



Strategies for combating separatism implemented in post-communist countries: Lessons for Ukraine

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Abstract. This article examines the strategies employed by post-communist countries to combat separatism, with a focus on their applicability to Ukraine. The relevance of the study lies in the ongoing challenges Ukraine faces in combatting hybrid threats instigated by Russia during war as well as in the political stability of Ukraine after the war. The purpose of the research was to identify effective strategies that can be adapted to the Ukrainian context. A comparative analysis was conducted using case studies from several post-communist states, including Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic States. The results highlighted the importance of political decentralisation, economic development, and international cooperation in mitigating separatist tendencies, as well as the importance of developing effective means of fighting outside influences. In Georgia, decentralisation and power-sharing agreements have been partially successful in addressing the grievances of ethnic communities of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Adjarians, but were unable to reach Abkhazia and South Ossetia, occupied by Russia. Moldova's approach to Transnistria, which emphasises economic incentives and international mediation, has shown promise in reducing tensions, though Russian interference puts a roadblock on any possible reconciliation. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dayton Agreement, while successful in ending violent conflict, has institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation. The Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, provide valuable lessons in managing ethnic Russian minorities through meticulous citizenship policies and integration programs, which have helped prevent separatist movements. The findings suggested that a combination of political, economic, and international strategies is necessary to effectively combat separatism. The practical value of the research lies in its potential to guide Ukrainian policymakers in developing more effective strategies to counter separatism and promote national unity

Keywords: public policy; separatist movement; hybrid warfare; conflict management; territorial integrity; decentralisation

Introduction

Separatism remains a pressing global issue, particularly in regions with ethnically diverse populations and historical grievances. In the post-communist world, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia created a fertile ground for separatist movements, as newly independent states struggled to manage ethnic divisions and territorial disputes. Ukraine also faced challenges in maintaining its territorial integrity since 2014,

when Russia stirred up separatist movements in the Donbas region escalating into a full-blown conflict. The global relevance of this issue is underscored by the fact that separatist movements often destabilise not only the affected countries but also entire regions, as seen in the cases of Georgia, Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Recent scholarly works have highlighted the importance of political decentralisation, economic development,

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and international cooperation in addressing separatist challenges. For example, L. Kakhishvili (2020) emphasised the role of decentralisation in Georgia's efforts to manage separatist regions like Abkhazia and South Ossetia, critically analysing how administrative restructuring can potentially mitigate ethnic tensions by creating more inclusive governance mechanisms that provide meaningful representation to minority populations. M. Stănescu (2023) argued that economic incentives had been crucial in Moldova's approach to Transnistria, the research further demonstrated how targeted economic development strategies can create interdependencies that reduce the appeal of separatist movements by improving material conditions and fostering economic integration. Similarly, P. Pepi (2022) noted that the Dayton Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while successful in ending violence, has institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation. P. Pepi's analysis revealed the paradoxical nature of peace agreements that, while halting immediate conflict, can entrench structural divisions that may seed future separatist tensions by creating parallel ethnic political structures.

The Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, offer additional insights. M. Alander (2024) and S. Coolican (2021) proposed convincing arguments to the idea that radical measures against local Russian minorities prevented separatist movements in these countries. Their studies provided nuanced evidence of how proactive integration policies, coupled with strict legal frameworks, can effectively neutralise potential separatist movements by addressing minority concerns while maintaining clear national sovereignty. A. Khevturiani & G. Chkhikvishvili (2020) explored how political, socio-economic, and foreign policy factors contribute to separatist tendencies in Europe, emphasising the ideological motivations behind such movements. The authors developed a comprehensive framework that illustrates how historical narratives, economic disparities, and geopolitical contexts intersect to create fertile ground for separatist ideologies, highlighting the multidimensional nature of these conflicts. A. Zaka (2021) explored in detail the decentralisation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has a highly fragmented governance system. The country's slow path toward EU integration highlighted the challenges of balancing decentralisation with national cohesion.

Additionally, R. Vlasenko (2020) examined the role of the Russian Federation in fuelling separatist movements across Europe, providing insights into external influences on regional instability. His analysis meticulously documented the strategic use of hybrid warfare techniques, including information manipulation, economic pressure, and support for local separatist groups, as key instruments in destabilising neighbouring states, particularly focusing on the Baltic states. Further analysing the Baltic experience, Z. Śliwa (2023) highlighted Estonia's decisive actions against pro-Russian activists, including the systematic removal of Soviet monuments and planned restrictions on the Russian language, with the aim of

curtailing Russian propaganda's societal influence in the coming years. These studies collectively demonstrate the complexity of separatism, illustrating that both domestic policies and actions of international actors play a crucial role in shaping separatist conflicts.

Scholars from all over the world have contributed significantly to understanding and explaining separatist dynamics in Europe, yet critical limitations remain in the current scholarly landscape. The existing studies are predominantly focused on isolated case studies of post-communist states, which, while valuable, fail to provide a comprehensive, comparative framework for understanding anti-separatist strategies. A noticeable gap exists in the systematic examination of how various anti-separatist approaches have been implemented and their relative effectiveness across different post-communist states. Current literature insufficiently addresses the nuanced interactions between domestic policies, international interventions, and separatist dynamics. Particularly underexplored are the mechanisms by which international actors influence separatist movements beyond broad geopolitical considerations. Moreover, the existing studies lack a robust methodology for synthesising anti-separatist strategies that could provide actionable guidance for emerging democracies facing similar challenges. This research gap is especially critical for Ukraine, which requires a comprehensive understanding of potential approaches to managing territorial integrity and ethnic tensions.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the strategies employed by post-communist countries to combat separatism and to draw lessons for Ukraine. The research was guided by three main objectives: (1) to identify the most effective strategies for mitigating separatism in post-communist states, (2) to assess their applicability to the Ukrainian context, and (3) to explore the role of international actors in supporting or undermining these efforts. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative approach, which examines the experiences of multiple post-communist countries, including Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the success or failure of anti-separatist strategies.

■ Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to analyse the strategies implemented by post-communist countries to combat separatism, with a focus on drawing lessons for Ukraine. The research was based on a comparative case study approach, which allowed for an in-depth examination of the experiences of Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states. These countries were selected due to their relevance to the Ukrainian context, as all have faced significant separatist challenges in the post-communist era.

The primary method of data collection was document analysis, which included a review of academic articles, government reports, policy documents, international

organisation reports and news articles. The sources were selected through a systematic approach prioritising scholarly contributions that offer substantive insights into separatism strategies. The research focused on sources published between 2019 and 2024, ensuring contemporary analysis of post-communist conflict management. Preference was given to peer-reviewed academic articles, international organisation reports, and government policy documents that provided empirical evidence and comparative analysis of separatist challenges in Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states. Sources were evaluated based on their ability to showcase complex political, economic, and social strategies for addressing territorial integrity and ethnic tensions, with a particular emphasis on methodological consistency and critical examination of conflict resolution approaches. Key documents included academic articles from peer-reviewed journals, as well as reports from international organisations like the European Union, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and International Crisis Group. Policy documents and government reports from the selected countries, focusing on decentralisation, conflict resolution, and minority integration policies, were also analysed. This review helped identify key themes and patterns in separatism management.

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy, selecting countries that have experienced significant separatist movements and have implemented specific management strategies to address them. The selected cases – Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states – exemplify diverse approaches to managing separatism, including political decentralisation, power-sharing agreements, economic incentives, and international mediation. A comprehensive analysis of these strategies was conducted using a comparative case study method, supported by thematic analysis. The thematic analysis identified common patterns across the cases, focusing on key themes such as political strategies (e.g., decentralisation, power-sharing agreements, and federalism), economic measures (e.g., development programs, trade policies, and economic incentives), international involvement (e.g., the role of international organisations and external actors in conflict resolution), and ethnic and minority integration (e.g., policies promoting minority inclusion and reducing ethnic tensions). This methodological approach enabled an in-depth examination of the effectiveness of various separatism management strategies in post-communist states. Finally, the study assessed how these strategies could be adapted to Ukraine, with a specific focus on mitigating hybrid threats and ensuring long-term stability. This structured methodology ensured a comprehensive, evidence-based examination of separatism management strategies. While this study does not involve experimental research, it is grounded in a rigorous analysis of real-world policies and their outcomes. The findings are based on empirical evidence from the selected cases, ensuring the reliability and validity of the research.

■ Results

Theoretical and contextual framework: Understanding separatism in post-communist societies

Separatism has long been a persistent challenge for nations across the globe, both historically and in the modern era. As a manifestation of political, cultural, or ethnic divisions, separatism often destabilises states, undermines their sovereignty, and creates long-lasting conflicts. In the 21st century, this issue has grown even more complex due to the rise of hybrid warfare tactics, which combine conventional military actions with disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and the manipulation of ethnic or social tensions. These methods not only amplify the reach of separatist movements but also complicate the ability of states to respond effectively.

After the fall of communism in the 1990s many Eastern European countries faced internal crises fuelled by ethnic divisions and outside forces trying to destabilise newly formed nations. There are many examples of this with varying degrees of success of the separatist movements. In Moldova, Russian elements quickly took control of Transnistria and hold it to this day. In Georgia, separatist forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia proclaimed independence after direct military intervention from Russia. On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved peace by international mediation, while the Baltic states remained undivided and avoided armed conflict altogether by implementing effective political measures and siding with the West. All these countries were in similar positions back when Soviet Union and Yugoslavia fell, but implemented different approaches which led them into vastly different paths of history. In this article the focus was put on the approaches these countries took to combatting separatism and how it affected their internal stability.

Post-communist countries have employed a variety of strategies to combat separatism, each with varying degrees of success. These strategies can be broadly categorised into political, economic, and international approaches, with additional emphasis on ethnic and minority integration. The analysis of case studies from Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of these strategies and their potential applicability to Ukraine, particularly in the context of future stability and the mitigation of hybrid threats.

As defined by O. Memišević (2023), hybrid threats are coordinated activities that combine conventional and unconventional methods to advance actors' strategic interests without declaring war. These threats target various societal sectors using tools like disinformation, cyber-attacks, corruption, and espionage. Whether motivated by economic gain or political destabilisation, they aim to weaken institutions, disrupt social order, and undermine security structures in target states, organisations, and infrastructure.

Political strategies: Decentralisation and power-sharing

One of the most common political strategies employed by post-communist countries to address separatism is decentralisation. In Georgia, decentralisation has been a key



component of the government's approach to managing separatist sentiment throughout the country, not only in breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as the country has large communities of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Adjarians (Melua, 2021). By granting greater autonomy to these regions, the Georgian government aimed to address the grievances of ethnic minorities and reduce the appeal of separatism. However, the effectiveness of this strategy has been limited by economic disparities and the lack of trust between the central government and regional authorities. According to L. Kakhishvili (2020), while decentralisation has helped to reduce tensions in some areas, like Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, it has not fully resolved the underlying issues of ethnic division and political exclusion. Process of Georgia's Europeanisation brought significant benefits like visa liberalisation and positive changes in governance providing better public services for minorities, which made ethnic communities more integrated with the rest of the country. Additionally, young citizens gained a chance to experience new educational opportunities funded by the EU and the USA. However, there were some difficulties in making such benefits equally accessible to all citizens, especially minorities. These encompassed insufficient access to information, language obstacles, and scepticism toward the notion that minority groups can genuinely benefit from Europeanisation. According to surveys conducted in Georgia between 2015-2019 about support for EU/EAEU membership, ethnic minorities were not keen on their country joining the European block, even though ethnic Georgians were overwhelmingly supportive of it. This suggested that even though minorities had benefited from Georgia's European integration, it was still difficult to convince them to trust the central government (Torres-Adán, 2022).

L. Kakhishvili's (2021) research showed that Georgian political parties had focused heavily on Russia when dealing with separatist movements. Instead of working on internal decentralisation policies to ease territorial tensions, they mainly relied on foreign policy strategies aimed at Russia. This approach highlighted their preference for a centralised way of maintaining territorial integrity, as they saw diplomacy and geopolitical tactics as more effective and manageable compared to complicated internal reforms that could have threatened the country's political unity.

The reintegration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia can be much more difficult, as unlike other ethnic communities, Abkhazians and Ossetians are out of reach for any benefits programme proposed by Georgian central government. Georgia has maintained a consensus on pursuing peaceful means to restore its territorial integrity, ruling out military solutions despite the recent example of Azerbaijan's swift recapture of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the study by P. Lysianskyi & E. Mamontova (2022), three primary scenarios for reintegration were discussed, each with its own challenges and implications. The first scenario centred on Russia's defeat in the war against Ukraine, which could lead to the cessation of Kremlin subsidies for Abkhazia and

South Ossetia, thereby creating an opportunity for Georgia to regain control. The second, a military option akin to the Karabakh model, was deemed unrealistic due to Georgia's current pacifist culture and lack of military strength. It is important to understand that the public opinion on Russia in Georgia was not as outright hostile as some might have thought. As seen from survey data results analysed by A. Buzogány (2019), despite Georgia's reputation as a staunchly pro-Western nation, a significant portion of its population simultaneously supported closer ties with both the European Union and Russia. This suggested that geopolitical alliances are not straightforward but are influenced by complex identity and interest-based factors that go beyond simple explanations of international relations. The third and less-discussed scenario involved Georgia leveraging Russia's potential financial decline under sanctions and military strain, potentially leading to a negotiated reintegration with Russian support (Lysianskyi & Mamontova, 2022). However, this approach risks compromising Georgia's independence, resembling a "Belarusian scenario" that Georgian society is unlikely to accept (How Georgia wants..., 2023). Another proposed way for reintegration was showcasing economic development to convince breakaway regions to return, but as L. Kakhishvili (2020) pointed out, economic development alone is not sufficient to address the root causes of separatism, as long as political grievances remain unresolved. As was explained in the research done by A. Khevtsuriani & G. Chkhikvishvili (2020), there are as many as ten key dimensions that contribute to separatist movements, including ethnic-religious tensions, socio-economic disparities, political struggles, historical memory, geographic conditions, language differences, demographic shifts, and cultural contradictions. While each factor can independently influence separatist sentiments, their interaction creates a nuanced and dynamic landscape of territorial challenges. Therefore, choosing only one method of dealing with separatism covers only part of the problem and does not address all the root causes of it.

Decentralisation serves as a key mechanism for addressing separatist tendencies by granting greater autonomy to regions, thereby addressing local grievances, and fostering political stability. However, in cases where decentralisation alone is insufficient to mitigate ethnic or regional tensions, power-sharing agreements emerge as an alternative strategy. These agreements aim to ensure political representation and decision-making influence for diverse ethnic or regional groups, reducing the likelihood of conflict and secessionist movements. Bosnia and Herzegovina's power-sharing agreements, established under the Dayton Accords, have been instrumental in ending the violent conflict that erupted in the 1990s. The 1995 Dayton Accords created a complex system of governance that divides power among the country's three main ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Moreover, constitutional, criminal and police reforms were outlined to be later realised by Bosnian authorities while a 60,000 strong NATO-led contingent was stationed to safeguard

their implementation (European Parliament, 2005). While this system has succeeded in maintaining peace, it has also institutionalised ethnic divisions, making long-term reconciliation difficult. As pointed out by A. Zaka (2021) in post-communist Bosnia and Herzegovina decentralisation has been a key strategy in managing separatist tensions, though it has led to a highly fragmented governance system. The Dayton Agreement established a delicate balance between ethnic groups, creating a decentralised state structure with two autonomous entities – Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – alongside the autonomous Brčko District. However, decentralisation has often resulted in inefficiencies, political gridlock, and conflicting administrative structures, with Republika Srpska resisting the transfer of competencies to the central government. RS has almost complete autonomy from the central government in internal matters and has gradually started taking over responsibilities which were supposed to be delegated to the government in Sarajevo, like foreign affairs, police and even its own military force.

Separatism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply intertwined with hybrid threats, particularly those fuelled by external powers such as Russia, as outlined in O. Memišević's (2023) analysis of hybrid threats in the Western Balkans. These renewed threats had also spilled over to Bosnia and Herzegovina where the goal of Russia was to exploit ethnic divisions and support separatist tendencies, particularly through Milorad Dodik, the President of Republika Srpska. Russia's hybrid tactics, including disinformation campaigns, strategic corruption, and the use of proxies like Dodik, aimed to destabilise Bosnia and Herzegovina by fostering mistrust in the EU, weakening state institutions, and promoting anti-Western narratives. These efforts were part of a broader strategy to create a climate of instability and undermine the rule of law, thereby perpetuating divisions within Bosnia and Herzegovina's already fragile political structure. Even after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Putin has had multiple meetings with Milorad Dodik where they exchanged statements of mutual support and awarded each other with medals. Dodik has reaffirmed Moscow that he would use the political powers of the RS to not let Bosnia and Herzegovina join the sanctions against Russia and move closer to the West, after which Russia provided substantial financial support to RS (Fella, 2024). Also, according to R. Vlasenko (2020) Russia had supported nationalistic movements in Bosnia as well as in Montenegro to share anti-Western sentiments. Serbian Orthodox Church, which is still widely popular in former Yugoslav states, was also used to influence public views in these countries. This external interference, combined with internal ethnic divisions, poses a significant challenge to Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and its aspirations for EU integration, highlighting the need for robust counter-hybrid strategies to address both state and non-state actors perpetuating separatism. Despite progress in local governance reforms, the process remained hindered by ethnic divisions and weak state institutions. As pointed

out by P. Bargués & P. Morillas (2021), the EU has been extensively involved in trying to heal the fragmented country but has only brought frustration to the locals. The country's slow path toward EU integration has highlighted the challenges of balancing decentralisation with national cohesion. This experience demonstrated the need for clear administrative structures, mechanisms to prevent ethnic fragmentation, and strong central institutions to maintain territorial integrity while accommodating regional autonomy.

For Ukraine, these findings suggest that political decentralisation and power-sharing could be effective tools for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in regions with significant ethnic minorities. However, the experiences of Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina highlight the importance of ensuring that decentralisation is accompanied by measures to promote economic development and build trust between the central government and regional authorities. Without these additional measures, decentralisation risks exacerbating existing divisions rather than resolving them.

Economic strategies: Development and incentives. Moldovan experience

Economic strategies have proven to be a critical tool in addressing separatism, particularly in post-communist countries where economic disparities and underdevelopment often fuel grievances among marginalised populations. By implementing targeted economic policies, governments can reduce the appeal of separatism and create incentives for cooperation and integration. The case of Moldova provided an example of how economic strategies can be used to address separatist tendencies, as well as the challenges associated with their implementation.

In Moldova, the separatist region of Transnistria has maintained de facto independence since the early 1990s, supported politically and economically by Russia. Transnistria's separation from Moldova has been driven by a combination of historical, political, and economic factors, including the region's industrial base and its desire for greater autonomy. The Moldovan government has sought to reintegrate Transnistria through a combination of economic incentives and cooperation, rather than relying solely on political or military measures. This approach has focused on fostering economic interdependencies between Transnistria and the rest of Moldova, with the aim of reducing the region's isolation and creating a more favourable environment for dialogue. As highlighted by F. Parmentier (2024) in a recent policy brief, one of the key economic strategies employed by Moldova in recent years has been the promotion of cross-border trade and investment between Transnistria and the rest of the country. By facilitating trade and economic cooperation, the Moldovan government has sought to demonstrate the benefits of reintegration to Transnistrian authorities and local populations. For example, Moldova has implemented policies to simplify customs procedures and reduce trade barriers between the two regions, allowing goods and services to flow more freely.



According to M. Stănescu (2023), these efforts have been partially successful in reducing tensions and creating a more favourable environment for dialogue. By fostering economic ties, the Moldovan government has been able to engage with Transnistrian authorities and local populations, demonstrating the potential benefits of reintegration. Another important aspect of Moldova's economic strategy has been the provision of economic aid and development programs in Transnistria. The Moldovan government, often with the support of international organisations such as the European Union and the World Bank, has implemented projects aimed at improving infrastructure, healthcare, and education in the region. These initiatives were designed to address the economic disparities that fuel separatist sentiments and to improve living conditions for residents of Transnistria. For example, Moldova has invested in the construction of roads, schools, and hospitals in the region, as well as programs to promote employment and economic growth. These efforts have helped to reduce the economic isolation of Transnistria and create incentives for cooperation with the central government (Sharan, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of Moldova's economic strategies has been limited by several factors. These factors were explored by A. Torres-Adán (2022) who pointed out that one of the key challenges has been the lack of political will on both sides to resolve the conflict. While economic cooperation has helped to reduce tensions, it has not been sufficient to address the underlying political issues that fuel the conflict. Pro-EU and pro-Russia forces have been competing for influence in Moldova ever since the country gained independence. With no clear long-term path necessary for EU integration, it was always difficult for pro-EU forces to obtain substantial assistance from the EU, thus giving pro-Russia forces a chance at criticising the EU for inaction. At the same time, Russia provided Transnistria with financial aid, energy subsidies, and military backing, which undermined Moldova's efforts to reintegrate the region. Transnistria's reliance on Russian support, both economic and military, has created a significant barrier to reintegration (Kharyshyn, 2020). Additionally, the Moldovan government's efforts have been hampered by corruption and inefficiency, which have undermined public trust in the central. On top of that, the public in Moldova has never been united on the issue of country's foreign policy direction. According to a study by R. Berlinschi (2019), migrants who returned to Moldova from the West had more pro-Western views while those returning from Russia, were significantly more pro-Russian. This is important because it showed that Russia could use their Moldovan population to influence elections and public discussion to quite a large degree, considering that the population of Moldova is only about two and a half million people. This assessment has proved to be correct during the 2024 presidential election and EU membership referendum when, according to Moldova's president Maia Sandu, Russia has allegedly heavily funded anti-EU groups, especially in Gagauz autonomous region, and bribed about 130,000 Moldovan citizens to vote against the EU (Sauer, 2024).

Many residents of Transnistria viewed the Moldovan government's economic initiatives with suspicion, fuelled by Russian propaganda. Despite already relying on Moldova for most exports of everyday goods, the breakaway region's "government" met every new step of cooperation with Moldova with hostility, likely on the orders of the Kremlin. These situations showcased that Transnistria had not operate independently and its government did not represent the people of Transnistria properly. Most recent example of this direct Russian rule over the region was the refusal to receive gas from Ukraine and Moldova after the suspension of Russian gas transit through Ukraine. Even being on a brink of a humanitarian catastrophe, the local "government" waited for Russia to step in and find ways to provide support (Krychkovska, 2025).

Another challenge was the lack of trust between the central government and the local population in Transnistria. Decades of conflict and political tension have created deep-seated mistrust, which could not be resolved through economic measures alone. While economic incentives have helped to reduce tensions, they have not been sufficient to build the trust needed for a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. According to M. Stănescu (2023), economic strategies must have been accompanied by political measures to address the root causes of separatism, including the need for greater autonomy and representation for Transnistria within the Moldovan political system. The process of reintegration of Transnistria into Moldova had to include granting special rights to minorities, including ethnic Ukrainians who have lived across Dniester for centuries.

For Ukraine, the case of Moldova provided valuable lessons on the potential role of economic strategies in addressing separatist tendencies. By promoting economic development and creating incentives for cooperation, governments can reduce the appeal of separatism and create a more favourable environment for dialogue. However, as the Moldovan experience demonstrated, economic strategies must be accompanied by political measures to address the underlying causes of separatism and ensure long-term stability (Sharan, 2021). One such recent measure was the criminalisation of separatism in Moldova. Its implementation was aimed at incitement to violence and financing of separatist movements. Although these measures were described by the Moldovan government as essential for the survival of the state, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) criticised them and recommended to review whether they are adequate and appropriate (OSCE, 2023)

In conclusion, Moldova's use of economic strategies to address separatism in Transnistria highlighted both the potential and the limitations of this approach. While economic incentives have helped to reduce tensions and create a more favourable environment for dialogue, they have not been sufficient to resolve the underlying political issues that fuel the conflict. For countries facing similar challenges, the Moldovan experience underscored the importance of combining economic strategies with political measures to address the root causes of separatism and promote long-term stability.

International involvement: Mediation and support

International involvement has emerged as a pivotal factor in the management of separatist conflicts within post-communist states. Notably, in the case of Moldova, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe have been instrumental in mediating the conflict in the Transnistrian region. These organisations have spearheaded initiatives, such as the 5+2 talks, to promote dialogue between the Moldovan government and Transnistrian authorities, thereby mitigating tensions and establishing a framework for conflict resolution. The 5+2 negotiations encompassed five principal actors, convened under the auspices of the OSCE, including the OSCE itself, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Transnistria. The OSCE's mandate has also targeted the withdrawal of Russian troops, the enforcement of international human and minority rights obligations, and the monitoring of agreements to ensure a sustainable political settlement. Despite these efforts, the mechanism has experienced stagnation, with the last effective meeting recorded in October 2019. Nevertheless, international mediation remained critical in sustaining efforts toward peace, even in the face of an absence of a comprehensive resolution (Parmentier, 2024).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community has played a central role in establishing peace and stability since the end of the war in 1995. P. Pepi (2022) analysed the Dayton Accords, and concluded that they succeeded in establishing a framework for power-sharing and in ending the violence but criticised them for entrenching ethnic divisions and creating a complex political structure that has hindered effective governance. Also, the continued presence of international organisations such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR) highlighted the fragility of the peace and the ongoing need for external support. On top of that, the presence of international troops did more for undermining the central government's ability to maintain security in its own country than for safeguarding peace.

Economic support and development aid have been vital components of international involvement in Bosnia. The European Union, along with other international donors, has invested significantly in rebuilding the country's infrastructure and fostering economic integration to counteract separatist sentiments. By promoting development projects that encourage cooperation across ethnic lines, international actors aimed to create economic interdependence that would make secession less appealing. However, it is important to note that Russia and China had also invested a lot of resources and money into Bosnia and Herzegovina. As O. Memišević (2023) investigated, Russia was the largest investor into the Bosnian economy in 2023 with China being in the top 10. On top of that, persistent economic challenges and high unemployment rates continued to fuel nationalist rhetoric and hinder progress.

The path to EU membership has been a critical incentive for Bosnia to undertake reforms aimed at promoting unity and curbing separatism. The EU's conditionality framework required Bosnia to implement comprehensive

political and economic reforms, including strengthening the rule of law and enhancing government functionality. While the prospect of integration has encouraged some progress, the slow pace of reforms and internal political deadlock posed significant obstacles. P. Bargaúes & P. Morillas (2021) examined the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina since the late 1990s and concluded that local authorities have not been successful in establishing effective governance, despite several institutional reforms implemented between 2000 and 2016. Furthermore, the project of building a unified, multicultural society remains incomplete. At the same time, the EU has not been keen on taking charge and lead the process of fixing institutions.

International mediation has also focused on fostering dialogue between ethnic communities. Initiatives led by various non-governmental organisations and international bodies aim to build trust and reconciliation through education, cultural exchanges, and shared projects. These efforts seek to address the root causes of division by promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. Nevertheless, the legacy of the war, coupled with entrenched ethnic identities, makes reconciliation a challenging and ongoing endeavour (Sharan, 2021). Despite these efforts, Bosnia continues to grapple with separatist challenges, particularly from the leadership of Republika Srpska, which has periodically threatened secession. The international community remained vigilant, employing diplomatic pressure and, where necessary, sanctions to deter moves toward fragmentation. The continued presence of international actors has been essential to ensure that Bosnia does not revert to conflict and that progress towards a stable, multi-ethnic state can be sustained (Memišević, 2023).

In conclusion, while international involvement in Bosnia has been instrumental in preventing further separatist conflicts and promoting peace, the journey towards a fully integrated and cohesive state remains full of challenges. Ongoing support and engagement from the international community are crucial to address these challenges and support Bosnia's path towards lasting stability and integration into the European family. However, while international involvement has been essential in maintaining peace, it has also created a dependency on external actors, limiting the country's ability to achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

For Ukraine, these findings suggested that international involvement could be a valuable tool for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in the context of hybrid threats. By engaging with international organisations such as the EU and OSCE, Ukraine could benefit from external support in mediating conflicts and promoting stability. However, as the experiences of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated, international involvement must be carefully managed to avoid creating dependencies and undermining national sovereignty.

Ethnic and minority integration: Policies and challenges

Ethnic and minority integration has been a key focus of efforts to combat separatism in post-communist countries.



In the Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia, the integration of ethnic Russian minorities has been a central component of the government's strategy to promote national unity and reduce the risk of separatism. Through policies such as citizenship programs and language requirements, these countries have sought to encourage the integration of ethnic minorities into the broader society. According to E. Berg & K. Vits (2020), these policies have been largely successful in reducing tensions and promoting social cohesion, although challenges remain in addressing the political and economic marginalisation of minority populations.

In Estonia, after declaring independence from the Soviet Union, the government implemented a series of measures aimed at integrating its substantial Russian-speaking population, which constitutes about a quarter of the country's residents (Śliwa, 2023). One of the cornerstones of this strategy has been the promotion of the Estonian language as a means of fostering a shared national identity. Language proficiency requirements for citizenship and education policies mandating the use of Estonian in schools have been pivotal in encouraging linguistic integration. Teaching of Russian language in schools is planned on being phased out. This process started in 2024 and should be completed in 2029-2030 academic year. As Z. Śliwa (2023) highlighted, starting from 2022 Estonia started taking more serious actions in terms of preventing pro-Russian separatism from flaring up. The government rejected most of applications for citizenship from Russian and Belarusian "grey" passport holders. It became evident that Estonia found that the root cause of potential separatism would be the language and started working harder on diminishing the use of the Russian while heavily promoting the use of Estonian. However, these policies have also been criticised for placing pressure on Russian-speaking communities and not fully addressing their cultural and linguistic rights. According to A. Włodarska (2023) the restrictions implemented in 1990s and early 2000s created serious divisions in Estonian society which was noticed by the government and some more harsher policies were withdrawn, as the government adopted a 2021-2030 plan to integrate all residents into the Estonian society regardless of identity and language. It is important to note that the efforts to integrate the Russian-speaking minority made by Estonia were met with both open and covert counteractions from Russia including nuclear threats and dissemination of propaganda. Thus, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and because of direct threats to Estonia, earlier relaxations were reversed, and additional actions were introduced like a mass removal of Soviet monuments glorifying Soviet soldiers (Śliwa, 2023).

Latvia, facing similar demographic challenges, adopted comparable strategies. The Latvian government instituted a naturalisation process that includes language and history tests as prerequisites for citizenship. This approach aimed to ensure that all citizens could possess a basic understanding of the national culture and language, thus enhancing social cohesion. Despite these efforts, the pace of naturalisation has been slow, and many ethnic Russians

had remained non-citizens, which continued to be a point of contention both domestically and in relations with Russia. J. Ekman (2024) researched surveys conducted in Latvia in 2014 and 2021 and found that the public opinion in Latvia was more anti-Western than in neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania. Less of half of respondents had positive views on democracy while a third were missing the Soviet times. In addition to that, about a third of Latvia's population is ethnically Russian, which showed why measures to combat separatism in Latvia had been less drastic than in Estonia.

Both countries have also undertaken efforts to increase minority representation in political and public life. This included initiatives to involve minority groups in local governance and to promote their participation in civil society. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these measures was often undermined by persistent socio-economic disparities. According to S. Coolican (2021) ethnic minorities in the Baltic states frequently encounter difficulties in accessing quality education and employment opportunities, which can perpetuate feelings of disenfranchisement and exclusion. However, she also pointed out that the Russian communities often exclude themselves from many aspects of Latvian society. Ethnic Russians still mostly consume Russian television and media, keep contact with relatives in Russia and attend Russian Orthodox Churches (ROC). According to the same study, amongst the churchgoers, the views are vastly more pro-Russian and opposed to liberal European values, although this has not translated into a serious pro-Russian movement.

The Baltic states have also engaged with international organisations, such as the European Union and OSCE, to seek guidance and support in their integration efforts. These organisations have provided frameworks and resources to help balance national identity with minority rights, emphasising the importance of inclusive policies that respect cultural diversity while fostering unity. NATO also plays an important role in the security of the Baltic states. According to J. Ahmaldy (2022), since 2014-2015 Russia had intensified their hybrid attacks on the West, particularly against the EU and NATO. While NATO has increased its presence in the Baltic states to deter Russian aggression, it lacks a cohesive strategy to counter Russia's growing military capabilities. The alliance faces significant challenges in the Black Sea, where Russia has established a strong anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) zone, limiting NATO's operational freedom. Russia's coercion in the Baltic has served as leverage to dissuade NATO from challenging its territorial control in the Black Sea. Moscow maintains escalation dominance, making deterrence in Eastern Europe increasingly complex (Sinovets *et al.*, 2021). The historical legacy of Soviet occupation and the geopolitical tensions with Russia complicate integration policies. Many ethnic Russians in the Baltic states maintain cultural and familial ties to Russia, which can sometimes be at odds with the national narratives promoted by Baltic governments. Furthermore, external influences and propaganda can exacerbate divisions and fuel separatist sentiments.

According to M. Galeotti (2019), Russia did not seek to reclaim the Baltic states but rather has used them as leverage against NATO, the EU, and the United States. Viewing their independence and NATO membership as threats, Moscow employed a multi-vector strategy of political warfare, including disinformation, intelligence operations, and economic pressure, while avoiding outright military confrontation. A key takeaway for Ukraine is that Russia's approach prioritises political destabilisation over territorial expansion. The Baltic states have countered these threats through proactive defence policies, strengthened NATO cooperation, and societal resilience, particularly in integrating Russian-speaking populations. The Baltic experience showed that Ukraine should focus on strengthening its internal political stability, countering disinformation, and deepening Western partnerships to deter hybrid threats from Moscow.

In conclusion, while Estonia and Latvia have made significant strides in integrating their ethnic minority populations, ongoing challenges highlight the complexity of balancing national cohesion with cultural diversity. Continued efforts to address socio-economic inequalities and to create an inclusive society are essential. By fostering an environment where all citizens feel valued and included, the Baltic states strengthened their resilience against separatist pressures and reinforced their national unity. The case of the Baltic states also offered an insight into Russia's strategies for exerting influence over post-communist countries without direct military intervention. For Ukraine, these findings suggested that ethnic and minority integration could be an effective tool for addressing separatist tendencies, particularly in regions with significant minority populations. By promoting policies that encourage the integration of minorities into the broader society, Ukraine could reduce the risk of separatism and promote national unity. However, as the experiences of the Baltic states and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated, these policies must be carefully designed to avoid exacerbating existing divisions and creating new sources of tension.

Lessons for Ukraine: Addressing hybrid threats

Ukraine faces significant challenges in addressing hybrid threats, particularly those posed by Russia, which have manifested through disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, economic destabilisation, and the manipulation of ethnic and social divisions. Current hybrid threats to Ukraine stem from Russia's ongoing aggression, which targets the country's territorial integrity and administrative structure. Since 2014, the Kremlin has used a combination of military, political, and information warfare to destabilise Ukraine, with a particular focus on undermining the territorial organisation of power. One key hybrid tactic was the imposition of conditions in the Minsk Agreements (2014-2015) that sought to grant Donetsk and Luhansk special status, potentially fragmenting Ukraine's governance. The full-scale invasion of 2022 intensified these threats, leading to the suspension of decentralisation reforms and the establishment of military administrations across occupied

territories. Russia's occupation has disrupted local governance, forcing Ukraine to replace traditional regional administrations with military-civilian structures to maintain control and public services. Additionally, hybrid threats persist through disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and economic pressure aimed at eroding Ukrainian sovereignty. The war has also postponed crucial reforms in local governance, leaving unresolved issues in administrative-territorial restructuring. Meanwhile, occupied areas are subjected to Russian-imposed governance models, further challenging Ukraine's statehood. These hybrid threats, combining direct military action with institutional destabilisation, underscore Russia's broader goal of dismantling Ukraine as an independent state (Radchenko & Krutii, 2023)

Drawing from the experiences of post-communist countries, Ukraine can develop comprehensive strategies to mitigate these threats and strengthen its national stability. One key lesson is the importance of political decentralisation as a means of addressing separatist tendencies. In Georgia, decentralisation aimed to provide autonomy to regions, which are home to ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis (Kakhishvili, 2020). Bosnia and Herzegovina's power-sharing system, established under the Dayton Accords, similarly succeeded in ending violence but institutionalised ethnic divisions, complicating long-term reconciliation (Memišević, 2023). For Ukraine, decentralisation could be a useful tool in regions like Zakarpattia and Odesa, where ethnic minorities might be susceptible to external influence. However, as these examples illustrate, decentralization must be accompanied by efforts to build trust between local and central authorities and ensure that all citizens feel included in the political process.

Economic development and incentives also play a crucial role in countering separatist tendencies. Moldova's approach to Transnistria, which emphasised fostering economic interdependence, demonstrated the potential of economic strategies to reduce tensions (Stănescu, 2023). However, these efforts have been hindered by Russian interference and a lack of trust between the central government and the local population (Parmentier, 2024). Ukraine can draw valuable lessons from Moldova's experience by prioritising economic development in vulnerable regions like Donbas. Investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure can create opportunities and reduce grievances that separatist movements exploit. However, it is essential to address issues of corruption and inefficiency, which could undermine these initiatives (Sharan, 2021).

International involvement is another critical factor. The case of Bosnia highlighted the role of organisations such as the European Union and OSCE in conflict resolution. Bosnia has benefited from international oversight and investment, which have helped maintain peace but created a dependency that limits the country's self-sufficiency (Pepi, 2022). For Ukraine, engaging with international organisations can provide valuable support in mediating conflicts and countering Russian influence. However, Ukraine must ensure that such involvement does not undermine



its sovereignty. Building domestic capacity while leveraging international expertise offers a balanced approach. The integration of ethnic minorities is another crucial area where Ukraine can learn from the Baltic states. Estonia and Latvia implemented policies promoting national language proficiency and citizenship as tools for social cohesion. While these measures helped reduce separatist risks, they also faced criticism for marginalising Russian-speaking minorities (Coolican, 2021). Ukraine must strike a delicate balance by fostering national unity while respecting the cultural and linguistic rights of minorities. Promoting inclusivity through education and cultural programs can help integrate minority populations and build a stronger sense of shared national identity.

■ Discussion

The comparative analysis of anti-separatist strategies in post-communist states revealed a broad spectrum of approaches, each influenced by historical, geopolitical, and socio-economic conditions. While the findings of this study aligned with many scholarly perspectives, they also diverged in certain key areas, particularly regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation, economic incentives, and international mediation. Decentralisation had been widely acknowledged as a potential tool for mitigating separatist tendencies. Scholars such as L. Kakhishvili (2020) and D. Melua (2021) emphasised the role of administrative restructuring in Georgia to address ethnic grievances, similar to the decentralisation initiatives examined in this study. However, as highlighted by A. Torres-Adán (2022), the process of decentralisation had to be accompanied by measures fostering trust between the central government and minority populations. The present study corroborated these findings, demonstrating that while decentralisation could reduce separatist sentiments, it was not a panacea. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dayton Agreement institutionalised ethnic divisions, illustrating that power-sharing arrangements, while effective in preventing immediate conflict, might entrench long-term fragmentation (Pepi, 2022). This aligned with the arguments presented by L. Kakhishvili (2021), who suggested that external diplomatic strategies were often prioritised over domestic decentralisation in addressing territorial tensions. Thus, while decentralisation was an important mechanism, its success was contingent on broader socio-political conditions.

Economic development had also been explored as a means of countering separatism. M. Stănescu (2023) demonstrated the role of economic incentives in Moldova's strategy toward Transnistria, arguing that fostering economic interdependence could reduce separatist appeal. This study supported this assertion, highlighting Moldova's focus on trade facilitation and infrastructure development. However, as F. Parmentier (2024) and R. Berlinschi (2019) noted, external influences, particularly Russian economic and political support, significantly undermined Moldova's reintegration efforts. The findings of this research similarly indicated that economic measures

alone were insufficient if external actors maintained influence over separatist regions. In the case of Ukraine, this suggested that economic reintegration strategies had to be coupled with broader diplomatic and security initiatives. International mediation had played a crucial role in conflict resolution, as evidenced by Bosnia and Herzegovina's reliance on external players such as the EU and OSCE (Bargués & Morillas, 2021). This study aligned with previous research in identifying both the benefits and limitations of international involvement. While external mediation had provided stability in Bosnia, it had also fostered dependency, limiting the country's ability to develop autonomous governance structures (Fella, 2024). Similarly, the 5 + 2 negotiations concerning Transnistria had yielded limited progress due to Russian obstructionism (Parmentier, 2024). The present study further illustrated that while international mediation could stabilize conflicts, its long-term effectiveness depended on sustained local engagement and institutional development.

Another critical aspect explored in this study was the role of ethnic and minority integration. The Baltic states' strategies for integrating Russian-speaking minorities, analysed by M. Alander (2024) and S. Coolican (2021), highlighted the importance of national identity policies in countering separatism. This research supported their findings, emphasising the significance of language policies and civic engagement in fostering national unity. However, as A. Włodarska (2023) observed, such policies had to be carefully designed to prevent alienation. Estonia and Latvia's strict language laws had successfully reduced separatist risks but had also faced criticism for marginalising Russian-speaking populations. The present study suggested that Ukraine had to balance integration policies with inclusive governance to ensure minority communities felt represented rather than excluded. The growing impact of hybrid threats in exacerbating separatism had also been noted in previous studies. M. Memišević (2023) and R. Vlasenko (2020) emphasised Russia's role in fuelling separatist movements through disinformation, economic pressure, and strategic corruption. The findings of this study reinforced these conclusions, highlighting the role of Russian hybrid tactics in Transnistria, Bosnia, and Georgia. Ukraine's experience with hybrid threats, particularly in the context of its ongoing conflict with Russia, underscored the necessity of a comprehensive counter-hybrid strategy that integrated political, economic, and security measures.

■ Conclusions

The research highlighted that combating separatism in the context of hybrid threats requires a multidimensional approach, integrating political, economic, and international strategies while fostering societal resilience. By examining the experiences of post-communist countries – Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Baltic states – this study has provided a framework for addressing the challenges faced by Ukraine in maintaining territorial integrity and political stability.

One of the most significant findings was the critical role of decentralisation and power-sharing agreements in mitigating separatist tendencies. The experiences of Georgia and Bosnia demonstrated that while decentralisation can reduce regional grievances, its success depends on accompanying measures to build trust, improve governance, and address socio-economic disparities. For Ukraine, this means adopting a balanced approach to decentralisation, particularly in regions with diverse ethnic populations, ensuring that it does not exacerbate existing divisions but fosters inclusivity and cohesion. The economic dimension was found to be equally important, as evidenced by Moldova's attempts to reintegrate Transnistria through economic incentives and development programs. These efforts underline the potential of targeted economic strategies to reduce grievances and foster cooperation, though their success is contingent on addressing corruption and ensuring equitable resource distribution. For Ukraine, prioritising development in conflict-prone and economically disadvantaged regions like Donbas and the South is essential to counter separatist narratives and promote long-term stability.

The study also underscored the importance of international involvement. Moldova's engagement with the OSCE and Bosnia's reliance on the European Union illustrated the potential of external mediation and support in managing separatist conflicts. However, these examples cautioned against over-dependence on international actors, emphasising the need for Ukraine to strengthen its domestic capacity for conflict resolution while leveraging external expertise. Integration of minority populations emerged as another critical aspect. The Baltic states' policies demonstrated how fostering national identity while respecting cultural and linguistic diversity can reduce separatist risks. Ukraine must adopt similar approaches, promoting inclusivity through education, language policies, and cultural initiatives to strengthen national unity and counter external manipulation of ethnic divisions.

Finally, the study highlighted the rising importance of countering hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks. The Baltic states provided valuable lessons in

combating propaganda through media literacy and monitoring foreign influence. Ukraine must expand its efforts in this area, focusing on public awareness campaigns, strengthening independent journalism, and collaborating with international partners to counter disinformation effectively. The findings of this research emphasised that Ukraine must adopt a holistic strategy combining these political, economic, and social measures to address the root causes of separatism while proactively countering hybrid threats. Beyond their immediate applicability, these strategies highlighted broader lessons for countries facing similar challenges in the post-communist space.

These effective practices of combating separatism will be necessary for Ukraine's future stability, especially in the context of possible hybrid threats like those used by Russia, as well as potential challenges from other neighbouring countries like Hungary and Romania, which have significant ethnic minorities within Ukraine. By learning from the experiences of other post-communist countries, Ukraine can develop proactive strategies to address potential separatist tendencies and mitigate the risks posed by external actors seeking to exploit ethnic divisions.

Future research on this topic should delve deeper into the role of civil society in fostering reconciliation and building societal resilience. Additionally, studies exploring the long-term impacts of international involvement in conflict resolution and the effectiveness of anti-hybrid strategies in different geopolitical contexts would provide valuable insights. As hybrid threats continue to evolve, continuous analysis and adaptation of strategies will be necessary to safeguard Ukraine's territorial integrity and political stability.

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Стратегії боротьби з сепаратизмом, реалізовані в посткомуністичних країнах: уроки для України

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■ **Анотація.** У статті проаналізовано стратегії, які застосовували посткомуністичні країни для боротьби з сепаратизмом, з особливим акцентом на їхню придатність для українського контексту. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена поточними викликами, з якими стикається Україна у протидії гібридним загрозам, спровокованими Росією під час війни, а також потребою забезпечити політичну стабільність у післявоєнний період. Метою дослідження було виявити ефективні підходи, які можуть бути адаптовані до українських реалій. Методологічною основою слугував порівняльний аналіз кейсів посткомуністичних держав: Грузії, Молдови, Боснії і Герцеговини, а також країн Балтії. Результати дослідження підкреслили важливість політичної децентралізації, економічного розвитку та міжнародної співпраці для стримування сепаратистських тенденцій, а також необхідність протидії зовнішньому втручання. У Грузії децентралізація та угоди про розподіл владних повноважень частково сприяли вирішенню проблем національних меншин (вірмен, азербайджанців та аджарців), однак не охопили Абхазію та Південну Осетію, які перебувають під окупацією Росії. Підхід Молдови до Придністров'я, який базується на економічних стимулах і міжнародному посередництві, демонструє потенціал у зниженні напруженості, хоча вплив Росії суттєво ускладнює примирення. Дейтонська угода в Боснії і Герцеговині поклала край збройному конфлікту, проте водночас інституціоналізувала етнічні поділи, що ускладнює довготривалу інтеграцію. Країни Балтії, зокрема Естонія та Латвія, мають цінний досвід у врегулюванні питань із російськомовною меншиною через продумані політики громадянства та програми інтеграції, які сприяли запобіганню сепаратистським рухам. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що для ефективної протидії сепаратизму необхідна комплексна стратегія, яка охоплює політичні, економічні та міжнародні чинники. Практична цінність роботи полягає в її потенціалі стати основою для формування української державної політики у сфері збереження національної єдності та територіальної цілісності

■ **Ключові слова:** державна політика; сепаратистські рухи; гібридна війна; врегулювання конфліктів; територіальна цілісність; децентралізація