



Analysis of the factors influencing the activities of public associations on the political component of Ukraine's national security: Current state and prospects

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Abstract. In modern conditions of geopolitical challenges and internal transformations, the role of public associations in ensuring the national security of Ukraine is of particular relevance. The purpose of this study was to analyse the effects of public associations on the political component of national security and to identify factors that facilitate or impede this activity. For this, the study employed the methods of analysis, synthesis, comparison, and systematisation of data. The findings of the study showed that public associations are significant subjects of public life, which actively influence decision-making processes and contribute to the democratic development of the state. It was found that the activities of these organisations ensure transparency, accountability of the authorities, and promote pluralism, which are necessary conditions for effective governance and social stability. It was found that public associations perform a series of functions, including representative, mobilisation, controlling and communicative ones, which enables them to effectively interact with both the authorities and citizens. The analysis of Ukrainian and international practices revealed that the successful functioning of public associations depends on the level of civic activity, regulatory support for their activities, and support from the state. At the same time, the study identified the risks associated with politicisation of public associations, fragmentation of society, and possible external influence which may adversely affect national security. The study suggested ways to minimise these risks, specifically by improving legislation, raising the level of civic education and strengthening the mechanisms of interaction between civil society and state institutions. Such an approach will contribute to the development of a sustainable and inclusive civil society capable of responding effectively to the challenges of the modern time. The practical significance of this study is to use its findings to improve the interaction between the state and civil society, as well as to strengthen the effects of public associations on national security and minimise risks

Keywords: agents of influence; trade unions; charities; civil society; state security

Introduction

In the context of modern geopolitical challenges and internal transformations of Ukrainian society, the issue of the effects of public associations on the political component of national security is of particular relevance and requires a thorough scientific and philosophical understanding. Considering the current geopolitical challenges and internal transformations of Ukrainian society, national security is of paramount significance.

The role of civil society in ensuring political stability and democratic development of the state is of particular interest. Public associations are not only active participants in socio-political life, but also indispensable tools for shaping security policy. Their influence on political processes is becoming increasingly significant, especially in the context of hybrid threats, European integration reforms and the need to strengthen state

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resilience. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the effects of civil society organisations on the political component of national security is crucial.

The issue of interaction between civil society and the state in the context of national security has been studied by many researchers. V.P. Horbulin & A.B. Kachynskiy (2021) analysed the participation of NGOs in overcoming crises and ensuring national security. The study showed that civil society plays a significant role in strengthening state institutions, especially during political and social transformations. Analysing the legal regulation of NGOs, H.M. Markovych (2023) emphasised the need to improve the legislative framework to create an effective mechanism of interaction between the state and civil society in the security sector. S.A. Sencha (2020) emphasised that civil society organisations act as a catalyst for democratic development, which is an essential factor in ensuring political stability and the state's resilience to internal and external threats. It should be emphasised that the same act also defines the term "state security". Having conducted an extensive study of the correlation between the terms "state security" and "national security", O. Turchenko & Yu. Hrutchenko (2024) concluded as follows: "The terms "national security", "state security", and "security of the state" are semantically related but not identical, the term "national security" is broader than the term "state security" and they are correlated as a whole and a component". G.P. Sytnyk (2022) concluded that "civil society is not an end in itself: it is a means of achieving a decent quality of life in a society where all conditions for self-realisation of the individual are created; it is a form of human community that is at a certain stage of development and meets the needs of individuals through work; it is a voluntarily formed association of individuals; it is a space of free individual communication protected by the necessary laws, where the values of citizens are respected". B. Hrushetskyi (2024) noted that "civil society is a set of non-governmental organisations that represent the will and interests of citizens". It includes the family and the private sphere, i.e., the "third sector" of society, along with the state and business. One of the key conditions for ensuring social and political stability is the proper development of civil society. That is why, according to the Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of National Security of Ukraine", the creation of civil society is classified as a priority national interest.

Thus, the analysis of scientific sources showed the multidimensional effects of public associations on the political component of national security. However, questions persist regarding the effectiveness of interaction between the state and civil society, as well as the need to adapt international practices to Ukrainian context. The purpose of this study was to analyse the content, role, and mechanisms of influence of public associations on the political component of the national

security of Ukraine, as well as to develop recommendations for improving their interaction with state institutions to strengthen the state's resilience.

Materials and Methods

The study of the effects of public associations on the political component of Ukraine's national security was conducted based on an integrated approach that included qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. The study employed general scientific methods, such as analysis and synthesis, which were used to identify the key factors of influence of public associations on the political component of national security; systematisation and generalisation, which were used to classify the principal trends in the development of civil society and mechanisms of its interaction with the state. Empirical methods in the form of content analysis of regulations and official documents helped to assess the current legislative framework for the activities of public associations in the field of national security.

Comparative analysis was employed to investigate the experience of the European Union, the United States and Canada in the context of involving civil society organisations in decision-making processes in the security sector. This study analysed a series of official documents, academic publications, and analytical reports covering the issues of civil society and national security. Specifically, the Law of Ukraine No. 2469-VIII (2024) and Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020), which play a key role in shaping the state security policy, were considered. Furthermore, the study used scientific monographs and articles in professional journals that analyse the relationship between civil society and national security. Official documents and analytical reports of Ukrainian and international organisations, including the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the UN, NATO, and the EU, were also considered. Sociological surveys on the level of trust in civil society organisations and their influence on political processes also formed a significant part of this analysis. The comparative analysis was conducted on the examples of Ukraine, Poland, Germany, the USA, and Canada. These countries were selected based on the following criteria:

- ▲ Elevated level of civil society development (USA, Canada, Germany).
- ▲ Similarity in transformation processes and experience of reforming the security sector (Ukraine, Poland).
- ▲ Existence of institutional mechanisms for interaction between civil society organisations and the authorities in the field of national security.

The applied methods and stages of the study allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the role of public associations in national security and formulation of practical recommendations for improving the state policy in this area.

Results and Discussion

As of 2024, according to Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine No. 3257-IX (2023), the legislator defined public associations as follows: “A public association is a type of public self-organisation (of citizens and/or legal entities) that is created to implement public interests in the area defined by the charter, the direction of its activities, as well as to satisfy and protect the legitimate common interests of its members” (Law of Ukraine No. 3257-IX, 2023). Furthermore, it is determined that the forms of implementation of public associations can be public organisations – associations of individuals and public unions – associations of individuals and/or legal entities. Such organisations can exist both with and without the status of a legal entity. They may have diverse specifics in terms of scope of activity, geography of operation, and other factors. Article 2 of the Law of Ukraine No. 3257-IX (2023) makes provision that the scope of this Law does not apply to the activities of: “political parties; religious organisations; non-entrepreneurial companies established by acts of public authorities, other state bodies, authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, local self-government bodies; associations of local self-government bodies and their voluntary associations; self-regulatory organisations, professional self-government organisations; non-entrepreneurial companies (not being public associations) established based on other laws”. At the same time, the relevant laws define, specifically, political parties and religious organisations as other forms of voluntary public associations, but they are regulated by separate legislative acts, and accordingly, by their form they cannot be directly perceived as public associations (Law of Ukraine No. 3894-IX, 2024; Law of Ukraine No. 4017-IX, 2024; Law of Ukraine No. 2365-III, 2024). This is mainly due to aspects related to the specifics of the activities of such associations.

But no less significant is not only the formal attempt to understand the content of the activities of public associations, but also their content. All the above types of organisations are aimed at satisfying the rights and interests of their members according to their statutory objectives. From the formal legal standpoint, such organisations will be distinguished by the area related to satisfaction of their members’ interests. Special attention should be paid to the activities of public associations that, considering the specifics of their activities, have acquired a special status and even have specialised legislation regulating their activities. These include the Ukrainian National Bar Association and Law of Ukraine No. 5076-VI (2024).

At the same time, the areas of activity and involvement where public associations can influence the processes related to the activities of already state institutions are extremely extensive. Specifically, by taking part in public control councils, supervisory boards, advisory bodies, anti-corruption councils, and other

collective bodies at various state-owned enterprises, institutions, organisations, and bodies, goals that are essential for the whole society, and not only for the categories of persons united within such a public association, can be achieved. What is equally relevant is that by taking part in other forms of civic associations, such as trade unions, individuals involved in the activities of such organisations acquire a wide range of powers and opportunities related to the exercise of the rights of the group they represent (Confidence in the state, 2022). Such opportunities are presented both in the ability to influence the activities of individual enterprises, institutions, and organisations, as well as to influence the adoption or non-adoption of decisions within them, and at the national level through participation in the lawmaking process.

Hence, an interim conclusion can be drawn that despite the narrow legislative wording regarding the types of organisations that are considered public associations, in fact, such associations are a broad category that will be primarily determined by the ability to carry out activities related to the protection of the rights and interests of members of such a community. Accordingly, it can be further assumed that a public association is a conditionally voluntary association whose main purpose is to perform actions aimed at protecting the rights and interests of such an association. It is vital to highlight the conditional voluntariness of such associations, since in the context of closed social groups, where not everyone can join them, there may be social, political, and economic factors that will be associated with the possibility of obtaining more preferences with the maximum involvement of all possible persons in such an association. It follows that, despite the absence of direct coercion to join such an association, there will still be factors of indirect coercion, which may take the form of restriction of access to additional preferences, various forms of mobilisation, etc. This requires a more in-depth study but will be most representative in forms related to the activities of political parties, religious organisations, and trade unions. If an individual is not a representative of any of the majority communities, but represents a minority community, it is more likely that the rest of the community will disassociate itself from such a person (Law of Ukraine No. 1045-XIV, 2023).

In terms of national security, the legislator defines it in Item 9, Part 1, Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine No. 3858-IX (2024) as “protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional order, and other national interests of Ukraine from real and potential threats”. Item 10 of Part 1 of Article 1 of the same Law defines the national interests of Ukraine as follows: “the vital interests of a person, society, and the state, the fulfilment of which ensures the state sovereignty of Ukraine, its progressive democratic development, as well as safe living conditions and the well-being of its citizens” (Law of Ukraine No. 3494-IX, 2023).

It follows that the term “national security” itself is broader and covers areas and issues that are not covered by state security, because, as described earlier, national security concerns not only institutional capacity, but also more general and significant categories and areas for the general public than the activities of institutions alone. The issue of national security was addressed in greater detail in terms of regulatory framework in the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020). The Strategy, on the one hand, tries to provide answers to the most diverse sets of questions that may arise, considering the set of components of national security defined by the legislator, namely: state sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional order, and other national interests. It is in the context of national security that the issue of protection of the above categories from real and potential threats is considered. In turn, threats, on the one hand, are factors, phenomena, trends that may make it impossible and/or challenging to implement national values and interests, as follows from the provisions of the Law on National Security.

On the other hand, the threats identified in Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020), the Law of Ukraine No. 3858-IX (2024), there is a wide range, including climate change and the effects on the natural environment; inequality and imbalance of development; rapid technological change; the spread of international terrorism and organised criminal groups, religious and ideological fundamentalism, and related phenomena; problems in a series of essential areas of state activity (information, healthcare, social protection); global uncertainty and unpredictability; new forms of global “polarity”; escalation by the Russian Federation (the aggressor state); hybrid forms of aggression against Ukraine; violations of human rights and freedoms; inefficiency of state bodies, as well as many other factors defined in Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020). Notably, both the Law of Ukraine No. 3858-IX (2024) and the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020) allocate a crucial place in the national security system to an individual, their well-being and interests. Together with other things, it is assumed that it is the context of a person's perception of the state and society as an indisputable factor in ensuring their existence in the context of the ability to exercise rights and interests that can be considered a sign aimed at strengthening national security.

V.M. Shamrayeva (2018) summarised the common approaches and understanding of the security category as follows: “If we systematise the existing definitions of security, one can distinguish three key approaches to understanding the essence of this phenomenon. The first approach implies understanding security as a multidimensional state. This understanding of security is typical for most modern researchers and implies a refusal to consider it only as the absence of external

threats to the state from other states. The second area involves considering security as an idea of what such a state should be and what it actually is. For example, security is a state of stable functioning and reproduction of a social object/subject, which is supported by a special institutional environment. Therewith, “reproduction” means the repetition in time and space, in the sequence of generations, of the structural, functional, and semantic characteristics of a social object/subject, taken in their dynamic relations with the environment. The third area lies in defining the essence of the phenomenon of security involves the allocation of mechanisms to ensure it” (Law of Ukraine No. 3858-IX, 2024).

The current state of influence of public associations on the political component of Ukraine's national security is characterised by a dialectical unity of opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, there is a strengthening of democratic control over the security sector; promotion of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, and increase of society's resilience to hybrid threats. On the other hand, there are risks of politicisation and radicalisation of certain public associations, the possibility of using public structures to promote external interests, and the potential fragmentation of society along ideological lines (Yevdokymenko, 2021). When considering development prospects, several key trends should be considered. Deepening digitalisation of civic activity expands opportunities for influence but also creates new challenges for cybersecurity. The strengthening of transnational ties of Ukrainian NGOs contributes to Ukraine's integration into the global democratic space. The growing role of think tanks in shaping national security policy improves the quality of decision-making. The development of mechanisms of state-public partnership in the field of national security optimises the use of public resources. The effects of NGOs on the political component of Ukraine's national security is a complex phenomenon characterised by multidimensionality and dynamism. Effective use of the positive potential of this influence while minimising risks requires the development of adaptive public administration strategies based on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, and strategic partnership between the state and civil society.

Furthermore, the Law of Ukraine No. 2469-VIII (2024) regulating the foundations of national security prescribes a significant role of civil society in strengthening the security of the state. Within the framework of this law, civil society organisations can become not only active participants in formulation of security policy, but also valuable tools for monitoring and public control over its implementation. The law stipulates that the security of the state depends on the active participation of society in discussing strategic issues such as defence, state security, and protection of citizens' rights and freedoms. The Law of Ukraine No. 4572-VI (2024) addresses the mechanisms of

legitimation and functioning of public associations in Ukraine. The law guarantees the right of citizens to establish organisations that can influence various spheres of life, including the political component of national security. The legislative definition of the functions of CSOs enables them to act as partners of the state, but in practice it is vital to strike a balance between the rights of CSOs and the need to control them in the face of threats to national security. The Law of Ukraine No. 987-XII (2024) is significant in the context of the influence of religious and other public associations on political processes. The components of this law, specifically, relate to the rights of citizens to freedom of conscience, which underlies the activities of religious and non-governmental organisations. At the same time, the law introduces restrictions on the political activities of religious organisations to prevent them from undermining national security through their overly active participation in political processes. In the case of the involvement of religious associations in political activities, the law defines clear boundaries to ensure the stability and integrity of national security policy. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 996 (2023) is an important instrument for ensuring the participation of public associations in the formulation of policies related to national security. According to this resolution, the executive authorities are obliged to conduct a dialogue with the public, specifically through consultations with organisations representing the interests of the general public. This allows considering the opinions and proposals of public associations when making decisions on major national security issues and contributes to the development of policies that meet the interests of all citizens.

Thus, the legal framework governing the activities of public associations in Ukraine defines their role in shaping the political component of national security. However, the exercise of these rights in the context of security requires not only legal support, but also clear monitoring and control by the state to avoid potential threats that may arise from underestimating the influence of CSOs on political processes in the country. After analysing the legislative acts of Ukraine that regulate the activities of civil society organisations in the field of national security, it is advisable to consider concrete examples of such organisations, their role in the political process and the current state of functioning.

One of the most influential civic associations that has a significant political effect on the national security of Ukraine is the CHESNO Movement. Its activities are aimed at monitoring political integrity, fighting corruption, and increasing transparency in public administration. CHESNO actively influences the political discourse, contributing to the formation of public demand for fair elections and good governance. Another example is the Anti-Corruption Action Centre (AntAC), which plays a key role in exposing corruption schemes in the

highest echelons of power. Through its active advocacy, the AntAC manages to influence the legislative process, specifically, the adoption of anti-corruption laws and mechanisms for monitoring their implementation. The Centre for Defence Reforms is particularly significant in security policy. The organisation develops strategic approaches to strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities, promotes the implementation of NATO standards, and generates public demand for security sector reform.

Civil society in Ukraine demonstrates a prominent level of activity, especially in the context of a full-scale war. Not only do civil society organisations take part in political control and the development of legislative initiatives, but they also act as a mobilising factor in crisis situations. The war has led to increased self-organisation of the population, which has manifested itself in the creation of volunteer movements, such as Come Back Alive and the Serhiy Prytula Foundation, which not only support the Armed Forces of Ukraine but also influence political decisions on military aid. At the same time, there are challenges, including the risk of politicisation of NGOs and their use in internal political struggles, as well as the threat of external influence through funding of certain organisations by pro-Russian entities. In the long term, further strengthening of the role of civil society can be expected in the national security sector. The key trends include:

- ▲ Strengthening the digital interaction between civil society and the state, which will facilitate the rapid exchange of information and control over the authorities.

- ▲ Increased international support for Ukrainian civil society organisations, which opens opportunities for training, exchange of practices, and resource mobilisation for the development of democratic institutions.

- ▲ Deepening public-private partnerships in defence and security, which will enable better coordination between the government and an active civil society.

- ▲ Prior to the outbreak of full-scale war, civil society organisations mainly focused on public administration reform, fighting corruption, and promoting democratic standards. During the period of martial law, their focus shifted considerably towards the security and defence sector. There has been an active involvement of civic initiatives in supporting the army, information warfare, countering propaganda, and helping internally displaced persons.

Thus, modern public associations play a significant role in ensuring the political component of Ukraine's national security. Their activities form an integral part of democratic processes, contribute to the strengthening of state institutions, and increase the resilience of society to internal and external threats. To summarise, the concept of national security is multifaceted and, specifically, considering the context of Ukraine, it involves a response to security threats. In other words, national security can be viewed as the absence of threats to state sovereignty, territorial integrity,

democratic constitutional order, vital interests of a person, society, and the state, which, specifically, will be expressed through welfare and sufficient conditions for a comfortable existence.

The above suggests that the perception of a certain factor as one that can affect a certain group of people and, accordingly, society can already be considered a factor of national security. Equally significant is what can be considered the political component of national security. The authors were unable to find any studies that would define the political component of national security among others. At the same time, the available sources allowed formulating the following. Considering the circles of actors available in the Law of Ukraine No. 3858-IX (2024) and Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 392/2020 (2020), as well as the already studied understanding of national security itself, it can be assumed that the political component of national security is a set of actions, processes, and mechanisms related to decision-making necessary to achieve the goals of national security, i.e., to meet the security needs of a person, society, and the state. In the context of the subject under study, let the focus be on the contexts of interaction between public associations and government institutions to formulate and implement such actions, decisions, and policies aimed at achieving the stated goals. At the same time, it is equally significant to consider how the activities of various forms of civic associations can affect aspects of both the political component of national security and the national security overall.

A separate aspect of the issue under study is the role of civil society in the context of influencing the state, and hence another question is whether civil society includes public associations. Based on the above, it can be concluded that civil society is more a form of achieving the goals and interests of representatives of this society, citizens, specifically, through the formation of ties and which can be represented through various organisations whose activities may be related to the interests and rights of their members. Other approaches to understanding civil society may also involve presenting it in the context of a social network of active society actors, an environment of people interested in change, etc. Accordingly, public associations are, arguably, a more institutionalised form of achieving the interests and exercising the rights of persons who are representatives of such associations, but it cannot be argued that the terms "civil society" and "public associations" are identical. However, public associations are a component of civil society. That is, the one where citizens can and should influence decisions, policies, and processes in the state.

This suggests that the mere existence of public associations will not mean the existence of civil society. At the same time, independent civic associations can be called an institutionalised form of civil society. Civil societies themselves may well be distinguished from a set of other entities that are interested in certain results

of the activities of certain authorities, enterprises, institutions, and organisations. The basic advantage of civic associations over such entities may be more extensive rights and powers; greater efficiency is possible due to the synergy of activities of a larger number of entities within one organisation that are interested in the same result. First of all, in essence, civil society will consist of the same actors that already influence the formation of policies, strategies, and laws within the state in other ways. As such, almost every citizen who, in theory, can invest their time and efforts to promote and fulfil their interests can be considered a civil society actor. The only way to influence other branches of power is through periodic involvement, namely through the electoral process, and, accordingly, delegation of their rights to govern the state to representatives.

The problematic point of this issue is that during the inter-election period, direct participation of citizens in decision-making processes is severely minimised, and, accordingly, another question arises, namely, the quality of actions or decision-making by elected representatives. The role of civil society in the period not related to the expression of citizens' will may consist in prompt intervention in decision-making processes and certain actions, providing their personal assessments. In other words, it can perform an auxiliary, monitoring function, which, first of all, enables a more transparent decision-making processes related to mechanisms and processes at the state level. Previously, the study typologised civic associations by type, but their specificity is extremely multifaceted and requires an even broader typology than presented previously. The following studies will try to understand more specifically the typology and categorisation of such associations.

Currently, according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine as of 1 January 2023 and Detector Media, there are 99,556 public organisations; 28,757 trade unions; 27,091 religious organisations; 26,846 charitable organisations; 2,212 associations of public associations (public unions); 1,762 bodies of self-organisation of the population, 318 creative unions (2022 Sustainability index..., 2023). According to the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, 365 political parties are currently registered (The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, 2021).

To summarise all the above, public associations, by their very nature, act as mediators between the state and society, and individual components of this society – social groups and people. Notably, there are many forms of influence on political security. Both through the direct activities of public associations according to their statutory objectives and by joining bodies that can develop policies and strategies, rules, and provide their assessment of the events taking place. These bodies include those already mentioned above: advisory and consultative bodies, public control councils, anti-corruption councils, supervisory boards, etc. In turn, the influence of civil society organisations on the political

component of national security can be extremely multifaceted and expressed through positive, neutral, and negative factors. Positive factors include:

Strengthening democracy and civil society. This feature can be expressed in more active participation of civil society organisations and, accordingly, their involvement in decision-making processes, development of policies and strategies. Taken together, the involvement of representatives of civil society organisations in more complex processes can contribute to the formation of relevant values of a democratic society, which largely depends on the perception of the rest of society, as well as to a deeper understanding (awareness) of the processes taking place in the state, as well as to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by representatives of such organisations. If the processes associated with such participation are sufficiently publicised, the formation of political culture and consciousness among citizens both associated with such associations and those operating outside such associations may take place.

Accountability and publicity, control over government activities. The involvement of public associations directly or indirectly in the processes related to the development or implementation of political initiatives will primarily mean systematic monitoring of such activities, and, accordingly, control over the correctness and impartiality of such processes. In some cases, this applies to both monitoring and follow-up actions related to compliance with the established rules, countering fraud with taxpayer funds, preventing the emergence or disclosure of conflicts of interest and corruption. Systematic monitoring and, as a result, publicity of political processes leads to an increase in the level of transparency and accountability of government authorities, enterprises, institutions, and organisations, regardless of the will of their management.

Inclusion and articulation of interests of different social groups. Through the participation of civic associations in such processes, various social groups that may not otherwise be represented are represented. Another side of the issue is the possibility of an easier form of communication on issues that may concern individuals directly with representatives of such public associations, and as a result, the ability to take actions aimed at realising the interests of formally unrepresented categories of people. Furthermore, in this way, a more objective form of pluralism can be achieved in discussions, decision-making, and implementation.

Expert engagement. Considering a series of restrictions related to the civil service, specifically, those determined by the anti-corruption legislation, there is a question of motivation to take part in political processes. Involvement of public associations and civil society can create conditions under which experts from different fields can join such processes without being subject to the duties and restrictions imposed by the civil service and representative mandate. Furthermore, it is

the expertise in such processes that allows considering other, alternative ways to resolve complex or ambiguous situations that may affect various categories of the population in some way.

Political mobilisation of citizens. The active role of civil society and public associations in the processes under study can draw citizens' attention to possible problems or extraordinary situations more quickly in times of crisis. Furthermore, the speed of bringing people together and creating a public outcry on problematic issues is a crucial factor in the context of society's resilience to possible external threats.

Neutral factors include the following:

Issues of motivation of public associations. It is impossible to predict the purpose and goals, motivation, and possible consequences of engaging in processes and institutions that have the authority to make decisions, develop policies, and control them. There can be both extremely idealised ideas about the purpose and role of a particular civic association in a certain process, and extremely pragmatic ones, specifically, in terms of gaining political points or promoting the interests of certain groups with major restrictions on the interests of other groups.

Financing the activities of public associations. In most cases, civic associations carry out their activities on their personal initiative and without sufficient or no funding for their activities. Accordingly, the issue of remuneration and reimbursement of expenses of representatives of such organisations may not be raised at all, and the necessary needs may be covered by their own income. Although this is not a problem in individual cases, the presence of such a factor may serve as a corruption risk associated with the possibility of influencing the ability to take part in certain processes objectively and impartially, which will primarily depend on the donors of such an organisation and such representatives.

Cyclical activity of public associations. Considering, specifically, the above factor, it is essential to focus on the cyclical nature of the activity of civic associations. Some issues may arouse more interest, while at the same time, if there is an excessive saturation of same-type issues, a certain tolerance to them will be formed, and, accordingly, the desire to resolve such issues. Moreover, it is noticeable that activity is usually associated with electoral or crisis processes. Specifically, the increase in the activity of public associations in the period after 2014, as well as on 24 February 2022 in Ukraine, is associated with crisis moments.

The negative factors include the following:

1. Manipulation and abuse. In some cases, public associations can use their status and involvement in certain mechanisms of public control to create a more positive image for themselves and destroy the reputation of other individuals and institutions. A separate risk may be the ability to influence the adoption of certain decisions, which ultimately creates the basis for corruption risks.

2. External influence. It is often impossible to trace the influence on the activities of individual public associations. However, financing of the activities of such associations or other possible forms of dependence on a beneficiary who is not a resident of Ukraine or certain groups of influence within the territory of Ukraine will considerably affect both the values and goals of such an association and possible actions or inaction.

3. Conflicts and paralysis of government institutions. Currently, national legislation provides for a series of possibilities that can be used to paralyse the activities of individual enterprises, institutions, and organisations. Specifically, by organising strikes, submitting multiple appeals and inquiries, forcing them to focus on certain issues, etc.

4. Radicalisation and fragmentation of society. Dividing society into right and wrong groups, calling for something to be done in a more or less correct manner, and trying to distinguish between friends and foes. This example can also be viewed through the lens of the activities of already banned political parties and religious organisations.

Notably, the presence of certain factors of influence of civic associations on political security cannot be decisive in the shaping of policies aimed at restricting the activities or, on the contrary, expanding the powers of such associations. For instance, most of the surveyed associations may have the status of non-profit organisations. In the context of national legislation, there is no specific reporting or control over the activities of most types of associations. On the one hand, one can see unambiguous advantages: the absence of factors that would determine the ability of the state or its individual representatives to influence the activities of such associations through regulatory or monitoring actions. A conditional trade union or religious organisation will not be legally liable for the fact that it has committed an act related to its statutory purpose. At the same time, there are also disadvantages, as the lack of control as such leads to the possibility of certain fraud.

But here, most importantly, it is essential to emphasise that public associations are only a tool that can be used more or less successfully to achieve the goals set by the community of such an association. In some cases, a community, in some parishes, in some labour collectives, or a hundred other variations. In recent years, there have been a series of successful examples where public associations have significantly positively influenced the development of civil society in Ukraine, and, accordingly, the involvement of the population in state-building processes. It is worth highlighting the experience of the Civil Oversight Council at the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (COC NABU), which demonstrates an effective model of interaction between civil society and the state in the field of combating corruption. This practice contributes to increasing the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of

the anti-corruption agency, as well as strengthening public trust in state institutions. The COC model can be adapted and applied to other state bodies, which will contribute to the development of democracy and civil society in Ukraine.

Other equally successful examples are the activities of the Chesno movement in the context of ensuring transparency in political processes or the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, which has been conducting monitoring and analytical activities to assess the political process for decades. In the context of historical retrospective, it can be noted that at the beginning of their formation, civic associations could face criticism and threatening perception from the current government. In the context of further historical development, it was the high-quality advocacy of the interests of representatives of such groups that enabled considerable changes in political processes, but later this was also expressed in a broader unification around new social norms. For example, let us consider the path to eliminating racial segregation in American society.

Public associations as institutional agents of social transformations represent a complex system of collective action characterised by the ability to reconfigure the socio-political space through a targeted communication strategy and mobilisation of collective resources (Lipkan, 2006). Their evolutionary trajectory is determined by a set of internal and external factors, among which the socio-cultural context, the level of institutional capacity and the nature of the political regime are dominant. Empirical cases of social movements demonstrate the multivariate nature of the mechanisms of influence of public associations on social transformations. Specifically, the historical examples of the anti-colonial movement in India, the civil rights movement in the United States, and the trade union movement in Poland illustrate the potential of collective action in dismantling discriminatory institutional practices and legitimising new social norms. The defining attributes of such movements are strategic communication, the ability to mobilise horizontally and produce an alternative social narrative.

The study of this issue requires the integration of different methodological approaches, including systemic analysis to understand the relationship between civil society and state institutions, institutional approach to study formal and informal rules of interaction, and social constructivist approach to study the formation of identities and narratives in the public sector (Korniyevskiy, 2008). At the same time, it is critical to understand the international context of interaction between civil society organisations and the authorities, as well as the effects of such associations on the formation of national security in different countries. Perhaps the first thing to be noted is the traditions of functioning of various political parties and movements in 'old' democracies. Specifically, the most frequently mentioned

examples are those of the United States of America (the USA), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK), France, Germany, and Poland as representatives of integrated liberal democracies. At the same time, one should not forget about other countries where pluralism of political opinion is widespread.

In the USA, civil society exerts a significant influence on security policy through an extensive network of think tanks, human rights organisations, and social movements (Political Parties in America, n.d.). Heritage Foundation, Brookings Institution, RAND Corporation – think tanks that develop national security strategies, analyse military threats and assess geopolitical challenges. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) – supports democratic movements around the world, which contributes to strengthening US security through the spread of democratic values. Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) – protects cybersecurity, civil liberties on the Internet, and fights against state and corporate control over the digital space.

In the UK, civil society organisations actively engage with government institutions in the areas of defence, information security, and counter-extremism. Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) is an influential think tank that studies global challenges, including hybrid threats and foreign policy. Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) – specialises in combating disinformation and radicalisation and works on counter-terrorism programmes. Privacy International – an organisation that protects citizens from excessive government and corporate surveillance, promotes human rights in the field of cybersecurity.

French NGOs have traditionally worked on human rights issues, fighting corruption, and increasing society's resilience to security threats. Institut Montaigne is a think tank that develops strategies for national security, counter-terrorism and defence policy. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is an international organisation that ensures freedom of speech, fights censorship, and disinformation, which is significant for the country's information security. SOS Racisme is an international organisation that fights against the radicalisation of young people, preventing social conflicts that could destabilise the internal situation in France.

German civil society has a strong influence on public policy through think tanks, anti-corruption initiatives, and social movements. The Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) is one of the leading think tanks dealing with defence, international security and geopolitical challenges. Transparency International (TI) is a global anti-corruption organisation based in Berlin that influences the development of transparency and anti-corruption policies in government. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) are political foundations that support democratic processes and political system stability through expert activities and international cooperation.

Poland, having a comparable transformation experience to Ukraine, is actively developing civil society, which greatly influences the country's security policy. National Freedom Institute is a research centre that analyses threats to national security and develops strategies to strengthen Poland's defence capabilities. Fundacja Panoptykon – an organisation dealing with cybersecurity, human rights in the digital space and personal data protection. Centrum Analiz Strategicznych (CAS) is a think tank specialising in defence policy, energy security and countering hybrid threats.

Civil society plays a key role in ensuring the national security of democratic states, performing the functions of public control, fighting corruption, protecting human rights, and countering hybrid threats. Overall, civil society in liberal democracies is an essential element of the political component of national security, ensuring its stability by controlling the government, promoting transparency of political processes, and countering internal and external threats (Kopan & Melnyk, 2024). There is a widespread perception that only two political forces – the Republican and Democratic parties – are involved in the political process and, accordingly, in decision-making in the United States. At the same time, there are a series of conventional 'third' parties, including the Green Party, Libertarians, the Constitution Party, and the Natural Rights Party. The US political system is largely based on aspects related to compromise and the ability to negotiate and cooperate. Specifically, decision-making processes involve the involvement of supporters of different ideas, but with the purpose of achieving more meaningful outcomes in each situation. As such, in a particular component of socio-political issues, both opportunities and threats, Republicans and libertarians may have a shared vision of how to resolve situations.

A series of civic and charitable organisations should be singled out, which, despite fulfilling the direct statutory objectives of the organisations, such as Feeding America (n.d.) or Human Rights Watch (HRW), are associated with the immediate context of humanitarian and human rights missions, there is also a context of political inclusion of such organisations. Specifically, the processes aimed at communication between the population and such organisations allow for a more qualitative study of the level of satisfaction with the situation depending on the specifics of the organisation's activities. The research of HRW allows further identifying trends inherent in different territories where human rights violations are committed. It is in the context of this organisation's activities that the ability of non-governmental organisations to influence not only the decision-making process in a particular country, but also the formation of international security policies can be emphasised. Thanks to HRW's activities, many cases of violence and impunity become known to the world, which allows for policy changes and justice to be achieved. HRW protects human rights in 100 countries

by investigating human rights violations, publicising them, and putting pressure on governments and international organisations to hold perpetrators accountable (Human Rights Watch..., 2024). The principal areas of HRW's activities are as follows:

1. Monitoring and investigation. Documentation of war crimes, torture, censorship, political persecution. Use of satellite imagery, interviews with eyewitnesses, and forensic examinations to collect evidence.

2. Publicity and international pressure. Publication of reports and analyses on human rights violations. Interacting with the UN, EU, International Criminal Court and governments to implement sanctions or reforms.

3. Legal accountability of the perpetrators. Preparing the evidence base for trials of war criminals and dictators. Promoting the adoption of resolutions and legislative initiatives to strengthen legal protection of people.

Feeding America is one of the largest charitable organisations operating in the United States. Its primary mission is to fight hunger. In its turn, the organisation's activities are not limited to providing food to the population but also manifest themselves in the form of advocacy for legislative changes and research to identify trends. Taken together, this enables the US government to develop more effective programmes to support the population. At the same time, the specifics of the activities of such organisations will also largely depend on who creates the organisation's resource base. More grassroots organisations can use the financial and human resources that are generated by the will of a wider mass of supporters of the organisation. In turn, the activities of organisations with a more expert orientation will largely depend either on the will of the experts involved in the activities of such organisations or on the resources provided by individual donors. As such, in both contexts, there are both advantages and risks associated with the functioning of such organisations and the influence they can exert on policy and decision-making.

In the UK, civil society organisations and initiatives play an equally significant role in ensuring aspects of national security. Organisations such as Amnesty International UK, specifically, are actively engaged in human rights activities and campaigns aimed at violations of human and civil rights, both domestically and internationally, which to some extent defines a common range of interests with HRW. Other human rights organisations, such as Liberty, are no less significant in the context of the specifics of the lawmaking process in the UK. Specifically, this organisation focuses its activities on the protection of individual human rights and freedoms. Since 1934, its campaigns have often been of an advocacy nature, aimed at preventing the adoption or demand for amendments to legislation that, in the opinion of the organisation's functionaries, is associated with threats to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms (Liberty, n.d.). Another type of organisations that significantly influence not only aspects related to

the decision-making process or policies, but also directly interact with employers are independent trade unions. In the UK, for instance, this is the Unison trade union, which protects the rights of employees in the public sector and provides advocacy for the interests of union members (Kikinichuk, 2017).

In Canada, civil society exercises major influence on security policy through an extensive network of think tanks, human rights organisations and social movements. The Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) is one of the leading think tanks dealing with defence policy, international security, and geopolitical challenges. Macdonald-Laurier Institute is a research organisation that analyses national security strategies, hybrid threats, and international relations. CIGI (Centre for International Governance Innovation) is a think tank that develops policy in the areas of global governance, cybersecurity, and international law. Canadian human rights organisations also actively contribute to national security through advocacy for human rights, cybersecurity, and transparency in government processes. Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) defends civil liberties, including freedom of speech, personal data protection and digital rights. OpenMedia is a civil society organisation that fights for internet freedom, data privacy, and protection from excessive government surveillance. Amnesty International Canada works to protect human rights, counteract censorship, and authoritarian tendencies in the field of information security.

Canadian civil society organisations also play a role in combating disinformation and the influence of external threats. DisinfoWatch is an initiative that analyses information manipulation, identifies fake news, and promotes media literacy. The Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy is a research centre that studies information security, global conflicts, and strategies for responding to hybrid threats. Canada is also known for its charitable organisations that influence social security and stability of society. Canadian Red Cross provides humanitarian assistance, responds to crisis situations and promotes social resilience. The Canadian Food-grains Bank is a charity that fights hunger and develops food security strategies. Canadian labour unions also play a vital role in protecting workers' rights and maintaining the stability of society. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) is the country's largest trade union organisation, working on social issues, labour rights and economic security. Unifor is an independent trade union representing workers in various sectors of the economy, including defence and energy.

Canada's civil society plays a key role in ensuring national security by performing the functions of public oversight, fighting corruption, protecting human rights, and countering hybrid threats. An essential aspect is its ability to influence political processes, promote transparency, and strengthen democratic institutions. The findings of the study confirmed the considerable

influence of civil society organisations on the political component of Ukraine's national security, which is consistent with the findings of other researchers who examined analogous aspects. Specifically, it was found that civil society plays a catalytic role in democratic processes, promotes transparency in decision-making, and strengthens the state's resilience to hybrid threats. After the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, Ukrainian civil society organisations greatly intensified their activities in the field of political control, influencing legislative initiatives and anti-corruption policy mechanisms. This study also confirmed this trend, specifically, through the example of organisations such as the Anti-Corruption Action Centre and the CHESNO Movement. Civil society organisations in Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, play a key role in shaping anti-corruption policy and promoting European integration processes. The present findings confirmed this trend, as the activities of CSOs in Ukraine are also aimed at increasing government transparency and fighting corruption, which is an essential aspect of Euro-Atlantic integration. The analysis in this study has revealed similar risks, especially in the context of martial law, when civic initiatives can be used for external influence through disinformation campaigns or funding of individual organisations. Thus, the findings of the study are consistent with the general trends in the development of civil society organisations in democratic countries but point to specific challenges for Ukraine.

To summarise the above, it is worth noting that in their totality, public associations are a rather broad concept that essentially covers the interests of citizens in all sectors of the economy. It is also undeniable that the organised activities of public associations have quite considerable prospects for the ability to influence decision-making processes, as well as in cases related to changes in policies in force in a concrete country or region. There are still risks associated with possible politicisation of certain types of CSOs, fragmentation of society, or external influence. At the same time, the trends related to the promotion of democratic values, transparency and accountability, influence on policy-making and representation of different social groups are extremely positive, allowing for closer to pluralism and inclusiveness in the decision-making process.

Conclusions

The study analysed mainly how and on what grounds different types of public associations function in

Ukraine, although the topic is extremely broad in scope, it can be noted that the topic has prospects for further research in the context of a clearer definition of the risks associated with interaction or lack of interaction between public associations and the authorities, as well as ways to prevent the fragmentation of society or the spread of influence through the so-called "agents of influence".

The study identified key aspects of the effects of public associations on the political component of Ukraine's national security. The study analysed the legislative regulation of their activities, the mechanisms of interaction with the authorities, and the key challenges that arise during this interaction. It was found that public associations play a vital role in shaping public policy, democratic control over the activities of the authorities, and increasing the level of transparency of management processes. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of specific NGOs, such as the CHESNO Movement, the Anti-Corruption Action Centre, the Centre for Defence Reforms, and the Reanimation Package of Reforms, which influence political processes through monitoring, advocacy, and the development of analytical recommendations. The study also emphasised the role of volunteer initiatives (Come Back Alive, Serhiy Prytula Foundation), which, under martial law, have substantially increased the influence of civil society on decision-making in the security and defence sector.

It was found that the current state of public associations in Ukraine is characterised by a prominent level of activity, especially during martial law. However, there are risks of politicisation, external influence, and fragmentation of society, which requires the development of effective mechanisms of state regulation and partnership between the government and civil society. Promising areas of research are also the development of mechanisms to prevent social polarisation, strengthen protection against external influence, and improve the regulatory framework for the activities of public associations in the field of national security.

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Conflict of Interest

The author of this study declares no conflict of interest.

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Аналіз факторів впливу діяльності громадських об'єднань на політичну складову національної безпеки України: сучасний стан та перспективи

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Анотація. У сучасних умовах геополітичних викликів та внутрішніх трансформацій роль громадських об'єднань у забезпеченні національної безпеки України набуває особливої актуальності. Метою дослідження був аналіз впливу громадських об'єднань на політичну складову національної безпеки та виявлення чинників, що сприяють або перешкоджають цій діяльності. Для досягнення мети використано методи аналізу, синтезу, порівняння та систематизації даних. Результати дослідження свідчать, що громадські об'єднання є важливими суб'єктами суспільного життя, які активно впливають на процеси прийняття рішень та сприяють демократичному розвитку держави. З'ясовано, що діяльність цих організацій забезпечує прозорість, підзвітність влади та сприяє плюралізму, що є необхідними умовами для ефективного управління та соціальної стабільності. Встановлено, що громадські об'єднання виконують низку функцій, зокрема представницьку, мобілізаційну, контролюючу та комунікативну, що дозволяє їм ефективно взаємодіяти як із владою, так і з громадянами. Аналіз українського та міжнародного досвіду засвідчив, що успішне функціонування громадських об'єднань залежить від рівня громадянської активності, нормативно-правового забезпечення їхньої діяльності та підтримки з боку держави. Водночас, виявлено ризики, пов'язані з політизацією громадських об'єднань, фрагментацією суспільства та можливим зовнішнім впливом, що може негативно впливати на національну безпеку. Запропоновано шляхи мінімізації зазначених ризиків, зокрема через удосконалення законодавства, підвищення рівня громадянської освіти та зміцнення механізмів взаємодії між громадянським суспільством і державними інституціями. Такий підхід сприятиме формуванню стійкого та інклюзивного громадянського суспільства, здатного ефективно реагувати на виклики сучасності. Практичне значення роботи полягає у використанні її результатів для вдосконалення взаємодії між державою та громадянським суспільством, а також посилення впливу громадських об'єднань на національну безпеку та мінімізації ризиків

Ключові слова: агенти впливу; профспілки; благодійні організації; громадянське суспільство; державна безпека