4000	3,85079
Fear of relatives' mobilisation (partner, father)	560	6,00	22,00	16,6000	5,84074
Simpler admission rules in foreign universities	560	13,00	21,00	17,2000	3,60951
Desire to study a specialty or program that is not available at Ukrainian universities	560	13,00	22,00	17,6000	3,37639
The desire to improve the level of a foreign language	560	12,00	23,00	19,2000	4,60124
The desire to avoid mobilization (for men)	560	17,00	23,00	19,8000	2,73078

Among the most significant reasons for moving abroad (those that students ranked as their first priority) were the following:

- Outbreak of the full-scale war (February 24, 2022) ($x = 1.8$)
- Active hostilities within the respondent's city or region ($x = 1.8$)
- Dissatisfaction with the quality of education in Ukraine ($x = 1.8$)
- Support from a foreign university in the process of graduate employment (assistance with job placement) ($x = 1.8$)
- Fear for one's own life and the lives of relatives ($x = 1.8$)
- Desire to acquire better knowledge ($x = 7.2$)
- Dissatisfaction with the socio-economic conditions of life in Ukraine ($x = 8.2$)
- Free tuition and financial support throughout the period of study abroad ($x = 8.4$)
- Occupation of the previous place of residence ($x = 8.8$)
- Lack of funding for student initiatives and projects from the state or university ($x = 10.0$)
- The least significant reasons influencing young people's decision to move abroad were the following:
 - Desire to avoid mobilization ($x = 19.8$)
 - Desire to improve proficiency in a foreign language ($x = 19.2$)
 - Wish to study in a specialty or program unavailable in Ukrainian universities ($x = 17.6$)
 - Simpler admission requirements to higher education institutions abroad ($x = 17.2$)
 - Fear of mobilization of relatives (husband/partner, father) ($x = 16.6$)

To generalize the reasons for respondents' relocation abroad, a factor analysis was conducted (Table 8).

Table 8

Indicators of the Attribution of Reasons for Moving Abroad to the Identified Factors

Reason for Moving Abroad	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Outbreak of full-scale war (24 February 2022)	-,982	-,024	-,187	-,024
Conduct of active hostilities in your city/region	,711	-,471	-,501	-,146
Occupation of previous place of residence	,754	-,571	-,168	-,278
Fear for one's life and the lives of relatives	-,731	,587	-,293	,190

Reason for Moving Abroad	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Avoiding mobilisation into the Armed Forces of Ukraine (for men)	,713	-,038	,070	,696
Fear of mobilisation of relatives (partner, father)	,892	,252	-,376	,013
Inability to realise professional potential in Ukraine	,684	,631	,321	-,176
Desire to obtain a foreign diploma	-,561	,352	,740	-,076
Employment opportunities abroad	-,019	,891	,338	,302
Desire to gain better knowledge	-,425	,603	,673	-,056
Dissatisfaction with socio-economic living conditions in Ukraine	,724	-,586	-,278	,233
Better material and technical provision in foreign universities	,242	-,430	,790	,365
Simpler admission rules in foreign universities	,942	,173	,284	,049
Support from foreign universities in job placement	,079	,731	,650	,193
Free education and financial support during study abroad	-,023	,956	-,293	,007
Desire to improve foreign language skills	-,286	,938	,197	-,011
Desire to live closer to relatives	,791	,286	,116	-,530
Desire to study a speciality/program unavailable in Ukraine	,113	-,158	,893	-,406
Dissatisfaction with the quality of education in Ukraine	-,871	,173	-,197	,414
Opportunity to travel freely	-,359	-,184	,100	,910
Higher wages abroad	-,411	,692	-,160	,571
Lack of funding for student initiatives/ projects (state or university)	-,604	-,303	-,050	-,735
Desire to get acquainted with new countries, cultures and traditions	-,265	-,044	,535	,801

The following reasons were included in **Factor 1**: “*Outbreak of the full-scale war (February 24, 2022),*” “*Active hostilities within the respondent’s city or region,*” “*Occupation of the previous place of residence,*” “*Fear for one’s own life and the lives of relatives,*” “*Desire to avoid mobilization (for men),*” “*Fear of mobilization of relatives (husband/partner, father),*” “*Inability to realize one’s professional potential in Ukraine,*” “*Simpler admission requirements to foreign universities,*” “*Dissatisfaction with the*

quality of education in Ukraine,” and *“Desire to be closer to relatives.”* These reasons primarily point to difficulties related to the war and the challenges of living in Ukraine.

Factor 2 included the following reasons: *“Desire for employment abroad,” “Support from a foreign university during graduate employment (assistance with job placement),” “Free tuition and financial support throughout the period of study abroad,” “Desire to improve proficiency in a foreign language,”* and *“Higher wages.”* This group of reasons relates to better opportunities abroad compared to Ukraine, particularly in employment and financial support.

The reasons incorporated into **Factor 3** were: *“Better material and technical facilities at foreign universities,” “Desire to study in a specialty or program unavailable in Ukrainian universities,” “Desire to obtain a diploma from a foreign university,”* and *“Desire to acquire better knowledge.”* These reasons are associated with seeking better educational conditions.

Factor 4 consisted of the following reasons: *“Opportunity to travel”* and *“Desire to become acquainted with new countries, their cultures, and traditions.”* These two reasons are linked to the pursuit of freedom of action, which is objectively restricted due to the war in Ukraine.

Thus, among the reasons for young people’s relocation abroad, four key groups prevail:

- difficulties related to the war and living conditions in Ukraine;
- better employment prospects and financial support in host countries;
- higher standards of education at foreign universities;
- aspiration for freedom of action and decision-making, which are significantly constrained in the homeland due to martial law.

The next step was the analysis of factors that may positively influence young people’s decision to return to Ukraine. Respondents were asked to rank the reasons that would be decisive in making the decision to return, where 1 denoted the most significant reason and 24 the least significant.

The results of the ranking are presented in **Table 9. Reasons.**

Table 9

**That May Positively Influence the Decision to Return to Ukraine
(Descriptive Statistics)**

Reason for Returning to Ukraine	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Complete cessation of hostilities on the entire territory of Ukraine	560	1,00	1,00	1,0000	,00000
Opportunity to receive decent wages	560	3,00	6,00	4,2000	1,01419
University support with employment after graduation	560	2,00	20,00	7,2000	6,90962
Availability of high scholarships or financial support for talented youth	560	2,00	14,00	7,4000	4,61055
Reduction of discrimination based on gender or age in Ukrainian universities	560	3,00	13,00	8,4000	4,01426
Cooperation of Ukrainian universities with commercial sectors and student involvement in projects generating additional income	560	2,00	19,00	10,4000	7,30753
Simplification of requirements for obtaining state funding for research projects in Ukraine	560	4,00	21,00	11,0000	5,74456
Desire to pay taxes in Ukraine, thereby supporting the national economy	560	10,00	12,00	11,0000	,65465
Elimination of corruption in Ukrainian universities	560	3,00	24,00	11,8000	7,89394
Opportunity to undertake paid internships during studies at Ukrainian universities	560	7,00	18,00	12,0000	3,87298
Admission of Ukraine to the EU	560	4,00	16,00	12,0000	5,23723
Elimination of corruption in Ukrainian HEIs	560	5,00	18,00	12,2000	4,87266
Opportunity for academic mobility and participation in exchange programs	560	8,00	19,00	13,4000	4,51664
Desire to spend more time with friends/partners	560	6,00	24,00	14,0000	7,26046

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Reason for Returning to Ukraine	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Raising awareness about non discrimination in the educational process	560	3,00	22,00	14,0000	8,53564
Possibility of professional and personal development	560	7,00	19,00	14,6000	4,37199
Possibility of participating in the reconstruction of Ukraine	560	7,00	22,00	15,4000	5,80394
State programs for youth (preferential loans for education or housing)	560	8,00	20,00	15,4000	4,88145
Ukraine's accession to the EU or NATO	560	5,00	23,00	15,4000	6,33358
Elimination of compulsory military mobilization for men	560	6,00	21,00	15,4000	5,50065
Desire to be part of the development of civil society in Ukraine	560	9,00	24,00	16,4000	5,87732
Improvement of training quality in Ukrainian universities	560	6,00	23,00	17,0000	6,83478
Deterioration of physical/ mental health abroad	560	5,00	24,00	18,2000	7,12340

Among the most significant reasons that may positively influence young people's decision to return to Ukraine (those most frequently chosen as the first priority) were the following:

- Complete cessation of hostilities across the entire territory of Ukraine (x = 1.0)
- Opportunity to receive a decent level of remuneration (x = 4.2)
- Employment support from the university after graduation (x = 7.2)
- Availability of high scholarships or substantial financial support for talented youth (x = 7.4)
- Reduction of discrimination based on gender or age in the university (x = 8.4)
- The least significant reasons identified as influencing the decision to return to Ukraine were the following:
 - Improvement of material and technical facilities of Ukrainian universities (x = 17.0)
 - Desire to live close to one's relatives in Ukraine (x = 18.2)

– Deterioration of physical or mental health while abroad ($x = 18.4$)

Through factor analysis, we also identified three generalized factors that may influence students' decisions to return to Ukraine (Table 10).

Table 10

Indicators of the Attribution of Factors Influencing the Decision to Return to Ukraine to the Identified Groups

Reason for Returning	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Complete cessation of hostilities on the entire territory of Ukraine	-,267	,921	-,234
Opportunity to receive decent wages	,901	,056	,511
University support with employment after graduation	-,868	,134	-,071
High scholarships/financial support for talented youth	-,993	-,441	,227
Reduction of gender/age discrimination in universities	,070	,113	-,898
Cooperation between universities and commercial sectors (student participation in income-generating projects)	,876	,132	,452
Simplified access to state funding for student research projects	,321	,684	,331
Desire to pay taxes in Ukraine, supporting the economy	,740	-,211	,125
Elimination of corruption in universities	,693	-,375	,121
Paid internships during studies at Ukrainian universities	,673	-,235	,413
Admission of Ukraine to the EU	-,278	,124	,786
Academic mobility and exchange programs	,090	,742	-,321
Desire to spend more time with friends/partners	,284	,721	,173
Opportunities for professional/personal development	,450	,079	,731
Participation in Ukraine's reconstruction	-,423	,823	,256
State youth programs (loans for education/housing)	,197	-,786	,938
NATO membership	,616	,291	,286
Elimination of compulsory military mobilization (for men)	,193	,913	-,258
Participation in civil society development	-,437	-,771	,243
Improved training quality in universities	,100	-,359	-,884
Deterioration of health while abroad	-,760	-,311	,192
Improved material and technical base of universities	-,650	-,014	-,220
Elimination of corruption in higher education institutions	,235	,165	-,644

The first factor combined variables that characterize the financial and economic determinants of students' return to their homeland: *"Availability of high scholarships or substantial financial support for talented youth," "Opportunity to receive a decent level of remuneration," "Cooperation between Ukrainian universities and the commercial sector and students' involvement in profit-generating projects," "Employment support from the university after graduation," "Aspiration to pay taxes in Ukraine and thereby support the state's economy," "Simplification of requirements for obtaining state funding for scientific projects and initiatives," "Opportunity to undertake paid internships or traineeships during studies at Ukrainian universities," "Reduction of tuition fees in Ukrainian universities," "Improvement of material and technical facilities in Ukrainian universities," and "State programs for youth providing favorable loans for education or housing purchase."*

The second factor encompassed socio-political determinants that may positively influence students' decisions to return to Ukraine. These included: *"Complete cessation of hostilities across the entire territory of Ukraine," "Ukraine's accession to the EU or NATO," "Desire to contribute to the development of civil society in Ukraine," "Difficulties in finding employment abroad," "Abolition of compulsory military mobilization for men," "Reduction of corruption in Ukrainian universities," "Opportunity to actively influence decisions and the functioning of state institutions," and "Improvement of educational standards in Ukrainian universities."*

The third factor was based on interpersonal communication as the shared foundation linking its variables. It included: *"Reduction of discrimination based on gender or age at the university," "Problems with integration abroad," "Desire to spend more time with friends or partners," "Opportunities for students' professional or personal development," and "Desire to live close to one's relatives in Ukraine."*

Thus, based on the results of factor analysis, it can be concluded that young people's positive decision to return to Ukraine is primarily influenced by the socio-political situation in the country, financial and economic factors, and the quality of interpersonal communication with family, peers, and academic staff.

The results of the factor analysis proved somewhat unexpected, as the role of high-quality interpersonal communication – particularly within

the educational environment – was highlighted on an equal level with financial and socio-political determinants. Students identified the variable *“Reduction of discrimination based on gender or age at the university”* as an important factor influencing their decision to return to Ukraine. In our view, enhancing corporate ethics, culture, and awareness among faculty and staff of higher education institutions regarding non-discriminatory interaction in the educational process will positively impact students’ decisions to pursue higher education in Ukraine.

Another empirical study was conducted using qualitative methods, aimed at identifying the motivational aspects of academic migration of lecturers and researchers and understanding the conditions under which the intellectual elite are prepared to return to Ukraine.

The primary method of research was in-depth interviews (15 interviews; average duration – 1 hour 20 minutes). The target audience comprised Ukrainian educators who had left the country and are currently employed in foreign higher education institutions. The sample included Ukrainian lecturers and researchers working at universities in the United States, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Lithuania.

When forming the sample, the focus was placed on academics aged 35–50 who, prior to the war, had held positions as associate professors and professors in leading Ukrainian universities. These individuals had matured as professionals in independent Ukraine and had achieved notable success. They possess foreign language skills, enabling close contacts with international colleagues through participation in international conferences, fellowships at European and U.S. universities, and joint scientific projects. They truly represent the academic elite, whose presence in Ukraine would ensure a proper level of science and education, as well as the competitiveness of domestic higher education institutions.

The results of the study revealed both the factors that foster academic migration and the determinants encouraging Ukrainian scholars and educators to return to Ukraine.

It was found that one of the factors influencing the professional activities of lecturers is the heavy workload not directly related to teaching. In particular, this includes preparing materials for accreditation, developing and updating methodological plans, curricula, and syllabi, as well as participation in the work of admission committees, which usually does not

involve additional remuneration. At the same time, respondents noted a different practice in foreign universities: the administration typically requires only a brief course annotation, while syllabi are developed primarily for the convenience of students and are not mandatory for submission.

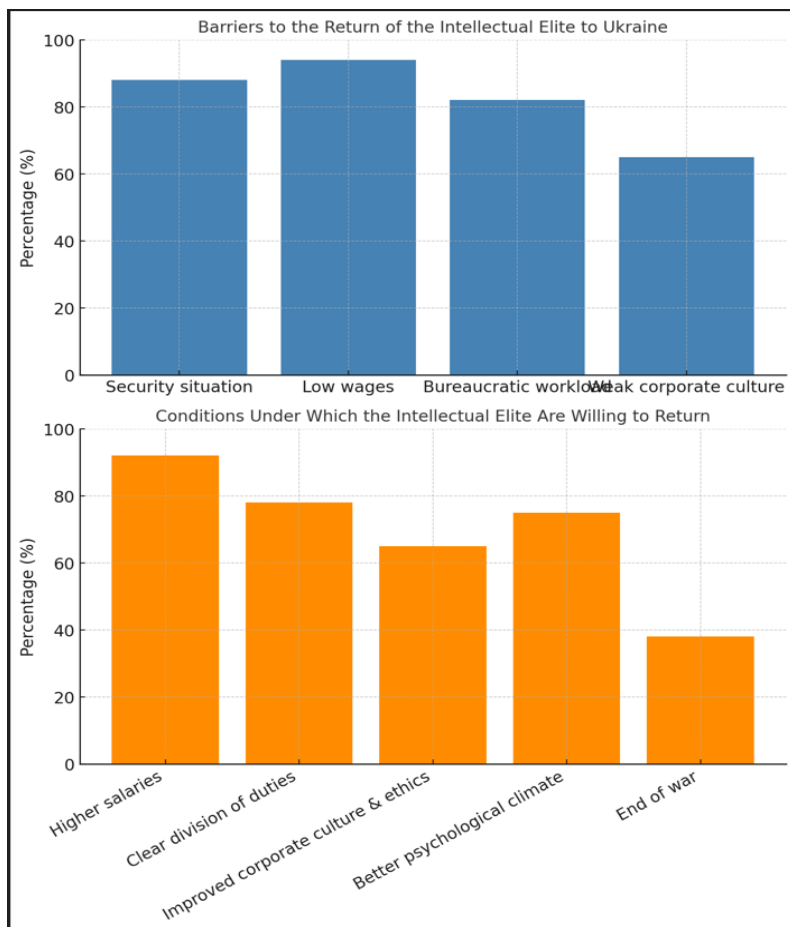


Figure 1. Motivational factors contributing to the academic migration of lecturers

Another desirable practice, according to respondents, is the differentiation of teaching and research responsibilities. In foreign universities, staff members often perform either exclusively pedagogical functions (delivering lectures and practical classes) or focus solely on research (preparing grant applications, implementing research projects, publishing articles, and participating in conferences). In Ukrainian higher education institutions, lecturers are required to combine both functions, which, according to respondents, increases the overall workload.

Another factor identified was the weak implementation of corporate culture and ethics. Lecturers who had worked abroad pointed to communication problems and instances of dismissive attitudes from colleagues. Such manifestations included passive aggression or devaluation of colleagues – for example, ignoring emails or requests from staff members based abroad, or filing complaints with the administration about their insufficient involvement in educational and research processes. These practices contributed to divisions within academic teams and worsened the psychological climate in collectives.

Respondents also emphasized the lack, or ineffectiveness, of development programs in most Ukrainian universities. Staff members were unaware of the core strategic vision of their institutions. Consequently, there was no strong corporate spirit, no sense of shared community, and no demand for close interdisciplinary collaboration in accordance with the requirements of modern science. By contrast, a high level of corporate culture in foreign universities is sustained, among other things, by informal activities, including corporate events where staff have the opportunity to communicate with colleagues from different departments, with the administration, and with students.

Significant factors of academic migration also included the security situation in Ukraine and the low level of remuneration for academic staff in Ukrainian higher education institutions. However, only 37% of respondents expressed willingness to return home after the complete cessation of hostilities across the entire territory of Ukraine, whereas for 93% the financial factor remained decisive in making the choice to continue professional activity in foreign universities and research centers.

Thus, among the main barriers to return, security concerns unsurprisingly prevail. At the same time, other significant barriers include excessive

bureaucratic workload for lecturers, the lack of differentiation between teaching and research functions, and an unfavorable psychological climate within academic teams.

The issue of re-migration in Ukraine is directly linked to the demographic situation. According to forecasts by the Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, if the war is prolonged, the country may lose between 20 and 30 percent of its working-age population. The problem of youth and highly qualified specialists leaving the country is particularly acute. Should a significant portion of them remain in European states, this would create a serious imbalance in the labor market, slow down reconstruction, and exacerbate demographic aging.

At the same time, the economic dimension of re-migration has a dual nature. On the one hand, the outflow of population reduces tax revenues and lowers domestic demand. On the other hand, the Ukrainian diaspora abroad generates new financial flows: in 2023 alone, remittances from abroad amounted to more than 14 billion USD (NBU). However, such transfers cannot substitute for the direct presence of labor in the economy. For this reason, the return of citizens is a necessary condition for sustainable economic development.

Re-migration is also of vital importance for the preservation of cultural identity. A significant portion of Ukrainian children are now integrated into EU schools, adopting new linguistic and cultural practices. This creates a risk of gradual assimilation and a weakening of ties with the homeland. At the same time, there is also a reverse effect: children and young people who receive European education may, upon their return, become carriers of progressive experience, thereby contributing to Ukraine's European integration. Thus, the return of the intellectual elite is critically important.

Socio-cultural re-migration also entails the transfer of new skills, knowledge, and experiences. Many Ukrainians currently residing in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Spain are mastering modern professions and engaging with contemporary educational and technological practices. Their reintegration into Ukrainian society could become an important resource for the modernization of education, science, business, and governance.

The experience of Central and Eastern European countries after their accession to the EU shows that the issue of migrant return is always complex. For instance, after the mass emigration of Polish citizens to the United Kingdom and Germany during 2004–2010, Poland implemented the *Powroty* (“Returns”) programs, which provided informational support for migrants, simplified access to employment, and offered loans for small businesses. Lithuania, faced with youth outflow after EU accession, introduced educational grants and dual-mobility programs to encourage students to return. Croatia, during its post-war reconstruction, relied on mechanisms of diaspora engagement in investment projects and cultural diplomacy, creating conditions for re-migration.

These examples demonstrate that re-migration does not occur spontaneously – it requires a deliberate state policy that combines economic incentives, social support, educational mechanisms, and cultural integration.

For Ukraine, the main challenge is to create conditions that would encourage return. Several key areas can be identified: the **security dimension** – guarantees of safety for citizens, reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure, and access to healthcare and education; the **economic dimension** – creation of jobs, concessional loans for entrepreneurs, tax incentives for those returning and investing in business; the **educational and scientific dimension** – programs to support students and researchers, dual degrees, and institutional cooperation with EU universities; and the **social dimension** – family adaptation assistance, housing programs, psychological support, and more.

4. Conclusion

Preservation of human capital is a key factor in the survival of the state in the post-war period. If Ukraine loses a significant part of its population, reconstruction could be delayed for decades, while social and economic imbalances would only deepen. Therefore, re-migration must be regarded as an element of national security. This requires integrating migration policy into the broader framework of the state’s recovery strategy and European integration.

Re-migration is not merely a question of citizens returning, but a strategy for the future development of Ukraine. It encompasses demographic, economic, socio-cultural, and security dimensions, and without its

implementation, the country's recovery will remain incomplete. European experience shows that successful re-migration requires systematic policy: from economic incentives and social support to cultural programs and diaspora networks. Ukraine has a unique opportunity to transform forced migration into a resource for renewal if it can create conditions for the return of its citizens and harness the experience they have gained abroad. Thus, the issue of re-migration goes far beyond demography – it becomes a central element of Ukraine's recovery strategy, European integration, and the preservation of national identity.

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