

DEMOCRATIC MODEL OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE:  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR UKRAINEДЕМОКРАТИЧНА МОДЕЛЬ ПУБЛІЧНОГО ВРЯДУВАННЯ:  
МІЖНАРОДНИЙ ДОСВІД ДЛЯ УКРАЇНИ

*Today, as Ukrainian society bravely defends itself against the aggression of russian occupiers, certain manifestations of skepticism regarding the feasibility of effective public governance within the constitutional-democratic model amid crisis and external aggression have emerged. This skepticism has its justifications. Firstly, the war has caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure and led to substantial losses in human resources, resulting in a worsened economic situation, increased poverty, and social inequality. In such circumstances, there may be a perception that the state is incapable of effectively addressing societal issues. Secondly, the war has heightened political divisions within Ukrainian society, eroding trust in authorities and political institutions. In such conditions, there might be a sense that the state cannot ensure political stability and consensus. Thirdly, the war has brought to the forefront the issue of Ukraine's external security, increasing the country's dependence on international support. In these conditions, there may be a perception that the state is unable to independently secure its safety. In light of this, the purpose of the article is to elucidate the extent to which this skepticism is justified and, accordingly, to determine the prospects for the development of the constitutional-democratic model of public governance in the context of contemporary Ukrainian society.*

*The article's authors contend that skepticism about the possibility of effective public governance in modern Ukrainian society is partially justified. However, they also argue that there are tangible prospects for the development of the constitutional-democratic model of public governance in Ukraine. The authors of the article are convinced that the implementation of the proposed measures will overcome skepticism about the possibility of effective public governance in Ukraine and ensure the development of the constitutional-democratic model of public governance in the conditions of contemporary Ukrainian society.*

**Key words:** public management, public governance, public policy, democracy, democratic model.

*Сьогодні, коли українське суспільство само-віддано захищається від агресії російських окупантів, з'являються певні прояви зневіри у можливостях здійснення ефективного публічного врядування в рамках конституційно-демократичної моделі в умовах кризи і зовнішньої агресії. Ця зневіра має свої обґрунтування. По-перше, війна завдала значних руйнувань інфраструктурі країни, а також призвела до значних втрат у людських ресурсах. Це спричинило погіршення економічного становища, підвищення рівня бідності та соціальної нерівності. У таких умовах може виникнути відчуття, що держава не здатна ефективно вирішувати проблеми суспільства. По-друге, війна посилює політичні розбіжності в українському суспільстві. Це призвело до погіршення довіри до влади та політичних інститутів. У таких умовах може виникнути відчуття, що держава не здатна забезпечити політичну стабільність і консенсус. По-третє, війна актуалізувала питання зовнішньої безпеки України. Це посилює залежність України від міжнародної підтримки. У таких умовах може виникнути відчуття, що держава не здатна самостійно забезпечити свою безпеку. У зв'язку з цим метою статті є розкриття того, наскільки зазначена зневіра є обґрунтованою і, відповідно, визначення перспективи розвитку конституційно-демократичної моделі публічного врядування в умовах сучасного українського суспільства.*

*Автори статті переконують, що зневіра в можливості ефективного публічного врядування в умовах сучасного українського суспільства є частково обґрунтованою. Однак вони також аргументують, що існують реальні перспективи розвитку конституційно-демократичної моделі публічного врядування в Україні. Автори статті переконані, що реалізація запропонованих заходів дасть можливість подолати зневіру в можливості ефективного публічного врядування в Україні та забезпечити розвиток конституційно-демократичної моделі публічного врядування в умовах сучасного українського суспільства.*

**Ключові слова:** публічне управління, публічне врядування, публічна політика, демократія, демократична модель.

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**Problem setting.** Today, Ukrainian society is fervently defending itself against the aggression of russian occupiers. Ukrainians are paying with human lives to preserve their own state sovereignty and the right to determine their own future. Alongside this, in the conditions of martial law, a special legal regime is in effect, which includes the possibility of limiting certain rights and freedoms of individuals, extending the powers of the Verkhovna Rada and the President of Ukraine, forming military administrations, and more. In other words, during wartime, there is a suspension of democratic procedures, including elections, and instead, the role of officials in

higher authorities, military leadership, and the degree of centralization of the national public governance system increase rapidly. In our view, these measures are lawful and create conditions for swift management responses to the challenges of wartime, enhancing the ability to make and implement critical decisions, including timely resource mobilization necessary for effective defense, preserving the lives of citizens, and ultimately, triumphing over the aggressor.

**Literature review.** Additionally, there is a growing need to preserve and develop the democratic model of public governance. To our opinion, studying international experience in

democratic development will contribute to its resolution. In the academic literature, various approaches to the issue of the relationship between the state and civil society, the powers of the national government, regional state administrations, and local self-government, centralization and decentralization, the will of the majority, and the rights and freedoms of the minority are presented [2; 3; 7; 8; 11]. In particular, there are signs of disillusionment with the prospects of effective public governance within the constitutional-democratic model amid the crisis and external aggression [8].

**Research goal.** The purpose of the article is to uncover the justification of this disillusionment and, accordingly, determine the prospects for the development of the constitutional-democratic model of public governance in the context of contemporary Ukrainian society.

**Key research findings.** First and foremost, it is important to recall that domestic democracy emerged during the downfall of authoritarian regimes in the majority of socialist countries. The scale of democratic transformations provided grounds for the belief in the universal nature of Western prototypes of democratic, social, and rule-of-law governance. The theses put forth by F. Fukuyama regarding the culmination of ideological evolution and the universalization of Western democracy as the definitive form of governance, S. Huntington's notion of the onset of the «third wave of democratization» and similar conclusions by theorists radiated confidence in the enduring constitutional-democratic perspective of modern societies [4; 9]. However, the optimistic sentiments soon began to fade, as they were eroded by a powerful counter-wave of de-democratization that swept over both newly formed democracies and established democratic regimes in Western countries. The central problem they face is the deegalitarization of democracy, where the civic agency of broad segments of the population is eroded, and instead, a distinct populist type of elite subjects emerges, whose power is based on the manipulative exploitation of the mass's commodified consumption instincts.

Even in countries with strong traditions of democratic governance, the formation of a stable civic subjectivity among the masses is marked by ambivalence. On one hand, it is their activism that has made an essential part of democratic constitutions oriented towards achieving the «common good» and implementing social policies aimed at regulating market relations and more equitable distribution of wealth among the population. On the other hand, as argued by J. Habermas, this policy has led to unexpected consequences. First and foremost, due to the loss

of a direct connection between income and labor, motivation for productive work has decreased, and labor unions have weakened, with a steep decline in their membership. Moreover, the expansion of social policies has transformed the democratic state, leading to a growth in bureaucracy and, thus, creating a new source of socio-economic issues due to the formation of an overly organized environment that is unfavorable for individual self-realization and civic self-organization. [7].

Furthermore, the reduced effectiveness of contemporary democratic states is attributed to the globalization of capitalist economies and the emergence of material, technological, and organizational opportunities for capital to escape from the control of national governments into the realm of the global market [3]. As a result, the fiscal foundation of social policies diminishes, and democratic governments begin to struggle with addressing a range of pressing issues. The balance of the fundamental resources of public governance—capital, political power, and civic solidarity—becomes disrupted, with the first two gaining an advantage while the latter is distorted. Ultimately, according to Jürgen Habermas, all of this leads to the loss of the capacity of democratic and welfare states to ensure public welfare and security [7].

The conclusions presented here align with the views of F. Zakariya. In his analysis of American practices of making significant public management decisions through direct democracy, he highlights the risks of populism and manipulation in the interests of big business representatives. According to his perspective, the most significant paradox of the movement for non-parliamentary initiatives and referendums is its unexpected connection with money that influences politics. This is because the financial and organizational challenges of initiating and conducting nationwide discussions on a large regional or national scale can only be undertaken by well-funded interest groups [8].

Additionally, it points to the problem of blurring accountability for public management decisions. For example, in California since the late 1970s, a practice has emerged in which 85% of the budget is allocated based on referendum decisions, while legislators only debate the remaining 15%. However, achieving this very high degree of democracy occurred against the backdrop of hampered social development and serious economic challenges. One of the reasons for this problematic situation was the violation of constitutional control mechanisms to ensure the alignment of state interests with societal needs. By constructing a complex system of constraints on taxation and state spending processes, the voters

of California, in many ways, deprived themselves of the ability to judge how well politicians fulfill their duties. In cases where funds run out for a particular program, it becomes unclear whether it's because state legislators allocated too little money or if local authorities overspent. The shifting of social responsibility, confusion in regulatory and legislative provisions, the decline in the authority of both individual politicians and the democratic state as a whole – these are just some of the problems that arise as a result.

Essentially, according to F.Zakariya, this involves a discussion of the «helplessness and paralysis of power» [8]. In his view, a possible solution is to return to the concept of «delegated democracy» in James Madison's version, the practical implementation of which aims to provide the filtration and deepening of public ideas by passing them through a governing body elected from among citizens whose wisdom will help best discern the true interests of the country, and whose patriotism and commitment to justice will not be sacrificed to temporary or private considerations. [8].

It appears that the criticism presented accurately reflects the danger of uncritical belief in the social subjectivity of the masses, which often leads to the denial of a conscious and responsible subject in power relations, thereby promoting a state of anarchy and chaos, favorable to destructive social forces. However, doubts also arise about the constructive integrity of the project to reconstruct representative democracy in its «pure» constitutional-liberal form. It's important to recall that the weakening of this model in the United States was not without precedent: it was preceded by numerous political corruption scandals (such as «Watergate» and «Iran-Contra»), dissatisfaction among broad segments of society with both domestic and foreign government policies (e.g., the Vietnam War, resistance to desegregation, etc.). In fact, even F.Zakariya acknowledges that officials still retain the potential for abusing the delegated authority.

It's worth noting that the leitmotif of his reflections is a nostalgia for the traditions of civil elitism from earlier historical periods, the «code of honor» of past rulers, adherence to which guaranteed the integrity, competence, and responsibility of leaders in government institutions, commercial companies, and civil associations. Ultimately, they represented both carriers and products of social capital – a stable set of social trust, a spirit of self-sacrifice, empathetic attitudes, values, and norms of citizenship that had accumulated through the prolonged formation and development of the civil society network of institutions and organizations.

But what happens when this capital diminishes to a critical point and no longer ensures the proper reproduction of socially significant qualities of elite groups? In this case, will the implementation of the «delegated democracy» project result in the establishment of an authoritarian-liberal regime where liberal freedom transforms into monological constructive arbitrariness by unaccountable demagogues and oligarchic groups?

F.Zakaria suggests that in times of crisis, authoritarian «liberation» of state power from the influence of the population can be socially beneficial. This reduction in the risk of populist tendencies and the whims of the masses allows for more rapid achievement of socio-economic and socio-cultural prosperity through efficient and well-coordinated mobilization efforts by society.

He points out that nearly all the «success stories» in the developing world over the last 50 years have occurred under liberal authoritarian regimes. This is seen in places like Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Chile, and even China. Governments that make the right choice in favor of long-term goals have achieved rapid economic growth and improvements in life expectancy and education levels among the population.

For F.Zakaria, it is difficult to imagine that democracy in the «Third World» could achieve the same sustained rates of development as the countries he mentioned earlier through authoritarian means. He notes that India, for example, which attempted to pursue democracy, has struggled to engage in strategic socio-economic transformations mainly because its politicians have been unwilling to cause discomfort to their voters. [8]. In this context, a «liberal-enlightened» authoritarian government is seen as a means to break the vicious cycle of endless transformation leading to social anarchy and chaos. A «benevolent despot» may, through firm policies or even coercion, improve the culture and welfare of citizens, thereby preparing them for the next democratic transition.

However, this conclusion remains a subject of debate. On one hand, there are indeed cases where a highly prepared authoritarian elite, aligning their interests with the needs of society, can create the conditions for the accelerated mobilization of social energy in critical areas of development. On the other hand, this tendency might not be sustainable as public policy pursued by ruling groups tends to become disconnected from society, primarily focused on preserving once-captured dominant socio-economic positions. Eventually, this could lead to sharp antagonism with the dynamic diversity of the social world.

Carol Pateman's perspective emphasizes a critical evaluation of certain liberal authors who challenge the traditional concept of democracy as popular sovereignty (in the spirit of Karl Popper's thesis that it does not matter «who rules» but rather «how they rule»). In her view, the elimination of the principle of mass participation from the concept of «democracy» results in an extremely one-sided theory, with the central focus being the actions of select elite groups and the political indifference of ordinary individuals. [5]. In other words, rejecting the literal meaning of the term «democracy» reduces theorists to a lower level compared to what was achieved by the classics of social thought in the distant past. This is because the connection between the realization of the constitutional-liberal project and the level of civic development of society as a whole receives insufficient attention. By focusing on the establishment of constitutional and legal institutional frameworks for public governance, liberals may overlook the need for the reproduction of competent and responsible masses whose self-activity provides the actual content within these frameworks.

From this perspective, the primary task is to determine ways and forms to qualitatively improve the mechanisms of socialization for the widest segments of society. According to Carol Pateman, the concept of a «society of mass participation» requires expanding the boundaries of the term «political» to encompass areas that are not directly related to public governance. [5]. Essentially, this perspective argues that the constitutional model of a legal and democratic state cannot be limited solely to questions of organizing state power. It should extend into other spheres of society, ensuring their unique democratic politicization. The realm of production is seen as particularly crucial since a significant portion of people's lives is spent at work. Therefore, the workplace provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to learn about managing the affairs of a collective group. The democratization of production is deemed necessary, especially as it aligns with the modern needs of material and technological development, offering greater flexibility in adapting to rapidly changing market priorities. Additionally, it is asserted that eliminating inequality in decision-making will weaken the conditions for other forms of economic inequality [5].

Alongside this, the practical implementation of participatory projects faces several obstacles. For instance, the practice of distributing shares of enterprises among workers in economic projects has shown significant social limitations. It has struggled to ensure parity in the relations between small and large shareholders. In our

opinion, it's essential to consider the critical evaluation of referendums, as performed by F. Zakaria. Despite public expectations that the expanded use of referendums would help reduce the distance between government bodies and ordinary citizens, the actual achievements have been much more modest, sometimes even contributing to negative trends [1]. As it turns out, a referendum, by itself, is not capable of transforming the population into a collective responsible entity capable of comprehending the fundamental needs of society and avoiding random and short-sighted decisions on social issues.

To mitigate these threats and ensure greater constructive and functional integrity of the democratic model of public governance, it is necessary to avoid absolutizing both the principle of mass participation and the principle of competent representative democracy. Instead, the analyzed international experience points towards establishing a constructive balance between state-representative and citizen-non-governmental mechanisms of public governance. In our view, this approach provides an opportunity to come closer to the constructive reproduction of the civil-democratic quality of the interrelationship between societal needs and state interests, thus removing the threat of the diffusion of collective and individual social subjectivity.

Compliance with the principle of democratic centralism is an important condition for addressing this task. While aiming to engage as broad a range of social strata in public governance as possible, the selectivity of government bodies and their officials, as well as ensuring their accountability to society, this principle also demands the preservation of a single management center capable of organizing the democratic process under its responsibility, disciplining its participants, and ensuring the implementation of decisions that are in the best interests of all. Essentially, this involves establishing a continuously functioning system of feedback between government authorities and civil self-organization. In this way, their bilateral active participation in public dialogue should be ensured, associated with maintaining a civilized order of transformation of civil movement subjects into government subjects responsible for implementing social transformation projects.

The development of these tendencies is contingent on the progress of civil society, the strengthening of a culture of collective social action, the promotion of values of social cooperation, and the fostering of trust. The transformation of authoritarian governance into democracy depends not only on legal laws

but also on the self-restraint of the individuals comprising it. According to Francis Fukuyama, if citizens demonstrate intolerance and do not respect each other, they will require a strong coercive state to establish order. If they cannot agree on common goals, they will need a state inclined to intervene in their affairs and capable of organizing what these individuals cannot achieve independently [10].

The author in question believes that the government's role in shaping civil society should be limited to establishing proper constitutional frameworks and ensuring their adherence. However, he is no longer as optimistic as he once was, and he now avoids the optimistic tone he had when he proclaimed the «end of ideological progress» and set the agenda for primary social reforms. In particular, certain notes of disappointment with the constructive possibilities of restoring trust resources in contemporary civilized society are felt. The American researcher emphasizes that social capital can be easily squandered by government actions, but mobilizing it again is very difficult. Hence, there is an urgent need during liberal social transformations to make every effort to preserve those traditional models of collective action that have proven themselves over a long historical period, concentrating in themselves the vital flows of sociality and trust. At the same time, there is skepticism about the government's ability, through systemic social reforms, to foster the emergence of new traditions of civic participation [10].

In essence, the process of filling constitutional and democratic forms with corresponding civic content is left to spontaneous social processes, which may, at some point, prove capable of breaking the endless corrupt cycle: «social chaos – authoritarian tyranny» that arises due to the weakness of civil society. This position seems to evoke extremely pessimistic sentiments, which are even more intensified when considering the full force of the trends that undermine the foundations of modern democracies. Under these conditions, adherence to the principle of democratic centralism becomes highly problematic, as it is associated with real threats of oligarchic-authoritarian or ochlocratic-populist violations.

In our opinion, the way out of this problematic situation is linked to a reevaluation of the role of the state government. In the context of the realities of Ukrainian society, it can and should develop and implement public policies aimed at realizing constitutional provisions, filling them with constructive socio-economic content. However, the state cannot be the sole driving force in establishing a civil order in both wartime

and peacetime periods. This is a complex public administration process in which government authorities must undertake preparatory work to awaken civil self-awareness in society. At the same time, the initiatives of individual political forces cannot fully substitute the societal movement of civil self-organization. Pocket public-party associations created under the auspices of oligarchic groups - all these are artificially distorted forms of civil self-organization that disorient the population, diminishing the very idea of social self-activity in their eyes. Instead, the focus of public policy should be on creating socio-economic, institutional, and normative-legal conditions necessary to activate civil self-organization in the population. Currently, the most significant progress has been made in the direction of constitutional engineering, particularly through the implementation of laws and sublegal normative-legal acts aimed at establishing a special civil legal format for relations between socially active citizens and holders of state power (The Constitution of Ukraine, The Law of Ukraine «On Citizen Appeals,» The Decree of the President of Ukraine «On Civil Dialogue» and others).

At the same time, the most crucial institutional transformations that could promote the establishment and development of a democratic model of public administration have not been realized. An analysis of international experience demonstrates that the main obstacle hindering the emergence and growth of socially significant forms of civic self-organization is the violation of officially declared principles of ensuring equality of rights for all subjects of property rights and their responsibility to society. This is corroborated by Ukraine's own experience. If during Soviet times, the right of state ownership was absolutized, leading to statist distortion of civic institutions and the establishment of a political monopoly by the party-state nomenclature, now, the right to private property is emphasized. In turn, this emphasizes social polarization, depriving the majority of its members of the resources required to realize their civil rights. This situation results in the unwarranted strengthening of the social positions of a very narrow oligarchic group. In both scenarios, all of this undermines the democratic principles of developing and implementing socially-oriented public policy and instead creates favorable conditions for its corporate distortion and alienation from the needs of progressive societal development.

At the same time, it is difficult to argue with R. Pipes, who emphasizes that private property can be an important condition for achieving the high values of civil society and a constitutional-democratic state [6]. Ultimately,

it is hard to disagree that it can indeed create a proper economic foundation for the free self-organization of social subjects capable of taking active, equitable, and participatory involvement in the process of transforming social relations.

**Conclusions.** However, like any other form of freedom, private property freedom of a social subject has its limits, exceeding which results in the alienation of individuals in all spheres - economic, social, political, and spiritual. To restore this socially significant limit, it is advisable to consider the experience of highly developed countries where during the second half of the 20th century, there was a rejection of both dogmatic sanctification of the inviolability of the institution of private property and projects of its complete state nationalization. In the context of Ukraine, the implementation of this scenario implies further construction of civilized market relations, where the state diligently monitors compliance with privatization conditions, combats economic monopolization, creates a normative and organizational basis for fair competition, and guarantees the social responsibility of entrepreneurs according to the extent of the property owned by each of them.

Thus, provided that the alienation of individuals in all spheres – economic, social, political, and spiritual – is overcome, an increase in the level of political and legal culture, and the harmony of all forms of property, real prospects for the development of a constitutional-democratic model of public governance emerge in the

conditions of modern Ukrainian society, *which* is on the path to creating an independent statehood.

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