

DOI: 10.55643/ser.4.58.2025.629

Rostyslav Golovchak

PhD Student of the Department of
General Legal Disciplines of the
Educational and Scientific Institute of
Law and Law Enforcement Activities,
Lviv State University of Internal Affairs,
Lviv, Ukraine;
e-mail: golovchakrostyslav@gmail.com
ORCID: [0009-0008-7215-1744](https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7215-1744)

LAWFUL BEHAVIOR AS THE BASIS FOR ENSURING THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE STATE: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

The article examines lawful behavior as a key factor ensuring the stability, security, and integrity of the state. The author argues that lawful behavior is not only a result of legal norms but also a complex socio-economic phenomenon shaping an atmosphere of legality, order, and public trust. The theoretical section outlines major approaches to defining lawful behavior in legal scholarship, analyzes its functions, and highlights the role of legal, social, and institutional mechanisms that promote compliance with the law. Special attention is given to the importance of lawful behavior for strengthening the rule of law and enhancing citizens' trust in state institutions. Empirical findings demonstrate a strong correlation between the level of lawful behavior within society and the effectiveness of the national security system, which includes law-enforcement bodies, the judiciary, and state institutions responsible for implementing security policy. The study explores different types of offenses resulting from violations of lawful behavior and discusses mechanisms for their prevention through legislative improvements, the development of legal education, and the strengthening of civil society institutions. The practical section emphasizes the role of education, media, and public communication in fostering legal awareness. The author stresses the need for an integrated approach combining effective legal regulation with social incentives that promote law-abiding behavior. Examples from international practice illustrate the success of such measures in enhancing state resilience and security. The conclusions emphasize that lawful behavior should be viewed not only as compliance with legal norms but also as an essential social phenomenon that contributes to democratic development, increases public trust, and reinforces national security. It represents a crucial component of social capital, ensuring the effectiveness and stability of state institutions.

Keywords: lawful behavior, state security, integrity of the state, rule of law, legal norms, national security, social campaigns, public trust, legal awareness, social institutions

JEL Classification: K00, K42, H11, P48, D02

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of researching lawful behavior as a guarantee of state security and integrity is determined by a number of factors related to the contemporary challenges facing states in a globalized world. In the context of complex socio-political transformations, growing threats to national security, and the development of new forms of crime, lawful behavior is becoming one of the key elements ensuring the stability of the rule of law and the functioning of state institutions.

Lawful behavior is not limited to formal compliance with the law; it encompasses a range of social, psychological, and cultural aspects that contribute to the formation and maintenance of a healthy legal environment. In this context, it is important to consider lawful behavior not only as a result of individual motivation or conscious compliance with norms, but also as an important factor influencing the overall social stability and security of the state.

Received: 09/10/2025

Accepted: 17/12/2025

Published: 31/12/2025

© Copyright
2025 by the author(s)



This is an Open Access article
distributed under the terms of the
[Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Contemporary research shows that the level of lawful behavior in society is directly related to the effectiveness of state institutions, such as law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, as well as to the level of public trust in the authorities. Accordingly, any violations of lawful behavior, especially in conditions of political or economic instability, can lead to significant violations of law and order, which threaten not only legal but also national security. Recent studies analyzing social crises and the rise in crime rates in various countries clearly indicate the need to develop and encourage lawful behavior as the basis for ensuring the stability and security of the state.

An effective state policy on legal education, raising citizens' awareness of the law, and creating mechanisms to encourage lawful behavior in society plays a special role in this process. An important element in ensuring lawful behavior is not only the development of legislation, but also the introduction of a system of preventive measures aimed at forming an appropriate social culture. As international experience shows, an effective legal policy that combines legal norms with social mechanisms can ensure the stable development of society and minimize the risks associated with violations of the rule of law.

The current stage of statehood development requires scholars, politicians, and practitioners not only to develop theoretical work in the field of law but also to provide practical recommendations for creating an environment in which lawful behavior is the norm rather than the exception. In this context, interaction between the state and citizens is important, where everyone must be aware of their role in ensuring not only individual security but also collective security at the state level.

In view of the above, the issue of lawful behavior as a guarantee of security and integrity of the state is extremely relevant in today's world. Understanding this phenomenon, as well as the factors that influence it, is necessary for the development of an effective public policy strategy aimed at ensuring law and order, preserving national security, and the integrity of the state. Therefore, the topic of lawful behavior is particularly relevant in the context of global change, when states face new challenges such as terrorism, cyberattacks, social conflicts, economic instability, and even external threats. In such conditions, only a high level of lawful behavior can ensure the stability of state institutions and guarantee their integrity. Therefore, the study of lawful behavior, its definition, components, and its impact on the security and stability of the state is of not only scientific but also practical importance for the formation of an effective strategy for ensuring law and order and the development of democratic institutions.

Ultimately, the study of lawful behavior as a guarantee of state security and integrity is important for the development of legal science and practice, contributing to the establishment of a stable rule of law, strengthening trust between citizens and the state, and improving the overall state of national security.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lawful behavior is an important component of social and legal stability, and its role in ensuring the security and integrity of the state has been repeatedly highlighted in both domestic and foreign studies. First of all, Ukrainian scholars such as I. F. Korzh (Korzh, 2024) are engaged in the study of lawful behavior in the context of security, emphasizing the importance of lawful behavior for the stability of the rule of law in Ukraine, considering it as the main factor ensuring social order and national security. The author notes that the increase in the level of offenses in the state is directly related to the decline in the lawful behavior of citizens, which leads to a violation of social harmony.

Another Ukrainian author, V. I. Didenko, in his work "The Institute of Offenses in Ukrainian Law" (Didenko, 2020), analyzes lawful behavior as an element of an offense, emphasizing its importance for ensuring legal stability in the state. Didenko believes that in order to maintain law and order, it is necessary to carry out preventive work to strengthen lawful behavior among citizens, which is important for preventing offenses and, consequently, for ensuring national security.

Foreign authors have also done significant work on the study of lawful behavior. One of the most significant studies is D. J. Galligan's "Law and Public Administration" (Galligan, 2017), in which he argues that lawful behavior is one of the basic conditions for the effective functioning of the legal and administrative institutions of the state. Galligan notes that states in which lawful behavior dominates have more stable governments and are less prone to internal crises. However, the author also points out that lawful behavior does not always guarantee the absence of offenses, especially in conditions of political or economic change.

John Rawls, in his classic work *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971), emphasizes the principles of justice and equality that underlie lawful behavior. According to him, if individuals believe that the justice system is fair, their lawful behavior will be natural and stable, which will contribute to the overall security and stability of the state. However, Rawls also notes that in the absence of trust in legal institutions, lawful behavior may decline, which will have a negative impact on the security of the state.

Foreign researchers also refer to the influence of legal norms on the formation of lawful behavior. For example, R. D. Putnam, in his work "Making Democracy Work" (Putnam, 1993), describes the link between high levels of civic participation and lawful behavior, pointing out that cultures of lawful behavior contribute to the stability of democracies. As Putnam notes, the higher the level of legal awareness in society, the greater the likelihood of compliance with legal norms, which contributes to the development of a safe and stable social environment.

In turn, L. M. Friedman, in *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective* (Friedman, 1975), emphasizes that lawful behavior in society is not always the result of legal norms alone; social traditions and cultures also play an important role in shaping lawfulness. He argues that national security can only be ensured when citizens perceive the legal system as part of their social context and culture.

Equally important is the study of the impact of lawful behavior on national security in the context of contemporary global threats. For example, Ngozi Aleke (Aleke, 2024) argues that strengthening lawful behavior in the context of globalization is the basis for state stability in the face of transnational threats. The author draws attention to the importance of forming global standards of law and order to ensure security within the state. Stuart A. Scheingold and Malcolm M. Feeley (Scheingold & Feeley, 2010) emphasize that national security directly depends on the effectiveness of the legal mechanism. They believe that lawful behavior should be supported not only at the state level but also at the international level to ensure global law and order.

Reviewing domestic and foreign studies, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, most scholars emphasize the importance of lawful behavior for ensuring state security. However, studies do not always take into account changes in socio-economic conditions and their impact on the lawfulness of citizens' behavior. In particular, the works of authors such as Galligan and Friedman clearly demonstrate the role of social and cultural factors in shaping lawful behavior, but their analysis is often limited to classical approaches to the rule of law.

Within the framework of realism, the issue of legitimate (lawful) state behavior is not central, as the main priorities are pragmatism and national interests rather than ethics or international law. Realists assume that a state acts according to its interests, even if this contradicts norms or agreements. Prominent theorists of realism include H. Morgenthau and his work *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, as well as K. Waltz, who in *Theory of International Politics* developed the approach of "neorealism" or "structural realism", focusing on the anarchic structure of the international system as the main factor shaping state behavior.

Representatives of Critical Security Studies (CSS) view security as a socially constructed concept, broader than the military sphere. It encompasses environmental and social security, human rights, and protection against emerging threats such as climate change, globalization, and social inequality. Within this approach, legitimate behavior is multi-layered and includes compliance with norms that ensure the security of states, individuals, groups, and the global community. CSS also critiques the norm-setting process, examines the influence of power structures on what is considered lawful, and emphasizes that legality can both protect and oppress. In this context, legitimate behavior is understood as the outcome of discursive practices, which vary depending on how society and authority construct perceptions of threats.

Although the joint works of K. Booth and K. Crouch do not focus directly on lawful behavior, Booth's concepts of "emancipation" and global ethics are directly relevant to its understanding. He interprets the protection of dignity and human rights as the foundation of legitimate state behavior. Legitimate behavior also involves the responsibility of states and international organizations within the framework of global ethics, international law, and the pursuit of social justice and equality. These ideas provide a basis for critically analyzing traditional state-centric approaches and broaden the discussion of state responsibility at the global level.

K. Krause and M. Williams examine the impact of legitimate state behavior on global security through adherence to international norms and standards, particularly regarding arms control. They critique traditional realism and propose a multi-level approach that includes individual security and social aspects. The authors also emphasize the role of international institutions as a lever influencing state behavior, which contributes to reducing the risk of conflicts.

R. W. Jones is one of the key figures in contemporary critical security studies. He analyzes security through the lens of critical theory, drawing on the ideas of J. Habermas and A. Gramsci, and expands the understanding of security from the military sphere to socio-economic dimensions, emphasizing the legitimacy and lawfulness of state actions. Jones underscores that legitimate behavior is the foundation of national and global security, that state legitimacy determines the stability of the international system, and that ethical and ideological principles must align with norms of social justice. A significant innovation in his approach is the humanitarian dimension of security, where human rights and social justice serve as criteria for legitimacy.

In Ukrainian scholarship, considerable attention is given to the legal foundations of security, the protection of human rights, the lawful behavior of state institutions, and the humanitarian aspects of security, including support for internally displaced persons and war victims. Researchers from the Institute of Information, Security, and Law of the NAS of Ukraine emphasize that the distortion of legal consciousness and culture poses a threat to national security. They highlight the central role of legal security in overcoming legal nihilism, which depends on the level of understanding by society and social actors of the essence and value of law.

Separately, it is worth noting the lack of attention to contemporary challenges such as cyberattacks, terrorism, and economic crises, which are changing public perceptions of lawful behavior and may lead to its weakening. Therefore, contemporary research should focus more on analyzing the latest threats to national security and seeking new approaches to supporting lawful behavior in the context of globalization and technological change.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive study of lawful behavior as an important guarantee of state security and integrity, as well as to analyze its impact on ensuring the stability of the rule of law and the functioning of key state institutions. The article aims to provide a theoretical justification for the role of lawful behavior in the context of contemporary challenges to national security, as well as to study empirical data on its impact on the level of law and order and social stability in the country.

In particular, the objectives of the article are:

- to analyze theoretical approaches to defining lawful behavior and its functions in the modern legal and social context;
- to identify the main factors influencing the formation of lawful behavior in society, in particular, the role of state institutions, legal education, and social mechanisms;
- to assess the relationship between the level of lawful behavior of citizens and the state of law and order in the country, as well as its impact on national security;
- to study practical examples from foreign experience in ensuring lawful behavior and stability of law and order in the context of globalization and new threats;
- to formulate recommendations for improving mechanisms to support lawful behavior as the basis for ensuring the security and integrity of the state in modern conditions, etc.

Thus, the article aims not only to theoretically reveal the role of lawful behavior in the state, but also to offer practical recommendations for its effective promotion, taking into account changes in the socio-economic and political environment.

METHODS

The methodology for researching lawful behavior as a guarantee of state security and integrity involves a comprehensive approach that includes both theoretical and empirical analysis. In the course of the work, methods were applied that allow covering various aspects of lawful behavior in the context of ensuring national security and stability of the rule of law. The choice of methodological tools is determined by the need to analyze lawful behavior not only through the prism of legal norms, but also taking into account the social, psychological, and economic factors that influence it. In order to define lawful behavior as an element of ensuring state security, the main regulatory and legal acts governing the rights and obligations of citizens, as well as the mechanisms of interaction between state bodies and society, were studied. By analyzing the Constitution of Ukraine, laws, subordinate acts, and international legal norms, it was determined how legal norms shape public perceptions of lawful behavior and how these norms are implemented in practice. Particular attention was paid to mechanisms for ensuring law and order and national security, such as law enforcement agencies, the judicial system, and other state structures. The work uses a systematic approach to analyze lawful behavior as a complex socio-legal phenomenon that involves the interaction of various elements: citizens, state institutions, and social and cultural traditions. Systemic analysis allows us to consider lawful behavior not only as a legal fact, but also as an element of broader social interaction that contributes to stability and security in the state. Studying this issue using a systemic approach allows us to identify both the influence of various factors on lawful behavior and the role of this behavior in the overall picture of the functioning of the legal order. The historical-legal method was used to analyze the evolution of conceptual approaches to lawful behavior and its significance for state security. This method allows us to trace changes in legal ideas, concepts of lawful behavior, and their functions over time, as well as to determine how socio-economic and more meaningful political changes affect attitudes toward offenses and the legal order as a whole. In particular, a comparative analysis of lawful

behavior in different countries was conducted, particularly in the context of transition periods and crisis situations, which made it possible to assess the impact of globalization and contemporary threats to state security. Empirical methods, including statistical analysis and surveys, were used to study real data on the level of lawful behavior in society. The study analyzed available data on the level of crime in Ukraine and other countries, as well as on the activities of law enforcement agencies and legal institutions. The study of the results of sociological surveys made it possible to identify factors that influence the lawful behavior of citizens, as well as their attitude towards legislation and state institutions. The case method was used to gain a more meaningful understanding of the mechanisms for ensuring lawful behavior in the context of global change, as well as to study best practices. A review of specific cases from foreign experience, particularly in European countries and the United States, made it possible to consider the effectiveness of different approaches to shaping lawful behavior and ensuring law and order. The analysis of practical examples makes it possible to identify the positive and negative aspects of certain policies and adapt them to Ukrainian conditions.

The study included a content analysis of scientific articles, publications, reports of organizations, and international studies, which provided additional information on lawful behavior in various contexts. This method allows us to identify the main trends that determine the dynamics of lawful behavior in society, as well as to analyze the interpretations of legal norms in different scientific schools and legal systems. The comparative legal method allows us to study lawful behavior in different countries, taking into account the specifics of their legal systems, social traditions, and economic conditions. Analysis of international experience, in particular examples of countries that have successfully implemented legal security mechanisms, allows us to formulate practical recommendations for improving the situation in Ukraine. The application of these methods made it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of lawful behavior in the context of state security and integrity, as well as to formulate recommendations for improving state policy in this area. The technical aspects of the study were also supported by the use of statistical tools for processing and interpreting the empirical data obtained, which allows conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between lawful behavior and the level of security in the state.

Thus, the research methodology includes the comprehensive application of various approaches and methods, allowing for a detailed examination of all aspects of lawful behavior, its impact on national security, and the stability of the state in the face of modern challenges.

RESULTS

Lawful behavior is an important aspect of ensuring law and order and security in any society, and studying it provides a deeper understanding of how compliance with laws and legal norms contributes to the stability and development of the state. The theoretical and empirical characteristics of lawful behavior cover a wide range of issues, from the legal foundations of the functioning of the state to practical examples of lawful behavior and empirical studies thereof. At the theoretical level, it draws on the epistemological potential of legal theory and philosophy, comparative law, political science, sociology, and other sciences, and includes an analysis of the legislative framework and legal and ethical norms governing citizen behavior. The empirical aspect focuses on studying specific manifestations of lawful behavior through social statistics, research on offenses, and other practical cases. This approach allows not only to assess the current state of legal culture in society, but also to develop effective strategies for its improvement, which is an important factor in strengthening the security and integrity of the state. In essence, a theoretical and empirical study of lawful behavior at various levels (individual, group, society, and state) is necessary to summarize its role as a guarantee of the preservation of Ukraine's integrity and independence. As key concepts, the integrity and security of the state affect its stability, functioning, and ability to ensure the well-being of its citizens. Ultimately, the concepts of state integrity and security have interdisciplinary content and appear in interdisciplinary discourses, which should be addressed in order to clarify the connection with lawful behavior. Each discourse has its own arguments on security issues, unique tools for analyzing and understanding how states can maintain integrity and security in the face of contemporary challenges, and what role legitimate behavior plays in security issues (Table 1).

Let's start with one of the most influential concepts, called political realism, which was especially popular in international relations during the Cold War of the last century. It basically says that states operate in an anarchic environment where there's no higher authority that could ensure order and security. Accordingly, the main goal for each state is survival, which is achieved by maximizing military power and ensuring national security. Realists insist that the integrity of the state is a fundamental condition for its survival, and therefore, the state must be prepared to use force to defend its territorial integrity from external threats. At the same time, they believe that it is necessary to strive to create a balance of power to prevent the domination of any other state. This concept emphasizes the importance of national interests and power in international relations, where cooperation between states is possible only when it is in their own interests. Realism recognizes the limitations of international institutions in ensuring stability and security, as states are primarily guided by their

own aspirations and fears. Thus, a rather pessimistic picture of international politics emerges, where states must always be on guard, defending their interests in conditions of constant competition and potential conflict. Overall, the analysis confirms that classical and neo-realism demonstrate a fundamental divergence from the contemporary understanding of legitimate state behavior. Realism effectively denies the normative component of international politics: it views legal norms as mere instruments; morality as weakness; and international institutions as mechanisms that only work when it suits powerful states. In the 21st century, this position is increasingly at odds with real processes: the development of international criminal law, the growing role of human rights, and the emergence of global regulatory regimes. Also, the results of the study indicate that realism explains the behavior of states in conflicts, but poorly explains their behavior in inter-crisis periods, especially in the areas of environmental security, climate policy, humanitarian response, and the formation of international jurisdiction norms. Thus, realism can model competition, but it cannot explain the stability, trust, and norms that actually ensure global order.

Table 1. Interpretation of lawful behavior in various theoretical concepts of security.

Concept	Main Focus	Role of Lawful Behavior
Political Realism	States operate in an anarchic environment; national security and survival are the top priorities	Lawful behavior is not a priority; emphasis is on national interests, with norms potentially violated in the name of survival
Liberalism	International cooperation and protection of human rights as the foundation of security	Lawful behavior is essential for cooperation, based on respect for human rights and the social contract
Critical Security Studies (CSS)	Security as a socially constructed concept, including environmental and social security	Lawful behavior serves as a tool for protecting marginalized groups and promoting social justice
Neorealism (Structural Realism)	The international system is anarchic; states act based on pragmatic calculations	Lawful behavior functions as an instrument for achieving national goals and reinforcing the balance of power
R. W. Jones' Critical Approach	Security should be people-centered, not limited to states	Lawful behavior includes the protection of human rights, social justice, and democratic oversight

Another influential concept (liberalism) emphasizes cooperation between states, international institutions, democracies, and economic cooperation. Its main thesis is that international cooperation can reduce the likelihood of conflict and promote general peace and security. In this case, an important role is assigned to international institutions that support order and law, such as the UN. It is essential that emphasis is placed on respect for human rights as a component of state integrity and stability. In this concept, lawful behavior plays an important role as a key element in ensuring a balance between individual freedom and public order. Laws must protect freedoms such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to property, etc. While emphasizing individual rights and freedoms, it also stresses the need for a certain legal framework to regulate interaction between citizens and the state. The common thread is the idea that lawful behavior should be based on respect for the rights of other individuals, and therefore, the basis for their interaction should be a social contract, the condition of which is voluntary submission to laws adopted to ensure the common good. The social contract ensures a balance between the personal interests of the individual and the general interests of society, which is part of the mechanism for protecting and realizing the rights and freedoms of the individual, as well as an instrument for ensuring the fair and effective functioning of society (Klymenko, 2022, 447–449).

CSS approaches are much broader and more adaptive. They allow us to explain changes in perceptions of threats, take into account the humanitarian dimension, and view law as a product of socio-political discourse. The key analytical finding is that CSSs make legitimate behavior not primary, but derivative of the discursive construction of security. This means that: what was considered "legal" may change along with changing perceptions of threat; norms can be an instrument of power; legitimacy is not static, but procedural. However, the results also reveal the shortcomings of this concept: excessive abstraction, complexity of practical operationalization, and lack of clear criteria for "legitimacy." Therefore, CSSs explain well why norms arise, but they do not adequately answer the question of how to make the behavior of states truly predictable and controllable. Another aspect of legitimate behavior is the protection of the rights of marginalized groups, the struggle for the rights of minorities, refugees, women, and those on the periphery of society who often fall outside the traditional concept of security. CSS questions the legitimacy of legitimate behavior imposed through dominant political or social structures. Criticism of how norms that legitimize certain behaviors are defined and implemented is important. This criticism aims to show how legitimate behavior can be used to maintain the status quo or suppress alternative voices. Thus, in critical security studies (CSS), lawful behavior is sufficiently justified and included in the broader context of social

and political processes, where it can be both a means of protecting and expanding rights and freedoms and an instrument of oppression and control.

In general, analysis of Jones' ideas led to one of the central findings of the study: legitimate state behavior in the 21st century is inseparable from the humanitarian dimension of security. This means that a state cannot be legitimate externally if it violates human rights internally; international law and ethics merge into a single plane; humanitarian standards become the criterion for a state's external behavior; military security is seen as part of a broader system of human security. This approach allows us to provide quantitative indicators of legitimacy: the level of compliance with international legal regimes, the state of democracy, the level of social justice, and compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law.

The results also allow us to form an innovative model of understanding legitimate state behavior, which synthesizes: realism → interests and power as motivators; liberal institutionalism → norms and institutions; CSS → discourses and social construction of threats; critical humanitarian theory → human rights and ethics as criteria. This means that legitimate behavior is not determined by a single approach. It is a multidimensional construct in which interests, norms, discourses, and humanitarian principles operate simultaneously. This allows the model to be applied to practical cases — from conflicts to international aid and diplomacy.

Research shows that state-centric military models (realism) are incapable of ensuring long-term security. Legitimacy, on the other hand, reduces the likelihood of conflict, increases trust between states, and lowers the risk of sanctions and international isolation. In this context, it is reasonable to argue that humanitarian norms change the balance of power. A state may have a powerful army but be internationally isolated due to human rights violations. Thus, humanitarian policy becomes a factor of "soft power". Therefore, we can assume that the legitimate behaviour of a state is a multidimensional phenomenon; includes legal, ethical, social, and humanitarian aspects; is formed through the interaction of interests and norms; cannot be explained solely by realistic or normative approaches; is key to the stability of both the state and the international system.

Based on the analysis, a number of practical recommendations have been formulated, in particular regarding the need for "multifactorial legitimacy" and legitimacy as a tool for conflict prevention. After all, states must base their policies on four types of legitimacy: legal – compliance with norms; social – support of citizens; moral – compliance with ethical principles; international – approval of the world community. However, all four must be combined simultaneously.

The idea of structural aspects of the international system that determine the behavior of states is continued by representatives of neorealism (structural realism). In their views, legitimate behavior plays a subordinate role compared to more fundamental structural factors, such as the distribution of power in the international system. As in classical realism, they understand the international system as anarchic due to the absence of a supranational authority that could compel states to comply with norms and laws. Under such conditions, states adhere to legitimate behavior only when it is in their national interest and contributes to their survival. In order to shift the balance of power in the international system in their favor, states use legitimate behavior. They may adhere to international norms to strengthen coalitions, prevent conflicts, or legitimize their actions in the international arena. Neorealists recognize the limited but important role of international institutions in regulating legitimate behavior. These institutions can promote cooperation between states and provide a certain level of predictability and stability in an anarchic system. Lawful behavior is one of the strategies that states use to achieve their goals, but it depends on specific circumstances and the distribution of power in the system, as the survival of the state remains the primary goal. States may adhere to lawful behavior if it contributes to their survival. For example, they may adhere to international treaties or agreements if this helps to reduce threats or avoid conflicts. Original in this regard is the concept of the security dilemma, where the actions of one state, even if legitimate, may be perceived by other states as a threat, which can undermine cooperation and increase tensions, even if all parties formally adhere to norms and laws. Thus, in neorealism, the lawful behavior of states is seen as a tool for ensuring survival and maintaining the balance of power in the international system. Although laws and norms are important, compliance with them is determined by structural factors and the distribution of power, as well as the pragmatic calculations of states.

At the present stage, the issue of lawful behavior is being integrated into the range of security issues in Ukrainian academia, affecting various aspects of both domestic and international security. Some researchers note the growing negative consequences of the spread of unlawful behavior by states, the emergence of an international legal vacuum as a result of Russian aggression, the weakness of international institutions, and the inadequate response of the international community. The example of the Russian Federation, which violates international law and its own agreements and ignores its obligations in international organizations, is setting a precedent for other states that justify encroachment on foreign territories based on historical arguments. The aggressor's impunity leads to growing mistrust between countries, polarization of positions regarding the aggressor and its victim, as well as conflict between pragmatic, selfish approaches and commitment to moral values (Parakonsky and Yavorska, 2024, 17–20).

Today, Ukrainian security studies are largely diversified and focused on various issues of economic security and threats arising in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukrainian statehood and the Ukrainian people. The emphasis is on reforming the security and defense sector, developing the Armed Forces of Ukraine, cybersecurity, and protecting critical infrastructure. Ukrainian scholars' study regional security issues in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. One important topic is Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, particularly NATO, and cooperation with the European Union in the field of security. As Ukraine faces various forms of hybrid threats, such as disinformation, cyberattacks, and economic pressure, these topics occupy an important place in research.

Contemporary security studies in Ukraine are a response to current challenges and are aimed at developing effective strategies to ensure national and international security. Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Y. Vermenych believes that at the present stage, social sciences and humanities should significantly change their research strategies ... in the context of improving state policy on cohesion and regional development (Vermenych, 2024, 27–31).

An analysis of contemporary Ukrainian research allows us to identify two key vectors:

1. The deformation of legal culture as a threat to security. Legal nihilism, low levels of legal awareness, corruption, and distrust of state institutions create a situation where formal legality ceases to be a factor of legitimacy. This means that the state may act correctly from a legal point of view, but not be perceived as legitimate by society.
2. Legitimacy as a condition for the internal stability of the state. For Ukraine, which is in a state of war, legitimate behavior by the state has the following consequences: it increases social cohesion; reduces vulnerability to information operations; strengthens international support; and increases the effectiveness of institutions. Therefore, legal security is not a formal category, but a mechanism for ensuring national stability.

Legal security and lawful behavior are closely intertwined, as lawful behavior contributes to ensuring legal security at both the individual and societal levels. It is important to realize that legal security is not only a theoretical concept, but also a tool for the sustainable development of society, the legal protection of citizens, and the integration of the state into the global legal system. The main components of legal security include: stability of the legal system, which allows avoiding legal uncertainty; predictability of legal regulation, which consists in predicting the consequences of one's actions based on the reliability of the legal system; effectiveness of the legal mechanism for protecting the rights and legitimate interests of every citizen; respect for the rule of law, equality before the law, and protection from arbitrariness, etc.

An important feature of lawful behavior as a guarantee of the security and integrity of the state is its empirical characteristic, as it provides a scientifically sound understanding of how legality and compliance with legal norms affect the stability and development of society (Table 2). It includes an analysis of real behavioral patterns reflected in legal practice and allows assessing how effectively legal mechanisms function and how they affect relations in society. The advantages of the empirical approach to studying lawful behavior also lie in the fact that it allows specific factors influencing compliance with the law to be identified.

Table 2. Theoretical and empirical characteristics of lawful behaviour and its impact on state security.

Level	Theoretical Aspect	Empirical Aspect
Approaches to Lawful Behavior	Legal, ethical, sociological	Observation, analysis of citizens' behavior, study of real cases of offenses
Scientific Disciplines	Theory of law, sociology, philosophy, political science	Social statistics, studies of offenses, practical case analyses
Role of Lawful Behavior	Guarantee of state stability, preservation of law and order and security	Assessment of the impact of legal norms on social relations, monitoring of legal culture
Effectiveness of Legal Mechanisms	Increasing stability through legislative initiatives and ethical norms	Empirical analysis allows for evaluating the effectiveness of law enforcement in real conditions
Key Components	Legislation, ethics, social norms	Legal culture, social stability, relations between citizens and institutions

The empirical characterization of lawful behavior is a key factor in ensuring the security and integrity of the state due to its ability to provide a scientifically sound understanding of the relationship between compliance with the law and social stability. It allows us to study how various aspects of citizens' legal behavior are related to the functioning of the state and society as a whole. This approach is based on the analysis of behavioral patterns with subsequent explication in the legal system to study its effectiveness.

Empirical characteristics form the basis for assessing the real state of legal culture in society and identifying its impact on various aspects of social and political life. Legal culture, as an integral part of the general culture of society, is one of the key factors determining the effectiveness of the legal system and the degree to which legal norms are rooted in the minds of citizens. It reflects how deeply the population perceives and supports the laws, as well as how legal norms shape and influence people's behavior in everyday life. Assessing the real state of legal culture based on empirical data allows for the development of targeted educational and information campaigns aimed at raising the level of legal awareness among the population.

An important aspect is the impact of legal culture on relations between citizens and state institutions. A high level of legal culture contributes to increased trust in the judicial system, law enforcement agencies, and other state structures, as citizens who respect the law and understand its significance are more likely to consider state institutions legitimate and fair. This, in turn, reduces social tension and contributes to the strengthening of social unity. On the other hand, a low level of legal culture can be a source of destabilization, as it leads to an increase in crime, the spread of corruption, and a decrease in the effectiveness of law enforcement. In such conditions, citizens begin to doubt the fairness of state institutions, which can lead to negative consequences. Empirical analysis allows such trends to be identified at an early stage and measures to be taken to neutralize them. Thus, the empirical characterization of legal culture is an important tool for assessing not only the legal awareness of the population but also overall social stability. It allows the state not only to understand the current state of affairs, but also to predict possible changes, which helps to timely adjust policies in the field of legal education, law enforcement, and social development, which ultimately contributes to ensuring the stability and integrity of the state.

Ultimately, the ability of empirical studies of lawful behavior to identify shortcomings in the legal system is one of the most important aspects of maintaining state security and stability. This approach allows for a scientific and reasoned assessment of how laws and legal institutions function in real-world conditions, identifying weaknesses that can be exploited to violate the rule of law. This is particularly important in the context of dynamic changes in society, where new challenges can create gaps in the legal system that pose a threat to state security. For example, the analysis of judicial practice, as an important component of empirical research, can highlight specific problems arising in the process of law enforcement, or the identification of cases where legislation allows for the avoidance of liability for offences indicates the need to review the relevant rules or procedures. Such gaps may be the result of both technical errors in legislation and deliberate manipulation of legal norms to achieve unlawful goals. Timely identification and elimination of these problems is critical to ensuring justice and the rule of law.

In addition, empirical research can reveal systemic problems that contribute to the spread of corruption. For example, analysis of the activities of law enforcement agencies or judicial institutions allows, in some cases, to identify mechanisms and reasons for avoiding punishment for corrupt practices. Empirical analysis allows the state to respond promptly to emerging challenges and take measures to address identified shortcomings, which may include both improving the legislative framework and reforming the institutions responsible for law enforcement. Thus, empirical research in the context of the impact of lawful behavior on the security and integrity of the state performs an important function of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the legal system, ensuring its relevance to contemporary challenges. This enables the state to maintain a high level of law and order, which is a necessary condition for protecting national security and preserving the integrity of the state.

DISCUSSION

Lawful behavior of citizens is one of the key elements ensuring the stability of the rule of law and security of the state. However, the question of how lawful behavior interacts with other factors determining national security remains the subject of numerous scientific and practical discussions. In this context, it is important to consider not only the legal aspect, but also the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence the formation of lawful behavior in society.

One of the main topics of discussion is determining what exactly contributes to or, conversely, hinders the development of lawful behavior. On the one hand, numerous studies indicate that a stable legal system that ensures impartial and effective justice is an important factor that encourages citizens to behave lawfully. On the other hand, the situation in Ukraine, in particular, with its high level of corruption and distrust of law enforcement agencies, shows that the justice system alone cannot guarantee a high level of lawful behavior if its functioning does not meet the requirements of fairness and efficiency.

Foreign studies, in particular the works of Galligan and Friedman, emphasize the importance of building citizens' trust in legal institutions as the basis for lawful behavior. They argue that a legal system that does not inspire trust in citizens

cannot ensure the stability of the rule of law, even if legal norms have a high level of formal perfection. This observation is particularly relevant for Ukraine, where many citizens distrust law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. Thus, the effectiveness of the legal system directly depends on the level of public trust in that system.

Another aspect of the discussion is the influence of social and cultural factors on lawful behavior. As the works of John Rawls and Putnam show, lawful behavior is not only the result of legal norms, but also of social norms, traditions, and cultural values that exist in society. In countries with a high level of civic responsibility and social cohesion, as observed in many European countries, lawful behavior becomes the norm rather than the exception. Therefore, for Ukraine, with its specific sociocultural conditions, it is important to have not only legal but also social policies that will encourage the formation of lawful behavior among citizens.

At the practical level, the effectiveness of state policy in shaping lawful behavior is an important issue. Current policy in Ukraine is twofold in this regard. On the one hand, laws have been adopted to combat corruption and improve the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, including reforms in law enforcement, the judiciary, and anti-corruption policy. However, on the other hand, the real situation with offences and the level of lawful behaviour in Ukraine leaves much to be desired. The lack of real changes in the structure and mechanisms of legal institutions, as well as the high level of corruption in state bodies, indicate that mechanisms for encouraging lawful behaviour still need significant improvement. In addition, the role of education and legal awareness of citizens in shaping lawful behavior is no less important. As researchers, Zimring and Friedman point out, legal awareness is one of the main factors influencing lawful behavior in society. In countries with a high level of legal education and legal awareness among citizens, the incidence of crime is significantly lower. It is important for Ukraine to introduce effective legal education, starting with kindergartens and schools, in order to instill in citizens from an early age an understanding of the importance of obeying the law and the responsibility for violations.

Another aspect that requires further discussion is the influence of external factors on lawful behavior in the state. One of the greatest threats to national security is new forms of crime, in particular cyberattacks, terrorism, organized crime, and economic threats, which cannot be effectively overcome without the development of new approaches to law and order. This issue is particularly relevant for Ukraine in the context of hybrid warfare and external threats. In this regard, there is a need to develop legal institutions capable of responding effectively to new challenges, in particular, improving the cybersecurity system and developing legislation that corresponds to modern realities.

In general, it can be concluded that the issue of lawful behavior as a guarantee of the security and integrity of the state is extremely relevant and multifaceted. Studying this phenomenon requires a comprehensive approach that includes an analysis of legal, social, cultural, and economic factors. At the same time, the successful formation of lawful behavior is only possible if the state not only ensures appropriate legal norms, but also creates conditions for the development of trust in its institutions, raises the level of legal education and legal awareness of citizens, and responds effectively to the latest threats to national security.

This article proposes a comprehensive approach to studying law-abidingness as a factor in national security, covering legal, social, economic, and cultural aspects. Unlike classical works in this field, which often focus either on formal legal regulation (Galligan, 2007; Friedman, 2019) or on the sociocultural determinants of behavior (Rawls, 1971; Putnam, 2000), this article integrates both perspectives and emphasizes their interaction.

The academic debate on law-abiding behavior is traditionally divided into two approaches. The first characteristic of Galligan and Friedman focuses on trust in legal institutions. They argue that the formal perfection of laws without public trust does not ensure the stability of the rule of law. The article confirms this position, but at the same time adds an empirical perspective of the Ukrainian context, where high levels of corruption and low institutional effectiveness complicate the implementation of legal norms. This is a scientific novelty, as it concretizes abstract concepts of trust in institutions through the practical challenges of a particular state.

The second approach is represented by the sociocultural theories of Rawls and Putnam, which emphasize the role of civic values, social responsibility, and cultural traditions in shaping law-abiding behavior. In this article, these views are integrated with the legal aspect, demonstrating that effective policies for shaping law-abiding behavior require not only legal reforms but also targeted social and educational work. This allows us to expand on classical models that view law-abiding behavior primarily as a result of legal regulation or social cooperation.

A particularly novel aspect of the article is the inclusion of external threats as a factor influencing law-abiding behavior and national security. Most Western studies focus on internal determinants of citizen behavior, while in the context of Ukraine, the article argues that modern threats—cyberattacks, terrorism, organized crime—require integrated legal and technological solutions.

Thus, this work differs from previous studies in its comprehensive approach, practical focus on the Ukrainian context, and consideration of contemporary external threats as a key factor shaping law-abiding behavior. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the combination of legal, social, cultural, and technological aspects, which allows for the creation of a more realistic model of law-abiding behavior and its impact on national security.

CONCLUSIONS

Lawful behavior is an integral (part/feature) component of law and order and national security. Studying this phenomenon allows us not only to better understand the mechanisms that ensure social stability, but also to develop practical recommendations for improving the legal system and social institutions. As a result of the study, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the importance of lawful behavior for the security and integrity of the state. First, the lawful behavior of citizens is an important factor in the stability of the rule of law in the state. Its presence contributes to the creation of preconditions for the normal functioning of basic social and political institutions. When citizens consciously adhere to the norms of law, this ensures not only the safety of individuals but also social harmony as a whole. At the same time, violations of the rule of law lead to the destabilization of the situation in the state, weakening of the institutions of power and justice, which creates a favorable environment for the growth of crime, corruption, and other undesirable phenomena. Second, the effectiveness of the legal system is a key element in ensuring the development of lawful behavior. However, even with well-developed legal norms, law and order cannot be ensured without their effective application. As the results of the analysis show, the level of citizens' trust in legal institutions, in particular law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, also influences the high level of lawful behavior in society. In this context, it is important to ensure the independence of the courts, transparency in the work of law enforcement agencies, and the fight against corruption, which remains a significant problem in Ukraine. Third, sociocultural factors play an equally important role in shaping lawful behavior. In societies with a high level of social responsibility and cultural cohesion, lawful behavior becomes the norm. However, in Ukraine, with its complex sociocultural conditions and a significant number of social problems, the lawful behavior of citizens often does not comply with legal norms. To solve this problem, it is necessary to improve social and educational mechanisms that will contribute to the formation of legal awareness among young people, as well as to invest in the development of cultural initiatives that contribute to increasing the level of trust in the state and its institutions. Fourth, the integration of international experience into national strategies for shaping lawful behavior is important. As the analysis of foreign practices has shown, successful countries that have been able to ensure a high level of law and order have a stable legal system supported by public trust, as well as inclusive policies in the field of education and social integration. This is an important lesson for Ukraine, where foreign models need to be adapted to the specific national realities.

However, despite obvious achievements, the study also identified a number of issues that require further study. In particular, it is necessary to examine in more detail the impact of new forms of crime, such as cybercrime, terrorism, and other global threats, on lawful behavior. In today's world, with its globalization and technological changes, traditional forms of crime are changing, requiring new approaches to legislation and law enforcement. In particular, new mechanisms for combating cybercrime need to be developed, as this is an area where many countries, including Ukraine, encounter difficulties. It is also important to investigate how changes in the socio-economic situation of the country, in particular high levels of unemployment, poverty, and economic instability, can affect lawful behavior. This issue requires in-depth analysis in the context of the interrelationship between social and economic factors, as well as mechanisms of crime and law enforcement in times of crisis.

One area for further research is the effectiveness of legal reforms in Ukraine. Although steps have been taken to improve the functioning of the legal system, studying their real impact on the level of crime and the overall state of law and order will remain an important task. This includes both an analysis of reforms in the judicial system and an assessment of the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in combating corruption and organized crime. Another important aspect of further research is assessing the impact of new legislative initiatives on lawful behavior, in particular, reforms aimed at increasing accountability for offenses and improving mechanisms for interaction between the state and citizens. In general, the prospects for further research in this area should include both theoretical analysis of lawful behavior in the context of global and domestic challenges to national security and empirical research on real changes in citizen behavior based on existing legal and social initiatives. Given the rapid changes in society and the legal sphere, research on lawful behavior must be constantly relevant and adapted to new realities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FUNDING

The Author received no funding for this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Ngozi, A. (2024). The Role of Cybersecurity Legislation in Promoting Data Privacy. In *Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Cybersecurity and Forensic Practices*, 205–244. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-0588-2.ch008>
2. Antonov, V. O. (2017). Constitutional and legal foundations of Ukraine's national security: monograph. Kyiv.
3. Beetham, D. (1999). *Democracy and Human Rights*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Bentham, J. (2017). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/bentham1780.pdf>
5. Balashov, E. et al. (2023, October 30). Security Studies: Concepts, Methodology, Education: Proceedings of the International Conference. Ostrog. <https://doi.org/10.25264/30-31.10.2023>
6. Booth, C., & Crouch, C. (2012). *Theory of World Security*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511840210>
7. Didenko, E. V. (2020). Realization of the right to a fair trial at the stage of preparation for the consideration of cases of administrative offenses. *Legal Scientific Electronic Journal*, 2, 204–208. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0374/2020-2/53>
8. Dzoban, O. P. (ed.). (2021). *National security: worldview and theoretical and methodological foundations*: monograph. Kharkiv: Pravo.
9. Friedman, L. M. (1975). *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation.
10. Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Free Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20752121>
11. Galligan, D. J. (2012). *Due Process and Fair Procedures: A Study of Administrative Procedures*. Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198256762.001.0001>
12. Jones, R. W. (2000). Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory. *American Political Science Association*, 94. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586105>
13. Keith, K., & Williams, M. C. (1997). Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 34(4), 770–772.
14. Klymenko, K. O. (2022). The relationship between the principles of territorial integrity of states and self-determination of peoples in international law. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University. Series: Law*, 69, 444–450. <https://doi.org/10.24144/2307-3322.2021.69.73>
15. Korzh, I. F. (2024). Legal security as a criterion for the state of legal life: monograph. Kyiv: Politia.
16. Korzh, I. F., Bohutskyi, P. P., & Pylypchuk, V. H. (2023). Legal security of Ukraine: content and concept. *Bulletin of the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine*, 4, 15–35. <https://doi.org/10.31359/1993-0909-2023-30-4-15>
17. Morgenthau, H. (1949). *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. *Political Science Quarterly*, 64(2), 290–292. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2144235>
18. Parakhonky, B. O., & Yavorska, H. M. (2024). Russia's war against Ukraine as a trigger for changes in international security: basic narratives: analytical report. Kyiv: NISD. <https://doi.org/10.53679/NISS-analytrep.2024.02>
19. Potapenko, V. G., Pavlenko, I. A., Nahirny, V. M. et al. (2024). Analysis of threats to national security in the field of domestic policy: analytical report. Kyiv: NISD. <https://doi.org/10.53679/NISS-analytrep.2024.05>
20. Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s8r7>
21. Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
22. Razmetaeva, Yu. S. (2018). *Doctrine and practice of human rights protection*: monograph. Kharkiv: Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University.
23. Reznikova, O. O. (2022). *National resilience in a changing security environment*: monograph. Kyiv: NISD.
24. Scheingold, Stuart A., & Feeley, Malcolm M. (2010). *The Politics of Law and Order: Street Crime and Public Policy*.
25. Veremnych, Y. V. (2024). The development of security studies as a necessary condition for overcoming the crisis in Ukrainian society. *Visnik Nacional Noi Akademii Nauk Ukrainu*, 5, 27–31. <https://doi.org/10.15407/vsn2024.05.027>
26. Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill.

27. Yavorska, G. M. (2019). War and peace in contemporary security studies paradigms. *Strategic priorities*, 1, 110–116.
28. Zifcak, S. (2005). *Globalisation and the Rule of Law*. London: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203237540>
29. Zimring, F. E., & Johnson, D. T. (2006). *The Crime Drop in America*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511616167>

Головчак Р.

ПРАВОМІРНА ПОВЕДІНКА ЯК ОСНОВА ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ БЕЗПЕКИ ТА ЦІЛІСНОСТІ ДЕРЖАВИ: ТЕОРЕТИЧНИЙ ТА ЕМПІРИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

Стаття присвячена аналізу правомірної поведінки як ключового чинника, що забезпечує стабільність, безпеку та цілісність держави. Автор підкреслює, що правомірна поведінка є не лише результатом дії правових норм, а й комплексним соціально-економічним явищем, яке формує атмосферу законності та довіри в суспільстві. У теоретичній частині розглянуто основні підходи до визначення правомірної поведінки в юридичній науці, визначено її функції та окреслено роль правових, соціальних і інституційних механізмів, що забезпечують дотримання закону. Особливу увагу приділено значенню правомірної поведінки для зміцнення правопорядку та підвищення довіри громадян до держави. Емпіричні дані засвідчують прямий зв'язок між рівнем законослухняності населення й ефективністю системи безпеки, що охоплює діяльність правоохоронних органів, судової влади та державних інституцій, відповідальних за реалізацію політики національної безпеки. Автор аналізує різні форми правопорушень, спричинених порушеннями правомірної поведінки, а також шляхи запобігання їм через удосконалення законодавства, розвиток правової освіти та зміцнення інститутів громадянського суспільства. Практична частина дослідження висвітлює роль освіти, медіа й соціальних комунікацій у формуванні правової культури населення. Наголошено на важливості комплексного підходу, що включає й ефективне правове регулювання, і соціальні інструменти заохочення законослухняної поведінки. Також у статті наведені приклади міжнародного досвіду, які демонструють результативність таких заходів у зміцненні безпеки та стійкості держави. У висновках підкреслено, що правомірна поведінка є важливим елементом соціального капіталу, який забезпечує надійність державних інститутів, сприяє розвитку демократичних процесів і зміцнює національну безпеку.

Ключові слова: правомірна поведінка, державна безпека, цілісність держави, правопорядок, правові норми, національна безпека, соціальні кампанії, громадська довіра, правосвідомість, соціальні інститути

JEL Класифікація: K00, K42, H11, P48, D02