

From Refugees to Tourists: The Forfeit of Ukrainians' Forced Migration Status in Bali

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Abstract: The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered an unexpected migration pattern, as some Ukrainians chose Bali, Indonesia, as their destination, challenging traditional distinctions between refugees and tourists. This study explores whether we should classify Ukrainians in Bali as refugees, given their tourist-like destination choices and behavior patterns. Through qualitative methodologies including content analysis, semi-structured interviews, observation, and migration theory analysis, the research reveals that Ukrainian presence in Bali aligns more closely with tourism than refugee characteristics, based on lifestyle-driven motivations, variable duration of stay, and destination choice preferences. The economic and social activities of Ukrainians in Bali resemble those of lifestyle migrants more than they do typical refugee patterns. The findings suggest that policy frameworks should maintain tourism-based approaches while acknowledging these migrants' complex circumstances and that traditional refugee-tourist classifications require revision to accommodate cases where conflict displacement intersects with lifestyle-based destination choices.

Keywords: migration patterns; refugee-tourist dichotomy; forced displacement; global mobility; policy frameworks

1. Introduction

On the date of February 24, 2022, the commencement of the Russian invasion of Ukraine will be unequivocally etched into the annals of history and trigger one of the largest refugee crises since World War II. Around 2.7 million individuals have been compelled to migrate beyond their nation's borders, predominantly towards various European nations (UNHCR, 2022), and by the middle of 2023, it is projected that a staggering 17.6 million individuals residing in Ukraine will be in dire need of humanitarian assistance (The Center for

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Disaster Philanthropy, 2023). While most Ukrainian refugees sought asylum in neighboring European countries, a unique phenomenon emerged in Southeast Asia: thousands of Ukrainians chose Bali, Indonesia, as their destination during the ongoing conflict.

This migration phenomenon posits a persuasive argument that interrogates traditional paradigms of forced migration. In contrast to established patterns of refugee relocation towards nations possessing well-defined asylum systems, individuals from Ukraine have predominantly migrated to Bali—a globally recognized tourist locale—capitalizing on Indonesia’s visa regulations and the island’s allure as a tropical sanctuary. Various sources indicate a significant increase in the Ukrainian population in Bali, with estimates fluctuating from 453 officially recognized individuals, some of whom possess Permanent Residence Cards (The Bali Sun, 2022), to potentially 7,000 arrivals in 2022 alone, alongside an additional 2,500 in the early months of 2023 (Chen, 2023). This substantial influx to Bali, Indonesia’s foremost tourist destination, suggests that the definition of forced migration is progressively becoming more indistinct in contemporary scenarios.

The substantial escalation in the number of Ukrainian individuals who sought asylum in Bali had a significant impact on both national and local policy implementation. Based on a report by Bali.com (2023), it has been suggested that Ukrainians may have the ability to request a visa on arrival, potentially simplifying their travel to and residence in Bali. The Indonesian government has scheduled the establishment of the aforementioned policy for May 2022. However, it is noteworthy that Ukraine is absent from the enumeration of 23 nations featured in the initial published policy, as well as from the additional 42 countries that qualify for visas on arrival, following the statements made by Sandiaga Uno, in his capacity as the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, during a Weekly Press Briefing conducted in Jakarta. (*Visa on Arrival Ke Bali Ditambah Dari 23 Menjadi 42 Negara, Ini Daftarnya | Tempo.Co*, 2022).

This particular policy elucidates that the Indonesian government classifies individuals of Ukrainian origin as visitors rather than asylum seekers. Additionally, the President of Indonesia has confirmed that tourists from Ukraine do not travel to Bali in the capacity of refugees (Office of Assistant to Deputy Cabinet Secretary for State Documents & Translation, 2023). However, this official position contradicts Vasyl Hamianin, the ambassador of Ukraine to Indonesia, who indicated that the major reasons why Ukrainians were in Bali were the circumstances of the crisis in their country and the need to temporarily lodge refugees from the upheaval (Wee & Suhartono, 2023).

The broad scope of the challenges faced by migrants of different classifications makes it increasingly arduous for them to surmount the

consequential obstacles. Therefore, this article aims to address the extent to which Ukrainians in Bali can genuinely consider themselves refugees due to the conflict in their home country, despite their strong desire to be in Bali. This distinction needs to be addressed as an objection to this article because the policy implications between these two are different. While the indication of refugees is more dominant, the government, in this case Bali, has responsibilities to protect refugees according to the protocol of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees's (UNHCR) 10-Point Plan in Action (UNHCR, 2017). *Vice versa*, it is more flexible for Indonesia to stand out as an international tourist destination, which contributes to its gross domestic product (GDP). As Milica Z. Bookman (2006) noted, with the complex nature of people's movements and their impact, it emphasizes the need for policymakers to consider these differences.

2. Literature Review

The phenomenon of Ukrainian individuals fleeing to Bali is a rarity, as the majority of those displaced tend to endure precarious living conditions and remain in or near the region from which they were displaced (Steiner, 2023). Traditional push factors in forced migration typically include conflict, persecution, and human rights violations (Black et al., 2011; Haas et al., 2020). However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 introduced new dimensions to these classical push factors, leading Schuster (2015) to state that migration incentives may overlap because individuals will want not only to save their lives but also to find employment and make a living once they reach a place of safety. Furthermore, migration is multifaceted, encompassing more than just simultaneous travel by migrants and refugees (Schuster, 2015). As people flee conflict, human rights violations, and persecution, they will also be leaving behind economic instability and poverty.

The use of mixed migration to comprehend the interconnected nature of migration was used in migration studies of Turkish migrants while they migrated from Bulgaria in 1989. The Bulgarian Turks considered moving to their native country on a voluntary basis, as Turkey is their motherland, but the Bulgarian Communist Party's assimilation policies forced them to do so involuntarily (Dişbudak & Purkis, 2016). In Spain, the voluntary repatriation of Romani migrants also revealed that what is considered voluntary migration can include elements of forced migration from certain perspectives. In her articles, Iona Vrăbiescu (2019) argued that humanitarianism's background permits the construction of social projects aiming at voluntary migration, but humanitarianism was just used to justify this practice while this repatriate did not consider the aspect of migrants' needs and aspirations. These two examples demonstrate that human migration can be both voluntary and involuntary or

forced; however, they still occur on the same continent, making the study of Ukrainians in Bali somewhat new.

Conversely, the contextualization of Bali within the realm of migration studies has undergone substantial transformation in the preceding decades. Picard's (2008) foundational research on tourism in Bali delineates the historical basis of the island as a prominent global tourism hub. The evidence indicates that individuals who travel to Bali do so primarily for recreational purposes, driven by specific tourist intentions to visit designated locales. Furthermore, from a rational choice perspective, Bali tends to develop tourism initiatives that attract visitors from around the globe to its shores (Wardana, 2019). Consequently, from both historical and administrative viewpoints, Bali emerges as a compelling island for visitation or as a tourist destination. Nonetheless, in contemporary times, as digital advancements proliferate, the motivations for visiting Bali have become markedly more heterogeneous, as most visitors are of productive ages (Hermawati et al., 2021; Wibowo, 2024).

For visitors originating from Europe, Utama (2017) identified three principal factors that entice European tourists to travel to Bali, namely security, affordability, and the aesthetic appeal of the island. Consequently, nearly fifty percent of European tourists have frequented Bali as repeat visitors. The tourism sector in Bali not only influences the livelihoods of the indigenous population but also has an important bearing on the political dynamics within various communities (Berger, 2013). Therefore, given that tourism generates a significant portion of Bali's economic revenue, this phenomenon has the potential to accelerate cultural evolution on both social and political levels. The evidence suggests that Bali exhibits a high degree of hospitality towards tourists and is prepared for potential cultural adjustments in response to tourist presence. Simultaneously, there is a correlation between the economic development of Bali and the transformation of the social and political behaviors of its inhabitants.

This literature review elucidates the intricate nature of Ukrainian migration status in Bali. Given the current state of warfare in Ukraine, it suggests that individuals departing from their homeland may qualify as refugees. Nevertheless, the decisions made by Ukrainians in Bali are notably distinctive. Consequently, the broad appeal of these migratory motives presents a formidable challenge for the host nation in evaluating and addressing this phenomenon. While the discourse regarding the amalgamation of migrants and refugees is ongoing, it is imperative to delineate between voluntary and involuntary migrants to facilitate optimal and straightforward policy formulation for the government. However, migration is multifarious in several respects, not merely in the context that both migrants and refugees traverse

simultaneously (Schuster, 2015). The application of pull and push factors in this article may assist in accurately identifying the presence of Ukrainians in Bali, thereby simplifying the task for policymakers to understand their situation.

3. Method and Theory

For this study, we used qualitative methods because the main goal of qualitative research is to gain a deep and detailed understanding of a specific topic. The active examination of locations and individuals within sociocultural contexts achieves this objective (Clark et al., 2021). This article adopts an inductive approach to expand the evidentiary base by observing and accumulating data to identify scenarios in which a theoretical proposition is corroborated or refuted. This research framework integrates diverse data collection techniques to guarantee thorough coverage and methodological triangulation. As explained by Clark et al. (2021), the researchers used qualitative content analysis, also known as semiotics, to clarify what the data means for each document they examined. To complement the data, the researchers also executed semi-structured interviews with two Ukrainian migrants presently residing in Bali and analyzed several public statements from officials related to this issue. We also used observational methods to gain additional contextual insights. By employing this methodology, this article aims to concentrate on data pertinent to the experiences of Ukrainian migrants in Bali as well as the prevailing conditions in Bali itself. Furthermore, this article incorporates the well-established concepts of push and pull factors within the context of this migratory phenomenon to fulfill its objectives and to present varying perspectives.

The complexity of contemporary migration patterns necessitates a robust theoretical framework that can accommodate both forced displacement and destination choice. This study employs two complementary theoretical approaches: the push-pull framework and mixed migration theory, while clearly delineating the distinctions between forced migration and tourism. The conceptual boundaries between different types of migration have become increasingly complex in the globalized world. While migration broadly refers to the movement of people from one location to another, the traditional dichotomy between forced and voluntary migration has been challenged by contemporary patterns of human mobility. As Haas et al. (2020) argue, although migration is not a binary choice between forced and voluntary movement, the categorization of migrants is needed for the government to implement policies and decide which migrants can access certain rights, especially for refugees. This consideration is particularly relevant in cases where clear push factors, such as conflict, intersect with individual agency in destination choice.

Forced movement at one end lies due to immediate threats to life and safety, while voluntary movement ends purely on voluntary movement for lifestyle enhancement. However, as Erdal & Oeppen (2018) argue, most contemporary migration falls somewhere between these extremes, with individuals experiencing varying degrees of choice and constraint in both their decision to move and their choice of destination. Therefore, it is important to maintain analytical clarity between forced migration and voluntary tourism while recognizing potential overlaps. As Möhring (2014) defines it, tourism represents voluntary, temporary movement with a predetermined return date, while forced migration involves involuntary displacement with uncertain duration.

The term mixed migration could be used to answer this question and became famous on the international agenda regarding the divergent and vast movement of humans in the era of globalization. Migration is a widely utilized term to denote the process of individuals relocating from their initial place of origin to a different location (Bastia & Skeldon, 2021; Inglis et al., 2020); consequently, individuals classified as migrants may include tourists or refugees alike. In the 1970s and 1980s, mixed migration came up to handle or as a solution for governing international mobility with clear boundaries between migrants' types, either refugees or economic migrants (Oelgemöller, 2021). Later, this approach became problematic because, despite clarifying the differences between migrant types, it merely reproduced the gendered and racialized subjectivity inherent in global politics (Oelgemöller, 2021). Contradictorily, it is imperative to undertake the differentiation of migrant types due to the disparate rules and regulations applicable to each migrant category (Andersen, 2010). Furthermore, by identifying the types of migrants, it could be easier to understand their experience and motivation for migration (Nijhoff & Gordano, 2017). We can better understand migration patterns, causes, and economic and social impacts by distinguishing between the various types of migrants. The uncertainty created by these disparities, however, will make it more difficult to execute policy successfully.

Because migrants do many different things, it is impossible to tell the difference between forced and voluntary migration. Drawing lines between the two often leads to results that are arbitrary and inconsistent, which is not a valid basis for theory (Bakewell, 2021; Piguet, 2018). Besides these difficulties, in reality, the policies and practices in the field often have significant consequences for migrants and their families (Bakewell, 2021). Because of this, the clear separation of voluntary and forced migration has made it harder for public policymakers to come up with migration strategies. On the other hand, it will be easier for migrants of any status to move to host countries. As globalization's

driving force, these difficulties show that global migration patterns are also complex as the influx of migrants becomes more diverse and distant (Czaika & Haas, 2014). In other words, globalization also plays an important role in increasing the difficulties of different migrations and making the demarcation between voluntary and forced migration even more blurred.

Practically, the concepts of refugees, forced migrants, and tourists are different. Modern tourism is a voluntary, short-term move to another place with no purpose and a more or less fixed date of return, while migration, including that of refugees, is the act of leaving one's place of residence and not returning for a very long time, if at all (Möhring, 2014). From this perspective, the distinction depends on many aspects of the motives and intentions of the people who moved, and therefore it is always challenging and difficult to analyze or create criteria for them. Ferruccio Pastore (2015) added the mobility of European Union (EU) citizens, who have the right to move freely within the EU for work, study, and other purposes. But for forced migration, Pastore (2015) described it as including individuals who are forced to leave home countries due to persecution, conflict, or other forms of violence, while voluntary migration specifically includes economic migrants who seek better job opportunities or a higher standard of living. The reviews that are presented to the public decision-makers in this context are, without a doubt, a considerable impediment that poses a challenge of enormous magnitude. This challenge, in particular, pertains to the crucial matter of ascertaining the ways in which humans are able to move around across borders and subsequently devising appropriate policy frameworks that can effectively accommodate and regulate these movements.

4. Results and Discussion

This section investigates Ukrainian migration to Bali through three analytical frameworks that reveal challenges in categorizing these migrants within legal and policy frameworks. The first subsection analyzes the ambiguity of destination choices among Ukrainian migrants, particularly how their selection of Bali complicates traditional refugee migration patterns and prompts inquiries into their motivations. The second subsection examines Indonesia's divergent approaches to foreign nationals, highlighting the contrast between its welcoming policy for tourists, which aids economic growth, and its restrictive refugee policies despite constitutional human rights guarantees. The final subsection establishes criteria—motivation, duration of stay, and destination choice—to differentiate between tourist and refugee status, ultimately asserting that Ukrainians in Bali align more closely with tourism and lifestyle migration than conventional refugee settlement trends.

4.1 *The Ambiguity of Ukrainian Migrants' Choice*

The incursion of Russia into Ukraine during February 2022 gave rise to a growing migration of individuals, particularly from the region of Ukraine. A significant proportion of Ukrainian citizens left their homeland due to concerns regarding their personal safety, resulting in their categorization as refugees. The most favored places of interest for refugees hailing from Ukraine are predominantly Russia, which has an estimated number of nearly three million refugees; Poland, which has approximately one and a half million; Germany, which has an estimated one million; and various other European nations, which possess less than five hundred thousand refugees each (Gavali, 2023). The movement of Ukrainians to European countries primarily suggests that refugees often select their destination based on the proximity or distance of the host country. As mentioned before by Niklaus Steiner (2023), the precarious circumstances of refugees often motivate them to select a refugee destination near their country of origin. Therefore, it appears that the Ukrainians have displayed a degree of indecisiveness in their selection of Bali as their preferred destination, akin to the ambivalence often observed among refugees. It is not incorrect for the Indonesian government to classify Ukrainians in Bali as tourists rather than refugees.

This classification is further reinforced by the official stance of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, particularly in their enforcement actions against Ukrainian nationals who violate immigration regulations. Following the deportation of a Ukrainian mother and child who had overstayed their visa by 191 days, Pramella Y. Pasaribu, Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in Bali 2022-2024, emphasized the government's firm stance:

"We will continue to collaborate with relevant agencies to ensure that foreign nationals in the Bali Province comply with applicable regulations and norms" (Kementerian Hukum Kantor Wilayah Bali, 2024).

This statement demonstrates that Indonesian authorities consistently treat Ukrainians as foreign nationals subject to standard immigration procedures and penalties, rather than recognizing them as refugees requiring special protection or exemptions from deportation.

In 2016, there was the introduction of a visa-free regime between Indonesia and Ukraine for their respective citizens, which has the potential to positively impact the growth of bilateral tourism exchanges. After the invasion of Russian forces in June of the year 2022, Indonesia and Ukraine once again arrived at a consensus to eliminate the requirement of visas for brief sojourns (Kitsoft, n.d.). Due to the circumstances prevailing during the time of war, the creation

of the bilateral agreement entailed a relaxation of rules by Indonesia to permit the entry of Ukrainians into the country. Furthermore, the aforementioned statement suggests that Indonesia is inclined to provide assistance to Ukraine through its migration policy while remaining impartial regarding the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

However, the reality on the ground presents a different picture. One Ukrainian informant in Bali revealed the stark contrast between policy intentions and actual implementation while asked about Indonesia's support for Ukrainians:

"No, nothing, because, like Ukraine and Indonesia don't have a strict connection, we don't have support here. So people in Australia give some support, and many countries in Europe like to support Ukrainians, but I'm not sure right now where it goes" (Informant 1, personal communication, 7 January 2025).

This testimony highlights the gap between Indonesia's stated commitment to assist Ukrainian nationals and the actual support received by those seeking refuge in Bali.

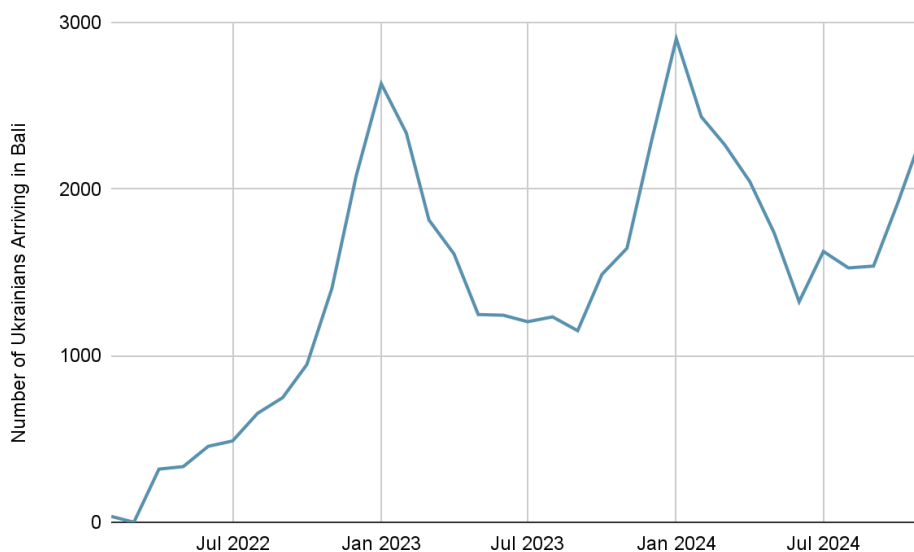


Figure 1. Number of Ukrainians Arriving in Bali from February 2022 until May 2023 (Bali Government Tourism Office, 2023, 2024, 2025)

From the viewpoint of the number of Ukrainians in Bali, it is clear that they are tourists. Figure 1 shows how the number of Ukrainians in Bali changes over time. Additionally, Figure 1 explains that most Ukrainians visiting Bali do so mainly for vacation during the winter break, with the highest number of

visitors coming in November, December, and January. The growing number of Ukrainians visiting Bali in these months also indicates that the ongoing war in Ukraine has not had a significant impact on them. However, the number of Ukrainians is small compared to the number of non-nationals who arrive at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport every day, which is about 19 thousand, according to Silmy Karim, the Director General of Immigration (*Ditjen Imigrasi Sebut 19 Ribu WNA Melintas Di Bali Setiap Hari - Nasional Tempo.Co*, 2023).

Jamaruli Manihuruk, the head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in Bali 2020-2022, has confirmed the verification process for the number of Ukrainian nationals currently residing in Bali. The total number of Ukrainian nationals residing in Bali amounts to 464 individuals. Among them, 453 individuals possess a Limited Residence Card (Kitas) that permits their stay for at least 90 days, while the remaining possess a Permanent Residence Card (Kitap) that has a validity period of five years (The Bali Sun, 2022). The data also serve to depict that a majority of individuals hailing from Ukraine who opted for Bali as their chosen destination were not inclined toward prolonging their visit.

Regrettably, certain individuals from Ukraine, including Vitalli, possessed disparate incentives for electing Bali as their desired location during the conflict. During a recent interview, Vitalli stated that his organization made a strategic decision to establish its operations in Bali, which he considers the optimal location. Since relocating to this region, he and his colleagues have been diligently working from Bali. Additionally, his firm has been actively recruiting a significant number of Ukrainian nationals who are seeking refuge from the ongoing conflict (*How Indonesian Resort Island Bali Became a Refuge for Ukrainians and Russians | Video - CNA*, 2023). Dmytro, the additional Ukrainian residing in Bali, has protracted his duration of stay and established a collective of compatriots in Bali with the aim of providing support to Ukraine (*Living with the Enemy: Tropical Paradise Bali Becomes Refuge for Thousands of Ukrainians, Russians - CNA*, 2023), as seen in Picture 1. These two instances demonstrate that there are both economic and social incentives driving the influx of Ukrainian migrants to Bali, particularly in light of the ongoing conflict. Furthermore, we observed that Ukrainian nationals chose Bali as their preferred destination during the war for a variety of reasons.



Picture 1. Ukrainian Community Activities in Bali (Bali Ukraine [@bali_ukraine], 2024)

However, the economic realities of Bali significantly limit who can actually relocate there. Informant 1 provided detailed insight into these barriers:

“And these people do not go to Bali, of course, because it’s too expensive. They will. It’s not possible to find. It’s very, very hard to find legal work here because I think you know how it works in Indonesia. So if you want one worker not from Indonesia, you need some amount of local workers. It’s very expensive and businesslike. So that’s why people don’t come here and don’t wait for any support. People who come here, almost all of them digital nomads or just like vacationers who just want to rest and come back to Europe or anywhere” (Informant 1, personal communication, 7 January 2025).

This testimony reveals crucial distinctions: the prohibitive costs, employment restrictions under Indonesian labor laws, and the absence of any expectation for government support. Most significantly, it confirms that Ukrainians in Bali are predominantly digital nomads or vacationers who maintain mobility to return to their home countries rather than displaced persons seeking permanent refuge, as illustrated in Picture 2 which shows several Ukrainians working as digital nomads in Bali.



Picture 2. Ukrainian Digital Nomads and Business Activities in Bali (*How Indonesian Resort Island Bali Became a Refuge for Ukrainians and Russians* | Video - CNA, 2023)

However, this situation creates legal challenges within the Ukrainian community itself. As informant 2 emphasized while urging fellow Ukrainians to comply with local regulations:

“Please don’t work here illegal, because our goal, our community here to share we respect local culture, we respect law. Yeah, it’s hard here because like we’re not feeling we are welcomed here sometimes especially in social media.”

This statement reveals the internal community efforts to maintain legal compliance and cultural respect, while also highlighting the social challenges and feelings of unwelcome that the Ukrainian community faces, particularly through social media discourse.

In addition to the offerings extended to Ukrainians, Bali has also welcomed Russian migrants onto its land. The influx of Ukrainian nationals has, in turn, incited the emigration of Russian citizens who have endeavored to flee from the adversities of the conflict under different circumstances alongside their Ukrainian counterparts. According to the data provided by the Bali Government Tourism Office, there was a noteworthy rise in the number of attendees from Russia. Specifically, in 2022, the number of Russian national tourists reached 58,031 (Bali Government Tourism Office, 2023); subsequently, in 2023, this number increased to 73,110 (Bali Government Tourism Office, 2024). The influx of Russians also raised several grievances. Although the numbers are lower than before the pandemic, many Russians are staying for a

longer period of time due to their avoidance of conscription and Russia's poor domestic situation (Rachman, 2023). The aforementioned impropriety, observed by I Wayan Koster, the governor of Bali, prompted a request to be made to the central government. The request involved stopping the issuance of permits to Russians and Ukrainians who planned to arrive in Bali (Rachman, 2023).

Although the report comes from several sources and claims that the Russians are the most likely to break the rules and norms in Bali, the Ukrainians also acknowledge their responsibility for any consequences. The principle of presumption of innocence accorded to Ukrainians elicits reactions from fellow Ukrainians who have migrated to the region post-2018. Anastasiia Marushevska (in Rachman, 2023) opines that such an action is reminiscent of Russian propaganda and portrays Ukrainians as complicit in Russian misdemeanors. But on the other hand, Grishanti Holon (in The New York Times, 2023), a Russian digital artist, said that currently, a majority of Russians, since the influx of attendance in Bali, are under the impression that it is permissible for them to engage in any action they desire. According to Holon, the presence of Ukrainians in Bali has no bearing on the rules and customs that Russians in Bali break.

The coexistence of Ukrainians and Russians in Bali represents a new era of complexity. On the one hand, those who migrated to Bali from Ukraine or Russia did so with the intention of evading the conflict in their respective homelands, thus qualifying them as refugees. On the other hand, Bali, situated over six thousand miles or ten thousand kilometers away from their native continent, was their preferred haven. The outbreak of violence in Bali further compounded the ambiguity of their status. The parties involved, including the Ukrainians, Russians, and Balinese, each responded differently to the situation. The resolution of this complexity requires precise consideration of their motives and the applicable Indonesian regulations. Thus, the ensuing section will elaborate on the practical regulations that concern this matter.

4.2 The 180-Degree Turn of Indonesians Amid the Refugees and Tourists

Indonesia, a nation located in Southeast Asia, has seen a notable rise in the number of individuals seeking asylum within its borders. This influx has created numerous challenges in providing thorough assistance and protective measures to ensure the well-being and safety of the refugees (Missbach & Adiputera, 2021). According to Olivia et al. (2021), the government of the Republic of Indonesia is deeply committed to the most basic human rights and the highest standards of humanitarianism. As a result, they have extended a warm invitation to all refugees and will not send them back to their home country. They will do this by upholding the moral duty to protect and safeguard

the basic dignity and sanctity of human life. The Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, specifically No. 125 of 2016, normatively governs the handling of refugees from abroad. The Indonesian government recently created this regulation to effectively manage refugees. Furthermore, this law in Indonesia defines refugees as non-native people who have a good reason to fear being persecuted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, membership in certain groups, or different political views, and who refuse to receive protection from their home countries (Indonesian Minister of Law and Human Rights, 2016).

Indonesia, as an archipelagic country situated between two oceans and two continents, faces the challenge of dealing with illegal migrants and refugees passing through its borders. The flow of illegal migrants to or through Indonesia has increased recently, particularly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan (Djalal, 2018). Basically, Indonesia is not a party to the Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, but it serves as a transit country for refugees fleeing conflict areas in Myanmar, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Indonesia's treatment of refugees is based on the general obligation to protect and honor human rights (Kadarudin, 2018). Indonesia is subject to the non-refoulement principle, which is a fundamental aspect of international refugee law. However, the handling of refugees in Indonesia is still not maximized, and it is suggested that Indonesia ratify the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees to resolve the issue of illegal immigrants more quickly (Soeryabrata, 2020). Indonesia's unfriendliness towards refugees is a matter of fact. This phenomenon is due to its non-participation in the Refugee Convention and the insufficient regulations in place to address refugee issues.

Indonesia's response to the refugee crisis has been characterized by a sense of unease and uncertainty in accommodating the protection requests of asylum seekers over time due to the lack of governmental regulations intended to address refugee issues. The discourse and practices surrounding protection amidst ongoing insecurity modulation in states are the primary factors that shape a state's strategies for safeguarding refugees. Hence, it can be deduced that the political discourse and practices of Indonesia impact its handling of refugees, which may not invariably prioritize their protection (Prabaningtyas, 2019). This contradictory phenomenon indicates a lack of appropriate implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016. Consequently, it is not surprising that the emergence of this presidential regulation was solely for the purpose of upholding Indonesia's international recognition as a human rights defender, which it had previously achieved (Sirait et al., 2019). Put differently, Indonesia had already acquired recognition, appreciation, and positive feedback from the international community, resulting in the alleviation of pressure from said

community, which could have instigated the phenomenon of misrecognition. In this respect, Indonesia's identity as a "human rights defender" can be sustained.

This particular approach exhibits a stark contrast with regard to Indonesia's treatment of visitors. As one of the main sources of GDP, World Travel and Tourism (2022) noted that the travel and tourism industry in Indonesia is anticipated to expand at an average yearly pace of 10%, a rate that is twice that of the broader economy, and the latter is predicted to experience a growth rate of 5.1%. Although the distribution of foreign tourists is uneven (Supriono et al., 2017), the tourism industry in Indonesia still has the potential to increase due to its contribution of 45.5 billion US dollars to GDP and its creation of over 11.2 million jobs by the end of 2022 (*News Article | World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2022*). Therefore, the government fervently advocates for tourism by means of significant occasions and expanding the scope of countries that offer visa-free entry (Lilik, 2021). Additionally, Indonesia's geospatial position possesses a compelling allure that magnetizes both domestic and international sightseers. A plethora of tourism genres, including but not limited to ecological, urban, spiritual, and gastronomical, are currently undergoing cultivation (Mariyono, 2017).

Figure 2 delineates the magnitude of the tourism sector in Indonesia. Notwithstanding the repercussions of the Covid-19 outbreak from 2019 to 2021, the tourism industry in Indonesia witnessed remarkable growth in both tourist influxes and economic revenue. With the cessation of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian tourism industry is progressively embarking on a trajectory toward its inaugural zenith. As is the case with the occurrence of Covid-19 outbreaks, the tourism sector experiences a collapse. During the launch of the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Joko Widodo, the former president of the Indonesian Republic, highlighted the significant focus that the Indonesian government has placed on the enhancement of tourism. The Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs credits prompt implementation in the areas of infrastructure, branding, and digitalization of tourism for this success (*Remarks by H.E. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, at the Launching of the IMT-GT Visit Year 2023-2025 | Portal Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2023*). This stance could serve as a valuable opportunity for Indonesia to bolster its tourism industry as a strategic policy aimed at achieving economic advancement in the aftermath of Covid-19.

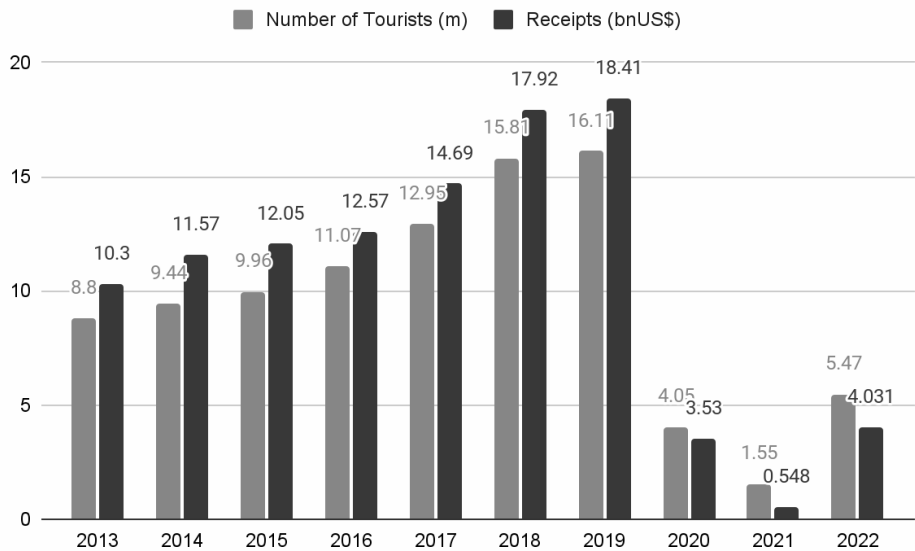


Figure 2. Number of Tourists and Tourism Receipts in Indonesia (*Development and Importance of Tourism for Indonesia, 2021; Indonesia Tourism Statistics 2023—All You Need to Know | GoWithGuide, 2023*)

Although tourism revenues have not yet fully returned to pre-Covid-19 levels, the presence of tourists in Indonesia has experienced a slight uptick. This phenomenon can be attributed to the successful implementation of various strategies aimed at managing the situation, such as the utilization of social media marketing to promote the wonders of Indonesian tourism (Chloridiany, 2021). Furthermore, the government has made a concerted effort to prioritize sustainable tourism practices as well as implement the Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environment Sustainability (CHSE) strategy with the goal of revitalizing the tourism sector (Alamsyah et al., 2021). According to Agustina et al. (2021), these efforts have led to a noticeable rise in the number of international tourists visiting Indonesia. The increase has had positive effects, such as creating jobs, encouraging people to start their own businesses, and helping to improve infrastructure. The aforementioned endeavors are indicative of the Indonesian government’s commitment to reinstating the prosperity of Indonesian tourism.

4.3 Ambivalence Determinants of Ukrainian Status

The presence of Ukrainians in Bali poses a complex situation with regard to distinguishing between their status as refugees or tourists, which requires a suitable approach for their treatment. To attain the most fitting policy for accredited stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and broader

society, it is imperative to aptly establish the status of Ukrainians. Unfortunately, the challenges involved in ascertaining the nature of individuals' movements across national borders represent a significant source of apprehension for nations that receive immigrants. Therefore, the concept of mixed migration gained considerable prominence and was viewed as a viable resolution to the challenges at hand. According to Oelgemöller (2021), the term "mixed migration" was initially a solution to clarify the status of migrants, but later it turned into a problem due to the propensity for subjectivity in determining the status. To get past the problem of figuring out the status, this article presents important factors to think about, such as possible ambivalence, to reach an objective view. To do this, this article attempts to divide the difference between tourists and refugees into three separate groups, adding to the academic discussion on the topic, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Refugees and Tourist Comparison

Component	Tourists	Refugees
Motivation	No exact purpose except pleasure	Security
Duration	Short-term	Non-measurable, mostly long-term
Distance	Depends on destination attractiveness	Near homeland

Source: The table is formulated by authors

First, motivation is the main factor that distinguishes different migrant types. Within the ensuing sections, this article examines the complex nature of Ukrainian presence in Bali during the ongoing conflict. Ukrainians in Bali exhibit traits more consistent with tourism than refugee status, according to data gathered from interviews with multiple sources. Further evidence comes from their accommodation choices and spending patterns, which mirror those of other international tourists in Bali. While the conflict in Ukraine undeniably influences their decision to travel; their behavior aligns with Maren Möhring's 2014 study on lifestyle migration, where individuals choose destinations primarily based on quality of life and tourist attractions rather than immediate safety needs. This is reflected in the interviewed Ukrainians' own narratives, where they frequently describe their stay in terms of lifestyle choices and tourism experiences rather than seeking refuge.

Secondly, the length of stay and economic activities of Ukrainians in Bali present an intriguing complexity in categorizing their status. While traditional tourism typically involves shorter stays, as noted by Möhring (2014), the Ukrainian presence in Bali demonstrates a hybrid pattern. Although

comprehensive data on their length of stay is not yet available, their economic activities suggest a more complex situation than pure tourism. Many Ukrainians have established remote businesses or created local employment opportunities for their fellow nationals, indicating a form of economic migration or digital nomadism rather than traditional tourism or refugee settlement.

These business practices and employment networks suggest that while their initial arrival might have been motivated by tourism or temporary relocation due to the conflict, their continued presence has evolved into a more established economic community. This evolution challenges simple categorization as either tourists or refugees, instead suggesting a new category of mobile professionals who combine elements of tourism with economic settlement. Their ability to maintain professional activities and create business networks, along with the social integration between the Balinese and Ukrainian communities shown in Picture 3, indicates a level of stability and integration that differs from both typical tourist behavior and refugee settlement patterns.



Picture 3. Social Integration Patterns of Ukrainian Communities in Bali (Bali Ukraine [@bali_ukraine], 2023).

Thirdly, the geographical choice of destination offers more details about the nature of the Ukrainian presence in Bali. Niklaus Steiner (2023) has documented that refugees typically seek asylum in neighboring countries due to immediate safety needs and practical constraints. The choice of Bali, which is significantly distant from Ukraine and requires substantial resources to reach, suggests a level of mobility and decision-making freedom more characteristic of tourism or lifestyle migration than refugee movement. This phenomenon is particularly notable given the availability of closer safe havens, such as Poland and other European nations, which offer established support systems for Ukrainian refugees.

The deliberate selection of Bali, known primarily as a tourist destination, over other Indonesian locations, such as Jakarta or other major cities with more developed infrastructure and economic opportunities, further supports this interpretation. Major cities typically prioritize those seeking refuge by providing better access to essential services, employment opportunities, and established immigrant communities. Instead, the preference for Bali's tourist-oriented environment suggests that these Ukrainians' primary motivation aligns more closely with tourism or lifestyle choices rather than immediate safety needs.

The economic and social impact of Ukrainians in Bali further clarifies their status within the destination country. Their contribution to Bali's post-Covid economic recovery through tourism spending and business activities aligns with typical tourist economic patterns rather than refugee settlement patterns. While their business activities may compete with local enterprises, this economic integration reflects characteristics of lifestyle migrants and digital nomads rather than refugees seeking immediate humanitarian assistance.

This analysis of motivation, length of stay, destination choice, and economic impact consistently points toward a classification of Ukrainians in Bali as tourists or lifestyle migrants rather than refugees. This classification is supported by the Indonesian government's current policy framework, which processes these individuals through tourism channels rather than refugee protocols. Their ability to choose Bali as a destination, maintain economic activities, and engage with the tourism economy demonstrates characteristics distinct from refugee migration patterns. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that this classification is not absolute. While their patterns suggest tourist behavior, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine remains a significant contextual factor that distinguishes their situation from typical tourists. Their choice of Bali may represent a combination of seeking temporary respite from conflict while engaging in tourism rather than fitting strictly into either the tourist or refugee categories.

However, this classification carries important policy implications. While the evidence supports treating Ukrainians in Bali primarily as tourists, their unique circumstances warrant a nuanced policy approach. The Indonesian government should maintain its tourism-based framework while acknowledging the complex circumstances that influence their presence. This approach allows for effective administration of their stay while respecting their dignity and circumstances. Such a balanced policy framework would enable proper management of their presence while avoiding the complications that could arise from mixed migration classifications, as noted by Christina Oelgemöller (2021).

5. Conclusion

The presence of Ukrainians in Bali during their country's conflict presents a complex case for migration status analysis. Their choice of Bali, situated approximately six thousand miles from Ukraine, over neighboring European safe havens, suggests motivations beyond immediate safety concerns. These individuals have established various economic activities, including remote business operations and local ventures that employ other Ukrainians. While their presence has created some tensions with local communities, leading to the Bali governor's request for entry restrictions, the Ukrainian ambassador to Indonesia, Hamianin, maintains that these individuals are displaced persons seeking temporary shelter from war. This contrast between their observed behavior patterns and official diplomatic statements calls for careful analysis of their status.

The challenge of categorizing cross-border movement has been significant since the 1970s, particularly regarding the distinction between different types of migrants. While the concept of mixed migration has been traditionally used to address such complexities, its implementation has often been oversimplified and problematically focused on demographic factors like gender and race. The current situation of Ukrainians in Bali demonstrates the need for more nuanced analytical frameworks that can accurately assess migrant status based on observable patterns rather than predetermined categories.

Using three key indicators—motivation, duration of stay, and destination choice—this analysis suggests that Ukrainians in Bali align more closely with tourism patterns than refugee characteristics. Their selection of Bali, a renowned tourist destination with no established refugee support infrastructure, it indicates priorities beyond immediate safety. Indonesia's lack of formal refugee protocols for Ukrainians further supports this classification. While their length of stay may sometimes extend beyond typical tourist visits, this could be attributed to digital nomad practices rather than refugee settlement. The economic and social impacts of their presence, including business establishment and community integration, reflect patterns more consistent with lifestyle migration than refugee settlement. However, this classification calls for nuanced policy frameworks that can accommodate both humanitarian considerations and practical administrative needs.

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