

Post-War Ukraine (Political Challenges, Forecasts, Possible Solutions)

Ivan OSADTSA
Volodymyr FISANOV

Abstract: *The article examines possible pathways for Ukraine's post-war development, focusing on the political conditions that will shape recovery after the end of the war. It argues that reconstruction cannot be reduced to rebuilding infrastructure or restoring the economy, since its success will also depend on the quality of governance, democratic accountability, decentralization, anti-corruption policy, public trust, and Ukraine's progress toward European integration. The study identifies the main political risks of the post-war period, including wartime institutional inertia, excessive centralization, difficulties in restoring political competition, corruption in reconstruction, regional disparities, declining public trust, and weakening international support. The analysis combines systemic, institutional, comparative, and scenario approaches and draws on recent Ukrainian and international research. Particular attention is given to the role of expert forecasting in assessing alternative paths of development and helping policymakers respond to uncertainty. Three scenarios are considered: institutional-reformist, inertial-adaptive, and crisis-destabilizing. The article also outlines the political indicators that may signal movement toward each of them. It concludes that Ukraine's post-war transformation will depend on whether the state can combine security needs with democratic recovery, effective local self-government, transparent reconstruction, continued European integration, and the ability to maintain public trust over the long term while avoiding the persistence of wartime practices in peacetime governance.*

Keywords: *post-war Ukraine, democratic recovery, decentralization, European integration, public trust.*

Introduction

Ukraine's post-war future is one of the key issues facing contemporary political science, public administration, and international relations. The full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war has caused enormous human, eco-

nomical, infrastructural, and humanitarian losses and has also changed the political system, public governance, relations between central and local authorities, and public expectations. Ukraine's recovery will therefore depend not only on rebuilding infrastructure and the economy, but also

on whether political institutions can move from wartime mobilization to a stable democratic model of governance.

Post-war recovery should be understood as a political process in which reconstruction, security, democratic recovery, European integration, institutional reform, and public trust are closely connected. Current research addresses public governance and administration¹, the institutionalization of reconstruction², strategic challenges for public administration³, reconstruction priorities in the context of EU membership⁴, and the development of the welfare state⁵. Other studies focus on transparency in international aid and anti-corruption policy⁶. Comparative experience of post-war recovery⁷, national resilience⁸, and the relationship between economic, administrative, and security dimensions⁹ also show that reconstruction cannot be treated as a purely economic or technical task. A broader framework linking recovery, reform, resilience, security, and development is offered by the collective volume edited by S. Nate¹⁰.

The political consequences of the war require particular attention. Centralized decision-making, a stronger executive branch, and restrictions on some political procedures may be justified under martial law, but they may create risks if extraordinary wartime practices continue after the security situation changes. The return to political competition, parliamentary oversight, electoral procedures, and effective local self-government

will therefore be an important part of post-war transformation¹¹. Public trust will be equally important. Strategic communications can help explain reforms, maintain dialogue between the state and society, and support the legitimacy of public policy during a difficult transition¹².

Post-war development will also remain highly uncertain. The security environment, international support, European integration, demographic change, economic recovery, political competition, and public trust may develop in different ways. Forecasting should therefore not be understood as an attempt to predict one inevitable future. Its value lies in comparing alternatives, identifying risks, and recognizing early signs of possible change¹³.

The aim of this article is to examine the main political challenges of Ukraine's post-war development, possible political and administrative responses, and the role of expert forecasting in assessing alternative paths of transformation. Particular attention is given to democratic accountability, decentralization, anti-corruption policy, European integration, social cohesion, public trust, and international support. On this basis, the article considers three possible scenarios: institutional-reformist, inertial-adaptive, and crisis-destabilizing.

The study combines systemic, institutional, comparative, and scenario approaches. The systemic and institutional perspectives are used to examine the interaction between politi-

cal institutions, democratic procedures, public trust, international support, and local self-government. Comparative analysis brings together recent research on reconstruction, resilience, European integration, decentralization, and public administration, while the scenario approach is used to compare alternative trajectories under conditions of uncertainty. Expert forecasting is treated here as a tool for identifying risks and possible early-warning indicators rather than as an attempt to predict a fixed outcome.

Presentation of the main material

Ukraine's post-war recovery should be viewed not only as physical and economic reconstruction, but also as a political process that will reshape relations between the state, society, and public institutions. Its success will depend on the quality of governance, institutional capacity, transparency, anti-corruption mechanisms, and the state's ability to maintain public trust. This is why the institutionalization of reconstruction and the strategic challenges of public administration are treated in current research as central conditions for effective recovery¹⁴.

Post-war Ukraine will also face the need to combine material reconstruction with institutional renewal, security resilience, and European integration. This broader approach is reflected both in systemic models linking economy, governance, and

security¹⁵ and in frameworks that connect recovery with reform, resilience, and development¹⁶. Comparative experience from other countries also shows that successful post-war recovery depends not only on financial resources, but on the ability of institutions to adapt to new conditions¹⁷.

Public governance will therefore be critical. Reconstruction will require coordination among central authorities, local self-government, international partners, and civil society, especially while Ukraine remains dependent on external support, security guarantees, administrative capacity, and public trust¹⁸. At the same time, recovery must remain closely linked to EU integration, since European standards of governance, rule of law, transparency, anti-corruption policy, and local self-government will shape the framework of future reforms. Reconstruction priorities should therefore reflect not only the scale of destruction, but also Ukraine's long-term goal of integration into the European political, legal, and economic space¹⁹.

At the same time, post-war recovery will create serious political risks. Society will expect rapid reconstruction, fair access to resources, accountability for abuses, support for veterans, the return of citizens from abroad, economic opportunities, and security. If these expectations are not met, public trust may decline, while populism, political fragmentation, and conflicts over post-war justice may increase. Post-war policy will

therefore have to manage not only resources, but also expectations and political tensions.

One of the main challenges will be the transition from wartime governance to a fully functioning democratic system. Centralized decision-making, a stronger executive, and restrictions on some political procedures may be justified during a full-scale war, but they should not become permanent features of post-war governance. Political competition, parliamentary oversight, regular elections, and broader public participation will need to be restored.

The risk is that some wartime practices may persist after their immediate security justification has weakened. This could lead to an excessive concentration of power and reduce the role of representative institutions and political competition. Current debates about the Ukrainian leadership already reflect concerns about the growing concentration of decision-making around the presidency and the possible tension between political control and broader state interests²⁰. For this reason, post-war democratization should involve not only elections, but also the restoration of institutional balance, transparency, parliamentary oversight, and effective public control. The transformation of public authority under martial law therefore remains important for understanding how wartime practices may influence Ukraine's future political system²¹.

A distinct place in this process is occupied by the problem of future

elections. Post-war elections in Ukraine must become not merely a procedure for renewing power but an important test of the state's ability to return to a normal democratic cycle. At the same time, they will take place under complex challenges: a large number of internally displaced persons, citizens abroad, destroyed infrastructure, security risks, the problem of servicemembers' participation, possible territorial restrictions, the influence of information manipulation, and the need to ensure the legitimacy of results. This is why the debate over the electoral system for post-war Ukraine is of fundamental importance for the quality of democratic recovery²².

The return to democratic competition will also entail the need to reconfigure the party system. The war has substantially altered societal priorities, strengthened the role of security issues, transformed perceptions of political leadership, and created new symbolic resources for political actors. After the war, political competition may take shape around questions of victory, accountability, reconstruction, European integration, social justice, attitudes toward veterans, anti-corruption policy, and the model of relations between the center and the regions. This will require the political system to be able to resolve political conflicts through institutional means.

At the same time, no less important will be the question of legislative-executive relations. During the war, the role of the executive branch

naturally grows, but in the post-war period the Verkhovna Rada must restore its role as the central platform for political representation, oversight, and public debate on strategic decisions. Research on legislative-executive relations under wartime conditions shows that the balance between governance effectiveness and democratic accountability is one of the key issues of a state's political resilience²³. For post-war Ukraine, this will mean the need to avoid both administrative paralysis and an excessive concentration of power.

The problem of democratic return is logically linked to the further development of the complex processes of decentralization and local self-government. Decentralization is one of the most important achievements of Ukrainian reforms of the past decade, and its importance will only grow in the post-war period. Local communities will play a key role in rebuilding housing, social infrastructure, educational and medical facilities, the local economy, transport links, and life-support systems. It is precisely at the local level that citizens will most quickly assess the real results of recovery, and the capacity of communities will therefore become one of the main indicators of the effectiveness of post-war policy.

At the same time, the war has created a complex dilemma for decentralization. On one hand, security conditions have objectively increased the need for centralized coordination. On the other hand, local self-gov-

ernment has in many cases demonstrated a high capacity for adaptation, resource mobilization, and support for the population. The post-war governance model should therefore not mean a return to the familiar model of centralization. On the contrary, it must involve an updated form of decentralization that takes into account the experience of the war, security needs, and the tasks of reconstruction.

Research on decentralization reform under wartime conditions emphasizes that its continued implementation remains an important precondition for democratic governance and effective management of territorial development²⁴. In the post-war period, this will require a clear delineation of powers among central government, regional executive authorities, and local self-government bodies. It will also be important to avoid a situation in which the temporary wartime administrative mechanisms that have become familiar are used as a substitute for elected local government.

The problem of decentralization is also directly linked to the question of internally displaced persons. After the war, communities will undoubtedly face complex demographic situations: some territories will lose a significant share of their population, others will gain new residents, and certain regions will require reintegration after occupation or large-scale reconstruction. The role of local authorities in supporting internally displaced persons has already shown

that a decentralized system can be a source of resilience if it has sufficient resources, powers, and legitimacy²⁵.

In this context, post-war policy must provide for several key decisions. First, the principle of subsidiarity must be preserved, whereby decisions are made at the level closest to citizens, provided that level has adequate capacity. Second, a financial foundation for local self-government must be secured, since without resources communities cannot be genuine agents of reconstruction. Third, it is important to create transparent mechanisms for citizen participation in setting local reconstruction priorities. Fourth, effective control over the use of funds must be introduced, but without turning that control into an instrument of centralized political pressure.

Decentralization in post-war Ukraine also has a distinct security dimension. Capable communities can respond more quickly to crisis situations, sustain social cohesion, organize local services, and work with veterans, IDPs, families of the fallen, businesses, and international partners. In this sense, decentralization should be regarded not merely as an administrative reform but as an element of national resilience, consistent with the broader vision of resilience as a component of post-war reconstruction²⁶.

However, the expanded role of the local level and the large-scale resource inflows into reconstruction will inevitably sharpen the issue of transparency and accountability.

Anti-corruption policy will become one of the most sensitive areas of post-war recovery. The scale of international aid, the volume of reconstruction projects, the need for rapid decision-making, and the large number of interested actors will generate heightened corruption risks. In this sense, corruption in the post-war period will be not only a domestic governance problem but also a matter of international trust, political legitimacy, and Ukraine's European integration prospects.

Transparency in the use of foreign aid is critically important, since external partners will assess not only Ukraine's needs but also the Ukrainian state's ability to guarantee accountability and control. Research on transparency and corruption in the context of foreign aid to Ukraine shows that the turbulent environment of war and reconstruction can heighten the risk of inefficient resource use unless effective mechanisms of control, reporting, and openness are established²⁷. The trust of donors and citizens alike will therefore depend directly on the quality of the anti-corruption infrastructure.

In this context, an important question arises: will post-war reconstruction become a driver of deeper reform, or, on the contrary, a domain for reproducing old practices of informal influence, political patronage, and resource control? Research on anti-corruption reforms in post-war Ukraine highlights the dilemma between a merely declarative retention

of reformist rhetoric and the genuine construction of a qualitatively new system of accountability²⁸. For Ukraine, this means that anti-corruption policy must be built into the very architecture of recovery rather than exist as a separate strand.

The link between trust, the fight against corruption, and security takes on particular importance. During the wartime and post-war periods, trust in the state becomes a political resource that affects citizens' readiness to support reforms, pay taxes, participate in recovery, accept difficult decisions, and cooperate with the authorities. Under such conditions, corruption scandals can have a far more destructive effect than in peacetime, since they undermine not only the reputations of individual officials but also citizens' faith in the fairness of the post-war order. Trust can therefore be regarded as a kind of "defense resource" against internal destabilization²⁹.

Post-war anti-corruption policy must combine several dimensions. The first is institutional: preserving the independence of anti-corruption bodies, the judiciary, and audit and control mechanisms. The second is digital: maximum openness of data on reconstruction projects, procurement, contractors, financing, and results. The third is civic: engaging civil society, the media, and local communities in monitoring reconstruction. The fourth is international: establishing joint control mechanisms with partners providing financial assistance. The fifth is political: the

inevitability of accountability for abuses regardless of officials' political affiliation.

At the same time, it is important to avoid the opposite extreme, in which anti-corruption policy turns exclusively into punitive rhetoric that paralyzes decision-making. Post-war reconstruction will require speed, flexibility, and administrative courage. The task, therefore, is not to create an excessively bureaucratized system that stifles any initiative, but to ensure a reasonable balance between efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

The transparency and accountability of reconstruction, in turn, are directly linked to European integration, which will become one of the main frameworks for Ukraine's post-war transformation. Preparation for EU membership will shape not only the state's foreign policy course but also the internal logic of reforms. This concerns the adaptation of legislation, judicial reform, anti-corruption policy, the modernization of public administration, stronger protection of human rights, the development of local self-government, economic competition, environmental standards, and institutional capacity.

In this context, Ukrainian policymakers, both during the reconstruction period and in the longer term, should devote constant attention to strengthening national security in all its dimensions. As military expert D. Hrebenuk has emphasized, contemporary challenges require a substantial broadening of the understanding

of security, so that *national security* now encompasses not only the military sphere but also economic stability, social harmony, ecological resilience, and information security. Thus, the resilience of society depends on the authorities' ability to integrate efforts, as well as on the adaptive capacity of the political system under conditions of risk³⁰.

It is worth analyzing in more detail Ukraine's reconstruction prospects in light of its European integration aspirations. The strategic partnership with the European Union in Ukraine's reconstruction process should be viewed not only as a source of financial support but as a mechanism of political modernization. The EU can simultaneously act as donor, normative benchmark, institutional partner, and external guarantor of reforms. In this sense, post-war reconstruction must be linked to fulfilling European integration criteria rather than set apart from them as a merely "technical" or "humanitarian" process³¹.

At the same time, post-war Ukraine's European integration will proceed under conditions of complex political conditionality. The EU's enlargement policy toward Ukraine will combine support with requirements concerning the rule of law, democratic institutions, the fight against corruption, and the capacity of public administration. Research on the rule of law in EU-Ukraine relations shows that the European integration process cannot be reduced to the formal approximation of legisla-

tion, since the real quality of institutions and the state's ability to enforce norms will be of key importance³².

This creates both opportunities and challenges for Ukraine. On one hand, European integration can become a powerful stimulus for continuing reforms and preventing a relapse into non-transparent administrative practices. On the other hand, an excessive accumulation of requirements, the complexity of reforms, societal fatigue, and expectations of quick results may create space for Eurosceptic or populist rhetoric. This is why the political class must not only see to the fulfillment of technical criteria but also explain to citizens the long-term meaning of European integration as part of a long-term post-war development strategy.

European integration will also require a revision of approaches to public policy. Post-war Ukraine must gradually move from the logic of crisis response to the logic of strategic planning, program-based management, policy impact assessment, and long-term institutional accountability. This means that every major area of recovery – infrastructure, energy, education, healthcare, regional development, social policy, and security – must be linked to European standards of quality, transparency, and accountability.

The problem of national interests within the process of European integration takes on particular significance. The economic strategy of post-war recovery must be oriented not only toward attracting funds but

also toward protecting the state's long-term agency, developing domestic production, technological modernization, energy resilience, and creating conditions for the return of human capital³³. European integration must therefore be not an external "control framework" but part of Ukraine's own strategic vision at every level of political governance and public life.

Institutional and European-integration transformations will, however, have a lasting effect only if social cohesion is preserved. It is clear that post-war Ukraine will face not only institutional and economic challenges but also profound social consequences of the war. These include the traumatization of society, the return of veterans, the reintegration of internally displaced persons, the situation of citizens who spent a long time abroad, regional disparities, questions of justice, expectations of compensation, the restoration of destroyed housing, social inequality, and the possible rise of political tension against this backdrop. All these factors will affect the level of public trust and citizens' readiness to support state policy.

The question of compensation for damaged and destroyed housing is one example of how legal and administrative decisions can have significant political consequences. If compensation mechanisms are perceived as unfair, non-transparent, or too slow, this may deepen distrust of the state and create new lines of social tension or even crisis. Research

on the socio-legal instabilities associated with Ukraine's compensation legislation for damaged and destroyed housing shows that such mechanisms must be not only legally sound but also politically sensitive to the expectations of affected citizens³⁴.

In this context, strategic communications must become an important component of post-war policy. This does not mean propagandistic explanation of decisions, but systematic, transparent, responsible, and dialogical communication among the state, society, and international partners. Built at every level of the administrative hierarchy and within self-government bodies, strategic communications must explain reconstruction priorities, the logic of resource allocation, the complexity of reforms, the expected timeframes for results, the state's limitations, and opportunities for civic participation.

In the course of a protracted war, trust has become one of the key resources of Ukrainian resilience. In the post-war period, however, this resource may prove vulnerable due to accumulated fatigue, social disillusionment, unequal access to recovery, political competition, and information manipulation. Strategic communications must therefore perform not only an informational but also an integrative function – namely, bringing different social groups together around a clear vision of the future, reducing space for manipulation, and sustaining the legitimacy of difficult political decisions³⁵.

Communication regarding unpopular and not always expected reforms will be especially important. Post-war Ukraine may be compelled to make decisions that will not produce a quick positive effect. Without good-quality communication, even rationally justified decisions may be perceived as unfair, imposed, or politically motivated.

Strategic communications also have an external dimension. Ukraine will need to continually sustain the trust of international partners, explain the results of reforms, demonstrate the effective use of aid, and shape the image of a state capable not only of defending itself but also of modernizing. In this sense, communication policy will be part of the diplomacy of recovery, since partners' trust will directly affect the stability of financing, investment, and political support. In this context, it is worth sustaining the effort to build and strengthen stable military-political alliances in the Central-Eastern European region, in particular with Ukraine's closest and most influential neighbors, Poland and Romania. In historical perspective, despite temporary Polish-Ukrainian disagreements, Poland is destined for an alliance with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. As analyst J. Bugajski notes, it is preparing for two interrelated challenges: a renewed Russian aggression "against its neighbors, should it win in Ukraine, and Russia's inevitable collapse, should it continue to lose the war against Ukraine"³⁶. The strategic Black Sea

flank will be defended together with Ukraine by Romania, which under current political conditions represents a growing military-political power in the region, where Romania's ability to transition "from a passive beneficiary of EU security initiatives to an active contributor in the evolution of Europe's defence-industrial landscape"³⁷ has yet to be confirmed. Consequently, Ukraine's political class, at every level of cooperation, should orient its foreign-policy compass toward the promising Romanian direction.

Public trust in post-war policy will also depend significantly on how fair and predictable economic decisions turn out to be. The economic dimension of post-war recovery cannot be considered outside the political context. Decisions on reconstruction priorities, resource allocation, tax policy, investment, public finance, and business support will have direct political consequences. They will determine the level of trust in the authorities, social stability, regional development, and the state's ability to fulfill its obligations to citizens.

National policy instruments for the recovery of the post-war economy must take into account not only the need for reconstruction but also factors of long-term resilience. Economic recovery must be linked to institutional development, the protection of property rights, transparency of regulatory policy, support for entrepreneurship, and integration into European markets³⁸. Politically, this means that the economic strategy

must be publicly understandable, fair, and oriented toward the state's long-term capacity.

Attracting foreign direct investment will also depend not only on economic indicators but also on political stability, the rule of law, security, anti-corruption policy, and the predictability of state decisions. The prospects for attracting foreign investment into post-war Ukraine are linked to investors' trust in institutions, guarantees for the protection of capital, and a clear state development strategy³⁹. Economic reconstruction therefore requires political predictability.

Public finance will play an important role. Post-war Ukraine will have to balance the needs of defense, social protection, reconstruction, debt servicing, regional support, and the financing of reforms. The role of public finance in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction lies not only in providing resources but also in shaping a financial architecture capable of sustaining stability, transparency, and long-term development policy⁴⁰.

Post-war economic policy must also take into account the principle of "build back better," meaning reconstruction not as a simple restoration of the pre-war state but as modernization. This applies not only to infrastructure but also to governance, environmental policy, digitalization, energy resilience, and spatial development. In the Ukrainian context, the "build back better" concept is linked to the need to integrate sustainability,

circularity, and long-term planning into reconstruction processes⁴¹. At the same time, approaches to sustainable recovery link reconstruction with the modernization of urban governance and the formation of «smart» governance models⁴², while the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is regarded as one of the benchmarks for Ukraine's renewal⁴³. Politically, this means that reconstruction should be not a restoration of the past but the design of a more predictable future.

It is precisely the high interdependence of institutional, social, economic, and international factors that makes expert forecasting one of the key tools for understanding the development of post-war Ukraine. The state's future development will depend on many variables, some of which remain uncertain. It is impossible to predict precisely the duration of security threats, the scale of international support, the pace of European integration, the dynamics of population return, the rate of economic growth, the configuration of political competition, or the level of public trust. This is why what matters is not the creation of a single "forecast" but the formation of several possible, most probable scenarios of development that make it possible to assess the opportunities, risks, and consequences of political decisions.

Scenario planning for Ukraine's post-war recovery makes it possible to move from reactive management to strategic anticipation. The methodology of scenario planning in-

volves identifying key factors of uncertainty, constructing alternative development trajectories, assessing risks, and formulating political decisions capable of functioning under different conditions⁴⁴. This is especially important for post-war Ukraine, since recovery policy cannot rely on the assumption of a stable environment.

Scenario modeling can also be used to identify priority directions for economic and political recovery. Research on the priorities of Ukraine's economic recovery based on scenario modeling shows that different development options require different administrative decisions, resource emphases, and time horizons⁴⁵. Politically, this means that the authorities must work not only with the optimistic scenario but also with riskier or crisis-related development options.

For the analysis of post-war Ukraine, at least three scenarios can be conditionally identified.

The first scenario is institutional-reformist. It presupposes that Ukraine successfully combines reconstruction with reforms, retains international support, deepens European integration, restores democratic competition, strengthens local self-government, ensures transparency in the use of aid, and sustains a high level of public trust. Under this scenario, post-war recovery becomes not merely compensation for losses but a foundation for the qualitative modernization of the state.

The second scenario is inertial-adaptive. It presupposes partial re-

covery of infrastructure and the economy and continued external support, but at the same time slow reforms, fragmented administrative decisions, periodic corruption scandals, regional disparities, and a gradual decline in public trust. In this case, Ukraine will move forward but without sufficient speed and consistency, which could significantly weaken its European integration prospects.

The third scenario – crisis-destabilizing – is the least desirable, though not to be excluded. It could materialize through a combination of several negative factors: declining international support, intensifying domestic political struggle, corruption abuses in reconstruction, social disillusionment, excessive centralization of power, poor communication of reforms, and unresolved security threats. This scenario does not imply the state's inevitable defeat, but it would significantly complicate democratic transformation and could create grounds for political instability within society.

Expert forecasting makes it possible not only to describe the proposed scenarios but also to identify indicators of their approach. For the institutional-reformist scenario, such indicators may include growing trust in institutions, stable international financing, progress in negotiations with the EU, transparency of reconstruction projects, restoration of democratic procedures, and effective local self-government. For the inertial-adaptive scenario, characteristic

indicators may include continued international support alongside slowing reforms, fragmented progress in fulfilling European integration commitments, uneven reconstruction across regions, periodic corruption scandals, and a gradual decline in public trust. For the crisis-destabilizing scenario, indicators may include rising political polarization amid a recurring “authoritarian syndrome”, declining public trust, corruption scandals, growing social anarchy, center-region conflicts, substantial delays in adequate reforms, and fatigue among international partners.

As already noted, the use of alternative and innovative forecasting methods in the study of ambiguous political and international processes makes it possible to avoid a linear vision of the future and to account for the dynamics of the interaction of various factors, particularly at points of political bifurcation. Forecasting should not substitute for a political decision, but it can improve its quality by enabling the assessment of risks, alternatives, and deferred consequences⁴⁶. In this context, strategic thinking is a necessary condition for effective post-war governance, as it allows one to move beyond short-term reaction and shape policy oriented toward achieving long-term resilience⁴⁷.

Scenario analysis has practical value only when it leads to concrete political and administrative decisions. For post-war Ukraine, the main priorities will include restoring demo-

cratic political processes, reviewing extraordinary wartime practices, preparing legitimate elections, strengthening parliamentary oversight and media freedom, and preserving a balance between central coordination and local self-government.

These priorities must be combined with transparent reconstruction, continued decentralization, European integration, public participation, and regular risk assessment. Open procurement, independent audit, sufficient resources for local communities, fair compensation mechanisms, and closer alignment with EU standards should form part of the same policy framework rather than operate as separate measures.

Post-war policy should therefore be built around a coherent strategy that connects reconstruction, democratic recovery, transparency, European integration, and public trust. The central challenge will be to maintain security while returning to democratic normality, so that wartime centralization does not become a permanent model of governance. A more integrated approach can help move Ukraine from fragmented recovery toward a more predictable model of post-war development, in which political decisions and expert forecasting reinforce one another⁴⁸.

Conclusions

Ukraine’s post-war recovery should be understood not only as the reconstruction of infrastructure and the economy, but as a broader politi-

cal process that will shape the quality of governance, democratic development, institutional resilience, and public trust. Its success will depend on the ability of the state to address several interconnected tasks at the same time: restoring political competition, overcoming wartime institutional inertia, preventing excessive centralization, continuing decentralization, ensuring transparency in reconstruction, preserving anti-corruption mechanisms, and advancing European integration. One of the main political risks of the post-war period is the persistence of extraordinary wartime practices after their immediate necessity has passed. The transition from a mobilization model of governance to a democratic and accountable system will therefore require the restoration of parliamentary oversight, electoral procedures, institutional balance, and meaningful political competition.

Decentralization will remain an important part of this transition. Local self-government will have a central role in reconstruction, the integration of internally displaced persons, support for veterans, and the restoration of social infrastructure. At the same time, transparency and anti-

corruption policy will directly influence both domestic legitimacy and the confidence of international partners. Public trust should also be treated as a strategic resource. It will depend less on official declarations than on fairness, accountability, open communication, and the visible results of reconstruction.

The scenario analysis developed in this article shows that Ukraine may move along different trajectories. The institutional-reformist scenario combines reconstruction with democratic reforms, transparency, stable international support, and deeper European integration. The inertial-adaptive scenario assumes partial recovery but slow and uneven reforms. The crisis-destabilizing scenario emerges when political polarization, corruption, excessive centralization, social frustration, and weakening external support reinforce one another. European integration will remain the main strategic framework for post-war transformation. Further research should therefore focus on the empirical testing of these scenarios and on identifying political, institutional, and social indicators that can signal changes in Ukraine's post-war trajectory.

Notes

- ¹ O. Fedyk, S. Fedyk, „Public governance and administration in Ukraine's post-war recovery”, *Visegrad Journal on Human Rights*, Nr. 5, 2024, pp. 168-172.
- ² G. Aleksin, „Institutionalizing Ukraine's post-war reconstruction”,

Three Seas Economic Journal, Vol. 6, Nr. 2, 2025, pp. 9-14.

- ³ V. Marenichenko, L. Berezytskyi, J. Vasilenko, D. Herasymchuk, O. Kazmin, „Strategic challenges for the public administration system in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine”, *Dnipro Academy of Continuing Education Herald*, Series: Public

- Management and Administration, Vol. 10, Nr. 1, 2026, pp. 192-203.
- ⁴ K. Leshchenko, S. Leshchenko, „Determining priorities for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction in the conditions of preparation for EU membership”, *Economics of Development*, Vol. 22, Nr. 3, 2023, pp. 42-51.
- ⁵ Л. Ільченко-Сюйва, Я. Ткачук, „Повоєнне відновлення в Україні: теоретичні засади розбудови держави суспільного добробуту”, *Аспекти публічного управління*, Vol. 13, Nr. 3, 2025, pp. 100-108.
- ⁶ J. Cifuentes-Faura, „Government transparency and corruption in a turbulent setting: The case of foreign aid to Ukraine”, *Governance*, Vol. 37, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 659-670; M. Richter, „‘Call the bluff’ or ‘build back better’ – Anti-corruption reforms in post-war Ukraine”, *Global Policy*, Vol. 14, Nr. 4, 2023, pp. 611-622.
- ⁷ O. Kravchenko, L. Sergiienko, H. Niameshchuk, T. Mamatova, I. Chykarenko, „Post-war recovery practices for Ukraine, based on the experience of other countries that have undergone similar processes”, *Economic Affairs*, Vol. 68, Nr. 4, 2023, pp. 2277-2288.
- ⁸ M. Nazarov, „National Resilience and Post-war Reconstruction of Ukraine”, in *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, S. Nate (ed.), Springer, Cham, 2025, pp. 63-73.
- ⁹ O. Semenenko, I. Havryliuk, O. Solomitskyi, Y. Kliat, Y. Dobrovolskyi, A. Hetman, „Ukraine’s postwar recovery strategy: A systemic model for integrating economy, governance, and security”, *Social Development and Security*, Vol. 15, Nr. 2, 2025, pp. 12-19.
- ¹⁰ S. Nate (ed.), *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, Springer, Cham, 2025.
- ¹¹ І. Осадца, І. Поліщук, „Трансформація системи публічної влади в умовах воєнного стану у контексті гібридизації політичного режиму в Україні”, *Історико-політичні проблеми сучасного світу*, Vol. 52, 2025, pp. 137-146.
- ¹² В. Фісанов, І. Осадца, „Стратегічні комунікації як інструмент формування суспільної довіри в умовах довготривалої війни”, in *Стратегічні комунікації у сфері забезпечення національної безпеки та оборони: проблеми, досвід, перспективи: тези доповідей VI Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції*, 29 жовтня 2025, НУОУ, Київ, 2025, pp. 22-26.
- ¹³ І. Осадца, „Мислити як стратег”, *Медіафорум: аналітика, прогнози, інформаційний менеджмент*, Vol. 9, 2021, pp. 292-299; І. Осадца, В. Карпо, „Прогностичні методик у дослідженні сучасних міжнародних відносин (на прикладі динамічної моделі Річардсона)”, *Медіафорум: аналітика, прогнози, інформаційний менеджмент*, Vol. 11, 2022, pp. 77-95.
- ¹⁴ G. Aleksin, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-14; V. Marenichenko, L. Berezynskyi, J. Vasilenko, D. Herasymchuk, O. Kazmin, *op.cit.*, pp. 192-203.
- ¹⁵ O. Semenenko, I. Havryliuk, O. Solomitskyi, Y. Kliat, Y. Dobrovolskyi, A. Hetman, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-19.
- ¹⁶ S. Nate (ed.), *op.cit.*
- ¹⁷ O. Kravchenko, L. Sergiienko, H. Niameshchuk, T. Mamatova, I. Chykarenko, *op.cit.*, pp. 2277-2288.
- ¹⁸ O. Fedyk, S. Fedyk, *op.cit.*, pp. 168-172.

- ¹⁹ K. Leshchenko, S. Leshchenko, *op.cit.*, pp. 42-51.
- ²⁰ І. Ведернікова, „Виродження влади. Як Зеленський досяг своєї стелі, а система держуправління – дна”, *ZN.UA*, 17 серпня 2026, <https://zn.ua/ukr/politics/virodzhennja-vladi-jak-zelenskij-dosjah-svojeji-steli-a-sistema-derzhupravlinnja-dn-a.html> (accessed pe 18 august 2026).
- ²¹ І. Осадца, І. Поліщук, *op.cit.*, pp. 137-146.
- ²² А. Авксентьев, „Електоральна система для повоєнної України: актуальні альтернативи для парламентських виборів”, Вісник Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна, *Серія «Питання політології»*, Nr. 48, 2025, pp. 51-59.
- ²³ K. Pelchar, E. Herron, G. Flikke, „Legislative–executive relations in Ukraine’s wartime conditions”, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 58, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 125-127.
- ²⁴ D. Zayats, „Decentralisation reform in Ukraine: Achievements and implementation prospects amidst war conditions”, *Democratic Governance*, Vol. 17, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 5–17.
- ²⁵ V. Romanova, „Does decentralization boost Ukrainian resilience? The role of local authorities in supporting internally displaced persons”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 41, Nr. 5, 2025, pp. 459-477.
- ²⁶ M. Nazarov, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-73.
- ²⁷ J. Cifuentes-Faura, *op.cit.*, pp. 659-670.
- ²⁸ M. Richter, *op.cit.*, pp. 611-622.
- ²⁹ A. Markovska, O. Serdiuk, I. Soldatenko, „Trust as a weapon of war: Fighting corruption and corporate crime in Ukraine”, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Vol. 83, 2025, Article 12, pp. 1-12.
- ³⁰ Д. Гребенюк, „Трансформація концепції національної безпеки”, *Національні інтереси України*, Nr. 4(4), 2024, pp. 22-28.
- ³¹ Y. Kostiuhenko, „Strategic partnership with the EU in Ukraine’s reconstruction”, *Visegrad Journal on Human Rights*, Nr. 3, 2024, pp. 101-107.
- ³² M. Rabinovych, „EU enlargement policy goes east: Historical and comparative takes on the EU’s rule of law conditionality vis-à-vis Ukraine”, *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, Vol. 16, 2024, pp. 715-737.
- ³³ А. Янчук, „Економічна стратегія повоєнного відновлення як основа забезпечення національних інтересів”, *Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського*, Серія: Юридичні науки, Vol. 35(74), Nr. 5, 2024, pp. 80-89.
- ³⁴ J. Unruh, „Socio-legal instabilities in Ukraine’s wartime compensation law for damaged and destroyed residential property”, *International Journal of Law in Context*, Vol. 20, Nr. 4, 2024, pp. 581-597.
- ³⁵ В. Фісанов, І. Осадца, *op.cit.*, pp. 22-26.
- ³⁶ J. Bugajski, „Janusz Bugajski’s Washington View: Poland is Europe’s Pivotal Power”, *Istraga*, 9 October 2024, <https://istraga.ba/janusz-bugajskis-washington-view-poland-is-europes-pivotal-power/> (accessed 8 July 2026).
- ³⁷ N. Iancu, „Romania’s Defence Policy and National Security Interests in the European Defence Fund Amidst European Defence Integration”, *Land Forces Academy Review*, Vol. 30, Nr. 2, 2025, pp. 218-228.
- ³⁸ Z. Sinaj, F. Vela, G. Shaip, „National policy instruments for restoring the post-war economy and factors of sustainability of the Ukrainian economy”, *Development Management*, Vol. 23, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 49-55.

- ³⁹ D. Riznyk, „Perspectives for post-war recovery in Ukraine in the sphere of attracting foreign direct investments”, *Economics of Systems Development*, Vol. 5, Nr. 1, 2023, pp. 31-34.
- ⁴⁰ T. Bogdan, „The role of public finance in Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction”, *Journal of European Economy*, Vol. 23, Nr. 4, 2024, pp. 615-634.
- ⁴¹ T. Shevchenko, B. Yannou, M. Saidani, „‘Build back better’ for war-torn Ukraine: Dual strategies for integrating circularity in post-disaster recovery”, *Proceedings of the Design Society*, Vol. 5, 2025, pp. 821-830.
- ⁴² J. Cifuentes-Faura, „Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction: Building smart cities and governments through a sustainability-based reconstruction plan”, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 419, 2023, Article 138323.
- ⁴³ A. Stavitskyi, G. Kharlamova, „SDGs Realization for the Renovation of Ukraine”, în S. Nate (ed.), *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, Springer, Cham, 2025, pp. 31-48.
- ⁴⁴ S. Kucherenko, A. Kolosov, A. Barylov, „Methodology of scenario-based planning for Ukraine’s post-war recovery”, *European Journal of Management Issues*, Vol. 33, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 57-65.
- ⁴⁵ V. Prokhorova, O. Kravchenko, O. Shkurenko, A. Babichev, A. Polivantsev, „Study of priority directions of economic recovery of Ukraine based on scenario modelling”, *Economics of Development*, Vol. 24, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 26-34.
- ⁴⁶ I. Осадца, В. Карпо, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-95.
- ⁴⁷ Idem, „Мислити як стратег”, *op.cit.*, pp. 292-299.
- ⁴⁸ O. Semenenko, I. Havryliuk, O. Solomitskyi, Y. Kliat, Y. Dobrovolskyi, A. Hetman, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-19.

Bibliography

Articles and studies

- ALEKSIN, G., „Institutionalizing Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction”, *Three Seas Economic Journal*, Vol. 6, Nr. 2, 2025, pp. 9-14, doi: 10.30525/2661-5150/2025-2-2.
- BOGDAN, T., „The role of public finance in Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction”, *Journal of European Economy*, Vol. 23, Nr. 4, 2024, pp. 615-634, doi: 10.35774/jee2024.04.615.
- CIFUENTES-FAURA, J., „Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction: Building smart cities and governments through a sustainability-based reconstruction plan”, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 419, 2023, Article 138323, doi: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.138323.
- CIFUENTES-FAURA, J., „Government transparency and corruption in a turbulent setting: The case of foreign aid to Ukraine”, *Governance*, Vol. 37, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 659-670, doi: 10.1111/gove.12835.
- FEDYK, O., FEDYK, S., „Public governance and administration in Ukraine’s post-war recovery”, *Visegrad Journal on Human Rights*, Nr. 5, 2024, pp. 168-172.
- IANCU, N., „Romania’s Defence Policy and National Security Interests in the European Defence Fund Amidst European Defence Integration”, *Land Forces Academy Review*, Vol. 30, Nr.

- 2, 2025, pp. 218-228, doi: 10.2478/raft-2025-0021.
- KOSTIUCHENKO, Y., „Strategic partnership with the EU in Ukraine’s reconstruction”, *Visegrad Journal on Human Rights*, Nr. 3, 2024, pp. 101-107, doi: 10.61345/1339-7915.2-024.3.14.
- KRAVCHENKO, O., SERGIHENKO, L., NIAMESHCHUK, H., MAMATOVA, T., CHYKARENKO, I., „Post-war recovery practices for Ukraine, based on the experience of other countries that have undergone similar processes”, *Economic Affairs*, Vol. 68, Nr. 4, 2023, pp. 2277-2288, doi: 10.46852/0424-2513.4.2023.35.
- KUCHERENKO, S., KOLOSOV, A., BARYLOV, A., „Methodology of scenario-based planning for Ukraine’s post-war recovery”, *European Journal of Management Issues*, Vol. 33, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 57-65, doi: 10.15421/192506.
- LESHCHENKO, K., LESHCHENKO, S., „Determining priorities for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction in the conditions of preparation for EU membership”, *Economics of Development*, Vol. 22, Nr. 3, 2023, pp. 42-51, doi: 10.57111/econ/3.2023.42.
- MARENICHENKO, V., BEREZYNSKYI, L., VASILENKO, J., HERASYMCHUK, D., KAZMIN, O., „Strategic challenges for the public administration system in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine”, *Dnipro Academy of Continuing Education Herald. Series: Public Management and Administration*, Vol. 10, Nr. 1, 2026, pp. 192-203, doi: 10.54891/2786-698X/2026-1-17.
- MARKOVSKA, A., SERDIUK, O., SOLDATENKO, I., „Trust as a weapon of war: Fighting corruption and corporate crime in Ukraine”, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Vol. 83, 2025, Article 12, doi: 10.1007/s10611-024-10191-5.
- NATE, S. (ed.), *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, Springer, Cham, 2025, doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-66434-2.
- NAZAROV, M., „National Resilience and Post-war Reconstruction of Ukraine”, in *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, S. Nate (ed.), Springer, Cham, 2025, pp. 63-73, doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-66434-2_5.
- PELCHAR, K., HERRON, E., FLIKKE, G., „Legislative–executive relations in Ukraine’s wartime conditions”, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 58, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 125-127, doi: 10.1-017/S1049096524000763.
- PROKHOROVA, V., KRAVCHENKO, O., SHKURENKO, O., BABICHEV, A., POLIVANTSEV, A., „Study of priority directions of economic recovery of Ukraine based on scenario modelling”, *Economics of Development*, Vol. 24, Nr. 1, 2025, pp. 26-34, doi: 10.63341/econ/1.2025.26.
- RABINOVYCH, M., „EU enlargement policy goes east: Historical and comparative takes on the EU’s rule of law conditionality vis-à-vis Ukraine”, *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, Vol. 16, 2024, pp. 715-737, doi: 10.1007/s40803-024-00223-6.
- RICHTER, M., „“Call the bluff” or ‘build back better’ – Anti-corruption reforms in post-war Ukraine”, *Global Policy*, Vol. 14, Nr. 4, 2023, pp. 611–622, doi: 10.1111/1758-5899.13251.
- RIZNYK, D., „Perspectives for post-war recovery in Ukraine in the sphere of

- attracting foreign direct investments”, *Economics of Systems Development*, Vol. 5, Nr. 1, 2023, pp. 31-34, doi: 10.32782/2707-8019/2023-1-5.
- ROMANOVA, V., „Does decentralization boost Ukrainian resilience? The role of local authorities in supporting internally displaced persons”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 41, Nr. 5, 2025, pp. 459-477, doi: 10.1080/1060586X.2025.2547336.
- SEMENENKO, O., HAVRYLIUK, I., SOLOMITSKYI, O., KLIAT, Y., DOBROVOLSKYI, Y., HETMAN, A., „Ukraine’s postwar recovery strategy: A systemic model for integrating economy, governance, and security”, *Social Development and Security*, Vol. 15, Nr. 2, 2025, pp. 12-19, doi: 10.33445/sds.2025.15.2.2.
- SHEVCHENKO, T., YANNOU, B., SAIDANI, M., „‘Build back better’ for war-torn Ukraine: Dual strategies for integrating circularity in post-disaster recovery”, *Proceedings of the Design Society*, Vol. 5, 2025, pp. 821-830, doi: 10.1017/pds.2025.10096.
- SINAJ, Z., VELA, F., SHAIPI, G., „National policy instruments for restoring the post-war economy and factors of sustainability of the Ukrainian economy”, *Development Management*, Vol. 23, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 49-55, doi: 10.57111/devt/2.2024.49.
- STAVYTSKYI, A., KHARLAMOVA, G., „SDGs Realization for the Renovation of Ukraine”, in S. Nate (ed.), *Ukraine’s Journey to Recovery, Reform and Post-War Reconstruction: A Blueprint for Security, Resilience and Development*, Springer, Cham, 2025, pp. 31-48, doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-66434-2_3.
- UNRUH, J., „Socio-legal instabilities in Ukraine’s wartime compensation law for damaged and destroyed residential property”, *International Journal of Law in Context*, Vol. 20, Nr. 4, 2024, pp. 581-597, doi: 10.1017/S174455-232400020X.
- ZAYATS, D., „Decentralisation reform in Ukraine: Achievements and implementation prospects amidst war conditions”, *Democratic Governance*, Vol. 17, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 5-17, doi: 10.56318/dg/2.2024.05.
- АВКСЕНТЬЄВ, А., „Електоральна система для повоєнної України: актуальні альтернативи для парламентських виборів”, *Вісник Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна. Серія «Питання політології»*, Nr. 48, 2025, pp. 51-59, doi: 10.26565/2220-8089-2025-48-05.
- ГРЕБЕНЮК, Д., „Трансформація концепції національної безпеки”, *Національні інтереси України*, Nr. 4(4), 2024, pp. 22-28, doi: 10.52058/3041-1793-2024-4(4)-22-28.
- ІЛЬЧЕНКО-СЮЙВА, Л., ТКАЧУК, Я., „Повоєнне відновлення в Україні: теоретичні засади розбудови держави суспільного добробуту”, *Аспекти публічного управління*, Vol. 13, Nr. 3, 2025, pp. 100-108, doi: 10.15421/152536.
- ОСАДЦА, І., „Мислити як стратег”, *Медіафорум: аналітика, прогнози, інформаційний менеджмент*, Vol. 9, 2021, pp. 292-299, doi: 10.31-861/mediaforum.2021.9.292-299.
- ОСАДЦА, І., КАРПО, В., „Прогностичні методики у дослідженні сучасних міжнародних відносин (на прикладі динамічної моделі Річардсона)”, *Медіафорум: аналітика, прогнози, інформаційний менеджмент*, Vol. 11, 2022, pp. 77-95, doi: 10.31861/mediaforum.202-2.11.77-95.

ОСАДЦА, І., ПОЛЩУК, І., „Трансформація системи публічної влади в умовах воєнного стану у контексті гібридизації політичного режиму в Україні”, *Історико-політичні проблеми сучасного світу*, Vol. 52, 2025, pp. 137-146, doi: 10.31861/mhpi2025.52.137-146.

ФІСАНОВ, В., ОСАДЦА, І., „Стратегічні комунікації як інструмент формування суспільної довіри в умовах довготривалої війни”, in *Стратегічні комунікації у сфері забезпечення національної безпеки та оборони: проблеми, досвід, перспективи: тези доповідей VI Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції, 29 жовтня 2025 р.*, НУОУ, Київ, 2025, pp. 22-26.

ЯНЧУК, А., „Економічна стратегія повоєнного відновлення як основа

забезпечення національних інтересів”, *Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Юридичні науки*, Vol. 35(74), Nr. 5, 2024, pp. 80-89, doi: 10.32782/TNU-2707-0581/2024.5/14.

Online resources

BUGAJSKI, J., „Janusz Bugajski's Washington View: Poland is Europe's Pivotal Power”, *Istraga*, 9 October 2024, <https://istraga.ba/janusz-bugajskis-washington-view-poland-is-europes-pivotal-power/>.

ВЕДЕРНІКОВА, І., „Виродження влади. Як Зеленський досяг своєї стелі, а система держуправління – дна”, *ZN.UA*, 17 серпня 2026, <https://zn.ua/ukr/politics/virodzhennja-vladi-jak-zelenskij-dosjah-svojeji-steli-a-sistema-derzhupravlinnja-dna.html>.