

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE RUSSO- UKRAINIAN WAR FOR UKRAINE

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Abstract. *On February 24, 2022, Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, which has led to significant demographic and social consequences. In particular, there has been a noticeable increase in forced migrations and displacements – both internal and international. Many families are being separated, and the unstable situation is contributing to a decline in the birth rate. There are also challenges related to the integration of refugees in host countries, particularly in Poland. The long-term consequences of war can include a decline in professional activity, disruption of the labor market, and burdens on social welfare systems. The conflict also creates challenges related to gender equality, as military mobilization and the need to care for children in crisis situations primarily affect women. In the face of these challenges, it is essential to develop appropriate pro-family policies, invest in healthcare and social care, and implement sustainable integration programs for refugees. The article also discusses potential scenarios for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, emphasizing the need for humanitarian aid and financial support from the international community. Restoring economic and demographic stability requires comprehensive actions, such as creating new jobs, rebuilding infrastructure, and strengthening the healthcare system. The conclusions of the analysis highlight that the ongoing conflict is likely to shape the demographic structure of Ukraine and neighboring countries for many years. Despite the challenges associated with dynamic social changes, there is hope that properly planned and implemented reconstruction efforts, along with international support, will help restore normalcy, foster economic development, and stabilize the social situation.*

Keywords: war in Ukraine, migrations, social consequences, demographic consequences.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the demographic and social consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian war presents a significant scientific challenge, as this conflict has an exceptionally profound impact on all key aspects of social and economic life in Ukraine. On one hand, armed conflicts and forced migrations affect basic demographic indicators, such as birth rates, death rates, and the age and gender structure of the population. On the other hand, the displacement of millions of people both within the country and across its borders leads to complex consequences in the labor market, social welfare systems, and the formation of human capital.

1. Theoretical significance

From a scientific perspective, the discussed conflict enables the verification of existing demographic models that address the impact of crisis situations on the dynamics of population processes. The theory of conflict demography, developed in studies on civil wars in Africa and the Middle East, takes on a new dimension in the context of the conflict in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, sociological and economic analyses of societal destabilization during war can be reexamined using data from Ukraine, which will ultimately enable their updating and enrichment.

2. Practical significance

The results of demographic and social research on the consequences of war are particularly valuable for political decision-makers, international organizations, and non-governmental institutions that develop

strategies to support Ukraine during the conflict and plan for its reconstruction after the cessation of hostilities. Issues such as:

- legal status of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs),
- humanitarian and international aid organization,
- human rights protection,
- labor market restructuring,
- ensuring healthcare and education has a direct impact on shaping the living conditions of millions

of people. Therefore, a proper understanding and prediction of demographic trends is crucial for developing effective strategies in social policy, migration policy, and even family support policy.

- Significance for the development of a given area of law (theory and practice)

3. In light of the above challenges, there is an increasing demand for specialized legal regulations in the following areas:

- migration law: regulations governing the reception of refugees and their integration,
- human rights: mechanisms for safeguarding against violations during conflict,
- humanitarian law: rules and norms for the protection of civilians,
- labor law and social security law: taking into account the needs of displaced and affected individuals,
- family law: issues related to family separation, as well as support for women and children.

The following studies and reports directly address the issues related to the demographic and social consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war for Ukraine:

- OSW (Centre for Eastern Studies - "War in Ukraine: Demographic and Social Consequences")

The report by experts from the Centre for Eastern Studies provides a detailed analysis of both current demographic changes and their potential long-term implications for Ukraine and neighboring states.

- Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) – "Ukrainian Refugees in Poland and Europe"

The study focuses on the issue of refugees in Poland and other European countries, particularly on the legal and administrative aspects of receiving, registering, and integrating large groups of people arriving from Ukraine.

- UNHCR - "Ukraine Emergency"

The website provides continuously updated reports on the situation of refugees, internally displaced persons, and the overall humanitarian situation in Ukraine. It enables real-time monitoring of the scale of needs and the ways in which various organizations respond to the crisis.

- IOM – „Latest Report on Displacement and Migration in Ukraine”

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) regularly publishes detailed statistical and analytical reports on the scale of population displacement, the characteristics of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as challenges in the areas of employment and social integration.

- International Crisis Group – „Ukraine Report: Humanitarian, Social and Economic Challenges”

The publications of this organization focus on the broad aspects of the conflict, including political, economic, and social analysis. Their documents also include recommendations for necessary actions aimed at humanitarian assistance and stabilizing the situation in the region. In the past several months, a number of reports, academic articles, and expert analyses have emerged, describing various aspects of the socio-demographic impact of the conflict in Ukraine. The available publications indicate that the most important current research directions focus on:

1. Migrations and displacements

- Scale and dynamics of refugee movements from Ukraine to neighboring countries (including Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary) as well as to other European and non-European countries.

- Conditions for the reception and integration of refugees (burden on social welfare systems, education of children, labor market).

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ISSN 2815-3324 Online, ISSN 2535-0358 Print

- Internal migrations (IDP – Internally Displaced Persons) and their impact on the economic and demographic situation of the regions experiencing the largest displacements (particularly in the east and south of Ukraine).

2. Demographic structure

- Changes in natural population growth, including a decline in the number of births in areas affected by military actions and in regions engulfed by economic crisis.

- Impact of the conflict on mortality rates, both among the civilian population (victims of military actions) and among vulnerable groups (the elderly, sick, children).

- Changes in gender and age group proportions, which may lead to disruption of family structures and impact long-term population development trends.

3. Social consequences of the conflict

- Labor market: mass unemployment resulting from infrastructure destruction and interruptions in the

functioning of key sectors of the economy (agriculture, industry, transport).

- Healthcare: overload of the medical system, as well as issues with access to medication and basic medical assistance in conflict zones.

- Psychological issues: trauma related to wartime experiences, the need for psychological support, and the increase in cases of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

- Legal issues: particularly concerning property rights, social security, and the recognition of pension and disability entitlements in the context of prolonged displacement.

Despite the presentation of current data covering many social and demographic processes triggered by the war, there is a lack of a comprehensive approach combined with an analysis of possible scenarios and the future consequences of the described reality. There is still a lack of a coherent strategy for rebuilding human capital, addressing both the material and psychological needs of individuals affected by the conflict. The scope of integrated databases covering migration movements (both external and internal) is insufficient. This leads to difficulties in planning assistance and development activities. Ensuring coherent legal regulations in the areas of international humanitarian law and migration law, which would take into account the specific nature of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, remains a significant challenge.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary aim of the proposed research is to comprehensively identify the key mechanisms influencing the shaping of Ukraine's demographic structure and social situation in the context of ongoing war threats.

In particular, this research aims to:

1. Diagnose current demographic trends – establish accurate figures on emigration and immigration, natural population growth, as well as the age and gender of individuals affected by displacement.

2. Determine the long-term socio-economic consequences — analyzing how current phenomena (especially the scale of refugee movements and the potential loss of human capital) may impact Ukraine's social and economic development in the future.

3. Propose political and legislative strategies – developing recommendations for legal regulations concerning human rights protection, humanitarian assistance, family-friendly policies, the labor market, as well as international support programs and refugee integration initiatives.

4. International Cooperation – identification of specific actions that could be undertaken in collaboration with neighboring countries and international organizations to minimize the long-term negative impacts of the conflict.

The term “demography” comes from two Greek words: demos - people, and grapho - to write, literally meaning “the description of population”. This is a field of study that examines the emergence, life, and decline of human communities. When we talk about demography, we primarily have in mind people, their

rich diversity and variability across various dimensions, which are the focus of demographers' interest. The core meaning of the word “demography” is people (or populations), and the primary subject of demographic research is the population inhabiting a given territory (Okólski, 2003). The knowledge gathered by demographers is essential for understanding various social, economic, and political processes. Thanks to the use of advanced statistical and mathematical methods, demography provides data that is instrumental in planning public policies, conducting scientific research, and making strategic decisions across various sectors of the economy. An important tool for population analysis is demographic research. The aim of this research is to explore various aspects of demography, such as:

- Population size, which is a fundamental demographic indicator. This is the number of people residing in a specific area at a given time. Demographic studies enable the monitoring of population changes over time, which is crucial for planning social and economic development.

- Population structure, which refers to the distribution of individuals according to various demographic characteristics. Demographic research analyzes the structure based on factors such as gender, age, and social characteristics, allowing for the analysis of gender proportions within the population.

- Natural movement which refers to changes in the population resulting from births and deaths.

- Migrations, which are an important aspect of demography. Demographic research analyzes both internal and international migrations. They monitor the flow of population between different regions of the country and allow for analysis of factors influencing internal migration, such as living conditions, access to work or education.

Demography provides invaluable tools for studying populations and planning the future of societies. Thanks to demographic analyses, it becomes possible not only to understand the current population situation but also to predict future changes, which is crucial for sustainable development and effective resource management. Migrations of people throughout the centuries have been an integral part of history, shaping the present demographic and cultural structure. These migrations result from various causes, such as wars, economic changes, natural disasters, or political decisions. Population and migration processes have had, and continue to have, a significant impact on the social, economic, and cultural development of societies.

The word “migration” comes from the Latin word “migratio”, which means “relocation”. Migrations are defined as specific journeys or movements of people aimed at changing their place of residence or habitation for a certain period of time or permanently. According to S.N. Eisenstadt, migration is a change of place of residence, the physical transition of an individual or group from one society to another, which usually involves leaving a familiar environment and entering a different, foreign one with a distinct character (Eisenstadt, 1953). Population migrations are a natural process that has been occurring since the beginning of human existence and has taken place throughout all periods of history. Migration can also be caused by an economic crisis (economic migrations) or a political crisis (political migrations), while population movement is often artificially induced during military conflicts.

Migrations can be divided into external and internal. The first ones refer to the movement of people from one country to another (destination) and can take various forms, such as:

- emigration - the departure of the population of a given country to another country permanently;
- immigration - the arrival of people to a given country for a permanent period of time;
- re-emigration – the return of the population to their home country after a temporary stay abroad;
- repatriation - the return to one's homeland after a long period of forced stay outside of one's own country, for example, due to political reasons.

- deportation - the forced removal of people from a country.

- refugeeism – the act of leaving one's country due to a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group (Pac, 2022).

Internal movements, on the other hand, refer to movements within a country, such as from villages to cities, from cities to villages, from cities to cities, and from villages to villages (Kaczmarek, 2015). The process of migration from rural areas to cities began as early as the Middle Ages (the migration of landless peasants to cities in search of work) and expanded on a larger scale during the Industrial Revolution (19th century).

As a result of the decisions made, migrations are divided into:

- voluntary migration – it is a decision made independently by the migrant, of their own free will and initiative, where they have options to choose from;
- involuntary migration – migration decisions are the result of pressure, such as environmental or political situations, where migrants are forced to leave their place of residence and are unable to return, for example, refugees (Georgica, 2018).

Forced migrations can occur for political or religious reasons. Many people decide to migrate due to ongoing wars in their countries, as exemplified by Ukraine and Syria. People fleeing from war-torn countries and seeking asylum in another country are called refugees. Refugees are often deprived of all means of livelihood and housing as a result of armed conflicts, which is why they flee with their entire families, hoping to find a safe place and receive assistance from the host country. Another reason driving migration is religious persecution. Religious persecution remains a common phenomenon in various parts of the world, particularly in countries where there are religious differences among citizens, and followers of dominant religions discriminate against minorities practicing a different religion (Pac, 2022).

Demographic Consequences of the War

Since 2014, migration processes in Ukraine have been closely linked to political events and the military invasion by the Russian Federation. Migration flows have become particularly intense after the open aggression on February 24, 2022. Given the dominant power of the Russian invader, the need for evacuation and the flight of civilians from regions most at risk of confrontation with the technologically and numerically superior forces of the invader was inevitable. The population was fleeing their homes in the east, north, and south of the country, where military operations were taking place. As a result, one of the most significant consequences of the war was the forced migration movements occurring both within the country and abroad. According to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, by the end of February 2023, 7.7 million Ukrainian refugees were temporarily abroad, while 6.2 million were internally displaced (Chugaievska et al., 2023).

In the first hours of the war, a significant number of Ukrainians fleeing the conflict arrived in Poland. Crowds have appeared at Polish-Ukrainian border crossings. Due to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, it became necessary to introduce regulations that would govern their status and enable their functioning in our country. According to the regulations, Ukrainian citizens have 30 days from the date of arrival in Poland to submit an application for a PESEL number. At the end of December 2023, 956,633 individuals from Ukraine residing in Poland had an active PESEL [national identification number]. According to UNHCR forecasts, by the end of 2024, there will be 1.1 million refugees in Poland. Over 90 percent of them are women, children, and elderly people (TVN24, n.d.).

RESULTS

In the two years since Russia's aggression, at least 10,582 civilians have been killed in Ukraine, including at least 587 children. 19,875 people have been injured, including 1,298 children. The highest civilian casualties occurred in the first months of the war (in March 2022, 4,289 people were killed, and another 3,013 were injured), and the symbols of Russian military cruelty against civilians became Bucha and Irpin. In the following months, the severity of the war for the Ukrainian population decreased, but it remained significant. In 2023, an average of 163 civilians were killed and 547 were injured each month. In 2024 (as

of February 15, 2024), 241 civilians have been killed. The vast majority of civilians were victims of rocket attacks (8,898 killed), as well as direct gunfire (1,341 killed) and mine explosions (343 killed). The vast majority of civilian casualties (7,668) were located in areas controlled by Ukraine and shelled by Russia. The highest number of casualties occurred in the Donetsk region (43,960). A very large number of civilians were also killed far from the front lines, for example, in the Kharkiv region – 206 people, in the Kyiv region – 193, in Dnipropetrovsk – 141, in Kyiv – 89, in Vinnytsia – 39, in Zhytomyr – 36, and in Lviv – 24.

As a result of Russian missile shelling, infrastructure and civilian buildings were destroyed: schools (1,072 in total, including 236 completely), hospitals and medical facilities (465, including 59 completely), power plants (especially in the attack on the entire territory of Ukraine on October 10, 2022), and residential buildings. In the Kherson region, approximately 30% of the population lives in damaged and destroyed buildings. Russia also bombed buildings and facilities used for storing and transporting grain, including silos, ports, and transport trucks. Russia also attacked Ukrainian nuclear power plants and destroyed critical infrastructure, including the dam on the Kakhovka Reservoir. The destruction of the dam caused a flood that affected nearly 1 million people. Over 37,000 residential houses, 37 schools, 11 medical facilities, and 11,000 hectares of forests were destroyed.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has exacerbated the already crisis-ridden demographic situation of the country, bringing it to the brink of catastrophe. Over the course of three decades of independence, it has been observed that there has been a deepening decline in the population, resulting from a negative natural increase and high migration dynamics. Ukraine gained independence with 51.5 million inhabitants, but by 2019, the estimated population had decreased to only 37 million. The ongoing war has resulted in a large (though undisclosed) number of casualties among military personnel, primarily men of working age, as well as civilians, and a multi-million strong refugee population with unclear prospects for return. The invasion has worsened the physical and mental health of citizens and contributed to a further decline in the reproductive plans of younger generations due to the uncertainty of living conditions in the coming years. Projections regarding the population of Ukraine after the end of military operations are divergent, but all of them are extremely pessimistic. They range from 24 to 35 million and predict that by 2030, the population of this country may be one of the oldest in Europe, additionally burdened with a high percentage of individuals who are sick, disabled, or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression. Thus, from a country that was once among the top in Europe in terms of population just 30 years ago, Ukraine is becoming a state threatened by a demographic gap, the scale of which will hinder its dynamic development and post-war reconstruction (Eastern Studies Centre, 2023).

It is worth noting that in the medium and long term, such a large wave of migration and refugees will have a very negative impact on Ukraine's economic development. Due to a significantly smaller population, and consequently fewer people able to work, the decline in the physical and mental health of the population, and numerous other existential challenges, rebuilding the country after the war will be highly challenging. The loss of workforce activity within the country will be only slightly offset by income transfers from work performed by Ukrainians abroad, especially since a significant number of them do not plan to return to the country soon. As the Macro Analysis Team of PKO Bank Polski rightly argues, losses in the fixed assets of companies and the state, combined with the need to evacuate the population from parts of the territory, mass migration of foreign workers, and disruptions in supply chains, in many cases make it impossible to continue normal economic activity in Ukraine, both currently and in the future (Wysota, 2022).

Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the demographic situation in Europe has changed. Ukrainians began to change their place of residence on a large scale. This is particularly noticeable in Poland. The Selectivv team undertook the task of analyzing data to describe changes in the size and characteristics of the Ukrainian minority in Poland. The study was conducted based on data collected in January 2022 (just before the outbreak of armed conflict) and one year later, in January 2023. During the period described, the number of people from the conflict-affected country fluctuated

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ISSN 2815-3324 Online, ISSN 2535-0358 Print

dynamically. At the peak, in May 2022, there were 3,468,068 Ukrainians in Poland, which is nearly double the number before the war. In just the first weeks of the conflict, 1,899,364 people arrived in our country from Ukraine. Since August 2022, the total number has stabilized in the range between 3,109,596 (September) and 3,184,296 (November), reaching 3,166,418 people in February 2023. Currently, people of Ukrainian origin make up 8% of the country's total population. Only one in five Ukrainians in Poland in January 2023 had also been in the country in 2022 (Selectivv, 2023).

The majority of migrants from Ukraine residing in Poland are women - nearly 70% of all respondents. Women dominate among refugees (about 80%), but also among pre-war migrants (about 54%). Compared to May 2022, the initial phase of the war in Ukraine, the percentage of men among refugees increased (from 10% to 19%). The dominant group among both migrant groups is individuals aged 27 to 44 years. The noticeable difference between refugees and pre-war migrants concerns individuals over the age of 60, who are more represented among refugees (8%). However, when comparing the refugee population in May 2022 and November 2022, it becomes evident that the percentage of individuals over 60 years old decreased from nearly 15%. This suggests that some of the oldest individuals may have left Poland.

Migrants come from all regions of Ukraine. However, pre-war migrants are predominantly from western Ukraine (34%) and central Ukraine (25%). Definitely less numerous are people from eastern and southern Ukraine. Among refugees, there are no such noticeable differences in proportions. However, compared to the spring of the previous year, there is a noticeable decrease in the share of people from northern Ukraine (from 26% to 20%), which can likely be largely explained by their return to Kyiv.

Most of the Ukrainian citizens who have come to Poland from both groups come from cities. Only 16% lived in rural areas directly before coming to Poland. Among refugees, a larger group than among pre-war migrants consists of individuals who lived in the largest cities of Ukraine, including Odessa, Kyiv, Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, and Kryvyi Rih. This may be due to fears of bombing, attacks on critical infrastructure, and supply difficulties (National Bank of Poland, 2023).

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the number of Ukrainians working in Poland. By the end of September, over a million foreigners were registered for insurance in Poland. About 779 thousand of them are citizens of Ukraine, according to data from the Social Insurance Institution. A Ukrainian citizen can work in Poland if they legally reside and have a valid residence title, or if they arrived in the country after February 24, 2022, due to the ongoing military conflict. Refugees who arrived in Poland after February 24, 2022, can obtain a PESEL number upon verifying their identity, and their stay in the country is considered legal until September 30, 2025. However, these individuals may lose their right to legal stay if they leave Poland for more than one month. However, this limitation does not apply to individuals assigned to work abroad by entities conducting business in Poland.

Families from Ukraine have access to family benefits such as "800 plus". The condition is that their children attend a Polish school. An exception to this rule has been introduced: in the 2024/2025 school year, students in the highest grade of a school operating under the Ukrainian education system will not be required to attend Polish schools. They can complete their education in a remote learning format. The Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) informed that from January to October 2024, "800 plus" was paid to 337.6 thousand children from Ukraine (ZUS, 2024). From September, 33,000 new Ukrainian children joined Polish schools, as reported by Deputy Minister of Education and Science Joanna Mucha. She added that since the beginning of the year, the number of Ukrainian children receiving the 800+ allowance has decreased by 20,000 (Bankier.pl, n.d.).

Changes in Demographic Structure

The war has changed the age and gender structure of Ukrainian society. The majority of refugees are women and children, as men aged 18-60 have been conscripted. As a result, in host countries such as Poland, a significant increase in the number of women of working age has been recorded. In Ukraine, there has been an overrepresentation of men, which has disrupted the gender balance in many regions.

Before the war, the gender structure in Ukraine was relatively balanced, with men constituting 49% of the population and women 51%. The war caused a mass exodus of women and children abroad, leaving men aged 18-60 in the country due to military mobilization. As a result, women currently make up about 80% of refugees, and Ukraine has experienced a deficit of women in some regions, especially in conflict-affected areas. Gender imbalance can lead to a decrease in the birth rate and slow down the rebuilding of family structures. Changing the gender ratio may require political actions, such as promoting the return of women to the workforce and providing support for families.

Table 1. Percentage of migration

Category	Percentage before the war	Percentage after the war
Men (Ukraine)	49%	40%
Women (Ukraine)	51%	60%
Women (refugees)	-	80%
Children (refugees)	-	20%

Source: Own study

The aging of society has been further accelerated by the war, due to the migration of younger age groups (primarily women and children) and the high mortality rate among men of working age. As a result, the percentage of people over 65 years old increased from 16% in 2020 to 19.5% in 2023, while the proportion of individuals under 18 years old decreased from 20% to 17% during the same period. An aging society will increase the demand for social services and healthcare, while the shortage of young people may hinder economic recovery and weaken the country's developmental dynamics.

Table 2. Migration rate age categories

Year	Percentage of population aged 65+	Percentage of the population under 18
2020	16%	20%
2021	16.5%	19.8%
2022	18%	18.5%
2023	19.5%	17%

Source: Own study

The humanitarian crisis, economic instability, and migration have led to a decline in birth rates to historically low levels. In 2023, the number of births was **40% lower** than in 2021. Along with the war casualties, harsh living conditions, malnutrition, and health issues have led to an increase in mortality, particularly among children and the elderly.

Selected Perspectives on the Future

The war in Ukraine has left the country grappling with serious demographic challenges that may have long-term consequences. The return of refugees and an increase in birth rates will be crucial for rebuilding society. However, this process will require the stabilization of the political and economic situation.

Table 3. Population Forecast Table

Year	Population Forecast Table		
	Scenario 1: Status Quo (million)	Scenario 2: Moderate Reconstruction (million)	Scenario 3: Optimistic (million)
2023	36.0	36.5	37.0
2024	35.7	37.0	38.1
2025	35.4	37.6	39.3
2030	34.3	39.0	42.0
2040	32.5	41.5	46.0

Source: Own study

One of the most visible effects of the war was the mass migration of people, both internal and international. Millions of people have fled their homes, escaping the hostilities. According to UNHCR data, since the onset of the conflict, more than 8 million people have sought refuge outside of Ukraine, primarily in European Union countries such as Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Romania. More than 6 million people have been displaced internally within the country. They were often forced to settle in regions of western Ukraine that were less impacted by the war. With the stabilization of the situation in certain regions, some people have returned; however, this process is hindered by a lack of infrastructure and the ongoing high risk of conflict. Countries like Poland have seen a sharp increase in population, which has affected the labor market, social welfare system, and education sector. Accepting refugees required substantial financial and social resources.

The war has caused a substantial loss of life, affecting both soldiers and civilians. Official data is difficult to obtain, but it is estimated that the number of fatalities ranges from 150,000 to 200,000, including soldiers and civilians on both sides of the conflict. The human losses and mass emigration have led to a reduction in Ukraine's population by approximately 20–25% compared to pre-war levels. The destruction of healthcare infrastructure has hindered access to medical care, increasing mortality from diseases and the lack of medication.

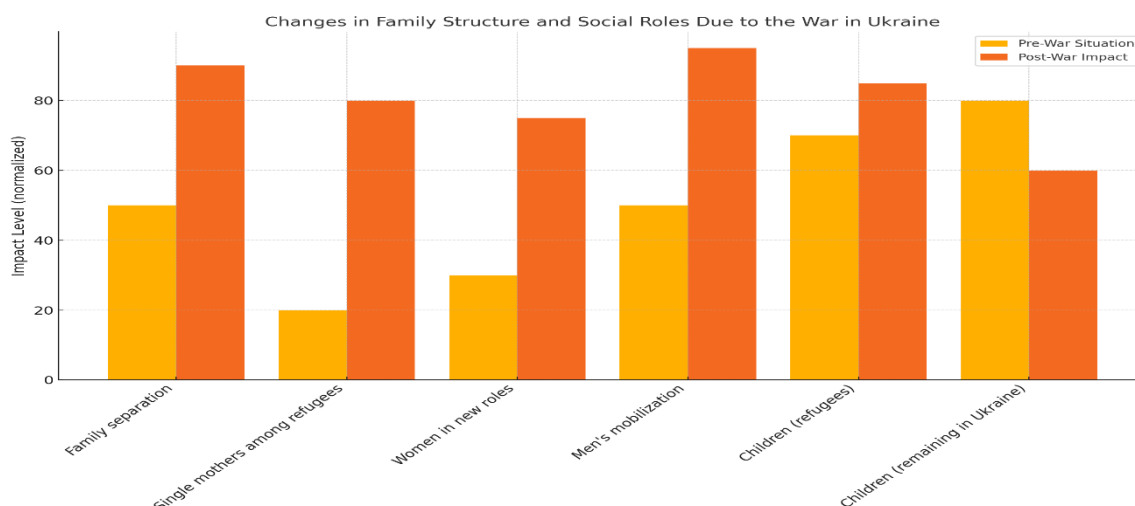


Figure 1. Changes in family structure and social roles due to the war in Ukraine

Source: Own study

Economic and Social Consequences of the War

On February 24, 2022, the established order in Europe collapsed. Despite weeks of warnings from the United States government about a potential Russian attack on Ukraine, few believed such a scenario would occur until the very end. Russian tanks on the outskirts of Kharkiv and the suburbs of Kyiv were a shock not only to the general public but also to financial markets. For two years, a war has been ongoing between forces supported by Russia and the Western world under the hegemony of the United States (Two years of war in Ukraine – economic consequences are becoming increasingly visible, n.d.).

Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the global economy was suffering from several man-made conflicts, climate change, COVID-19, and rising costs, all of which had devastating consequences for impoverished populations in low-income and developing countries. In the face of the pandemic, supply chain disruptions, and rapidly rising inflation, global food prices have been increasing since mid-2020 and are currently at their highest level in history, causing significant challenges for low-income families. The war in Ukraine, a critical “breadbasket” of the world, has exacerbated these challenges on an unprecedented scale, with the resulting global crisis causing widespread food insecurity. Armed conflicts

weaken the ability of nations and households to secure their food needs and can hinder activities aimed at cultivation and harvest, processing and transportation, as well as the delivery and sale of food. Ukraine and Russia together account for 30% of global wheat exports and 62% of sunflower oil (Bezpartochnyi et al., 2021). The escalation of the conflict raises concerns in Ukraine regarding whether crops will be harvested and products exported. The war has already resulted in the closure of ports, the suspension of oilseed pressing operations, and the introduction of export license requirements for certain products. All of this may impact the export of grains and vegetable oils in the coming months. There is also considerable uncertainty regarding the prospects for Russian exports, given the challenges that may arise from selling goods due to the economic sanctions imposed on the country (Krzykowski, 2022).

Ukrainians effectively filled the gap in the Polish job market left by over 2.5 million Poles who migrated to other EU member states after 2004 and, for the most part, remained there permanently. They also earn more (three times as much as before the war in Ukraine, usually around PLN 5000 gross), with the most common employment found in trade, services, gastronomy, the hotel industry, transport, construction, agriculture, food processing, horticulture, as well as in the ICT sector and other knowledge-intensive services (KIBS). According to the report "War Refugees from Ukraine – Life in Poland and Plans for the Future", the primary group that came to Poland was the Ukrainian middle class. The majority were well-educated women from large and medium-sized cities in central and eastern Ukraine, who had worked in the service sector, most often in business, before the invasion (Baszczak et al., 2022).

The long-term influx of workers from Ukraine could be beneficial for Poland. For years, Polish companies and institutions have been grappling with a labor shortage, not only in occupations requiring low and medium qualifications but also in those demanding higher qualifications. We warmly welcome our eastern neighbors, and their commitment to providing assistance on various levels is commendable. In return, alongside many expressions of gratitude, we can rely on the efficient contributions of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland, including paid taxes, contributions to GDP, and the potential improvement of significantly poor demographic indicators (Kolany, 2023).

The Russian Federation's attack on the independent and sovereign Ukrainian state on February 24, 2022, not only triggered a humanitarian crisis but also a series of geopolitical tensions. It has also led to significant economic and industrial turbulence. Ukraine is a large European country (603,500 km²), with a population of approximately 44 million people before the war. It is a country almost twice the size of Poland, larger than France or Spain. Ukraine is home to heavy industry, a major granary for European agriculture, and a significant processor and extractor of many key elements essential to the automotive industry. An example is neon, which is used in the production of semiconductors. The war in Ukraine caused the disruption of supply chains that have barely been restored after numerous lockdowns caused by COVID-19 (Britchenko et al., 2023). Ukraine's location on the map of Europe and the world also gives it a strategic position for railway routes leading to Asia. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has the potential to affect our wallets and businesses on multiple levels. It has affected vehicle production in Ukraine and Russia, while also destabilizing component deliveries within Europe and beyond. The consequences not only affect vehicle production in Russia and Ukraine but also cause disruptions in component deliveries both within and outside of Europe.

As early as the beginning of February, Volkswagen production plants in Poznań and Września, Poland, came to a complete halt. In the second half of March, the production lines at the Fiat factory in Tychy, owned by the Stellantis group, were also halted. There has also been a complete suspension of production at the "Eurocar" factory in Solomonovo, Ukraine, which assembles the Skoda Fabia, Superb, Karoq, and Kodiaq for local markets. Reports have emerged in Russia about component shortages causing production stoppages. Hyundai has halted production at its plant in St. Petersburg due to shortages of components. Toyota has halted production at its plant in St. Petersburg due to disruptions in the supply chain. Avtovaz, predominantly owned by the Renault Group, has reportedly halted production due to disruptions. It was also reported that this applies to Renault, which operates a factory in Moscow. The

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ISSN 2815-3324 Online, ISSN 2535-0358 Print

consequences of the war in Ukraine will impact the entire production, supply, and sales structures of the automotive industry in Europe (Cartrack Magazine, n.d.).

The invasion and Western sanctions have led to a sharp increase in the prices of fertilizers, wheat, metals, and energy, contributing to both a food crisis and an inflation wave that has impacted the global economy. Shortly after Russia's invasion – the second-largest exporter of crude oil in the world – the prices of this commodity rose to their highest levels since 2008. Efforts to reduce dependence on Russian oil, gas, and petroleum products – or even cap their prices – have intensified the already severe energy crisis, the most serious since the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s. After Russia reduced gas flows through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany, wholesale gas prices in Europe surged. According to Goldman Sachs, a complete cutoff of supplies would push the eurozone into a recession, with severe consequences in both Germany and Italy (Forsal.pl, 2024).

At the end of September 2022, there were 24.1 thousand companies with Ukrainian capital operating in Poland, including 3.6 thousand established in 2022. Immediately after the outbreak of the war, the registration of new companies declined, but in the following months, their number began to rise again. They accounted for 7 percent of all registered companies, both Polish and foreign-owned. Companies with Ukrainian capital primarily operate in trade (22%), construction (19%), and transportation and warehousing (14%).

From January 2022 to June 2024, approximately 59.8 thousand active sole proprietorships were established in Poland by individuals with Ukrainian citizenship. The largest increase in active businesses occurred in April, with their number nearly tripling compared to March. Since the outbreak of the war until September, the monthly number of newly established companies increased nearly twelvefold. In January, Ukrainian sole proprietorships accounted for less than 1 percent of all newly opened businesses, and by September 2022, this figure had risen to 8.5 percent. Most Ukrainian sole proprietorships are involved in construction (24%), information and communication (16%), or other service activities (14%).

Ukrainian women own 41% of sole proprietorships. Nearly one in three companies founded by women is involved in other service activities. However, nearly two out of every five companies opened by men operate in the construction industry. The gender structure indicates that the owners of sole proprietorships established in 2022 are not only war migrants but also individuals who arrived in Poland earlier and started their businesses after the outbreak of the war. The end of the war will not mean a mass closure or relocation of businesses back to Ukraine. According to the responses from the surveyed entrepreneurs, the majority of companies intend to continue their operations in Poland, expand, strengthen cooperation with Polish partners, and participate in the future reconstruction of Ukraine (Polish Economic Institute, 2022).

At the end of March 2024, the Ukrainian pharmaceutical company Farmak completed its acquisition of the Polish pharmaceutical company Symphar. It became its sole owner. The acquisition, according to the new owners, is part of Farmak's international expansion strategy, following its recent merger and acquisitions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia last year. Farmak itself is an international pharmaceutical company founded in 1925. It has 10 strategically located sales offices worldwide, including in Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Central Asia, the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, and Western Europe. In the autumn of 2023, the Ukrainian company Trzy Niedźwiedzie acquired the Calfrost plant in Kalisz, which specializes in producing frozen foods. It marked the beginning of the end for the factory. By the end of June 2024, all employees had been laid off, and the owner announced the sale of the plant due to the company's difficult economic situation, caused by rising prices and operational costs. A Ukrainian company has put the Calfrost plant site up for sale for PLN 12.9 million. Ukrainian capital has also entered the Intersport Polska company, a well-known chain of sportswear and accessories. In October 2023, the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection approved the acquisition of a majority stake in the company by Ukrainian billionaire Galyna Fedoriwna Gerega. She is a co-owner of the Ukrainian construction hypermarket chain "Epicentr" (ZUS, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The war in Ukraine has brought not only political, demographic, and economic consequences but also lasting social and cultural changes. The conflict has led to mass migration, a decrease in population, shifts in the age and gender structure, and significant challenges in rebuilding local communities and the economy.

- Breakdown of social ties: The separation of families and forced resettlements have disrupted traditional social structures, making it difficult to rebuild local communities.

- War trauma: Both civilians and soldiers endured immense stress and trauma, which significantly impacted the mental health of society as a whole.

- Integration challenges: Refugees have faced challenges in integrating into new environments, which has affected their well-being and their ability to return to normal life.

- The departure of younger age groups and high mortality among working-age individuals have accelerated the population's aging process. Currently, the proportion of elderly people relative to young people has significantly increased. The war had a devastating impact on the birth rate, while simultaneously increasing the mortality rate (UNHCR, 2023).

The war in Ukraine has had profound social consequences, including the breakdown of social ties, changes in the functioning of local communities, an increase in psychological and health problems, and heightened tensions in the societies of countries hosting refugees. One of the painful consequences of war is the separation of families. The war forced millions of people to flee their homes, often resulting in the separation of family members. Women and children fled to European countries, while men remained in Ukraine due to mobilization. The separation of families hinders their post-war integration and impacts the emotional stability of both children and adults (UNHCR, 2023).

The war in Ukraine has radically altered the structure of families and social roles, both within the country and among refugees. The conflict has brought about changes to traditional family models, resulting in long-lasting social effects. Millions of families have been separated due to mass migrations and the mandatory mobilization of men aged 18–60. The majority of refugees are women (80%) and children (20%) who had to leave Ukraine, while men remained behind. Separation from family members leads to trauma and psychological issues, particularly in children. Women who have gone abroad are often forced to take up jobs in challenging conditions, frequently below their qualifications. Women must also assist their children in the process of educational integration into new environments. In Ukraine, women have assumed many traditionally male roles, particularly in agriculture, education, and healthcare. Women assuming leadership roles in families and local communities can drive long-term changes in traditional gender roles in Ukraine. New family models, including single parenting, may become more common. Women who have left Ukraine often must assume the role of head of the family, bringing new challenges. The challenge lies in the need to find employment in foreign countries, as well as integrating children into new educational systems. In many cases, women face language and cultural barriers, which hinder their adaptation (OECD, 2023). Military mobilization forced men to participate in the conflict, leading to changes in traditional family and social structures. After the war, many men may face difficulties with reintegration and mental health issues stemming from their wartime experiences. The war has destroyed thousands of schools in Ukraine, forcing children to learn remotely or interrupt their education. In countries hosting refugees, Ukrainian children were required to adapt to new educational systems, which added an additional burden. Many refugee children lack access to full education, which could lead to the creation of a so-called “lost generation” that will not acquire the necessary skills and knowledge (UN Women, 2024).

Men of working age, on the other hand, were forced to leave their jobs and join the military, which affected their family and professional roles. After the conflict, many men will face challenges reintegrating into society and dealing with the consequences of war trauma. In many villages and smaller towns in Ukraine, there is a noticeable shortage of men, which increases the burden on women and seniors. Many children are being taken care of by older family members or neighbors, which leads to safety and mental

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ISSN 2815-3324 Online, ISSN 2535-0358 Print

health issues. Children learning in wartime conditions face interruptions in their education and limited access to teaching materials. Families separations, economic difficulties, and the trauma of war have led to a dramatic decline in birth rates. The lack of young families and youth migration will accelerate the aging of society.

The changes in family structure and social roles caused by the war in Ukraine will have long-lasting consequences. The separation of families, the new roles of women and children, and the military mobilization of men require comprehensive support from the state and international organizations to rebuild stable communities and mitigate the further social consequences of the conflict.

Gradually, local communities are becoming disorganized. The displacements have destroyed traditional social structures, particularly in eastern Ukraine, where the war has obliterated entire cities and villages. Rebuilding communities will require time, investment, and coordinated efforts. Thousands of people, including children, have endured direct acts of war, such as bombings, the loss of loved ones, and the destruction of homes. The war has led to an increase in anxiety disorders, depression, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

Healthcare systems in Ukraine are overwhelmed, and access to mental health specialists is limited. International organizations such as WHO and UNICEF are working to provide psychological assistance, but the scale of the need is enormous.

The reception of a large number of refugees has also created tensions in the societies of host countries, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Local communities are concerned about competition in the job market and the strain on educational and healthcare systems. At the onset of the war, communities demonstrated great solidarity with refugees. However, over time, “helper fatigue” has emerged, hindering further integration and support.

The activities carried out by Ukrainian citizens in Poland meet the needs of the Polish economy by filling labor shortages in many sectors. Despite some concerns about competition from businesses run by Ukrainians, the majority of Polish entrepreneurs view them as important business partners. Ukrainians contribute to Poland's economic growth through their work, both as employees and entrepreneurs (Trade.gov.pl, 2024).

In addition to establishing business activities, there have also been Ukrainian acquisitions of companies in Poland.

The war united Ukrainians in the face of a common threat, strengthening their national identity. The sense of national belonging has even grown in regions where pro-Russian sentiments were previously strong. Long-term emigration can weaken refugees' connection to their home country, particularly for children who grow up in new cultural environments.

Organizations such as UNHCR, WHO, and UNICEF have played a crucial role in providing humanitarian, educational, and healthcare assistance. Local organizations in host countries have also played a key role in the integration of refugees. Despite widespread support, many people still lack access to adequate assistance, highlighting the need for better coordination of international efforts. The social consequences of the war in Ukraine are profound and multifaceted. The breakdown of family bonds, psychological trauma, shifts in social roles, and challenges in integration are just a few of the key aspects. The process of rebuilding society after the war will require long-term efforts, both in Ukraine and in countries hosting refugees (D'Anieri, 2019).

The demographic consequences of the war in Ukraine are both profound and complex. Mass migration, population decline, shifts in age and gender structure, and a decrease in births will be felt for decades. The challenge for Ukraine and the international community will be to create conditions that foster demographic recovery, social integration, and economic stability. These actions are crucial to mitigating the dramatic consequences of war and ensuring a future for coming generations. The war in Ukraine has impacted nearly every demographic aspect of the country. The biggest challenges include rebuilding the gender structure, which involves encouraging women and children to return and reintegrating families.

Further support for the elderly requires investment in social services and healthcare, while improving living conditions and family policy is crucial for long-term population growth.

These actions are essential to counteracting the consequences of the war and ensuring a stable demographic future for Ukraine. If you would like more detailed data, I can provide further insights based on current statistics.

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