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*Vasyliiev O., Candidate of Technical Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Darnytskyi District Department of Civil Protection and Preventive Activities of the Main Department, State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the city of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine  
ORCID: 0009-0009-1241-4407*

*Pokaliuk V., doctor of pedagogical sciences, associate professor, head of the department of fire and rescue and physical training National University of Civil Protection of Ukraine  
Ukraine  
ORCID: 0000-0001-8706-7096*

## **PUBLIC CONTROL AS A MECHANISM FOR ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY UNDER MARTIAL LAW CONDITIONS**

*The article is devoted to the study of the role of public control as a key mechanism for ensuring the effectiveness of state anti-corruption policy in Ukraine under martial law conditions. The relevance of the topic is determined by the necessity to maintain high standards of transparency and accountability in public administration during wartime, when traditional control mechanisms may be limited. The author analyzes the transformation of forms and methods of public control in the anti-corruption sphere since the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression, examining the adaptation of civil society organizations to wartime realities. Special attention is paid to the mechanisms of interaction between civil society institutions and specialized anti-corruption bodies, particularly with NACP, NABU, and SAP. The article examines successful practices of public monitoring of budget funds utilization, international aid, and defense procurement. The challenges facing civil society organizations under martial law conditions are analyzed, including restrictions on access to information, security threats to activists, and the need to adapt working methods. The author substantiates proposals for improving the regulatory and legal framework of public control,*

*expanding opportunities for electronic citizen participation, and strengthening protection of civil society activists. Promising directions for the development of public control in the anti-corruption sphere are identified in the context of European integration and democratic development of Ukraine. The research is based on the analysis of regulatory acts, reports of civil society organizations, monitoring research results, and expert assessments of the effectiveness of civil society anti-corruption initiatives.*

**Keywords:** *public control, anti-corruption policy, martial law, civil society, public administration, transparency, accountability.*

Problem Statement and Its Connection with Relevant Scientific and Practical Tasks. The formation of effective mechanisms of public control in the anti-corruption sphere constitutes a fundamental problem of public administration theory and practice. Research by R. Klitgaard, S. Rose-Ackerman, and M. Johnston established conceptual foundations for civil society participation in combating corruption; however, their works do not account for the specifics of public control functioning under extreme conditions.

Ukrainian scholars M. Melnyk, A. Novak, and S. Seryogin developed theoretical foundations of public control in anti-corruption activities, but their research was based on the analysis of peacetime conditions for democratic institutions' functioning. Works by foreign researchers J. Haywood and P. Heater are devoted to studying public control under political crisis conditions, but they do not examine the specifics of martial law. The problem lies in the absence of scientifically grounded approaches to ensuring the effectiveness of public control as a mechanism for implementing anti-corruption policy under emergency legal regime conditions. The existing paradigm of public control, developed for stable democratic systems, requires conceptual reconsideration in the context of wartime realities.

The relevance of the problem is determined by the objective necessity to preserve democratic standards of transparency and accountability while simultaneously ensuring national security. The scientific aspect of the problem consists in developing theoretical foundations for public control functioning under conditions of limited access to information and heightened security risks. The practical aspect involves creating effective institutional mechanisms for implementing public control adapted to the specifics of martial law.

Analysis of Recent Domestic and Foreign Research. Theoretical foundations of public control in the public administration system have been studied in the works of leading foreign scholars. Fundamental works by A. de Tocqueville and J.S. Mill laid the conceptual foundations for understanding the role of civil society in controlling government activities. Contemporary research by R. Putnam, F. Fukuyama, and J. Alexander developed the theory of social capital and its impact on the effectiveness of democratic governance. The issue of public control in the anti-corruption sphere received comprehensive coverage in the works of S. Rose-Ackerman “Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform” (2016), R. Klitgaard “Controlling Corruption” (2020), and M. Johnston “Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy” (2017). These studies substantiated the necessity of active participation of civil society organizations in monitoring anti-corruption activities; however, they did not consider the specifics of such mechanisms functioning under martial law conditions.

The Ukrainian scientific school of public administration is represented by works of leading researchers in anti-corruption issues. M. Melnyk in the monograph “Corruption - Corrosion of Power” (2019) revealed the systemic nature of corruption and substantiated the role of public control in combating this phenomenon. S. Seryogin in the work “Mechanisms of Public Control in Public Administration” (2021) analyzed institutional forms of civil society participation in controlling government.

Research by A. Novak “Public Control in Anti-Corruption Sphere: Theory and Practice” (2020) is devoted to analyzing the effectiveness of various forms of public monitoring of anti-corruption activities. O. Puhkal in the work “Administrative and Legal Foundations of Public Control” (2018) developed legal mechanisms for ensuring public participation in controlling government bodies’ activities. Foreign experience of public control functioning under extreme conditions is partially covered in works by P. Heater “Democracy Under Pressure: Civil Society and Political Crises” (2019) and J. Keane “Democracy and Civil Society” (2021). However, these studies focus on political crises without examining the specifics of martial law.

Analysis of scientific literature indicates insufficient development of the issue of adapting public control mechanisms to martial law conditions while maintaining their effectiveness in

the anti-corruption sphere. Existing research does not account for the specifics of civil society organizations' functioning under conditions of limited access to information, heightened security risks, and transformation of forms of interaction with government bodies, which necessitates comprehensive study of this issue.

**Formulation of Article Goals.** The aim of the article is theoretical substantiation and practical analysis of public control mechanisms as an instrument for ensuring the effectiveness of anti-corruption policy under martial law conditions in Ukraine.

**Presentation of Main Research Material with Full Justification of Obtained Scientific Results.** Public control in the anti-corruption sphere represents a complex system of interconnected mechanisms that ensure the participation of civil society institutions in monitoring, evaluating, and influencing the implementation of anti-corruption policy by the state [2]. Under martial law conditions, this system has undergone cardinal transformations that require comprehensive scientific understanding and adaptation to new realities of democratic governance. Theoretical foundations of public control in the anti-corruption sphere are based on the concept of democratic governance, where civil society acts as an independent actor capable of ensuring horizontal accountability of power [5]. A. de Tocqueville's conceptual approach to understanding the role of associations in democratic society becomes particularly relevant in the context of forming anti-corruption policy under extreme conditions [11].

The institutional foundation of public control in Ukraine was formed during 2014-2022 in the context of European integration processes and anti-corruption reforms. The adoption of Ukraine's Law "On Prevention of Corruption" in 2014 laid the legal foundations for public participation in anti-corruption activities [8]. Analysis of public control functioning until 2022 indicates the formation of an extensive system of anti-corruption civil society organizations. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, as of early 2022, 847 civil society organizations whose statutory activities are related to combating corruption were registered in Ukraine [4]. Leading organizations in the public control system included the Anti-Corruption Center, Transparency International Ukraine, Anti-Corruption Headquarters, and Public Network "OPORA," which monitored the activities of anti-corruption bodies, conducted research on corruption risks in various spheres, and formed anti-corruption

culture in society [1, 10].

The methodology of public control in the pre-war period was based on a comprehensive approach that included legal analysis, statistical monitoring, sociological research, and media monitoring. Civil society organizations developed their own methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of anti-corruption bodies, transparency and accountability indices, and systems for monitoring public procurement [8]. The introduction of martial law on February 24, 2022, significantly affected the conditions of public control functioning, creating both new challenges and opportunities for developing anti-corruption monitoring. Access to public information was restricted through the expansion of the list of information constituting state and military secrets, which complicated the conduct of traditional forms of monitoring [7].

The priorities of civil society organizations' activities and the distribution of their resources changed. Many activists reoriented to volunteer activities supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine and internally displaced persons. According to research results, 67% of civil society organizations changed or expanded their areas of activity in connection with the war [6]. Security issues for civil society activists and protection of their activities became acute, especially in frontline regions. An important factor was the change in funding sources for civil society organizations' activities. Many international donors reoriented their programs to humanitarian aid, creating financial challenges for anti-corruption organizations. At the same time, new sources of support appeared, related to international programs for monitoring aid utilization to Ukraine [9].

The fifth factor was the digitalization of public control methods, caused by both technological development and the necessity of remote work under security restrictions [3]. This led to a significant expansion of online monitoring capabilities and analysis of large data arrays. Analysis of the transformation of public control methods shows significant activation of digital tools and innovative technologies usage. The "Prozorro" platform became a key instrument of public monitoring of defense procurement, allowing transparency even under heightened secrecy requirements. The development of artificial intelligence and machine learning allowed civil society organizations to automate corruption risk analysis processes [3].

The Anti-Corruption Center developed an algorithm for automatic detection of

suspicious tenders in defense procurement, which increased monitoring efficiency by 3.5 times compared to manual analysis [1]. Transparency International Ukraine implemented a blockchain monitoring system for charitable contributions to the Defense Fund of Ukraine, ensuring complete transparency of fund movement [10]. The Anti-Corruption Headquarters developed the “Stop Corruption” mobile application, which allows citizens to report corruption facts in real-time. In 2023, the application was downloaded by over 340 thousand users, indicating a high level of civic activity even under war conditions [1].

Transformation also occurred in the methods of interaction between civil society organizations and specialized anti-corruption bodies, which became more structured and systematic. The National Agency on Corruption Prevention introduced monthly online consultations with civil society representatives to discuss anti-corruption activity priorities under war conditions. The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine expanded the practice of involving civil society experts in analyzing corruption schemes in defense procurement and international aid utilization. In 2023, 23 criminal proceedings were initiated regarding abuse in the use of budget funds for defense needs based on civil society organizations’ initiatives [7].

The Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office introduced a mechanism for public monitoring of criminal cases related to corruption under martial law conditions. The High Anti-Corruption Court expanded opportunities for public participation in judicial processes through online broadcasting of hearings. In 2023, civil society organizations submitted 67 conclusions on high-profile cases [7]. Public control over the use of international technical and financial assistance, whose volumes significantly increased during the war, became particularly relevant. According to estimates by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the volume of international aid in 2023 amounted to over \$42.5 billion [6]. Civil society organizations developed special methodologies for monitoring the targeted use of such funds.

The “Reanimation Package of Reforms” coalition created a special working group for monitoring international aid utilization, which includes representatives of 15 leading civil society organizations. The group developed a detailed methodology for assessing donor fund utilization effectiveness and publishes quarterly reports on identified violations [8].

The Center for Economic Strategy introduced the “International Aid Tracker” system, which allows tracking the movement of funds from donors to final beneficiaries. Using this system, 12 cases of misuse of funds totaling 23.7 million hryvnias were identified. The civil society organization “State Guard” developed a mobile application for monitoring reconstruction projects [8].

An innovative direction was the development of indices and ratings of anti-corruption activity effectiveness under martial law conditions. The Institute of World Policy introduced the “Wartime Transparency Index,” which assesses the level of openness of information about defense expenditures considering national security requirements [9]. The Anti-Corruption Headquarters introduced the “Bank of Corruption Complaints” system, which allows citizens to report corruption facts in real-time. From March 2022 to December 2023, the system received 2,847 reports, of which 1,204 were forwarded to law enforcement agencies for verification, and 456 became grounds for initiating criminal cases [1].

However, comprehensive analysis reveals significant challenges and systemic problems facing the public control system under martial law conditions. The main limitations are reduced funding for civil society organizations’ activities, limited access to information about security agencies’ activities, and security threats to activists in frontline regions [6]. The fourth challenge is the complexity of information verification under conditions of information warfare and disinformation spread. The fifth is the necessity of balancing transparency requirements and national security when disclosing information about anti-corruption investigations [2].

Research by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine showed a decrease in citizens’ trust in public control effectiveness from 34% in 2021 to 28% in 2023. This is related to the limited possibilities for the public to influence decision-making under conditions of power concentration [6]. At the same time, a positive factor is the significant strengthening of international support for Ukrainian anti-corruption civil society organizations. The “EU4Accountability” program allocated 15 million euros in 2023 to support civil society initiatives for monitoring anti-corruption activities [9]. The USAID “Democratic Governance” program provided \$8.5 million for developing electronic platforms for public monitoring.

A successful practice of international cooperation was the creation of the “Reanimation Package of Reforms” coalition, which united 85 civil society organizations to coordinate efforts in anti-corruption monitoring. The coalition developed a “Roadmap for Anti-Corruption Reforms in Wartime and Post-War Period” [8]. The effectiveness of public control in the anti-corruption sphere under martial law conditions is confirmed by concrete results of civil society organizations’ activities. According to NABU data, 34% of criminal proceedings in corruption cases were initiated based on materials from civil society organizations in 2023 [7]. Monitoring of public procurement carried out by civil society organizations allowed saving budget funds amounting to over 2.1 billion hryvnias [1].

Conclusions. The conducted research allows us to conclude that there has been a cardinal transformation of the public control system in Ukraine’s anti-corruption sphere under the influence of martial law. This transformation is characterized by both the destruction of traditional control mechanisms and the formation of fundamentally new approaches to ensuring transparency and accountability in public administration. Martial law created a complex environment for public control functioning, where the necessity of ensuring national security conflicts with the principles of openness and transparency. At the same time, it is precisely under these conditions that public control acquired special importance as a mechanism for preserving democratic values and ensuring effective use of state resources and international aid.

The adaptation of civil society organizations to wartime realities occurred through active implementation of innovative technologies and digital solutions. The use of artificial intelligence, blockchain technologies, and automated data analysis systems allowed not only to compensate for the limitations of traditional control methods but also to increase monitoring efficiency in certain spheres. Digital solutions for controlling public procurement and international financial aid utilization proved particularly successful. The interaction between civil society organizations and specialized anti-corruption bodies became more structured, manifested in the creation of permanent consultation mechanisms, joint working groups, and coordination platforms. This interaction enabled a synergistic effect in combating corruption, where civil society resources complement the capabilities of state institutions.

International support for civil society anti-corruption initiatives significantly increased

during the war, which is related to the necessity of ensuring proper control over the use of aid provided to Ukraine. This support not only compensated for the reduction in traditional funding but also stimulated the implementation of best global practices of public control. The research results demonstrate that public control retained its role as a key mechanism for ensuring anti-corruption policy effectiveness even under extreme martial law conditions. Moreover, in certain aspects, this role was even strengthened due to the international community's heightened attention to issues of aid utilization transparency and the need to demonstrate progress in combating corruption.

At the same time, the research revealed systemic problems that require resolution to increase public control effectiveness. It is necessary to improve the regulatory and legal framework regarding access to information under martial law conditions, develop special mechanisms for protecting civil society activists, and create a unified platform for coordinating anti-corruption monitoring. The prospects for developing public control in the anti-corruption sphere include further digitalization of monitoring processes, expansion of international cooperation, and formation of new mechanisms of public participation adapted to post-war reconstruction needs. Special attention should be paid to developing a long-term strategy for institutional development of civil society as an integral element of Ukraine's anti-corruption system in the context of European integration and democratic development.

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