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The impact of information warfare on social security within the framework of liberal democracy

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Abstract

This research emphasized the significance of myth in forming national consciousness and consolidating people during the formation of a democracy, using the example of democratic transition in Ukraine. The study examined the dynamics of Ukraine's democratic transition, focusing on the constructed mythical images, their reliance on national archetypes, and the antinomy between life's realities and the imposed ideology. The role of political reality, which encompassed both objective reality and a closed virtual reality with constructed simulacra signs, was also analyzed. The findings suggested that in the spectator society of the 21st century, with increasingly diverse connections, the intuitive-irrational type of world perception dominated, leading individual and social consciousness to simplify their world view. Yet, a unified statist conceptual picture of the world was not created using the mythical images constructed as opposed to Soviet ones in Ukraine's democratic transition. Understanding the role of political myth as a carrier of information about society and a driving force behind changes in the political space can guide future analysis of democratic transition processes and inform decision-making in emerging democracies.

Keywords: democratic transition, information warfare, liberal democracy, media manipulation, social security



Introduction

In the modern world, the influence of information warfare has become increasingly apparent, shaping opinions, perceptions, and actions of people across the globe (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2019). The rapid growth of digital technology and the internet has facilitated the spread of disinformation, propaganda, and targeted campaigns that can significantly impact the stability and security of nations (Hubanova et al., 2021). Within the framework of a liberal democracy (Rustow, 1970), these disruptions can have a profound effect on social security, democratic processes, and public trust in democratic institutions. The main objective of this research is to analyze the impact of information warfare on social security within the context of liberal democracy, using a case study approach to explore the influence of disinformation and propaganda campaigns on democratic processes and institutions. By examining the ways in which information warfare can undermine democratic processes, we aim to provide valuable insights for policymakers, academics, and citizens alike on how to mitigate these threats and safeguard social security.

Particular attention is given to the challenges faced by countries during democratic transitions, using the case of Ukraine as an example. As a nation undergoing significant political, economic, and social changes, Ukraine has found itself vulnerable to the disruptive power of information warfare. This research aims to analyze the implications of information warfare on the national consciousness, social cohesion, and stability in a nascent democracy.

Research Hypothesis. The research hypothesizes that information warfare significantly disrupts the social security of liberal democracies by undermining trust in democratic processes and institutions, polarizing public opinion, and exacerbating existing social and political divides. It further posits that a better understanding of the methods and tactics used in information warfare can inform the development of effective countermeasures and resilience strategies to ensure the stability of liberal democracies.

Research Tasks:

1. Review the literature on information warfare, defining key concepts and exploring the relationship between information warfare and democratic systems.
2. Investigate the methods and tools used by state and non-state actors to conduct information warfare targeting liberal democracies and their social security.
3. Evaluate potential countermeasures and strategies for liberal democracies to mitigate the negative impact of information warfare on their social security systems.

The study employs interdisciplinary approaches combining insights from political science, sociology, media studies, and cybersecurity to analyze the complex interplay between information warfare, social security, and liberal democracy. By exploring the multifaceted relationships between these elements, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the risks and potential countermeasures associated with information warfare in liberal democratic societies.

Theoretical Framework

The support for populists in society has the potential to affect the fundamental values of democracy (Urbinati, 1998). This occurs because a portion of the public only partially tolerates liberal democracy, which, according to Welzel et al. (2003), imposes emancipatory values in politics upon citizens.

Consequently, some individuals within society may be more inclined to align themselves with populist stances opposing liberal democracy, which can naturally lead to the support of anti-democratic tendencies. It is important to emphasize that under such circumstances, value changes could arise in society, resulting in decreased support for democracy.

One of the most widespread contents of information warfare in Ukraine is the myth of the “split of the nation.” In 2004, following the transformation of a conflict between personalities Victor Yushchenko and Victor Yanukovich into a conflict of essences (the western pro-European region against the eastern pro-Russian one), this conflict was given a timeless form due to the application of civilizational rhetoric (Huntington, 2000). The myth of the split of the Ukrainian nation was created by Moscow political technologists following the presidential elections in Ukraine in 2004 (Pavlyuk, 2005) and successfully integrated into public (everyday and even theoretical) consciousness.

Another artificially constructed myth, analyzed by Shevchenko (2006) within the framework of crisis mythology in Ukraine, was also exported from Russia (and is, incidentally, quite prevalent in Russia) – the myth of a management crisis. Within this myth’s context, the chief ideologue of “United Russia,” V. Surkov, stated that Ukrainians are not a “state-creating people” and that they lack “state existence skills” (Düben, 2020). He argued that they demonstrate a fundamental inability to engage in state-building and autonomous geopolitical decision-making, thereby condemning them to the status of a perpetual province (Shevchenko, 2006).

A well-known Russian journalist and the recipient of a “Golden Pen of Russia,” Mikhail Leontiev [ed., *Leontyev*], often portrays Ukraine and its people in a negative light (Khaldarova, 2021). Therefore, he is often associated with *Ukrainophobic* sentiments (Sukhankin & Hurska, 2015). The phenomenon of *Ukrainophobia* refers to the irrational fear, hostility, or prejudice against Ukraine, its people, culture, and history. This phenomenon can be observed in various forms, including the media, political discourse, and cultural expressions. It often involves the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and the distortion or denial of Ukraine’s historical and cultural achievements. In the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations, *Ukrainophobia* may be fueled by historical tensions, political rivalries, and differing worldviews (Bedrik et al., 2017).

Leontiev links the crisis of public administration in Ukraine to the phenomenon of betrayal, which he believes consistently “haunts” Ukrainian historical figures and modern public personalities. For instance, when commenting on the moral degradation of Ukrainian politics, he claimed that “Ukrainian politics is always about betrayal; whoever betrays first is the one tall in the saddle” (Mongait, 2014). Leontiev’s views and opinions can significantly impact the public perception of Ukraine in Russia. His statements may perpetuate negative stereotypes, contribute to biased narratives, and potentially exacerbate tensions between the two nations. By portraying Ukraine and its political figures in an unfavorable light and attributing the country’s issues to a consistent pattern of betrayal, Leontiev’s commentary, whether intentionally or not, may further reinforce *Ukrainophobic* attitudes and hinder the development of constructive dialogue and mutual understanding between the Russian and Ukrainian people.

It is important to understand that Leontiev’s perspective might be shaped by his affiliations and the broader political context in which he operates. As a journalist, he is perhaps influenced by the prevailing narratives or biases in the media industry in which he works (Slay & Smith, 2011). Additionally, the ongoing tensions and historical conflicts between Russia and Ukraine could potentially

contribute to his unfavorable portrayal of Ukraine and its people. In analyzing his works, it is essential to consider these contextual factors to ensure a more balanced and fact-based understanding of the subject matter.

Information warfare and its implications have been a growing area of interest and concern for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. The following literature review presents the key concepts, theories, and findings relevant to understanding the impact of information warfare on social security within the context of liberal democracy.

Defining Information Warfare

Information warfare is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to manipulate, deceive, or influence the perceptions, decisions, and actions of individuals, groups, or nations (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1997a, 1997b; Ventre, 2012). This includes cyberattacks, disinformation, propaganda, and psychological operations, which have become more intricate and widespread in the digital era (Castells, 2011; Libicki, 2007).

Information Warfare and Liberal Democracies

Foreign scholars have explored the vulnerabilities of liberal democratic systems to information warfare (Bennett & Livingston, 2003). These vulnerabilities include the openness of democratic societies, which allows for easier penetration and dissemination of disinformation; the reliance on free media that can be exploited for spreading false or misleading information; and the weaknesses in democratic institutions, such as political parties and electoral systems, which can be targeted to undermine trust and legitimacy (Hanska-Ahy, 2016; Bradshaw & Howard, 2017).

Impact on Social Security

Information warfare can have profound implications for social security within a liberal democracy (Lin & Kerr, 2019). Social security is a broad concept that encompasses various aspects of societal stability and cohesion, including physical safety, economic stability (Koval et al., 2021), cultural identity, and social trust. Information attacks can lead to increased polarization, social fragmentation, and erosion of trust in democratic institutions, as well as heightened tensions between various social groups or contribute to the diffusion of extremist ideologies (DiResta, 2018).

Countermeasures and Resilience

To mitigate the effects of information warfare, various countermeasures have been proposed, including improving media literacy, enhancing the credibility and transparency of democratic institutions, bolstering cybersecurity, and fostering international cooperation to combat disinformation and cyber threats (Glass et al., 2018; Romaniuk & Manjikian, 2021). Additionally, scholars have emphasized the importance of developing societal resilience to information warfare through strategies such as promoting social cohesion, critical thinking, and diversity of information sources (Van Puyvelde & Brantly, 2019; Kortukova et al., 2022).

The literature on information warfare reveals its potential to disrupt social security within liberal democracies by targeting their inherent vulnerabilities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies aimed at mitigating the negative consequences of information warfare and fostering resilience against these threats.

Methods

To thoroughly examine the impact of information warfare on social security within the framework of liberal democracy, this study employs a qualitative research design. The methodology focuses on analyzing primary and secondary sources, as well as conducting expert interviews, to gain a deep understanding of the subject matter.

1. **Primary Source Analysis.** The study involves an examination of primary sources, such as government documents, reports, and policy papers from democratic countries that have experienced information warfare. This analysis aims to identify trends, strategies, and tactics employed by perpetrators, as well as the countermeasures adopted by targeted countries to mitigate the effects on social security and democratic institutions.
2. **Secondary Source Analysis.** The secondary source analysis includes a comprehensive review of academic literature, articles, and published studies on information warfare, its impact on social security, and its implications for liberal democracy. This review will ensure a robust understanding of current theoretical frameworks, debates, and empirical findings, and help identify gaps in existing research.
3. **Liberal Democratization: Approaches, Conditions, and the Impact of Populism.** In the *theory of liberal democratization*, commonly applied to explain transformational processes in post-communist countries, political analysis primarily focuses on two approaches:
 - 1) The structural approach, which emphasizes the importance of socio-economic conditions and the formation of effective political institutions in the process of democratization.
 - 2) The procedural approach, which concentrates on the behavior of elites and their ability to establish pacts among different factions.

The establishment and stable functioning of a liberal democracy can be achieved under the following conditions:

- An appropriate level of socio-economic development;
- The construction of efficient political institutions;
- The adherence of political elites to democratic values and principles.

Table 1. A Content Comparison of the Meta-Ideological Foundations of Populism and Liberal Democracy

Ideological views system	System	Society
<i>Populism</i>	Strong resolute leadership	People’s sovereignty
<i>Liberal democracy</i>	Strong institutions	Social capital

The theorists tend to pay less attention to the study of how values influence the formation of democracy, and more to the impact of institutional factors (Welzel et al., 2003).

Within the framework of liberal democracy, the consequences of populist governments’ rule may be observed in the following areas: the behavior of populist parties, structural changes in the socio-economic landscape of societies (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2020, 2021), and political institutions essential for liberal democracy. Some researchers argue that the actions of populists are not aimed

against democracy as a system, but rather against liberal (representative) democracy and specific elements crucial to the stable functioning of democracy (within the context of structural and functional analysis) (Kaltwasser, 2012; Gaus et al., 2020). Additionally, populists often target a particular type of elites (within the scope of procedural analysis).

4. Thematic Analysis. The data collected from primary sources, secondary sources, and the theory of liberal democratization will be subjected to thematic analysis. This qualitative approach involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data, offering a rich and detailed interpretation of the impact of information warfare on social security within the context of liberal democracy.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the impact of information warfare on social security within the framework of liberal democracy provided several key findings (Table 2).

Table 1. Essential Findings on Information Warfare Effects within the Context of Liberal Democracy

Effects of Information Warfare	Meaning
<i>Erosion of trust</i>	Information warfare has significantly contributed to the erosion of trust in democratic institutions, the media, and political actors. This decline in trust undermines social cohesion and can lead to increased polarization within the society.
<i>Manipulation of public opinion</i>	The spread of disinformation and propaganda through various channels, including social media platforms, has resulted in the manipulation of public opinion. This may destabilize the democratic process, as informed decision-making is compromised.
<i>External interference</i>	Information warfare from foreign actors is found to have negative consequences for social security within liberal democracies. These interference attempts can exacerbate existing divisions, promote extremist narratives, and undermine the legitimacy of electoral results.
<i>Rise of populist movements</i>	The effects of information warfare have contributed to the rise of populist movements within liberal democracies. Populist leaders often exploit the distrust and insecurity generated by information warfare to promote their own agendas, which may not always align with democratic values.
<i>Weakened resilience</i>	Information warfare has reduced the resilience of liberal democracies to both internal and external threats. As democratic institutions and norms are challenged, these societies become more vulnerable to potential security risks.

Overall, the results demonstrate that information warfare poses significant threats to social security within the framework of liberal democracy. Its destabilizing effects extend beyond the political sphere, impacting the social fabric and cohesion of democratic societies.

State and non-state actors employ various methods and tools to conduct information warfare

targeting liberal democracies and their social security. Some of these methods and tools include:

1. *Disinformation campaigns.* Actors use false or misleading information, often disseminated through digital platforms and social media, to manipulate public opinion, erode trust in democratic institutions, and incite division among the population.
2. *Cyberattacks.* State-sponsored or non-state hackers can target critical infrastructure, government networks, and private sector organizations, potentially causing disruptions and impacting public safety.
3. *Propaganda.* Actors use biased and misleading information to promote a particular political agenda or ideology, attempting to sway public opinion and undermine opposing perspectives.
4. *Covert influence operations.* Infiltrating or establishing relationships with political campaigns, grassroots organizations, or influential individuals can be used to covertly shape public discourse, promote specific narratives, and manipulate political outcomes.
5. *Social media manipulation.* Utilizing automated accounts, or “bots,” to amplify divisive or misleading content on social media platforms can help artificially create a perception of widespread support or opposition for certain ideas or political actors.
6. *Traditional media infiltration.* Actors might buy or infiltrate traditional media outlets, such as newspapers or television stations, to disseminate biased content and further their agendas.
7. *Leaking compromising material.* Actors may obtain and strategically release sensitive or damaging information about political opponents, aiming to discredit them and influence public opinion.
8. *Deepfake technology.* Advanced technologies are used to create realistic fake videos or audio recordings, spreading false information and undermining trust in information sources.

By understanding these methods and tools, liberal democracies can better anticipate, detect, and counter information warfare efforts targeting their social security and democratic processes.

Information warfare has emerged as a significant threat to the social security and stability of liberal democracies, as state and non-state actors increasingly use digital platforms to manipulate public opinion, discredit democratic institutions, and disrupt electoral processes. These actions pose a profound challenge to the core principles and values of liberal democracies, and their capacity to ensure the well-being of their citizens. Therefore, it is vital for these nations to adopt effective countermeasures and strategies to mitigate the negative impact of information warfare on their social security systems (Table 3).

Table 3. Potential Strategies for Liberal Democracies to Mitigate the Negative Impact of Information Warfare on Their Social Security Systems

Strategies	Implementation
<i>Cybersecurity enhancement</i>	Strengthening the cybersecurity infrastructure is essential to protect sensitive data, election processes, and prevent unauthorized access to critical systems. Investing in advanced technologies and up-to-date protective measures will help secure digital platforms against hostile cyber activities.

<i>Public awareness campaigns</i>	Governments and civil society organizations should collaborate on educating the public about information warfare, specifically addressing disinformation and misinformation. By raising awareness, citizens will be better equipped to identify and combat deceptive information.
<i>Media literacy education</i>	Incorporating media literacy in educational curricula will help foster critical thinking among future generations. A well-informed and discerning population is crucial for maintaining trust in democratic institutions and social security systems.
<i>Transparent communication</i>	Governments and political actors must maintain open and transparent communication with citizens, sharing accurate and reliable information to counteract disinformation and build trust in democratic institutions.
<i>Collaborative efforts</i>	Democracies should work together, sharing best practices and intelligence on potential threats, to create a united front against information warfare. This collaboration can extend to joint cyber defense initiatives, coordinated diplomatic responses, and shared resources.
<i>Legislation and regulation</i>	Implementing robust legislation and regulations to combat the spread of disinformation, including holding social media platforms and technology companies accountable for the content they host, can help mitigate the impact of information warfare.
<i>Fact-checking services</i>	Supporting independent fact-checking organizations and encouraging citizens to verify information before sharing can contribute to building a more robust information ecosystem that is resilient to information warfare.
<i>Preemptive deterrence</i>	Establishing clear consequences for information warfare and cyberattacks, such as economic sanctions, diplomatic actions or even retaliatory measures, can be a deterrent for potential adversaries.

By adopting these countermeasures and strategies, liberal democracies can effectively mitigate the negative impact of information warfare on their social security systems and reinforce the resilience of their democratic processes.

Technologically, due to the lack of opposition and countermyths in Ukrainian society, as well as the inability of domestic myth-making subjects to decode negative symbols, stereotypical constructions about Ukraine’s divisions became the accepted norm and began to be perceived as obvious. Political and public leaders readily used the “divisive” mythologeme in public discussions, unaware of the potential negative consequences this information war could bring.

For example, the significant differences between Bavaria and Saxony (Kleber, 2020) or the disparities between Germany and the former GDR (Luy, 2005) are not real reasons for a German statesman to talk about a “split of the German nation.” However, the situation in Ukraine, which is situated next to a semi-authoritarian state and wishes to position itself as the strong “core” country of a separate civilizational space, seems to function differently.

Concerning strategy, the mythologeme of “split” became highly convenient and “profitable” in election campaigns as it allowed for the regional mobilization and activation of significant voter

groups. With the clear division of electoral groups according to their adherence to different values, political technologists can easily construct winning artificial myths. As new elections take place, novel mythological constructions are created, while the previous ones persist, even if the subjects they served periodically descend from the “political Olympus.” This phenomenon can be attributed to the strong attachment and clear correlation of civilizational rhetoric to the archetypes of Ukrainians’ collective unconscious.

In fact, certain aspects of Ukraine’s political process, such as the indecisiveness and propensity for manipulation among ruling elites and their complete dependence on unelected elites (i.e., oligarchic groups), assist the “exporters of myths from Russia to Ukraine” in presenting new arguments supporting the myth of a governance crisis in Ukraine. This myth of a managerial crisis, which is more mythologized than real, continued to psychologically instill apathy and negativism in the public consciousness for some time due to the subsequent propagation of the “national salvation” propaganda formula. Sometimes, the nation needs to be saved primarily from the creators and spreaders of such a myth.

Another component of crisis mythology is the myth of Ukraine’s inevitable disintegration, which is not only operated by Russian politicians. For example, Shevchenko (2006) quotes Slovak journalist S. Helemendyk’s assertion about the “civilizational incompatibility” of several “Ukraines” (which include Kyiv, the pro-Russian northeast, Crimea, agrarian regions of central and southern Ukraine, Galicia, and former Austria-Hungary territories). According to S. Helemendyk, such a situation gives rise to a forecast of a “Yugoslav scenario,” involving the probable secession of the part of Ukraine that he refers to as “Russian” (Crimea, southeast). While these materials may be planted, it is worrying that such analysis is spreading beyond the CIS region.

The most perilous situation arises from large-scale manipulation of “crisis mythology,” leading to the public perception of Ukraine’s disintegration as a tragic inevitability. This forms an ideal basis for political technologies that popularize a “crisis” image of the state. Within the context of the irrational components dominating the political process, political myths, as elements of consciousness, significantly hinder the objective understanding of political phenomena. The crisis mythology of Ukraine examined earlier contributes to the formation of a distorted self-image among the constituents of mass consciousness. To guard against the persistent destructive consequences of such self-identification, it is crucial to recognize the fallacy in these twisted judgments, and to implement a mechanism of accountability for such manipulative behavior.

Analysis of Forms of Mythic Influence on the Formation of Ukraine’s Domestic Political and Cultural Landscape

At specific stages of democratic transition in Ukraine, authoritarian tendencies in the political sphere were re-actualized and grew quite potent. In general terms, these tendencies manifested in the myth of a “strong state,” which served as an imperative for the political class that emerged following the 2010 presidential elections in Ukraine.

A distinct feature of the 2010 presidential campaign was the public debate about the merits of implementing an authoritarian “strong hand” model in Ukraine. Even candidates advocating for democracy discussed the necessity of establishing a “strong state.” On September 25, 2010, Yu. Tymoshenko stated during a TV broadcast on the “Ukraine” channel that a dictatorship was the only way out of the crisis. However, she added that it should be a dictatorship of law and order. One of her

opponents, S. Tihipko, campaigned under the slogan “a strong president is a strong country,” leading a party named “Strong Ukraine.” S. Tihipko proposed adopting a new version of the Constitution in which the government, “as a genuine and indisputable center of state and executive power,” would be subordinate to the President. Another 2010 presidential candidate, A. Yatseniuk, declared his intention to “restore order” if victorious. Yet another candidate, A. Hrytsenko, presented his draft “Constitution of Order,” built on the strengthening of presidential powers. He argued that, “In the current conditions, we need to talk about order and a strong hand not as a counterweight to democracy, but rather, conversely, as responsibility and a means to create a solid foundation for genuine, non-facade, democracy.” Thus, for the first time in Ukraine’s history, the candidates pledged not to deepen democracy but to scale it back.

The promotion of authoritarian attitudes by presidential candidates correlated with the public mood. According to a sociological study conducted by the Research & Branding Group, 80% of respondents believed that the state needed a “strong hand,” and 36% stated that they were willing to accept restrictions on civil liberties. In this respect, authoritarian slogans remained popular among the Ukrainian population even after nearly 20 years of democratic transition.

This popularity was undoubtedly facilitated by a combination of socio-economic and political crises, highlighting the crucial importance of ensuring basic social comfort and security indicators for Ukrainians. In this context, economic circumstances play a role in restructuring the system of political myths.

The functional burden of myths, which consists of concealing ideological vacuums and supporting the transition process to a consolidated democracy, proves to be universal at all stages of the country’s democratic transition (Andrieieva, 2009). Due to the weakness of democratic and liberal traditions, the population retains little faith in rational explanations for the complex and dramatic changes they face.

In today’s world, as opposed to archaic times, myths rarely emerge spontaneously. Consequently, ruling elites, power structures, and experts in the field of humanities play a key role in shaping political mythology.

Considering the need for revolutionary changes and patriotic surges, elites prioritize the following identification markers:

1. Memorial markers (derived from the past, historical texts, folklore, and ideas about the early days of prophets and the righteous);
2. Borrowed markers (adopted from other nations while competing for symbolic heritage or acknowledging identity subordination);
3. Newly created markers (conceived from present-day revolutionary experiences, which are typically challenging).

Patriotic protest actions in Ukraine during 2013-2014 were fueled by memorial markers of identity and a retrospective understanding of the national. They leveraged:

- The Cossack myth (Cossack centuries);
- The commemoration of past heroes (in particular, Stepan Bandera);
- The destruction of monuments to Vladimir Lenin;
- The cultivation of the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian songs, embroidery, and other cultural products.

This demonstrates that national identity is closely tied to memorial markers. Conversely, a portion of Ukraine's population borrowed not European, but rather Russian identification markers: paternalism and hostility towards other identities.

To determine the nature of modern myth in transitional societies, one can employ the concepts of "threshold," "social structure," and "ideal community" proposed by the American ritual researcher, Victor Turner. According to Turner (2018), society encompasses two inseparable models of human relations:

1. A social structure as a structured system of political, legal, and economic statuses of people;
2. An ideal community as an unstructured and relatively undifferentiated collection of individuals that arise in the absence of a social structure

In post-Soviet states, Turner (2018) argues that the opposition between an ideal community and a social structure becomes permanent. What is crucial is the degree to which the groups within these societies that claim the status of nation-builders have integrated themselves into the existing state structure.

The Prospects for Research

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the influence of information warfare on social security in the context of liberal democracies. Despite the pressing nature of this issue, there is still much to explore in terms of the complex interplay between information warfare and the stability of democratic societies. The following are some potential avenues for further investigation:

1. *Comparative case studies:* Comparing the experiences of different countries facing information warfare can reveal variations in how societies respond to and mitigate these effects. Cross-national analyses can provide valuable insights into effective policy responses.
2. *Countermeasures and strategies:* A deeper examination of existing countermeasures to information warfare is essential, especially focusing on the efficacy of these strategies in preserving social stability and trust in democratic institutions.
3. *Psychological and sociological aspects:* Research into the psychological processes through which information warfare impacts individuals and societies can strengthen the understanding of the underlying drivers of information consumption, belief formation, and trust.
4. *Historical perspectives:* Exploring past examples of information warfare can shed light on the evolution of these phenomena over time, helping to contextualize modern threats.
5. *Technological advancements and their consequences:* Investigating the ways in which advancements in technology, such as AI and machine learning, may heighten the risks posed by information warfare can inform policy development and risk mitigation strategies.

By pursuing these research avenues, scholars can enhance knowledge about the consequences of information warfare on liberal democracies and contribute to the development of effective strategies for countering these threats.

Conclusion

Under conditions of the proliferation of technological myths, which are increasingly destructive to public consciousness, further dividing the government and citizens, and creating an atmosphere of despair

and apathy hindering strategic reforms, the need for legislative regulation of political populism before elections becomes a topical issue. In our opinion, the solution to this problem lies in comprehensive electoral (transitioning to a proportional system with open lists) and party (introduction of state financing for parties) system reforms, accompanied by the adoption of a special law on political responsibility in Ukraine.

Over the past six months, Ukraine has rapidly forged its own identity, complete with a pantheon of martyrs, heroes, and traitors, as well as clearly defined categories of “our people” and “enemies.” This process has been accelerated by military operations. Counter-mythical constructs such as “Banderians,” “junta,” and “fascists” are fictitious, yet they serve as reality for those prepared to fight against them. This exemplifies a myth that cannot be rationalized. The emphasis on mythological principles in social consciousness makes it difficult for consciousness to be understood.

During Ukraine’s independence, authorities were in no rush to dismantle political myths, since the demand for myths grew under the façade of democracy. The fatalistic perception of fate, which has characterized Ukraine from the mid-1990s until the Orange Revolution, partly explains the slow process of the country’s modernization due to citizens’ minimal interest in politics.

In summary, the study of the impact of information warfare on social security in liberal democracies is crucial for both the academic community and practical applications. This research provides valuable insights that can significantly contribute to the understanding and mitigation of the negative effects posed by information warfare.

This research enriches the field of political science and communication studies by exploring the intricate relationship between information warfare and social security. It helps broaden the understanding of how information manipulation tactics can undermine democratic processes.

By studying the mechanisms of information warfare and their impact on social security, policymakers and practitioners can develop effective countermeasures to defend liberal democracies from external threats and internal vulnerabilities.

The research findings can contribute to the development of educational programs aimed at fostering critical thinking and media literacy among citizens. This will empower individuals to discern between genuine information and disinformation, making them less susceptible to manipulation. Moreover, findings can be used as a basis for discussions between nations, fostering collaboration to address the global challenge of information warfare and its effects on social security in liberal democracies.

By raising awareness of the dangers of information warfare, this article can help shift public discourse and stimulate debates on the importance of protecting democratic values and social security.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Inna Semenets-Orlova contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, provided critical analysis of the research topic, and participated in writing and revising the manuscript.

Andriy Moshnin was involved in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results. He also contributed to writing and revising the manuscript.

Yaroslav Chmyr played a key role in the literature review and synthesis of existing knowledge on the topic. He contributed to the development of the theoretical framework and provided input on the manuscript.

Igor Rodchenko contributed to the methodology and statistical analysis of the study. He also participated in the interpretation of the results and provided feedback on the manuscript.

Oleksandra Oleksiienko was responsible for the overall project coordination, ensuring the research process adhered to ethical standards, and contributed to the final revisions and submission of the manuscript.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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