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ORIGINAL

## Principles of public administration in the modern social sphere of Ukraine

### Principios de la administración pública en la esfera social moderna de Ucrania

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** public administration plays a crucial role in managing the social sphere and implementing social policies in modern societies. In Ukraine, the social sphere serves citizens' interests and supports societal values, but realizing its potential requires effective governance through public institutions.

**Objective:** the purpose of this study is to evaluate the key features and principles of public administration in Ukraine's modern social sphere.

**Method:** this study employed analysis, modeling, and historical methods to review relevant legislation, government reports, and academic literature on public administration and social policy in Ukraine.

**Results:** the research highlights management as a critical element in Ukraine's social sphere administration due to various factors influencing social policy changes. Effective governance reduces inequality and supports citizens facing diverse issues. Key features include the social sphere's role in protecting human rights within political and legal systems, state support encompassing direct payments and other assistance like psychological aid, local and regional levels having significant potential for social work administration, and wartime conditions necessitating adapted governance mechanisms and targeted support for affected populations.

**Conclusions:** public administration in Ukraine's social sphere requires balancing multiple priorities to uphold citizens' rights and welfare. While facing challenges, the system demonstrates adaptability, particularly in crisis response. Further reforms and efficiency improvements could enhance its capacity to meet societal needs and support Ukraine's development goals.

**Keywords:** State; Management; Governance; Public Administration; Methods of Organizing Management; Economy of Ukraine and Its Regions.

#### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** la administración pública desempeña un papel crucial en la gestión de la esfera social y la aplicación de políticas sociales en las sociedades modernas. En Ucrania, la esfera social sirve a los intereses de los ciudadanos y apoya los valores de la sociedad, pero hacer realidad su potencial requiere una gobernanza eficaz a través de las instituciones públicas.

**Objetivo:** el propósito de este estudio es evaluar las características y principios clave de la administración pública en la esfera social moderna de Ucrania.

**Método:** este estudio empleó métodos de análisis, modelización e históricos para revisar la legislación relevante, los informes gubernamentales y la literatura académica sobre la administración pública y la

política social en Ucrania.

**Resultados:** la investigación destaca la gestión como un elemento crítico en la administración de la esfera social de Ucrania debido a diversos factores que influyen en los cambios de la política social. Una gobernanza eficaz reduce la desigualdad y apoya a los ciudadanos que se enfrentan a diversos problemas. Entre las características clave se incluyen el papel de la esfera social en la protección de los derechos humanos dentro de los sistemas político y jurídico, el apoyo estatal que abarca pagos directos y otro tipo de asistencia como la ayuda psicológica, los niveles local y regional que tienen un potencial significativo para la administración del trabajo social, y las condiciones de tiempo de guerra que requieren mecanismos de gobernanza adaptados y apoyo específico para las poblaciones afectadas.

**Conclusiones:** la administración pública en el ámbito social de Ucrania requiere equilibrar múltiples prioridades para defender los derechos y el bienestar de los ciudadanos. A pesar de los retos a los que se enfrenta, el sistema demuestra capacidad de adaptación, especialmente en la respuesta a las crisis. Nuevas reformas y mejoras de la eficiencia podrían aumentar su capacidad para satisfacer las necesidades de la sociedad y apoyar los objetivos de desarrollo de Ucrania.

**Palabras clave:** Estado; Gestión; Gobernanza; Administración Pública; Métodos de Organización de la Gestión; la Economía de Ucrania y Sus Regiones.

## INTRODUCTION

At the present stage, the social sphere is an important component of state development. At the same time, it is an integral element of its policy, which significantly reduces the negative impact of social inequality and economic shocks.<sup>(1)</sup> The social sphere plays an important role, as it provides a real opportunity not only to positively influence the lives of individuals in need of appropriate assistance but also to make society more equitable and improve the economic development of the state.<sup>(2,3)</sup> This is caused by the fact that the greater the inequality is (which is most often measured using the Gini index,<sup>(4)</sup> the less efficient and better the functioning of the economy.<sup>(5,6)</sup> This is not the only positive effect: it is possible to highlight the growth of demand, strengthening of the political and social, further improvement of the investment climate, etc. It is worth noting that active state regulation, including social governance tools, plays an important role in times of crisis,<sup>(7)</sup> which makes it especially important to consider it in the current Ukrainian realities (primarily in connection with Russia's full-scale invasion) and for the world as a whole (due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, energy problems, and the prospects for a new global financial crisis).<sup>(8,9)</sup>

Although there are many different public policy instruments in this area, their incorrect use may not bring any positive effects and may only harm the state.<sup>(10)</sup> Therefore, the study of the features and rules of public administration in the modern social sphere in Ukraine is relevant. In addition, it is important to consider the socio-economic essence of this concept, mechanisms of implementation, characteristics, etc. This will make it possible to find opportunities for further improvement in this area. Many well-known scholars have studied the peculiarities of governance and the role of the state in terms of support for the population, particularly in Ukraine. An important study is by Bransah W,<sup>(11)</sup> in which the author assesses the fundamental difference in the management of the social sphere in democratic and authoritarian regimes. At the same time, it should be noted that this research is essentially theoretical in nature, so it does not contain practical advice for improving the functioning of such a system in democratic states (which the author is on the side of).

The study by Chen Y et al.<sup>(12)</sup> in which the researchers found relevant interdependencies between pension insurance and the entrepreneurial behavior of the population. They can be successfully used both in the formation of social policy and policy in the field of entrepreneurship development. In turn, Curi-Quinto K et al.<sup>(13)</sup> in their study depicts the role played by government support during the COVID-19 pandemic. They point out that if the state had not intervened, the existing effects could have been even more serious. This could have led to a recession in many countries or even a depression. It is worth noting the study by Popovych V and Popovych Ya,<sup>(14)</sup> assessed the peculiarities of social sector management in Ukraine during the war. The authors also note certain factors that influenced and substantiated fundamental changes in the governance mechanisms within this area. However, they do not provide practical advice on how to eliminate existing inefficiencies and improve the management system.

Thus, the research aims to assess the peculiarities of social sector administration in Ukraine, which should help improve the effectiveness of public policy in this area and, consequently, improve the overall standard of living of the population.

## METHOD

The authors had to process many data within the framework of Ukrainian legislation: laws that affect the state's activities in the social sphere, including the Law of Ukraine No. 1533-III "On mandatory state social

unemployment insurance”;<sup>(15)</sup> Law of Ukraine No. 1788-XII “On pension provision”;<sup>(16)</sup> Law of Ukraine No. 2671-VIII “On Social Services”;<sup>(17)</sup> Law of Ukraine No. 794-VII “On the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine” and Budget Code of Ukraine.<sup>(18,19)</sup> In addition, data from some international organizations were used, including The World Bank.<sup>(20)</sup> At the same time, two different approaches were used: the first was a systemic approach, which made it possible to understand the nature, role, and state of the social sphere in Ukraine by dividing it into separate components based on characteristic distributional features.

In addition, a synergistic approach was used, which made it possible to consider the main components of the problem of administrative management of this sphere in the country and the implementation of state policy in it, to identify among them the main and essential characteristics that interact with each other based on internal and external processes. The main scientific method used in the study was analysis. The reason for this is that to conclude the research results, it was necessary to process quite large amounts of information. In addition, the historical method also played a significant role in assessing the realities of the current functioning of the social sphere in Ukraine and its progressive development over the past 30 years. Using the method of induction, the authors were able to assess the characteristic differences in the implementation of state policy in the social sphere of the country, considering the mechanisms of its implementation and the overall effectiveness and efficiency for its population.

By using the modeling method, the authors made it easier to understand the main features of the functioning of various components of the social sphere in Ukraine and the institutions that implement the chosen social policy. For this purpose, the study built a model that describes the functioning of the Ukrainian social protection system. The forecasting method was also used, which made it possible to conclude how certain changes in the principles of public administration in the social sphere of Ukraine may affect the future development of the country. Thus, the method of abstraction was also important, as it allowed for a clearer description of the impact of individual components without the influence of external factors (thus simplifying the model). The modeling method was also used in the construction of the relevant model, which made it possible to group, identify and simplify some of its constituent elements, which made the model less difficult to perceive and understand. In turn, the graphic method was used to directly depict the model.

## RESULTS

The main goals of the state’s social policy are to create conditions for citizens that provide them with a real opportunity to improve their well-being through their work. In addition, such a policy should be aimed at supporting the most vulnerable segments of the population, in particular, through various measures and the development of support programs for wages and pensions. Another component of this policy is to increase the subsistence level, which is one of the main indicators of the country’s living standards,<sup>(21)</sup> and to ensure a decent standard of living for those with various disabilities. At the regional level, this is done by local governments and state authorities, which implement relevant state financial support programs at the level of regions, districts, or communities.<sup>(18,22,23,24)</sup>

The meaning of the “social sphere” concept is multidimensional. In modern scientific economic literature, one can find several definitions and characteristic features. First, it is an ordered set of social groups - classes, nations, etc. Secondly, it is a non-productive sphere of the national economy whose main goal is to properly meet the needs of all citizens. Third, it occupies a certain intermediate position between the economy and politics of a country. Fourthly, it is a sphere of social activity that covers relations between (and among) all individuals in the community who have different statuses (most often financial). The social and labor sphere includes several components. These components are education, health care, the social protection system, and culture. It also encompasses the labor market and employment services, retraining, and work motivation. Social partnership, social insurance, and the pension system are part of this sphere as well. Additionally, labor and environmental protection are important components, among several others.<sup>(25,26,27)</sup> Based on this, it can be defined the social sphere as integral, dynamic, and dependent on the development of the state subsystem of society, generated by the objective need for continuous reproduction of individual subjects of a particular social process.

This sphere itself does not have any fixed framework. Its functioning takes place in interaction with other processes of society aimed at different groups. The social sphere includes the processes and objects involved in the formation of a system whose properties are interconnected with the consistent reproduction and improvement of a particular person (or their groups) by satisfying their urgent daily and higher needs. Its main function is the social reproduction of people as subjects of life with the use of specific structures and social institutions and resources for the life support of social subjects.<sup>(25)</sup> Such structures include various public organizations, representatives of state authorities, political parties, etc., and at the regional level - local governments.<sup>(28,29,30)</sup>

The basis of the social sphere is the needs of individuals and their value orientations, i.e., ideals, interests, aspirations. They are the basis for shaping their behavior in society. Another important component is infrastructure, which is essentially a system of organizations and institutions that ensure the functioning of

social institutions. It can be characterized by the number of entities that ensure the proper processes of its creation, medical, household, transportation services.<sup>(31,32,33)</sup> To assess the quality of the social infrastructure, there is a list of characteristic factors that can be used to evaluate both its quantitative and qualitative characteristics: the state of health and social services for citizens, the degree to which their needs are met. Thus, individuals as such are the most important component of the social sphere. Although there are many groups of different factors of social development, it is possible to identify some of the main ones, a summary of which is given in table 1.

Table 1. Factors of social development and their brief description	
Factors	Characteristic
Economic	Assess the level of socio-economic development of the country and its regions
Political	Allow us to understand the impact of social policy on the population groups it targets
Legal	Evaluate the legislative regulation of the main processes of the social sphere in the state, while cultural ones show how moral and ethical norms affect social relations
Climate	Characterize how environmental features affect the life of the population
Social and demographic	Address the composition of the population, its age and levels of migration, birth and death rates and show the impact on society
National and ethnic	Assess the influence of national mentality in society, customs, traditions, rituals
Social and psychologic	Different societal moods, feelings, or expectations of different segments of the population

Source: I.T. Zvarych et al.<sup>(22)</sup>

Table 1 shows 7 main factors that characterize the development of the social sphere. It should be noted that there are more of them, mainly because, as mentioned earlier, the modern social sphere has no clear boundaries, and therefore the division of factors measuring its effectiveness cannot be clearly defined. Nevertheless, the authors believe that the characterization provided in Table 1 is quite clear and balanced.

A separate component that should be considered is social governance. It has several main features. Firstly, social management functions only with the joint activity of people, since its essence is to organize the overall activity of many participants in a particular activity. Secondly, it is the main object of appropriate influence on human behavior and controls it properly. Thirdly, such social management is based on the relationship between the will of the participants in such management relations.<sup>(22)</sup> This mechanism of public management is formed through public institutions, which are its main subjects. Together, they form the governance system, which includes the state, public organizations, political parties, etc. As already mentioned, at the regional level, public administration of the social sphere (as a mechanism for implementing social policy goals) is carried out by local government bodies.<sup>(25,34,35,36)</sup> At the same time, to better understand the functioning of the main institutions in the social sphere, the model shown in figure 1 was built.

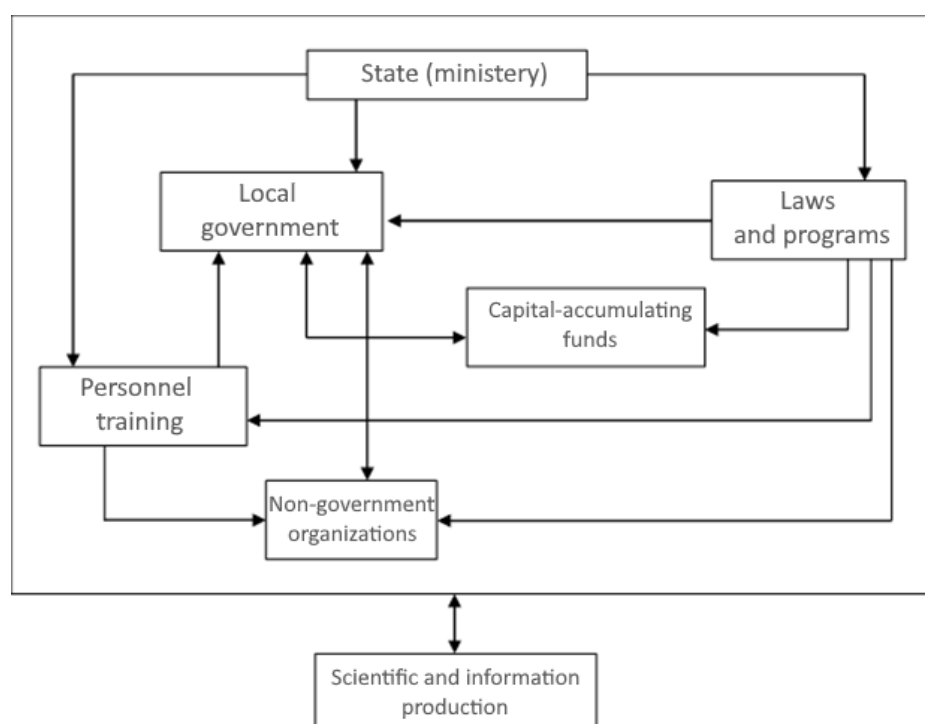


Figure 1. A model for the functioning of the social sphere in Ukraine

As can be seen from figure 1, all the main components of the model actively interact with each other using many interconnections. For example, the behavior of local governments depends on the laws adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the amount of money accumulated by the funds, the activities of higher authorities, and so on. This complex interaction allows for more effective solutions to the challenges that authorities often face when implementing various public policies, including social policy.

Public administration of the social sphere also has its specific principles, among which the following are most often distinguished: the existence of a negative feedback loop; continuous exchange of information within the system; closed management system, and clear management goals.<sup>(37,38,39)</sup> As for the latter, there can be several types of them. For example, there are the following: the democratization of all spheres of society; protection of citizens' rights; strengthening of government institutions; improvement of human welfare; social security of society; etc. There are quite a few such goals. It is worth emphasizing that the state can pursue many of them simultaneously when formulating social policy. As for the functions of such public administration, they are not much different from any other type of management.<sup>(40)</sup> They mainly include general management, planning, organization, operational intervention, differing from others in that its regulators are specific entities - both the state and local governments - that should reflect the basic wishes of society and its individuals. Thus, its main role is primarily to coordinate all interactions between the structures that ensure social welfare in the country and thus create its social policy.

Since there is such a function as public administration of the social sphere, there should be criteria that would allow us to assess its effectiveness. One of the most important among them is the basic state concepts, goals, or values of the state and its course in this area. Equally important is the internal organization of the government, from its top to executive bodies, and how the interaction between them functions. It is also worth mentioning the role of the state of the administrative apparatus, its forms, and its methods. The level of public confidence in the government and its role in the state also plays a significant role. It is worth mentioning the factors of social and economic stability that can both facilitate and complicate any internal processes in the state. In turn, the state's activities to help citizens can be varied. The most common is pension insurance, which can be based on age, disability, loss of a breadwinner, and several other reasons why the state begins to support its citizens.<sup>(16)</sup> Equally important is their insurance in case of temporary disability, which can be caused by birth or burial, or in case of an accident at work or occupational disease. And the last type of such assistance is unemployment insurance.<sup>(10)</sup> In any case, all these types of insurance are important for ensuring the best possible functioning of domestic economic and social systems.<sup>(17,41,42)</sup>

There are also some peculiarities in public administration in the field of science, culture, and art. The state policy in these areas is generally aimed at developing national culture, and national heritage and meeting the spiritual needs of society using a specific system of measures. In Ukraine, its main goal is to ensure that citizens of the country understand the identity of the Ukrainian people and create a single cultural space in the country. From the perspective of science development, it is important to provide decent learning conditions for children and enable them to participate in various social activities, develop in the desired directions, etc. Such a policy is multifaceted and includes many smaller components. For example, to ensure high cultural development among citizens, it is important to publish and distribute Ukrainian books, organize various events with educational purposes in these areas, care for and monitor cultural heritage, etc. At the same time, it is worth mentioning the need for international cultural cooperation, which contributes to both the spread of Ukrainian cultural heritage abroad and a certain broadening of horizons among local citizens. Equally important, it often helps to improve relations between the countries involved in such cultural exchange.<sup>(43,44,45,46,47)</sup>

It should also be noted that the determination of relevant priorities of state policy in the field of culture and other areas is based on the programs of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and other targeted programs in this area, which has certain competencies in the field of science and scientific and technical activities, the main of which is the distribution of budget funds to finance research and the work of enterprises that carry out them.<sup>(14)</sup> Thus, it is this body that is the main one when it comes to policy in such areas as culture and art and scientific research as special components in the social sphere.

## DISCUSSION

Khromov AV *et al.*<sup>(48)</sup> assessed the general prospects for the development of public administration. The researchers noted that the field of public administration is quite dynamic in nature and depends primarily on the rule of law, the overall economic development of the state, the achieved level of democratization of social relations and the degree of personal freedoms. However, it should also be noted that not only economic development affects the level of state governance, but also vice versa - high-quality public administration in any area (including social) can ensure the more rapid economic growth of each territory. In addition, the scientists note that the state should implement reforms to ensure more effective public administration, although they do not specify which ones. Following the authors, the most qualitative change would be to increase control

over the activities of the relevant executive bodies, especially at the local and regional levels, to minimize the possibility of any speculation and improper use of existing powers.

Bransah W<sup>(11)</sup> highlighted the role of public administration in modern democratic states (as opposed to authoritarian ones) in the social sphere, clearly stating that the role and functions of public administration have already become quite dynamic, constantly changing, and evolving along with the needs of society. Technological development, the formation of new principles of governance, changes in consumer needs, their civic position, etc. are all important reasons for making changes to social policy. Thus, this can become a problem for democratic countries, one of the negative components of which is significant bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the authors believe that it is in such cases that countries with a similar system of government are still more effective in fulfilling their fundamental tasks to ensure the rights and freedoms of the population and maximize their living standards.

The state support for citizens as pension insurance and its role in every society was described. Nevertheless, some modern economists have different opinions. Thus, Chen Y et al.<sup>(12)</sup> conducted a study on how pension provision affects entrepreneurship in a country, showing that basic pension insurance reduces the number of entrepreneurs (or rather, the probability that a particular person will become one). However, at the same time, the existence of such insurance increases the likelihood that the country will have a relatively higher number of innovation-oriented entrepreneurs. Thus, this study does not in itself indicate that pension insurance in a country leads to negative consequences for the corresponding development of entrepreneurship. It only changes its structure, which makes it possible to adjust the state's policy in the context of pension insurance in such a way that it is consistent with the policy of entrepreneurship development.

Government support during the COVID-19 crisis, especially in its first months, played an important role. Thus, Curi-Quinto K et al.<sup>(13)</sup> note that it played a crucial role in ensuring a decent standard of living for citizens. It can lead to some inefficiencies that existed in the implementation of this kind of assistance. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that in its absence, the economies of states and their people would have been much worse off. However, sometimes even such assistance is not enough to solve all the problems. For example, Barrafreem K et al.<sup>(49)</sup> conclude that government support has not been able to fully offset the negative impact of COVID on people. Moreover, it has caused a certain level of distrust, especially given that the restrictions imposed by the states have become one of the reasons for the economic and financial difficulties. It is also worth noting that government support, in this case, does not avoid the problem entirely as it only allows to move or stretch it over a longer period. This can be seen especially now, when there is a very high probability of recession in Europe and North America due to the high rates of interest rate hikes by central banks and uncontrolled inflation,<sup>(20,50)</sup> although its onset is not yet inevitable,<sup>(51)</sup> and most of the world's population is experiencing the negative impact of some government decisions and the pandemic.

Latynin MA et al.<sup>(52)</sup> studied the current governance in the economic sphere of Ukraine. They showed that there is a strong need to improve administrative management in Ukraine. However, the authors are convinced that the Ukrainian social sector system also has significant problems that need to be addressed urgently, mainly in terms of bureaucracy, inefficient use of budget funds, etc. Thus, Popovych V and Popovych Ya,<sup>(14)</sup> in their study, assess how the social sphere functions in Ukraine during the war, coming to the following main conclusions. First, the greatest potential of public administration in the field of social work is seen at the regional and local levels. Many scholars note that at these levels there is a significant level of interaction between the local administration and the administration of each territorial community within the framework of social protection of the population. Secondly, they highlight the areas of support for social projects during the period of hostilities. This includes organization of a network of centers for social and psychological program-targeted management, specifically development and implementation of various social programs and projects for combatants and organization of a network of centers for social and psychological rehabilitation. This also include work with internally displaced persons using project management methods with the population of frontline areas and provision of services to them. Indeed, as noted in the paper, the main function of the social sector development is to uphold universal values and rights, which includes assistance to war-affected people.

This is especially important, as it makes it possible to reduce the level of their suffering and often save their lives. It should also be noted that the need for special support for these segments of the population does not mean that others are less in need of assistance. That is why the state must be able to continue to fulfill its basic obligations: to pay pensions, scholarships, salaries to civil servants, etc. Denial of such payments may inevitably lead to a likely increase in internal instability, a decrease in public confidence in the state's actions, and a lack of confidence in its prospects, etc. In addition, scholars point out the existing mechanisms of governance under martial law, including socio-managerial, material and financial, information and communication, and regulatory and legal ones, and substantiate some other functional features of this area in modern military realities. Thus, this research describes in detail the main features of the functioning of public administration in the modern social sphere of Ukraine. The authors characterize the management mechanisms and the main factors of development of this sphere, principles, values, etc. In conclusion, it is worth noting that any management system cannot be perfect but will have certain weaknesses and benefits compared to others. Nevertheless, the

authorities should always minimize the disadvantages and maximize the benefits, because this is the only way to achieve the maximum potential in the economic development of the state.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research evaluated the main components of public administration in Ukraine's modern social sphere. It demonstrated that the social sphere plays a vital role in representing people's interests and mitigating negative effects of inequality and shocks. Key elements include addressing individual needs and value orientations that shape behavior, as well as the social infrastructure of institutions and governing bodies that enable its functioning. Public policy implementation is crucial for ensuring citizen welfare by influencing the social sphere to improve living standards. This is carried out through controlled legislative orders by elected representatives. Timely payment of promised benefits like pensions and social insurance is essential, as problems can reduce economic efficiency and cause public dissatisfaction. Effective management of this system is particularly important for Ukraine's development, market relations, and European integration aspirations. Future research comparing Ukraine's public administration of the social sphere to other countries could yield valuable insights for potential improvements.

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