

Multi-level public administration in the context of hybrid threats

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Abstract. The research relevance is determined by the need for effective coordination and cooperation between different levels of government to address current challenges and threats. The research study aims to thoroughly analyse hybrid threats in the context of the public administration system, which includes elements of external and internal threats, such as information warfare, cyber threats, disinformation, terrorism, and economic pressure. The study used methods such as synthesis, comparison, structural-functional and formal-legal methods. The study examined the legislation of Ukraine and the EU in the field of public administration at the national level, and as a result of the review, a comparison of approaches to governance in the context of hybrid threats was made. The study proposed strategies to combat various threats that can be applied in Ukraine at different levels of government. These are prevention, detection, and counteraction strategies. They interact with each other to create a comprehensive hybrid threat management system. Understanding the different strategies allowed us to formulate recommendations for policymakers, government, and public authorities to increase resilience and ability to respond to hybrid threats in the context of multi-level public administration. The study examined international policy documents aimed at addressing various aspects. These documents helped to find a single comprehensive approach to enhancing preparedness and response to threats of various kinds. The practical significance of the research is that the proposed strategy options will help society and the

Suggested Citation

Article's History: Received: 14.03.2024 Revised: 25.05.2024 Accepted: 26.06.2024

Karamyshev, D., Suvorov, V., Didok, Yu., Sobol, R., & Myrna, N. (2024). Multi-level public administration in the context of hybrid threats. *Social & Legal Studios*, 7(2), 44-54. doi: 10.32518/sals2.2024.44.

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government of the country to effectively combat various threats and maintain stability and security in the context of hybrid confrontation and full-scale war

Keywords: crisis; martial law; economic security; national interests; decentralisation

Introduction

Today, the concept of a “hybrid threat” has become relevant in light of current geopolitical and technological changes. The study of the concept of “hybrid threat” allows us to better understand and analyse new types of threats faced by states and the international community. The study of this issue is important in the context of the public administration system, since with the development of technologies and information tools, parties to conflicts can use a variety of tools, which poses certain challenges for the authorities in the management system to avoid or overcome the consequences of hybrid threats. This topic is being discussed both in academic circles and at various levels of public administration and in the legal context to ensure safe conditions for the functioning of all spheres of public life. Today’s situation shows that Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine has led to a profound rethinking of conceptual approaches to global security and defence of the future. As a result, ineffective public administration leads to a dangerous situation for the state. Approaches and principles of the entire multi-level system of public administration are radically changing and provide an unusually high level of responsibility for decisions (Meduna, 2023). In such circumstances, the study of the principles and roles of all levels of public administration becomes particularly important.

The study of aspects related to the revision of the principles and functions of multilevel public administration in the context of hybrid threats is not a common subject of research by both Ukrainian and international scholars (Hudyma, 2021; Shevchuk & Mentukh, 2021). However, some aspects of the functionality of public authorities in non-standard crisis conditions are being actively studied by scholars, in particular, considering public administration of national security, crisis phenomena and peculiarities of public administration in hybrid warfare. V.O. Kopanchuk (2020) argues that the problems of ensuring national security and maintaining public order are caused by the need to develop new conceptual methods for analysing trends in social development using modern methods of the scientific community, primarily the science of public administration, to assess trends in the development of the environment affecting national security, as well as to identify mechanisms and factors influencing its formation in the context of modern challenges of globalisation.

O. Busol (2020), Chief Researcher of the Interagency Research Centre at the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, emphasises that to understand the basic concepts of hybrid threats, it is necessary to analyse such concepts as “risk”, “threat”, “security policy”, which are fundamental to security theory. This makes it possible to analyse these problems in detail and from different angles. Also, important information is provided by S. Grishko and V. Sokhina (2022). They proved that decision-making systems are one of the targets of hybrid attacks. One way to achieve this goal is to erase traditional dichotomies and create ambiguity. This method allows people to use a bipolar approach to thinking (e.g., distinguishing truth from lies, friendly from hostile).

The decision-making process is largely based on this bipolar way of thinking.

Another scholar who has studied the topic of multi-level public administration is A. Kolodka (2022). His research confirms the fact that information is the basis for decision-making in the field of public administration and plays a key role in ensuring the security of the state. In addition, the author believes that the organisation and support of important support systems is one of the main components of the activities of governing bodies. Thus, it can be noted that conducting research and developing methodological recommendations provides an opportunity to gain best practices in the field of public administration. Z.Z. Denysiuk (2021) noted in one of his works on strategies of the state information policy that the strategic line of the state information policy is aimed at forming guidelines for the state’s activities in the field of information and at managing this area through legal regulation. Therefore, the main idea of his work is to provide citizens with sufficient access to information, to expand opportunities and provide means for the effective use of information, to increase the level of security, to support the protection of information resources, and to promote international cooperation.

T. Petreman and K. Dubych (2021) highlight the interconnection and interaction of development factors and threats to the economic security of the state at different levels of economic management, such as national, regional, and global levels. To formulate and implement the state policy aimed at ensuring security, it is necessary to effectively use the potential of the economy, and promote the development of production and cooperation, including the implementation of projects and the creation of a favourable sustainable investment climate through the systematic achievement of strategic and tactical goals of the functioning and development of the foreign economic and domestic socio-economic system of the state.

The analysis shows that none of the published articles pays due attention to the methods of improving multi-level public administration in the context of hybrid threats and military invasion. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the concept of “hybrid threats” in the context of public administration systems, which includes elements of external and internal threats.

Materials and methods

In the current context, there is a need to improve public administration to prevent hybrid threats, which are characterised by different hierarchical approaches to improving traditional administrative structures. Various sources of data were used to develop a variant of improving this system. Such sources include scientific literature on the theory of hybrid threats, as well as official documents and legislative acts, orders, and instructions of the relevant state authorities. In the current context, ensuring the national security and defence of Ukraine requires a comprehensive approach and the implementation of various measures and strategies. The formal legal method was used to review the main

legislative documents defining the policy in the field of national security and defence of Ukraine (Law of Ukraine No. 1932-XII, 1991; Law of Ukraine No. 2469-VIII, 2018; Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 260, 2021). These documents relate to the improvement of the network of situation centres and the digital transformation of the national security and defence sector. These documents define strategic steps and priorities in ensuring the security of the state.

In parallel with national laws, the programme documents of international organisations such as the UN, the EU, the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) were considered (National policy frameworks on resilience in OECD countries, 2016; DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2023). These policy documents are aimed at supporting sustainable development, ensuring peace and security, and developing partnerships between states. They contribute to building national resilience around the world and addressing various aspects of security, including addressing the root causes of conflicts, promoting unity and trust, developing leadership, and implementing a comprehensive approach to improving preparedness and responding effectively to threats of various kinds. Moreover, documents aimed at countering hybrid threats were analysed (Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, 2016). A comparison of statistics and reports on crises discussed at the NATO Summit (Madrid, Spain) (2022) and the G7 Summit “Moving Towards a Just World” (Germany) (2022) was also conducted, which allowed to reveal the essence and unique aspects of such events.

To study and define the concepts of “hybrid war”, and “hybrid threats” and their impact on the economic security of Ukraine, the structural-functional method was used. The method was used to consider these concepts as a complex system and to identify the interrelationships and influence of various factors on this phenomenon. The synthesis method was used to analyse and describe the dynamics of threats in different regions of Ukraine in 2022-2023. This method helped to reveal the complexity and diversity of threats and identify their evolution over time. The synthesis method was used to study the evolution of the problem statement and the sequence of its solution, as well as to establish links between social phenomena and events. This method helped to identify logical connections and patterns in the process of understanding hybrid threats and their impact on economic security. The use of these methods in the study was used to obtain reasonable conclusions and recommendations on possible ways to improve the organisational structure of public administration for more effective functioning in crises.

Results

Multilevel public administration in the context of hybrid threats is a very important and relevant issue for the study of research, as the modern world is facing various forms of hybrid threats that include elements of military aggression, political manipulation, cyberattacks, disinformation and other methods of influence. In this context, multilevel public administration means the joint activities of different levels of government that work together to protect national interests and the security of the population. To analyse this issue, the specifics of hybrid threats, including their features and methods of influence, were considered. Hybrid threats in-

clude various methods and techniques that are combined to conduct hostile activities that can be difficult to detect and disrupt. These threats span the political, economic, social, and technological spectrums (Joint Report to the European Parliament and the Council, 2016). Several key characteristics can be attributed to hybrid threats. They are multidisciplinary, using a variety of means and methods, such as disinformation, cyberattacks, economic pressure, political influence, and military action, to cause maximum damage or inconvenience to the target country or organisation. The use of information technology, such as cyberattacks and information manipulation, is also a key component of hybrid threats. This can include hacker attacks, spreading fake news, manipulating social media and other online tools.

Hybrid threats also aim to exploit vulnerabilities in the social, political, and economic systems of the target country. They can exploit social conflicts, political divisions, or economic instability to achieve their goals. Furthermore, hybrid threats are constantly evolving and adapting to the measures taken to eliminate them. They may change their methods and techniques to evade detection and disruption. Countering hybrid threats requires joint action at the political, military, information, and economic levels. Coordination and cooperation between different actors, including governments, organisations, and civil society institutions, is critical (Yevtushenko, 2023). Due to its importance for national administration, public administration has become an essential tool of national governance. The development of public administration can be seen as one of the key conditions for improving the performance of all public bodies, including the system of government.

Globalisation and the rapid evolution of global trends determine the growing importance of management activities and the specifics of management work, which affects their effectiveness. The inconsistency between the existing system of governing bodies and the system of local self-government requires public administration reform. Modern Ukrainian society is experiencing a transformation crisis. One of the important factors that can contribute to overcoming this crisis is the creation of a modern and effective public administration system. For a long time, the need for a new system of public administration as a means of overcoming the crisis in Ukraine was not recognised. After Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the need to find other directions, modern responses to challenges and anticipation of hybrid threats in the context of external aggression and internal imbalance, including an analysis of the concept of national resilience, is essential.

This study will further analyse in detail the multi-level system of public administration in Ukraine, as well as the typical functions performed at each level of this system. These functions are in line with the strategic and current goals of decentralisation are based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and are aimed at promoting the country’s development. Information about this system and the functions of the different levels of government is presented in Table 1. The analysis of the functions of the national and regional levels of government was used to reveal the integrity of the multi-level system of public administration and establish the relationship between them (Johnstad, 2023). An important aspect of this system is to ensure the effectiveness of each level and link, which together contribute to effective governance in the state, strengthening its viability, competitiveness, and development.

Table 1. Functions performed by the multi-level system of public administration in Ukraine

Management levels	Functions
National level	
Ukraine President	The head of state acts on behalf of the state and is responsible for ensuring its sovereignty, territorial integrity, implementation of the Constitution and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens. He or she performs various functions, such as representative, constituent, controlling and others. In domestic political affairs, the President ensures national security, independence, and succession of the state, and delivers a message to the people and regular or extraordinary messages to the Verkhovna Rada on the situation of Ukraine internally and externally.
Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine	It is the only nationwide permanent collegial organisation elected by law. The Verkhovna Rada has various functions, including legislative (which is a priority), representative, constituent (aimed at forming state structures and organisations), parliamentary oversight, budgetary and financial, and foreign policy functions.
Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	It is the highest executive body responsible for ensuring state sovereignty and economic independence of the country, implementing both domestic and foreign policies, and observing the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, as well as acts of the President of Ukraine. It is responsible for measures aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens and creating conditions for their free and harmonious development. In addition, it must ensure the conduct of various types of economic activity.
Ministries	Non-central level in the system of executive authorities. The functions and responsibilities of this body include the following aspects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regulation of the legal and regulatory sphere. 2. Determining strategic development directions. 3. Analysis and application of legislation, implementation of proposals for its improvement and preparation of draft legislative acts and acts of the President of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers for submission to the President and the Government. 4. Performing other tasks established by the laws of Ukraine and imposed on this body by acts of the head of state.
Regional level	
Local self-government	The tasks and functions include the following responsibilities: management of municipal property; approval of programmes for socio-economic and cultural development and systematic control over their implementation; approval of budgets of the relevant administrative units and control over their financial implementation; setting local taxes and fees; organisation of local referendums and implementation of their results in practice; establishment, reorganisation and liquidation of municipal enterprises, organisations and institutions, as well as systematic supervision of their activities; resolution of other issues of local importance and defined by law as part of their competence.
Local state administrations	It is a component of the structure of interinstitutional power relations that ensures the implementation of such tasks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control over the compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine, legislation and regulations of the executive authorities adopted within their competence; 2. Implementation of economic, environmental and other targeted programmes (both at the local government and national level), budget execution and reporting on their implementation; 3. Interaction with local governments and the exercise of powers by these authorities.

Source: P.G. Johnstad (2023)

In the pre-war period, Ukraine implemented decentralisation reform as one of the key aspects of modernising the multi-level public administration system. The project of reforming the territorial organisation of local government in Ukraine envisages the achievement of the following important results as a result of the decentralisation reform: Strengthening the resource, infrastructure and legal capacity of territorial communities and local governments operating following the principles and standards set out in the European Charter of Local Self-Government; introducing a mechanism for monitoring the quality of public services provided by local governments by local executive authorities and the public; creating a legal context to facilitate the development of direct democracy mechanisms and the active involvement of citizens and other civil society actors in decision-making (Heryanti *et al.*, 2023). It also involves other important aspects and tasks.

In the period from 2014 to 2020, Ukraine adopted several legislative acts aimed at implementing decentralisation reforms. In the scientific spectrum of theoretical and practical research, the term “decentralisation” is considered in

different aspects and from the point of view of different disciplines (Séogo & Zahonogo, 2023). From the political science point of view, decentralisation is seen as a political system that provides for the distribution of functions and powers between central and local authorities to optimise the resolution of issues of national importance and the implementation of regional programmes. A careful analysis of different approaches to the concept and essence of decentralisation leads to the conclusion that decentralisation should be viewed as a long-term process characterised by management activities and requiring adequate resources for the transfer of powers. From this point of view, decentralisation can be defined as the process of transferring powers, competencies, and resources from central government to local authorities and self-government.

The scientific discourse traditionally considers the following motivations for the implementation of decentralisation: the need to increase productivity, mobilise resources, ensure transparency in their use and create an accountability system (Puehringer *et al.*, 2021). These needs can be combined in one direction, using the principle of

subsidiarity as a key principle of institutional organisation of power and multi-level governance, including in the context of hybrid threats. However, it is important to note that research on these issues is relevant even in peacetime. The event of the Russian full-scale invasion has necessitated the adjustment of the principles of multi-level governance. This is determined by the need to preserve the territorial integrity of the country, which can only be

achieved through the unification of all branches of government, the business sector, and the public to achieve this strategic goal. It is also important that the decentralisation reform in Ukraine is designed to improve the financial security of amalgamated territorial communities and reduce the likelihood of hybrid threats, and the systematisation of risks associated with decentralisation should be carefully analysed (Table 2).

Table 2. Classification of risks associated with the decentralisation process based on the main factors of development of territorial socio-economic systems

Key factors in the development of territories	Risk and challenges
Professional management	Possible dangers and difficulties caused by corruption due to political, family, backroom, local or other agreements of government officials. Risks and difficulties associated with poor governance, including financial governance.
Availability of resources for operation	The risk of a shortage of financial resources in certain territories. The possibility of a decrease in the attraction of public funds in the form of transfers and funds. Risks of further growth of inequalities in resource opportunities for the development of territories, including entrepreneurship, availability of natural resources, property, and tax collection. Possibility of further deepening differences in socio-economic development between different territories.
Working with a higher-level system	Possible threats to macroeconomic stability. Dangers associated with further widening of financial inequality between different regions of the country. Risks associated with violation of the principles of justice in the social sphere. Possible dangers associated with separatist sentiments that threaten the country's integration.

Source: compiled by the authors

Thus, while the numerous benefits of decentralisation processes are important, it is also important to consider their potential risks and threats. Thus, territorial communities at the basic level, as well as local governments at higher levels that assume additional financial, budgetary, and social functions, should be aware of and take responsibility for the development of their territory (Tkachuk & Yevsyukov, 2022). On the other hand, public authorities should take these risks into account when formulating the national security strategy. In this context, it is important to define the term “hybrid threat”, which refers to any adversary

that uses a variety of means, including weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal activity in the conflict zone to achieve its political goals.

Hybrid threats cover a wide range of conflict modes, including conventional weapons, irregular tactics, the formation of armed groups, terrorist acts and the spread of criminal activity. When considering the possibility of hybrid threats, in particular military threats, it is necessary to identify the main causes and factors of military danger for Ukraine in the current circumstances (Backman, 2020). These sources can be divided into external and internal (Fig. 1).

External causes	Internal causes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The presence of territorial disputes. 2. Interest in using changes in Ukraine's foreign and domestic policy to their advantage. 3. The desire to reduce Ukraine's political, economic and military influence in the interests of its dominance in the region. 4. The presence of significant military formations near Ukraine's borders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anti-Ukrainian propaganda, supporting separatist forces in Ukraine and promoting the decay of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations. 2. Interest in gaining control over key strategic facilities and communication networks in Ukraine.

Figure 1. Main sources and factors of military danger

Source: compiled by the authors

The importance of these sources is particularly significant due to the presence of other objective factors emanating from neighbouring states. These factors include internal economic and socio-political instability; insufficient legal regulation of interstate relations with Ukraine; and the presence of a powerful military potential combined with a steady increase in military spending. Therefore, studying examples of countries that successfully counter hybrid threats and

analysing their strategies and measures is an important task. As for the experience of international cooperation, the EU has quite clearly defined the concept of “hybrid threats” and developed measures to prevent them. In this context, several documents have been created that reflect the EU's strategic approach to countering hybrid threats and ensuring stability and security in the region. The following documents can be distinguished among them (Fig. 2).

A Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy: this key document, adopted in 2016, represents the overall strategic vector of the EU's actions in the context of hybrid threats and defines common goals and objectives to ensure security and stability in the region.

Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats a EU response (2016): this document sets out the EU's framework and strategic approach to countering various hybrid threats, including information warfare, cyber attacks, influential diplomacy and other aspects.

Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: focusing on key priorities and tangible results (2017): This document focuses on specific tasks and goals in the context of the EU's Eastern Partnership and the development of the region until 2020, including aspects of security and countering hybrid threats.

Council conclusions on progress in implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence (2017): this report notes the progress in implementing the strategic decisions set out in the EU Global Strategy and other documents and provides an assessment of the situation.

EU operational protocol for countering hybrid threats "EU Playbook" (2016): this document presents a specific set of measures and recommendations for action in the event of hybrid threats and provides guidance on how to respond.

Countering hybrid threats: EU-NATO cooperation (2017): this report analyses the cooperation between the EU and NATO in countering hybrid threats and provides recommendations for improving this cooperation.

Figure 2. Documents that reflect the strategic approach of the EU

Source: compiled by the authors based on Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats a European Union response (2016), A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016), EU Operational Protocol for Countering Hybrid Threats "EU Playbook" (2016), Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results (2017), Council conclusions on progress in implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence (2017), Countering hybrid threats: EU-NATO cooperation (2017)

These documents represent an important policy tool for ensuring security and resilience in the region and demonstrate the EU's serious approach to addressing hybrid threats. The EU has established a classification of areas subject to countering hybrid threats. These areas include information, energy, transport and infrastructure, space activities, military, health and food security, cyberspace, financial, industry, and the public or societal dimension. It is important to note that the EU takes the identification of hybrid threats seriously and in 2020 proposed the establishment of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell for the analysis of EU hybrid threats within the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INT-CEN) of the European External Action Service. This Centre has already been launched and is responsible for collecting, analysing, and disseminating open and classified information related to hybrid threat indicators and warnings (Świdorski *et al.*, 2020). This structure ensures the systematisation of hybrid threats at the European level and disseminates information on them, including the Hybrid Bulletin, between EU institutions and EU member states.

In the context of Ukraine, the threat of hybrid influence has covered almost all spheres of public life, such as the economy, politics, culture of memory and the information sphere (November *et al.*, 2022). Limited diversification of markets for Ukrainian products, dependence on the Russian market in key sectors of the national economy, and the lack of alternative sources of resource supply have created a threat to national security. Industry and infrastructure continue to be costly and inefficient. The lack of proper information and cultural policy has led to the cultural occupation of the minds of a large part of the population. Propaganda has created an artificial problem of discrimination against the

Russian-speaking population. The information environment of Ukraine, in the absence of proper Russian and English-language content, has become closed, uncompetitive, and unable to effectively present Ukraine's position on the global level (Kyrydon & Troyan, 2023).

As analysts emphasise, hybrid threats are also concentrated in the non-military sphere. The main international threats to Ukraine that are being actively used in the hybrid war at this stage are the growing tendencies towards separatism in some border areas, except for the temporarily occupied parts. It is also the lack of proper law and order, as well as the absence of an effective mechanism to combat crime, especially organised crime, and terrorism. This leads to uncontrolled penetration of subversive and provocative groups into the territory of Ukraine. They also include the uncontrolled withdrawal of material and financial resources from Ukraine, mainly from uncontrolled territories (Steingartner & Galinec, 2021). An equally important threat is unjustified immigration, where residents of uncontrolled territories come to Ukraine in search of pensions and benefits, and then may return to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

The diversity of weaknesses in the context of hybrid threats allows us to conclude that this problem remains relevant today, which in turn poses a threat to destabilisation processes and weakening of Ukraine through violation of the system of citizens' rights and freedoms, lowering their living standards and disruption of peace and stability.

Ensuring the resilience of public administration to hybrid threats is an important task for policymakers and government officials. Here are some specific recommendations that Ukraine can implement to prevent other hybrid threats in the future and minimise existing ones: Create a national

strategy – develop a comprehensive national strategy to identify, analyse and counter hybrid threats. It should define the roles and responsibilities of various government agencies and structures.

Next, attention should be devoted to improving cybersecurity – ensuring a high level of cybersecurity in government information systems and networks to prevent cyberattacks and leaks of confidential information. Education and training should also be improved to provide training and skills development for government employees to identify and respond to hybrid threats, including disinformation and manipulation on the Internet. Other suggestions include support for media and journalism, which would strengthen freedom of speech and media independence to reduce the impact of disinformation and fake news.

Cooperation with other countries can also be included – support international cooperation to exchange information and experience in the field of hybrid threats. Openness and transparency in the system should be added to ensure that information is open and accessible to the public to reduce the possibility of manipulation and corruption. These recommendations will help strengthen the resilience of public administration to hybrid threats and reduce their impact on society and democracy.

Discussion

In order to effectively confront the challenges posed by globalization, it is essential for nation states to collaboratively harness their capabilities. This collaborative effort aims to address the complexities of existence within a globalized social framework while simultaneously safeguarding diversity. Consequently, there is a call for the integration of nation states into a cooperative community guided by specific principles of collaboration. The objective is to establish a global actor capable of making decisions, particularly those that enhance its significance and competitiveness in the realm of interstate relations (Karamyshev, 2019). In the midst of these transformative circumstances, the primary focus should be on resolving the conflicts between contemporary needs and the available opportunities for their resolution. This process is identified as the pivotal issue in global development, along with the formulation of strategic frameworks for the development of individual national states amidst hybrid threats and challenges.

The study highlighted various aspects of hybrid threats that pose an important challenge to modern society and multi-level public administration. The study examined such phenomena as cyberattacks, disinformation and influential operations and their consequences at different levels of society and in public administration (Valenza *et al.*, 2022). The detailed analysis revealed the importance of understanding and combating these threats to ensure stability and security. The study focused on how different levels of public administration respond to hybrid threats. It also examined the various strategies, policies and measures that are being developed and implemented to protect society and the state from these threats. An equally important part of this study was the role of international cooperation in combating hybrid threats. The experience of other countries and the possibilities of coordinating actions at the international level to ensure effective counteraction to these threats were considered. International cooperation is an important tool in addressing the challenges of hybrid warfare and

maintaining stability in the world (Shahini *et al.*, 2024). Studying the response of public administration is an important step in raising awareness and responsibility in this area.

The management system of any economic entity is based on its specific principles, which are implemented through the structure of public administration institutions. Each of these principles plays an important role in the formation of a multi-level public administration system. However, these principles do not fully correspond to current development trends and do not consider the need to ensure the unity of methodological approaches, the relevance of the comparative analysis of the reliability of the results obtained, and the continuous improvement of information support for the management process. Public and programme management requires mandatory adherence to these principles, including unification of methodological approaches, comparative analysis of the validity of the results obtained and informatisation of all aspects of the management process. This will help to overcome the identified conflicts and introduce “results-based management” tools into the system of multi-level public administration.

According to V. Abroskin (2018), administrative and political activity in the theory and practice of the administrative and legal field of public administration includes the areas of national security, national defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs, and justice. The governing bodies of these branches are integral parts of the unified state administrative system, linked to the executive branch, and actively perform state functions. National security and the bodies that manage it occupy a particularly important place in the system. This statement by the researcher coincides with the results of this paper. Today, there is no clear mechanism for the functioning of public administration in the field of national security, but it is undeniable that the national security of Ukraine is now the object of state governance. The security and defence system, as a subject of national security, has various components. Ukraine’s security and defence system consists of 4 interdependent elements: defence forces; security forces; the defence industry; and citizens and public associations that voluntarily participate in ensuring national security (Jeong *et al.*, 2023). It should also be added that the role of various government agencies, which played an important role in the emerging internal threat, should not be underestimated. In today’s environment, all government agencies must work together to implement ideas, as this directly affects the state of Ukraine’s information security.

Democracy today brings a diversity of views and points of view, and in this context, it is necessary to ensure national unity, which largely depends on the state of national security. The modern concept of national unity requires that everyone be able to distinguish between genuine national interests and artificial, fictitious, or confessional national interests. After gaining independence, to fulfil the national interests of the people, it is necessary to ensure stability, prosperity, peace and evolutionary development of the country and the nation (Spytska, 2024). National security cannot be separated from a strong country, stable central government, and stable society. The protection of the country and national security should be properly targeted, and its basis is economic and financial sustainability (Pinto *et al.*, 2021). The components of national security cannot be universal or the same for all countries. They depend on the degree of development or stagnation of each country. For example, the US National Security

Council focuses on addressing issues related to the protection of US national interests at the global level. In Ukraine, the ongoing internal crisis requires, first and foremost, targeted efforts to address a wide range of domestic problems.

L. Bardžieva Miovska (2022) points out that the need to modernise society often leads to copying westernisation measures or improving the old reform model, which can only increase the risks of threats and risks to national security. One of the main threats to national security is the phenomenon of a synergistic system of governance crises, which are activated by both external and internal factors. Thus, as noted earlier in this study, the processes of hybrid threats do indeed affect not only socio-economic aspects but also various other areas of social processes, including military ones, turning them into a system of a modified mechanism of crisis functioning of society. Thus, in today's Ukrainian society, any transformation in any sphere of life and activity (political, social, economic, military, organisational, legal) should be based on the general principles of effective reform.

Considering this issue, it is worth paying attention to the study by B.A. Olaniran and J.C. Scholl (2020), in which the researchers note that the main mistake in crisis management, often made in public and private organisations, is the emphasis on crisis response through preparedness and planning to address unforeseen situations. It should be added that preparing for and managing crises involves problem management. This means identifying complex problems that may affect an organisation or community and finding ways to solve these problems before they turn into a crisis.

It is also possible to note a study by C. Whyte (2020), where the scientist argues that hybrid threats mean that the enemy can use various types of attacks, including cyberattacks, information propaganda, disinformation, economic pressure, political influence, military actions, and other methods to achieve its goals. It is worth agreeing with the author's opinion that cybersecurity includes measures and strategies to protect computer systems, networks, information and data from cyber criminals and cyber spies. This statement cannot be disagreed with, as cybercriminals can use cyberattacks to obtain important information and data that can be used for various purposes, including espionage and disinformation (Metelskyi & Kravchuk, 2023). Since hybrid threats include many different aspects and methods, cybersecurity is becoming key to ensuring the resilience and protection of society and the state from such threats. Developing and implementing effective cybersecurity strategies is an important task for protecting the interests and security of the state in the face of hybrid threats.

J. Zhang *et al.* (2022) reveals the complex interaction between multi-level institutional arrangements and local innovation mechanisms. The authors' opinion coincides with the results obtained in this study. It is possible to add that the interaction between multilevel institutional mechanisms and local innovation mechanisms is a process of cooperation and interaction between different levels of government and institutional structures in the field of development and support of innovations at different levels of territorial organisation, including the sphere of national security. This interaction contributes to the creation of a favourable environment for innovative development and supports local innovation initiatives in the field of hybrid threats. It is important to consider this process as a key element of the innovation

governance framework, as it facilitates the exchange of knowledge, resources and experience between central and local authorities, industry, and other stakeholders to promote sustainable innovation and economic growth at the regional and international levels.

Conclusions

Thus, it is possible to conclude that Ukraine, like any other country, faces various threats and crises, such as natural disasters, man-made accidents, terrorist threats, conflicts, and, as of today, a full-scale war against Ukraine, its borders, and citizens. In the context of these challenges to the national security and resilience of the country, it is necessary to emphasise the need for effective management and response to such events.

With this in mind, the country should improve its crisis response mechanisms and adapt its multi-level public administration to these challenges, especially during martial law. Hence, the country should maintain well-developed systems for monitoring, warning, and responding to natural disasters, as well as thoroughly study technical and technological risks that could lead to man-made accidents. In addition, it is necessary to have developed plans for dealing with terrorist threats and conflicts, as well as the ability to mobilise resources and coordinate the actions of various governing bodies and security forces during crises. It is also important to emphasise the importance of international cooperation and support in crisis management, especially in times of war, when external factors can have a significant impact on the internal affairs of a country.

In general, the concept of "crises that threaten national security" is actively used in the context of formulating the tasks and functions of the security forces, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, including the Security Service of Ukraine, the Special Operations Forces of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. These bodies should be responsible for the implementation of state policy in the field of national security during crises and ensure coordination between different components of the security and defence sector to effectively overcome such crises. Thus, Ukraine should consider its activities in the field of countering hybrid external threats as a comprehensive approach and one of the central problems that requires immediate solutions.

A generalised analysis of the world experience in the field of national resilience, including effective practices and different approaches to the organisation of the national resilience system, along with the study of key processes in this context, helps Ukraine to make an informed choice in determining the national model of national resilience, considering the national interests of the state and the peculiarities of its development. Thus, effective crisis management and response is a key task for ensuring Ukraine's national security and stability. Adapting multilevel public administration to these challenges requires systematic efforts and investments in the development of appropriate mechanisms and resources to ensure effective responses to various crises, including in times of war. This topic also holds promise for further research. The research could focus on analysing the impact of hybrid threats on society and developing methods to increase public awareness and preparedness to act in the event of threats.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of interest

None.

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Багаторівневе державне управління в умовах гібридних загроз

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження визначається необхідністю ефективної координації та співпраці між різними рівнями влади для протидії сучасним викликам і загрозам. Метою дослідження є ґрунтовний аналіз гібридних загроз у контексті системи державного управління, які включають елементи зовнішніх та внутрішніх загроз, таких як інформаційна війна, кіберзагрози, дезінформація, тероризм, економічний тиск. У дослідженні використано такі методи, як синтез, порівняння, структурно-функціональний та формально-юридичний. У ході дослідження було проаналізовано законодавство України та ЄС у сфері державного управління на національному рівні, і в результаті огляду було зроблено порівняння підходів до управління в умовах гібридних загроз. У дослідженні запропоновано стратегії боротьби з різними загрозами, які можуть бути застосовані в Україні на різних рівнях державного управління. Це стратегії запобігання, виявлення та протидії. Вони взаємодіють між собою, створюючи комплексну систему управління гібридними загрозами. Розуміння різних стратегій дозволило нам сформулювати рекомендації для політиків, уряду та органів державної влади щодо підвищення стійкості та здатності реагувати на гібридні загрози в контексті багаторівневого державного управління. У дослідженні було проаналізовано міжнародні політичні документи, спрямовані на вирішення різних аспектів. Ці документи допомогли знайти єдиний комплексний підхід до підвищення готовності та реагування на загрози різного роду. Практичне значення дослідження полягає в тому, що запропоновані варіанти стратегії допоможуть суспільству та уряду країни ефективно протидіяти різним загрозам та підтримувати стабільність і безпеку в умовах гібридного протистояння та повномасштабної війни

Ключові слова: криза; воєнний стан; економічна безпека; національні інтереси; децентралізація