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DYNAMICS OF LABOR MIGRATION POLICY IN UZBEKISTAN AND MEDIA FRAMING OF PUBLIC AWARENESS

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Abstract: This thesis examines the dynamics of labor migration policy in Uzbekistan and the growing importance of media participation in shaping public awareness about migration processes. The study analyzes demographic, economic, social, and institutional factors influencing labor migration, alongside reforms implemented between 2018 and 2025. Particular attention is paid to the role of mass media in constructing migration-related narratives, stereotypes, and public perceptions. Using content analysis of Uzbek and foreign media sources, the research identifies the dominance of informational coverage over analytical and human-centered journalism. The findings demonstrate that media framing significantly influences attitudes toward labor migrants and affects the effectiveness of migration governance. The paper argues for the development of rights-based, analytical, and empathetic media approaches in migration reporting. It concludes that improving public communication strategies and strengthening cooperation between media institutions and migration agencies are essential for sustainable migration policy development in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: labor migration, migration policy, media framing, public awareness, Uzbekistan, journalism, reintegration.

Introduction

Labor migration remains one of the most significant socio-economic phenomena in contemporary Uzbekistan. Despite ongoing reforms aimed at job creation and economic modernization, demographic growth and labor market imbalances continue to stimulate outward labor mobility. Migration processes today affect not only economic development but also social relations, cultural transformation, and public consciousness.

In recent years, the issue of labor migration has become increasingly visible in both domestic and international media discourse. Mass media and digital platforms shape public perceptions of migrants, influence political narratives, and construct social stereotypes. Consequently, media coverage of migration has evolved into an important component of migration governance and public policy.

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to analyze how migration policy reforms in Uzbekistan interact with media representation and public awareness mechanisms.

Research Methodology

The research applies a complex analytical approach based on several methods:

Systematic analysis was used to evaluate migration reforms and institutional developments implemented between 2018 and 2025.

Statistical analysis examined demographic indicators, migration flows, and labor market dynamics using official data from national and international institutions.

Content analysis was conducted on more than 50 publications from Uzbek and foreign media outlets, including Kun.uz, Daryo, Gazeta.uz, BBC Uzbek, and RIA Novosti.

Comparative analysis allowed comparison of Uzbekistan's migration governance with practices observed in Russia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, and several European countries.

Main Findings

The research demonstrates that labor migration in Uzbekistan is primarily driven by demographic and economic factors. By 2025, the country's population exceeded 37 million, while approximately 600,000 young people enter the labor market annually. This imbalance between labor supply and domestic employment opportunities encourages citizens to seek work abroad.

The study also reveals that organized labor migration has expanded significantly. Government institutions and private employment agencies increasingly facilitate legal migration channels to countries such as Russia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

At the same time, migration governance in Uzbekistan has undergone substantial reforms. The expansion of the Migration Agency's authority, the introduction of legal protection mechanisms, and the development of reintegration programs have strengthened institutional support for migrants.

Media analysis indicates that Uzbek media generally portray labor migration in neutral or positive terms, emphasizing economic opportunities and state support measures. Foreign media, however, frequently frame migrants through narratives related to security concerns, social adaptation problems, or legal violations. Such representations contribute to stereotypes and may negatively affect migrants' social status abroad.

The study further shows that most migration-related media content in Uzbekistan remains descriptive and event-oriented. Analytical journalism, investigative reporting, and human-centered storytelling remain underdeveloped. Migrants' personal experiences and voices are still insufficiently represented in the media sphere.

Discussion

The interaction between migration policy and media discourse is becoming increasingly important in Uzbekistan. Media institutions do not merely transmit information; they actively shape social attitudes and influence public understanding of migration realities.

The research suggests that strengthening analytical and empathetic journalism could contribute to:

- increasing legal awareness among migrants;
- reducing misinformation and stereotypes;
- improving reintegration processes;
- supporting evidence-based migration policy.

Furthermore, international media cooperation and strategic communication initiatives may help create a more balanced image of Uzbek labor migrants abroad.

Conclusion

The study confirms that labor migration has become a long-term structural phenomenon in Uzbekistan's socio-economic development. Recent reforms demonstrate the government's intention to institutionalize migration management and strengthen migrant protection mechanisms.

However, several challenges remain unresolved, including:

- legal vulnerability of migrants abroad;
- insufficient reintegration support;
- limited analytical media coverage;
- persistence of negative stereotypes in foreign media.

Therefore, it is necessary to:

1. expand international legal agreements protecting migrants' rights;
2. strengthen public communication strategies on migration issues;

3. develop specialized media platforms focused on migration awareness;
4. encourage analytical and human-centered journalism;
5. continue interdisciplinary research on migration and media interaction.

The development of an informed, balanced, and rights-oriented media environment may become a crucial factor in improving migration governance and public understanding in Uzbekistan.

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