

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND LEGAL INTERESTS OF DEMOGRAPHICALLY VULNERABLE POPULATION GROUPS: ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL DIMENSION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE

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Abstract. The article examines the protection of the rights and legal interests of demographically vulnerable population groups through the prism of their impact on the economic development and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. It is substantiated that demographic vulnerability has not only a socio-legal, but also a distinct economic meaning, as it is associated with a decrease in the level of employment, increasing poverty, increasing the burden of dependency, narrowing the tax base and increasing spending on social support, healthcare and public services. It has been established that children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, internally displaced persons and other demographically vulnerable groups are an important element of human capital, on which the stability of the labor market, the restoration of productive resources and the economic capacity of the state depend. It has been proven that effective administrative and legal support for the rights of these groups should combine procedural accessibility, targeted economic support mechanisms, the development of inclusive services, employment stimulation and coordination of social policy with the needs of reconstruction. It is concluded that the protection of demographically vulnerable groups is a necessary prerequisite for preserving labor potential, reducing socio-economic losses and ensuring long-term post-war development of Ukraine. *Research methods.* The methodological basis of the study is dialectical, systemic-structural, formal-logical, comparative-legal methods, methods of analysis and synthesis, which allowed a comprehensive study of the financial and economic mechanisms for ensuring the stability of critical infrastructure in conditions of crisis transformations. The expected scientific result is to clarify the concept, content and features of ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable population groups: the administrative and legal dimension of economic development and post-war recovery of Ukraine. *The purpose of the article* is to study the issues of ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable population groups: the administrative and legal dimension of economic development and post-war recovery of Ukraine. *Conclusions.* The study found that demographically vulnerable groups should be considered as a separate legal and economic category, which is not identical to the general category of "vulnerable groups", since its content is determined primarily by demographic characteristics and the life cycle of a person, and the legal consequence is the need for enhanced administrative and procedural guarantees of accessibility, priority, reasonable accommodation and proactive provision of services. The study shows that in the economic dimension, demographic vulnerability manifests itself through a decrease in labor potential, an increase in the dependency burden, increased social security costs and greater sensitivity to administrative barriers, and therefore it directly affects the quality of human capital, budgetary sustainability and the pace of economic recovery. It has been established that migration processes, poverty, population aging, security threats and institutional barriers increase the number and depth of demographic vulnerability, and prolonged martial law further worsens the situation due to increasing poverty, reducing the labor force and narrowing domestic demand. As a result,

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the tax base, investment potential and the state's ability to quickly recover after the war are weakened. Therefore, an effective solution to the problem under study is possible only if administrative and economic mechanisms of influence are combined: simplified and accessible procedures, interagency coordination, digital inclusion, free legal aid, as well as targeted social transfers, budget financing, employment programs, housing support and other long-term instruments that reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion of demographically vulnerable groups. It is such a comprehensive model that should become the basis of state policy in the field of economic development and post-war recovery of Ukraine.

Keywords: demographically vulnerable population groups, administrative and legal support, economic development, post-war recovery, human capital, population poverty, population aging, social protection, public administration, economic vulnerability.

JEL Classification: H55, I38, J11, J14, O15

Introduction

In the current conditions of social transformations, the problem of ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups of the population is becoming particularly urgent. It is these categories of people who react most acutely to the consequences of socio-economic crises, increased migration processes, population aging, as well as changes in the functioning of the public services system. Such groups may include the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income families, internally displaced persons, children, large families and other categories of the population who, due to objective life circumstances, require an increased level of legal protection and administrative support. Under these conditions, the state must not only formally declare guarantees of their rights, but also provide a real, accessible and non-discriminatory mechanism for their implementation. Despite the presence of a regulatory framework that enshrines guarantees for vulnerable demographic groups, the practical level of their implementation often remains insufficient. This is due to the existence of numerous barriers in the field of access to administrative procedures and public services, among which the complexity of procedural requirements, excessive discretion of officials, fragmentation of legal regulation, insufficient information openness, as well as digital inaccessibility of certain administrative services are particularly noticeable. As a result, formally guaranteed rights often acquire a declarative nature, which negatively affects the level of social justice, trust in public authorities and the effectiveness of state policy in general. In the context of the modernization of public administration, the digitalization of administrative processes and the gradual approximation of Ukraine to European standards of good governance, the issue of improving administrative and legal mechanisms for the protection of such groups is of particular importance. This is not only about updating regulatory approaches, but also about forming a holistic system of administrative and legal instruments that would ensure equality of opportunities, accessibility of public services,

transparency of procedures, non-discrimination of decisions and effective restoration of violated rights. At the same time, it is important to determine the boundaries, forms and proportionality of administrative influence, in particular service, control and coercive, in order to avoid excessive state intervention, abuse of power and violation of the principle of a fair balance between public and private interests.

Thus, the study of administrative and legal protection of demographically vulnerable groups of the population is timely and socially significant. Its relevance is determined both by the needs for the development of the theory of administrative law, in particular, in terms of clarifying the conceptual apparatus, classification of instruments and mechanisms of legal influence, and by the practical tasks of improving procedural guarantees, standards of accessibility and efficiency of the activities of public administration entities. That is why scientific understanding of this issue is of great importance for building a legal, social and service-oriented state.

1. Methodology of the Research

1.1. Scientific Analysis of Scholarly Works on the Research Topic

Ukrainian scientists (Andrusyshyn N., Ryndzak O., Radchuk O.) propose to understand the factors of social vulnerability as those factors that influence the emergence of social risk. Social vulnerability of the population is a characteristic of an individual, group or community of individuals, which reflects the possible emergence of social risk under the influence of certain factors (Andrusyshyn, 2022; Ryndzak, 2021:695; Radchuk, 2014:2).

In economic terms, demographic vulnerability means an increased likelihood of the population or individual groups developing conditions that, due to age, gender, disability, health status, family composition, or migration status, reduce the ability to self-sufficiency, limit participation in the labor market, and increase dependence on the system of public services and social transfers (Petrukha, Plakhotniy, Chukhniy,

2024:101-102; Stozhok, 2024:65-66). Unlike general social vulnerability, which is mostly associated with a lack of material resources, demographic vulnerability in the economic aspect reflects the impact of biographical and status characteristics on: labor productivity, level of economic activity, burden on budgets, and the need for additional expenditures on medical, social, and care services.

Schröder-Butterfill E., Marianti R. reveal vulnerability in old age through the interaction of exposure, threats, coping capacities and outcomes, i.e. show how demographic characteristics are combined with resource and economic constraints (Schröder-Butterfill, Marianti, 2006); Golaz V., Wandera S. O. directly link the vulnerability of older people to lack of resources, weakness of family support networks, poverty and limited access to health care (Golaz, Wandera, 2017); Cosco T. D., Cooper R., Kuh D., Stafford M. show that among older people, vulnerability and resilience are unevenly distributed depending on socio-economic status, which is well suited for arguing the economic dimension of demographic vulnerability (Cooper, Kuh, Stafford, 2018); Adisa O. directly examines how age, household structure, family size, and region of residence affect the economic vulnerability of older people (Adisa, 2019); Arnault L., Jusot F., Renaud T., Thevenot C. prove that the economic vulnerability of people aged 50+ increases barriers to access to health care, and this is especially pronounced in those who already had poorer health (Arnault, Jusot, Renaud, Thevenot, 2022).

Thus, in our opinion, the main economic markers of demographic vulnerability in the economic aspect are:

1. Reduced labor potential.
2. Increased dependency burden.
3. Increased spending on public administration and social security.
4. Increased sensitivity to administrative barriers, the digital divide, and territorial inaccessibility of services, which directly affects the quality of human capital and the pace of economic recovery.

An analysis of the dynamics of demographic security shows that its national indicator has tended to deteriorate since 2010, with particularly significant losses recorded in 2014–2015 and 2020–2021, reflecting the impact of the migration crisis, military-political instability, and the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Mulska, Bil, Leschuch, Baranyak, 2025:19-20). The lowest demographic security indicators were observed in industrial and border regions, in particular, in Donetsk, Luhansk, Chernihiv and Kharkiv regions, while during periods of crisis the largest demographic losses were also experienced by Zaporizhia, Lviv and Kirovohrad regions. Thus, we will present indicators that will demonstrate three-phase dynamics: in 2010, the lowest base values of the index are recorded in Donetsk (0.737), Luhansk (0.749),

Chernihiv (0.758) and Kharkiv (0.777) regions, and the range between the minimum and maximum in this group is only 0.040, which indicates a relatively close level of lag. In 2014–2015, a sharp turning point occurs: the maximum losses are concentrated in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (0.300 each), followed by Ternopil (0.200), while the remaining regions have a much smaller weakening (0.100), i.e. the range already increases to 0.200, which indicates a sharp increase in interregional asymmetry. In 2020–2021, the negative dynamics persist, but its intensity is noticeably lower: Zaporizhia region has 0.130, Lviv region – 0.110, Kirovohrad region – 0.100; therefore, compared to the peak of 2014–2015, the maximum negative indicator decreased from 0.300 to 0.130, that is, by approximately 56.7%.

From a legal point of view, such dynamics indicate uneven implementation of the principle of de facto equality of regions and the need for a differentiated administrative and legal response. If 2010 reflects initially vulnerable territories, then 2014–2015 already show a structural breakdown, in which the general mechanisms of state administration turned out to be insufficient to prevent a sharp deterioration in the situation of individual regions. Accordingly, for legal assessment, these data are an argument in favor of introducing special procedural guarantees, targeted regional support, enhanced access to public services and compensation mechanisms specifically for the territories where the losses were the greatest. From an economic point of view, such indicators indicate uneven regional development and different resilience of regions to external shocks. Low index values in 2010 indicate the presence of initial structural imbalances – weaker diversification of the economy, lower investment attractiveness, worse conditions on the labor market or lower quality of socio-economic infrastructure. Sharp losses in 2014–2015, especially in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, mean a deep economic weakening of the territories: a reduction in production, the destruction of economic ties, the outflow of capital and population, a fall in income and a narrowing of the tax base.

The indicators of 2020–2021 no longer indicate a one-time collapse, but a long-term vulnerability of the economic system, when even smaller losses confirm the reduced ability of individual regions to recover quickly. In a broader sense, this is an indicator that some regions have low adaptability to crises, and therefore need not only financial support, but also structural modernization, economic diversification and strengthening of internal sources of growth.

In general, the dynamics show a transition from locally low baseline values in 2010 to the deepest phase of destabilization in 2014–2015 and then to a more moderate but geographically wider weakening in 2020–2021. This means that the problem has not disappeared, but has changed form: instead of a one-

time sharp decline, a more restrained but stable weakening is observed in other regions. For a correct legal and statistical conclusion, this gives grounds to speak about the need not only for a crisis response, but also for a long-term policy of equalizing regional development and legal accessibility of administrative services.

The data presented indicate that demographic vulnerability is a dynamic economic indicator sensitive to macroeconomic and social shocks, and its growth means not only a deterioration in the demographic situation, but also an increase in risks for regional development, employment, budgetary sustainability and post-war recovery.

1.2. Methodological Features of the Study

The research methodology is based on the comprehensive use of general scientific and special legal methods of cognition. Its construction is due to the interdisciplinary nature of the selected issues, since it is at the intersection of administrative law, social law, economic theory, public administration and research in the field of public policy. In this regard, the methodological basis of the work is dialectical, systemic-structural, formal-legal, comparative-legal, logical-semantic, functional and prognostic methods.

The application of the dialectical method made it possible to study the provision of rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups of the population as a dynamic legal phenomenon, the content and forms of which change depending on socio-economic conditions, military challenges and tasks of post-war recovery. The system-structural method was used to clarify the place of administrative and legal means in the general mechanism of state influence on the sphere of social protection, employment, healthcare, education, housing and access to public services. The formal-legal method made it possible to analyze the normative content of the rights, guarantees and powers of public administration entities in this area, and the comparative-legal method – to identify promising areas for improving national regulation taking into account modern European and international approaches. The use of the functional method contributed to identifying the impact of legal provision of demographically vulnerable groups on economic stability, the labor market, human capital and the pace of post-war recovery.

A scientific analysis of scholarly works on the research topic shows that in modern doctrine the problem is studied fragmentarily. One group of scientific works consists of studies devoted to the essence of state policy, public administration and administrative-legal means of influencing public relations. Within this direction, scientists focus on the nature of state policy, mechanisms of administrative-

legal regulation, methods of public administration and features of the implementation of state functions in socially sensitive areas. The second group consists of works that reveal the legal status of socially vulnerable or demographically vulnerable groups of the population, in particular persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, the elderly, children, large families, war veterans and other categories that require an increased level of legal protection. The third direction includes studies devoted to economic development, human capital, social stability and post-war reconstruction, however, in them the administrative-legal aspect of ensuring the rights of these groups is most often considered in passing.

Thus, the scientific review gives grounds to assert that in domestic and foreign literature there is no holistic study in which the provision of the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups of the population would be considered simultaneously as a subject of administrative and legal regulation and as a factor of economic development and post-war restoration of the state. It is this circumstance that determines the need for a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis aimed at developing a coherent theoretical model and identifying practical directions for improving public administration in the relevant field.

2. Demographic Vulnerability of the Population in the Context of Military Challenges and Post-War Reconstruction of Ukraine

2.1. The Concept and Features of Understanding Demographically Vulnerable Population Groups in the System of Administrative-Legal and Economic Analysis

In order to thoroughly reveal the concept and features of demographically vulnerable population groups in the system of administrative-legal and economic analysis, it is necessary to distinguish between the categories of “vulnerable population groups” and “demographically vulnerable population groups”, since their content and legal meaning are not identical. If the first concept is mainly associated with the risk of a person or family falling into difficult life circumstances, then the second focuses on demographic characteristics and the life cycle as factors of increased dependence on public services, social support and special administrative-legal guarantees. That is why clarifying the concept and features of understanding demographically vulnerable population groups requires a separate analysis in the system of administrative-legal and economic approaches.

In Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On Social Services”, the legislator proposes to understand the concept of

“vulnerable population groups” as individuals/families who are at the highest risk of falling into difficult life circumstances due to the influence of adverse external and/or internal factors (On Social Services, 2019). In my opinion, the category of “vulnerable population groups” in Article 1 of the Law “On Social Services” describes not a “permanent” property of a person, but a state of increased probability of finding themselves in difficult life circumstances due to a combination of personal characteristics and external conditions that reduce the ability to self-sufficiency and protect one’s rights. Its key feature is a risk-oriented approach: what is important is not the status itself (age, disability, unemployment, etc.), but the fact that these factors actually increase the risk of losing access to basic goods and services or worsen adaptation opportunities. The second feature is dynamism: a person or family can enter/exit this category depending on changing circumstances, so the state’s response should be flexible and timely. The third is the complexity of vulnerability, when several factors overlap (for example, old age, loneliness, illness, lack of digital skills), which requires individualization of social services and procedural guarantees of accessibility.

The concept of “vulnerable population groups” is interdisciplinary, it is used mainly by sociologists, demographers, psychologists, economists, ecologists, and physicians in the context of the peculiarities of activity in certain areas of public life (Kondur, 2024).

The category “demographic vulnerability” has a slightly different content. V.R. Pisarkova defines demographic vulnerability as an unfavorable demographic situation in a region caused by migration processes, increased mortality and decreased birth rates (Pysareva, 2024:53).

Demographic vulnerability is the degree and form of vulnerability for a country or region facing its demographic evolution. More specifically, the term is used to define the challenge multiplier that population growth poses for developing countries. In a world of limited space and limited resources, population growth is projected to jeopardize human and economic development, putting millions of people at greater risk of hunger, poverty and water scarcity. Demographic pressures also contribute to environmental degradation and political instability. Demographic vulnerability, as defined, is limited to countries with rapidly growing populations. Countries with populations that are both shrinking and aging face their own set of demographic challenges, including potential labor shortages and shrinking tax bases, but the challenges associated with population aging are quantitatively and qualitatively different (Nigeria Trend Analysis: Challenges and Opportunities of the Demographic Shift and its Link to Stunting An Outlook To 2030:3).

Thus, from a legal point of view, the distinction between such legal categories as “vulnerable population groups” and “demographically vulnerable population

groups” is as follows: “vulnerable population groups” is a normatively defined category (in particular, in Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On Social Services”), which is tied to the highest risk of falling into difficult life circumstances under the influence of internal/external factors and has a clear legal consequence – grounds for assessing needs and providing social services. In contrast, “demographically vulnerable population groups” is a predominantly doctrinal/sectoral category that groups individuals by demographic characteristics and stage of the life cycle (age, health status/disability, pregnancy/parenthood, family composition, migration status), which objectively increase the risk of restricting access to rights and services, but do not always automatically mean “difficult life circumstances”.

The distinction is also based on the attribution: for “vulnerable population groups” the decisive factor is social risk/circumstances, for “demographically vulnerable population groups” the demographic factor as a marker of increased need for accessibility guarantees. The legal consequences are also different: the first category triggers social service mechanisms, and the second justifies enhanced administrative and procedural guarantees (priority, accessibility, “reasonable accommodation”, proactivity of services) in various areas of public administration. Crossing is possible (for example, a lonely elderly person is often both “vulnerable” and “demographically vulnerable”), but not identity: a person can be demographically vulnerable (for example, an IDP with children) without established “complex life circumstances”, and vice versa.

Demographically vulnerable groups of the population from an economic point of view are categories of persons who, due to objective demographic characteristics, in particular age, health status, disability, family status, presence of dependents or migration status, have a reduced ability to self-sufficiency, limited participation in the labor market and increased dependence on social transfers, public services and state support.

Their economic vulnerability is manifested in a higher risk of poverty, unemployment, loss of income, reduced access to medical, educational and social services, as well as in greater sensitivity to crisis macroeconomic phenomena. Therefore, demographically vulnerable groups are not only an object of social protection, but also an important factor in the formation of human capital, budgetary burden and the sustainability of the state’s economic development.

From a legal point of view, demographically vulnerable groups of the population are characterized by the fact that their vulnerability is due not so much to the fact of being in difficult life circumstances, but to demographic characteristics and the stage of the life cycle – age, health, disability, pregnancy, parenthood, family composition or migration status.

A feature of this category is that it justifies the need for enhanced administrative and procedural guarantees, in particular, prioritizing the consideration of applications, accessibility of information, reasonable accommodation, proactive provision of services and reducing administrative barriers.

From an economic point of view, demographically vulnerable groups of the population are characterized by a reduced ability to self-sufficiency, limited participation in the labor market and increased dependence on social transfers, medical, educational and social services. Their economic vulnerability is manifested in a higher risk of poverty, unemployment, loss of income, an increase in the burden of dependency and greater sensitivity to macroeconomic crises, which makes these groups an important factor in the formation of human capital, the budgetary burden and the sustainability of the state's economic development.

2.2. Economic Factors Contributing to the Growth of Demographic Vulnerability

Demographic vulnerability develops and decreases under the influence of a number of factors.

The increase in the number of demographically vulnerable population groups is exacerbated by migration and security factors (forced displacement, rupture of family ties, loss of housing/jobs), as well as economic crises and poverty, which limit access to medicine, care, education and administrative services. A separate block is institutional barriers: complex procedures for obtaining statuses/payments, the digital divide, low accessibility of infrastructure, weak interdepartmental coordination and discretion of officials. As a result, the proportion of people who simultaneously have several risk factors (for example, old age, loneliness, chronic illness, low income) is increasing, that is, demographically vulnerable groups are expanding according to the principle of "overlapping vulnerabilities".

The increase in demographic vulnerability is usually caused by structural demographic shifts: 1) population aging; 2) declining birth rates; 3) increasing mortality/morbidity; 4) imbalances in the sex-age structure and depopulation of certain territories. Thus, according to World Development Indicators / World Bank, the following values are available for Ukraine for the indicator of the poverty headcount ratio beyond the national poverty line: 2016 – 51.1%, 2017 – 34.9%, 2018 – 27.6%, 2019 – 23.1%, 2020 – 23.2%. For 2021, the value is not provided in the open series of WDI in the quoted fragment. The World Bank separately notes that in 2022, due to the lack of a survey, there was no official assessment, and then poverty increased sharply: 2023 – 35.5% (assessment by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine based on a study supported by UNICEF), 2024 – 37.0%, 2025 – 36.9% preliminary.

For comparison, some World Bank documents also use another, international poverty line, according to which 2021 was estimated at 5.5%, and 2022 – at 24.1–24.2%, but these values are not directly comparable with the national poverty line based on the actual subsistence minimum.

According to official statistical materials of state statistics bodies, the process of aging of the population of Ukraine is stable. The share of the population aged 65 and over was: 16.5% at the beginning of 2018, 16.5% at the beginning of 2019, 17.1% at the beginning of 2020, and 17.4% as of January 1, 2021. Separately, the official infographic of the State Statistics Service states that as of January 1, 2021, the population of Ukraine aged 60 and over was 23%. Therefore, we assume that in 2016–2020, the poverty rate across the national border decreased from 51.1% to 23.2%, but after the full-scale war it increased sharply again – to 35.5% in 2023, 37.0% in 2024, and 36.9% in 2025; At the same time, Ukraine's population continues to age: the share of people aged 65+ increased from 16.5% at the beginning of 2018 to 17.4% on January 1, 2025, and the share of the population aged 60+ on this date was 19% (Diagram 2 Poverty level and population aging in Ukraine 2010-2025; Diagram 3 Population aging level 2010-2025).

2.3. The Role of the State in the Growth of Demographically Vulnerable Groups

The state should respond to the growth of demographically vulnerable groups in a risk-oriented and human rights-based manner: identify risks (through demographic monitoring and "case management"), provide targeted guarantees and interagency coordination, and not just formally grant statuses. Practical response measures: simplified and accessible administrative procedures (minimum of certificates, data exchange between registers), proactive services ("no unnecessary appeals"), reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, "single window/mobile offices", clear communication, free legal aid and effective administrative appeal. To reduce the number of demographically vulnerable people (i.e., to prevent people from falling into vulnerability), policies are needed that target the causes: poverty reduction, support for families with children and single parents, affordable kindergartens/care, employment and retraining programs, inclusive education, and digital accessibility. A separate key block is health care and long-term care: prevention and early intervention, rehabilitation, mental health, development of community care services for the elderly and people with chronic conditions, which reduces dependency and social risks. For demographic shocks (migration/displacement) - integration and reintegration, housing programs, access to medical and social services at the

place of actual residence, and the effectiveness of all measures should be tied to clear indicators (availability of services, deadlines, rate of refusals/appeals, poverty level, health, employment).

Despite the fact that the state, through demographic, social and economic policies, seeks to reduce the number of demographically vulnerable groups (poverty prevention, family support, healthcare, employment, integration of IDPs, etc.), the real risks of vulnerability do not completely disappear. On the contrary, in transitional periods and under crisis conditions, cases of restriction of access to services, discrimination, bureaucratic refusals and inaction of bodies increase, which directly affects the rights of such persons. Therefore, along with the reductionist policy, the state is obliged to provide an effective mechanism for restoring violated rights – fast, accessible and predictable. This function is performed by administrative and legal means of restoring rights: procedures for application and consideration, administrative appeal and review of decisions, guarantees of representation and free legal aid, as well as control and response to violations.

2.4. Impact of Prolonged Martial Law and Post-War Recovery on Ukraine's Economic Development

Prolonged martial law increases poverty primarily through loss of jobs and income, population displacement, destruction of housing and businesses, and uneven decline in labor income: according to the World Bank, the poverty level in Ukraine in 2025 was 36.9%, remaining almost twice as high as pre-war values, while UNHCR recorded about 6.9 million Ukrainian refugees abroad and about 3.7 million internally displaced persons in 2025.

Martial law also accelerates population aging: the departure abroad of a significant part of the younger and able-bodied cohorts, a decline in the birth rate, and high premature mortality narrow the demographic base for reproduction. The Government's Demographic Development Strategy directly links armed aggression to the need to minimize the outflow of Ukrainians abroad, support internally displaced persons, and preserve the necessary amount of human capital and the workforce for martial law and post-war recovery; at the same time, according to the World Bank, the share of the population aged 65+ in Ukraine was already about 18% in 2021, meaning that aging began even before the full-scale war, and the war intensified it.

For the Ukrainian economy, this means a simultaneous blow to both demand and supply of labor: on the one hand, poverty reduces the consumption and investment capacity of households, and on the other, aging and migration reduce the labor force, narrow the tax base, and increase the burden on the pension and

social systems. The National Bank of Ukraine directly notes that the war continues to complicate the search for workers, and the shortage of personnel remains one of the key constraints for business; Even after the war, competition for workers will be fierce, as reconstruction will require a large number of skilled people.

For post-war recovery, the consequences are even harsher: the higher the poverty and demographic aging, the less human capital, domestic co-financing resources, and institutional capacity Ukraine has to quickly rebuild its economy. This is critical, as Ukraine's recovery needs under the RDNA4 are estimated at \$524 billion over the next decade, and the government and international partners emphasize that recovery is impossible without the return of people, increased economic self-sufficiency of families, and the integration of internally displaced persons, older persons, and other demographically vulnerable groups into the labor market and the system of accessible services.

Thus, the growth of poverty and the aging of the population have a clearly negative impact on Ukraine's economic development, as they simultaneously narrow domestic consumer demand, reduce the state's labor potential, and increase the burden on the budget, pension, and social systems. Rising poverty means a reduction in household solvency, a growing dependence on social transfers, and a slowdown in business activity, while population aging leads to a shortage of labor, lower labor productivity, and a growing imbalance between the economically active and dependent population. Taken together, these processes weaken the tax base, limit investment potential, and complicate post-war recovery, as the state is forced to direct more resources to social support than to development, modernization, and economic reconstruction.

3. Administrative and Economic Mechanisms of Influence on Ensuring the Rights and Legal Interests of Demographically Vulnerable Groups

3.1. Administrative Mechanisms of Influence on Ensuring the Rights and Legitimate Interests of Demographically Vulnerable Groups

Administrative mechanisms of influence on ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups include administrative norms, procedures, administrative acts, provision of administrative and social services, control and supervision, preventive measures, as well as measures of administrative coercion and responsibility. From the perspective of administrative law, this is primarily a procedurally regulated power influence, which is

carried out in the forms and limits determined by law (taking into account the principles of legality, proportionality, non-discrimination and accessibility) in order to guarantee the actual access of vulnerable persons to public goods and protection. The result of the application of such means is the adoption/review of administrative decisions, elimination of violations and restoration of violated rights in an administrative manner or with the provision of effective appeal.

Administrative and legal mechanisms for ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups (children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, IDPs, etc.) are divided into: regulatory and institutional, organizational and procedural, financial and economic, information and communication, service and adaptation, control and jurisdictional and protective.

Regulatory and institutional mechanisms include: consolidation of the legal status of the relevant groups, determination of the competence of public authorities and establishment of special guarantees of accessibility.

Organizational and procedural mechanisms include simplification of administrative procedures, priority consideration of applications, proactive provision of services, interdepartmental coordination and the principle of a "single window".

Financial and economic mechanisms include budget financing, social transfers, benefits, compensations, subsidies, employment support programs and public-private partnership mechanisms.

Information and communication mechanisms consist in ensuring the availability of information, digital inclusion, counseling and legal education.

Service and adaptation mechanisms are related to reasonable accommodation, barrier-free access, territorial accessibility of services and taking into account the special needs of specific categories of persons.

Control and jurisdictional and protective mechanisms provide for administrative supervision, monitoring of compliance with rights, consideration of complaints, application of liability measures and judicial or extrajudicial protection of violated rights.

3.2. Economic Mechanisms of Influence to Ensure the Rights and Legitimate Interests of Demographically Vulnerable Groups

Economic mechanisms of influence to ensure the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups include a system of financial, budgetary, tax, compensation and incentive instruments through which the state and local governments create conditions for real access of such persons to basic goods, services and opportunities for economic self-realization. These include: budget financing of social,

medical, educational and rehabilitation programs; social transfers in the form of pensions, benefits, subsidies, compensations and privileges; tax and credit incentives for employers who employ persons with disabilities, IDPs, persons of pre-retirement age or parents with young children; financing of employment, retraining and micro-entrepreneurship programs; housing support mechanisms; as well as mechanisms of public-private partnership in the field of social and care services.

Their main purpose is not only to provide material support to such groups, but also to reduce the risk of poverty, social exclusion and economic dependence, which is especially important in the context of demographic aging, migration losses and post-war recovery. The peculiarity of these mechanisms is that they should be targeted, differentiated and long-term, that is, take into account the specific status of the person, their income level, the degree of disability, family burden and regional living conditions. Therefore, economic mechanisms are an important tool for administrative and legal protection of the rights of demographically vulnerable groups, since through them the state influences the level of their social protection, participation in the labor market, the formation of human capital and the overall sustainability of economic development.

For example, the Law of Ukraine "On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2026" establishes a subsistence minimum for the main socio-demographic groups: for children under 6 years old – 2817 UAH, for children 6–18 years old – 3512 UAH, for able-bodied persons – 3328 UAH, for persons who have lost their ability to work – 2595 UAH. This is a basic economic mechanism, because it is through such indicators that benefits, social payments and other guarantees for children, the elderly and persons with disabilities are calculated. Article 9 establishes the level of ensuring the subsistence minimum for the provision of assistance to low-income families: for able-bodied persons – 60%, for persons who have lost their ability to work and persons with disabilities – 100%, for children – 145% of the corresponding subsistence minimum. This is an example of an economic mechanism in which the amount of support is directly differentiated depending on the demographic vulnerability of recipients. The Law of Ukraine "On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2026" determines the revenues to the special fund related to the social protection of persons with disabilities, in particular, revenues determined by the Law "On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine", administrative and economic sanctions and the balances of the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities. Separately, the law provides for the use of these funds for the implementation of measures for the social protection

of persons with disabilities (On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2026, 2026).

Thus, economic mechanisms for ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of demographically vulnerable groups are a key practical tool for implementing the social function of the state, since it is through them that real access to material support, basic services, employment and conditions for economic self-realization is guaranteed. Their effectiveness is determined not only by the amount of funding, but also by the level of targeting, differentiation and ability to take into account the specific needs of different categories of the population depending on age, health status, family situation, income and regional living conditions. The example of enshrining in the Law of Ukraine "On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2026" the subsistence minimum, differentiated approaches to determining assistance to low-income families, as well as individual sources and areas of financing measures for social protection of persons with disabilities confirms that economic mechanisms are not an auxiliary, but a system-forming element of administrative and legal support. That is why their further improvement should be aimed at increasing the accessibility, fairness and effectiveness of state support in the context of demographic changes, social risks and post-war recovery.

Conclusions

Demographic vulnerability is not only a social, but also a legal and economic category, since it simultaneously affects the ability of a person to exercise their rights, participate in the labor market, use public services and maintain economic independence. The paper substantiates that its key markers are a decrease in labor potential, an increase in the dependency burden, an increase in budget expenditures and increased sensitivity to administrative barriers.

The dynamics of Ukraine's demographic security indicate a systemic deterioration of the situation, which had a three-phase nature. This means that the problem is not accidental, but long-term and structural in

nature, and therefore cannot be solved only by short-term anti-crisis measures.

Martial law, poverty, forced migration and population aging are interrelated factors of increasing demographic vulnerability. It is noted that after the poverty rate decreased in 2016–2020, the war again caused its sharp increase, and the aging of the population and migration losses simultaneously narrow the labor potential, tax base and possibilities for post-war recovery. Accordingly, demographic vulnerability directly affects the economic sustainability of the state, human capital and the pace of reconstruction.

Formal consolidation of rights is not enough if administrative procedures remain complex, inaccessible or discretionary. Therefore, the state should move from a formal status approach to a risk-oriented response model, which includes simplification of procedures, interdepartmental coordination, digital and physical accessibility of services, free legal aid and effective administrative appeal. It is such a model that can actually reduce the scale of demographic vulnerability, and not just fix its consequences.

Economic mechanisms are a systemic element of the protection of demographically vulnerable groups, since through budget financing, social transfers, benefits, employment incentives, retraining programs and mechanisms for supporting persons with disabilities, the state ensures the actual implementation of rights, and not just their declaration. The argument of the work is that such mechanisms should be targeted, differentiated, long-term and tied to the real status, income and needs of a particular person or family.

The general conclusion of the study is that ensuring the rights of demographically vulnerable groups should be considered as one of the basic factors of economic development and post-war recovery of Ukraine. The higher the demographic vulnerability of the population, the weaker the labor market, consumer demand, budgetary sustainability and the state's recovery capacity become; therefore, policy in this area should not be auxiliary, but priority, comprehensive and interdisciplinary.

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