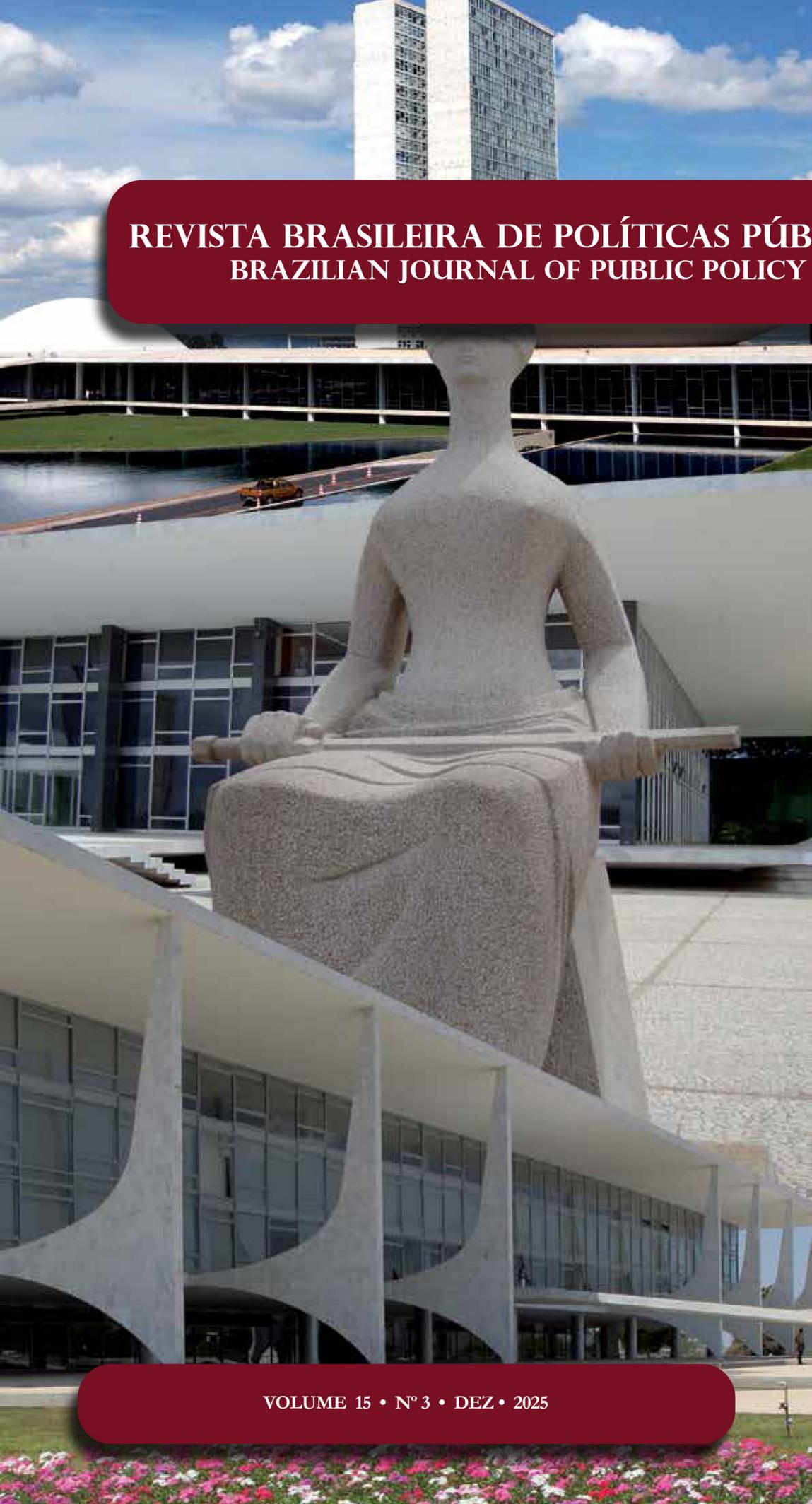


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Resilient governance and quality of life amid war: public administration challenges in Ukraine

Governança resiliente e qualidade de vida em meio à guerra: desafios da administração pública na Ucrânia

Olena Korolchuk

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Resilient governance and quality of life amid war: public administration challenges in Ukraine*

Governança resiliente e qualidade de vida em meio à guerra: desafios da administração pública na Ucrânia

Olena Korolchuk**

Abstract

The ongoing war in Ukraine has placed extraordinary strain on the country's public administration (PA) systems and their ability to safeguard quality of life (QoL). This study explores how Ukrainian PA has adapted to crisis conditions, drawing on a mixed-methods approach including documentary analysis, comparative review, and empirical data from interviews and surveys. Findings reveal significant disruptions to public services, rising socioeconomic disparities, and severe demographic shifts, particularly among displaced populations. Despite these challenges, localized successes in adaptive governance - driven by digital integration and decentralized decision-making - offer valuable insights. The research underscores the urgent need for systemic PA reforms that prioritize resilience, enhance service delivery, and incorporate QoL metrics in policy planning. Recommendations include expanding digital governance, stabilizing labor markets, and aligning public policy with both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reconstruction goals. The study contributes to global discussions on effective governance in conflict settings and the essential role of PA in sustaining societal well-being during times of war.

Keywords: resilience, institutional reform, digital transformation, internally displaced persons, human security

Resumo

The ongoing war in Ukraine has placed extraordinary strain on the country's public administration (PA) systems and their ability to safeguard quality of life (QoL). This study explores how Ukrainian PA has adapted to crisis conditions, drawing on a mixed-methods approach including documentary analysis, comparative review, and empirical data from interviews and surveys. Findings reveal significant disruptions to public services, rising socioeconomic disparities, and severe demographic shifts, particularly among displaced populations. Despite these challenges, localized successes in adaptive governance - driven by digital integration and decentralized decision-making - offer valuable insights. The research underscores the urgent need for sys-

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temic PA reforms that prioritize resilience, enhance service delivery, and incorporate QoL metrics in policy planning. Recommendations include expanding digital governance, stabilizing labor markets, and aligning public policy with both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reconstruction goals. The study contributes to global discussions on effective governance in conflict settings and the essential role of PA in sustaining societal well-being during times of war.”

A guerra em curso na Ucrânia tem imposto uma pressão extraordinária sobre os sistemas de administração pública (AP) do país e sobre sua capacidade de salvaguardar a qualidade de vida (QV). Este estudo explora como a administração pública ucraniana tem se adaptado às condições de crise, com base em uma abordagem de métodos mistos, incluindo análise documental, revisão comparativa e dados empíricos provenientes de entrevistas e questionários.

Os resultados revelam interrupções significativas nos serviços públicos, aumento das disparidades socioeconômicas e intensas mudanças demográficas, especialmente entre as populações deslocadas. Apesar desses desafios, sucessos localizados na governança adaptativa — impulsionados pela integração digital e pela tomada de decisões descentralizada — oferecem insights valiosos.

A pesquisa destaca a necessidade urgente de reformas sistêmicas na administração pública que priorizem a resiliência, aprimorem a prestação de serviços e incorporem métricas de qualidade de vida no planejamento de políticas públicas. As recomendações incluem a expansão da governança digital, a estabilização dos mercados de trabalho e o alinhamento das políticas públicas tanto às necessidades humanitárias imediatas quanto aos objetivos de reconstrução de longo prazo.

O estudo contribui para os debates globais sobre governança eficaz em contextos de conflito e sobre o papel essencial da administração pública na sustentação do bem-estar social em tempos de guerra.

Palavras chave: Resiliência, Reforma institucional, Transformação digital, Pessoas deslocadas internamente, Segurança humana resilience, institutional reform, digital transformation, internally displaced persons, human security

1 Introduction

The quality of life (hereinafter - QoL) in Ukraine during wartime is influenced by a combination of significant challenges and impressive resilience. Public administration (hereinafter - PA) has made strides in adjusting to wartime realities. However, gaps remain, especially in resource management and service delivery. While Ukrainians hold strong to their social values and continue to adapt, issues such as income insufficiency, mental health deterioration, and displacement still impact overall well-being, requiring further efforts to improve PA and enhance the population's QoL. Such circumstances require even greater stability and efficiency from PA as a foundation and mechanism for ensuring public policy and implementing the state strategy at all levels, throughout its territory, which tirelessly maintains the balance of living conditions of people in the country. PA in Ukraine must rapidly shift its governance responses to preserve QoL despite wartime conditions. The war has shifted the priorities for governance, and fresh approaches must be formulated to offer social stability, economic resilience, and continuity in services. This involves aligning these approaches with the specific needs and challenges of Ukrainian circumstances, placing particular emphasis on modernizing the assessment tools for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the PA. Consequently, the imperative of safeguarding the QoL for the populace stands as a paramount concern for every modern country across the globe. The results presented highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of QoL and PA effectiveness in Ukraine amidst the ongoing war. While Ukraine has shown significant resilience in adapting to wartime conditions, the challenges faced by its population are profound and deeply affect both the well-being of citizens and the functioning of PA systems.

The theoretical framework of resilience and adaptive governance, which highlights PA systems' capacity to react to and recover from crises, serves as the foundation for this article. This approach offers a useful prism through which to view how PA changes might support the maintenance and enhancement of QoL in the context of the continuing war in Ukraine. This research offers a theoretical framework for comprehending the difficulties and possibilities of PA reform in wartime Ukraine by looking at the relationship between resilience, adaptive governance, and QoL.

Nykyforenko (2012) and Mulka et al. (2022) emphasize that improving the population's QoL is a top priority for PA in every country. Given the continuing war in Ukraine, this duty has a new urgency. In addition to upsetting socioeconomic stability, the war has radically changed PA's goals and workings. With an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the standard of living for Ukrainian residents, this paper aims to investigate how PA changes might adjust to the difficulties of wartime government. This study offers a paradigm for comprehending how PA might support resilience and sustainable development in the face of unparalleled obstacles by investigating the interactions among PA reform, QoL, and the socioeconomic effects of the war. The main issue this paper aims to answer is: How can Ukraine's PA reforms adjust to the difficulties of wartime governance in order to protect and enhance the standard of living for its people?

2 Materials and methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the effectiveness of PA in Ukraine during wartime and its impact on the quality of life. The research methodology integrates theoretical analysis, document review, and comparative evaluation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

The study relies on theoretical analysis, using the framework of resilience and adaptive governance to assess how PA systems respond to crises. This involves examining scholarly works from domestic and international researchers on PA, governance adaptation, and QoL indicators in conflict settings. A documentary analysis method is applied to review regulatory and policy documents issued by the Ukrainian government and international organizations, including OECD, UNDP, and national strategic reports. These documents provide insight into legislative measures, policy adjustments, and reforms introduced to sustain PA and improve QoL during wartime.

Comparative analysis is utilized to contrast Ukraine's wartime PA strategies with other conflict-affected nations. By examining governance models, economic recovery plans, and social resilience strategies in similar contexts, the study identifies best practices that can be adapted to Ukraine's situation. Additionally, the research incorporates statistical data analysis, using economic indicators, demographic shifts, and social development metrics. Data is sourced from national statistical agencies, international reports, and reputable research institutions to evaluate changes in employment, healthcare, migration, and social well-being.

To ensure a well-rounded perspective, this study also synthesizes information from public opinion surveys and expert analyses, which assess citizens' perceptions of governance effectiveness and quality of life. These sources provide qualitative insights into how wartime policies affect daily life and social stability. By integrating these methods, the study aims to provide a robust evaluation of PA role in mitigating the effects of war on Ukraine's population, identifying key challenges and proposing strategies for enhancing governance resilience and sustainability.

3 Results

3.1 Key findings on quality of life and public administration effectiveness in wartime Ukraine

The analysis of the QoL and PA effectiveness in Ukraine during wartime reveals several important findings. According to the OECD's (2024) report on PA, Ukraine has made progress in adapting its governance systems to the challenges posed by the war. These improvements include developments in strategic frameworks, policy implementation, and public service management. However, the report also highlights persistent challenges, particularly in public financial management and service delivery, which have been exacerbated by the conflict.

When it comes to the perception of QoL, a survey conducted by the European Business Association (2023) found that about 30% of Ukrainians feel positively about their life quality, especially younger people and residents of Kyiv. However, 31% report feeling unsatisfied with their lives. Key factors contributing to these perceptions include job satisfaction, income levels, healthcare, security, and education. A significant 85% of Ukrainians believe their income is insufficient for a decent living.

The war has had a severe impact on the mental and physical health of Ukrainians. According to Statista (2023), over 60% of respondents reported a decline in their mental health due to the ongoing conflict, with many also experiencing physical health issues. This reflects the broader strain that the population is under due to the war, economic hardships, and disruptions to healthcare services. Despite these challenges, Ukrainians demonstrate strong resilience and social cohesion. A survey conducted in October 2022 revealed that 92% of the population considers human life to be the highest value, followed by freedom, human rights, mutual assistance, trust, and social harmony. These values play a critical role in maintaining social unity in the face of adversity (Svit, 2024).

The war has also contributed to a growing homelessness crisis. A report from The Guardian (2024) found that nearly a quarter of the homeless population are individuals displaced by the war. Over 3.5 million Ukrainians are internally displaced, and 6.2 million Ukrainian refugees across Europe are also facing the risk of homelessness. This situation has been made worse by decreasing resources and aid, further impacting the population's QoL. In spite of these numerous challenges, Ukrainians continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptation. This is evident in the preservation of core social values, a continued sense of social cohesion, and ongoing efforts by PA to manage scarce resources efficiently. These factors are crucial in maintaining the QoL and ensuring the country's long-term development during this difficult period.

3.2 Consequences of the military conflict and challenges for public administration

In 2021, modern “characteristics of risks, challenges and threats - variability, unpredictability, combination, hybridity, complexity and ambiguity of their consequences - have made the issues of prevention, control, increased preparedness to meet them and eliminate the consequences of their extremely relevant for countries” (Korolchuk, 2021), respectively, and for PA. The accumulated knowledge and experience of the PA are not able today to meet the needs for stability, security and safety, because at any time there may be a sudden impact of the risk/factor, against the background of the impact of many others (such as a pandemic, war, natural disasters). At the 2022 G20 summit in Indonesia, it was noted that the war has a negative impact not only directly on the participants in the war, but also on the whole world, which was in economic crisis without war as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Hbur, 2022; Duka et al., 2022).

In order to address the consequences of war, both urgent interventions to maintain QoL and post-war rehabilitation initiatives are necessary. This paper identifies the main governance issues that affect PA effectiveness in wartime Ukraine, such as demographic changes, economic instability, and infrastructure loss. The economy has lost more than \$700 billion in civilian infrastructure, GDP, and investment. USA (National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022) to 50% of the production capacities of enterprises of strategic industries, most of which were located in the east of Ukraine (National Council for the Restoration

of Ukraine, 2022); internal and external economic relations were disrupted; housing stock, production, social and service infrastructure, logistics routes, etc. were broken; more than 70% of Ukrainian enterprises significantly reduced or stopped their activities, etc. GDP decreased by 30, in 2022, which is the largest drop in the recent history of Ukraine, but much less than predicted by international financial organizations (45-50%) (Government Portal, 2023), a decrease in both real incomes and restrictions on decent employment opportunities, etc.

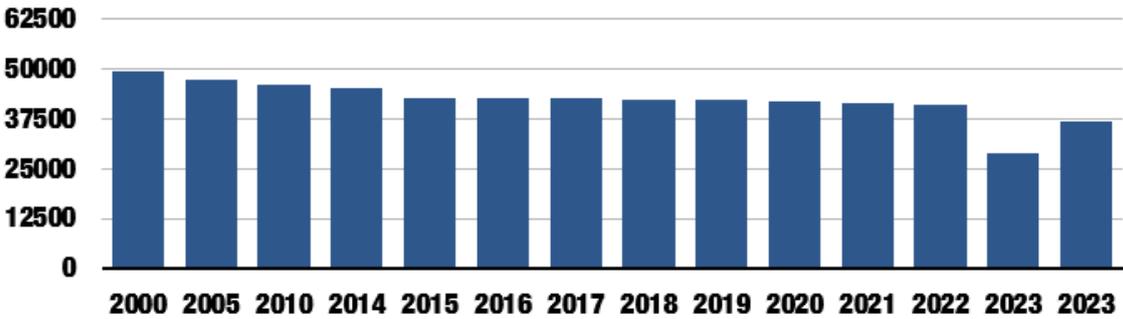
A humanitarian crisis has developed, which sharply reduces the QoL: large-scale losses of human capital (due to forced emigration and death), redistribution of labor within the country, loss of income and livelihoods of households, partial or complete destruction of communication and communications in certain territories and difficulties in access to both basic and critically needed services, etc. In times of war, accurate statistics are difficult to collect, so we will rely on the education and research of various organizations.

In addition to causing large financial losses, the war has drastically changed Ukraine's sociopolitical environment. Public management now faces difficulties as a result of the devastation of infrastructure, the eviction of millions of people, and the interruption of public services. To take into consideration the reality of wartime administration, the conventional measures of QoL, such as income levels, access to healthcare, and educational possibilities, need to be reevaluated (Cherenko et al., 2023). For instance, long-term development objectives have been momentarily neglected as a result of the war's forced reallocation of funds towards urgent humanitarian necessities including food, housing, and medical attention. This shift in priorities underscores the need for PA reforms that are both adaptive and resilient, capable of responding to the immediate needs of the population while laying the groundwork for post-war recovery (World Property Journal, 2021).

3.3 Demographic crisis and its impact on the population of ukraine in the conditions of war

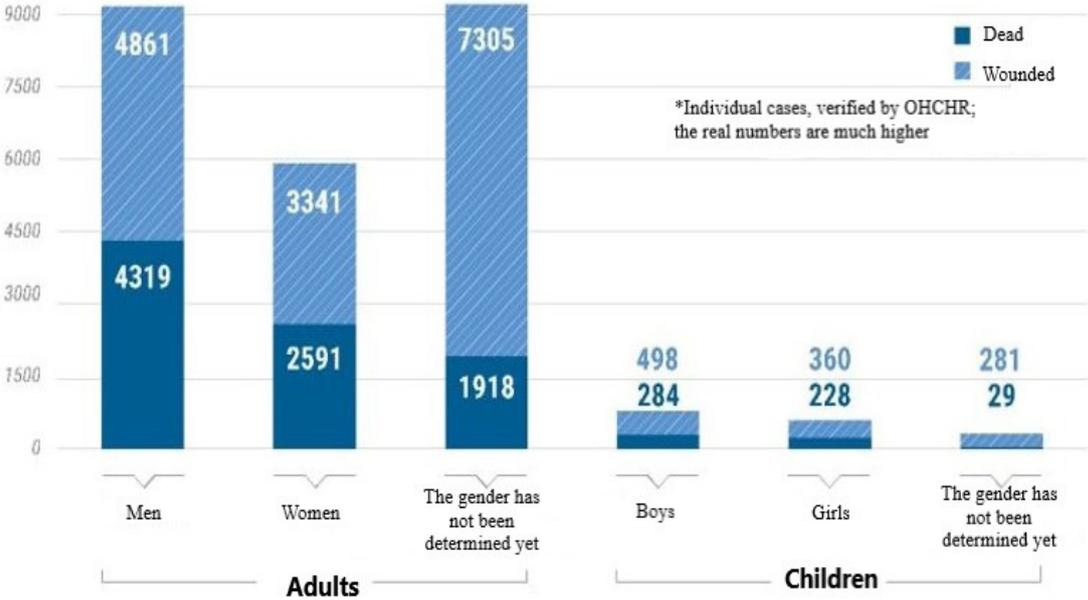
The demographic issues that have been important for the solution of the last ten years have become extremely aggravated in the conditions of war. Due to migration, socioeconomic instability, and war-related mortality, Ukraine's population has been rapidly decreasing. Millions of people have left the country since 2000, with the biggest decrease taking place after 2014 as a result of prolonged violence and territorial occupation (Minfin, 2024).

Figure 1. The population of Ukraine from 2000 to 2023 (from 2014 – excluding the occupied territories (Crimea, Sevastopol, part of Donbas))



The number of people in Ukraine is steadily decreasing due to death in the war. Thus, according to the UN report, 9,369 deaths and 16,646 injuries of Ukrainians have been recorded since February 24, 2022 (United Nations, 2023). Figure 2 shows total civilian casualties, by age and sex (February 24, 2022 to July 30, 2023).

Figure 2. Total civilian casualties, by age and sex (24 February 2022 to 30 July 2023)



Source: United Nations, 2023

Equally noteworthy is the substantial population of internally displaced persons, surpassing 7 million individuals (Feshchenko, 2022; Semenets-Orlova et al., 2022). Forced migration manifests in two directions: first, there are approximately 4.8 million internally displaced persons officially registered in Ukraine as of 2022. It is noteworthy that the escalation of this socially vulnerable demographic exerts considerable strain on the public service administration system. The second group comprises refugees seeking asylum from the conflict in Ukraine. According to the United Nations, as of January 17, 2023, the tally of individuals registered for temporary protection in Europe has reached 4.9 million, with only a third expressing an inclination to return (Operational Data Portal, 2022).

In general, up to 70% of the population of Ukraine may have been affected by the fighting, and about 7.7 million people have become internally displaced due to the conflict (as of April 17, 2023) (Cherenko et al., 2023). According to a study by the OPORA (2023) civic network, as of June 21, 2023, 8 million 177

thousand Ukrainians were abroad, of which 63% were adults, 22% were children under 18, and 15% were unspecified.

3.4 Socio-economic dynamics and challenges in Ukraine: analysis of life quality indicators and the impact of military events on social spheres

According to the report (Cherenko et al., 2023), the indicators of QoL of the population in Ukraine for a long period did not have a steady increase: the period 2008-2021 in the context of QoL assessment can be characterized from the perspective of uncertainty. From 2017 to 2019, Ukraine witnessed a consistent rise in incomes and a reduction in poverty. However, the global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 altered this trajectory. The average per capita total household expenditures, adjusted for comparable prices of the base year, saw a decline of 4.3%. Notably, the share of food costs in total household expenditures, a pivotal indicator reflecting changes in the standard of living for many years, increased significantly, surging from 48.4% to 52.1%. This surpassed the psychological threshold of 50%. Concurrently, the incidence of absolute poverty rose, with the share of the population experiencing expenditures below the actual subsistence level escalating from 41.3% to 47.2%. Persistently low incomes further exacerbated challenges related to ensuring adequate living conditions.

Throughout the war, 3,145 educational institutions faced damage from bombing and shelling, with 415 of them being completely demolished according to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2023). Presently, the systemic adverse factors contributing to the decline in Ukraine's demographic situation and population's QoL encompass concerns such as the absence of a sense of security, reduction in income sources, and diminished purchasing power due to rising prices, particularly for essential goods. Additional challenges include issues with the provision of electricity, water, and heat, a general decline in housing conditions with increased overcrowding in western regions, as well as constraints on accessing high-quality medical and other social services (Cherenko et al., 2023).

The country has witnessed a sharp increase in the unemployment rate, which rose from 9.9% according to the methodology of the International Labor Organization to 30%, leading to an imbalance in regional labor markets (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023). It has also led to limited opportunities for decent employment. As a result of the war, numerous challenges arose, such as the departure of qualified personnel abroad and mobilization to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This gave rise to a situation of discrepancy between the geographical location of jobs and the workforce, the deepening of professional and regional disparities, the lack of qualified personnel and the shortage of individual specialties, which hinders the further restoration of employment. As of May 2023, the unemployment rate was approximately 20%. Since the beginning of 2023, there has been a gradual recovery of the labor market in Ukraine (Karakuts et al., 2023).

3.5 Theoretical principles of measuring the quality of life in war conditions

QoL is a total characteristic of a person's physical, psychological, social, emotional and material well-being, based on their subjective perception. In contemporary times, a state's well-being and societal development are symbolized by a high QoL, serving as an essential criterion in the formulation of strategies for constructing a democratic nation. QoL is an intricate and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by both objective factors, primarily the capacity to fulfill human needs and interests within prevailing socio-economic conditions, and various subjective factors encompassing socio-psychological and socio-cultural dimensions (Libanova et al., 2013; Bryan, 2002).

QoL is based on economic factors, indicators of material well-being, average per capita income; average monthly wages, living wage, population, structure of monetary incomes and expenditures of the population (Gini index), etc. (Libanova et al., 2013); is the result of a combination of various statistical indicators - a

complex synthetic category that objectively assesses the significant material conditions of life, existence and development that significantly affect the QoL of a social subject: goods and services, profits, savings, spiritual needs, personal safety of living in a given territory and other attributes of social comfort, the state of the environment. It should be noted that “standard of living”, “living conditions”, “lifestyle” are the categories that form and are included in the QoL (Hukalova, 2008; Polishchuk et al., 2019).

The world community recognizes QoL as one of the main characteristics of the level of social development of the country, and the effectiveness of the PA in improving QoL is determined on the basis of retrospective and/or predictive and for different territories analyses of the values of the relevant indicators calculated on the basis of the above indicators.

In 2007, during the “Beyond GDP” conference, which was organized with the involvement of the European Parliament, the Club of Rome, the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World-Wide Fund for Nature, innovative methods for assessing social progress were introduced. J. Manuel Barroso emphasized the limitations of GDP, stating that while it is a valuable economic policy tool, it falls short in capturing the complexity and gravity of contemporary challenges. He advocated for moving beyond GDP to adopt more comprehensive measures of societal well-being (European Commission & European Parliament, 2009). This is confirmed by the so-called “Easterlin paradox” (1974), that the average happiness index will not grow for a long time even with GDP growth, since it does not take into account the determinants of well-being - home production, leisure, quality of social relations, health, etc (European Commission & European Parliament, 2009).

Unfortunately, periods of war, environmental degradation and environmental pollution force countries and populations to spend more money to generate GDP growth, but undoubtedly well-being and a sense of proper QoL do not improve. Thus, the QoL model should be dominant, taking into account the complex nature of the relationship between objective and subjective living conditions, because people in better material living conditions are more satisfied (Libanova et al., 2013).

3.6 Managing the quality of life in Ukraine: challenges and approaches to assessment

In Ukraine, given the war, the trend of further aging and depopulation of the population, the human resource becomes an invaluable treasure, which in turn increases the significance of the QoL problem (Tretiak et al., 2014). Regarding the QoL, the researchers note that its positive changes were launched in Ukraine three years before the COVID-19 pandemic, managed to acquire the character of resilience, ensuring the growth of the main indicators since 2021. However, due to the war, according to the results of 2022, a significant drop in income and an increase in poverty were expected, which inevitably reduced QoL for a long period (Cherenko et al., 2023).

Researcher Kelley-Gillespie (2009) presented an integrated QoL model as a construct of well-being in six major life domains: social, physical, mental, cognitive, spiritual, environmental well-being. Consequently, QoL management is a process of continuous improvement of living standards, which is implemented by the PA with the use of advanced management technologies and modern technical means to preserve human capital and ensure the competitiveness of the country.

At the moment, there is no single approach to assessing QoL, so countries and communities use different methodological approaches. The Economist Intelligence Unit (2011) Methodology calculates the QoL Index in nine main areas, including health, family, public life, material welfare, political stability and security, climate, employment guarantees, political freedom, and gender equality. The OECD methodology, known as the Better Life Initiative, includes 82 indicators across eleven areas: income, employment, housing, work-life balance, health, education, society, participation in public life, environment, safety, and life satisfaction.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions evaluates QoL based on twelve key areas: health, employment, income deprivation, education, family, social participation, environment, transport, safety, recreation, and life satisfaction. The European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) measures QoL across nine areas, including material and living conditions, activity, health, education, leisure and social interactions, economic and physical security, PA and fundamental rights, ecology, and general life perception.

The International Living Index incorporates both quantitative and qualitative subjective indicators across nine dimensions: cost of living, culture, economy, environment, freedom, health, infrastructure, safety and risk, and climate. Finally, the general methodological concept of standards and QoL distinguishes and assesses two key elements of social progress separately: living standards, which include economic, macroeconomic, and other objective indicators, and QoL, which focuses on sociological and subjective social content indicators.

The scientific and academic community uses the general methodological concept of standards and QoL with a distinction between macroeconomic indicators and sociological indicators (GDP per capita, consumer price index, consumer basket, household expenditures, GFK basket, poverty level, income inequality, life satisfaction and happiness, deprivation, optimism about the future, etc.). In New Zealand, a methodology is used with 68 indicators of sociological research in 11 main areas of assessment (standard of living; economic development; population; health; knowledge and skills; environment; safety; living conditions; urban lifestyle; civil and political rights; social networks); in the UK - 14 areas (economic efficiency, investment; employment; poverty and social exclusion; education; health; housing; crime rate; climate change; air quality; road safety; river water quality; wildlife; land use parameters; waste); in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (Fahey et al., 2003), 64 indicators are used in 8 main areas (public life; democratic participation; education; environment; health; leisure and culture; standard of living; time use).

The international community uses the developed indices: United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), as the geometric mean of three indices (Life expectancy; Education; Gross national income) is studied by 191 countries and published in a special series of UN reports on human development. Methods of calculation were modernized taking into account the scale of inequality, the gender equality index and the multidimensional poverty index; Legatum Institute (Prosperity Index) (Anderson et al., 2009) that is an integral assessment of parameters in 89 indicators: (Economy; Level of entrepreneurship development and business opportunities; PA; Education; Health care; Safety level; Personal freedom; Social capital) is used by 110 countries; Gallup Institute (Quality of life Gallup) that is a sociological survey in the following areas: (Health; Education; Material wealth; Public activity; Political freedom; Social ties; Environment; Economic and physical security); Regional HDI takes into account 33 indicators in the following areas (reproduction of the population; social status; comfortable life; welfare; decent work; education) (United Nations Development Program, 2022).

3.7 Dynamics of the quality of life index in Ukraine: impact of the war, demographic shifts and economic trends

Ukraine is a country with a high level of HDI, which tended to improve (1990 - 0.729; 2000 - 0.700; 2010 - 0.764; 2020 - 0.775, 2021 - 0.773), in the report for 2021 it took 77th place, in 2020 it was in 88th place. The overall coefficient of Ukraine in 2020 is 0.775, 2021. - 0.773 (out of a maximum of 1.000). According to the index, the life expectancy of Ukrainians over the past 2 years is 72.1-71.6 years. The listed facts can be tracked in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Human Development Index Ranking in 2020

	Rank	Country	HDI value (2019)	Life expectancy at birth (years) SDG3	Expected years of schooling (years) SDG 4.3	Mean years of schooling (years) SDG 4.6	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (PPP \$) SDG 8.5
	70	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.783	76.7	14.8	10.3	12,447
	72	Sri Lanka	0.782	77.0	14.1	10.6	12,707
	73	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.780	77.4	13.8	9.8	14,872
	74	Grenada	0.779	72.4	16.9	9.0	15,641
	74	Mexico	0.779	75.1	14.8	8.8	19,160
	74	Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.779	74.8	13.8	8.7	25,038
	74	Ukraine	0.779	72.1	15.1	11.4	13,216
	78	Antigua and Barbuda	0.778	77.0	12.8	9.3	20,895
	79	Peru	0.777	76.7	15.0	9.7	12,252
	79	Thailand	0.777	77.2	15.0	7.9	17,781

Source: Human Development Report Office 2020. • Created with Datarwrapper

Source: Human Development Report, 2020

According to the United Nations Population Fund’s report, the average life expectancy for women in Ukraine in 2023 is 78 years, which is 10 years longer than that of men, who have an average life expectancy of 68 years (UNFPA Division for Communications and Strategic Partnerships, 2023). Projections suggest that life expectancies may gradually increase after the war, with estimates indicating that by 2032, they could reach levels observed during the Covid period (around 67 years for men and at least 77 years for women). In early May 2023, the World Bank forecasted that 7 million Ukrainians, particularly in rural areas, fall below the poverty line. To enhance human development indicators and combat poverty, the implementation of programs fostering business development and self-employment is crucial. Utilizing three essential elements – healthy longevity, education, and a decent material standard of living – becomes imperative for ensuring the post-war expanded reproduction of the Ukrainian economy (Kostiuk, 2023; Human Development..., 2023).

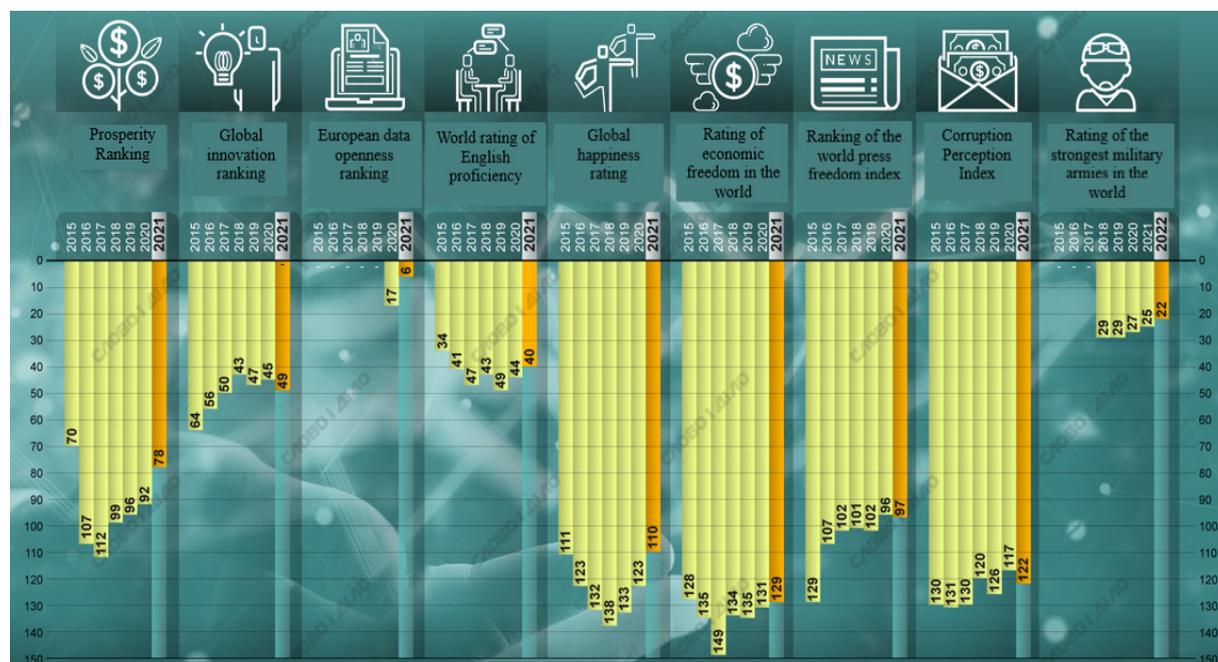
Ukraine took the 92nd position in the Prosperity Index ranking in 2020, rising four points compared to 2019 and 19 positions compared to 2018. It rose to 126th place, from 146th in 2019, in the overall road quality rating in The Legatum Prosperity Index - an integrated indicator that takes into account the country’s economic growth, the level of the educational system, medicine, personal well-being and QoL. In the Transport rating, the country rose by 12 positions – to 73rd place; in the Market Access and Infrastructure rating – 77th place (+10 positions) (Interfax, 2020).

Although 51% of Ukrainians are satisfied with their lives, Ukraine ranked 38th out of 44 in the happiness index, ranking among the ten unhappiest countries in the world. These are the data of the international survey Gallup International, which was conducted in Ukraine by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. In 2020, Ukraine entered the top five unhappiest countries in the world. In the ranking of 41 countries, Ukraine ranks fifth from the bottom. While the average happiness index in the world was 40%, in Ukraine this indicator was at the level of 14%. It should be noted that according to a Gallup International survey, at the end of 2019, 51% of Ukrainians considered themselves happy and only 18% considered their lives unhappy, the happiness index was 33% (The Village, 2022).

In 2021, Ukraine rose by 15 positions in the world ranking in terms of the Social Progress Index and ranked 48th with an index value of 75.78 among 168 countries. This was mainly due to the pandemic, the deterioration of access to necessary medical services, as well as the restriction of personal rights. Ukraine

improved its results by 32 places (in 2019 it ranked 80th with an index value of 66.97) (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2022). Figure 4 shows how Ukraine's place in international rankings has changed over the past seven years.

Figure 4: Ukraine's place in the world rankings in 2015-2021

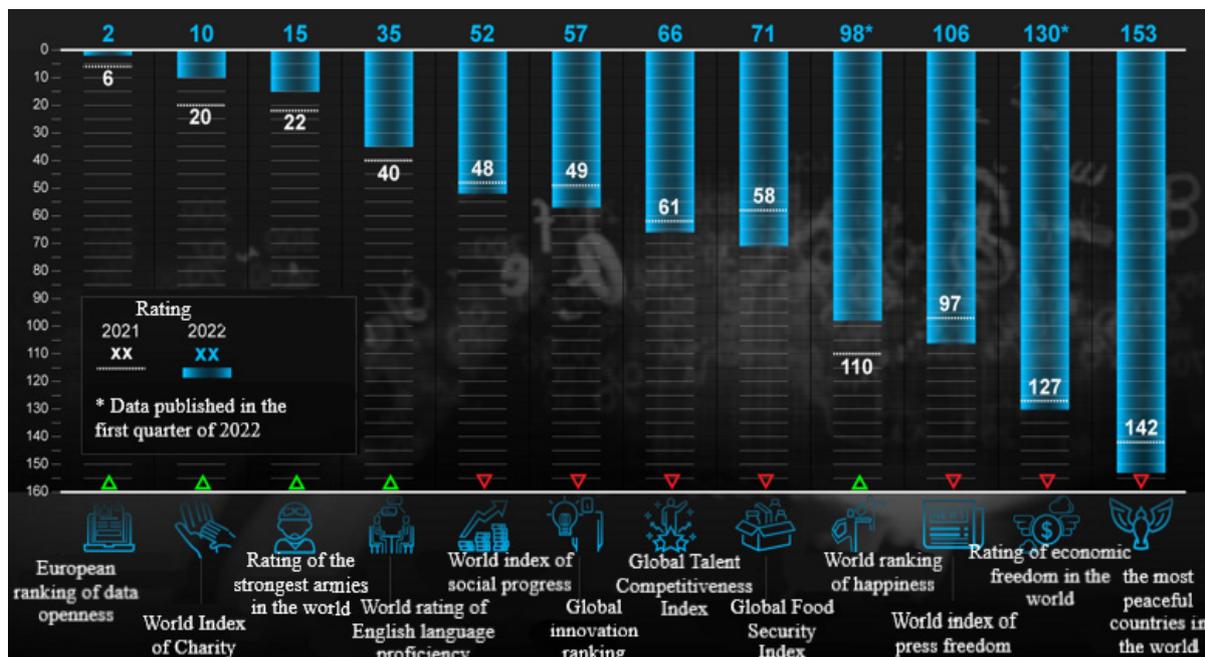


Source: Slovo I Dilo, 2022

The present stage of development of the PA in Ukraine is largely influenced by the war. The indicator for assessing crisis phenomena in the PA is the Fragile States Index developed by the Peace Fund, the value of which for Ukraine in 2022 was 68 points - Ukraine belongs to a group of states, the situation with which the Peace Fund assesses as “preventive”, the reasons for which are economic factors, internal socio-political problems, and the war that Russia is waging against Ukraine. It should be noted that since the beginning of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, the PA in Ukraine has continued to function both at the national and local levels, despite huge challenges (The Fund for Peace, 2022; Anderson et al., 2009).

Ukraine has recently improved its position in several ratings. Thus, we have risen two places in the ranking of world passports (Ukrainians can travel without a visa or with a visa upon arrival to 141 countries); three positions – in the ranking of the strongest armies; 14 positions – in the global ranking of QoL (Figure 5). At the same time, there has been a regression in the corruption perception index over the past year.

Figure 5. How Ukraine's positions in international rankings changed in 2022



Source: Slovo I Dilo, 2022

The war provoked many risks and threats to the PA in Ukraine, the research project “Analysis of threats to national security in the field of internal policy” identifies the following threats to PA:

1. “corruption” - in matters of undermining the defense capability and economic stability of Ukraine, increasing poverty as a result of corruption; violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens, reducing confidence in the authorities as a result of corruption scandals;
2. “inefficiency of power” - the threat of excessive centralization of power and curtailment of the decentralization reform, a drop in the level of competence of employees of the state apparatus, a fall in confidence in power;
3. “horizontal disintegration of Ukraine” - here, we should say, in the context of self-identification of Ukrainians, there was an increase in national consolidation and the formation of a common identity (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022), and new fault lines were formed with the war - the division of Ukrainians into those “who are at war” and “suffer from war” and those who are hiding from mobilization or are “sitting down”, - the shaking of the internal situation in the region (especially in the rear regions) associated with the religious factor; - the destruction or radical transformation of local identities, the need for a “reset”; - artificial division in society under conditions when the state does not offer a clearly balanced vision; - where the degradation of democratic institutions, the deterioration of the quality of the vertical dialogue between the government and society;
4. “Fatigue from the war” and the exhaustion of the resource of the population’s resistance against the background of the routineization of the war and the loss of motivational potential and psychological exhaustion; ineffective information on policies that do not reproduce the demands of time; external influences on the information space (National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023), etc.

4 Discussion

4.1 Challenges and institutional barriers to public administration in wartime Ukraine

In the examination of the capability and efficacy of the PA system during martial law, researchers delineate several primary challenges that impede the PA capacity to function effectively in times of war. These challenges encompass security concerns, where the activities of public authorities are constrained under martial law; resource limitations, including inadequately funded budgets, state programs, and human capital development, as well as the allocation of resources required for post-war reconstruction and the implementation of reforms. Additionally, challenges involve integration, with limited coordination among state, business, and public institutions in managerial decision-making. The necessity to manage societal tension increases due to contradictions in the system of accountability to citizens and foreign financial and political partners. Furthermore, information constraints are noted, encompassing limitations in the ability to acquire and disseminate current information regarding PA activities, service provision, particularly in temporarily uncontrolled territories or combat zones, and the imperative for effective communicative support for restoration projects and reforms (Izha & Kosenko, 2023; Sardak et al., 2021).

Thus, among the institutional problems, the PA note: 1) the actual incompleteness of the administrative-territorial reform, which threatens to increase in Ukraine the institutional disproportion in relations between state authorities and local self-government bodies of different levels; 2) the distribution of managerial functions between state authorities, local self-government bodies and civil society institutions regarding the exercise of their powers in the field of PA, which are largely underregulated in the contexts of the organization of public life, economic competencies, work on the formation of a mobilization reserve and activities in the security sphere; 3) corruption and other institutional dysfunctions that block the effectiveness of PA mechanisms in Ukraine, such as abuse of tax evasion, distribution of humanitarian aid, distribution of land resources, allocation of men of forced age abroad, etc.; the institution of proactive legal and administrative support, reformistically based on the behavioral part of the population, etc.

Improving the QoL in Ukraine in the face of modern challenges, threats and problems can be achieved by improving the living conditions of people through “modernizing the economy, providing new jobs, activating innovative and entrepreneurial activities, developing the education system and healthcare, improving the efficiency of business management of enterprises and organizations, improving the mechanism of state regulation” (Holubchuk, 2022). Some researchers believe that the emphasis of modern PA improvements, first of all, should be on minimizing bureaucracy and ensuring the digitalization of processes, respectively, simplifying the receipt of services by the population, and increasing the professional competence, qualification of PA managers. It is important in such work to provide opportunities for continuing education, and the formation of the priority of the social orientation of the service of the PA bodies, etc., which will also provide the necessary flexibility.

For instance, based on the World Bureaucracy Indicator (WWBI) collected and analyzed by the World Bank’s “Bureaucracy Laboratory,” the data from 2019 reveals that 42% of the workforce in Ukraine is engaged in the public sector, with a higher percentage in Moldova at 47%. Within this sector, civil servants constitute 16%, which is equivalent to 6.72% of the total workforce. In Ukraine, a population of approximately 36 million is served by 171,469 civil servants as of the end of 2021. This implies that each civil servant caters to approximately 215 Ukrainians. These indicators are found to be average for Europe (Andrianova, 2022; Duma, 2017). It is worth noting that the bureaucracy itself is not a negative definition, it helps to arrange everything in place, to develop and establish consistency. The result is transparent reporting, order and efficiency in the PA activities, which will contribute to the improvement of QoL.

In general, the effectiveness of the PA system is expressed in the practical implementation of economic, social, environmental decisions taken in various sectors and in the public environment - this context (decision-result) is declared to be fundamental in the content of the PA reform, the purpose of which is to increase the efficiency of the functioning of government bodies in strategic guidelines and the effectiveness of operational activities (Yaremko, 2022; Kulikov et al., 2022), which is certainly reflected in the dynamics of development indicators and QoL that we have indicated above.

Ukraine's government has prioritized PA reforms to enhance governance adaptability, digitalization, and transparency. However, wartime conditions have disrupted long-term reform goals, necessitating urgent policy shifts to maintain service delivery and economic stability (Orlova & Lukashuk, 2022). The large-scale invasive war of Russia against Ukraine has suspended the implementation of many ongoing PA reforms in Ukraine, but since 2016, Ukraine has developed and implemented PA reforms, focusing on the development of hopefulness, accountability and transparency, competence, capacity and public participation. The Public Administration Reform Strategy for the period up to 2021 and its Action Plan demonstrated proper implementation, reaching 57% of the set targets and completing 87% of the planned activities by the end of 2021 (Order of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, 2019). The progress of the PA reform today is difficult to predict, because challenges and threats are included, combining their consequences form new barriers that will certainly affect the result. It is possible to predict alternatives to the effects of reform, and, unfortunately, it is impossible to predict all the current possible consequences of the complex impact of challenges and threats (Borshchevskyi et al., 2022).

In 2021, an updated Strategy for Reforming Public Administration of Ukraine for 2022-2025 was adopted, where openness, inclusiveness and responsibility are among the priorities for the development of the PA, which will contribute to ensuring the interests of civil society and the state, the priority of rights and freedoms, openness and accountability of the PA; development of managerial competence and, as a result, the quality of public services, etc. The implementation of the new Strategy involves the implementation of key priorities - high-quality public services, a highly professional and politically neutral public service, effective, open and accountable public institutions.

Most of the studies described in the scientific literature on the effectiveness of PA operate on the concept of "effectiveness", which is positioned as a measure of the achievement of goals, and "efficiency" - the criterion of economy or suggest "the value of the effectiveness of PA is considered on the basis of a generalizing indicator, which includes both quantitative and qualitative characteristics, reflects the effectiveness in achieving the goals set... economy is expressed in the use of available resources, and productivity is expressed in the results obtained (efficiency)"; they also propose to assess the effectiveness of PA "with the help of the public on the basis of a comprehensive, interconnected and methodologically constructed process of determining the state of certain areas of PA by the public" (Duma, 2017).

The efficacy of PA services constitutes a significant element of QoL, and its evaluation can be approached through three avenues: analyzing complaint and suggestion statistics, considering parameters from external and internal assessments of PA activities. It is essential to establish developed standards, reporting forms, and auditing indicators for key PA services to measure their actual effectiveness at specific levels of PA and in particular regions. Additionally, efficiency is gauged by economic feasibility criteria, directly linked to the outcomes of PA actions and whether preventive measures prove effective. Social effects on achieving social goals also contribute to the assessment. The crucial determinant of effectiveness lies in the alignment of PA results (effects) with the genuine problems and needs of society.

Worldwide rating indicators of the country's development level, some of which are included and calculated by Ukraine, the dynamics of which we proposed above, are generally acceptable for assessing the effectiveness of PA in the context of ensuring the QoL. Today, there are also integral indicators of the level of development of the country and the effectiveness of the PA of a more targeted nature, based on the principles of "good governance", for example, GCI, HDI, CPI, IMD, GRICS, usually related to the achie-

vement of national priorities in the provision of certain public services or the improvement of procedures and processes of state bodies, some of which were calculated in Ukraine (Kortukova et al., 2023).

One example of a system of PA quality indicators based on the principles of “good PA” is the integral GRICS indicator (Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot), developed by the World Bank Institute, which includes six indices - parameters: - voice accountability - the government’s willingness to be externally accountable through citizen feedback mechanisms and democratic institutions; - political stability and absence of violence, crime and terrorism (political stability, lack of violence); - government effectiveness - the quality of public services and the policy-making process, the level of bureaucratization; - the burden of administrative pressure and the quality of legislation (regulatory framework) - the ability of the government to formulate and implement rational policies and legal acts that contribute to the development of the private sector; - the rule of law - a measure of confidence of various actors in the norms established by society, as well as their compliance with these norms; - anti-corruption (control of corruption). Each is scored based on the measurement of data from a large number of secondary sources, as well as through targeted surveys and perception measurements conducted by risk assessment companies, public opinion research agencies (Sokolov, 2014).

At the same time, countries where PA reforms are being implemented should monitor the progress of the implementation of reform programs and develop programmatic performance indicators, including QoL indicators aimed at measuring progress in a certain territory over a certain period of time (Yaremko, 2022) - this is our opinion for application in Ukraine under modern realities. It is also necessary to develop a system of indicators that characterize the effectiveness of the PA in the context of ensuring the QoL in the context of the war in Ukraine, because it is the PA that should create the conditions for the formation of open and accountable relations with society, ensure the reality of assessing the complex conditions, decisions and implemented plans that result in improving the QoL of citizens.

Among the key priorities are tasks related to enhancing the socio-cultural aspect of PA modernization, incorporating flexibility, innovation, and technologization. This includes establishing effective collaboration between state authorities, local self-government, and civil society institutions. Additionally, emphasis is placed on improving PA effectiveness through the development of strategic planning mechanisms, with particular attention to financial, social, innovative, and market dimensions. This approach not only gauges the level of serviceability, bureaucratization, and digitalization but also aligns with European PA standards. Ukraine is progressing toward providing high-quality and affordable PA services, fostering the creation of a highly professionalized PA service system (Omelchuk et al., 2022). The overarching goal is to ensure the implementation of public policy grounded in analysis and communication with all stakeholders, as articulated in the aforementioned Strategy until 2025.

The path to openness, transparency and accountability of the PA is also important to continue, gaining momentum and measuring its effectiveness, because these processes add resilience to the country in the context of receiving support and assistance from the world community. Such areas will also have a positive impact on the QoL of the country’s population. It is also worth paying attention to the development of measures of programs to raise public awareness on the implementation of PA measures in a certain territory - this, on the one hand, will ensure an understanding of the needs of this group, and on the other hand, will ensure a dialogue between people from the PA.

The search for a universal conceptual approach to assessing the effectiveness of PA, regarding the ability and success in achieving the strategic goal of maximizing the well-being of the population, continues. The modern mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the PA should provide an integrated view of the various quality indicators of the PA with a basis in the principles of “good PA” with guidelines for an external assessment of the PA activities by consumers of management services (Lelyk et al., 2022).

4.2 Discussion on the quality of life and public administration in wartime Ukraine

One of the key findings is the positive, yet limited, perception of QoL among a segment of the Ukrainian population. Approximately 30% of Ukrainians express satisfaction with their life, particularly younger individuals and those in Kyiv, despite the hardships of war (Svit, 2024). This suggests a certain level of optimism and resilience within specific demographic groups. However, the fact that 31% of the population reports dissatisfaction indicates that the majority is still grappling with substantial issues, particularly related to income insufficiency, job satisfaction, and access to basic services. The widespread belief that income levels are inadequate for a decent life (with 85% of Ukrainians in agreement) underscores the economic strain that the conflict has intensified. This is a critical area for policy attention, as improving economic stability and addressing income disparities will be essential in enhancing overall life quality during and after the war (The Guardian, 2024).

The significant mental and physical health toll of the war, as indicated by the deterioration in well-being reported by over 60% of Ukrainians, reflects the pervasive impact of prolonged conflict (European Business..., 2023). Mental health issues, coupled with physical health challenges, are common in war zones, yet the lack of adequate healthcare services in many areas compounds the situation. Addressing these health concerns, through better access to mental health resources and strengthening healthcare infrastructure, should be a priority for PA efforts moving forward.

Despite these challenges, the continued presence of strong social values - such as a commitment to human life, freedom, and mutual assistance - demonstrates a critical element of social cohesion in Ukraine. These values contribute to the resilience of the population, even in the face of immense hardship. They also provide a foundation upon which PA can build, ensuring that the state mechanism not only addresses immediate needs but also nurtures long-term social harmony and trust. In this regard, the work of PA in maintaining and fostering these values, alongside its efforts to improve living conditions, becomes essential.

The growing issue of homelessness and displacement is another pressing concern that needs to be addressed. With millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees facing the risk of homelessness, the impact on QoL is severe. The war has created an urgent need for comprehensive housing and support systems, yet the reduction in available resources has hindered the ability of both the government and humanitarian organizations to meet these needs. Addressing the housing crisis will require coordinated efforts between local, national, and international entities, alongside long-term planning for reconstruction and resource allocation (OECD, 2024).

The adaptability and resilience of the Ukrainian PA, as evidenced by the OECD's findings, is commendable. However, the persistence of significant challenges - such as public financial management and service delivery - points to areas where further reform and innovation are necessary. PA must continue to evolve in response to the needs of the population, particularly in wartime conditions (OECD, 2024). Effective resource management, transparent governance, and a focus on citizen engagement will be critical to strengthening PA and improving the QoL in Ukraine.

5 Conclusions

The current war in Ukraine has drastically changed PA's environment and its function in protecting inhabitants' QoL. The intricate relationship between QoL, PA reform, and the socioeconomic difficulties brought on by the conflict has been examined in this paper. The results highlight how crucial it is to incorporate QoL measures into the assessment of PA reforms in order to make sure that these changes not only have immediate benefits but also advance the more general objectives of resilience and sustainable develop-

ment. As Ukraine continues to navigate the challenges of wartime governance, the results can inform future efforts to enhance the effectiveness of PA and improve the well-being of citizens.

Wartime governance in Ukraine demands PA reforms that balance immediate crisis management with long-term resilience. Ensuring QoL under war requires strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing digital governance, and prioritizing socio-economic stabilization. Future research should focus on empirical assessments of PA effectiveness in crisis conditions to refine policy strategies.

The efficacy of PA, functioning as an open and integrated multilevel management structure, is evaluated through the examination of diverse indicators. These indicators encompass aspects such as the realization of economic, political, and social goals set by the PA, the balance between costs and outcomes, the quality of human resources in terms of managerial competencies and skills development, and the characterization of the country's level of development, both socially and economically. Additionally, the assessment extends to the satisfaction of citizens with living conditions, the protection of rights and freedoms, and the performance of PA bodies at various levels. These evaluations are encapsulated in the key indicators and ratings mentioned earlier, which include metrics pertaining to the QoL.

However, amidst the escalating socio-economic challenges and the ongoing war, efforts to curb depopulation and mitigate adverse trends in demographic indicators in Ukraine may prove futile. Consequently, anticipating an enhancement in the country's rating in global indices pertaining to demography and health in the immediate future may be unrealistic. Particular attention should be paid to the creation of effective PA measures to ensure proper living conditions and health preservation, proper quality of social services, etc.

To secure the sustainability and advancement of the population's QoL, it is crucial to conduct systematic public opinion polls. These polls should not only assess the overall effectiveness of PA on the ground but also identify gaps requiring resolution. Adaptation of PA mechanisms is essential to address current and future challenges, ensuring the realization of set goals and objectives. The primary focus is on meeting the diverse needs of the country's populace and implementing a strategy for improvement of life quality. This approach aims to fortify the resilience of the country and its populace, fostering sustainable development for present and future generations.

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