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Mechanisms of strengthening the economic sovereignty of the state in the context of military operations

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to determine the methodological aspects of the construction of mechanisms for strengthening economic sovereignty in the context of the processes of globalization and war. Comparative law and economic statistics were used in the study. The research found that economic security, which showed a significant decrease after a large-scale invasion, is the material expression of economic sovereignty. The Debt/GDP ratio reached 85% and gross external debt was 83% of GDP. Mechanisms for strengthening Ukraine's economic sovereignty and economic security were determined by analysing international experience. They included, in particular: improvement of the legal framework, development of emergency response mechanisms, development of international partnerships, strengthening of economic governance, balancing regional development. Reactive and proactive approaches to the development of response measures should be taken into account when introducing such mechanisms. The results of the study are of value to government representatives in terms of ensuring the economic security and economic sovereignty of the country. Further research can focus on identifying the main methods for forecasting threats to the economic sovereignty of the country.

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Keywords: economic sovereignty; economic security; globalization transformations; national interests.

Mecanismos de fortalecimiento de la soberanía económica del Estado en el contexto de operaciones militares

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio fue determinar los aspectos metodológicos de la construcción de mecanismos para el fortalecimiento de la soberanía económica en el contexto de los procesos de globalización y guerra. En el estudio se utilizó el derecho comparado y las estadísticas económicas. La investigación encontró que la seguridad económica, que mostró una disminución significativa después de una invasión a gran escala, es la expresión material de la soberanía económica. La relación Deuda/PIB alcanzó el 85% y la deuda externa bruta fue del 83% del PIB. Los mecanismos para fortalecer la soberanía económica y la seguridad económica de Ucrania se determinaron mediante el análisis de la experiencia internacional. Incluyeron, en particular: mejora del marco legal, desarrollo de mecanismos de respuesta de emergencia, desarrollo de asociaciones internacionales, fortalecimiento de la gobernanza económica, equilibrio del desarrollo regional. Los enfoques reactivos y proactivos para el desarrollo de medidas de respuesta deben tenerse en cuenta al introducir tales mecanismos. Los resultados del estudio tienen valor para los representantes gubernamentales en términos de garantizar la seguridad económica y la soberanía económica del país. La investigación adicional puede centrarse en identificar los principales métodos para pronosticar amenazas a la soberanía económica del país.

Palabras clave: soberanía económica; seguridad económica; transformaciones de la globalización; intereses nacionales; medidas reactivas.

Introduction

In the context of globalization, the development of effective mechanisms for strengthening the economic sovereignty of the state should be aimed at solving a number of controversial issues of determining the balance between national interests and compliance with international norms (Dutta and Anupama, 2019; Papelekaj, 2021; Charsmar, 2020). Globalization is

often considered a force undermining economic sovereignty (O'Grady Walshe, 2019), but many works refute this view (Quiggin, 2001; March and Schieferdecker, 2021; Collin, 2004; Havrylyshyn *et al.*, 2000). In particular, Sapir (2020) suggests considering international law as a law of coordination that does not subordinate one state to another.

Pisani-Ferry and Wolff (2019) note that the development of economic sovereignty does not involve a rejection of globalization, which brings advantages for further growth. Its strengthening should involve strengthening the order based on the relevant rules.

Such contradictions are caused, among other things, by the lack of a generally accepted definition of economic sovereignty. It can be defined as the ability of the national government to make decisions independently of other governments' decisions (Ozioko and Oraegbunam, 2019; Tkalenko, 2014) and is also used in discussions about "economic patriotism" (Clift, 2022; Szanyi, 2022) and "economic populism and sovereigntism" (Gryshchenko *et al.*, 2022a; 2022b; Mazzoleni and Ivaldi, 2022; Csehi and Heldt, 2021). Caravella *et al.* (2021) define economic sovereignty as the ability to generate added value and prosper through independent activities.

Mitchell (2010) describes economic sovereignty as the state's autonomy to implement fiscal and monetary policy, which is demonstrated by its ability to achieve desired economic goals and outcomes. In the conditions of globalization, such interpretations of economic sovereignty are somewhat narrow-minded, because the modern international environment determines the interdependence of countries to a certain extent, and therefore they cannot conduct their activities at their own discretion only.

Therefore, economic sovereignty should be viewed as an opportunity for the state to choose one of the alternatives for further economic development. It is necessary to develop appropriate mechanisms for strengthening economic sovereignty in order for globalization processes not to threaten it, which will contribute to an adequate assessment of existing and potential threats. This will help to preserve national interests in the context of integration processes.

The aim of the article is to determine the methodological aspects of developing mechanisms for strengthening economic sovereignty in the context of globalization processes and war. The aim involved the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- determine the components of economic security as a material embodiment of economic sovereignty;
- propose approaches to the development of mechanisms for strengthening economic sovereignty during the war;

- determine the main mechanisms for ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty in the context of crisis in the USA and the EU, and propose ways of their adaptation in Ukraine.

1. Literature review

The work of Tatsii *et al.* (2021) significantly influenced the author's position regarding the main areas of research. The researchers reveal the concept of economic sovereignty through the prism of its relationship with the economic security of the state, coming to the conclusion that economic security can be considered as a material embodiment of the economic will of the state (economic sovereignty).

Besides, their reflections on the transformation of the understanding of economic sovereignty in the course of deepening integration processes in the economy are worth special attention. The work also takes into account the findings of Yakoviyk *et al.* (2020), who comprehensively consider the problems of ensuring national, including economic, security.

The monograph by Mazaraki *et al.* (2015) made a significant contribution to the development of aspects of economic sovereignty. In particular, the work noted that approaches to the understanding and realization of economic sovereignty vary in time and space, and they can be interpreted in terms of three main parameters: carrier, absoluteness, external and internal dimensions.

Almost all researchers in this direction raise the issue of the "absolute" economic sovereignty, its limits and existence as such in general in the context of globalization, integration and deepening interdependence of economies. Sapir (2020) notes that criticisms of both absolute and limited sovereignty often refer to the objective limitations imposed by the state.

However, in the event of a decreased control by the state in connection with the strengthening of its dependence on relations with other countries, the importance of this state decreases accordingly. Therefore, the thesis of economic globalization is often used to justify the limitations of the state's powers and the gradual abandonment of sovereignty. However, this statement is misleading because of the inappropriate generalization of different levels of abstract concepts.

The conceptual apparatus of the study is based on the work of Miriasov and Yakhno (2019), who study methodological approaches to determining the economic sovereignty of the state. In their work, the researchers emphasize the essential difference between the political and economic sovereignty of the state, reveal the differences in the understanding of

economic sovereignty from the economic and legal points of view, and also emphasize incomplete existing definitions of this concept, offering their own interpretation. The distinction between formal and actual economic sovereignty is an important emphasis in the work.

Unlike Miriasov and Yakhno (2019), who emphasize the differences between political and economic sovereignty, Leonard *et al.* (2019) suggest that the line between geopolitical and economic sovereignty is becoming increasingly blurred.

The researchers reveal the problems of ensuring economic sovereignty in the European Union (EU) in the form of an analytical report. They noted that sovereignty for the EU as a whole is, first of all, economic sovereignty. The ability of EU countries to work together to maintain economic independence underlines the value of European integration. This statement is supported by the EU's ability to determine the rules of the game in the global economy.

Savanovic (2014) provided an alternative approach to the relationship between economic and political sovereignty. The approach is to transform the classical concept of sovereignty, in which economic sovereignty itself becomes the dominant element of sovereignty, while other aspects of sovereignty are effectively suppressed and "turned into simple words." This view is opposite to the views of individual lawyers who, as Miriasov and Yakhno (2019) noted, consider the separation of the concept of "economic sovereignty" as such inappropriate.

Hackenbroich *et al.* (2020) are the authors of an analytical report on the protection of European sovereignty and the search for new ways to counter economic coercion. Like the study by Leonard *et al.* (2019), this work belongs to the series of reports of the European Council on Foreign Relations and also has not only theoretical, but also practical value, as it reveals directions for strengthening economic sovereignty in European countries.

In some works, the desire to strengthen/restore economic sovereignty is defined as a counter-reaction to the globalization and denationalization processes. The sentiments of dissatisfaction intensified in certain regions and/or among certain strata of the population when such trends deepened.

Examining the election campaigns of Austrian parties, Heinisch *et al.* (2020) note that populist radical right and, more recently, centre-right parties in Western political systems seek to "recover lost values in the search for self-determination." Jabko and Luhman (2019) explore the reconfiguration of sovereignty, including economic, in the EU.

The analysis of literature gives grounds to note that very few studies focus on the ways and mechanisms of strengthening economic sovereignty

in the context of military operations. At the same time, the issue of defining and ensuring economic sovereignty arises most acutely in such conditions, because economic sovereignty is under the greatest threat in wartime.

2. Methods and materials

2.1. Research design

The first stage of the study provided for describing the structure of Ukraine's economic security by analysing the 2025 Economic Security Strategy of Ukraine. The application of the method of economic statistical analysis demonstrated the deterioration of the main indicators of the state of economic security in terms of its financial component upon a full-scale invasion.

The second stage deals with identification of the mechanisms of ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty in the context of crisis in the USA and the EU using the method of comparative law. The conducted analysis made it possible to create a list of these mechanisms for Ukraine.

The third stage involved making propositions to classify response measures into proactive measures (countermeasures or mitigating the threat) and reactive measures (overcoming or adapting to the threat) based on the analysis of international experience.

2.2. Methods

The study involved the method of comparative law and economic statistics.

2.3. Sample

The research sample consists of such countries as Ukraine, the USA, the EU, Japan, and China. The choice of Ukraine as the main object of the study is explained by the current situation in the country, which developed with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the sovereign territory of the country, which caused a number of significant threats to the economic sovereignty and economic security of the country.

Other states are included in the study because of the existence of powerful systems of ensuring economic sovereignty and economic security, which can be a positive example for Ukraine. The experience of the EU, among other things, is considered in the article through the prism of the European integration intentions of Ukraine.

2.4. Information background

Academic periodicals of Ukraine and other states, legislative acts of Ukraine, as well as information contained on the official website of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine are used as the information background of the research.

3. Results

3.1. Components of economic security as a material embodiment of economic sovereignty

The problem of ensuring Ukraine’s economic sovereignty is more acute than ever in the context of the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation (RF) on the country’s territory, as well as Ukraine’s European integration course.

These two global factors have a direct and significant impact on ensuring the economic sovereignty of Ukraine, which is materially expressed in economic security. The 2025 Economic Security Strategy of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021) provides the values of the main indicators of economic security presented in terms of its components (Figure 1).

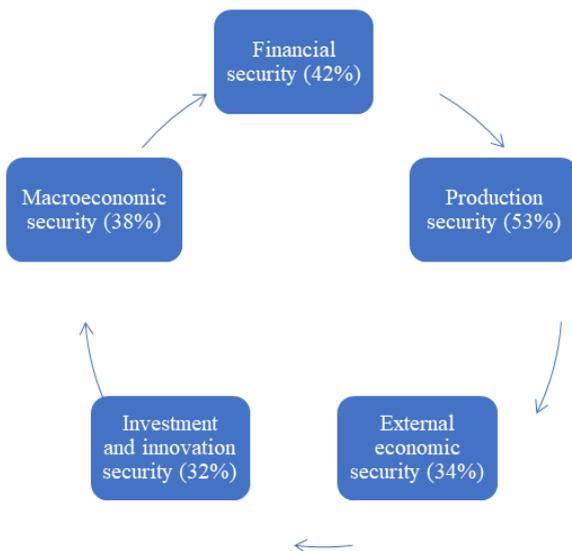


Figure 1: Components of economic security (built by the author according to (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021).

Figure 1 shows the integral value of the assessment of the state of each component of economic security in percentage (with an optimal value of 100%). This gives grounds to judge that the state of all components of Ukraine's economic security was assessed as unsatisfactory as of 2019. The situation worsened after the invasion, which is confirmed by the analysis of economic security indicators. Table 1 compares the values of some of these indicators in 2019 and 2022.

Table 1. Comparison of the values of some indicators of financial security as one of the main components of the economic security of the state in 2019 and 2022

Indicator	Value in 2019	Value in 2022	Critical value
Budget deficit to GDP ratio, %	2	19.1	32
Debt-to-GDP ratio, %	44.3	85	60
Gross external debt (percentage of GDP)	79.2	83	70

Source: prepared by the author based on (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021; Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, 2023).

Table 1, gives grounds to conclude that the negative economic trends significantly deepened after the full-scale invasion. The Debt-to-GDP ratio and Gross External Debt require special attention, because their values significantly exceed the critical ones. This is determined by the need to attract significant financial resources for the country's defence, thereby causing an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, the growing public debt and gross external debt pose a threat to the country's economic security.

On the other hand, Ukraine would not be able to fully resist the aggressor without loans, and its economic, as well as national, security would be under even greater threat. This proves that the interpretation of integration and deepening of relations with other countries and international organizations as an unambiguous threat to economic security and sovereignty is somewhat one-sided. Therefore, the level of the threat should be assessed taking into account the specific situation in a specific country.

3.2. Mechanisms for ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty in crisis conditions in the USA and the EU and their adaptation in Ukraine

The mechanism for ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty in the US crisis involves several key principles and tools. Most often, the main aspects that are taken into account are the following:

1. Ensuring the reliability of the financial and regulatory systems by creating a comprehensive structure of financial rules and institutions in order to maintain stability and mitigate risks. The Federal Reserve System, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Treasury Department are the main players in this structure. These authorities supervise financial markets and institutions, monitor systemic risks, and implement measures to protect economic security.
2. Implementation of measures to respond to emergency situations, in particular, fiscal stimulus packages are implemented, monetary policy is adjusted, targeted support is provided to industries that have suffered losses, financial assistance programmes are introduced, etc.
3. Cooperation with international partners (countries and international organizations) in order to coordinate the response to global crises and exchange experience. This helps increase the effectiveness of measures to ensure economic security and contributes to the stabilization of the world economy.
4. Improving the legislative framework, in particular, acts related to financial regulations, trade policy, emergency management, as well as national security strategies regarding the economy.

The mechanisms for ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty in the context of a crisis in the EU in the context of Ukraine's European integration intentions are also worth noting, which include:

1. Defining the economic management framework, which includes the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), the European Semester and the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure. These mechanisms are aimed at ensuring fiscal discipline, coordinating economic policy, and preventing imbalances.
2. Implementation of crisis management tools to resolve financial crises and support member states facing economic problems. These instruments include the European Stability Mechanism, which provides financial assistance to countries in financial distress, and the European Investment Bank, which offers financing for strategic investments.
3. Ensuring unity and solidarity through structural funds and related policies. These mechanisms help reduce regional disparity, support economic development, and increase social resilience in times of crisis.
4. Development and improvement of the legislative framework, including on the implementation of banking supervision, regulation of securities and capital markets, as well as competition policy.

It is important for Ukraine to assess the specific conditions of its development and to consult with experts and stakeholders in order to develop and implement an appropriate mechanism for ensuring economic security and strengthening economic sovereignty. Ukraine should consider the following mechanisms taking into account the experience of the USA and the EU:

- improvement of existing and the development of new effective legal acts, which should be aimed at strengthening financial stability and increasing the transparency of the financial system, take into account the improvement of risk management practices and the implementation of measures to prevent and resolve financial crises;
- development of emergency response mechanisms, including the ability to provide timely fiscal incentives, implement targeted support measures for affected sectors, strengthen social protection networks, create crisis response funds;
- development of international partnership for exchange of experience, knowledge and resources, in particular, through participation in regional and global economic cooperation initiatives;
- improving economic governance, which can be implemented through the establishment of effective fiscal rules, improving the management of public finances, increasing transparency and accountability in the process of making economic decisions;
- balancing of regional development aimed at reducing regional disparities and supporting vulnerable population groups during the crisis.

3.3. Approaches to the improvement of the mechanism of strengthening economic sovereignty during the war and in the post-war period

The analysis of international experience and its comparison with Ukrainian practice revealed that the world's leading countries use not only a reactive (response to existing challenges), but also a proactive approach (anticipation and early action in response to potential challenges) for ensuring economic sovereignty and economic security. Therefore, it is suggested that the threats to economic security should be classified using the algorithm shown in Figure 2.

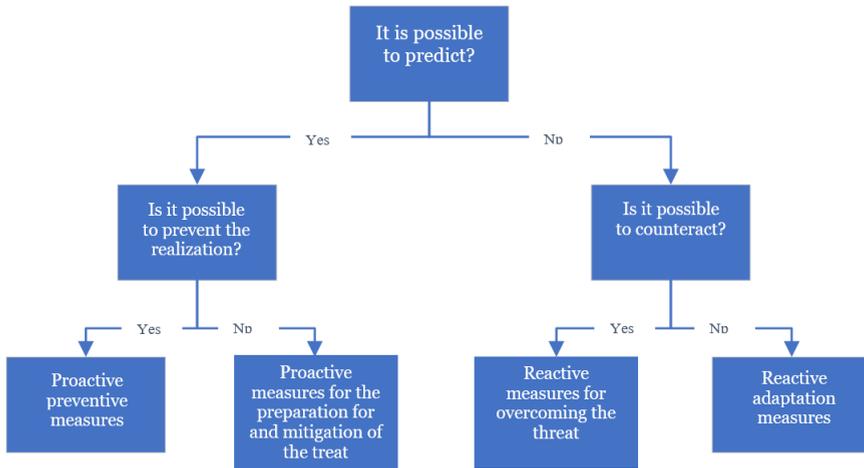


Figure 2: Classification of threats by appropriate measures (counteraction, mitigation, coping or adaptation) (developed by the author).

Such a distribution of threats will contribute to more effective countermeasures by determining the most appropriate measures and taking into account the possibility of completely preventing them or mitigating their negative impact in advance. Ultimately, this will help strengthen economic security and strengthen the economic sovereignty of the state.

4. Discussion

The results of the study develop the main theses presented in Tatsii *et al.* (2021), however, the researchers' work is more theoretical, and it also does not take into account the problems faced by the economy during the war, because the work was written before it began.

Yakoviyk *et al.* (2020) determine the key areas of ensuring national security, which can be interpreted as external – joining the global security system (NATO, UN) and internal – ensuring regional security by the country. An important achievement of researchers used in this study is the conclusion that the security policy of Ukraine in the current conditions should not only counteract existing threats, but apply more active (aggressive) mechanisms to ensure national security.

Such mechanisms should serve the promotion of national interests in the geopolitical space. The expanded classification of security and proactive

measures (defined in the article as “reactive” and “proactive”) into proactive countermeasures/mitigation and reactive coping/adaptive measures is distinctive in the author’s research.

The work of Miriasov and Yakhno (2019) considered the theoretical aspects of the definition of the concept of “economic sovereignty”, which researchers divide into formal (existing rights) and actual (the degree of compliance of realities with constitutional norms). The author’s work is different, as considered economic sovereignty only in a formal sense, and its material (actual) expression is found in the degree of economic security, which more fully reflects the economic and legal essence of the category.

Mazaraki *et al.* (2015) consider economic sovereignty in two dimensions – internal and external. In contrast to this work, the author’s research focuses mostly on the external dimension, because the category of economic sovereignty finds its manifestation in any open economy through foreign economic relations.

A study by Leonard *et al.* (2019), as well as the work of Hackenbroich *et al.* (2020), which is a continuation of the previous one, focuses on identifying threats and countering them in the EU. The United States of America (USA) and China are identified as one of the sources of the most important threats to the EU. Russia is also a threat, but “its economic leverage is limited by its economic failure.” In response to the increased level of threats, researchers suggest developing the scientific, innovative and technological background, protecting critical assets from foreign interference, ensuring equal conditions for domestic and international competition, strengthening monetary and financial autonomy.

The desire to restore economic sovereignty can be traced as a counter-reaction to the globalization processes in this policy, which carry certain threats. The definition of economic sovereignty by Savanovic (2014) is worth noting in this context: “being sovereign means that a person is *de facto* capable of managing resources, i.e., able to impose the rules of allocation, exchange and use of resources”, which is the definition of economic sovereignty in this work.

This is a return to the understanding of sovereignty as an absolute category, and even the ability to “impose rules” is attributed to its key characteristics. This distinguishes these works from the author’s article, which states that sovereignty is “eroding” under globalization, but this is not always a threat. This difference is probably determined by the difference in the understanding of economic sovereignty for Ukraine and the EU. Increasing dependence on international partners is the only alternative in wartime for the former, because it would not be able to effectively resist the aggressor without international support. In turn, the issue of economic sovereignty is not only an aspect of security for the EU as a powerful union, but also involves the possibility of dictating favourable conditions for it.

As a continuation, the works of Heinisch *et al.* (2020) and Jabko and Luhman (2019) are worth noting. These studies reveal the reasons behind the desire to strengthen economic sovereignty in the EU in response to globalization. Heinisch *et al.* (2020) provides the example of Austria, where political forces have expressed concern about how foreigners are encroaching on the socio-economic interests of Austrians.

As noted in the paper, the restoration of economic sovereignty is not limited to criticism of European integration — encroachment on economic sovereignty will probably be reflected in the rejection of international and multilateral trade agreements and a hostile attitude towards everything that potentially threatens national economic autonomy. Jabko and Luhman (2019) take a different position, noting that while the Eurozone and migration crises have exposed the EU's weaknesses, its leaders have been able to reorganize existing institutions by addressing member states' politicized concerns about sovereignty.

So, these studies considered the provision of economic sovereignty from the perspective of the EU countries, which interpret the European integration as a threat to sovereignty. In the author's work, European integration is considered as the most desirable alternative from the perspective of Ukraine, which can contribute to the strengthening of economic sovereignty in the context of threats from the Russian Federation.

At the same time, Sapir (2020) proposed to consider international law as the right of coordination, not subordination: its norms are not established by the majority, but unanimously; the signatories of the agreement have equal rights regardless of size, population, wealth; any party has the right to unimpeded withdrawal from an international agreement. This once again confirms that the understanding of economic sovereignty can be extremely relative, and integration into international associations is not always a threat to economic sovereignty, but must take into account the preservation of the balance between national interests and the norms that exist for the members of the association.

Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the conducted research, it is worth noting that despite the fact that the boundaries of economic sovereignty are blurred in the context of globalization, decisions on further integration do not always weaken it and are often a necessary requirement for further development and ensuring economic security. Ukraine's economic sovereignty and economic security, which were under a threat even before the war because of numerous challenges to the developing economy, faced even greater challenges after the full-scale invasion.

Integration into the EU is the optimal alternative for strengthening economic sovereignty in the face of armed aggression of the Russian Federation. The article determines that the actions of the government of Ukraine should be aimed at strengthening economic sovereignty and security in the context of European integration, as well as martial law and post-war reconstruction. In particular, not only reactive, but also proactive measures should be used in response to challenges, as well as international experience should be taken into account.

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