

ORIGINAL

Conceptual aspects of public administration of the quality of life in the context of war

Aspectos conceptuales de la administración pública de la calidad de vida en el contexto de la guerra

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: post-COVID syndrome is associated with a wide range of long-term complications, among which neurological manifestations have become increasingly recognized. These complications present diagnostic and therapeutic challenges due to their heterogeneity and the evolving understanding of their pathophysiology.

Objective: to investigate the clinical and pathogenetic characteristics of neurological manifestations in patients with post-COVID syndrome, with a focus on identifying patterns and potential underlying mechanisms.

Method: a cohort of 60 patients with confirmed post-COVID syndrome was evaluated. Clinical assessments included neurological examination, neuroimaging (MRI), and neurophysiological studies (EEG, EMG, and evoked potentials). Laboratory markers were also analyzed to assess inflammatory and autoimmune activity. Data were categorized by symptom type and severity.

Results: the most frequent neurological symptoms were headaches (48,3 %), cognitive impairments (41,6 %), sleep disorders (40 %), and anxiety-depressive symptoms (38,3 %). Neuroimaging revealed structural changes in 35 % of patients, while neurophysiological testing showed signs of central and peripheral dysfunction in a significant subset. Laboratory analysis indicated elevated inflammatory markers in patients with more severe neurological presentations. Findings suggest a multifactorial pathogenesis involving neuroinflammation, vascular dysfunction, and possible autoimmune responses.

Conclusions: the most frequent neurological symptoms were headaches (48,3 %), cognitive impairments (41,6 %), sleep disorders (40 %), and anxiety-depressive symptoms (38,3 %). Neuroimaging revealed structural changes in 35 % of patients, while neurophysiological testing showed signs of central and peripheral dysfunction in a significant subset. Laboratory analysis indicated elevated inflammatory markers in patients with more severe neurological presentations. Findings suggest a multifactorial pathogenesis involving neuroinflammation, vascular dysfunction, and possible autoimmune responses.

Keywords: Public Administration; Quality of Life; Individual Potential; Wartime Governance; Policy Resilience; Digital Governance.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el síndrome post-COVID se asocia a un amplio abanico de complicaciones a largo plazo, entre las

que se han ido reconociendo cada vez más las manifestaciones neurológicas. Estas complicaciones presentan retos diagnósticos y terapéuticos debido a su heterogeneidad y a la evolución de la comprensión de su fisiopatología.

Objetivo: investigar las características clínicas y patogenéticas de las manifestaciones neurológicas en pacientes con síndrome post-COVID, con un enfoque en la identificación de patrones y potenciales mecanismos subyacentes

Método: se evaluó una cohorte de 60 pacientes con síndrome post-COVID confirmado. Las evaluaciones clínicas incluyeron un examen neurológico, neuroimágenes (IRM) y estudios neurofisiológicos (EEG, EMG y potenciales evocados). También se analizaron marcadores de laboratorio para evaluar la actividad inflamatoria y autoinmune. Los datos se clasificaron por tipo de síntoma y gravedad.

Resultados: los síntomas neurológicos más frecuentes fueron cefaleas (48,3 %), alteraciones cognitivas (41,6 %), trastornos del sueño (40 %) y síntomas ansioso-depresivos (38,3 %). La neuroimagen reveló cambios estructurales en el 35 % de los pacientes, mientras que las pruebas neurofisiológicas mostraron signos de disfunción central y periférica en un subconjunto significativo. Los análisis de laboratorio indicaron marcadores inflamatorios elevados en los pacientes con cuadros neurológicos más graves. Los hallazgos sugieren una patogenia multifactorial que implica neuroinflamación, disfunción vascular y posibles respuestas autoinmunes.

Conclusiones: las manifestaciones neurológicas del síndrome post-COVID son clínicamente diversas y fisiopatológicamente complejas. Este estudio subraya la necesidad de enfoques diagnósticos integrales y apoya el desarrollo de estrategias terapéuticas específicas para abordar los síntomas neurocognitivos y neuropsiquiátricos persistentes en pacientes post-COVID.

Palabras clave: Administración Pública; Calidad de Vida; Potencial Individual; Gobernanza en Tiempos de Guerra; Resistencia Política; Gobernanza Digital.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the burden of chronic disease, environmental degradation, educational inequality etc. has grown substantially, evolving from a localized concern into a global issue with widespread social, economic, and health implications. Historically, this problem was addressed in fragmented ways, often limited by regional perspectives and inconsistent data. However, global developments - including urbanization, technological advancements, and shifting policy priorities - have highlighted the urgency of a more coordinated and comprehensive approach. Recent studies have emphasized the complexity and persistence of this issue, particularly in relation to inequality, access to resources, and policy response. Despite increased scholarly and institutional attention, significant gaps remain in understanding the full scope of the problem and identifying effective interventions. These gaps underscore the importance of synthesizing existing evidence to provide a clearer picture of current challenges and opportunities.

This review aims to critically examine recent developments in the field, identify prevailing trends and challenges, and offer evidence-based insights to inform future research and policy efforts. The theoretical framework of resilience and adaptive governance, which highlights PA (public administration) 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⁽³⁷⁾ and Mulska et al.⁽³²⁾ 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?

METHOD

This review followed a structured and systematic approach to identify and analyze relevant literature. The search strategy was developed collaboratively by the authors to ensure broad and comprehensive coverage

of the topic. Searches were conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, focusing on peer-reviewed publications from the last 10 years. A combination of keyword searches and Boolean operators was used to retrieve relevant articles. The inclusion criteria required that studies be published in English, address the core themes of the review, and provide empirical or theoretical insights into the topic. Reference lists of selected articles were also reviewed to identify additional sources.

Following the initial screening of titles and abstracts, full-text articles were evaluated for relevance and quality. Data were extracted using a standardized framework and analyzed thematically. The findings were organized into key categories reflecting the main dimensions of the issue under study. 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.

RESULTS

The reviewed literature consistently highlights the increasing prominence of the issue in both policy and academic discourse. In earlier years, the topic often received fragmented attention, but recent publications reflect a more cohesive understanding of its complexity. The problem is now widely recognized as intersectoral in nature, intersecting with public health, social equity, and governance. This shift is also visible in international agendas, where the issue has become increasingly integrated into broader frameworks and development goals.

⁽¹¹⁾ A large portion of the literature focuses on institutional and policy responses. High-income countries are generally characterized by more structured approaches, supported by legal mandates and sustained funding. In contrast, lower-income countries often experience fragmented institutional frameworks, with limited inter-ministerial coordination and inconsistent implementation. However, across both contexts, there is a gradual trend toward more integrated, multi-level governance. Studies note improvements in agenda-setting and cross-sector collaboration, though major gaps remain in execution and enforcement

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⁽³⁸⁾ 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⁽⁹⁾ 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,⁽⁴⁸⁾ 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.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The war has also contributed to a growing homelessness crisis. A report from The Guardian⁽⁵¹⁾ 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.

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",⁽²²⁾ 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.^(6,14)

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⁽³⁵⁾ to 50 % of the production capacities of enterprises of strategic industries, most of which were located in the east of Ukraine;⁽³⁴⁾ 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 %);⁽¹³⁾ 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.⁽⁵⁾ 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.⁽⁵⁸⁾

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.⁽²⁹⁾

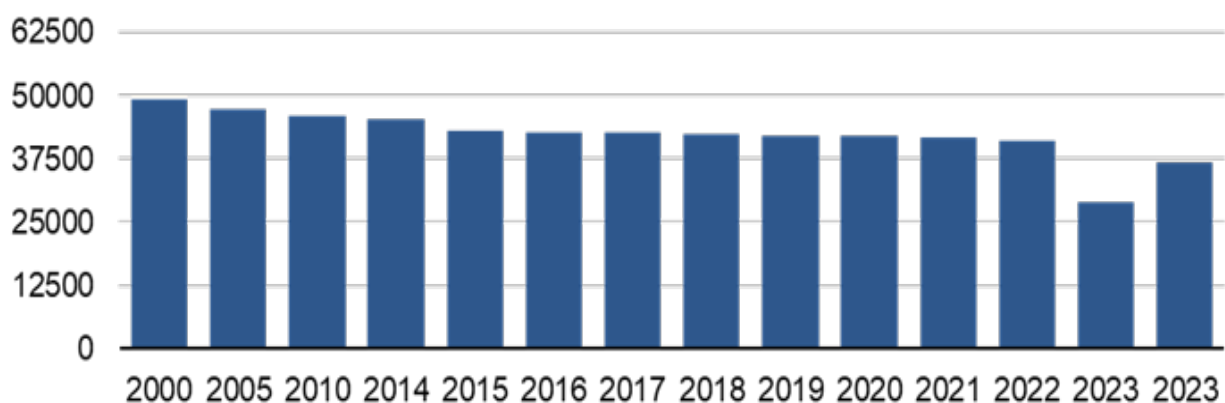


Figure 1. The population of Ukraine from 2000 to 2023 (from 2014 - excluding the occupied territories (Crimea, Sevastopol, part of Donbas))

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.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Figure 2 shows total civilian casualties, by age and sex (February 24, 2022 to July 30, 2023).

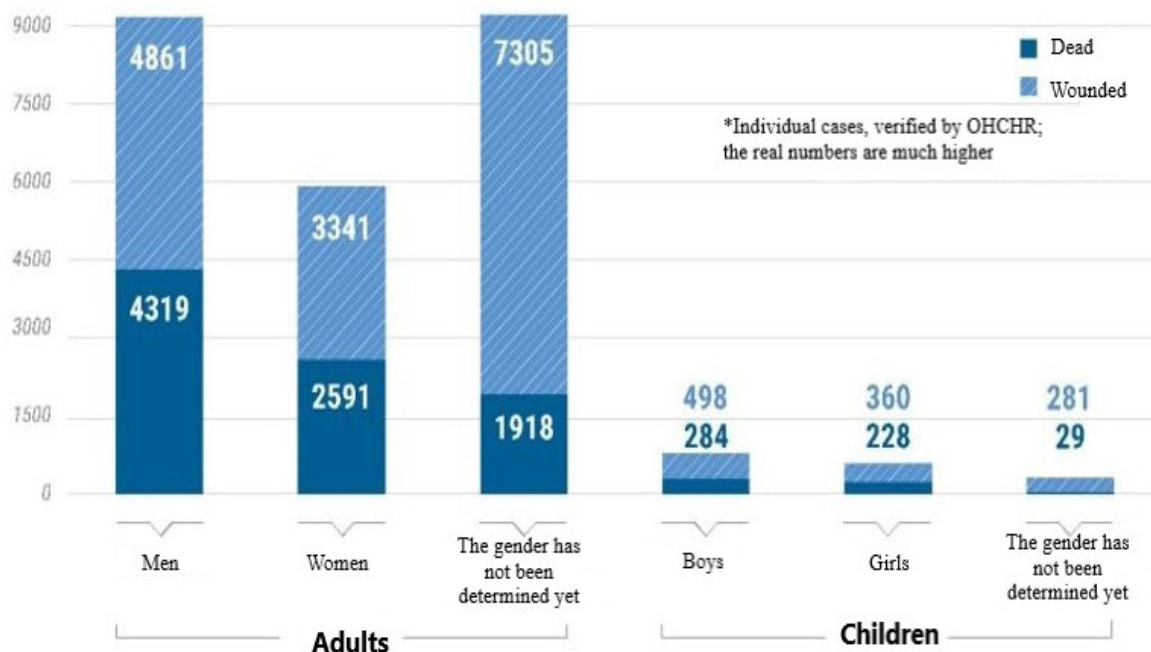


Figure 2. Total civilian casualties, by age and sex (24 February 2022 to 30 July 2023)⁽⁵⁷⁾

Equally noteworthy is the substantial population of internally displaced persons, surpassing 7 million individuals^(12, 45). 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.⁽⁴⁰⁾

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).⁽⁵⁾ According to a study by the OPORA 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.

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,⁽⁵⁾ 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.⁽³¹⁾ 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.⁽⁵⁾

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.⁽³³⁾ 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.^(4,20)

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.^(4,28)

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.^(3,28) 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.^(16,43)

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.⁽¹⁰⁾ 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.⁽¹⁰⁾

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.⁽²⁸⁾

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).⁽⁵³⁾ 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.⁽¹⁰⁾

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^(2,8) 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 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)⁽¹⁾ 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).⁽⁵⁵⁾

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.

	Rank	Country	HDI value (2019)	Life expectancy at birth (years) SDG 3	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

Figure 3. Human Development Index Ranking in 2020⁽⁵⁴⁾

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. 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.^(17,18,24)

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 %.⁽⁵²⁾

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).⁽³¹⁾ Figure 4 shows how Ukraine's place in international rankings has changed over the past seven years.

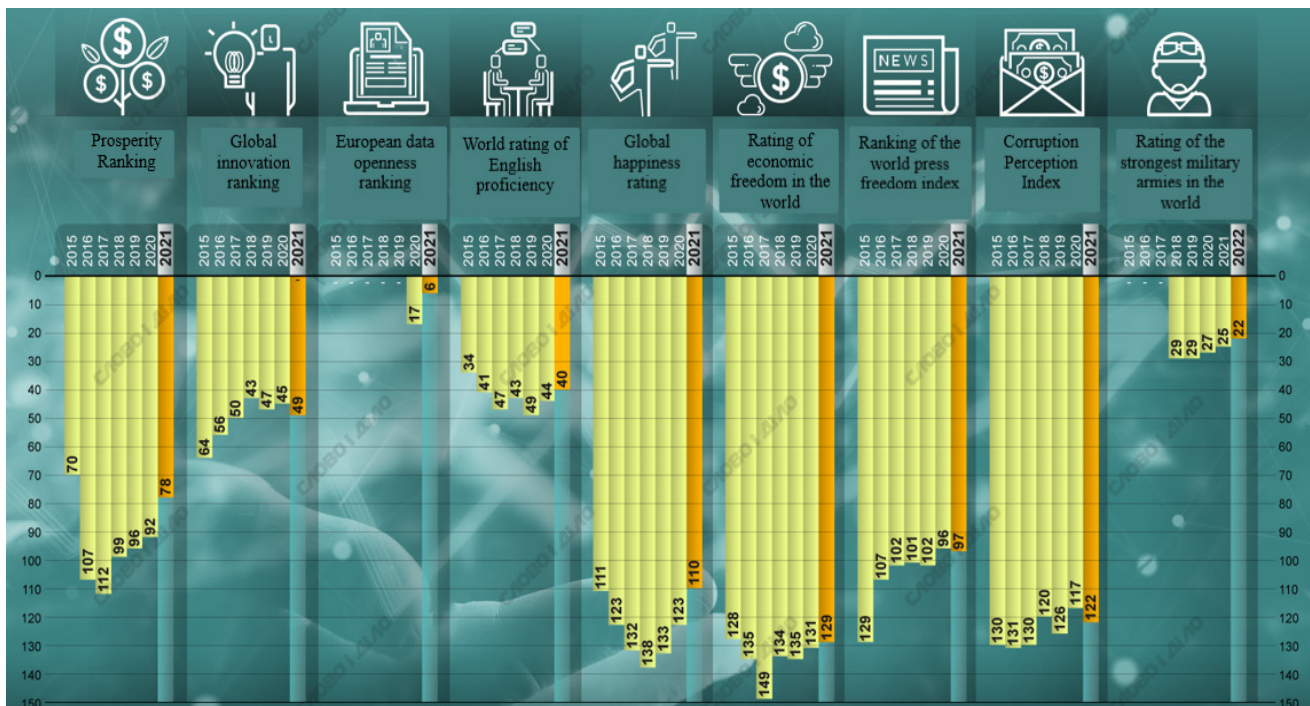


Figure 4. Ukraine's place in the world rankings in 2015-2021⁽⁴⁶⁾

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.⁽⁵⁰⁾

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.

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:

- "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;
- "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;

- “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⁽²⁶⁾, 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;
- “Fatigue from the war” and the exhaustion of the resource of the population’s resistance against the background of the routinization 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, etc.⁽³⁵⁾

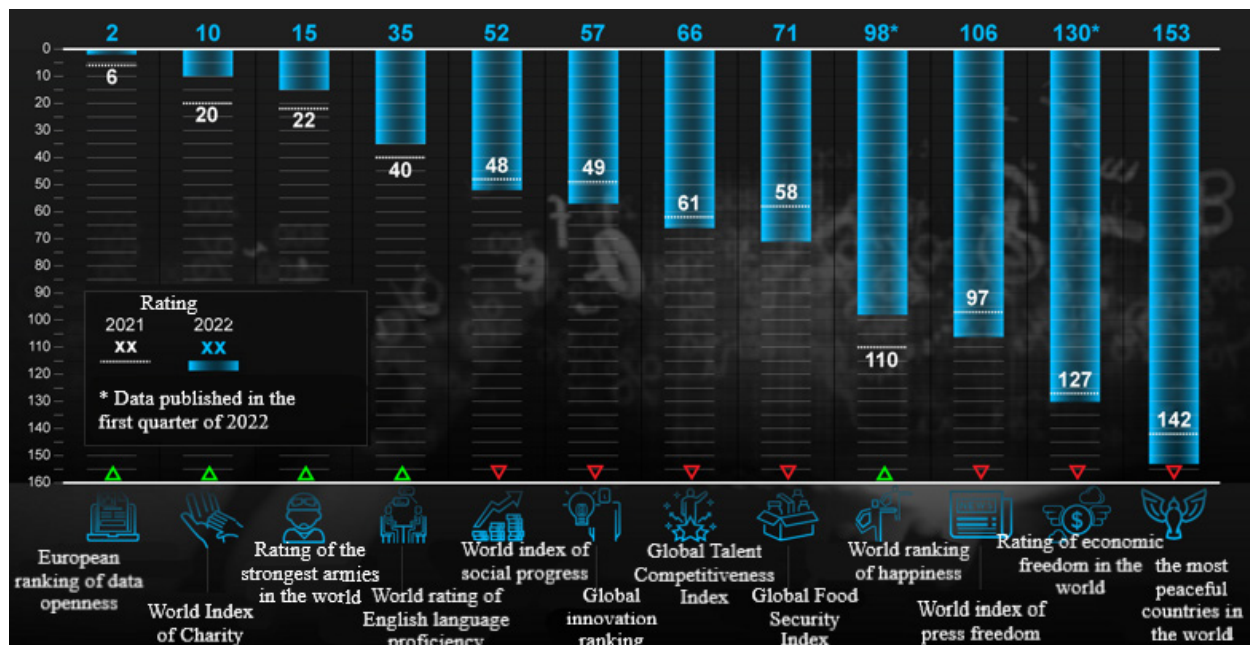


Figure 5. How Ukraine’s positions in international rankings changed in 2022⁽⁴⁶⁾

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.^(19,44)

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”.⁽¹⁵⁾ 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.^(2,7) 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,^(25,59) 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.⁽⁴²⁾ 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.⁽⁴¹⁾ The progress of the PA reform today is a difficult to predict process, 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.^(3,30)

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”.^(7,21)

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 achievement 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.⁽²³⁾

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.⁽⁴⁷⁾

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⁽⁵⁹⁾ - 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.⁽³⁹⁾ 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.^(20,27)

DISCUSSION

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.⁽⁴⁹⁾ 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.⁽⁵¹⁾

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.^(8,9,36) 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.⁽³⁸⁾

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. Effective resource management, transparent governance, and a focus on citizen engagement will be critical to strengthening PA and improving the QoL in Ukraine.

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 development. 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.

Neurological manifestations in patients with post-COVID syndrome are diverse and include both central and peripheral nervous system disorders, such as cognitive impairment, headaches, polyneuropathy, and psycho-emotional disturbances. Our findings highlight that these symptoms are not random but follow distinct clinical patterns and are associated with identifiable neuroimaging and neurophysiological abnormalities. The results support the hypothesis of a multifactorial pathogenesis, including neuroinflammatory, autoimmune, and vascular mechanisms. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the clinical and pathogenetic characteristics of post-COVID neurological complications, which is essential for improving diagnosis, treatment, and long-term monitoring. These insights can inform the development of comprehensive management strategies tailored to the specific neurocognitive and neuropsychiatric profiles of affected patients.

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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