

**ECONOMY AS A BACKGROUND OF CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL
CONFLICTS: THEORETICAL ASPECTS**

Oleksandr Kompaniets ¹, Volodymyr Prykhodko ²

¹ *Master degree Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, Ukraine*

Email: oleksandr.kompaniets@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2921-3161>

² *Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Head of International Economic Relations Department, Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, Ukraine*

Email: volodymyr.pryhodko@uzhnu.edu.ua, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1354-5195>

ABSTRACT. The article examines the economic aspect of international conflicts, in particular the role of the economic component in international conflicts. Individual causes of occurrence, management methods and principles of conflict resolution were studied, in order to structure theoretical knowledge about conflicts and determining the role of economic aspects in the reasons of conflicts, its influence on their course and the possibility of applying of economy as a lever that contributes to the prevention, resolution or minimization of the negative consequences of international conflicts, the search for solutions and the prevention of such in the future, also by taking into account the results of previous scientific studies and using the examples of modern interstate disputes.

The main three functions that can be performed by the conflict economy have been defined and the importance of such roles for understanding the nature of the conflict and determining the methodology of its management and resolution has been defined.

Authors studied the reasons of actual conflicts to reveal the role of economic aspects of each conflict in order to realize how is economy applied in those conflicts and if it could be as an instrument of aggression or as an instrument of stabilization and resolving the conflict.

Also, the nature of conflicts itself was examined to understand if it is possible to find some signs that there is a possibility that a conflict is coming. This understanding could help to prevent the worst consequences of such foreign policy or how to manage it better.

Some aspects of the psychology of the conflict were examined. The aim of studying this aspect was to realize which aspects give the possibility to the government to step in the conflict. And how the internal policy of some country could testify that country is preparing to some kind of a conflict.

The different systems of internal state organizing were examined to understand which of them is more stable and which one is less stable and could not only move forward to the conflict, but also could be a kind of such conflict.

Key words: international conflict, economic component, prevention tool, conflict psychology, interstate relations

INTRODUCTION. There is no doubt that conflicts became an integral part of international life. Defining of conflict as collision of opposing interests and views, as tension and extreme aggravation of contradictions which lead to active actions, complications, struggle accompanied by complicated collisions [1] from one hand, explain what the course and intensity of the conflict is, from the other hand it lets to understand that this issue needs to be learnt and investigated [2].

Ukrainian and foreign scientists have always been working on analysis of international conflicts, the result of which is a great amount of scientific works that study all aspects of conflict, its types, levels, phases, structure and reasons of appear, management methods, principles of solution etc. However, as practice shows despite the thorough knowledge of people about conflicts they are not reduced but become more cruel and destructive.

When considering the international conflict as a separate phenomenon and as one of the ways+ of the flow of interstate relations it can be said with confidence that it has an economic basis which can be present in every phase of conflict realization: either in its prerequisites or its flow or even in its results and consequences [3]. This raises a legitimate question: what is the economy of conflict, what is its role and if it can be used to prevent or minimize the destructive consequences of conflicts.

Research results. Even Aristotle considered that the source of conflicts between people is property inequality and the main goal of conflicts is to achieve certain economic benefits and gains, in particular or primarily from the side of the state leaders [4, c.33].

One of the investigators of conflict study as a science is German philosopher and founder of the theory of social interaction Georg Simmel (1858-1918). He confirmed that conflict is an integral part of human development. In his works Simmel mainly described the sociological component of conflicts, however economics (mainly in his writings the emphasis is on resources) played an important role [5, p.139-149].

In later studies of conflicts, the economy (in the most general sense) is increasingly identified as an important component of conflict. Thus, one of the followers of Simmel, German-American sociologist Lewis Alfred Coser (1913-2003) considered that when entering into a conflict, the warring parties aim first of all to dispute resources, capital and image issues [6].

In turn, Australian diplomat, statesman and founder of the Center for Conflict Analysis at the University of London, John Wear Burton (1915-2010) developed ideas of Simmel and Coser considered that the main problem of conflict lies not so much in the contested resources as in their

perception by the parties of the conflict. In his opinion, this perception of the subject of the dispute can potentially transform in the future into the willingness of the participants of the conflict to "jointly use such a disputed resource". And it is the degree of such readiness that is one of the main variable indicators of the conflict, in particular, it can become both a prerequisite for its occurrence to resolve or end the conflict.

In essence, the above mentioned theorists agree on that when a conflict appears there should be the object of the dispute or its subject. Besides, Burton emphasizes that although such an object must exist, on the other hand, such an object for which it is impossible to find an algorithm of non-conflict or sharing does not exist. Therefore, the issue is solely in the psychological aspects of the readiness/unreadiness of each of the parties to joint use/possession of the subject of the dispute and the corresponding distribution of profit or profit arising from such use/possession [7, p.197-214].

In conclusion – possession or free use for one's own benefit and for one's own benefit of the subject of the dispute (which in the vast majority of cases is a resource that has a clearly expressed economic or intangible value) and a complete initial unwillingness to share this resource gives us the right to conclude that such a component of the conflict as the economy, in fact, may be the cause of its occurrence, and will also characterize its course and result.

In relations between subjects, especially when it comes to interstate relations, the economic weight of each of the parties to such relations is one of the main determining factors of the nature of such relations. And the purpose of the emergence of such relations is the desire of one part of society to dominate another. Besides, this model is used both at the lowest level of society - the household - and at the highest level – in international relations [8, c.144-145].

In addition to the above-mentioned subject of international controversy, there should be the subject of relations that evaluates political and economic value of this subject and makes a decision about the possibility or impossibility of transferring relations with the opponent regarding this subject precisely to the plane of the conflict.

It is quite natural to assume that it is the state leadership that acts as the subject of interstate relations that makes the decision to enter into a conflict or resolve a dispute through negotiations. At the same time, the recipient of political and economic profit from these processes may be other interested institutions, entities or individuals.

In this context it is appropriate to refer to the works of the French political scientist Maurice Duverger (1917-2014), who paid considerable attention to political conflict study and demarcated conflicts into types depending on the system in which they develop. The scientist distinguished two types of systems - a vertical system, with a rigid vertical (subordination) of relationships, and a horizontal system, which is built on conditionally equal relationships between subjects. The

horizontal system (he also calls it solidary) is complex in its architecture, however, at the same time, it is more stable and less vulnerable to external and internal destabilizing influences due to the high number of horizontal ties. While the vertical system, according to Duverger, is significantly simpler in terms of its organization and decision-making processes, although at the same time it is much more vulnerable and unstable in case of external influence on its key elements. Such a system of building processes, which is characterized primarily by the inequality of its subjects, eventually leads to the emergence of conflicts within the system itself or, as is clearly observed in modern history, to the transformation of the system itself into a source of conflict [9, p.317-319, 401].

The construction of a further logical chain of international conflict studies was continued, in particular, by the founder of the Peace Institute in Oslo, the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung. According to the concept of the "structural theory of aggression", the cause of the conflict is the imbalance of the criteria of state, which determine its place in the system of international relations. That is, when one or more of the inherent state criteria of the country is hypertrophied at the expense of other criteria, such when country loses its objective perception of reality and its real place and weight in the system of international relations, which in turn provokes "risky behavior" of such state. As a rule, risky or conflict behavior of the state leads to an inadequate perception of its own economic and military power [10].

These processes we observe in the Russian Federation in the last thirty years of its history, in particular, in its aggressive foreign policy and foreign economic activity. The perception of leadership by its country as one of the world's leading economies, its positioning as an indispensable actor in the strategic economic processes of the world, or at least the European economy, prompted Russia to constantly use the economy, mainly its resource component, for the generation and deployment of conflict, in particular in terms of blackmail, dispute or pressure on partners and competitors.

Clear evidence of such policy is the use of Russia's leading role as a supplier of energy resources to European countries. For example, in the period of "gas wars" with Ukraine in 2005-2006, 2008-2009 and 2013-2014, resource "gas", in particular, its value and the "debts and underpayments" of Ukraine in favor of Gazprom acted precisely as an instrument of "vertical" economic and political pressure on the Ukrainian government to make decisions beneficial to Russia [11, c.17-21].

At the same time, trying to affect Ukrainian export of food products, Russia also initiated an international economic conflict, developing it according to the "horizontal" system. At this stage, the food security of the "brother" country was undermined with the application of

phytosanitary control sanctions and was accompanied by constant appeals by the Russian initiator of the conflict to the Ukrainian "partners" regarding the need to comply with international law and WTO rules. But this, as we can see, was only an economic overture to the "hybrid war" of 2014-2022 and full-scale military aggression against Ukraine in the form of a so-called "special military operation." As it is known, its consequence was a food crisis of international scope.

In the further "gas war" between Russia and Europe in 2021, the calculation of the Russian leadership was based on a conditionally "total" dependence of Europe on Russian gas not only as a raw material for industrial production, but also as a resource for financing socially and economically significant part of the EU internal policy. The purpose of such actions was to manipulate counterparties in the EU in order to achieve benefits in solving political and economic tasks important for Russia [11]. Thus, Russia was using the economy as a part of a tool for provoking and deepening the conflict situation. However, the use of this instrument by Russia caused the opposite reaction aimed at reducing its aggressive intentions as one of the subjects of international economic relations. An example of this was the international economic sanctions imposed by the world community on the Russian Federation for starting a war against Ukraine.

Another example of the use of economy as a tool in interstate political conflict is the establishment of customs and non-tariff barriers by the United States against goods produced in China. Such measures are used by the US leadership with the purpose of deterring PRC from active actions against Taiwan.

CONCLUSIONS. Summarizing what has been said, it should be stated that the economy is most actively used as a tool, as a lever of influence in interstate conflicts. On the one hand, the economy can be used as an instrument of aggression, on the other, as an instrument of forcing peace.

In modern world, economic development of the country is impossible without cooperation and collaboration in all its aspects. This leads to the growth of the well-being of society. As it has been already noted, in the vast majority of cases, the conflict aims not only to appropriate resources and wealth of the other party in the process of the conflict, but also to create, as a result of the conflict, such conditions under which, in the future, the resource and production base of one of the parties to the conflict unchanged legal affiliation passes under the actual control of another and begins to work specifically for the benefit of the winning party.

The analysis of the course of conflict processes of the modern time shows that the concept of conflict, which pursues the goal of obtaining profit for one's own economy at the expense of the opponent's resources, does little to justify itself. More and more often, the initiators of the conflict

rather set the goal of causing damage to the opponent, and therefore, against the background of reducing his opportunities, to obtain certain competitive advantages in his favor.

It is known that starting from the 18th - 19th centuries apologists of the economic theory of mercantilism believed that the country's economic growth was impossible without active foreign interventionist policy. That is why, in the views and practical actions of many supporters of expansionism and imperialism of the past and present (Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Castro, etc.), militarization continues to be one of the main drivers of economic development, as it not only stimulates the development of production, but also, in combination with the corresponding internal information (propaganda) policy, stimulates society to mobilize for the sake of the "interests and prosperity of the state". However, it should be noted that due to the dominance of such a concept, the interests of the state leadership and those close to it are the basis of the foreign policy of countries, without special consideration of the interests of society and citizens. This is the exact situation we observe today in the Russian Federation, where the interests of society and citizens are not taken into account, they are manipulated and sacrificed for the sake of the interests of the political and economic elite. The results of this policy and the functioning of this development model can be seen against the background of the Russian war against Ukraine and world democracy.

Since the time of Adam Smith, the basis of the liberal doctrine of free enterprise is the individual himself, his economic and other freedoms, which open up wide opportunities for personal enrichment and family well-being and, as a result, the growth of the wealth of the country itself [12]. The role of the state as a "night watchman" in this doctrine of the "invisible hand of the market" is to create the most favorable and competitive working conditions for national economic entities, and most important to ensure the possibility of their international cooperation and participation in the international division of labor.

The liberal doctrine that excludes war as a type of international relations is considered as the only possible type of economic growth and development of countries due to its extraordinary resource capacity, and international cooperation and trade. Also, the state should act as a kind of independent non-committal arbitrator in resolving disputes between subjects of economic activity. As soon as the state takes over the main features of an economic actor, interweaves them with a political component, there is a shift in emphasis and values from a human-centric model to a state-centric one. And taking into account the actual abstract responsibility of the official "for the actions of the state", persons who make decisions on its behalf, especially in countries with weakly developed democratic institutions, are often guided not by the public good of the people, but by their own imaginary or far-fetched interests. This behavior of the top management of the state, as practice shows, in the vast majority of cases leads to conflicts both within the country itself and at

the international level. And quite often the nature of such conflicts is also artificial, therefore it is difficult to analyze and diagnose, and the conflict itself either has rather unexpressed goals, or such goals, the achievement of which is impossible or leads to almost complete destruction (in any sense of this word) of one of the parties of the conflict. In this context, the economic component of the conflict may be well defined as its main goal, however, whether this statement will correspond to reality is a debatable question and will require an extremely thorough analysis of the conflict itself and all its components.

Among the constant paradoxes of international politics and economy is the fact that in the global dimension cooperation, collaboration in joint use of resources, production and distribution of the results of such cooperation have many examples of their superiority over conflictual methods of dispute resolution. However, conflicts do not disappear as a method of solving issues in the field of international relations, but on the contrary, they retain historical and mental persistence, high frequency and intensity of flow, become diverse, lose their locality and gain global distribution, lead to unforeseen by their initiators and participants large-scale destruction of human property and human sacrifices.

The economy remains an integral part of any conflict and in many cases is its main basis or driving force. Early and correct diagnosis and interpretation of internal and external factors of an individual international relations player will allow early identification of its real and potential conflicts, thorough analysis of challenges and risks. This will also make it possible to respond to the emerging situation as quickly and effectively as possible, in particular, in the context of limiting the possibilities of such an actor to go to active conflict actions.

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