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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-566-5-14>

PROGRAM-ORIENTED APPROACH IN MANAGING MIGRATION DURING CRISIS: FROM 1970S-STYLE STABILIZATION TO 1980S-STYLE LIBERALIZATION

The present study explores how Ukraine's socio-economic trajectory between the mid-2010s and mid-2020s shapes migration dynamics under crisis. I frame 2016 as analogous to a 1970s stabilization regime – a period of patching, recovery, and internal resilience – and 2025 as analogous to early 1980s liberalization / “Reaganomics” – a regime of market discipline, polarization, and global integration. This analogy helps interpret household strategies, policy tensions, and migration flows in a crisis context.

I use a comparative-historical / structural analogy method, linking the socio-economic regimes of the 1970s and 1980s with Ukraine's 2016 and 2025 contexts. Empirical support comes from migration and demographic research, policy reports, and data on population movement trends. This approach allows situating migration management policies not just in linear projection, but in systemic transitions. Below is a summary of the findings obtained.

A) In 2016, following years of conflict and instability, many households prioritized stabilization: saving, reducing exposure, and patching losses. This mirrors the 1970s logic of slow recovery.

By 2025, however, a bifurcated model emerges: some households remain oriented toward domestic stability, while others fully engage in transnational labor mobility. This dualism parallels early 1980s polarization: inward security vs. outward competitiveness. The policy challenge: migration becomes a structural outlet, and state strategy must reconcile internal stability with external labor dependencies.

The trends of migration intention in Ukraine show that in 2025 about 13 % express intent to leave in the next six months, with Poland and Germany as preferred destinations [3]. Also, the EUAA reports that departures in earlier years dropped sharply after initial outflows.

B) The 2016 mode combined administrative planning with reactive corrections: a hybrid “planned routine + activism.” This is akin to managerial compromises of the 1970s. By 2025, decision architectures align more with market discipline: regulatory enforcement, performance incentives, and competitive benchmarks override legacy collective practices. This shift is analogous to the 1980s push for market rationalization over compromise. The tension lies in maintaining social embeddedness while enforcing efficiency [4]. The reform pressures under wartime conditions stress institutional discipline and oversight.

C) In 2016, stratification had begun stabilizing: elites consolidating, social elevators rising, but still permeable. The structure resembled 1970s’ relatively fluid hierarchical orders.

By 2025, elite groups have hardened, inequality widened, and demands for accountability have grown. This mirrors early 1980s consolidation: entrenched power blocs negotiating with rising middle demands. The conflict: socio-economic modernization vs. distributional justice. Migration and labor studies in Ukraine emphasize how war and economic pressure intensify stratification and social inequality [5].

D) In 2016, a cautious view existed toward technology: overuse, health risk, and dependency led to resistance, echoing 1970s ambivalence about machines.

By 2025, technology is restructured: selective automation in production, careful household adoption, and emphasis on resilient digital infrastructure. This resembles the retooling and productivity pushes of the early 1980s. Migration policies must incorporate the divide between digital efficiency and human well-being. Research on digital migration, network analysis, and professional mobility in Ukraine supports the role of tech in migration decisions [6].

E) In 2016, the Internet and digital overload created instability for youth and households: a tension akin to late 1970s structural strain.

By 2025, migration and labor competition are embedded globally: young professionals compete across borders, digital infrastructure is

integrated into global value chains, and migration becomes a core route for economic positioning. This parallels the liberalization and globalization pressures of early 1980s economic regimes. Studies using LinkedIn data show a growing exodus of educated Ukrainians, influenced by networks and global demand [6]. Also, broad migration flow measurement via digital data highlights the surge in Ukraine's outward migration post-invasion.

The 1970s – 1980s analogy illuminates how Ukraine's crisis context evolves from stabilization to liberalization dynamics. The shifts in household strategy, institutional logic, stratification, technology, and youth labor markets are not independent: they reinforce one another, pushing migration from a margin to a structural axis of economic balance.

Managing migration in this environment means that policy cannot simply treat emigration as a “loss,” but as a systemic instrument of adjustment. A program-oriented approach must build flexible architectures that mediate between internal cohesion and external integration, ensuring human development and structural competitiveness.

Thus, between 2016 and 2025, the transformation is dramatic: from a stabilizing, patchwork regime toward a polarized, liberalizing, globally networked regime. From war fatigue to Reaganomics-style polarization; from Eastern decision models to market-discipline hybrids; from post-soviet stratification to elite consolidation; from skepticism to restructuring technology's role; and from information overload to global labor competition.

The 1970s-style recovery gives way to 1980s-style competition. Migration becomes integral to national adaptation rather than emergency relief. A program-oriented strategy offers a structured way to handle this tension, combining modernization with social safeguards.

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