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Refining the Concepts of Mobilisation and Mobilisation Systems Based on russian-Ukrainian War Lessons Learned

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Abstract. The relevance of this article stems from the necessity to conduct a thorough analysis of the terms “mobilisation system,” “system of mobilisation,” and “mobilisation” itself. It is essential to define the role and place of mobilisation within the national security and defence architecture of Ukraine, and to clarify the conceptual distinctions between these terms. The usage of “mobilisation system” or “system of mobilisation” as equivalents or even substitutes for the term “mobilisation” in mass media and, at times, academic literature is not entirely correct. In most instances, such substitution leads to conceptual confusion and a lack of understanding regarding the actual subject matter. The purpose of this article is to clarify the content of the aforementioned terms, to establish their interrelation and hierarchical structure, and to substantiate the notion of mobilisation as an integrated system. The research is grounded in a systems-based approach, normative legal analysis, and selected elements of state governance theory. The article presents a systemic analysis of one of the core categories within the theory of mobilisation planning and mobilisation itself, namely the concept of “mobilisation.” This approach has enabled a clearer definition of the related terms “mobilisation system” and “system of mobilisation,” along with their interdependence and relation to the general notion of mobilisation. It is argued that mobilisation within a state context can be conceptualised as a system, as it possesses all the key attributes of a systemic structure. At the national level, mobilisation is understood as a dual-faceted process. The mobilisation system provides the legal, organisational, economic, and administrative foundation for mobilisation. Meanwhile, the set of mobilisation measures serves as the practical mechanism through which mobilisation is implemented via specific processes and actions. The study demonstrates that while the terms “mobilisation system” and “system of mobilisation” are closely related and interlinked, they are not entirely identical in meaning. It is further clarified that mobilisation represents a critical mechanism for ensuring national security and serves as a core component of Ukraine’s defence organisation. The practical value of the study lies in its potential to contribute to the enhancement of legislative frameworks, the development of mobilisation response strategies, and the optimisation of military command and control structures. The article offers specific recommendations for refining the understanding of the core concepts under examination.

Keywords: mobilisation, mobilisation system, system of mobilisation, terminology, systems-based approach, mobilisation measures.

Introduction

National security of the state implies the ability to counter military, economic, political, cyber and informational threats. In this context, mobilisation functions as a critical mechanism enabling the state to respond in a timely manner to emerging challenges and to ensure stability during crises.

Under the conditions of the russian–Ukrainian war, with escalating intensity of hostilities, the urgent need to replenish irrecoverable and medical losses, and the requirement to establish new military units, the mobilisation process acquires exceptional strategic importance. In effect, successful mobilisation constitutes the foundation for Ukraine’s survival. Consequently, mobilisation has become a priority area within the domain of national defence organisation.

In recent times, both the mass media and certain academic publications have increasingly used the terms “mobilisation system” and “system of mobilisation” alongside or even in place of the concept of “mobilisation,” which is not entirely appropriate. In most cases, the substitution of these terms leads to conceptual ambiguity and hinders a proper understanding of the subject under discussion.

Reference [1] provides a definition of mobilisation. However, no official normative legal act defines the terms “mobilisation system” or “system of mobilisation” or outlines their relation to the broader concept of “mobilisation.” This results in differing interpretations and, in some cases, a lack of clarity regarding the meaning and significance of these terms.

Therefore, clarification of the terms “mobilisation system” and “system of mobilisation” and their correlation with the concept of “mobilisation” is a relevant scientific objective.

Methodological Framework

An analysis of publications, prior research, reference materials and informational resources indicates that considerable attention has been given to the subject of mobilisation planning and mobilisation itself. However, in their studies and publications, most authors primarily focus on specific areas such as national economic mobilisation planning as examined by P. B. Volotyvskyi [2], the authority of state bodies in the field of mobilisation planning and mobilisation also discussed by P. B. Volotyvskyi [3], the management of mobilisation addressed by O. Ostapenko [4], the mobilisation deployment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine explored by V. L. Cherep [6], the enhancement of mobilisation planning again by P. B. Volotyvskyi [5], and the legal aspects of mobilisation covered by O. M. Romanova [7]. The fundamental essence and content of the terms "mobilisation system" and "system of mobilisation" and their correlation with the concept of "mobilisation" remain largely unexplored. Only in the work of V. P. Didichenko and V. L. Cherep [8] have certain elements of the mobilisation terminology been addressed, specifically the categories "mobilisation planning" and "mobilisation." It was established that these categories are central to understanding such concepts as "mobilisation deployment," "mobilisation readiness," and "mobilisation planning of the Armed Forces." Furthermore, the interrelation between the terms "mobilisation planning," "mobilisation readiness," and "mobilisation" was identified and their respective content elaborated. Nevertheless, even this publication does not address the conceptual essence or the substantive content of the terms "mobilisation system" and "system of mobilisation," nor does it clarify their relation to the broader concept of mobilisation.

Results and Discussions

When analysing or discussing a particular issue, it is essential to rely on precise and mutually consistent terminology that serves to describe the nature and content of the subject under consideration.

A general understanding of the research subject, as well as the disclosure of its nature and content, is carried out through concepts. A concept is understood as an idea that reflects the general and essential characteristics of an object, or a logically formulated general notion of the object [9].

Зміст поняття відображається у термінах.

The content of a concept is expressed through terms.

The collection of terms and their organisation into a coherent system constitutes terminology.

It is precisely the use of terms, systematised within a specific framework, that defines the scope of a concept, that is, the knowledge concerning a set of objects whose essential characteristics are reflected in the concept.

Clarification of terminology is understood here as the process of detailing the systematised concepts (conceptual apparatus) within the theory of mobilisation planning and mobilisation, along with the articulation of their content expressed through terms.

This clarification provides the opportunity to generalise and, in other words, to offer formal definitions for the concepts employed by the theory of mobilisation planning and mobilisation. Defining terms, systematising them, and revealing their essence and content is not possible without analysing the nature and content of the object of study within the theory of mobilisation planning and mobilisation.

One of the core categories of the theory is the concept of "mobilisation." This category is fundamental in relation to such terms as "mobilisation deployment," "mobilisation readiness," and "mobilisation planning of the Armed Forces."

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Mobilisation Planning and Mobilisation," mobilisation is defined as a process comprising a set of measures carried out in order to systematically transition the national economy, the activities of public authorities, other state institutions, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions, and organisations to operate under conditions of a special period, and to transition the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, and civil protection

forces to wartime organisation and staffing [1].

This definition highlights that mobilisation encompasses not only the military domain but also all spheres of public life, including the economy, governance, and civil protection. Mobilisation is therefore a systemic process that integrates various elements of the state in pursuit of a common objective – the safeguarding of national security. It can thus be viewed from two interrelated perspectives (Fig. 1):

1. Mobilisation as a system is a cohesive and organised structure encompassing all thenecessary mechanisms for the implementation of mobilisation processes.

2. Mobilisation as a set of measures refers to specific actions carried out within the mobilisation system to achieve its objectives.

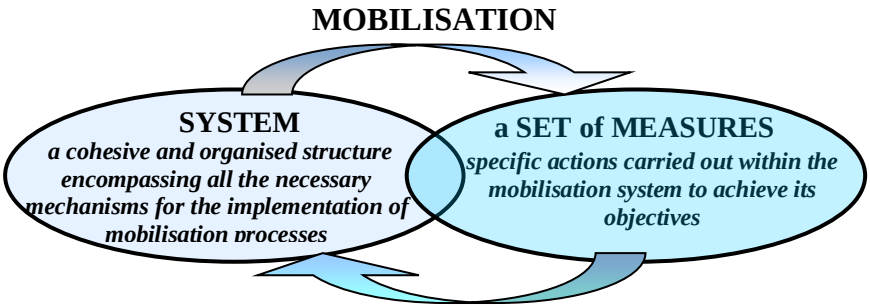


Figure 1. The interrelation between the two aspects of mobilisation mobilisation

These two levels are interrelated according to the principle of "system ↔ process", where the system defines the overall framework and mechanisms, and the set of measures translates them into practical implementation.

The system-forming factors that ensure the formation, functioning and resilience of the mobilisation system, determine its structure, interrelations and effectiveness include (Fig. 2):

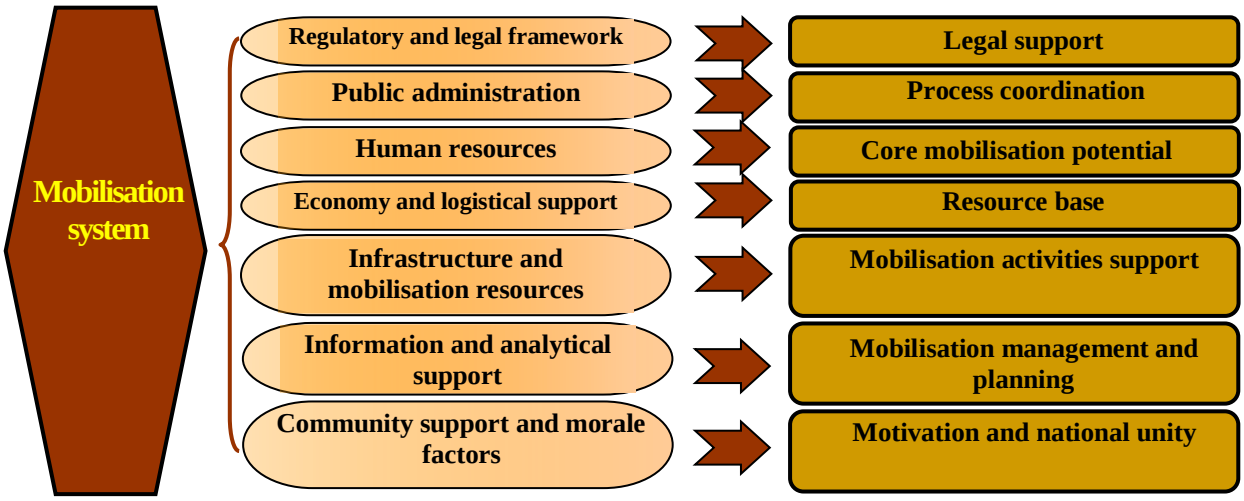


Figure 2. Key factors shaping the mobilisation system

Regulatory and legal framework – legislative support (provides legitimacy and regulates the procedure for mobilisation measures). It includes legislative and normative acts that establish the legal foundations of mobilisation:

The Constitution of Ukraine (defines mobilisation as an instrument for ensuring the defence of the state);

The Law of Ukraine "On Mobilisation Preparation and Mobilisation" (regulates mobilisation mechanisms);

Other laws and subordinate acts (concerning defence, military service, economic mobilisation);

International agreements (cooperation with partners in the field of defence and security);

Public administration – coordination of processes (ensures coordination, management, and control of mobilisation processes at all levels). Includes structures that organise and coordinate the mobilisation process:

President of Ukraine (issues mobilisation decrees);

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (adopts laws and budgets for mobilisation);

Cabinet of Ministers (manages the implementation of mobilisation measures);

Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (operational management of mobilisation);

Local government bodies (implement mobilisation measures at the local level);

Human resources – core mobilisation potential (without human resources, the mobilisation system loses its meaning). The country's population is the primary source of mobilisation potential:

Reservists and conscripts (the main personnel resource of the armed forces);

Civilian population (can be involved in production, defence, logistics);

Professional military personnel (career officers, instructors, command staff);

Medical reserve (doctors, medical staff, psychologists) ;

Economy and logistical support – resource base (ensures the fulfilment of the mobilisation needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the rear). The reorientation of the economy toward military needs is key to effective mobilisation:

Funding for the army and defence sector (state budget, international assistance);

Industry and the defence-industrial complex (DIC) (production of weapons, equipment, ammunition);

Logistics and transport (mobilisation of transport assets, organisation of military supply routes);

Energy and food security (stable supply of electricity, fuel, and food);

Infrastructure and mobilisation resources – support for mobilisation activities (enables rapid build-up of military capability in a crisis). It includes all facilities necessary to sustain the mobilisation process:

Territorial recruitment and social support centres (organise selection, conscription and deployment);

Storage bases for weapons and materiel (reserves for operational deployment and for forming new military units, replenishment of materiel losses during hostilities);

Training centres (initial training and retraining of mobilised personnel);

Civilian infrastructure (airports, railways, hospitals, warehouses).

Information and analytical support – mobilisation management and planning (ensures effective control of mobilisation processes). Includes systems for registration, planning, and analysis of mobilisation potential:

State registers of conscripts (digitalisation of military service records);

Strategic analysis systems (assessment of military threats and mobilisation planning);

Information campaigns (public communication of mobilisation procedures and objectives);

Community support and morale factors – motivation and national unity (enhances the effectiveness of mobilisation measures and the morale of personnel). The population's readiness for mobilisation significantly influences its success:

Public support for state mobilisation policy;

The role of volunteer organisations and civic movements;

The moral and psychological condition of mobilised servicemen;

Counter-propaganda and the fight against disinformation.

Therefore, mobilisation within the state can be regarded as a system, as it possesses all the fundamental characteristics of the systems approach (see Fig. 3). Specifically:

1. Existence of Elements

Mobilisation comprises various components that collectively ensure its functionality:

State bodies (parliament, government, Ministry of Defence, General Staff);

Local authorities (Territorial Centre of Recruitment and Social Support, local self-government bodies);

Legal framework (mobilisation laws, presidential decrees, governmental resolutions);

Human resources (conscripts, reservists, other eligible citizens);

Logistics and support (weapons, transport, financial provision).

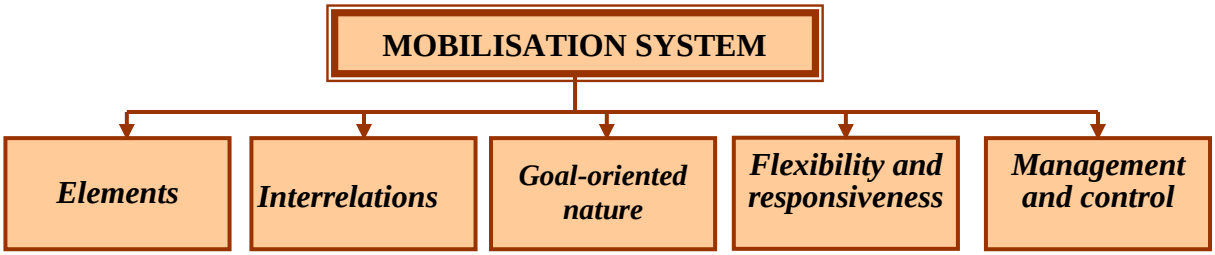


Figure 3. Key characteristics of the systems approach

2. Interrelations between elements

All these components interact functionally within the mobilisation system:

The state enacts legislation → military bodies implement mobilisation procedures;

Territorial recruitment centres receive data from state registers and local authorities;

Mobilisation funding depends on the state budget and international assistance;

Logistics and personnel training are ensured through pre-established planning mechanisms.

3. Goal-oriented nature of the system

The primary objective of mobilisation is the rapid reinforcement of the armed forces in the event of a military threat, making it a strategic component of national defence.

4. Flexibility and responsiveness

The mobilisation system is capable of adjusting in response to:

The scale of the threat (partial or full mobilisation),

The state's resource capacity,

Technological advancement (automation of military registration, digitalisation of conscription records).

5. Management and control

The mobilisation system operates through a hierarchical management structure that ensures oversight and coordination of processes.

Given that mobilisation possesses structure, defined elements, interrelations, clear objectives, adaptability, and control mechanisms, it can be characterised as a system. It functions according to established principles and legal frameworks, enabling the state to effectively build military capability when required.

Accordingly, the mobilisation system can be defined as follows: **The mobilisation system is a complex of organisational, legal, economic, and technical measures aimed at preparing for and conducting the mobilisation of the state's human and material resources in the event of emergencies, including the threat of war or armed conflict.**

Since mobilisation, as defined by the Law of Ukraine [1], constitutes a set of measures aimed at transitioning all key national systems to operate under special period conditions, it can be asserted that the economy, government institutions, and local authorities are integral components of the

mobilisation system. These elements interact with one another and ensure its effective functioning at the national level (see Fig. 4).

1. Mobilisation as a system consists of various subsystems and elements, each with distinct functions:

Military component – recruitment, personnel training, and deployment of military formations.

State governance – coordination of government bodies, enactment of legal frameworks, and crisis management.

Economy – redirection of industrial output towards military needs, resource allocation, and defence sector financing.

Logistics and infrastructure – provision of transportation, energy, medical services, and communications required for mobilisation.

Civilian sector – maintaining continuity of civilian life, civil protection, and supporting voluntary initiatives.

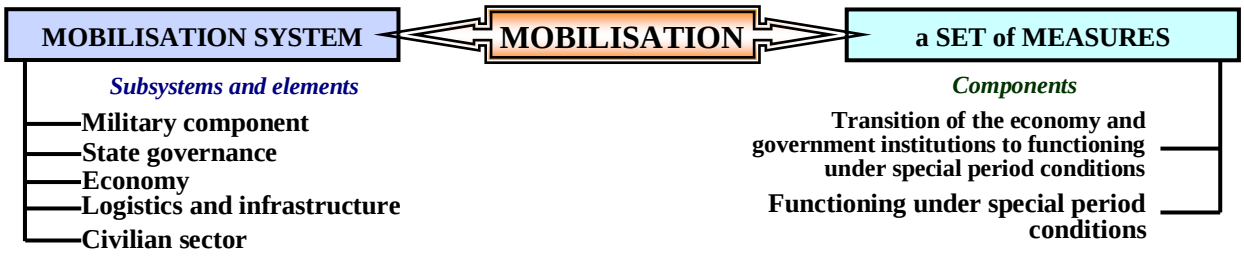


Figure 4. Subsystems, Elements and Components of Mobilisation

2. The Transition of the Economy, Government Authorities, and Local Self-Government to Functioning under Special Period Conditions Forms an Integral Part of the Mobilisation System, as:

The economy must supply the military formations with essential material resources;

Government authorities coordinate mobilisation processes and ensure their effective implementation;

Local self-government plays a critical role in resource mobilisation, public support, and executing mobilisation tasks at the community level.

3. Functioning under Special Period Conditions Involves:

Introduction of special operational regimes for enterprises (military procurement, mobilisation tasks);

Implementation of extraordinary measures in state governance (restrictions of rights, special administrative regimes);

Coordination of civilian sector efforts with military requirements.

Based on the definition of “mobilisation” provided in [1], it can be argued that the mobilisation system creates the conditions necessary for the implementation of mobilisation measures. In other words, mobilisation should be viewed simultaneously as a system and as a process. At the strategic level, the mobilisation system establishes the legal, organisational, economic and managerial foundations for mobilisation. At the operational level, the set of mobilisation measures translates these foundations into concrete processes and actions. Thus, the set of measures represents the practical implementation of the mobilisation system within the context of a specific situation — whether peacetime, escalation, special period, or full-scale war. Only the synergy between the system and the measures ensures the effective execution of mobilisation at the national level.

The Interrelationship Between the Mobilisation System and Mobilisation Measures Is Reflected as Follows (see Fig. 5):

a) The mobilisation system → establishes the conditions and organises mobilisation measures, defines the framework, and sets out organisational mechanisms, planning, and command and control.

b) Mobilisation measures → serve as the operational mechanism for implementing decisions adopted within the mobilisation system.

c) Without a system, mobilisation measures would be disorganised and ineffective.

d) Without mobilisation measures, the system remains inert — it must be activated through practical implementation.

The terms “mobilisation system” and “system of mobilisation” are closely related in meaning but not entirely synonymous.

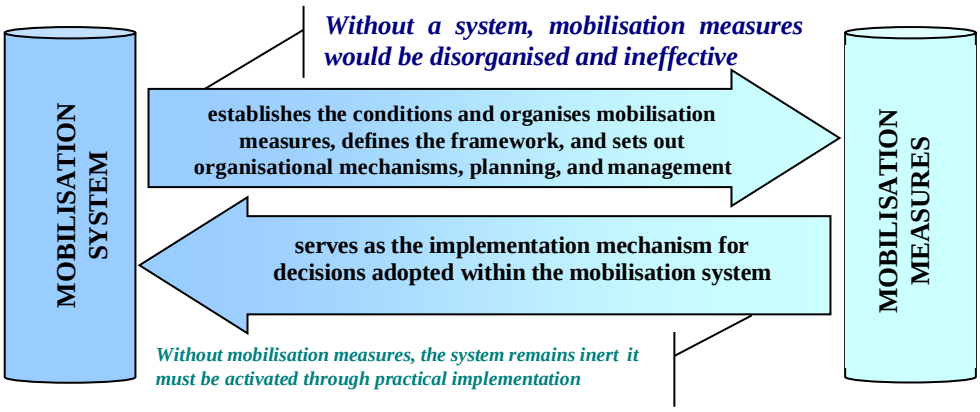


Figure 5. Interrelationship Between the Mobilisation System and Mobilisation Measures

The mobilisation system is a broader concept that encompasses the entire set of measures undertaken by the state to mobilise human, material, economic and military resources. It incorporates legal and organisational frameworks as well as mechanisms for managing mobilisation processes.

The mobilisation subsystem refers to a component or a subsystem within the overarching mobilisation system. It specifically relates to the organisation and execution of mobilisation measures. This term is more commonly applied when referring to specific mobilisation mechanisms in distinct domains such as military, economic or administrative spheres. For instance, the military recruitment mobilisation subsystem includes mechanisms for maintaining records of reservists and conscripts, notification procedures and the process of enlisting citizens for military service.

Thus, while the two concepts are interrelated, they are not fully synonymous.

Mobilisation is a complex, cross-sectoral process that spans all areas of state activity. It is a vital mechanism for safeguarding national security and serves as a key component in the organisation of Ukraine’s defence. Mobilisation enables the state to counter both external and internal threats, rapidly respond to military challenges, deploy armed forces and efficiently manage resources under crisis conditions.

Thanks to a systematic approach to mobilisation measures, Ukraine has been able to significantly strengthen its defence posture during the full-scale war, rapidly expand its military potential and establish a resilient response to the russian aggressor.

The core aspects of mobilisation within the national security and defence system of Ukraine include the following (see Fig. 6).

Military mobilisation involves the deployment of the armed forces, the preparation of reservists and the provision of essential resources to the army.

Economic mobilisation refers to the conversion of industry to the production of defence-related goods and the control of strategic resources.

Social mobilisation entails the organisation of the population in support of the armed forces, volunteer initiatives and the informational preparation of citizens.

Political mobilisation means strengthening state governance and preparing legislative initiatives to ensure defence capability.

Cyber mobilisation includes the protection of critical infrastructure, countering cyber attacks, conducting intelligence operations and ensuring information security.

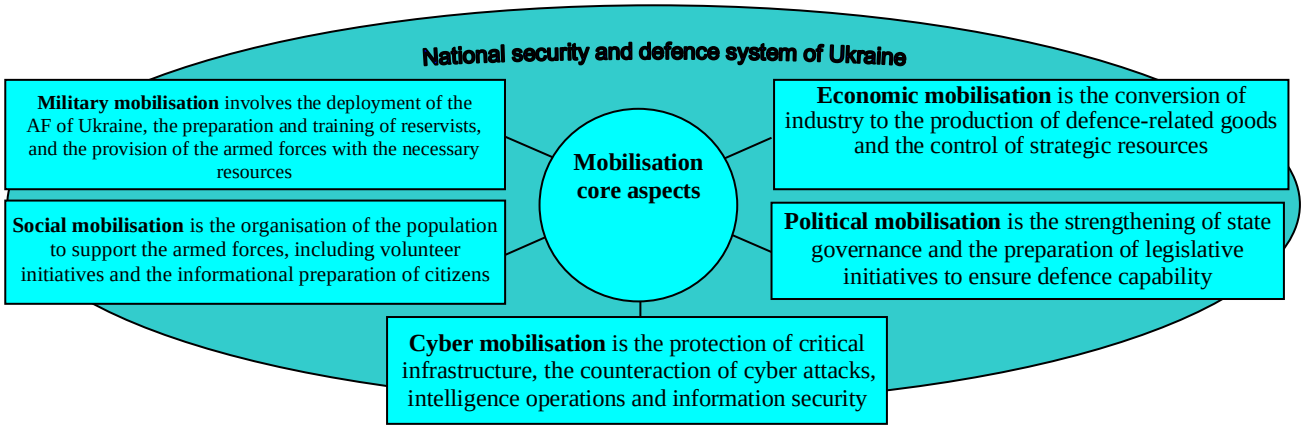


Figure 6. Key aspects of mobilisation within the national security and defence system of Ukraine

Military mobilisation is a key element of Ukraine's national security and defence, serving as the central mechanism for ensuring the country's defence. It includes:

the deployment of reservists and the formation of new units;

the training of personnel and their integration into combat formations;

the reinforcement of the army's logistical and technical support;

coordination between military and civilian structures to ensure the effective employment of human and material resources.

Successful mobilisation enables rapid response to threats, enhances the country's defence capability and creates strategic advantage over the adversary.

Economic mobilisation is the foundation of national resilience

The economic sector plays a decisive role in mobilisation. In times of crisis, it ensures:

increased production of military equipment, ammunition and food supplies;

control over the supply of critical goods and energy resources;

the introduction of a special operational regime for strategic enterprises;

enhanced state regulation of the economy and financial flows.

Without effective economic mobilisation, the military component cannot be fully implemented.

Information and cyber mobilisation

In contemporary warfare, information is as vital as physical resources. Under conditions of hybrid war, it is necessary to:

protect the national information space from fake news and propaganda;

maintain public morale through both state and independent media;

strengthen cyber protection of strategic assets such as energy, communications and transport infrastructure;

conduct information and psychological operations against the adversary.

A strong information policy is one of the key components of mobilisation and national security.

The social aspect of mobilisation

A country's defence posture depends on the support of its population. Social mobilisation includes:

organising volunteer movements and providing civilian support to the military;

preparing citizens psychologically for potential threats;

eveloping support programmes for servicemen and their families.

Mobilising society ensures the state's stability even in times of crisis.

Mobilisation is not merely a response mechanism but a fundamental component of Ukraine's national security and defence. It defines the state's ability to survive and prevail under modern threats.

Conclusion

The article examines the key concepts of mobilisation theory and mobilisation preparedness, such as "mobilisation system", "mobilisation", and "mobilisational system". Proposals are provided to refine the definitions of these terms.

The essence and internal structure of one of the core categories of mobilisation theory – "mobilisation" – is analysed. This made it possible to define the concepts of "mobilisation system" and "mobilisational system", their interrelation, and their connection to the broader concept of mobilisation.

It is noted that mobilisation within the state can be viewed as a system, as it possesses all the fundamental characteristics of a systems-based approach. A definition of the term "mobilisation system" is provided.

It is established that, at the state level, mobilisation is a dual process: the mobilisation system creates the legal, organisational, economic and administrative foundation for mobilisation while the set of practical measures implements mobilisation through concrete actions and procedures.

It is proven that the concepts of "mobilisation system" and "mobilisational system" are closely related and interconnected, though not entirely synonymous.

It is clarified that mobilisation is a critical mechanism for ensuring national security and a key component in the organisation of Ukraine's defence.

Recommendations

The materials presented in this article may be used in the planning of mobilisation measures. The article may also be of value to scholars working in the field of mobilisation theory and preparedness, as well as to professionals involved in the organisation and implementation of mobilisation activities.

Future research should focus on the definition and elaboration of other concepts and categories within the theory of mobilisation preparedness and mobilisation, taking into account the realities of the present day.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Уточнення понять “система мобілізації”, “мобілізаційна система”, “мобілізація” з урахуванням досвіду російсько-української війни

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Анотація. Актуальність статті зумовлена необхідністю проведення ретельного аналізу понять “система мобілізації”, “мобілізаційна система”, “мобілізація”, визначення місця та ролі мобілізації у системі забезпечення національної безпеки і оборони України та уточнення змісту розглянутих понять. Вживання у засобах масової інформації і навіть у наукових публікаціях поряд, а у деяких випадках і замість, з поняттям “мобілізація” термінів “система мобілізації” або “мобілізаційна система” є не зовсім коректним. Ба більше, у більшості випадків підмінювання одних понять іншими не надає розуміння предмету, про який йде мова. Мета статті полягає в уточненні змісту зазначених понять, встановленні їх взаємозв’язку та ієрархічної структури, а також обґрунтуванні мобілізації як цілісної системи. Методологічною основою дослідження стали системний підхід, нормативно-правовий аналіз та елементи теорії державного управління. У статті на основі системного аналізу розглянуто сутність та внутрішній зміст однієї з основних категорій теорії мобілізаційної підготовки та мобілізації – “мобілізація”, що дозволило визначитися з поняттями “система мобілізації” та “мобілізаційна система”, їх співвідносності між собою та з поняттям “мобілізація”. Зазначено, що мобілізацію в державі можна вважати системою, оскільки вона має всі основні характеристики системного підходу. Визначено, що у масштабі держави мобілізація – це двоєдиний процес: система мобілізації – створює правову, організаційну, економічну та управлінську основу мобілізації, а комплекс заходів – реалізує мобілізацію через конкретні процеси та дії. Доведено, що поняття “система мобілізації” та “мобілізаційна система” є близькими за змістом, взаємопов’язані, але не є абсолютно тотожними. Уточнено, що мобілізація є важливим механізмом забезпечення національної безпеки, ключовим компонентом організації оборони України. Практична значимість полягає у можливості використання результатів дослідження для вдосконалення законодавчої бази, розробки стратегій мобілізаційного реагування та оптимізації роботи органів військового управління. Надані пропозиції щодо уточнення змісту розглянутих понять.

Ключові слова: мобілізація, система мобілізації, мобілізаційна система, терміни, системний підхід, мобілізаційні заходи.