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#### Risk management in public administration in Ukraine: strategies and tools

#### Gestión de riesgos en la administración pública de Ucrania: estrategias e instrumentos

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## Abstract

The purpose of the article is to highlight the peculiarities of the risks faced by management in the public administration paradigm in the context of the unstable socio-political situation in the world and in Ukraine. The methodology of the study is based on the analysis of the socio-scientific discourse on the problem of public administration development in Ukraine since 2020 (the beginning of socio-political instability in the country caused by the pandemic crisis and martial law). Through a combination of general scientific and scientific-sociological methods, an attempt is made to analyse the risks in the public administration system and the role of management in its functioning. The results of the study identify the following priority areas of risk management in the modern Ukrainian paradigm of public administration: crisis management, transformation management, and sustainable development management. Public administration management in Ukraine in the early 20s of the twenty-first century is guided by the synergistic principles of dynamism, flexibility and self-organisation. Thus, risk management of public administration in Ukraine is provides for the synergy of anti-crisis, reform and stabilisation steps in the formation of a strategy for the development of the national model of development of the State and its institutions.

**Keywords:** management paradigm, public sphere, anti-crisis management, transformation management, sustainable development management.

## Resumen

El propósito del artículo es poner de relieve las peculiaridades de los riesgos a los que se enfrenta la gestión en el paradigma de la administración pública en el contexto de la inestable situación sociopolítica en el mundo y en Ucrania. La metodología del estudio se basa en el análisis del discurso sociocientífico sobre el problema del desarrollo de la administración pública en Ucrania desde 2020 (inicio de la inestabilidad sociopolítica en el país provocada por la crisis pandémica y la ley marcial). Mediante una combinación de métodos científicos generales y científico-sociológicos, se intenta analizar los riesgos del sistema de administración pública y el papel de la gestión en su funcionamiento. Los resultados del estudio identifican las siguientes áreas prioritarias de la gestión de riesgos en el paradigma ucraniano moderno de la administración pública: gestión de crisis, gestión de la transformación y gestión del desarrollo sostenible. La gestión de la administración pública en Ucrania a principios de los años 20 del siglo XXI se rige por los principios sinérgicos de dinamismo, flexibilidad y autoorganización. Así, la gestión de riesgos de la administración pública en Ucrania prevé la sinergia de los pasos anticrisis, de reforma y de estabilización en la formación de una estrategia para el desarrollo del modelo nacional de desarrollo del Estado y de sus instituciones.

**Palabras claves:** paradigma de gestión, esfera pública, gestión anticrisis, gestión de la transformación, gestión del desarrollo sostenible.

## Introduction

### Research Problem

The public administration system is formed of many clusters of state, local and public authorities and provides for the functioning and development of public institutions at various levels. Socio-cultural realities determine the specifics of management activity. Under favourable conditions for the development of the state and society, sustainable management strategies are formed, while in case of instability of the socio-cultural space, the principles of crisis management are actualised. The problem of risks is taken into account in both of these management strategies. However, in the paradigm of sustainable development, risk management is positioned as a readiness for change and a potential tool for regulating situations that go beyond the planned indicators of development of the socio-political, socio-economic and cultural spheres. On the other hand, in a situation of turbulence in the public administration system, risk-oriented management formats have short-term anti-crisis tasks and require dynamism and flexibility to respond to changes in real time.

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### Research Focus

The Ukrainian public administration system is characterised by an extraordinary characteristic of the conditions in which it is established as an element of the functioning of the state as a whole. On the one hand, Ukrainian society has been tested in recent years by the instability associated with the pandemic and full-scale military operations. On the other hand, the principles of public administration have not yet been fully established in the Ukrainian public administration paradigm. Therefore, the application of risk management strategies does not cover all areas of public activity. Traditionally, risk-oriented management models are first implemented in the financial and economic cluster, where they are an integral stabilising element. Later, the implementation of risk management principles is extended to other areas. One of the key points for the development of the risk-based management system is its application in the public sphere of state and local authorities. At the present stage

of its civilisation development, Ukraine is characterised by the stage of correlation of social dimensions to create the preconditions for synergy of state, local and public authorities in the public paradigm. Local self-government reforms and decentralisation should be the last factor in the formation of the integrity of public administration in Ukraine. Under such conditions, the presence of a stabilising regulatory element, such as risk management, is a prerequisite for the harmonious functioning of the state.

### **Research Aim and Research Questions**

*The purpose of the article is to highlight the experience of forming risk management strategies in the public sphere and the specifics of their application in modern Ukrainian realities. The relevance of the risk-oriented model of public administration increases in times of socio-cultural turbulence, and therefore it is in demand in the Ukrainian administrative public space. The purpose of the article is to determine the optimal scenario for the application of risk management in the public sphere and to correlate the public potential with the level of threats that the Ukrainian community faces.*

The research questions of the article are focused on determining the content and format of short-term and long-term risk management models in the system of government in the context of turbulent socio-cultural realities. The strategy of using risk management should be implemented according to the introduced algorithms in order to maintain the fundamental stability of public authorities' functioning in the face of variability.

### **Literature review**

The problem of risk management in the public sphere has gained active coverage in modern scientific discourse. The key issue highlighted by scientists in the context of risk management in the public sphere is the model of application of this format of management activity. There are a number of studies that demonstrate the benefits

of risk management strategies and identify gaps that exist in such principles of management activity.

The main problems of using risk management in the public sphere of Ukraine include external global factors and the internal situation of the state's functioning, namely:

- global (Gevorgyan & Baghdasaryan, 2021) and civilisational dynamic threats (Iastremska et al., 2023), which require the state and society to be prepared to respond to their negative consequences;
- taking into account the level of human capital in the country and forecasting its growth or decline (Radieva & Kolomiets, 2019);
- determining the level of initiative (Dooranov, Orozonova & Alamanova, 2022), business literacy (Buriak & Petchenko, 2021), civic awareness of society (Abdel-Zahra Hassan et al., 2023) and its readiness for innovative transformations (Buriak et al., 2022);
- peculiarities (primarily unevenness) of the development of various spheres of social activity: the financial cluster (Marshalok et al., 2021), the legal system, healthcare (Tsekhmister et al., 2021), education, media (Wulandari, Apsari, Hapsari, 2023), cultural life, etc;
- harmonisation of the principles of public authorities' work, taking into account the risks of the demographic situation in Ukraine (Malachynska et al., 2022);
- the system of social life in Ukraine and all the problems and difficulties of the development of society and the concept of public power (Bhandari, 2023);
- use of innovative technological and digital tools to form elements of the electronic format of public authorities (Sofilkanych et al., 2023).

An important point in the study of the implementation of risk management in Ukraine is the analysis of the experience of applying strategies for taking into account threats in various areas of public activity in neighbouring countries - Poland (Sanetra-

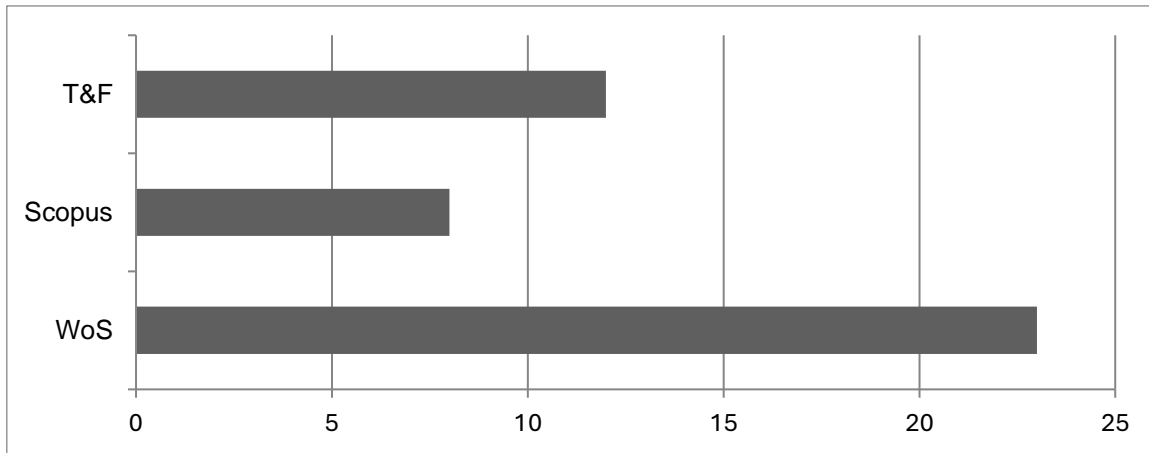
Pólgrabi, 2022), Slovakia (Mura, 2022) and in the context of the institutional functioning of public authorities in the European Union (Dankevych et al., 2020).

## Methodology

The methodological basis of the study is based on the synergy of general scientific, scientific-sociological and philosophical-scientific methods. The fundamental methodological elements in the study of the risk-oriented format of public administration are analysis, modelling and forecasting. The analysis of the works of scientific discourse on risk-oriented management has gained additional importance for the current study, since it includes the characteristics of modern socio-cultural realities, which are marked by excessive socio-cultural turbulence. The factors of socio-political life in Ukraine over the past few years have been highlighted in the context of their impact on the functioning of the public administration sector in the country. At the same time, the modelling of socio-cultural risks forms the dimensions of the demand for risk-oriented management.

General scientific methods provide a holistic characterisation of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the public administration model. The analysis is based on the materials of the scientific discourse of the last five years, which highlight public administration strategies and risk management practices in this management cluster. For the current study, scientific papers were selected from the leading scientometric databases Google Scholar, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis, and Springer.

A search on the Google Scholar scientometric platform using the title of the research problem yielded about 10800 articles. A further check to clarify the content of the article narrowed the number of articles to be analysed by abstracts and keywords to 209, of which 42 were finalised for use in the current study (see Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Researcher results

**Source:** authors' own development

The literature was selected using the following key phrases: public administration, risk management, power, socio-cultural space. Also relevant is the methodological synergy, thanks to which the results obtained in the analysis of socio-cultural conditions are modelled. They form a paradigm of public administration, within which the positioning of risk management is determined.

Comparative analysis allows us to determine the difference between a sustainable format of management activity and risk management in conditions of socio-cultural instability or crisis. The systematisation of the data obtained in the course of the analysis of the principles of organising the management system, taking into account global or local risks, allows obtaining universal models of the public sector manager's activity.

A separate methodological asset is the tools aimed at revealing the future dimension of the risks of public activity and the potential of this cluster of the public administration system. Modelling makes it possible to formulate universal public administration strategies using risk management as a mechanism for regulating the system of government and responding to critical changes in society. Forecasting provides an understanding of the feasibility of using risk management concepts in permanent social progress. Determining the resources that can potentially be used

to eliminate force majeure of a socio-cultural nature is the key to the effectiveness of the public administration system.

At the same time, the philosophical and scientific principle of synergy allows us to determine the general trend of a risk-oriented type of management in the public sphere, which is based on interaction in society at the horizontal and vertical levels. Synergy is a methodological approach used in the current study to determine the levels of controllability of the public administration process and the level of self-organisation, which determines the autonomy of management while taking into account potential and real risks.

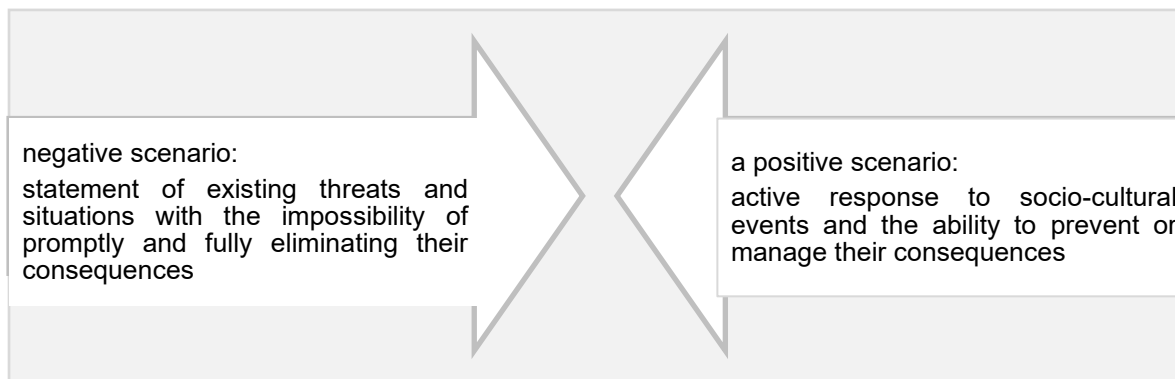
## Results

Risk management of the public activity of the authorities is formed on the basis of an analysis of the existing socio-cultural features of the functioning of state institutions. The success of the public cluster management is determined by the format of activity in relation to the risks faced by the state, society, and citizens.

It is worth noting the relevance of the analytical model of the process approach to identifying risks in public sector management (Matusova, Andryeyeva & Yahodzinsky, 2019). The triad of this model: identification-assessment-impact allows for a reasoned presentation of risks to the public administration system in Ukraine.

The effectiveness of public administration depends on the timeliness of identifying risks and responding to their manifestation and potential negative consequences. The management that states the negative results of socio-cultural crises and force majeure situations has obviously failed to fulfil the target mission entrusted to it. Under such conditions, public administration management moves to the next level of response to problematic issues - the implementation of functional activity. The algorithm of actions of risk-oriented management in the public sphere can be traced in the context of the level of efficiency (see Fig. 2).





**Figure 2.** Scenarios for the effectiveness of risk-based management in the public sphere

**Source:** authors' own development

The scenarios indicated in the figure are considered in the operational and tactical practice-oriented dimension, characterising the potential activity of the managerial level of the public sphere. The results of managerial performance in times of socio-cultural instability or crisis determine the relevance of the format of managerial activity. Risk-oriented models have demonstrated their effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of emergency support for the functioning of certain areas of public activity. At the same time, the state and public administration apparatus functioned as usual, using risk management tools only sporadically at critical moments.

Therefore, the expediency of using risk-oriented models in the strategic paradigm of public authorities raises certain doubts, as it requires a radical reformatting of public administration.

The public administration system involves building authorities (state, local, and public) in a paradigm where management functions are not interrupted by threatening conditions or events, but rather duplicated, interchangeable, and interacting. The effectiveness of public administration is ensured by engaging the potential of the entire society for sustainable strategic development or short-term anti-crisis measures. Risk management, which does not state management

problems but promptly transforms the management system to preserve the functions of governance of society and the state, is the optimal model of public administration.

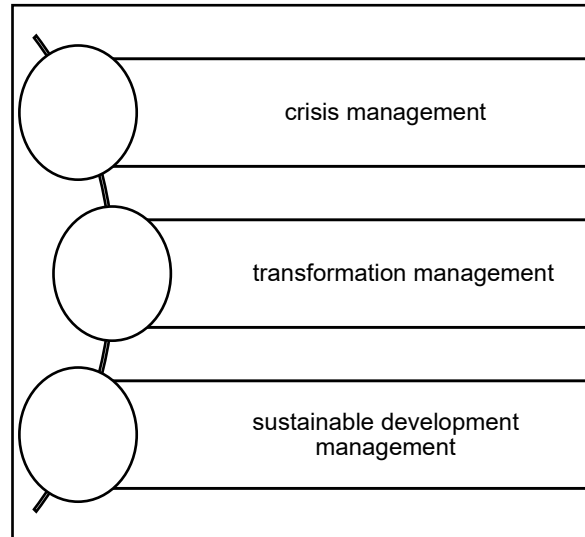
An example of public involvement in public administration is the actualisation of the concept of civil society. When formulating a specific decision in the field of public activity, public opinion is taken into account, which reveals the level of problematic implementation of the planned project. This is how a full and objective assessment of risks that could potentially be actualised in the course of social activity is carried out. Therefore, the status of social activity plays a key role in the risk-oriented format of the management model.

A separate element of consideration of the mechanisms for implementing risk-based management models in the public space of Ukraine is the positioning of public authorities in the processes of formation and operation of the vertical of power (Schäfe, Hirsch & Nitzl, 2022). For a long time, the concept of public authority did not acquire a decisive status in the socio-cultural space, limited to the dominance of state institutions, whose activities significantly limited the publicity of power, since the potential of self-government and civil society was not taken into account.

Limiting the public space to the public cluster only contributes to the fact that risk management is focused on compliance with the institutional dimensions of public administration (Schäfer, Hirsch & Nitzl, 2023). At the same time, the involvement of the public segment allows to actualise such aspects as motivation, initiative, leadership to the characteristics of management, which is designed to respond to potential threats. It is clear that in the face of growing risks, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, the management system loses its structure and habitual controllability in some respects, so the individual characteristics of managers with their personal potential and ability to act autonomously come to the fore.

The task of the modern Ukrainian community is to force a holistic system of public administration in which risk management will have a strategic status. Variations in the use of risk management depend on the socio-cultural characteristics of the state's development (see Fig. 2).

Figure 3. Priority areas of risk management in the modern Ukrainian public administration system



Source: authors' own development

Under conditions of stable development of the state, risk management focuses on solving current problems that potentially negatively affect the functioning of the state and society. Among such problematic issues are: bureaucratic obstacles (Appe, Rubaii & Whigham, 2021), corruption risks (Kopanchuk et al., 2021), and violation of the principles of managerial integrity.

Another dimension of the formation of risk-based models of public administration is the concept of reforms and transformations. It is worth noting that in order to convince of the necessity and expediency of changes in the public administration paradigm, there are several key socio-cultural markers that indicate the need to take risks into account:

- public distrust at the vertical level (in state authorities) and the horizontal level (within social relations) (Williams, 2020);

- innovative trends in the development of society 4.0, which require determining the status of the technological and digital system in the management system (Irani et al., 2023);
- new formats of public administration systems: public administration, network management, etc. (Suray et al., 2020);
- the need for new algorithms for managing human resources (Boselie, Van Harten & Veld, 2019) and human capital;
- testing of new forms of synergy between the state and society in the public administration paradigm, including the concept of public-private partnership (Chiang et al., 2022);
- involvement of a multi-level risk management structure, which includes technology, organisation and the external environment (Ullah et al., 2021).

There are several criteria for determining the state of instability in the public administration system, among which external influence (*force majeure*) and internal indicators of the exhaustion of management resources are considered critical (Krukowski, Raczyńska & Escher, 2021). Accordingly, mechanisms for taking into account threats are being developed and a risk management paradigm is being formed to respond promptly to socio-cultural challenges. For the public administration system in Ukraine, recent years have been a period of testing its strength and efficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ansell, Sørensen & Torfing, 2021) and, in general, the ability to preserve governance institutions during full-scale military operations. A factor that determines the effectiveness of the public administration system is the quality of management decisions (Vasylieva et al., 2020). When developing management strategies, instability is positioned as one of the potential scenarios for the development of the socio-cultural space. Such a scenario requires the readiness of public managers to respond to problematic issues, guided by effective guidelines.

Despite the immaturity of public administration institutions, the synergy of the state and society in the governance cluster has become a key to preserving statehood and sustainability at the national level. The full-scale invasion was not only a military

challenge, but also a threat to public space in Ukraine. However, Ukrainian society demonstrated resilience and, despite the lack of institutional dimensions, managed to self-organise, which became a factor in stabilising the country's governance system.

## Discussion

The problem of risk management in the public administration system in Ukraine has become controversial due to the transition period and the immaturity of the public space in the country as a whole. The public consciousness of Ukrainians has not formed a holistic view of the synergy of state and public elements of management activity, focusing on the lack of alternatives to state power. However, the successful experience of neighbouring countries (Schin, Cristache & Matis, 2023) and steps to transform the system of self-government and decentralisation of power (Khadzhyradieva, Slukhai & Rachynskyi, 2020) have led to practice-oriented steps to implement a risk-based model of public administration.

The results obtained show that risk management in Ukraine has gone through a period of transformation and reform, entering the times of instability and socio-cultural turbulence. These stages require a thorough analysis, as shortcomings in predicting threats to the public administration system have become urgent problems for management. In general, risk management is relatively successful in responding to external and internal threats to the governance system and gaining the necessary experience in difficult conditions. However, a holistic picture of the effectiveness of risk management in Ukraine can be traced after the implementation of this management format in the context of sustainable development.

The results of the study were somewhat unexpected in the context of a large share of the scenario of stating risks in the public administration system. The high level of passivity of the managerial level of public administration is unacceptable for an effective response to socio-cultural challenges. Therefore, it is obvious that both the state and especially society should more intensively calculate risks and eliminate the

consequences of threats in order to ensure the conditions for sustainable development.

The results of the study contradict the ideas of some researchers who believe that risk management strategies are a negative factor in planning the public administration system. In particular, the culture of risk avoidance proposes to liberalise control and management issues (Torugsa & Arundel, 2017). Such a format does not imply the need for a risk manager, since the potential of the state and society is focused on preventing crises.

The results of the study were confirmed by the ideas of supporters of innovative transformations of public administration and the integration of the potential of the digital society in the formation of risk-based management (Bondarenko, Liganenko & Mykytenko, 2020). A similar opinion is shared by representatives of the technological and digital wing of public sector management, who note that the resilience of critical infrastructure (Sokiran, 2021) depends on the ability to model the content and format of potential risks.

The problem of the algorithm of management actions in risk modelling remains a matter of debate. As the experience of force majeure in the public administration system in Ukraine has demonstrated, it is a mistake to rely on a separate format of management activity. Innovation is a fundamental key to transformation and sustainable development (Kondratenko et al., 2020), but in force majeure circumstances it serves only as an operational tool, not a driver of change (Borodina & Trushkina, 2021). Focusing on European standards of risk management in public administration (Králiková, 2022) is possible only after the situation in Ukraine stabilises, which is possible after the end of the war. At present, the threats facing society in Ukraine and Europe are unequal in existential terms, so it is almost impossible to analyse the effectiveness of the management system of sustainable development (Leheza et al., 2022) in conditions of instability. At the same time, certain elements of risk management have proven to be effective in the Ukrainian realities of the modern public space, in particular, the concept of public-private partnership (Hrytsenko et al., 2021). Another tool that has had a positive effect in

assessing threats is the method of data coverage analysis (Lesika et al., 2020), which determines the need for risk management activities based on real-time data on the available resource base.

The current study also correlates the concepts of national specificity and global civilisation trends in the public administration paradigm (Bokovets et al., 2020). Obviously, the content of risk management depends on the worldview and mental trends characteristic of social development. At the same time, the format of risk-oriented public administration is determined by the scale and intensity of socio-cultural influence on the system of state institutions.

The scientific novelty of the results lies in the differentiation of socio-cultural conditions in which risk management formats are implemented. For the public administration system, it is important to clearly classify threats, which will allow to identify strategic risks, operational threats and situational problems of social development. According to the level of threat, the scenario of the risk-oriented format of public administration is updated: from balanced sustainable development to dynamic anti-crisis actions.

## **Conclusions**

Thus, risk management in public administration in Ukraine correlates with the threats and challenges of the time and organises a set of anti-crisis, transformational and stabilising elements to avoid the collapse of government institutions. The effectiveness of the risk management concept depends on the scenario laid down in the algorithm for responding to threats: a passive model of management activity involves identifying problems without the capacity and resources to solve them; an active model provides everything necessary to manage the situation in crisis or force majeure socio-cultural circumstances. The realities of the modern Ukrainian governance system dictate the permanence and variability of factors that are introduced in the form of risks. Therefore, the management of the public administration paradigm should be based on the principles of dynamism, flexibility, synergy and self-organisation.

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