

The ambivalent protection of Ukrainian refugees in Europe: gender and generations in the case of the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

The paper starts with general reflections on how gender and (second) generation impact the nature of migration processes. Where these initially tend to be conceived as temporary in nature because of the prospect of return with savings, or to a country recovered from war and persecution, such migrations often evolve into permanent resettlement. Important factors are changes in gender dynamics and the integration of the migrants' children into the educational system of the receiving state. Migration may allow women to emancipate from traditional roles they are reluctant to return to. The educational opportunities children get and the subsequent disconnect from their origin make return migration for their parents less of an option. The paper then explores how such dynamics play out in the case of Ukrainian refugees who benefit from the Temporary Protection Directive in Europe. The TPD, although valid throughout the EU, is not uniformly implemented. The interpretation of the Dutch government is such that the position of Ukrainians has remained ambivalent: integration into the labour market and education is encouraged yet desired temporality of stay underlies their legal position. In the case of the Netherlands, and based on original survey data, we argue that here again gender and generational dynamics are determining the actual outcome of the Ukrainians' "temporary" protection.

CVs

Jofelle P. Tesorio is a migration researcher at the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University. Within the Horizon 2020 Welcoming Spaces project at UU, Jofelle has done research about Ukrainians in peripheral Netherlands. Her research hopes to contribute to the lessons learned from the arrival of Ukrainians in their host countries in the longstanding debate on refugee inclusion. Also trained as a journalist, she has been investigating media representations of different groups of migrants and reporting about issues of Asian migrants in Europe.

Dr Jeroen Doomernik is an associate professor at the Dept. of Political Science and a senior researcher at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam. His field of research is the politics of past and present international migration and asylum in Europe. Latest publication is (2025) "Why All Benefit When Refugees Enjoy the EU's Freedom of Movement" in EconPol Forum, Vol.26(1), pp.32-34.