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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE REGULATION OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE 1932–1933 FAMINE

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In the context of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, widely characterised as a genocidal war, as well as ongoing globalisation processes and Ukraine's integration into European and global communities, renewed attention to historical memory has become particularly important. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 occupies a central place in this process and requires continuous scholarly re-examination. It is essential not only to preserve the memory of this tragedy but also to ensure its accurate interpretation, particularly in terms of its recognition as a systematic assault on Ukrainian identity. This necessitates further theoretical and methodological research across both academic and public discourse.

The historiography and archaeography of the Holodomor are extensive and have been addressed in numerous specialised studies. However, the subject remains far from exhausted. This is due to the ongoing discovery of new archival materials, the application of new methodological approaches, and the emergence of new research questions. In this context, historical-legal analysis is of particular relevance, especially given the growing importance of interdisciplinary approaches. At the same time, there remains a relative lack of research on civil society in Ukrainian history, particularly during the period of the New Economic Policy.

This study aims to provide an original interdisciplinary analysis of public administrative mechanisms regulating family relations during the Holodomor of 1932–1933. Particular attention is paid to the legal and institutional dimensions of these processes.

The increasing use of interdisciplinary methodologies in Holodomor studies can be explained by several factors. First, it reflects broader developments in social sciences, characterised by the integration and synthesis of knowledge across disciplines. Second, the Holodomor, recognised as genocide, was comprehensive and systematic in nature. The policies of the Bolshevik leadership aimed to fundamentally transform all key aspects of Ukrainian peasant life, incorporating them into the framework of a totalitarian socio-political system. The transformation of administrative and legal mechanisms governing family relations formed an integral part of this process.

This article presents an interdisciplinary analysis aimed at refining existing scholarly understandings of the preconditions, implementation, and consequences of the Holodomor. It also offers a multi-dimensional examination of the public administrative regulation of family relations during the famine of 1932–1933.

Key words: Holodomor, genocide, public administration, family relations, civil society, historical-legal research, legal regulation, peasants, Soviet policy, historiography.

Правоторова О. М. Публічно-управлінські аспекти регулювання сімейних відносин у період Голодомору 1932–1933

В умовах повномасштабного вторгнення російської федерації проти України та фактичної геноцидної війни, а також прискорення глобалізації, коли Україна активно зосереджується на інтеграції зі світовим та європейським співтовариством, виникає необхідність посилення уваги до переосмислення історичної пам'яті, але щодо Голодомору слід здійснити максимальні зусилля, щоб цю страшну подію не забули та вірно трактували та формулювали до неї вірне відношення, як до планомірного знищення української ідентичності в своїх дослідженнях, як наукова спільнота так і громадянськість, а отже, необхідність теоретичних та методологічних досліджень цих процесів. Саме тому дослідження публічно-управлінських аспектів регулювання сімейних відносин у період Голодомору 1932–1933 років, набуває зараз дуже великого значення і потребує більш глибоких досліджень.

Історіографія й археографія Голодомору значна за обсягом і неодноразово вже ставала предметом спеціальних досліджень. Проте ця проблема практично не вичерпана в силу

багатьох причин. Серед них варто згадати і нові пошуки документів, і нові методологічні підходи, і нову проблематику. В цьому сенсі вивчення саме історико-правових сюжетів не позбавлене сенсу з огляду на продуктивність міждисциплінарних, зокрема історико-правових, підходів та практичній відсутності досліджень громадянського суспільства в історії України, зокрема в період нової економічної політики.

Авторка прагнула розробити й використати оригінальне дослідження публічно-управлінських аспектів регулювання сімейних відносин у період Голодомору 1932–1933.

Наголосимо, що порівняно широке використання дослідниками міждисциплінарних методик у вивченні Голодомору об'єктивно зумовлене низкою факторів.

Мова йде в першу чергу про логіку та закономірність поступу соціального знання, якому притаманна тенденція до узагальнення, синтезу здобутків різних соціальних наук та окремих історичних і правових дисциплін.

По-друге, Голодомор-геноцид був комплексним і системним. За задумом більшовицької верхівки він мав докорінно змінити всі основні сфери життя українського селянства і в кінцевому підсумку перетворити його на гвинтик комуністичної утопії, і звісно, трансформація публічно-управлінських аспектів регулювання сімейних відносин у період Голодомору 1932–1933 років, не є виключенням у цьому плані.

Дана стаття є спробою проведення дослідження із дотриманням принципів науковості на засадах міждисциплінарності має удосконалити існуючі в науці уявлення про передумови, здійснення і наслідки Голодомору, а також здійснити різновекторний аналіз публічно-управлінських аспектів регулювання сімейних відносин у період Голодомору 1932–1933.

Ключові слова: Голодомор, Голодомор-геноцид, управління, публічно-управлінські відносини, сімейні відносини, громадянське суспільство, інституції громадянського суспільства, геноцид, селяни, продовольство, історико-правове дослідження, знищення, правові акти, історіографія.

Statement of the problem. The historiography and archaeography of the Holodomor are extensive and have repeatedly been the subject of specialised research. However, the issue remains far from exhausted for several reasons, including the ongoing discovery of new archival materials, the application of innovative methodological approaches, and the emergence of new research questions. In this context, the study of historical-legal aspects is of particular relevance, given the demonstrated productivity of interdisciplinary—especially historical-legal—approaches, as well as the relative lack of research on civil society in Ukrainian history, particularly during the period of the New Economic Policy.

In examining the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as a factor in the destruction of the socio-political foundations of civil society, there is a need to develop and apply an original methodological framework capable of analysing the processes through which civil society institutions were dismantled. This necessity arises from the unique nature of the Holodomor as a historical and legal phenomenon.

In contemporary political and legal scholarship, civil society is generally associated with developed societies—economically, politically, and institutionally—within which it can interact with the state on the basis of democracy and the rule of law. Civil society is understood as a self-organised system of social relations and institutions that mediates and reconciles the interests of its members. Its interaction with the state is oriented towards the realisation of fundamental human values.

Under such conditions, the state is expected not to interfere in the functioning of civil society institutions, provided they operate within the legal framework. The effective functioning of civil society is typically associated with key structural conditions, including the separation of powers, equality of different forms of property, freedom of enterprise, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the safeguarding of political, economic, social, and cultural interests. Its structural components include various forms of civic association, such as political parties, social movements, and other organisations across different spheres of social life.

At the same time, understanding the actual impact of Soviet policies requires careful contextualisation within the specific realities of the Soviet system. A number of historical examples illustrate the frequent misinterpretation of these realities in Western discourse. For instance, perceptions of Joseph Stalin as constrained by collective decision-making bodies such as the Politburo during the Second World War overlook the highly centralised nature of political power in the Soviet system, where such institutions often performed largely formal or symbolic functions. Similarly, references to the constitutional rights of Soviet citizens, particularly those enshrined in the 1936 Constitution, frequently failed to reflect the absence of their effective implementation in practice.

Within this broader context, the provision of food and seed “assistance” during the Holodomor may be interpreted not merely as a humanitarian or administrative measure, but as part of a wider system of control that contributed to the destruction of social autonomy and the functioning of civil society institutions.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The historical and legal dimensions of the Holodomor of 1932–1933, including the public-administrative regulation of family relations during this period, have been addressed by numerous Ukrainian and international scholars. These studies demonstrate the continued relevance of the topic and its importance for both historical and legal research. Among the most significant contributions are the works of Andrea Graziosi, Serhii Vodotyka, Vasyl Marochko, Volodymyr Danilenko, Janusz Bruski, Liudmyla Vovchuk, Serhii Kornovenko, and James Mace, among others. Their research has significantly contributed to the understanding of the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of the Holodomor, although a number of aspects—particularly those related to legal regulation and civil society—remain insufficiently explored.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of this article is to analyse the public administration aspects of the regulation of family relations during the Holodomor of 1932–1933 and to examine how these mechanisms reflected the ideological foundations of the totalitarian regime. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of traditional family and marital relations in Ukraine as part of broader efforts to construct a Soviet social order.

Presentation of the main material. In the context of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, widely characterised as a genocidal war, as well as the acceleration of globalisation and Ukraine’s active integration into the European and global communities, the need to re-examine historical memory has become particularly urgent. In relation to the Holodomor, this requires sustained and deliberate efforts to ensure that this tragedy is neither forgotten nor misinterpreted. It must be consistently understood and presented in scholarly and public discourse as a deliberate and systematic destruction of Ukrainian identity.

Accordingly, there is a clear need for further theoretical and methodological research into these processes. This is why the study of public-administrative aspects of the regulation of family relations during the Holodomor of 1932–1933 is of particular contemporary relevance and requires deeper scholarly investigation.

Ukrainian history contains no crime committed by a state against its own people on a scale as vast or as devastating as the Holodomor of 1932–1933. It was the most tragic period in the history of Ukraine. The brutal policies of the authorities resulted in the deaths of millions of peasants who were deliberately subjected to starvation. This crime is widely recognised as genocide, as it was caused by a deliberate, man-made famine orchestrated by Soviet authorities with the aim of establishing total state control over all segments of the population [1].

In analysing the public-administrative aspects of the regulation of family relations during the Holodomor of 1932–1933, it is essential to consider the impact of the revolutionary events of 1917. Following a prolonged period of restrictions on women's rights, new principles emerged aimed at liberating women from social, economic, and cultural dependence, thereby granting them formal equality with men in political and civil rights. After the Bolsheviks came to power, these changes were reflected in radical reforms of marriage and family legislation. New legal frameworks were introduced in the RSFSR and later in the Ukrainian SSR, most notably through the adoption of the first Family Code, which significantly transformed traditional family relations and established new social norms [2].

With the consolidation of totalitarian rule under Joseph Stalin, private life, morality, and everyday existence became subject to increasing state control. The principles of party governance were extended to family and marital relations, turning them into instruments of ideological regulation. During this period, the foundations of the Soviet family model were formed within a system that subordinated individual and family life to state interests.

The key legal source regulating family relations during the Holodomor remained the revised Family Code of 30 May 1926, which was in force until 1936. This Code formally strengthened the personal and property rights of family members, particularly women and children. It established legal equality between children born within and outside marriage, defined procedures for establishing paternity, and introduced detailed regulation of guardianship and custody. It also proclaimed the principle of equality between spouses and recognised their legal independence in matters such as property, contractual relations, and mutual support obligations [3].

At the same time, these legal provisions functioned within a broader system of strict state control. Particular emphasis was placed on motherhood, which was assigned a specific social role and supported through state-controlled maternity benefits. These measures illustrate how family policy became integrated into the administrative and ideological framework of the Soviet state.

Statistical evidence demonstrates the profound impact of the Holodomor on family life. During 1932–1933, the number of registered marriages in Ukraine declined by approximately 40%, and in rural areas by up to 50%. Marriage rates decreased sharply, reflecting not only demographic losses but also the collapse of normal social and reproductive processes. Although a partial recovery occurred in subsequent years, the long-term consequences for the rural population were irreversible [4].

The policies implemented during this period were characterised by economic deprivation, administrative isolation, and sustained psychological pressure. These factors contributed to the destruction of traditional social structures, including the institution of the family, and to the transformation of social values. Millions of children perished, and those who survived were often deprived of parental care, security, and basic conditions for normal development. Many victims remain unnamed, which underscores the scale of the tragedy and the enduring gaps in historical memory [5].

According to Stanislav Kulchytsky, the deprivation of food constituted a form of deliberate killing. In the practice of grain requisitioning, it was used selectively as a tool of coercion and intimidation. The fate of its victims served to instil fear across the peasantry, facilitating the extraction of excessive grain quotas. In this context, the concept of “terror by starvation,” introduced by Robert Conquest, provides an essential framework for understanding these policies [6].

At the same time, when starvation is applied not to individuals or specific groups but to entire populations as a means of enforcing compliance, it represents a phenomenon that extends beyond conventional definitions of terror. It reflects a systematic strategy of coercion aimed at reshaping society as a whole.

The exact number of victims of the Holodomor remains unknown and is unlikely ever to be determined with precision. In an effort to conceal the the scale of the crime, Soviet authorities prohibited the recording of the true causes of death, and at the peak of the famine in 1933, victims were buried in mass graves without registration. As noted by Stanislav Kulchytsky, state administrative structures in rural areas were severely disrupted or paralysed. In 1934, population statistics and archival systems were placed under the control of Soviet security organs, and access to demographic data was restricted. Despite official denial, the scale of the catastrophe attracted the attention of foreign observers [7].

Conclusions. The public-administrative regulation of family relations during the Holodomor of 1932–1933 reflected the ideological foundations of the Soviet totalitarian regime and contributed to the transformation of traditional family structures in Ukraine in line with the objectives of constructing a new Soviet society.

Although the 1926 Family Code formally established principles of equality and legal protection, in practice these norms operated under conditions of pervasive state interference, which significantly limited private autonomy.

Overall, the Holodomor had devastating and long-lasting consequences for Ukrainian society. It led to demographic decline, changes in family structures, a decrease in birth rates, and the erosion of the institution of the family as a fundamental social unit.

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