

Analyzing Restrictive Refugee Policies in Japan and the United Kingdom: An Examination of Fundamental Causes and Implications

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Abstract : The worldwide refugee challenge has arisen as a critical concern, with millions of individuals fleeing their home countries owing to conflict, persecution, and human rights violations. Since the establishment of an international framework in 1951 for tackling the humanitarian needs of refugees and asylum seekers, many developed and developing countries have adopted a refugee admittance framework into their national immigration policy and steadily changed their domestic legislation to assist the resettlement of refugees. However, many developed nations have put forth strict limitations on refugee admission in the midst of the continuing refugee crisis, claiming factors including national sovereignty, security of their borders, and national economy. Two such developed nations that have been restrictive on refugees is Japan and the United Kingdom. Despite their contrasting histories, migration methods, and viewpoints on diversity in modern society, the two notably developed nations have taken similar restrictive approaches in refugee policy in the recent years. This study attempts to investigate the underlying causes that led these countries to adopt strict refugee policies and how those policies have affected their compliance with international human rights responsibilities. The study employs a head-to-head methodology to examine the structural inequities in Japan and the United Kingdom's refugee policies. Using data from the UNHCR Refugee Data Finder, official government policy proposals, statements, and academic works, the study evaluates the contemporary refugee legislations, fundamental causes, and subsequent implications. The study illustrates a combination of economic, security, and demographic issues, as well as political rigidity and negative public perceptions, as major determinants of the two countries' restrictive refugee policies. The findings shed light on the restrictive actions taken by Japan and the UK, raising concerns about potential breaches in obligations to their commitments to international law and human rights obligations. Understanding the underlying issues influencing these policies allows lawmakers and activists to establish more compassionate refugee policies that adhere to international human rights and protect vulnerable individuals fleeing persecution. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the development of sensible refugee policies that uphold human rights and humanitarian values.

Keywords : immigration, Japan, refugee policy, united kingdom

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