

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Politology



Specifics of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine after its independence in 1991

Abstract

**of a dissertation for the acquisition
degree "Doctor"**

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The dissertation contains 249 typewritten pages, of which the main text is 224 pages, applications - 19 pages, bibliography - 306 items (number of cited sources - 113, used sources - 193).

The public defense of the dissertation work will take place at an open meeting on 11.06.2024 at 14:00 in auditorium 307, in the 4th block of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 125 Tsarigradsko Shose Blvd. The materials for the defense are available to those interested in room 317 in the 4th block of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Scientific committee consisting of:

Alternate members:

Author: Iryna Oleksiivna Ostrovska

Title: The Specifics of Russia's Hybrid War in and against Ukraine after its independence in 1991.

The structure of the work consists of: Table of Contents; Introduction; Three chapters, including Eleven Paragraphs, Nine Subparagraphs; Conclusion; Bibliography; List of Abbreviations; Applications.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

INTRODUCTION

The dissertation begins with an **Introduction**, outlining the contents of the material and justifying the choice of topic.

The choice of topic for the dissertation work, as well as the author's survey research in it, is driven by two factors: the author's desire for a personal contribution, as a Bulgarian from Ukraine and a graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", to the social development of Bulgaria and Ukraine.

Ukraine's sad experience, despite its significant shortcomings, can serve as a positive example for many countries, including Bulgaria. That is why I started to develop the topic of problems in Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2013, in my Bachelor's thesis "The Ukrainian Conflict in Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Russian Media (2017). A Comparative Study of News Broadcasts on BNT, 1+1 and Channel One TV" (2013-2017) and the Master's thesis "The Balkans in Ukraine's Regional Politics in the 1990s - Early 21st Century" (2017-2019). The thesis is a logical continuation of my work on the topic and is the result of independent research on the history of Russian-Ukrainian interstate relations, Bulgarian-Ukrainian intercultural exchange and the process of unification of the Bulgarian community in Ukraine, as well as on the impact of hybrid warfare in Ukraine on Bulgaria. The conclusions and practical suggestions as well as the publications on the topic presented in the dissertation research are the author's personal and exclusive work. The dissertation contains scientific and scientifically applicable results that represent an original contribution to science.

The chronological scope of the study covers the period of development of Russian-Ukrainian official interstate relations after the restoration of Ukraine's state independence in 1991, as well as the period of active development of intercultural exchange and promotion of Ukraine as an independent state from the transitional phase after the collapse of the Soviet Union to its current interstate relations with Russia (as an aggressor state) and with Bulgaria, as a member of the (Ukraine-priority) EU and NATO. The implications of Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine are analysed in two aspects: general trends and Ukraine-specific features. The upper limit of the research is related to the completion of the PhD of the graduate - by September 2023.

Key words: Balkans, refugees, Bulgaria, war, temporary protection, volunteers, European integration, EU, information safety, history, research, China, independence, politics, survey,

respondent, Russia/RF, USA, social workers, Ukraine, Ukrainians of Bulgarian origin, hybrid war, SEE.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

Part of the obtained results of the author's research have been published as articles in:

- **international editions:** “**Hybrid threats to global security**”, Scientific journal “Public Administration and Public Service” - a periodical publication of the State Enterprise “Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan”. The journal is indexed in the Kazakh citation database “JSC NCSTE”, has an impact factor ISSN 1994-2370; “**Economic security as an important component of the hybrid war in Ukraine**”, International scientific and practical conference of young scientists “Financial mechanisms of sustainable development of Ukraine in the conditions of modern challenges”, NUBiP of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine. K.: Komprint Center, 2021. 374 p.; “**The impact of hybrid warfare on national security in a risk society**”, Proceeding of the International Scientific Conference 2020, Sofia Part I Security-education, science, industry. © Military Academy “Georgi Stoykov Rakovski”, publisher, 2020 ISBN 978-619-7478-57-0;

- **bulgarian edition:** “**The attitude of Ukrainians of Bulgarian origin in Ukraine and Ukrainians of Bulgarian origin in Bulgaria to the hybrid wars against Ukraine after the beginning of its democratic changes**”, Proceedings, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. ISSN: 2603-3453, etc.

The work has been partially approved through the candidate's presentations at international and national scientific conferences, forums and round tables (online and offline), namely: “Doctoral Readings”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2022); “Doctoral Readings”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021); XXVIII International Scientific Conference “Lomonosov”, Moscow State University, Moscow, RF (2021); International Scientific and Practical Conference of Young Scientists “Financial Mechanisms of Ukraine's Development in the Minds of Current Challenges”, NUBIP of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine (2021); Round Table “Conflict Resolution”, SU St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021); “Doctoral School” and “5-A Doctoral Scientific Session”, Southwestern University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria (2021); “Doctoral Readings”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021); “Doctoral School” and “5-A Doctoral Scientific Session”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021); “Doctoral Readings”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021). Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria (2020); XV

International Scientific Conference “The Bulgarians in the Northern Black Sea Region”, Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Melitopol, Ukraine (2020); International Online Seminar for Young Scientists “International Relations and Global Security”, Institute of Diplomacy at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, Kazakhstan (2020), etc.

Awards and distinctions: Student of the Year (Second place) at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for 2022 in the category “Doctoral Student of the Year”.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL MODEL OF THE RESEARCH

The first chapter focuses on the roots of the phenomenon and the derivation of **a definition of “hybrid warfare” and its components**, which is done through the examination of different definitions of authors and institutions, as well as different explanatory theories. It defines: **research question and research hypotheses; research methods; and research significance.**

Research question and research hypotheses

The current dissertation analyses the specifics of Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine after its independence (1991). The theoretical part provides information on the origin and brief history of the term “hybrid war”. It outlines what it is and clarifies its place among other types of war. Starting from the definition of hybrid warfare and presenting the basic concepts, the paper conducts implicit research and analysis of how the hybrid warfare led by Russia is being implemented in Ukraine, and what are its specifics. This dissertation does not claim to be exhaustive, but is oriented towards revealing the key role of Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine in the development of the independent Ukrainian state itself and its relations with Bulgaria and other states.

The crises in independent Ukraine in 1991, 2004 and 2013, Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine with crucial periods in 2014 and 2022, and the events thereafter, in a risky post-Soviet society, have raised national security concerns and threats of hybrid warfare in every single country, riveting the attention of the entire world. After the annexation of Crimea, the armed conflicts on the territory of the Donbas and the full-scale invasion of the entire territory of Ukraine, it has become obvious that Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine is indeed having a major impact on the national security of the country, as well as on the national security of the other states involved (even indirectly or “on paper”) in this process. That is why the issues of countering

Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine, as a new form of national security threat in a risky society, should be taken into consideration as one of the priority areas of military research.

Russia has been waging a hybrid war in and against Ukraine since its independence in 1991. The reasons for this are that since the beginning of its independent development new principles, goals and priorities have emerged in the foreign policy of Ukraine, which has found itself between Russification and Europeanisation, i.e. in an active search for geopolitical alternatives.

The research question that is posed in this paper is what is the specificity of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine, which is implemented on the territory of independent Ukraine and what impact does this war have on the future of the country and its role in the international arena?

The object of this study is Russia's hybrid warfare (dimension) in its foreign and domestic policy in and against Ukraine since its independence and sovereignty in the early 1990s, as well as the impact of the 2013 Ukrainian crisis on the attitudes and policies of/with other countries, including Bulgaria.

The central idea in formulating the **hypotheses** in this dissertation is that today's Ukrainian crisis, in particular Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine, has certain preconditions and aspects, and in order to clarify and resolve this issue, a number of different internal (local) and external (international) indicators need to be considered in all directions - at the micro, meso and macro levels.

In this dissertation the following 4 hypotheses are considered:

1. The Ukrainian crisis does not arise out of nowhere, but has certain preconditions and aspects.

2. The Ukrainian experience is important for Bulgaria because it is clear that countries that had strong ties with Russia and close territorial location are more vulnerable to Russian hybrid warfare.

3. Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine has been successful to a large extent not only because of the presence of a wide range of political and economic entities dependent on Russia, but also because of the poor awareness of Ukrainian citizens of the specifics of “hybrid warfare”, which makes them easy victims of Russian manipulation.

4. Ukraine's successful confrontation against Russia in the hybrid war depends on various national and international factors.

The present work aims at:

- To determine what are the preconditions for the Ukrainian crisis;
- To indicate how the relations of different countries with Russia influence their position in the world and predisposition of waging hybrid wars against them;
- Determine what those internal and external factors are upon which Ukraine's successful confrontation of Russia in Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine depends;
- Track and analyze the attitude and behavior of Ukrainian citizens and ethnic Bulgarians from Ukraine towards Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine and the subsequent processes and events with a view to containing it peacefully and preventing the “spillover” of crisis potential and processes to the Balkans.

To achieve the objectives of the dissertation it is necessary to solve the following tasks:

- Study of the problem area (the Ukrainian crisis) and analysis of the state of the problem: the hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine;
- Definition of the term “hybrid war”;
- Consideration of the historical context in which the first hybrid wars emerged, and what similarities exist between the political, social and other climates of the time and those in which Russia's modern hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine began to take shape;
- Determine whether Ukraine is the biggest new stumbling block between the West and Russia;
- Establish the historical and other preconditions for the emergence of the Ukrainian crisis and for Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine;
- Analyze Russian-Ukrainian relations from the 1990s to early 2022;
- Identifying countries that had strong ties with Russia and close territorial location and arguing why they were more vulnerable to Russian hybrid warfare;
- Exploring the domestic (within Ukraine) factors on which Ukraine's successful confrontation of Russia in hybrid warfare depends;
- Examine the external (international) factors on which Ukraine's successful confrontation against Russia in the hybrid war depends;
- Situational analysis of subjects and objects dependent on Russia and the reasons for their dependence;

- Conducting experimental surveys to determine the specific characteristics of Russia's adversaries and supporters in the hybrid war against Ukraine;
- Relying on a methodological science - statistics, to study the mass phenomena and processes associated with Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine and to find out their manifested regularities;
 - Analysis and summary of the results of the experimental surveys;
 - Establishing the presence or absence of the main object of study in specific individuals or organizations;
- To trace the dynamics of changes in the image of Ukraine and the Ukrainian crisis in Bulgaria;
 - Trace the relationship between Bulgaria and Ukraine during the crisis and in recent years;
 - Analyse why the hybrid war in and against Ukraine has been largely successful;
 - Predict how Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine might end;
 - Analyse the reaction of Bulgarian experts to the hybrid war in Ukraine;
 - To establish the influence of the Bulgarian diaspora in Ukraine on the relations between Bulgaria and Ukraine against the background of the hybrid war in Ukraine.

Research methods

The methodology of the study gave rise to **the interdisciplinary character** of the issues under consideration. The methodological basis of the study is based on the general scientific principles of historicism, objectivity, complexity, systematicity, as well as on the specific scientific approaches of political science, sociology, international relations and other humanities. The dissertation is an elaboration based on **the analytical approach, comparative analysis, retrospective review, survey research, documentary research, etc.** The process of planning and organizing the study, collecting the data, analyzing and interpreting the information involved the use of **statistical methods**. The method of **terminological analysis** was used to explore the concepts. The theoretical basis for the study of concepts in relation to Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine are the works of Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Russian and other scholars in the field of history, international relations, political science, journalism, economics, cultural studies, etc., to promote the study of hybrid warfare as a component of foreign and domestic policy of states in the XXI century.

The dissertation is developed on a diverse interdisciplinary basis. In order to formulate reasonable conclusions about hybrid warfare in Ukraine, a considerable number of studies have

been analyzed. The analysis of the literature on the topic of the study showed that scholars often draw diametrically opposed conclusions on the same issue, which is why one-sided assessments and opinions of authors from one country are avoided. Normative documents, scientific works, studies, articles, textbooks, etc. of historians, sociologists, lawyers, journalists, political scientists, internationalists, etc. from Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, USA, etc. were analyzed.

Significance of the study

The relevance and significance of the work is unquestionable, since in the conditions of a multipolar world, along with the objective correlation of economic and military potential, the nature of the relationship between the main centres of power, influence and strength plays a significant role. Every great power state seeks to become one of these centres by resorting to the methods of hybrid warfare. By trying to defend its interests and orienting its foreign policy towards European integration in the most important areas: economy, military, information, technological security and many others, Ukraine has become a victim of hybrid warfare on the part of Russia.

Russia's large-scale hybrid aggression against Ukraine - initially in covert forms - began to manifest itself from the very first day after the declaration of Ukraine's independence, and since 2014 - from the occupation of Crimea and some territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions - has entered a military phase, which eight years later in 2022 turned into a large-scale offensive of the Russian Federation against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine.

Processes and events in the Balkans in the 1990s and early 21st century received a priority place in Ukraine's regional policy, which is explained by cultural-civilizational ties, economic relations, geostrategic location of the Balkans. On the other hand, the crisis in Ukraine in 2013 and the events that followed - the large-scale military conflict in 2022 - aroused concern and attracted the attention of the Balkan states, including Bulgaria.

The scientific innovativeness of the study consists in the development of a topic related to political science, international relations, sociology and journalism, which has not been the subject of special study in Bulgarian scientific circles. A complex approach is applied to the study of the development of the specifics, tools and forms of hybrid warfare in the XXI century on the example of Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine. The dissertation presents for the first time original research, presented in Chapter 3.

The practical significance of the dissertation lies in the generalization of the specifics of hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine after 1991 until September 2023. The results of the research can be used for further research on “hybrid war” as a phenomenon, Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine, Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations, etc. The materials and conclusions of the work may be of interest for the development of practical programs to support the expansion of information education about hybrid warfare on the Ukrainian example in the international arena. The factual material of the dissertation can be used in teaching political science, history, journalism, sociology, etc.

CHAPTER II

HYBRID ATTACKS BY RUSSIA ON AND AGAINST UKRAINE AFTER THE ACQUISITION OF ITS INDEPENDENCE

In the 21st century, wars between states with large-scale use of violence are gradually becoming archaic and are being replaced by new ones - hybrid wars. They are based on a fundamentally different type of organised violence, characterised by a mix of war, organised crime, terrorist attacks and the massive impact of information and communication technologies - for example, in cyberspace, in the cultural and ideological spheres, etc. Hybrid aggression does not become immediately apparent, but due to the absence of official subjects (belligerents) of warfare and the conclusion of hybrid wars becomes more difficult and less visible than typical wars with officially declared belligerents.

Hybrid wars are made possible by various factors, and the events in Ukraine after 1991 confirm and demonstrate this. The Russian invasion of Ukraine since 2014 and 2022 has not only had serious military consequences for the Ukrainian people, but has also unleashed propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Russia strategically uses these tactics to manipulate, distort the truth and justify its aggression. In response, Ukraine attaches the utmost importance to discrediting Russian propaganda and makes considerable efforts to counter disinformation.

The significance of the events and phenomena of the end of the last century is that they reflect radical changes in the geopolitical situation in the world, as well as in a newly formed state, Ukraine, which seeks to realize its interests in a geopolitical context, to define its priorities, to develop a strategy and tactics for their implementation. After the Revolution of Dignity in 2013-2014. Ukraine faces a number of fundamentally new challenges and threats, the main source of which is Russian aggression against Ukraine. While the first phase of this aggression (from February 2014 to February 2022) resulted in some territorial losses - the annexation of the

Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the partial occupation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions - the second phase (from 24 February 2022) began with the open use of armed force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the country under the guise of a so-called 'special military operation'. The Ukrainian crisis, which began at the end of 2013 and continues to this day, has clear historical antecedents: the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changing social and political systems in the former socialist countries of central and eastern Europe, the strengthening of the EU economically and politically, and much more.

This is why **the second chapter analyses the main aspects of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine** after 1991 in the risky post-Soviet society and countermeasures in the following aspects: **individual:** informational, historical, religious; **social:** political, legal, economically, energetic; **power:** military, chemical, biological and nuclear.

CHAPTER III

ETHNIC DIMENSIONS OF PERCEPTIONS OF HYBRID WARFARE

The third chapter contains **ethnic dimensions** of perceptions of hybrid warfare. It analyses cultural-civilisational and geopolitical relations between Ukraine and Bulgaria and presents the results of the **authors' empirical surveys: "Attitudes towards hybrid war of people with Ukrainian citizenship and Bulgarian origin living in Ukraine and living in Bulgaria"**. In the present study, an analytical review and comparative analysis of data from the survey conducted by the author of the research work among people with Ukrainian citizenship and Bulgarian origin in Ukraine and people with Ukrainian citizenship and Bulgarian origin in Bulgaria is made regarding their attitude towards hybrid warfare against Ukraine after its independence. The survey was conducted in 2020, before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This means that the results of the survey after 2022 could be different. The results clearly demonstrate that Ukrainian society was not prepared for the events that took place in 2022, and that the hybrid war in Ukraine has had a massive impact on the citizens of the country, as well as on the geopolitical dimensions and international legal aspects of many other countries, including the Great Powers. The specificity of Ukrainian geopolitics lies in the fact that it has traditionally been linked to ethnopolitics, which is why it is very important to know the opinions and positions of different ethnic groups inhabiting Ukraine regarding the political development of the country. Ethnic Bulgarians are the sixth largest ethnic group in Ukraine and their political support is of great importance not only for the future development of Ukraine, but also for Bulgaria;

“Attitudes of social workers and volunteers in Bulgaria towards working with refugees from Ukraine”. In this paper an analytical review of the survey conducted by the author among volunteers and social workers in Bulgaria who have worked with refugees from Ukraine from 24.02. to 31.05.2022 is made regarding their attitudes towards the refugees from Ukraine and their assumptions about the future development of the refugee crisis directly related to Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria;

“An Anonymous Survey of Experts' Opinions on Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine after 1991”. The survey implemented in **08.-09. 2023**, in the form of evaluation questionnaires, was provoked by the dissertation author's findings from previous surveys regarding Russia's hybrid warfare in and against Ukraine. The aim of the survey is to establish the level of awareness of Bulgarian and Ukrainian specialists in Bulgaria about the specifics of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine after 1991.

The paper assesses the degree of threat that Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine poses to the national security not only of Ukraine but also of Bulgaria.

The authors' empirical studies aim to fulfil the main aims and objectives of the dissertation by confirming the theoretical material presented above in practice. National identity in the studies is considered as a set of subjective and objective characteristics of human individuals or groups (social, political, ethnic, civilizational, territorial, etc.), determining their specificity and uniqueness, as well as their differences with other individuals or groups. **The period of observation** is the key event - the hybrid war in and against Ukraine after its independence. **The task of the surveys initiated in different years (2020, 2022 and 2023) is to summarize the information** from the respondents in order to trace possible changes in the attitudes, assessments and awareness among the public in certain time periods towards Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine after 1991; to clarify whether the change of demographic factor influences the opinion of people with Ukrainian citizenship but with Bulgarian origin about the hybrid wars and the future development of Ukraine. **In this regard, the relevance of the research** is undeniable, as the Bulgarian community in Ukraine is one of the largest national minorities and has a great influence on the development of the country. Similarly, Bulgarians who have returned from Ukraine to Bulgaria have a real, though sometimes not so noticeable, influence not only on Ukraine but also on Bulgaria through their votes in various elections at the state and local level, as well as in social, economic, cultural and demographic terms.

The total number of respondents participating in the survey for this dissertation is 537, the total number of (open and closed) questions is 55. In these surveys, only the results of the survey were recorded, not the knowledge, judgement or opinion of the recorder.

Note: The questionnaires were filled in properly and in good faith, with very minor omissions, which do not have a negative impact on the final result, and even help for a more in-depth analysis of the topic. Sometimes, in percentage terms, the results in the surveys are below 100% due to the fact that some of the surveyed users did not indicate any of the answers, but left a comment on the corresponding answer options. On the other hand, the percentages indicated in the surveys in some cases exceed 100%, as some of the respondents indicated in some places more than one answer.

The main organizational tasks for conducting surveys include: developing a methodology for conducting the survey, developing survey cards, activating an electronic form of surveys for respondents, creating an organization for distributing and completing surveys, collecting, processing and analyzing the results obtained.

Surveys were done through Google Forms, due to the low cost, possibility of anonymity and control of responses. The disadvantages of the platform are that it does not allow the intervention of the interviewer in the research process, for example to explain to the interviewee something he did not understand, and there is a high risk of poor quality answers, as well as a low return of answers. There is always the danger that the respondents will answer with “I don't know” and that they may not be sincere in their answers, due to personal reasons and concerns. Many of the answers also depend heavily on the qualifications and general subject knowledge of each individual respondent.

All three surveys consist of three conditional parts - introductory questions for filtering, a group of questions, the answers to which provide information about the issues raised on the topic, and final questions about the personal and demographic data of the participants. By means of survey maps, made according to the characteristics of individual key communities, the aim is to measure the level of public opinion, the degree of awareness and the sources of information, the reasons for the established level of public opinion, the main prerequisites for it and the possible means of change, evaluation and recommendations for its improvement.

The conducted polls on hybrid wars are a good experience that can serve as an example of a comprehensive global survey that can be conducted among all (willing) citizens and

residents of Bulgaria. Similar results should be analyzed by political scientists and sociologists with the necessary qualifications and competence in order to make an accurate analysis of the representative sample in relation to the researched issues, as well as to deduce trends and possible forms of development of public opinion on the subjects subject to the study.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation ends with a **Conclusion** of the work carried out. An answer was given to the question of whether the main hypotheses, aims and tasks of the research have been proven.

A vivid example of a modern hybrid war in the 21st century is Russia's war in and against an independent Ukraine, which became evident in 2014 and continues to this day, having become permanent: the Euromaidan events, the beginning of the Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea, the development of military actions on the territory of Donbas, the creation of the so-called “DPR” and “LPR” (“ДНР” и “ЛНР” – бр.) and the full-scale military invasion. Russia seeks to undermine the governance structure and infrastructure of Ukraine, to sow chaos and destabilization, to conquer its territories and citizens, starting not with a classic plan of direct military action, but with hybrid ones.

I think that **the author's theoretical and empirical studies effectively prove the main research hypotheses presented in this work:**

1. The Ukrainian crisis does not arise out of nowhere, but has certain prerequisites and aspects.
2. The Ukrainian experience is important for Bulgaria, because it becomes clear that countries that had strong ties with Russia and a close territorial location are more vulnerable to the Russian hybrid war.
3. Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine has been successful to a large extent not only because of the presence of a wide range of political and economic subjects dependent on Russia, but also because of the poor awareness of Ukrainian citizens about the specifics of the “hybrid war”, which is why they easily fall victim to manipulations by Russia.
4. Ukraine's successful opposition to Russia in hybrid warfare depends on various domestic and international factors.

The stated tasks of this dissertation have been successfully completed, and the main objectives have been achieved.

Scientific contributions:

1. The concept of hybrid warfare was first applied in its complete, systematized form to a specific case study - that of Ukraine.

2. Ukraine's empirical experience is conceptualized in turn, thereby enriching the concept of hybrid warfare.

3. The place of hybrid warfare and its relation to classical warfare is examined, deriving and articulating the ways in which it influences security architecture. The doctoral student's conclusions are also supported by empirical research.

Among the scientific-applied contributions can be noted: presented basic scientific results from four author publications, three author empirical studies, with **the total number of respondents participating in the survey** for this dissertation being **537**, **the total number of questions being 55**. Through theoretical studies, **an answer was given to the research question** about the specifics of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine, which is being implemented on the territory of independent Ukraine, and what impact this war has on the future of the state, and its role in the international arena.

The general trend of the results obtained in the three authors' surveys is that in 2020 most of the respondents were not worried about a full-scale military conflict in Ukraine, in 2022 the respondents on average were worried about a real war in Bulgaria against the background of what happened in Ukraine and 53.7% of them would consider moving to another country if they felt the impact of a possible/real war on themselves (and/or their family), in 2023 the respondents are already analyzing the prerequisites of the hybrid war in Ukraine and how the hybrid element will change in future potential military conflicts.

In today's conditions, forming an objective view of the global context of the political consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war is a task with many unknowns and can hardly be definitively resolved only within the framework of this dissertation work, so I plan to continue to develop the topic even further extensively. As, for example, a handbook could be written on the topic with the idea: **“You may not be interested in hybrid warfare, but it is interested in you”**, as well as on the readjustment of Ukraine and Russia (after the war), minorities abroad and migration flows as a tool of hybrid warfare or how such wars should be prevented. I also plan to

hold conferences and simulation games for students (political scientists, lawyers, historians, journalists, etc.) etc.

Among **the recommendations** made as a result of the thesis, the need to develop a comprehensive conceptual vision for countering hybrid threats, as a new form of threats to national security in a risky society, should be emphasized. The developments in this thesis can be taken into account by the Ukrainian and Bulgarian state authorities responsible for the security of the state and society, for individual EU institutions, in particular the European External Action Service, the EU Delegation to Ukraine, the Consultative Mission of The EU in Ukraine, the countries of the Eastern Partnership, scientific, civil and expert organizations dealing with security issues, developments in the field of political science, international relations, sociology, psychology, history, journalism, etc.

In this thesis, it was established that the prerequisites for the formation of the phenomenon of “hybrid war” are the development and technologization of the main spheres of public life, thanks to which the war is developed and modernized depending on the needs and realities of geopolitical modernity. Hybrid warfare is the latest global international confrontation to emerge in the current geopolitical order, a struggle for supremacy and influence waged by states, their coalitions, and non-state actors. In this work, theoretical approaches to the essence of the concept of “hybrid war” are shown. The analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict shows the emergence of new forms and methods of armed struggle between states to achieve their respective political goals and resolve interstate conflicts. Classic forms of armed struggle have been replaced by hybrid ones that, with the help of modern technologies, can have an almost instantaneous impact. The essence of this approach is expressed in shifting the focus of efforts from the physical destruction of the enemy in a large-scale war, to the use of so-called “soft power” against the enemy state to disinform its population. The aggressor country strategically coordinates these actions while maintaining the possibility of plausible deniability of its involvement in the conflict. The work analyzes the stages of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine, the use of modern information technologies and their impact on the consciousness of the citizens of Ukraine, as well as the following aspects of the hybrid war in Ukraine: military, information, cyber, economic, energy , political, legal, religious, chemical, biological and nuclear, and countermeasures.¹

¹ Mishchenko H. (2020) "Influence of information technologies on mass consciousness in the conditions of "hybrid war". Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. National Aviation University. [Online] Available at: https://er.nau.edu.ua/bitstream/NAU/42037/1/%D0%9C%D1%89%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BE_%D0%A5.%D0%9E._%D0%9C-608%20%D0%94%D0%B8%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BC.pdf

Despite Russia's hybrid aggression against Ukraine, which has been going on for many years now, there are still gaps in Ukraine's security system that prevent it from restoring its territorial integrity and sovereignty and fulfilling its obligations to ensure the security of Ukrainian society. As a result, Ukrainian citizens living in the occupied Crimea and ORDLO, in the “gray” zone and adjacent to the contact line, as well as in other regions of Ukraine directly affected by the aggressor or hybrid threats, suffer. The situation should be corrected based on an analysis of gaps in Ukraine's system for ensuring public security, taking into account the experience of individual EU and Eastern Partnership countries in countering Russian hybrid threats. Ukraine's state security system in the context of hybrid warfare requires immediate national measures to improve Ukraine's ability to ensure public security.²

In order to succeed in regaining lost territories and restoring its sovereignty in the future, Ukraine must do everything possible today, both domestically and internationally. It is necessary to strengthen education and awareness raising, to convince the whole society and the international community of the need for joint action, that eastern Ukraine and Crimea are temporarily occupied by Russia territories of Ukraine, which Ukraine will not give up under any circumstances and sooner or later he will bring them back to his bosom. The experience of Russia's aggression against Ukraine shows that the concept of hybrid war should be seen not only as a new kind of war and a new kind of military conflict. Hybrid warfare can and should also be qualified as the newest form of global confrontation in the modern security environment.³

The Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war should lead Ukraine, Europe and the international community as a whole to the following considerations. Any hybrid war contains global and regional challenges and threats. There are still enough rulers in the world who are willing to start a war or carry out a terrorist attack to satisfy their own imperial ambitions. This means that no country in the world can feel secure without having an effective security system and a capable modern military. The self-proclamation of an independent or even neutral state without reliable international guarantees of independence and territorial integrity is a “time bomb that may explode sooner or later.” Currently, the European and global security system does not have a relevant

² Martynuk V., Gonchar M., Chubyk A., Zhuk S., Chyzhova O., Maksak H., Tyshchenko Y., Zvarych O. (2018) Hybrid threats to Ukraine and public security. The experience of the EU and the Eastern Partnership. Center for Global Studies "Strategy XXI" [Online] Available at: https://www.civic-synergy.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/blok_XXI-end_0202.pdf

³ Mishchenko H. (2020) "Influence of information technologies on mass consciousness in the conditions of "hybrid war". Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. National Aviation University. [Online] Available at: https://er.nau.edu.ua/bitstream/NAU/42037/1/%D0%9C%D1%89%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BE_%D0%A5.%D0%9E._%D0%9C-608%20%D0%94%D0%B8%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BC.pdf

response to Russian aggression. The war in Ukraine is likely to become another frozen conflict, a source of instability and a threat to European countries and the world community as a whole. Active work in the international arena, based on the national priorities and real capabilities of the Ukrainian state, combined with a balanced, consolidated and effective domestic policy and a predictable pragmatic pro-European foreign policy course, can provide a positive image and a worthy place for Ukraine in the world community and significant international support, where **the main thing is the rule of law, not the right to force.**⁴

It is important to specify that Ukraine also uses hybrid methods of warfare, defending itself from the Russian Federation, however, they are not so pronounced, and this can be a separate topic for a dissertation.

A bibliography contains a list of documentary and reference materials, periodicals and non-periodicals that are cited and/or used within this work and are focused on defining and characterizing the phenomenon of “hybrid warfare”, as well as historical and other prerequisites and specifics of Russia's hybrid war in and against Ukraine.

Applications - results of the theoretical and experimental research conducted both by the author and by other individuals and organizations that did not find a place in the main part of the dissertation due to volume limitations.

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⁴ Interdepartmental scientific and practical conference: "Lessons of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine - military strategic aspects." (2021) Coll. materials int. science and practice conf. (Kyiv, April 29, 2021). - K.: National University of Defense of Ukraine named after Ivan Chernyakhovsky, 2021. -296 p. [Online] Available at: <https://nuou.org.ua/assets/documents/npc-zbr-agr-rs-pr-ukr-29-04-2021.pdf>