Tovmashenko Roman Fedorovych, Postgraduate Student of the Department of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, National Technical University "Dnipro Polytechnic", Dnipro, Ukraine, https// orcid.org: 0009-0004-6712-5999

TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRATIC TURBULENCE

Abstract

The article studies the transformation of public policy in the context of growing democratic turbulence, characterized by instability of political processes, polarization of society, increased information threats and complication of interaction between the state and citizens. Theoretical approaches to understanding the essence of public policy are revealed, emphasis is placed on the multi-vector nature of its interpretations in modern scientific discourse, and the key factors that determine its instability in the global and national dimensions. For Ukraine, the impact of war, institutional fragmentation, low level of public trust and high dependence of political processes on crisis factors are especially relevant.

It is emphasized that the existing system of public policy often does not have time to transform in accordance with the pace of democratic turbulence and becomes a factor in the accumulation of managerial dysfunctions.

The main causes of democratic turbulence are outlined, including: the crisis of legitimacy of state institutions, information and communication challenges, growing social inequality, global migration processes, technological changes and undermining of established models of representative democracy. It is shown that in such conditions, traditional public policy instruments lose their effectiveness, and the system needs new mechanisms of adaptation and resilience.

A set of mechanisms for increasing the sustainability of public policy, including institutional, socio-communicative and technological tools, has been proposed. Institutional mechanisms provide for the modernization of state institutions, the introduction of network management models and the development of crisis procedures. Social and communication mechanisms are aimed at strengthening civic participation, increasing the level of transparency and creating a culture of trust. Technological mechanisms focus on the digitalization of management, the use of analytical platforms, risk forecasting, and cyber protection.

Keywords: public policy, public administration, civil society, transformation, political turbulence.

Problem statement. The current stage of development of democratic societies is marked by the growth of phenomena that can be described as democratic turbulence – dynamic, unpredictable changes in the institutional, political and social planes that significantly affect the processes of formation and implementation of public policy. The spread of disinformation, the growth of polarization, the crisis of trust in the institutions of power, the complication of public participation mechanisms and a sharp change in public expectations create an environment in which to which traditional models of political formation lose their effectiveness.

In these conditions, there is an urgent need to rethink the principles of public policy functioning that can adapt to the high speed of social change, multi-level complexity of risks and the need to respond to new challenges in real time. Traditional bureaucratic procedures, linear approaches to planning, and rigid institutional structures do not provide sufficient flexibility and openness, which is especially noticeable in the context of war, global crises and information instability.

The problem is that the existing system of public policy often does not have time to transform in accordance with the pace of democratic turbulence and becomes a factor in the accumulation of managerial dysfunctions. This is manifested in fragmented decisions, contradictions in regulatory frameworks, uneven communication between the state and society, as well as in a decrease in the ability of government institutions to forecast and strategic modernization.

Thus, the scientific task is actualized – to determine the essential characteristics of the transformation of public policy in the conditions of democratic turbulence, to investigate the mechanisms of its adaptation, sustainability and innovation, as well as to substantiate new approaches to ensuring the effectiveness of political formation in an unstable socio-political environment.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Within the framework of understanding the theoretical foundations of the transformation of public policy in the context of democratic turbulence, it is important to take into account the diversity of approaches to the interpretation of the very concept of "public policy". The analyzed studies demonstrate that public policy is considered as a conscious and purposeful regulation of social processes, resources and interactions between the state and citizens, which is reflected in the works of T. Belska [1], L. Gonyukova [2] and other scientists.

Ukrainian researchers O. Pukhkal, I. Reiterovych, S. Sytnyk and S. Teleshun [3, 4] draw attention to the fact that in modern scientific discourse there is a tendency to instrumentalize the concept of "public policy". However, despite the active use of the term, a single approach to its definition has not been formed. In the scientific literature, various interpretations of the essence of public policy are distinguished, in particular: as an open and transparent process of forming political and managerial decisions with the provision of access of interested groups to this process; as a purposeful influence of public authorities, which

determines the content and direction of managerial actions; as a strategic program for the development of the state; as a course of action of public authorities, which can reflect the ideological foundations of the ruling elite; as a form of public activity of various actors aimed at realizing their interests and optimizing managerial decisions; as a tool for maintaining public order; as a political process in the public space, based on vertical and horizontal interactions and provided by information and communication resources.

O. Chaltseva emphasizes that the very way of interpreting public policy depends on whether it is considered as a system, a development strategy, an instrument of communication between the government and society, or as a decision-making process [5].

Despite significant scientific achievements, further study requires the question of how, in the context of democratic turbulence, the democratic principles of public policy can be strengthened, its adaptability, openness and resilience to new challenges should be ensured.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the transformation of public policy in the context of democratic turbulence.

Presentation of the main material. The phenomenon of democratic turbulence is formed under the influence of a complex of global and national factors that transform political dynamics, change traditional forms of interaction between the state and society, complicate decision-making mechanisms and exacerbate the need for adaptive models of public policy. In this context, it is important to identify the key reasons that determine the nature of democratic instability both on an international scale and in Ukrainian realities.

Consider the global causes of democratic turbulence. First of all, the crisis of trust in political institutions is exacerbating as a result of corruption investigations in Ukraine. In many democracies, there has been a steady decline in trust in parliaments, governments, judicial systems, and traditional media. This is

due to the ineffectiveness of state policy, corruption manifestations and alienation of citizens from decision-making processes [6]. As a result, the legitimacy of the government and its ability to ensure stability are weakened.

An essential feature of modernity is the polarization and radicalization of societies. The growth of ideological and value conflicts, the strengthening of divisions between social groups lead to the deepening of social fragmentation. Political polarization destroys society's ability to consensus and complicates the development of balanced solutions [7].

Russia's weapons against Ukraine and Europe are disinformation and information wars. The spread of fake news, manipulative narratives, and hybrid information influences on global digital platforms creates instability in democratic systems [2]. Disinformation campaigns are often aimed at delegitimizing the institutions of power and fueling internal conflicts.

In the context of the political crisis, there is a decline of traditional parties and the growth of populism. The decline in the influence of classical parties and the emergence of populist movements offering emotional but simplistic solutions increase political instability. Populism destroys institutional sustainability, substituting short-term political benefits for strategic management.

The consequences of the economic crisis in the post-COVID period were economic disparities and social inequality. Economic crises, rising inequality, labor instability, and social vulnerability contribute to disbelief in democratic institutions. Economic challenges provoke protests, reduce the effectiveness of social dialogue, and stimulate demand for unconventional policy solutions [3].

On the eve of World War III, global security threats are escalating initiated by Russia and other terrorist states. Migration flows, military conflicts, cross-border terrorism, and cyber threats exert powerful pressure on democracies, forcing them to restrict certain freedoms in the name of security. This creates a dilemma between the protection of human rights and the need to respond to risks.

Digital transformation processes are driving technological change and algorithmic control. The dominance of digital platforms, the algorithmization of political communication, and opaque data management are shaping new forms of political influence, often undermining democratic autonomy and distorting public opinion.

Let us consider the national causes of democratic turbulence in Ukraine.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has created unprecedented conditions in which democratic procedures are partially limited by the requirements of military expediency. This state creates tension between the need to defend the state and the preservation of democratic standards.

Frequent changes in political courses, instability of the parliamentary majority, personalization of power and conflicts between key political institutions reduce the predictability of the political system.

Problems with strategic planning, managerial coordination, the rule of law, and the functioning of the civil service deepen the democratic vulnerability of the state.

Oligarchic interests continue to influence the formation of political decisions, causing a conflict between private and public priorities. Corrupt practices reduce citizens' trust in the authorities and slow down democratic reforms.

Systemic information attacks by russia, media manipulations, and insufficient media literacy of the population form an environment in which democratic discourse becomes an object of constant external and internal influence.

Ukraine has severe socio-economic consequences of the war. The economic downturn, the destruction of infrastructure, the growth of poverty, the internal displacement of the population and the uncertainty of the future create conditions of social tension, which affects the level of support for democratic reforms.

There is a value and regional fragmentation. Different visions of the role of the state, security priorities, social policy and democratic procedures form heterogeneity of political orientations, which complicates the consolidation of the democratic model of development.

Thus, democratic turbulence in the world and in Ukraine is formed at the intersection of global processes and local challenges. For Ukraine, the combination of external military threat with internal institutional contradictions is specific, which creates a difficult environment for the transformation and strengthening of the democratic model of public policy.

Modern challenges caused by democratic turbulence require states to take new approaches to organizing the political process, increasing institutional flexibility and the ability of the system to respond to instability. The transformation of public policy is becoming not only a requirement of the time, but also a prerequisite for ensuring democratic resilience, stability and development. Ukraine, being in the conditions of war and systemic reforms, especially needs to update the mechanisms of political formation. In this context, the following key areas of transformation can be distinguished [1].

1. Institutional adaptation and increased management flexibility

In the context of rapid changes, the effectiveness of public policy depends on the ability of state institutions to quickly adapt to new conditions. We are talking about the modernization of public administration structures, the development of digital tools, the optimization of administrative procedures, as well as the introduction of crisis response and strategic preparedness mechanisms. It is important to move from rigid bureaucratic models to more flexible, networked and integrated forms of management.

2. Strengthening transparency and accountability of the authorities

Transparency and accountability are basic factors for restoring citizens' trust in a period of democratic instability. This involves the active use of open data

tools, increased control over the activities of authorities, the introduction of digital participation platforms, and the ability to track the implementation of policies in real time. Wartime transparency must be combined with security constraints, maintaining a balance between accessibility and protection of sensitive information.

3. Deepening public participation and co-governance

Democratic turbulence actualizes the need to expand the mechanisms of public participation and co-creation of politics. The role of public consultations, e-democracy, inclusive dialogue formats (deliberative forms of participation, public councils, local initiatives) is growing. It is important to involve vulnerable and marginalized groups in the political process, which ensures the legitimacy of decisions and increases social cohesion.

4. Developing sustainable communications and combating disinformation

Effective communication between the state and society is becoming a central task in countering information threats. The transformation involves the development of crisis communications, information transparency, official fact-checking infrastructure, strategic communications, and information literacy of the population. In wartime, it is especially important to ensure the unity of the information space and create mechanisms to counter propaganda.

5. Institutionalization of strategic planning and risk management

Democratic turbulence highlights the need for systemic forecasting and risk management at all levels of public policy. For Ukraine, the key are the formation of long-term recovery strategies, the development of infrastructure for assessing the impact on public policy, the use of scenario planning, and the creation of institutions responsible for threat analysis and strategic development.

6. Overcoming corrupt practices and reducing the influence of oligarchic groups

Effective transformation of public policy is impossible without overcoming corruption. The following are necessary:

– strengthening the independence of anti-corruption bodies;

– implementation of real mechanisms of control over the assets and expenses of officials;

– demonopolization of the media and reduction of the political influence of business groups;

– transparency of campaign financing.

This will contribute to the formation of equal conditions for political competition and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

7. Optimization of socio-economic policy and improvement of equity

Social inequality is one of the key sources of democratic instability. State policy should focus on:

– expansion of social protection;

– employment support;

– investments in human capital;

– development of inclusive institutions.

It is important for Ukraine to implement a policy of recovery and support for the population affected by the war, which will contribute to strengthening social resilience.

8. Networking of public governance and cross-sectoral interaction

Modern crises prove that the state needs partnership with civil society, business and international institutions. Effective policy-making is possible only in the format of intersectoral interaction, where state structures act as coordinators of network connections, and not monopolists in the development of decisions. For Ukraine, this direction is key in the implementation of reforms and post-war recovery.

The transformation of public policy in the context of democratic turbulence involves a reorientation from traditional bureaucratic approaches to flexible, networked and innovative management models. It should be based on the principles of transparency, adaptability, inclusion and strategic. This process is especially relevant for Ukraine, because it is the renewal of political governance mechanisms that can ensure stability, resilience and further democratic development in difficult conditions of war and global instability.

Modern manifestations of democratic turbulence – political polarization, changing nature of social mobilization, information wars, instability of institutions and a decrease in the level of trust – require a rethinking of approaches to the formation and implementation of public policy. The resilience of a democratic system is no longer an automatic property of institutions, but is the result of purposeful management practices, adaptability, foresight and flexibility. In this context, it is especially relevant to form mechanisms that can ensure the endurance of public policy to shocks, "non-standard" political cycles and crisis impacts.

Democratic turbulence, manifested by growing polarization, instability of political institutions, increased information threats, and transformation of public mobility, requires the formation of new approaches to ensuring the sustainability of public policy. Its stability becomes not a static property of the system, but the result of purposeful management, adaptability and the ability to respond to a wide range of crisis influences. Below is a set of mechanisms that determine the directions of strengthening public policy in the face of growing uncertainty.

Institutional mechanisms of resilience

One of the key factors in countering turbulence is the modernization of state institutions. Increasing their capacity involves optimizing functions, introducing network forms of management and forming a high level of organizational adaptability. An important condition is to guarantee the rule of law, transparent procedures and predictability of state decisions, which reduces the risks of

political manipulation and strengthens the trust of citizens. A significant element of institutional resilience is the institutionalization of crisis management systems – early warning, scenario planning and rapid response.

Socio-communicative mechanisms

The sustainability of public policy largely depends on the effective interaction of the state and society. Building open, two-way communication keeps citizens informed, minimizes the impact of disinformation, and fosters social cohesion. Civic participation – through consultations, public discussions and digital tools of democracy – increases the legitimacy of managerial decisions and forms a culture of political responsibility. At the same time, the development of partnership models of interaction "state – community – business" strengthens social capital as the foundation of democratic resilience.

Technological and digital mechanisms

In the context of digital transformation, it is important to ensure the technological resilience of public administration. Digitalization of procedures, the introduction of electronic registers, analytical platforms, and artificial intelligence systems make it possible to improve the quality of management and speed up decision-making. The use of data for risk forecasting and scenario modeling increases the ability of the state to anticipate and neutralize crisis impacts. The key condition remains cyber defense and systematic counteraction to information attacks, which reduces the vulnerability of the political system to external and internal threats.

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