

SECTION «STATE ADMINISTRATION»

PUBLIC MECHANISM FOR COUNTERING DISINFORMATION IN UKRAINE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND POLYCENTRIC COORDINATION

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Abstract. The paper examines the public mechanism for countering and preventing disinformation in Ukraine as an independent analytical category within the public administration system and as a polycentric coordination system operating in an environment of networked information threats. It traces the evolution of the concept of «mechanism» from technical interpretations to socio-managerial approaches in which structure, processuality, institutional embeddedness, communicative nature, feedback, and learning become pivotal. *Purpose.* To conceptually substantiate the analytical autonomy of the category «public mechanism» in public administration, to distinguish it from related concepts (the mechanism of state administration, the administrative-legal mechanism, and the policy implementation mechanism), and to reveal the practical functioning of the public mechanism in the field of countering disinformation as a polycentric coordination system. *Methodology.* The study applies a systems approach (organization of interactions and feedback), institutional and normative–cognitive analysis (rules, incentives, expectations, legitimation), a network and polycentric governance perspective (multiple decision-making centers and horizontal coordination), as well as elements of micro-level explanations and behavioral approaches (cognitive frames, audience responses, trust). The theoretical synthesis is complemented by organizational coordination

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concepts, collaborative governance approaches, and organizational learning, including «double-loop learning», as a foundation for the mechanism's adaptability. *Results.* The paper demonstrates the validity of conceptualizing the public mechanism as a multi-actor, polycentric system of institutionally ordered interactions, instruments, and resources (regulatory, organizational-procedural, communicative, digital, and socio-behavioral). It identifies key distinctions between the public mechanism and state-centric and purely legal-procedural constructs, and delineates its core components: a plurality of actors; rules of interaction, responsibility, and accountability; procedures for detecting and interpreting threats; coordinated communication protocols; and feedback channels for decision correction and learning. *Practical implications.* The paper proposes parameters for operationalizing the mechanism's coordination capacity: the speed and quality of inter-organizational data exchange, consistency of public signals, the availability of response protocols, the sustainability of partnerships, institutional clarity of roles, trust maintenance, and the adaptability of managerial practices. *Value/originality.* The study substantiates the autonomous methodological status of the category «public mechanism» and its suitability for analyzing counter-disinformation as a domain of public administration in a digital, polycentric environment.

1. Introduction

Contemporary public governance operates within a networked information environment in which digital platforms, distributed audiences, and transnational channels of content dissemination play an increasingly significant role. Under such conditions, disinformation emerges not as an isolated communicative incident but as a structural public challenge to democratic governance, affecting public trust, the legitimacy of decisions, and the capacity of the state and society for collective action and effective communication. The relevance of this study is обусловлена by the fact that traditional state-centric and purely administrative-legal approaches prove insufficient for explaining and organizing counter-disinformation efforts, since key nodes of informational influence (algorithmic visibility, content moderation, monetization, and the networked amplification of narratives) often lie beyond the direct hierarchy of the state.

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Against this background, the scientific novelty of the work lies in the conceptual identification of the public mechanism as an autonomous analytical category within the system of public governance and in revealing its functioning as a polycentric coordination system in the field of countering and preventing disinformation. The proposed approach differs from reducing a mechanism to an instrument, procedure, or legal regime: the public mechanism is interpreted as a multi-level system of institutionally ordered interactions, instruments, and resources through which state and non-state actors jointly develop, coordinate, implement, and adjust public decisions under conditions of informational uncertainty.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the analytical autonomy of the public mechanism in public governance and to reveal its practical functioning as a polycentric coordination system for countering and preventing disinformation.

To achieve this purpose, the following research objectives are defined:

1) to trace the evolution of the concept of «mechanism» from its technical meaning to a socio-managerial understanding and to identify its key semantic layers;

2) to carry out a conceptual differentiation of related categories (the mechanism of state governance, the administrative-legal mechanism, the policy implementation mechanism, and the institutional mechanism) and to demonstrate the limits of the state-centric approach;

3) to define the content of the public mechanism as a polycentric, multi-actor coordination system;

4) to substantiate coordination, communication, feedback, and learning as system-forming elements of the mechanism for countering disinformation;

5) to outline parameters for the analytical operationalization of the mechanism's effectiveness (consistency of actions, quality of public signals, trust, and decision adaptability).

The methodology of the study is based on the systems approach, institutional and normative–cognitive analysis, concepts of polycentric and network governance, as well as managerial-organizational and behavioral approaches to explaining coordination and responses under conditions of uncertainty. The logic of the presentation proceeds from the interdisciplinary evolution of the concept of «mechanism» and its application in public governance to the substantiation of the autonomy of the «public mechanism»

and the disclosure of its practical functioning in countering disinformation as a polycentric coordination system.

2. The public mechanism in the system of public administration: the evolution of the concept and substantiation of analytical autonomy

The concept of «mechanism» belongs to the fundamental interdisciplinary categories that were formed long before the emergence of management sciences in their modern form. The evolution of this concept took place gradually – from a technical understanding as a set of parts that ensure the functioning of a machine, to more complex social, cognitive, and managerial interpretations. Such a multi-level history of the development of the category provides grounds for a correct interpretation of the meaning of the concept of a «public mechanism», for distinguishing it from instruments of public policy, administrative procedures, or regulatory and legal means, as well as for determining the role of the public mechanism in the field of countering disinformation.

Etymologically, the word «mechanism» originates from the Greek «mechané» meaning «tool», «device». The «Dictionary of Foreign Words» interprets the concept of «mechanism» as the «internal structure, system of something; arrangement», as well as a «set of processes» [1]. The «Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language» provides a similar definition – «the internal structure, system of something» [2]. In socio-political vocabulary, the term is often used to describe integrated structures of influence and coordination. In particular, the example from the «Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language» refers to a «single mechanism» that combines the resources of monopolies and state power to achieve a certain goal [2]. These definitions are important because they fix two semantic centers of the concept: structurality (internal structure or system) and processuality (a set of interconnected processes).

In the classical technical sense, a mechanism is interpreted as a structured complex of interconnected elements that ensures the integral functioning of a system in accordance with a specified goal. The mechanism begins to function as a materialized model with clearly defined cause-and-effect linkages that are realized in the process of interaction with other objects. As M. Bunge emphasizes in «Mechanism and Explanation», «a mechanism is what makes a concrete system work» [3, p. 410], and thus provides

grounds to consider it as a set of elements, connections, and rules of interaction organized in such a way as to generate a certain result.

In our view, providing this type of characterization is fundamentally important for further analysis, because it makes it possible from the very beginning to embed in the category of «mechanism» not only a descriptive but also an explanatory function. Precisely through the mechanism it becomes possible to trace how and due to which interactions the system produces a concrete result.

Further theoretical reflection on the concept of «mechanism» took place under the influence of the formation of systems thinking, where the mechanistic interpretation of complex objects gradually gives way to an approach focused not on isolated elements but on the ways of organizing their interaction. In the general systems theory, L. von Bertalanffy in «General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications» established that the mechanistic vision of complex objects is gradually displaced by another approach, within which the emphasis shifts from separate elements to «organization and order» that arise as a result of dynamic interaction of the parts of the system and determine their behavior [4, pp. 30-33]. Consequently, the mechanism is increasingly conceptualized as a way of organizing and regulating the behavior of an open system that interacts with the environment, and its states are determined by a combination of internal parameters and conditions of exchange with the external environment [4, pp. 121-122].

The application of the systems approach in the social sciences endowed the concept of «mechanism» with social meaning. In particular, O. Laszlo and S. Krippner in «Systems theories: Their origins, foundations, and development» draw attention to the use of systems analysis for the study of social organizations, political structures, and managerial processes [5, pp. 49-52].

Based on the above, it is important for us to understand that it is precisely here that the mechanism becomes a form of organizing interaction through which actions, connections, and rules of behavior in social and managerial systems are coordinated.

The theoretical reflection on the processes of social stabilization within the framework of structural-functional analysis is associated with the works of T. Parsons, for example «The Social System», «Toward a General Theory

of Action», «Essays in Sociological Theory» and «Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives». In these works, social order is considered as the result of institutionally *закрепленої* (institutionally *закрепленої*) interaction of actors oriented to shared norms and values. The stability of the social system is ensured by the coordinated functioning of roles and subsystems that perform integrative and regulatory functions, rather than by individual actions [6-9]. Such an approach forms theoretical prerequisites for understanding the mechanism as a socio-structural way of coordinating interaction.

A similar position was held by N. Luhmann in the theory of social systems, indicating that mechanisms are ways of ordering social complexity and maintaining the operational closure of the system. In «Vertrauen: Ein Mechanismus der Reduktion sozialer Komplexität» and «Social Systems», the researcher indicates that the social system is reproduced through selective processes of communication. In turn, mechanisms perform the function of selecting and ordering information, decisions, and expectations by selecting relevant possibilities in a complex social environment [10, pp. 95-115; 11, pp. 49-62]. A special place in this concept belongs to trust, which N. Luhmann defines as a mechanism for reducing social complexity that makes decision-making and stabilization of expectations possible under conditions of risk and informational uncertainty [11, pp. 69-73; 12, pp. 23-44].

In our conviction, the Luhmannian approach is of direct significance for the study of disinformation, because it allows the mechanism to be considered as a form of organizing communication and managing informational complexity. The mechanism covers not only the coordination of actors' actions but also the processes of circulation, selection, and filtering of information in communication networks [10]. In countering disinformation, this means that managerial influence is aimed at ordering informational flows, expectations, and trust that determine the behavior of actors under conditions of uncertainty.

In political science, the category of mechanism receives a clear conceptual definition in D. Easton's «Systems Analysis of Political Life», where the political system is viewed as a process of transforming societal demands and support into decisions and actions of authority. The central element of this model is the mechanisms of «inputs» and «outputs», as well

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as feedback and adaptation to changes in the external environment. Here the mechanism acts as a way of transforming social signals in political decision-making and evaluating managerial outcomes [13, pp. 27-32, 111-124].

One should agree with this model, because its significance for public policy and public administration lies in its pronounced processuality: the mechanism describes not so much the institutional structure of the system as the way requirements, decisions, and actions move within the management cycle. This is precisely what allows mechanisms to be considered as chains for coordinating procedures, communications, and managerial decisions in real public systems.

The further development of the systems vision of the mechanism can be traced in the Ukrainian philosophical tradition of systems and synergetic thinking. In the works of I. Dobronravova «Post-nonclassical knowledge as a process», L. S. Horbunova «Post-nonclassical rationality: a transdisciplinary discourse in science and education», A. K. Bychko and I. V. Bychko «Philosophy», the category of mechanism in social and managerial systems is conceptualized as a multi-level, integrated configuration of interaction among subjects, institutions, norms, resources, and processes that ensures integrity, stability, and reproducibility of social order. Analyzing post-nonclassical ideas about complex self-organizing systems, I. Dobronravova emphasizes that the integrity of the social system is not set externally, but is formed in the process of interaction of its components through internal mechanisms of self-organization [14, pp. 220-223]. It is precisely such mechanisms that ensure the adaptability and stability of the system under conditions of increasing complexity and uncertainty through coordinating the interaction of its structural elements, which is fundamentally important for the further analysis of public mechanisms.

Developing these approaches, L. S. Horbunova interprets post-nonclassical rationality as a methodology for analyzing open, nonlinear, and multidimensional social systems [15, pp. 136-140]. Under this approach, the integration of value-based, institutional, communicative, and practical elements acts as a condition for the functionality and evolutionary development of mechanisms of social governance. In turn, A. K. Bychko and I. V. Bychko, defining the subject of social philosophy as the study of forms of organization of social life, emphasize the coherence of value-normative foundations, institutional structures, and social practices

as a necessary prerequisite for the stable functioning of the social system [16, pp. 432-438].

The change of research paradigms in the social and managerial sciences led to a rethinking of the concept of «mechanism» beyond rational-technocratic models. The focus of analysis shifted to institutional, cognitive-normative, and network approaches that emphasize the role of rules, expectations, and interaction structures. Within institutional theory, D. North in «Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance» shows that the behavior of actors in social systems is determined primarily by formal and informal rules that structure possible forms of interaction and shape expectations regarding appropriate behavior. He defines institutions as «humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction», emphasizing their role in shaping the configuration of incentives and constraints within the social system [17, pp. 4-10]. In view of this, the theoretical context of the mechanism is appropriate to consider as an institutionally conditioned environment of interaction through which the behavior of subjects is ordered and the reproduction of social order is ensured.

Within new institutionalism, the concept of «mechanism» acquires normative-cognitive content, in particular in the works of J. March and J. Olsen. In «The Logic of Appropriateness», the authors substantiate that institutions function as complexes of rules, norms, and roles that determine what behavior is considered correct, expected, and legitimate for a subject in a given situation [18, pp. 4-12]. Developing these provisions in «Elaborating the «New Institutionalism»», the scholars note that a mechanism should be understood as a set of institutional conditions through which stable matrices of behavior are formed and the reproduction of norms and expectations within the political order is ensured [19, pp. 6-8].

In sociological and political theory, alongside institutional approaches, a micro-level understanding of mechanisms emerges, oriented toward explaining how social processes unfold. Within analytical sociology, attention is focused on reconstructing causal-genetic links that connect initial conditions with concrete social consequences through intermediate links of interaction. R. Merton in «Social Theory and Social Structure» defines social mechanisms as «social processes having designated consequences for designated parts of the social structure» and emphasizes

the need to analyze the conditions under which these mechanisms arise or fail to operate [20, pp. 43-44].

Further development of this approach is associated with P. Hedstrom and R. Swedberg, who in «Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory» interpret a mechanism as a set of entities and activities that «regularly bring about particular results and provide a microfoundation for social explanation» [21, p. 25]. Meanwhile, R. Collins, developing the microfoundations of macrosociology in «On the microfoundations of macrosociology», emphasizes that macrostructural changes «emerge as an aggregated effect of chains of interaction», within which symbols of group belonging are formed and social coalitions are reproduced or transformed, connecting the macro level with individual behavior [22, p. 989].

It should be noted that systemic, institutional, and micro-level interpretations of the mechanism are used to clarify how social processes become governable under conditions of growing complexity. Let us note that synergetic and post-nonclassical approaches allow one to fix the processual nature of mechanisms and their ability to maintain the integrity of the system without external directive control. Institutional and normative-cognitive concepts specify the role of rules, expectations, and models of appropriate behavior in structuring the interaction of actors. At the same time, micro-level explanations reveal how individual actions and decisions are aggregated into stable social effects. In our view, it is important that the mechanism in such a theoretical configuration appears not as a universal scheme or management tool, but as a context-conditioned way of coordinating interactions among multi-level actors. Such a foundation will make it possible to further analyze the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation as a form of coordinating institutional decisions, communication processes, and behavioral reactions in a situation of informational uncertainty.

Classical organization theory interprets the concept of «mechanism» as a rational-organizational system, where management appears as an ordered system of procedures and structures aimed at achieving defined goals. In M. Weber's model of bureaucracy «Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology», the mechanism appears as a formally organized and hierarchically ordered structure in which each element performs a clearly regulated function, ensuring predictability and stability of managerial

processes [23, pp. 956-1005]. Developing the organizational approach, C. Barnard in «The Functions of the Executive» emphasized that the mechanism is formed through a set of coordinated actions, communications, and procedures that support the organization's capacity to collectively achieve goals, in particular through the interaction of formal and informal structures [24, pp. 65-73, 114-119]. Meanwhile, H. Simon, developing a behavioral approach to administrative activity in «Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization», presents the mechanism through a system of formalized decisions and rules designed to compensate for individuals' bounded rationality and to ensure the structured character of managerial choice; at the same time, he considers the central problem of administrative theory to be the boundary between rational and non-rational aspects of social behavior [25, pp. 93, 111-118]. The behavioral turn in decision-making theories, associated with criticism of the model of full rationality, strengthened the cognitive dimension of understanding mechanisms. D. Kahneman and A. Tversky in «Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk» proved that choice under risk systematically deviates from the prescriptions of expected utility, because it is based on psychological regularities of evaluating outcomes and risks. Individuals perceive gains and losses differently, assign a disproportionately large weight to certain outcomes, and perform subjective weighting of probabilities, which forms stable patterns of decision-making under uncertainty [26, pp. 264-270]. Generalizing these approaches, D. Kahneman in «Thinking, Fast and Slow» shows that mechanisms of social action include not only structural or institutional elements, but also established ways of thinking, automated schemes of perception and interpretation of information, which directly determine the behavioral reactions of subjects [27, pp. 20-27; 51-67].

Considering the above, it should be emphasized that classical, organizational, and behavioral interpretations of mechanisms are considered not as alternatives, but as complementary analytical perspectives. Rational-organizational models allow one to capture the structural orderliness of managerial processes, while behavioral and cognitive approaches reveal the limitations of formal rationality and the role of subjective schemes of perception and interpretation of information. In analyzing the public mechanism of countering disinformation, this is of fundamental

importance, since disinformation influences operate simultaneously at the level of institutional procedures, managerial decisions, and cognitive reactions of audiences. In the study, the mechanism is considered as a multi-level coordination system that combines formalized managerial decisions with informal communication and cognitive processes through which the behavior of subjects under conditions of uncertainty is formed.

In theories of complex adaptive and social systems, the mechanism should be considered as a dynamic set of rules, expectations, and regulators of the behavior of units of interaction – actors or agents in agent-based models – that are formed and change in the process of their interaction with each other and with the environment. R. Axelrod's agent-based models in «The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration» demonstrate that local strategies, expectations, and response schemes of individual actors, set as relatively simple rules, dynamically generate complex collective forms of cooperation and conflict interaction at the macro level; at the same time, the result of the system's functioning is formed as a consequence of multiple local interactions and is not reduced to the properties of individual actors [28, pp. 10-19, 121-136]. The studies by S. A. Levin «Ecosystems and the Biosphere as Complex Adaptive Systems» and «Complex Adaptive Systems: Exploring the Known, the Unknown and the Unknowable» emphasize that the mechanisms of functioning of such systems are determined by the set of local connections between elements, the nonlinearity of interactions, and the historical conditionality of processes, as a result of which the system is able to change its own parameters in response to external perturbations and to manifest adaptability and self-organization [29, pp. 432-433; 30, pp. 5-9]. The stochastic spatial models of P. Clifford and A. Sudbury, built on the idea of local interactions and spatial conflict, presented in «Model for Spatial Conflict», demonstrate that even under relatively simple rules for updating the states of individual elements of the system, stable or unstable spatial structures can form as a result of long processes of local interaction and competition [31, pp. 582-584].

These ideas of the above-mentioned scholars should be supported. The proposed approaches of complex adaptive systems and agent-based modeling allow one to explain how stable collective effects at the macro level are formed from local interactions, individual strategies, and rules

of behavior. At the same time, these approaches are not considered self-sufficient, but analytically limited in cases where it is about purposeful managerial influence and normatively fixed mechanisms of public policy. Their explanation lies in revealing the dynamics of self-organization, adaptation, and nonlinear effects of interaction, but not in defining institutional goals and managerial decisions. The application of such approaches in our study makes it possible to consider disinformation as a process that spreads and becomes established through multiple local interactions of actors, informational reactions, and stable patterns of behavior, while at the same time requiring institutional coordination and public administration. The approaches of complex adaptive systems are used in our study as an instrument for analyzing the dynamics and conditions for the emergence of informational effects, but are integrated with institutional and managerial approaches to form a holistic understanding of the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation.

In management sciences, the concept of «mechanism» has become widespread primarily within studies of organizational structure and coordination of activities, where it is used to explain ways of ordering interaction among elements of an organization and ensuring the coherence of managerial actions. In H. Mintzberg's «Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations», coordination mechanisms are considered as basic ways of integrating the activities of different parts of an organization through mutual adjustment, direct supervision, and various forms of standardization, which allows maintaining the integrity of organizational functioning under conditions of structural differentiation [32, pp. 7-11]. Such an interpretation is methodologically significant for the analysis of public mechanisms for countering disinformation, since it allows them to be viewed not as a set of isolated instruments, but as coordination systems capable of aligning the actions of governmental, public, private, and international actors within a common system of managerial coordination.

The evolution of the concept of «mechanism» reflects successive transformational transitions from technical to social, and later to managerial content. Such dynamics indicate that the mechanism is not limited to a technical analogy or metaphor, but appears as a universal analytical category capable of describing complex forms of interaction in social systems. Accordingly, in the field of public administration, the

concept of «mechanism» cannot be reduced only to an instrument, method, procedure, or legal regime, but is considered as a complex formation that combines institutional, organizational, processual, resource, and communicative elements. The generalization of the above approaches – from agent-based models of complex adaptive systems to organizational-managerial interpretations – gives grounds for us to assert that the modern concept of «mechanism» functions at several interrelated semantic levels. Distinguishing them allows one to systematically organize the evolution of the term and to ensure its correct application in public administration, in particular in the analysis of the public mechanism of countering disinformation.

In international applied terminology, the concept of «mechanism» is also used in connection with public administration as a designation of a specially authorized coordination structure. Thus, in the practical guide of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up is defined as a «national public mechanism or structure» authorized to coordinate the preparation of state reports, interaction with international and regional human rights mechanisms, and to track the implementation of undertaken obligations and recommendations [33, p. 2]. The same source emphasizes that such a mechanism is a component of the governmental system and functions as part of the executive power, which determines its state-centric and managerial-organizational character [33, p. 2].

A similar interpretation is reproduced in the report of the «Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions», where the definition “national public mechanism or structure” is directly provided with reference to the approach of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and is used to denote an institutionally mandated form of interagency coordination in the field of implementing the state’s international obligations [34, p. 8].

This example is important for our study not as a universal theoretical definition of a public mechanism, but as confirmation that in international approaches the term «public mechanism» is used in a narrow, state-centric meaning – to denote a formalized coordination structure of public authority, which subsequently requires conceptual differentiation from the broader, polycentric understanding of a public mechanism.

At the same time, it is important to note that outside management theory, in related areas of mechanism theory and information design, the phrase «public mechanism» is used in a more formalized meaning associated not with the composition of actors (governmental/non-governmental), but with the commonality of the information field and the uniformity of signals for all participants of interaction.

R. Lamba in «Essays in Dynamic Mechanism Design», distinguishing types of mechanisms by the degree of information transparency, defines a public mechanism as such a mode of organizing interaction under which «all announcements are publicly observed by all participants», that is, all announcements are publicly observable to all participants in the process [35, p. 12]. In this approach, the public nature of the mechanism means equal access of participants to information about the actions and signals of the mechanism, which, in turn, forms shared expectations and determines the boundaries of rational behavior in interaction.

A similar position is also demonstrated by Y. Sun, N. Zamani-Foroushani, Z. Liu, and J. Wu in the study «Information Design and Pricing in Lead-Selling Platforms with Supply Competition», devoted to signaling mechanisms: the scholars emphasize that «a public mechanism publicly sends the same signal to all agents», that is, a public mechanism sends the same signal publicly to all agents, in contrast to private or individualized mechanisms of informing [36, p. 5]. They stress that precisely the public nature of signals creates conditions for mutual observation, coordination of expectations, and collective reactions, and therefore for the coordination of actions in complex interaction systems.

Although the above approaches were formed outside classical public administration theory, they fix a feature that is methodologically relevant for our study: a public mechanism can be described as a regime of a shared information space within which multiple actors coordinate behavior on the basis of the same public signals. In the field of countering disinformation, this becomes especially important, since the effectiveness of managerial decisions depends on the transparency of public communication, synchronization of reactions, and shared understanding of informational influences in the network environment.

Thus, international discourse demonstrates at least two different ways of using the definition «public mechanism»: an applied state-centric one

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(as a formalized coordination structure of public authority) and a formalized information-procedural one (as a regime of shared public signals). This is precisely what strengthens the need for conceptual differentiation carried out within our study.

At the same time, within the formation of the managerial approach in public administration and governance, the concept of «mechanism» significantly expands its meaning compared to technical, social, and systemic ideas. At this stage of the development of scientific knowledge, the mechanism is considered not only as a set of structures and procedures, but also as a complex institutional-organizational formation that ensures the purposeful functioning of public authority, implementation of state policy, and coordination of interaction among different actors.

At the managerial level, the concept of «mechanism» is specified as a way of organizing purposeful power influence on social processes. Within classical management theory and early studies of public authority, such a mechanism was conceptualized primarily through the activity of the state as the main subject of governance. For a long time, scientific discourse was dominated by understanding the mechanism in the form of the mechanism of state governance, in which the institutional structure, legal regulation, and administrative procedures acted as key means of ordering social relations.

In the domestic tradition of public administration, the concept of «mechanism of state governance» has been formed as one of the basic theoretical and methodological categories used to explain the ways of organizing, regulating, and ensuring the state's managerial influence on social processes. O. Yu. Obolenskyi, developing a structural-functional approach, defines the mechanism of state governance as a complex of interconnected instruments and means that ensure the performance of the state's managerial functions, including regulatory-legal, organizational, personnel, and informational support, which emphasizes its multi-component and internally coordinated character [37].

Within the classification approach presented by O. Fedorchak, mechanisms of state governance are considered mainly as ways and forms of purposeful state influence, which reflects the dominance of the administrative-legal vector in traditional scientific interpretations [38, pp. 2-8]. A similar position is held by N. R. Nyzhnyk and O. A. Mashkov, who, relying on a systems approach, define the mechanism of state

governance as a functionally organized configuration of institutions, procedures, norms, and resources that ensures the state's capacity to carry out an orderly managerial influence [39]. V. D. Bakumenko, V. M. Bashkatov, V. M. Kniaziev and R. M. Rudnitska complement this approach, emphasizing the role of organizational-legal and information-analytical means as key elements of mechanisms of state governance on which their effectiveness and stability of functioning depend [40, pp. 13-24; 41, pp. 116-118; 42, pp. 50-59].

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the state-centric approach does not fully take into account the growing role of non-state actors, horizontal forms of interaction, network structures, and communication processes that significantly influence the development and implementation of public policy. In modern conditions, managerial influence is formed not only through the administrative-legal means of the state, but also through the interaction of authorities with civil society, media, digital platforms, and international institutions.

In contemporary theoretical discourse of state and public administration, formed under the influence of governance concepts and public management, the concept of «mechanism» acquires new meaning. It gradually goes beyond narrow institutional or administrative-legal significance and is used to explain processes of public policy implementation, coordination of managerial actions, and transformation of political decisions into practical results.

M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, and L. Pal in «Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems» consider the implementation of public policy as a stage of the political process in which managerial intentions are transformed into practical actions and outcomes through the combination of policy instruments, procedures, and organizational decisions; at the same time, the effectiveness of implementation depends on institutional capacities and the configuration of the instruments involved [43, pp. 183-205]. In this sense, the mechanism appears as an integrated set of instruments and institutional capacities that ensures the practical execution of public decisions.

Considering the instrumental approach, M. Howlett in «What is a policy instrument? Tools, mixes, and implementation styles» interprets public policy instruments as «governance techniques» by which public authorities

and other participants in the governance process exert purposeful influence to achieve public goals. Instruments are not applied in isolation, but are combined into complex mixes associated with certain styles of policy implementation [44, pp. 33-47]. Thus, it is seen that the mechanism is not reduced to a single means of influence, but is formed as an integral configuration of managerial actions.

Along with this, the administrative-legal approach, represented in the works of V. B. Averianov and Yu. P. Bytiak, considers the mechanism primarily as a legal regime for regulating managerial relations, within which the hierarchy of norms, procedures, and formalized powers of public authorities plays a decisive role [45, pp. 12-16; 46, pp. 160-169]. Such mechanisms ensure legitimacy, normative certainty, and legal obligatoriness of managerial actions, however their analytical potential is limited for explaining complex inter-institutional, network, and communication processes. In this regard, the administrative-legal mechanism should be considered as a functional subsystem of the public mechanism – necessary, but insufficient to cover the entire set of managerial influences in the field of information security and countering disinformation.

An important methodological supplement is offered by the new institutionalism of B. Guy Peters and D. North, within which the mechanism is conceptualized as an institutionally conditioned system of rules, incentives, and constraints that forms standards of appropriate behavior and coordinates the actions of governance actors. Institutions, structuring interaction and reducing uncertainty, create stable expectations and determine possible trajectories of managerial decisions [47, pp. 3-9; 17]. This approach is especially relevant for analyzing the public mechanism of countering disinformation, since the effectiveness of this field directly depends on the coherence of institutional rules and incentives between public authorities, media, civil society institutions, and digital platforms.

Further expansion of the understanding of the mechanism is associated with the concepts of good governance and network governance, within which the mechanism is considered as a form of coordinating interaction between autonomous but interdependent actors of the public sphere who function in a complex and multi-level environment [48, pp. 652-667; 49, pp. 5-13]. Under such an approach, the mechanism does not have a rigidly centralized character, but is based on horizontal

interaction, negotiations, and coordination of interests. The development of public decisions is determined by the configuration of participants and the regimes of their interaction, which set procedures for joint decision-making, coordination of actions, and conflict resolution [50, pp. 43-46, 141-146]. In our conviction, this is of fundamental importance for the analysis of the public mechanism of countering disinformation, which by its nature is inter-institutional and communication-saturated.

From the perspective of public management and policy implementation theory, the mechanism of managerial action appears as an integrated institutional-organizational structure that combines formal organizational forms, decision-making procedures, and managerial practices. L. Lynn in «Public Management: Old and New» emphasizes that the interaction of organizational structures and administrative procedures ensures the coherence of managerial decisions within the public sector [51, pp. 33-41]. M. Hill and P. Hupe in «Implementing Public Policy: Governance in Theory and in Practice» emphasize that mechanisms of policy implementation also include inter-organizational interactions through which political intentions are transformed into practical actions in accordance with established governance regimes [52, pp. 46-53; 97-102].

A significant contribution to understanding mechanisms of public policy implementation was made by J. L. Pressman and A. Wildavsky, who showed that the success of public programs critically depends on the coherence of the chain of decisions and procedures among the numerous participants in the implementation process. In their approach, the mechanism appears as a system of interconnected decision points, where disruption of coordination at any stage significantly reduces the probability of achieving the planned results [53, pp. 100-124].

The generalization of theoretical approaches to interpreting mechanisms in public administration makes it possible to identify a number of common characteristics that recur regardless of disciplinary tradition, level of analysis, or governance model. These include complexity, purposiveness, systemic character, institutional conditionality, processuality, and the communicative nature of the mechanism. Taken together, these characteristics indicate that the mechanism in public administration is not reduced to a single instrument, procedure, or organizational structure, but appears as a complex analytical category capable of describing the processes of exercising public authority,

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coordinating interaction among actors, and achieving socially significant outcomes. This generalization provides a foundation for further conceptual differentiation of the public mechanism as a category broader in meaning and polycentric in its mode of functioning.

A key element of the mechanism is the plurality of public administration actors whose interaction has a polycentric and network character. Their activity is realized through managerial procedures and actions that unfold in time and require constant coordination. Communication and feedback ensure the adaptability of the mechanism, correction of managerial decisions, and transformation of managerial influences into concrete public outcomes. In this sense, the mechanism in public administration appears as a dynamic process of coordinating goals, norms, actions, and communications, which fundamentally distinguishes it from narrowly administrative or purely institutional mechanisms.

Thus, the theoretical analysis of the evolution of the concept of «mechanism» allows it to be considered in public administration as a complex, multidimensional, and processual category that is not reduced to individual instruments, procedures, or organizational forms. At the same time, to substantiate the analytical autonomy of the public mechanism, it is appropriate to specifically address the category of the mechanism of state governance not as an alternative to the public one, but as a historically dominant form of the governance mechanism, the analysis of which makes it possible to reveal the conceptual boundaries of the state-centric approach and to show directions for its further expansion.

In the domestic scientific tradition, the category of the mechanism of state governance belongs to the basic ones, since historically the state acted as the key subject of organizing power influence and coordinating social processes. In modern generalizations of the concept of the mechanism in state governance, two complementary emphases are traced: institutional-organizational (the mechanism as a system of state bodies or institutions) and instrumental-resource (the mechanism as a set of means, methods, procedures, legal norms, incentives, and resources through which influence on the object of governance is ensured). In particular, in the definition of V. Bakumenko and V. Kniaziev, mechanisms of state governance are described as «practical measures, means, levers, incentives» by which state authorities influence social relations to achieve the set goals [40, pp. 116-118].

At the same time, a generalized definition based on the analysis of a number of scientific interpretations fixes the mechanism of state governance as a system of state bodies (institutions) which, using instruments and available resources, ensure managerial influence to achieve the goals of state governance [54, pp. 39-47]. In this understanding, the concept has a predominantly institution-centered character, since it focuses on the agency of state bodies and their formal powers, while including the technological dimension of instruments and procedures of managerial influence. According to the definition of H. S. Odintsov, V. B. Dziundziuk, N. M. Meltiukhova, N. S. Myronova, and O. B. Korotych, mechanisms of state governance appear as ways of resolving contradictions in state governance, providing for the consistent implementation of actions based on principles, goal orientation, and functional activity using appropriate forms and methods of governance [55, p. 421].

In the view of V. B. Averianov, the mechanism of state governance performs the function of legal and organizational support of the state's power influence, which determines its structural attachment to a hierarchical model of power with the dominance of vertical coordination and formalized procedures [56, pp. 92-96, 103-107]. This corresponds to the classical paradigm of public administration, within which the state is considered the main legitimate coordinator of decision-making and implementation processes.

At the same time, modern public administration studies, in particular in the context of good governance, demonstrate that complex social challenges – such as disinformation, hybrid threats, crisis conditions, and digital transformation – cannot be effectively addressed exclusively by state instruments. In such fields, distributed responsibility, cross-sector coordination, communicative capacity, and digital response practices become decisive, which determines the need to introduce a separate analytical category such as the public mechanism.

Within our study, the public mechanism is defined as an independent, polycentric, and multi-actor system of institutionally ordered interactions, instruments, and resources (regulatory, organizational-procedural, communicative, digital, and socio-behavioral) by which state and non-state actors jointly develop, coordinate, implement, and adjust public decisions and ensure the achievement of a public goal under conditions of dynamic and networked environments.

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From an analytical point of view, the public mechanism is considered as a system of managerial coordination, the effectiveness of which can be assessed by several key parameters: the ability to timely detect and interpret disinformation influences; the level of coherence of actions among the involved actors; the quality and level of trust in public communication; and the adaptability of managerial decisions to changes in the information environment. This approach forms an analytical foundation for the transition from conceptual reflection on the public mechanism to its further empirical analysis and evaluation of effectiveness in the field of countering disinformation.

The definition provided by us is fundamentally important because it fixes that the public mechanism is not a type of the mechanism of state governance and is not reduced to administrative-legal, institutional, or managerial mechanisms. It correlates with them as an autonomous analytical category that may include separate elements of these mechanisms (norms, procedures, instruments, organizational forms), but does not lose its own integrity and methodological status.

The public mechanism is grounded in polycentricity, networkedness, multi-actor character, and institutional diversification. Theoretical sources of this approach include the works of E. Ostrom [57, pp. 572-641], F. Fukuyama [58, pp. 347-357], F. Scharpf [59, pp. 240-252], S. Osborne [60, pp. 4-14] and L. Lynn [51, pp. 33-39; 140-146], which emphasize that in modern governance systems public decisions are created and implemented not only by the state but also by a wide range of stakeholders: local self-government bodies, independent regulators, civil society institutions, business, expert communities, media, and digital platforms, etc.

The difference between the public mechanism and the mechanism of state governance is fundamental and is manifested in the following parameters.

First, agency: while the mechanism of state governance is based on the dominance of state bodies, the public mechanism includes state, non-state, and hybrid actors who participate in coordination, monitoring, public communication, decision-making, and implementation.

Second, the nature of interaction: the mechanism of state governance operates mainly through power-administrative influence, whereas the public mechanism functions on the basis of network coordination, cooperation, partnership, and joint production of managerial decisions.

Third, the institutional basis: the state mechanism relies primarily on legal norms, administrative procedures, and resource support, whereas the public mechanism also integrates communicative, digital, cognitive, and socio-behavioral components that are critically important in environments where information flows and the media space play a decisive role.

Fourth, the scale and subject of action: the mechanism of state governance is tied to formalized spheres of state policy, whereas the public mechanism applies to broader social processes, including those not subject to strict legal formalization (information confrontations, digital communications, behavioral strategies of audiences).

It is important to emphasize that the correct relationship between these categories lies not in the thesis of «expanding» one mechanism by another, but in the fact that they reflect different levels of analytical description. The mechanism of state governance describes primarily a state-centric configuration of influence, while the public mechanism describes a polycentric configuration of public interaction in which the state is a necessary but not the only actor. Within actor-centered institutionalism, F. Scharpf links public policy outcomes to «constellations of actors and modes of interaction», emphasizing that it is institutional rules that delineate the circle of participants and permissible ways of their interaction [61, p. 775]. Accordingly, governance outcomes are formed not as a consequence of unilateral power influence, but as the result of institutionally mediated interaction of multi-level actors. In the field of countering disinformation, this is especially clear: the mechanism of state governance covers regulatory, administrative, and enforcement instruments, while the public mechanism also includes media actors, digital platforms, civil society organizations, independent fact-checking initiatives, educational institutions, and international structures, without whose participation modern information threats cannot be effectively neutralized.

In the science of administrative law, the mechanism of administrative-legal regulation is traditionally considered as a normatively conditioned system of legal means and forms of their implementation, by which the state ensures ordering and purposeful influence on public-administrative relations. In textbook and monographic works on administrative law, in particular edited by Yu. P. Bytiak [46], in the works of V. B. Averianov [62], Yu. A. Vediernikov and V. K. Shkarupa [63], as well as

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N. Yu. Kantor [64], this mechanism is associated primarily with the exercise of power-organizing powers of public administration and the functioning of the system of administrative-legal norms. In modern generalizations, its structure includes norms of administrative law and acts of their official interpretation, administrative legal relations together with legal facts, acts of realization and application of legal norms, and in some approaches also the legal consciousness of participants in legal relations as an auxiliary element. A characteristic feature of the administrative-legal mechanism is the dominance of the legal component, the imperative type of regulation, and the method of power subordination, which determines the formalized character of managerial procedures and a predominantly vertical hierarchy of interaction among public authorities. Means of administrative coercion in this context are considered as an instrument of protection and ensuring appropriate behavior, the procedure and limits of application of which are clearly determined by the norms of administrative law.

Unlike the administrative-legal mechanism, the public mechanism significantly goes beyond a purely normative-procedural approach, although it includes it as an important but not the only component. Its substantive nature is characterized by multidimensionality, polycentricity, and a multi-actor composition, which gives grounds to interpret it not only as a legal, but primarily as an institutional-communicative and socio-managerial analytical category. If the administrative-legal mechanism functions within legal rationality, is based on legal norms and formalized administrative procedures, and is predominantly structured according to vertical power relations, then the public mechanism involves interaction of a wide range of actors: state bodies, local self-government bodies, civil society institutions, media, digital platforms, expert networks, and international institutions. In this sense, the public mechanism corresponds to approaches of polycentric governance, for example as in E. Ostrom [65, pp. 7-29], network coordination (in the understanding of governance), and multi-level governance, which emphasize the interaction of multiple centers of competence and the coordination of interests in the process of policy-making.

The key difference, in our conviction, lies in the method of ensuring regulatory action. The administrative-legal mechanism is oriented toward legal regulation, control, accountability, and the application of

sanctions, whereas the public mechanism integrates legal, organizational, communicative, digital, socio-behavioral, and cognitive instruments. This makes it suitable for influencing processes that cannot always be effectively regulated only by administrative-legal norms, in particular information and communication flows unfolding in a dynamic digital environment. Accordingly, in the public mechanism a significant role is played not only by formally established norms, but also by self-regulation and co-regulation instruments, platform codes of conduct, professional and ethical standards, social expectations, information campaigns, public monitoring, and digital content moderation tools.

In the field of countering disinformation, this difference is particularly pronounced. The administrative-legal mechanism can ensure regulatory requirements, response procedures, grounds of liability, and the powers of regulatory bodies, but, as a rule, it is insufficient without being complemented by instruments of operational cross-sector interaction. Therefore, the public mechanism, which combines network coordination, digital moderation practices, participation of civil society, and partnerships with international institutions, is more relevant for spheres with high speed of change, complex communication structure, and multi-level nature of threats.

Further, in public policy theory, the mechanism of policy implementation should be considered as a structural-functional set of instruments of public influence, procedures, institutional roles, and governance practices by which adopted political decisions are transformed into concrete managerial actions and practical results. In M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, and L. Pal «Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems», it is emphasized that public policy is not a one-time act of decision-making, but a consistent process of transforming government intentions into actions and results that requires appropriate instruments and organizational mechanisms [66, pp. 6-12]. At the same time, it is emphasized that the cyclical model of public policy does not fully reproduce the real course of political processes. The problem of the transition from an adopted decision to its practical execution is thoroughly demonstrated in the classic study by J. Pressman and A. Wildavsky [53, pp. 87-93; 97-104], where policy implementation is shown as a vulnerable organizational construction sensitive to institutional and communication failures.

Against this background, it is methodologically important to fix that the public mechanism is not identical to the mechanism of policy implementation, since it is not limited to the stage of implementation of specific decisions. The public mechanism functions as a system of polycentric interaction of state and non-state actors that ensures not only execution of adopted decisions, but also joint development, adaptation, clarification, and communication support of managerial actions in a dynamic social environment.

Given the diversity of approaches to interpreting the category of mechanism in public administration and the presence of related but not identical concepts (mechanism of state governance, administrative-legal mechanism, mechanism of public policy implementation, institutional mechanism, management mechanism, mechanism of public management, public mechanism), in order to eliminate terminological uncertainty and ensure conceptual differentiation, the study provides a comparative generalization of key differences between the respective concepts.

Thus, in countering disinformation, administrative-legal and state-centric mechanisms are necessary but insufficient, since modern threats unfold in digital networks where key nodes of influence are often outside the direct hierarchy of the state – at the level of platforms, media, networks of public trust, and international partners. The effectiveness of countering is determined not only by the existence of a legal norm and sanctions, but primarily by the speed of detecting disinformation, the quality of public communication, behavioral reactions of audiences, and the ability of different actors to act coherently. Under these conditions, the relevant unit of analysis is the public mechanism as a polycentric coordination system that integrates regulatory decisions with communication strategies, digital monitoring, and instruments for forming information resilience and public trust. This, in our conviction, constitutes the analytical autonomy of the category «public mechanism» within our study.

3. The public mechanism as a polycentric system of coordination in the field of countering and preventing disinformation

After substantiating disinformation as a structural public challenge to democratic governance and defining the public mechanism as an autonomous analytical category within the system of public administration,

there arises the need to disclose the nature of its functioning in the practical dimension. We consider the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation not as a set of separate instruments or institutions, but as a polycentric coordination system. In such a system, the coordination of actions of state and non-state actors takes place around a common public goal, namely: preserving public trust, ensuring conditions for effective public communication, and increasing the resilience of the public space to manipulative influences. In our view, such an approach makes it possible to move from a conceptual definition of the public mechanism to the analysis of its structural and functional characteristics in an environment of networked information threats.

The theoretical foundation for interpreting the public mechanism as a polycentric coordination system is provided by the concept of polycentric governance developed by E. Ostrom. Polycentricity in this approach means the presence of multiple decision-making centers that are formally autonomous but function within a common institutional environment and are able to mutually adjust their activity. In the absence of a single dominant center of governance, effectiveness is achieved through coordinating rules, procedures, and interaction regimes between different centers of competence. Polycentric systems, according to E. Ostrom, allow combining the autonomy of actors with mutual responsibility and joint development of decisions in complex socio-economic environments, which makes them more adaptive to dynamic and multi-level challenges than hierarchical governance models [65, pp. 641-642]. Thus, governance effectiveness is determined not by the concentration of powers in a single center, but by the capacity of different centers of competence to coordinate actions, combine competition with complementarity, and conduct joint learning in the process of interaction. Accordingly, the state retains a key role in defining frameworks, standards, and public priorities, but ceases to be the sole source of managerial influence and decision-making.

The further development of this vision within theories of network governance makes it possible to specify ways of coordinating actions among autonomous participants of the public space. In such a perspective, coordination appears as the result of interaction of actors in inter-organizational networks that function outside rigid hierarchy, complementing classical state governance as an alternative way of ordering

collective action. Thus, R. Rhodes defines governance as a system of self-organizing inter-organizational networks in which interaction is based not on formal subordination but on mutual dependence, resource exchange, and coordination of interests among autonomous participants [48, pp. 660-663]. In view of this, the public mechanism should be interpreted not as a set of formalized administrative prescriptions, but as a relatively stable configuration of interaction rules, communication channels, role distribution, and coordination procedures that ensures the development of joint decisions under conditions of high complexity and fragmentation of the public space.

Precisely R. Rhodes's approach is methodologically important for our study, because it allows describing governance interaction in a sphere that does not fit within exclusively state-centric influence. Disinformation threats are formed and spread in digital networks where key resources of influence – such as content distribution channels, algorithmic visibility systems, monetization and moderation infrastructures – are controlled by actors not subordinated to the state vertical, including digital platforms, media organizations, distributed user communities, fact-checking initiatives, and international partners. Under such conditions, the effectiveness of governance influences is determined not only by the presence of a legal norm or administrative procedure, but by the capacity to build stable regimes of coordination: regular communication channels, agreements on data exchange, joint response procedures, standards of professional interaction, educational components, and mechanisms of mutual responsibility. Therefore, the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation should be operationalized through parameters of coordination capacity, in particular: the speed and quality of inter-organizational information exchange, the presence of coordinated response protocols, the stability of partnerships, the institutional clarity of roles and procedures, and the system's capacity to maintain trust, predictability, and continuity of interaction under conditions of high uncertainty and crisis informational change.

A significant theoretical support for the polycentric understanding of the public mechanism is provided by the collaborative governance approach developed by C. Ansell and A. Gash. In the classic definition, these scholars describe collaborative governance as an institutionally organized process

in which agencies directly involve non-state stakeholders in collective development and implementation of governance decisions in formalized, discursive, and typically consensus-oriented formats [67, pp. 544-546]. Essential in this approach is that governance effectiveness is linked not only to hierarchical power or legal bindingness of decisions, but to the quality of interaction, the level of trust among participants, and the capacity to coordinate interests, knowledge, and resources of different actors [67, pp. 550-556]. Relying on this foundation, it is positive for our study that effective restraint of manipulative influences depends on the ability to synchronize public communication, data exchange, response standards, and behavioral interventions among public authorities, media, digital platforms, expert environments, and civil society institutions.

An additional analytical dimension of the polycentric approach is associated with the discussion of state capacity and governance effectiveness. F. Fukuyama interprets governance not as the formal presence of institutions, but as the state's ability to actually achieve set public goals and ensure high-quality performance of executive functions [58, pp. 350-356]. Combined with polycentric and network perspectives, this means that the public mechanism in digital environments should be evaluated not by institutional presence, but by coordination productivity – for example, the speed of information exchange, the level of synchronization of roles, the consistency of public signals, the stability of procedures, and the adaptability of governance practices to changes in the information environment.

The practical relevance of the above theoretical synthesis lies in the fact that disinformation influences unfold as network processes within which critical nodes of influence – digital platform infrastructure, algorithmic visibility of content, distributed audiences, transnational dissemination channels, and networks of repeated replication of narratives – are not subordinate to a single administrative vertical. Under these conditions, the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation should be interpreted as a coordination system that includes at least the following interrelated components:

– a plurality of actors with different mandates, resources, and competencies (public authorities, media, digital platforms, civil society, expert and scientific communities, international partners);

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- institutional rules of interaction, responsibility, accountability, and legitimation of joint decisions;
- procedures for joint detection and interpretation of threats, including analytics, monitoring of the information environment, attribution of influences, and risk assessment;
- coordinated communication protocols that ensure the unity of public signals, timeliness of response, crisis communication, and work with sensitive information topics;
- feedback channels and decision correction oriented toward evaluating effects, revising governance approaches, and accumulating institutional learning.

The above allows us to consider the public mechanism not as a set of separate measures, but as an integral coordination structure, without reducing it either to state-centric models of governance or to exclusively administrative-legal instruments.

Thus, generalized empirical data confirm the expediency of interpreting the public mechanism of countering disinformation as an adaptive, multi-level, and polycentric system of public governance within which coordination, communication, and feedback act as system-forming elements. Precisely such an interpretation creates methodological prerequisites for further modeling and quantitative evaluation of the influence of governance decisions in the field of information policy, which constitutes a logical transition to the next stages of the dissertation research.

In a polycentric information environment, coordination of actions among autonomous actors acquires decisive importance, since none of the subjects has a monopoly either on informational influence or on governance resources. In public administration theory, coordination is considered as an independent way of ordering collective action, distinct both from market mechanisms and from classical administrative hierarchy. In particular, within F. Scharpf's actor-centered institutional approach, public policy outcomes are linked to configurations of interaction among actors and modes of their coordination [68, p. 10]. Moreover, B. Jessop develops this position by describing modern governance as the coordination of interdependent but operationally autonomous actors in situations of complex mutual dependence [69]. In the field of countering and preventing disinformation, this means that effectiveness is ensured not

only by direct power interventions, but primarily by ordering interaction among public authorities, media, platforms, expert environments, and civil society precisely through response standards, coordination of public communication, and mechanisms of accountability.

A functionally related element of the public mechanism is communication, since it is through communication that the coherence of public signals and the reproduction of trust are ensured. The theoretical foundation for such an approach is J. Habermas's concept of communicative rationality, according to which the legitimacy of public decisions is formed through practices of open, reasoned, and mutually oriented communication in the public sphere [70, pp. 107-109]. In the context of disinformation, the conditions of reasoned discussion are destroyed, undermining society's capacity for collective reflection on reality and for coordinating actions. In this dimension, communication appears as a structural condition of coordination in polycentric governance systems, which corresponds to approaches of B. Jessop's strategic-relational theory of the state [71, pp. 16-17] and N. Luhmann's theory of social systems, within which communication is considered the basic operation of social systems aimed at reducing the complexity of the environment [72].

In the modern information society, trust is not only a social value but a full-fledged resource of governance. Disinformation campaigns, as networked media ecosystem studies show, in particular in the works of Y. Benkler, are purposefully aimed at destroying trust, which leads to polarization and reduced effectiveness of corrective interventions by the state [73, pp. 41, 73-75]. In practical terms, this means the need to form institutionally fixed communication channels capable of ensuring consistency, transparency, and accountability of public messages in the public space and minimizing the space for manipulative interpretations.

At the same time, even a high level of coherence of actions and communicative interaction does not guarantee stable effectiveness of the public mechanism in a dynamic information environment if the system does not possess the capacity for systematic updating of governance practices. The dynamic nature of information threats, the evolution of algorithmic environments, and changes in behavioral patterns of audiences make it necessary to consider adaptability and learning as systemic properties of the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation.

In organizational learning theory, C. Argyris and D. Schön show that effective organizations can move from simple error correction to reflective revision of their own governance assumptions and basic frames, such as double-loop learning («double-loop learning») [74, pp. 118-120; 75]. Applied to the mechanism under study, this means correcting governance decisions not only after individual informational incidents, but also through rethinking ways of interpreting threats, formats of public communication, rules of interaction with digital platforms, and models of involving non-state actors. The adaptability of the public mechanism correlates with approaches to managing complex adaptive systems, within which stability is achieved through constant adjustment of actions based on feedback and analysis of results, rather than through rigid fixation of rules [76, pp. 18-20]. The practical implementation of adaptability presupposes the presence of institutionally fixed learning procedures. In our view, these include regular monitoring of the information environment, analysis of the effectiveness of governance decisions, generalization of interaction experience, and adjustment of standards and protocols of public communication.

Thus, the public mechanism of countering and preventing disinformation is an institutionally and normatively conditioned system of interaction among state bodies, non-state actors, and digital platforms aimed at detecting, restraining, neutralizing, and preventing disinformation influences using legal, communicative, organizational, and technological instruments, functioning on the principles of legality, proportionality, public responsibility, and preservation of freedom of speech. Such a structure is flexible for responding to information threats, ensures institutional stability and compliance with democratic standards of public communication and interaction, creating a foundation for considering countering and preventing disinformation as a full-fledged sphere of public administration.

4. Conclusions

The conducted research has made it possible to comprehensively conceptualize the evolution of the notion of «mechanism» within the system of public governance and to substantiate the analytical autonomy of the category of the public mechanism in the field of countering and preventing disinformation. The findings demonstrate that contemporary information challenges associated with the networked nature of communication, digital

platforms, and transnational information flows require a reconsideration of traditional state-centric approaches and a transition toward polycentric models of coordination.

The synthesis of theoretical approaches and interdisciplinary experience has enabled the formulation of the following key conclusions.

1. The evolution of the concept of «mechanism» demonstrates a consistent shift from a technical understanding to a social, systemic, and managerial one. In contemporary scholarly discourse, a mechanism is understood as a multi-level system of interaction among elements, rules, and processes that ensures the coordinated functioning of complex systems.

2. Systemic, institutional, and socio-communicative approaches make it possible to consider a mechanism not only as a structure but also as a way of organizing interaction, coordinating behavior, and reducing social complexity through communication, trust, and institutional rules.

3. In public governance, a mechanism cannot be reduced to instruments or procedures; rather, it constitutes a complex formation combining institutional, organizational, regulatory, communicative, and behavioral elements.

4. State-centric interpretations of governance mechanisms provide normative certainty and organizational order; however, they are insufficient for explaining contemporary governance processes in which non-state actors, digital platforms, and network forms of interaction play an increasingly significant role.

5. The administrative-legal mechanism is an important but functionally limited component of governance influence, as it focuses on normative regulation and vertical hierarchy, whereas modern information processes are characterized by horizontality and networked interaction.

6. Based on the analysis conducted, the public mechanism is substantiated as an autonomous analytical category that is not a subtype of the mechanism of state governance but reflects a polycentric configuration of public interaction in which the state is a necessary, though not the sole, actor.

7. The public mechanism is defined as a polycentric and multi-actor system of institutionally ordered interactions, instruments, and resources through which state and non-state actors jointly develop, coordinate, and implement public decisions in a networked environment.

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8. In the field of countering disinformation, governance effectiveness depends not only on legal norms but also on the coordination of actions, the quality of public communication, trust, decision adaptability, and the consistency of public signals.

9. The polycentric approach developed in the works of E. Ostrom, network governance perspectives, and collaborative governance concepts confirm that the coordination of autonomous actors is a key condition for effective governance in complex information environments.

10. The public mechanism for countering disinformation functions as a coordination system that includes a multiplicity of actors, institutional rules of interaction, procedures for joint threat analysis, coordinated communication protocols, and mechanisms of feedback and institutional learning.

11. Communication and trust function as system-forming elements of the mechanism, as they ensure the consistency of public signals, the legitimacy of decisions, and the resilience of the democratic public sphere.

12. Adaptability and organizational learning, including double-loop learning, are necessary conditions for the functioning of the mechanism in the context of dynamic information threats.

13. The public mechanism for countering disinformation should be understood as an institutionally and normatively conditioned system of interaction among public authorities, civil society, media, and digital platforms aimed at detecting, containing, and preventing manipulative information influence while adhering to democratic standards and freedom of expression.

Promising directions for further research include:

1) operationalizing indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the public mechanism for countering disinformation;

2) developing models for the quantitative measurement of coordination capacity and information resilience;

3) studying interaction between the state and digital platforms and mechanisms of co-regulation;

4) analyzing the impact of communication strategies on public trust and audience behavioral responses;

5) examining the role of education and media literacy programs in strengthening information resilience;

6) adapting international experience of polycentric governance to the Ukrainian context;

7) further research into institutional learning mechanisms and adaptive governance under conditions of digital threats.

Thus, the proposed conceptual understanding of the public mechanism provides a theoretical and methodological foundation for the development of an effective public governance system in the field of countering disinformation and strengthening the information resilience of democratic society.

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