THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ENSURING STATE SECURITY: STRATEGIES AND MECHANISMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this research is to examine the role of public administration in ensuring national security within the context of strategy formation and implementation. It seeks to substantiate the theoretical foundation and offer practical recommendations for addressing the challenges posed by increasing risks, threats, and dangers to state security in the face of instability and external influences, especially in the aftermath of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Methods: The study utilizes a range of research methods, including general scientific and specialized approaches such as economic analysis, system analysis, scientific abstraction, comparison, synthesis, analogies, statistical analysis, grouping, multivariate cluster analysis, the k-means method, correlation and regression analysis, as well as tabular, graphical, systematization, and generalization techniques.

Results: The findings reveal that the security situation in European and transitional countries has deteriorated due to Russia's actions, affecting the effectiveness of public administration in ensuring state security. Ukraine's Fragile State Index reached a critical level in 2023, highlighting the need for immediate measures to counter threats.

Conclusions: The evolving landscape of state security, marked by increased instability and external pressures, necessitates a reevaluation of public administration's role in ensuring national security. The empirical findings underscore the urgency of addressing these challenges through strategic planning and effective mechanisms. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation and coordinated efforts among countries facing similar threats to safeguard state sovereignty and territorial integrity in a changing geopolitical landscape.

Keywords: state, public administration, mechanisms, strategies, state security, threats, dangers.

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O PAPEL DA ADMINISTRAÇÃO PÚBLICA NA GARANTIA DA SEGURANÇA DO ESTADO: ESTRATÉGIAS E MECANISMOS DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objectivo desta investigação é examinar o papel da administração pública na garantia da segurança nacional no contexto da formação e implementação de estratégias. Procura fundamentar a base teórica e oferecer recomendações práticas para enfrentar os desafios colocados pelo aumento dos riscos, ameaças e perigos para a segurança do Estado face à instabilidade e às influências externas, especialmente no rescaldo da guerra da Rússia contra a Ucrânia.

Método: O estudo utiliza uma variedade de métodos de pesquisa, incluindo abordagens científicas gerais e especializadas, como análise econômica, análise de sistema, abstração científica, comparação, síntese, analogias, análise estatística, agrupamento, análise de cluster multivariada, método k-means, correlação e análise de regressão, bem como técnicas tabulares, gráficas, de sistematização e generalização.

Resultados: As conclusões revelam que a situação de segurança nos países europeus e em transição se deteriorou devido às ações da Rússia, afetando a eficácia da administração pública na garantia da segurança do Estado. O Índice de Estado Frágil da Ucrânia atingiu um nível critico em 2023, destacando a necessidade de medidas imediatas para combater as ameaças.

Conclusões: O cenário em evolução da segurança do Estado, marcado por uma maior instabilidade e pressões externas, exige uma reavaliação do papel da administração pública na garantia da segurança nacional. As conclusões empíricas sublinham a urgência de enfrentar estes desafios através de planeamento estratégico e mecanismos eficazes. Enfatiza a importância da cooperação e dos esforços coordenados entre os países que enfrentam ameaças semelhantes para salvaguardar a soberania do Estado e a integridade territorial num cenário geopolítico em mudança.

Palavras-chave: estado, administração pública, mecanismos, estratégias, segurança do estado, ameaças, perigos.

1 INTRODUCTION

The challenges and dangers of our time significantly impact the state’s functioning and cause many destabilizing factors for state security. They are constantly growing under the influence of global instability and uncertainty. As a result, public administration mechanisms in the country demonstrate a low level of efficiency, and the level of state security is constantly decreasing. Obviously, this situation requires an immediate solution to the problem of ensuring state security. It necessitates the identification of strategic directions for institutional changes in the public administration system, considering the challenges and dangers of Russia’s war against Ukraine, the intensification of its armed aggression, and the occupation of large Ukrainian territories. The change in the geopolitical order on the European continent has caused significant destructive changes
in the international legal order. As a result, Ukraine’s existing public administration model cannot ensure high levels of state security. In such circumstances, the protection of the state's national interests is complicated by dangerous challenges and threats.

Therefore, under certain circumstances, the need to develop an efficient and effective public administration system based on the establishment of its new model is becoming more urgent. This includes the principles, tools, methods, and forms of management, as well as strengthening the system of national interests protection from risks and threats of loss of sovereignty, violation of territorial integrity, and reduction of the state security level both now and in the strategic perspective.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The challenging aspects of determining the role of public administration in ensuring state security have been reflected in the scientific research of both national and foreign scholars over a long time. They have been actively discussed at scientific and practical conferences. However, it has not yet been possible to solve the problem of ensuring optimal indicators of state security. There is a constant negative impact of destabilizing factors of the external and internal environment on state security, as well as the lack of a clear definition of the conceptual and methodological bases of the administrative nature of state security in the public administration system.

In this context, the comment of Gavrilenko (2022) is appropriate. He argues that at the present stage, the mechanisms of ensuring state security are focused on a systematic approach to the use of various methods of studying political and legal phenomena as well as state institutions. In particular, they highlight their interconnection and mutual influence by considering state security as an open public administration system. The functioning of this system is based on specific criteria, a clear autonomous mechanism of regulation, and a precise means of control. In fact, the scholar concludes that state security is a special object of public administration science, which has specific features of both the management system in general and a tool for stabilizing the system of identifying issues of the current legislation of the country.

In the main strategic document of the Strategy for Ensuring State Security (On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine dated December 30, 2021, "On the Strategy for Ensuring State Security, 2022"), this scientific and practical category is interpreted as the creation of appropriate conditions to ensure the protection
of state sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country, democratic constitutional order and other vital national interests from present and potential threats to Ukraine.

The particular relevance of public administration in the national security system is emphasized by Dobra (2021). The scholar argues that a successful state-building process in any country is only possible with a robust public administration system, especially in circumstances where the country is experiencing armed conflict or post-war recovery. The scholar places particular importance on democracy, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law in implementing public administration functions, as these principles are considered fundamental aspects of ensuring national security in a country.

On the other hand, Kivalov (2023) views national security within the context of a country's overall security and asserts that ensuring national security requires the creation of a qualitatively new model of public administration in the realm of security, considering the main directions of reforming management influence on societal relations that emerge within the sphere of national security. At the same time, the scholar emphasizes the necessity of a clear distinction between the security sphere and the defense sphere.

Expanding on Kivalov's (2023) research, Zagurska-Antoniuk (2020) suggests that national security should be considered an integral part of the state's national security within the framework of public administration. She argues that at the present stage, it's essential to develop an effective public administration system for national security based on clearly defined legal regulations, which should become a priority for the country's development from a strategic perspective. Furthermore, she concludes that mechanisms of public administration for national security should adhere to global standards and be capable of implementing the state's internal and external policies based on safety and democratic development.

Moreover, Safi (2020) regards public administration as a tool for successfully implementing state policy and ensuring national security. The scholar proposes examining public administration at the national, regional, and local levels in the context of providing national, regional, and territorial security. This approach allows for the consideration of regional development specifics, the establishment of relationships between different levels of government, and achieving desired outcomes in the shortest timeframe. Gavkalova et al. (2023) agree with the opinion of the scientists. They argue that, in addition to these, the provision of state security by public administration bodies
should be carried out using modern innovative tools and mechanisms that consider creative digitalization modes.

However, Holzer (2022) holds a different view, emphasizing that the public administration system in the state is highly vulnerable to internal political and societal changes. This resulted in decreased public trust in the authorities leading to reduced efficiency in their functioning and weakening national security. A similar stance is taken by Inakefe & Godwin (2022), who draw parallels and establish a directly proportional relationship between the effectiveness of the country's public administration system and the level of national security. The author asserts that the mechanisms and tools of public administration correspond to those of ensuring national security at the local, regional, and national levels.

Page et al. (2023) consider that many scholars view the essence of public administration as the process of implementing government policies involving responsibilities for planning, organizing, executing, and controlling governmental actions. Therefore, the mechanisms of its implementation and realization strategies must be well thought out, balanced, and considerate of the country's external and internal environment. It becomes evident that ensuring national security is only possible with effective public administration and its strategic implementation. However, Liu et al. (2022) argue that the parameters of ensuring national security in world countries significantly depend not only on the efficiency of their public administration but also on the dangerous challenges of the contemporary world that exert considerable pressure on national public administration systems. Thereby, they intensify the influence of destabilizing factors and diminish the level of national security.

According to Borshchevskyi et al. (2022), this impact is especially noticeable under martial law, as it leads to significant institutional changes and the transformation of many informal institutions. At the same time, scholars insist that the growing instability in the country leads to the destruction of established mechanisms of state governance and the aggravation of security problems at all levels of public administration. Therefore, they propose to focus on the formation of new approaches to strategizing the development of the state and regions. In this context, they see the unification of efforts of various parts of the public administration system, in particular, public authorities, local governments, and civil society institutions. It becomes evident that under these circumstances, the necessity
of forming and implementing financial, social, and market mechanisms of institutional change gains particular significance.

Akimova (2018) argues that public administration in the system of ensuring state security occupies one of the key places since its mechanisms implement the functions of regulatory and information support of state security, and its methods, tools, and levers ensure the regulation of the main processes. At the same time, the scholar defines the mechanism of public administration as a set of public authorities organized into a system and directing their activities to fulfill the goals and objectives of a managerial nature per their legal status and functional purpose.

Apparently, the role of public administration in ensuring state security is crucial. However, it is impossible to implement all aspects of its strengthening without consolidating the state's and society's efforts. In this context, Bahmani (2016) argues that the coordinated interaction of public administration bodies allows for rapid adaptation to changing conditions of the external and internal environment and effective counteraction to the challenges, threats, and dangers of the present. A similar opinion is shared by Blahuta et al. (2022). Based on empirical research, they prove the main challenging aspects of ensuring the effectiveness of public administration in the country, which, accordingly, affects the reduction of the state security level. For instance, scientists have found that in Ukraine, there is a low level of activity in the interaction of public administration bodies with the population. As a result, the opinion of the latter is not taken into account, as well as a low level of transparency and democratic culture of their activities. At the same time, the significant attention of researchers is focused on the existence of such a rather dangerous threat to state security as corruption. Its indicators are extremely dangerous and require the use of effective mechanisms to counter them at different administrative levels. The danger of corruption to both the public administration system and state security is emphasized by David-Barrett (2023). He argues that corruption threatens to reduce not only the level of state security as well as the national statehood of the country. It also causes significant deformations in the public administration apparatus while reducing the level of public trust in public administration.

Along with these challenges and threats faced by public administration bodies in ensuring state security, Yusufzada et al. (2019) and (Reznikova, 2022) identify other issues. For example, in the current situation, there is a particular problem of the lack of any rule of law, imperfect institutional strategic planning, and the unprofessionalism of
specialists in public administration bodies. This thesis is confirmed by Moseyko & Negodchenko (2021), who, using the example of Ukraine, prove the ineffectiveness of the public administration system in the field of state security. They argue that it is caused by the system's imperfection and the excessive impact of the financial, economic, social, and political crisis due to the depletion of the state's financial resources, total corruption, distortion of democracy, and a decline in the population's living standards.

The research on the main scientific approaches to determine the role of public administration in ensuring state security in the context of formulation and implementation of strategies and mechanisms indicates the diversity and multifacetedness of scientific developments in this area. It also shows the need for a more advanced study on this issue.

The study aims to ground the theoretical background and provide practical recommendations for determining the role of public administration in ensuring state security in the context of the formation and implementation of strategies and mechanisms for its application.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article employs general scientific and specialized methods of economic analysis, fundamental research, and scientific cognition, including:

- definition of the essence of public administration and elucidating its role in ensuring national security based on the method of systemic analysis, scientific abstraction, and synthesis;
- applied research built on the use of comparative methods, analogy, and statistical analysis;
- classification of the world countries by indicators characterizing their public administration parameters using a technology of multifactorial cluster analysis based on the k-means method;
- visual representation of research results by using tabular and graphical methods;
- the use of systematization and generalization methods for forming conclusions based on research results.

The following countries were selected for the research: Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia.
The informational background of the study is based on the scientific works of national and foreign scholars, as well as on the reporting data of international organizations for the period from 2019 to 2023:

- Fragile State Index Annual Report by the Fragile State Index;
- Democracy Index, 2019-2021 and Democracy Countries, 2022 by the Democracy Index;
- Corruption Perceptions Index, 2019-2022 by the Corruption Perceptions Index.

4 RESULTS

The research on public administration issues in ensuring state security has been carried out for a long time, both at the scientific level and is reflected in the practical activities of state and public structures. Obviously, this issue is both theoretical and practical since it is impossible to achieve the desired results without the following actions:

- revising and improving the current legislation of the country;
- formulating strategic documents;
- defining the principles and directions of public administration bodies to identify, prevent and neutralize threats to state security timely.

The list of such threats is systematized in the Strategy for Ensuring State Security (On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine dated December 30, 2021, "On the Strategy for Ensuring State Security, 2022) and is shown in Figure 1.

The current security environment is characterized by significant volatility both globally and at the national level. The phenomena of unpredictability and instability have been further exacerbated by the war waged by Russia against Ukraine, resulting in escalated threats to national security not only for the country where active combat operations are taking place but also for neighboring countries. In this regard, the list of threats to national security, as depicted in Figure 1, includes:

1. insufficient effectiveness of government agencies, inconsistency and incompleteness of security component reform efforts;
2. inadequacy of mechanisms for organizational, legal, personnel, financial, and material-technical support for the process of development and strengthening of national security;
3. some limitations of the state's financial resources;
(4) the control exerted by oligarchic clans over strategic sectors of the economy and enterprises.

Figure 1. The list of the main threats to state security.


This includes the control through an influence on political processes and institutions, which has been complemented by threats of a military nature and an increase in the risks of terrorism and separatism, namely:

(1) active combat actions conducted by the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine and its systematic use of economic, political, informational, psychological, and other means, as well as cyber-attacks;

(2) the creation by the Russian Federation of its own state bodies and structures in the territories not controlled by Ukraine, which have usurped power in the
temporarily occupied territories and violate the norms and principles of international law;

(3) conducting intelligence and subversive activities by special services of certain foreign states aimed at fostering separatist sentiments and gaining influence;

(4) increasing threats to critical infrastructure and deterioration of its technical condition.

Clearly, under such circumstances, the preservation of the territorial integrity of the warring country has become threatened, and the assurance of state sovereignty has been significantly weakened. As a result, instability in Ukraine and its neighboring countries is intensifying, with empirical assessments on an international level being proposed to be conducted by calculating the Index of State Instability in a specific country. This index allows for determining the state and trends of functioning of public authorities and their performance of duties.

The methodological aspects of the Fragile State Index involve the study of the effectiveness of public administration bodies, the degree of their vulnerability to modern threats and challenges, to existing conflicts, as well as their ability to assess the risks and possibilities of state collapse. Indeed, the current trends in the functioning of world countries cannot be called favorable and characterized by a high level of stability. Moreover, the issues are constantly aggravated under the influence of war. Therefore, the calculation of the Fragile State Index is critical, as it can be used to calculate the following possibilities:

• the loss of state sovereignty;
• parameters of state security and security environment;
• the role of public authorities in its preservation;
• the legitimacy of public authorities and their ability to provide quality services;
• the level of protection of human and civil rights and the implementation of the rule of law in the state.

An increase in the Fragile State Index indicates a decrease in the level of state security and an increase in crises in the state and society. As a result, the vulnerability of countries to various kinds of conflicts, threats, and dangers is getting worse.

The Fragile State Index studies conducted in European countries such as Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia in 2019-2023 (Figure 2) make it possible to state that in countries belonging to the European Union, the
values of the Fragile State Index are significantly lower than in countries that are in a state of armed conflict - in Ukraine (FSI: 68.6–95.9) and Russia (FSI: 72.5–80.7). In Belarus, Fragile State Index is 67.8–69.9 because the country is an implicit ally of Russia in the war against Ukraine. In Moldova, which has a border with Ukraine, the Fragile State Index is 64.5–67.4.

Figure 2. The state and dynamics of the Fragile State Index in selected European countries in 2019-2023.

The indicated trends regarding the state and dynamics of change in the Fragile State Index in the countries chosen for analysis testify to significant differences in the ability of public administration bodies to ensure optimal parameters of state security. It is evident that in the European Union countries, there is a higher level of efficiency in the activities of public administration bodies, and state sovereignty is better protected than in countries of a transitional type, especially those in a state of war.

In-depth research into the dynamics of the Fragile State Index change in European countries chosen for analysis provides grounds to assert that the difference in the value of the analyzed indicator occurs during crisis periods for the country. Particularly noticeable negative trends were observed in 2022 when due to the disruption of global stability resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine, the Fragile State Index tended to increase in all countries except Hungary and Slovakia. It is noted that the critical value of the Fragile State Index was reached in Ukraine in 2023, reaching a mark of 95.9.
An undeniable fact is that in 2023, the geopolitical order on the European continent has significantly weakened, and the challenges provoked by the war aggression and unprovoked war by Russia against Ukraine have led to increased political instability in each of the countries, significantly unbalanced the public administration system, especially in the territories of Ukraine where active combat actions are taking place and which are under the occupation of the aggressor country.

At the same time, in 2022, the Fragile State Index showed a downward trend in terms of its value. Crisis events in the short term can consolidate the efforts of public administration bodies and society to achieve several common goals, namely:

- protecting democratic values, state sovereignty, and territorial integrity;
- strengthening the parameters of state security.

However, in the mid- and long-term, such imbalances lead to significant negative changes.

For a more comprehensive analysis of the studied issues, the authors propose identifying common and distinctive public administration aspects in the selected countries. For this purpose, it is suggested to classify the countries by the Fragile State Index from 2019 to 2023. The classifications should be made using the multivariate cluster analysis technology based on the k-means method and Statistica 8.0 software. The results are systematized in Table 1.

The research results indicate that among the selected European countries for analysis, two distinct groups of countries with typical characteristics of public administration functioning and peculiarities of ensuring state security are clearly distinguished. During the analyzed period, the first group consisted of European Union countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia), while the second group consisted of transitional-type countries with an unstable system of ensuring the efficiency of public administration (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Moldova). These countries' state security levels were assessed with significantly lower parameters than those in the first group.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to highlight a significant dependency on a country's Fragile State Index value on the level of democracy. If we analyze each country based on its Democracy Index, we can observe an inversely proportional relationship between these indicators. In particular, in countries with a high level of state instability (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Moldova), a lower level of democratic development is observed.
Also, in these countries, the fundamental principles of democracy adherence by public administration bodies have low-efficiency indicators.

Table 1. Classification of the selected European countries by the Fragile State Index in 2019-2023.

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Source: Calculated according to: *Fragile State Index Annual Report, 2019-2023.*
The obtained results of empirical research on the impact of the level of democracy and corruption in the countries selected for the study during the period from 2019 to 2022 on the parameters of their state instability allowed authors to establish a strong correlation between the chosen indicators. This is evidenced by the approximation coefficient and the statistical significance of the model, with the Fisher's F-test values ranging from $R^2 = 0.958$ to $0.967$ during the analyzed period.

Moreover, the decrease in the Democracy Index and the Corruption Perceptions Index leads to an increase in the Fragile State Index value (corresponding regression coefficients: $r = -0.49$ and $r = -0.65$ in 2019; $r = -0.56$ and $r = -0.59$ in 2020; $r = -0.31$ and $r = -0.75$ in 2021; $r = -0.32$ and $r = -0.72$ in 2022).
Thus, the conducted studies of applied aspects of ensuring state security by public administration authorities indicate that countries engaged in the war have a lower level of state security. In addition, the activities of public administration authorities are assessed by lower performance indicators than in countries of the European Union.

5 DISCUSSION

The results of conducted research on determining the role of public administration in ensuring state security in the context of the formation and implementation of strategies and mechanisms of its performance provide grounds to assert that the security environment of world countries is too vulnerable to challenges, dangers, and threats from both external and internal environments. In particular, during the analysis conducted, it was possible to identify that factors of a military nature have the most destructive impact on ensuring state security, significantly influencing the activities of public administration bodies within the system of ensuring state security in Ukraine and extending greatly to neighboring countries.

A significant deepening of state instability in 2023 has been established in most European countries selected for research, with a critically high Fragile State Index value in Ukraine – 95.9. It indicates increased risks of loss of state sovereignty and territorial integrity and a heightened threat of state dissolution.

Empirical calculations show that countries with higher levels of socio-political development belonging to the European Union (Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) have better opportunities to ensure optimal parameters of state security. On the other hand, countries of a transitional nature (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Moldova) are more prone to conflicts and crises, requiring substantial resources and efforts to overcome.

The outlined issues in ensuring state security by public administration bodies necessitate the formulation of a complex of measures to counter risks and threats and strengthen state security. Among the most significant measures are:

1) Cessation of military actions on the territory of Ukraine and resolution of the military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.
2) The need to reduce the level of conflict within the activities of public administration bodies and enhance the quality of their performance of core tasks and functions.
3) Strengthening the interaction between public administration bodies and the public, as well as enhancing the transparency of such interaction.

The proposed measures should be reflected in sectoral and regional strategies for ensuring state security and implemented within the framework of the State Security Strategy. This approach will enable achieving desired outcomes and protecting the country's national interests from destabilizing external and internal risks, threats, and dangers.

6 CONCLUSION

The following results can be stated by summarizing the conducted research regarding the role of public administration in ensuring state security within the context of forming and implementing strategies and mechanisms for its implementation. They involve identifying significant destabilizing factors in the activities of public administration bodies in the sphere of state security provision. Among the most notable are:

1) A full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine and its engagement in intense combat actions.
2) A substantial deformation of the public administration system through Russia's annexation of significant Ukrainian territories and loss of control over them.
3) The spread of war-related threats to countries neighboring Ukraine and destabilizing their security situation.

The research findings demonstrate that during the time of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, there has been a notable increase in state instability both in European Union countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) and in countries of a transitional type (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Moldova). This has led to a decrease in their levels of state security. In 2023, Ukraine's Fragile State Index reached a critical value of 95.9, indicating an intensification of risks related to losing its state sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the threat of its disintegration.

The necessity of formulating a comprehensive set of measures to counter risks and threats and strengthen state security has been established, both in Ukraine and in the countries bordering it.
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ANNEX

The initial data for the calculations.

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