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Goal-achievement evaluation of Ukraine's social inclusion policies toward internally displaced persons

ABSTRACT

Ukraine has been facing numerous interconnected challenges since Russia's full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022. Arguably, one of the most critical challenges has been the migration of internally displaced persons from localities under Russia's persistent military attack to relatively safe places across the country. Initially, social inclusion policies have been ad hoc and primarily relied on domestic sub-state authorities' input. Then social inclusion policies have been rapidly evolving and engaging multiple international, national, and sub-national stakeholders.

This paper seeks to perform goal-achievement evaluation of Ukraine's social inclusion policies toward internally displaced persons and, in particular, identify the impact of the recently implemented decentralisation reform that has strengthened the capacities of domestic local authorities.

The paper uses the concept of multilevel governance and perceives Ukraine as a multilevel system.

In order to identify the policy consequences of decentralisation on social inclusion, the paper applies the method of comparative analysis. It evaluates Ukraine's social inclusion policies toward internally displaced persons:

- (a) in 2014-2020 (after Russia's annexation of Crimea and its engagement in the armed conflict in Donbas), when the decentralisation reform has been gradually progressing, but partial;
- (b) since 2022 (since Russia's full-scale invasion), when the institutional and financial capacities of domestic local authorities have been strengthened throughout the whole country.

This research design is aimed at identifying the input of decentralisation and will allow comparing the extent of intergovernmental coordination during policy implementation (vertical and horizontal dimensions).

The paper is based on analyzing primary and secondary sources available for desk research. The paper acknowledges its major limitation – Galton’s problem than goes hand in hand with the comparative method: identifying a relationship between two phenomena does not necessarily mean it is a causal relationship, because the observed outcome might be caused by some intervening variable(s), i.e. the input of international stakeholders into Ukraine’s social inclusion policies that has enormously increased since February 2022.