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RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN MILITARY CONFLICT: TERMINOLOGICAL AND DISCURSIVE DIMENSIONS

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The paper is devoted to terminological, typological and discursive dimension of concepts describing modern conflicts. Historical development of concept "war" is retraced including four generations of warfare. Difficulties in establishing a methodological framework for analyzing the media coverage of military conflicts are analyzed and an interdisciplinary approach to the media coverage of military conflicts is proposed. This enables the integration of different theories - international relations, conflict studies, political communication and journalism. Two dimensions of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict (physical and discursive) are desribed. In the physical dimension, the conflict is localized. The discursive dimension of the conflict is implemented at the global, interstate (Russian-Ukrainian) and local (intra-Ukrainian) levels. Discursive understanding of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict was investigated on local level. The object of analysis was coverage of the conflict in 4 Ukrainian online news portals. The need of new methodological approaches to analysis of the relationship between the media and security issues is emphasized.

Keywords: war; conflict; hybrid warfare; Russian-Ukrainian military conflict; media coverage; conflict dimensions; communication.

Introduction.

One of the current of research fields in political science is conflict studies. In publications devoted to the study of conflicts, we come across the parallel use of the terms *"war", "warfare", "conflict", "political conflict", "military conflict", "military-political conflict",* etc. In addition, there are various typologies of these phenomena and there is no established view of the conflict typology conflicts and its criteria.

War typology.

As for the typology of wars, one of the simplest is based on the criterion *"methods of warfare".* Accordingly there are *conventional* and *unconventional wars.* Conventional war can be described as a war which is waged by states using regular troops and conventional weapons. There are **four generations** of conventional war. The **first** is associated with the massive use of smooth-bore weapons in static battles, e.g. the Napoleonic Wars. The **second** generation is associated with invention of rifled weapons and strategic troop transfers

by rail, e.g. the First World War. In the **third** generation heavy armored vehicles appeared. This enabled deep tactical and operational maneuver, e.g. World War II.

The first two generations are considered as *linear wars*, because the struggle is conducted through a direct clash of military orders, or lines. From the third generation we can talk about *nonlinear warfare*, in which superiority is achieved through maneuvering, tactical and operational skills. In this sense, all modern wars are nonlinear. Wars of the **fourth generation** were presented by military theorists as a futuristic phenomenon in which the leading role is played by technical innovations, such as highly effective directional weapons (lasers, electromagnetic guns, etc.), remotely controlled devices and robots, computer based networks of communication and observation[1]. In this fourth generation of wars, new types of wars emerged: *network-centric and hybrid wars.* The concept of network-centric warfare appeared after the US Gulf operation in 1991. The idea of network-centric warfare is to achieve maximum adaptability of troops through the almost total use of information technologies. In this war such a war, single military units are able to act autonomously and, at the same time, to coordinate their operations with other units to achieve victory.

The second type is *unconventional war.* This category includes all wars, conducted using not "ordinary" methods. The use of armed forces in most leading countries in modern (the second half of the 20th and 21st century) military conflicts involves the limited use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons as well. Therefore, we can speak about unconventional war only if it is dominated by use of non-traditional weapons. In most cases, the term *"unconventional war"* is synonymous with *"irregular war".* The subjects of such wars are various non-state actors or entities that use methods that are not typical for regular state troops. Depending on the specific circumstances, different additional terms are used to describe the features of irregular war: *"civil war", "guerrilla war", "insurgent war".*

In irregular warfare terrorist and criminal methods are used. However, the use of the terms *"terrorist war"* or *"criminal war"* is not actually terminological. Following the events of 9.11, the Bush administration formulated the doctrine of *"war on terror".* "The enemy was identified as the "axis of evil" of several rogues" states and their sponsored terrorist networks, and the main threat was a combination of terrorist methods and high technologies. This doctrine has greatly influenced the concept of hybrid warfare and has affected of the modern understanding of war and its legal aspects[2].

At the same time, it should be noted that the term *"war"* is used in situations that do not involve any use of military weapons, such as "information war", "economic war", "political war". In each case, we can talk about certain typical methods of action in these areas, but in the traditional sense, they are only different components of *"war".* Their absolutization as separate types of war is controversial. As we can see, the criteria for most typologies are the methods of the warfare. This criterion helps to determine the essential characteristics: the war in which a single method is used, the enemy who uses it and the threat posed by this method. At the same time, the absolutization of one or another method can distort the understanding of a particular type of war, as in the case of a hybrid, which combines several methods. In addition, there is another disadvantage of defining war through the method of

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[1]   Lind, W., Nightengale K. (1989). The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation. *Marine Corps Gazette*, nr. 73, p. 23. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/7964013/The_Changing_Face_of_War_Into_the_Fourth_Generation [accessed 05.11.2021].

[2]   Horbulin, W. (Ed.) (2017). *Svitova hibrydna vijna: ukrajinskyj front,* Kyiv, p.120.

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waging it. It is that "... the method does not answer the question of the causes and purposes of war, moreover, the method of war as such does not reveal its strategy. Understanding the method does not answer the question of why a war is being fought, what is a victory or a loss, and what is the price of war"[3].

"War" vs. "armed conflict". Hybrid warfare

After World War II, the *"war"* as a term of international law gradually gave way to the term *"armed conflict"* . This is due, in particular, to the fact that from the point of view of international law, the state of war between the two states requires the formal declaration of war and allows the warring parties to apply the rules of war. This, in turn, is contrary to international law, in particular to the Geneva Convention (1949).

 Analyzing recent publications by military conflict experts, they all agree that the traditional understanding of war as a military confrontation between two states or blocs with defined political goals needs to be reconsidered. In the early 21st century in American and German publications appeared a range of concepts: *"4th Generation Warfare", "political warfare", "neue Kriege", "asymetrische Kriegsführun", "unkonventioneller Krieg", "non-linearer Krieg", "postmoderner Krieg"* , which aimed to conceptualize changes in classical approaches to war[4]. However, the term *"hybrid war"* has become the most widespread. It first appeared in the United States in the 90s. The term *"hybrid"* means a combination of different elements in a single physical object or action. The term *"war"* became widely used to mean *hybrid* only with the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The term *"hybrid warfare"* appeared in the US military, specifically in the Marine Corps. R. Walker defined it as a combination of ordinary war with special operations. He argued that the organization of the Marines was hybrid in nature[5]. Later, the term *"hybrid warfare"* was used by V. Nemeth in the context of the Second Chechen War (1999-2009) to describe the tactics of the Chechen insurgents, who combined the methods of traditional and guerrilla warfare[6].

Hybrid warfare can be interpreted as a combination of traditional and irregular hostilities combined with terrorist operations in a combat zone to achieve political goals. Hybrid warfare blurs the line between state and non-state actors, changes the forms of warfare, and traditional conceptual differences between terrorism, traditional hostilities, crime, and irregular military groups lose their practical significance. In his definition, G. Russell claims: "Simultaneous and coordinated use by the enemy of a set of political, military, economic, social, information means and traditional, irregular, terrorist, subversive, criminal methods of warfare involving state and non-state sub objects"[7].

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[3] Horbulin, W. (Ed.) (2017). *Svitova hibrydna vijna: ukrajinskyj front,* Kyiv, 2017, p. 123.

[4] Tamminga, O. (2015). Hybride Kriegsführung. Zur Einordnung einer aktuellen Erscheinungsform des Krieges, *SWP Aktuell*, nr. 27.p.2. Retrieved from: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2015A27_tga.pdf [accessed 05.11.2021].

[5] Walker, R.G. (1998). *SPEC FI: the United States Marine Corps and Special Operations.* Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey.
Retrieved from: https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/8989/specfiunitedstat00walk.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed 04.11.2021].

[6] Nemeth, W. J. (2002). *Future war and Chechnya: a case for hybrid warfare.* Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey. Retrieved from: https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/5865 [accessed 05.11.2021].

[7] Russell, W. G. Thoughts on Hybrid Conflict, *Small Wars Journal.* Retrieved from: https://smallwars-journal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/188-glenn.pdf [accessed 05.11.2021].

In July 2014, NATO officially decided to use the term *"hybrid war"* . This was due, among other things, to the nature of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In the case of a hybrid war, it is a question of extending hostilities to the sphere of civilian life. That is, it is about the coordinated use of diplomatic, military, humanitarian, economic, technological and information means to achieve not peaceful but military goals[8].

However, the fundamental nature of the war has not changed. The war is politically motivated and has its own logic and purpose: to protect their own interests and force the enemy to carry out their own will. The phenomenon of hybrid warfare is neither a new nor a purely Russian phenomenon.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that there is no definition of the term *"hybrid war"* in international law.. Its participants operate outside the legal field and use hybrid means instead of traditional ones, thus avoiding responsibility to the international community. Thus, *"hybrid warfare"* is a combination of open and hidden, regular and irregular, symmetrical and asymmetrical, military and non-military means to blur the line between the concepts of *"war"* and *"peace"* enshrined in international law[9].

In other words, it is the inverse use of various means to control the course of the conflict by "militarizing" the spheres of civilian life. According to O. Tamminga, hybrid warfare is a synthesis of military and non-military (diplomatic, economic, technological, humanitarian, information) means used by state and non-state actors for the purpose of systematic and coordinated destabilization and attack on previously identified enemy weaknesses. The aim is to control the course of the conflict by militarizing the spheres of civilian life[10]. What researchers of hybrid warfare have in common is that they all consider it necessary to first study specific cases of this war, identify similarities and differences between them, and only then formulate a general concept.

Hybrid warfare is generally understood as actions that combine military, quasi-military, diplomatic, informational, economic and other means to achieve strategic political goals. The specificity of this combination is that each of the military and non-military methods of hybrid conflict is used for military purposes and used as a weapon. W*eaponization* occurs not only in the media sector. The war is therefore called hybrid, because it is widely used and non-military means[11].

The complex nature of the concept of *"hybrid war"* requires the comprehensive interdisciplinary analytical approach that would integrate the methodological and methodological achievements of various sciences: political science, sociology, communication, linguistics, jurisprudence. It should be, however, mentioed that such a task is complicated by differences in the subject area of single sciences that deal with the same object – hybrid warfare.

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[8] NATO (2014). *Hybrid War – Hybrid Response.* Retrieved from: https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2014/07/01/hybrid-war-hybrid-response/index.html

[9] Schaurer, Florian. (2015). Alte Neue Kriege - Anmerkungen zur hybriden Kriegführung, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Berlin, p.28.

[10] Tamminga, O. (2015). Hybride Kriegsführung. Zur Einordnung einer aktuellen Erscheinungsform des Krieges, *SWP Aktuell*, nr. 27.p.2. Retrieved from: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2015A27_tga.pdf [accessed 05.11.2021].

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The two main questions to which the representatives of various sciences seek answers can be formulated as follows: 1) has the nature of modern war changed?; 2) are hybrid methods of warfare a fundamentally new form of military conflict, or is it really just a matter of applying new combinations, techniques and methods of warfare known since ancient times? There is still no final answer to this question. Some military theorists categorically deny hybrid wars their essential specificity, while others insist that such specificity exists. The term *"hybrid" is* unacceptable to many experts , as a result of which it can be used so widely that it loses its meaning. Evidence of the vagueness and uncertainty of the nature of modern military conflicts is the existence of numerous terms to denote them: *hybrid war*, *"gray zone conflicts"*, *"gray wars"*. Using these terms, the authors seek to distinguish modern wars from traditional ones. This terminological instability "makes some experts doubt whether it is worth talking about the emergence of new forms of warfare? Or perhaps it is more correct to consider the latest conflicts as the use of classic force and strategies, the effectiveness of which is enhanced by modern advanced technologies and combined with the conscious use of vulnerabilities in the security structures of the Western world?

Thus, we argue that modern forms of warfare create new military-legal, social, moral and ethical problems that need to be addressed.

Therefore, it is appropriate to use *"hybrid war"* as the *umbrella term*, describing the complexity of this phenomenon. This enables comprehensive analysis of methodological approaches. The role of such a term is to "find common features of hybrid warfare and ... stimulate the search for theoretically sound and effective practical solutions"[12].

In addition to the search for common features, this makes it possible to categorize wars on the principle of variable sets of common features. Interpretation of the *"hybrid war"* as the *umbrella term* makes it possible to use different terms in parallel *("hybrid combat", "hybrid threats", "hybrid enemy")* as synonyms[13]. The basis for this is a combination of traditional, non-traditional, military and non-military methods: whether as threats, or during real hostilities, or as an attribute of a potential or real aggressor. Today we can talk about the process of expanding the meaning of the concept of *"hybrid war"* as a new type of global confrontation.

Despite the diversity of issues and disciplinary approaches, all authors emphasize that the media play a key role in understanding the phenomena of *"security"* and *"conflict"*. However, there are some difficulties in establishing a methodological framework for analyzing the media coverage of military conflicts. These difficulties are due to several factors: a) the interdisciplinarity of research and the multidimensionality of the links between political actors, the media and society; b) the existing set of methodological tools approaches does not always adequately and comprehensively describe the interaction between political actors, the media and society; c) the lack of ongoing dialogue between researchers and specialists in the fields of security, military affairs, and media technologies.

One way to overcome these difficulties is to take an interdisciplinary approach to the media coverage of military and political conflicts. It allows you to integrate theories of different fields – international relations, conflict studies, political communication and journalism. For example, the application of theories of international relations makes it

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[12] Horbulin, W. (Ed.) (2017). *Svitova hibrydna vijna: ukrajinskyj front,* Kyiv.
[13] Yavorska, H. (2016). Concept *"vijna"*: semantyka i pragmatyka. *Stratehichni priorytety. Seria: Philoso-phia*, nr.1, p. 16.

possible to consider a political or military conflict in a theoretical and historical-cultural context. Conflict studies provide a methodological basis for the analysis of the main parameters of the conflict. Communication and media studies theoretically substantiate changes in communication technologies, media functions and the role of journalists in covering political and military conflicts.

This diversity of approaches is certainly an advantage, but it also requires the consolidation of research efforts and the systematization of knowledge, as well as the development of methodological guidelines. The first steps in this direction were the magazine *"Media, War & Conflict"* , founded in 2008, and the collective work *"Routledge Handbook of Media, Conflict and Security",* which was first published in 2017[14].

Cultural dimension of the military conflicts

If we assume that every military conflict has a cultural dimension, it will make it possible to understand how mediatized culture affects the processes of armed conflict. Recently, the attention of researchers has shifted from the problems of interstate relations, conflict, strategic planning towards the so-called *"Soft power"* or *"smart power":* culture, identity, values[15] [16]. This was facilitated by the so-called *"cultural turn",* which strengthened the position of poststructuralist and constructivist approaches to the issue of conflict and security[17] [18]. This *"cultural turn"* means that culture in general and media in particular form a certain *"background meanings",* stressing the importance of some and diminishing the importance of other events, and in that way a significant impact on the scope of policy[19].

At the same time, it is fair to note that these authors, emphasizing the importance of culture for the social and political sphere, do not dwell in detail on methods that allow to analyze verbal and nonverbal means by which culture and media "produce" certain meanings other audience reactions. Since the media produce meanings through media texts (verbal and visual), placing them in a certain context ("background"), the features of media texts (design, content, structure) significantly determine the processes of their interpretation and understanding by the audience.

Media and security

Research on the relationship between the media and security issues is based on **three principles** about the nature of communication.

First, to describe media communication in general, the transport metaphor is most often used: *"news has flown around the world", "at the intersection of information flows", "speed".* If we talk about news communication, it is more accurately described by the model of the ritual. This or that news or image can be attractive to the consumer, however, and this is much more important, given the power relations and social order, the news is a daily recurring rituals of consumption of multi-layered narratives. Ritual processes

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[14] Robinson, P. (Ed.). (2017). Routledge *Handbook of Media, Conflict and Security* , London.

[15] Nye, J. S. (2008). *The Power to Lead: Soft, Hard and Smart Power*, New York, p. 28.

[16] Rough, W. A. (2009). *The Case of Soft Power* , [in:] *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting US Foreign Policy*, Ed. Ph. Seib, New York, p. 177.

[17] Bachmann-Medick, D. (2006). *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften,* Reinbek b. Hamburg.

[18] Hammond, P. (2007). *Media, War and Postmodernity.* London.

[19] Weldes, J. (2003). *Popular Culture, Science Fiction and World Politics: Exploring Intertextual Relations*, [in:] *To Seek Out New Worlds: Exploring Links Between Science Fiction and World Politics,* Ed. J. Weldes, New York, p. 10.

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of consumption and interpretation of news narratives are in the center of attention of researchers of the relationship between media and security. Repetition is important because media rituals form standardized frames for news and, consequently, stereotyped audience reactions. This in turn poses security threats.

Second, the study of the relationship between the media and security issues involves not only an analysis of several leading media, but also media culture in general, as the concept of media encompasses actors, technologies and the environment. Politicians, journalists and media consumers live in a multimodal, multinational and multilingual media environment, in which local, regional and global narratives and visions circulate, competing with each other and determining the various reactions and behavior of the audience[20].

Theses on communication as a ritual and media culture as a medium of interaction lead to the **third** foundation: the vagueness and uncertainty of the concept of *"media power".* Establishing the agenda and determining the importance of security issues is no longer the prerogative of political elites alone . Repetitive rituals that change their form are mechanisms in the process of communication, which is now also involved in social media. If some subjects skillfully use these rituals to convey "correct" messages to the target audience, which often interprets the news media in an unexpected and unpredictable way, depending on the cultural and political context. In addition, the hybrid model of communication *(one - to - many + many - to - many)* leads to the individualization of mass communication[21].

Discursive dimension of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict.

Now let us trace the discursive understanding of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict. This conflict exists in physical and discursive dimensions. In the physical dimension, it is localized (Crimea, occupied territories of Donezk and Luhansk regions). Its discursive dimension is implemented at the global, interstate (Russian-Ukrainian) and local (intra-Ukrainian) levels. Discursive understanding of events at different levels is different. To study the relationship between the physical and discursive dimensions of the Ukrainian-Russian military conflict, it is optimal to use an interdisciplinary approach and a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Discursive dimension of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict was investigated on local level. The object of analysis was four online news portals *"ZAXID.NET", "Lviv Portal", "Vgolos"* and *"Galinfo".* The research period is May 2021. The sample consists of 400 randomly selected news texts (100 texts from each media). Most of the materials about the events in the conflict area were published by the Vgolos (11), a little less by Galinfo (9), ZAXID.NET (4), and the Lviv portal (4).

In general, the coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the news media discourse does not raise reservations. Given the specifics of this discourse, one should probably not expect the analytical component of the publication. However, if the text of the news is accompanied by a comment from a conflict expert or a military journalist, it significantly enhances the news quality.

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[20] Deuze, M. (2012). *Media Life.* Cambridge, p. 113.

[21] Gillespie, M. & O'Loughlin, B. (2017). *The Media-Security Nexus. Researching ritualized cysles of insecurity*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Media, Conflict and Security, Eds.* P. Robinson, R. Fröhlich, London, p. 55.

The thematic range of publications on the military conflict is not very wide. Most of them inform about violations of ceasefire, wounding or death of Ukrainian soldiers, military "exercises" in occupied territories of Donezk and Luhansk, seizure of militants by Ukrainian soldiers. In addition to *"militants"* journalists use the terms *"hostiles", "enemy", "occupiers", "Russian militants", "enemy troops of the Russian Federation", "Russian terrorists", "Russian mercenaries", "armed formations of the Russian Federation".* It is worth noting that some publications in the title talk about *"militants"* or *"terrorists",* and in the text we already have *"armed formations of Russia"* or *"Russian troops".* We believe that journalists who report on the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict should be more careful in choosing and using a term. If the term has synonyms, then of course they should be used. For example, the terms *"militant"* and *"terrorist"* are synonymous. The authors of some publications use these terms simultaneously, mostly in the plural: *"terrorist-militants".*

As for the names by which the authors of periodicals denote the territories where hostilities are taking place, they most often use the official name *"Joint Forces Operations Area"* (in Ukrainian "**O**peracija **O**bjednanych **S**yl" – OOC), which the Operational Headquarters of Ukrainian Armed Forces decided to use from the end of April 2018 instead of "Anti-terrorist Operation" (ATO), which was formally managed by the Security Service of Ukraine. In addition to this official term, journalists use other concepts: "area of operation", "anti-terrorist operation zone", "war zone". As we can see, journalists, when reporting on the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict and its participants, use different terms randomly. This does not always accurately convey the essence of the event. Finally we refer to *"ABC. Armed Conflict in Terms (Guidebook for Ukraine)",* which was published in 2019 at the initiative of the Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons and with the financial support of the Swiss Embassy in Ukraine. This handbook contains 105 terms of international and Ukrainian law that describe various aspects of the armed conflict, as well as a list and description of regulations and legislation adopted by Ukraine since 2014 to address issues related to the armed conflict and the temporary occupied parts of Ukraine[22].

In conclusion we claim that new methodological approaches are needed to analyze the relationship between the media and security issues. They should adequately respond to changes not only in social and political reality, but also in discursive practices, visual and verbal means of communication. This interaction between the subjects of politics and media is not linear, reflecting both continuity and variability of political system. Therefore, research methods on media interaction and national or international security issues should be sensitive, flexible, iterative and reflective. They should reflect the dynamics of this interaction and new ways of communication between social and political players, the media and their audience.

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РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ЗБРОЙНИЙ КОНФЛІКТ: ТЕРМІНОЛОГІЧНИЙ ТА ДИСКУРСИВНИЙ ВИМІРИ

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У статті проаналізовано термінологічні та дискурсивні аспекти російсько-українського воєнного конфлікту у контексті зарубіжних та українських досліджень у галузі конфліктології. Об'єктом аналізу були чотири інтернет-видання "ZAXID.NET", "Львівський портал", "Вголос" і "Галінфо". Період дослідження – травень 2021 року. Обсяг вибірки – 400 текстів новин, обраних за допомогою генератора випадкових чисел (по 100 текстів із кожного видання).Зазначено, що традиційне розуміння війни як військового зіткнення двох держав чи блоків з визначеними політичними цілями потребує переосмислення. На початку XXI століття у зарубіжних публікаціях з'явилися нові поняття, які мали на меті концептуалізувати зміни у класичних підходах до війни. Одним із таких термінів став термін "гібридна війна". Термін "гібридний" означає поєднання різних елементів у цілісному фізичному об'єкті, явищі або дії. Термін "війна", якому відповідає англійське слово war, став широко використовуватись з означенням hybrid (гібридна) тільки з початком російської агресії проти України. Спільним для дослідників є те, що всі вони вважають за потрібне спершу вивчити конкретні випадки цієї війни, визначити подібності і відмінності між ними, а вже після того сформулювати загальну концепцію. Гібридну війну назагал розуміють як дії, у яких поєднуються мілітарні, квазімілітарні, дипломатичні, інформаційні, економічні та інші засоби з метою досягнення стратегічних політичних цілей. Тому доречно трактувати назву "гібридна війна" як т.зв. umbrella term, що описує багатогранність цього явища та уможливлює комплексний аналіз методологічних підходів. Роль такого терміну полягає в тому, щоб віднайти спільні характеристики гібридної війни і стимулювати пошук теоретично обґрунтованих та ефективних практичних рішень.

Ключові слова: війна; конфлікт; гібридна війна; російсько-український воєнний конфлікт; медіа; виміри конфлікту; комунікація.