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## **PROBLEMS OF THE THEORY OF DEMOCRACY IN THE CONTEXT OF FORMATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY**

*This article examines the theoretical foundations of democracy within the context of social protection policy formation, with particular emphasis on the challenges faced during periods of societal transformation. The research analyzes various interpretations of democratic governance and their impact on social policy decision-making processes, focusing on the relationship between democratic institutions and social protection mechanisms. Special attention is paid to the challenges of maintaining democratic principles in social protection during crisis conditions, particularly in the context of martial law in Ukraine. The study reveals the transformation of citizen participation mechanisms in social policy formation, highlighting both limitations and emerging opportunities. The paper identifies key institutional frameworks necessary for effective democratic governance in the social protection sphere, considering European integration aspirations. The research demonstrates that successful implementation of social protection policies requires a balanced approach between maintaining democratic principles and addressing urgent societal needs. The study concludes that adaptation of democratic institutions while preserving core democratic values is crucial for effective social policy implementation.*

*Keywords: democracy theory, social protection policy, democratic governance, citizen participation, institutional framework, public administration, social policy transformation*

Formulation of the problem. The intersection of democratic theory and social protection policy formation presents fundamental challenges that require careful theoretical consideration. A significant disconnect exists between formal democratic procedures and meaningful citizen participation in social policy decision-making processes. This challenge is compounded by the inherent complexity of maintaining robust democratic principles while simultaneously ensuring efficient and effective social protection delivery mechanisms.

Moreover, the transformation of democratic institutions under crisis conditions introduces additional layers of complexity to the theoretical framework. This transformation particularly affects the delicate balance between representative democratic systems and direct citizen participation in social policy formation. The challenge becomes especially pronounced when considering the need to maintain democratic legitimacy while adapting governance mechanisms to address urgent social protection requirements.

These interrelated challenges necessitate a comprehensive theoretical analysis of how democratic principles can be effectively integrated into social protection policy formation while maintaining both institutional efficiency and democratic legitimacy. The complexity of these challenges is particularly evident in contexts where rapid social policy responses must be reconciled with democratic decision-making processes.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The theoretical foundation for understanding democracy in social protection policy draws from several key sources. Robert Dahl's work on democratic theory provides fundamental insights into the relationship between democratic institutions and policy formation. Contemporary scholars have expanded this framework, particularly in the context of social policy implementation:

Larry Diamond's analysis of democratization waves offers valuable perspectives on institutional transformation

David Collier and Steven Levitsky's research on democracy subtypes provides a framework for understanding various democratic models in social policy context

Andrew Heywood's classification of democratic definitions helps structure the analysis of democratic governance in social protection

Presentation of the main material. The concept of democracy, as defined in modern constitutional frameworks, positions citizens as the primary source of state power, exercising their authority both directly and through government institutions. However, a complex theoretical question remains regarding how citizens can effectively exercise their will and what political regime can be considered genuinely democratic. This question becomes particularly pertinent in the context of social protection policy formation, where theoretical democratic principles intersect with practical governance challenges.[4]

The theoretical foundation of democracy in the context of social protection policy requires careful examination, particularly in light of Ukraine's current wartime conditions. Modern democratic systems encounter significant challenges in reconciling theoretical principles with practical governance requirements, especially concerning social protection mechanisms. The contemporary understanding of democracy, as evidenced in constitutional frameworks, positions citizens as the primary source of state power. However, the practical implementation of this principle in social protection policy formation presents several fundamental challenges. Research indicates that while formal democratic procedures exist, the effective participation of citizens in social policy decision-making often remains limited, particularly during crisis periods.

The transformation of democratic institutions under martial law conditions has necessitated significant adaptations in how social protection policies are developed and implemented. Traditional democratic mechanisms, designed for peacetime operations, have required substantial modification to meet urgent social protection needs while maintaining democratic legitimacy. This adaptation process has revealed both limitations and new opportunities in democratic governance during crisis periods. [1]

Ukrainian experience demonstrates that effective social protection policy implementation under martial law requires innovative approaches to maintaining democratic principles. The traditional Schumpeterian model of elite democracy, emphasizing electoral processes over direct participation, proves insufficient in addressing contemporary social protection challenges. Modern democratic systems must evolve to incorporate more dynamic forms of citizen engagement while maintaining institutional stability. The role of civil society organizations in bridging the gap between state institutions and citizens has become increasingly significant, particularly in the context of wartime social protection needs. These organizations serve as crucial intermediaries in the policy formation process, facilitating public discourse and providing expertise in social protection matters. Research indicates that successful social protection policies often emerge from collaborative processes involving both governmen-

tal and non-governmental actors.

Digital democracy tools have emerged as essential mechanisms for maintaining citizen participation in social protection policy formation during martial law. These tools enable continued public engagement despite physical mobility restrictions and security challenges. The integration of digital platforms with traditional democratic processes has created hybrid consultation formats that enhance policy responsiveness while preserving democratic legitimacy. [3]

Empirical evidence suggests that effective social protection policies require institutional frameworks that can accommodate both immediate societal needs and long-term democratic principles. The transformation of democratic mechanisms under current conditions has led to the emergence of new forms of public participation. These adaptations demonstrate the resilience of democratic institutions while highlighting the need for continued innovation in governance approaches. The European integration context adds another dimension to Ukraine's democratic transformation in social protection policy. Alignment with European democratic standards while addressing urgent wartime social protection needs creates a complex environment requiring both theoretical understanding and practical solutions. This dual challenge necessitates careful consideration of how democratic principles can be maintained while ensuring efficient policy implementation.

Local government institutions play a crucial role in implementing social protection policies while maintaining democratic legitimacy at the community level. The decentralization process, even under martial law conditions, has demonstrated the importance of maintaining democratic governance structures at various administrative levels. This multi-level approach to democratic governance ensures that social protection policies remain responsive to local needs while maintaining coordination with national priorities. Research indicates that successful implementation of social protection policies under martial law requires a balanced approach between centralized coordination and local autonomy. [2] This balance becomes particularly important when addressing urgent social protection needs while preserving democratic decision-making processes. The experience of Ukrainian communities demonstrates that effective social protection often emerges from collaborative efforts between different levels of government and civil society organizations.

The transformation of democratic mechanisms in social protection policy formation has revealed several key factors for successful implementation:

The institutional capacity for rapid response must be balanced with mechanisms for citizen input and oversight. While emergency conditions may require expedited decision-making processes, maintaining channels for public consultation remains crucial for democratic legitimacy. Transparency and accountability mechanisms must be adapted to wartime conditions without compromising their essential functions. Digital tools and innovative reporting methods can help maintain democratic oversight while accommodating security considerations.

Coordination between different levels of government and civil society organizations requires new frameworks that preserve democratic principles while ensuring efficient policy implementation. These frameworks must be flexible enough to address urgent needs while maintaining democratic legitimacy. The experience of implementing social protection policies under martial law has demonstrated that democratic institutions can adapt to crisis conditions while preserving core democratic values. This adaptation process requires careful consideration of how traditional democratic mechanisms can be modified to meet urgent social

protection needs without compromising fundamental democratic principles. [6]

Theoretical analysis suggests that effective democratic governance in social protection policy requires both institutional adaptation and preservation of core democratic values. The challenge lies in maintaining democratic legitimacy while ensuring efficient policy implementation under crisis conditions. This balance becomes particularly crucial when addressing urgent social protection needs during wartime. Recent research demonstrates that the integration of democratic principles into wartime social protection policy formation requires institutional adaptability while maintaining democratic legitimacy. This process involves complex interactions between various stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society organizations, and citizen groups.

The involvement of international organizations and partners in Ukraine's social protection system during wartime has introduced additional dimensions to democratic governance mechanisms. These partnerships have contributed to the development of innovative approaches to maintaining democratic principles while addressing urgent social protection needs. The experience gained through such collaboration provides valuable insights into how democratic institutions can adapt to crisis conditions while preserving their essential functions. [5]

Ukraine's wartime experience has revealed the importance of maintaining democratic feedback mechanisms in social protection policy implementation. While traditional democratic processes may require modification under martial law, the fundamental principle of citizen participation remains crucial. Digital platforms and innovative consultation methods have emerged as essential tools for preserving democratic engagement in policy formation and implementation.

The transformation of social protection delivery systems during wartime has necessitated new approaches to democratic oversight and accountability. Traditional monitoring mechanisms have been adapted to accommodate security considerations while maintaining transparency in policy implementation. This adaptation process demonstrates how democratic institutions can evolve to meet changing circumstances while preserving their core functions.

Analysis of regional variations in social protection policy implementation reveals important insights into democratic governance under crisis conditions. Different regions have developed unique approaches to maintaining democratic processes while addressing local social protection needs. These variations provide valuable lessons for understanding how democratic institutions can adapt to diverse challenges while maintaining consistency in basic principles. The role of professional communities and expert groups in social protection policy formation has gained new significance during wartime. These stakeholders contribute to democratic governance by providing specialized knowledge and facilitating informed decision-making processes. Their involvement helps ensure that social protection policies remain both technically sound and democratically legitimate. [4]

Research indicates that successful integration of democratic principles in wartime social protection requires careful attention to both procedural and substantive aspects of policy formation. While emergency conditions may necessitate expedited procedures, maintaining democratic legitimacy requires continued attention to inclusive decision-making processes and stakeholder engagement. The experience of implementing social protection policies under martial law has highlighted the importance of maintaining democratic principles even in crisis conditions. This includes ensuring continued citizen participation in policy formation, maintaining transparency in decision-making processes, and preserving accountability mech-

anisms despite operational challenges.

The adaptation of democratic institutions to wartime conditions has revealed both challenges and opportunities for social protection policy implementation. While some traditional democratic processes may require modification, new approaches to citizen engagement and policy oversight have emerged. These innovations contribute to the evolution of democratic governance in social protection policy formation.

Conclusions. The analysis of democracy theory in the context of social protection policy formation, particularly under Ukrainian wartime conditions, leads to several significant conclusions:

First, the research demonstrates that traditional democratic mechanisms require substantial adaptation to maintain effectiveness in social protection policy implementation during crisis periods. The transformation of democratic institutions under martial law has revealed both limitations and new opportunities for citizen participation in policy formation.

Second, the integration of digital democracy tools and innovative consultation methods has proven crucial for maintaining democratic legitimacy in social protection policy implementation. These adaptations enable continued citizen engagement despite operational challenges posed by wartime conditions.

Third, the role of civil society organizations and professional communities has become increasingly important in bridging the gap between state institutions and citizens. Their involvement ensures that social protection policies remain both technically sound and democratically legitimate, even under crisis conditions.

Fourth, the experience of different regions in Ukraine provides evidence that democratic institutions can successfully adapt to diverse challenges while maintaining consistency in basic principles. This adaptability is crucial for effective social protection policy implementation at various administrative levels.

Fifth, international partnerships have contributed significantly to the development of innovative approaches in maintaining democratic principles while addressing urgent social protection needs. These collaborations provide valuable insights for future development of democratic governance mechanisms.

The research concludes that successful implementation of social protection policies under martial law requires a balanced approach between maintaining democratic principles and addressing urgent societal needs. This balance can be achieved through careful institutional adaptation and preservation of core democratic values, supported by innovative engagement mechanisms and strong stakeholder participation.

These findings have significant implications for public administration practice, particularly in contexts of societal transformation and crisis management. They suggest that maintaining democratic legitimacy in social protection policy formation under challenging conditions requires continued innovation in governance approaches while preserving fundamental democratic principles.

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