INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

The war crimes of the Russian Federation (thousands of civilian casualties, destroyed residential infrastructure) accompanying the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on Ukraine's territory and failed attempts of the two states to negotiate, justify a need to study the factors influencing the effectiveness of negotiations in international conflicts. Indeed, the West's support for Ukraine (economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, as well as military assistance to Ukraine) weakens the aggressor and allows the Ukrainians to continue defending their sovereignty. However, these commitments cannot replace the negotiation process and the peace deal.

The article presents the main characteristics of the modern international conflict and considers its structure, highlights a range of factors influencing destructive/constructive conflict resolution, and investigates the factors hampering conflict resolution. The main sets of factors that influenced the success of the negotiation process in the 20th century international conflicts have been identified. The role of public opinion as one of the key factors influencing the negotiation process in the context of an international conflict has been substantiated. An empirical study (sociological survey) of the Ukrainian's attitude to the military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine has been conducted. Based on the analysis of the survey results, it has been found that the public opinion of Ukrainians is a factor that does not allow a diplomatic resolution of the international conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Possible ways of resuming the negotiation process between Ukraine and the Russian Federation have been proposed. The purpose of the article is to investigate and determine the factors influencing the negotiation process in international conflicts for their practical application.

Keywords: political communication, president, international conflicts, negotiation process Relevance, political interaction.

The invasion of the Russian Federation (RF) into the territory of Ukraine and subsequent war crimes have become one of the most shocking political events of the 21st century and one of the most brutal conflicts in recent history. Breached international conventions, diplomatic law rules, and inhumane civilian casualties have put into question even the hypothetical possibility of resolving this conflict peacefully. The negotiation process that showed some progress in the early stage of the conflict (some experts assessed its prospects quite optimistically) was almost completely frozen. After unveiling the occupiers' atrocities in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol, the Ukrainian citizen's attitude towards the negotiation process with the Russian Federation's representatives has changed to highly negative. However, the latter are very skeptical about dialogue with Ukraine, preferring military actions and terror of the civilian population to a peaceful conflict resolution. In order to provide for the possibility of resolving the conflict diplomatically, the factors affecting international conflict resolution should be analyzed.

Since international conflicts, either wars or covert confrontation, impact the political, economic and social global processes significantly, they constitute an essential part of political science and conflictology scientific research. The fundamental scientific research that reveals the essence of the definition of "international political conflict" includes the works of Wright Q., Pfech F., Rowloff K., Rapoport A., Wilhelmsen L., Strand H. et al.

The research on major armed international conflicts is carried out by Kay G. D., Grant D. A., Emond E. J., Tillema H. K. et al. The works by these authors distinguish by their emphasis on the ambiguity of the international armed conflict essence, mainly from the standpoint of political realism. The authors emphasise the chaotic nature of international relations, the emergence of new threats, challenges and risks, especially in the context of hybrid war, the changing nature of traditional threats, particularly information security threats, and the emergence of new political phenomena and megatrends.

Hence, the success of the negotiation process in modern international relations is determined primarily by the negotiator's ability to fully consider changes in the nature and structure of international relations, identify factors that affect the negotiation process, and be able to predict the consequences of making foreign policy decisions. A special place in the negotiation process in the context of an international conflict is occupied by political leaders of countries, presidents, foreign ministers, opinion leaders[1].

The purpose of the article is to investigate and determine the factors influencing the negotiation process in international conflicts for their practical application.

The main research methods include the comparative method – used for the comparative analysis of the degree of the factors influencing the negotiation process; sociological survey in the study of modern political discourse in Ukraine as a condition of the negotiation process for the international conflict resolution.

Main text

In modern political science, the definition given by Wright Q., the American scientist, has been widely recognized. Without making a clear distinction between international and interstate conflict, he defines international political conflict as "relations between states occurring at all levels and containing the following stages: recognized incompatibility; increased tension; pressure without the use of military force; war"[2]. An international conflict is an aspect of international relations in the form of counteraction, which states enter into on the basis of various contradictions. A wide range of objective and subjective reasons may instigate international conflicts. Therefore, it is impossible to attribute a particular conflict case to any specific type of conflict. Thus, various accompanying reasons may reinforce and complement the underlying one. In all international conflicts, the socio-economic interests of the parties play a leading role. International conflicts are characterized by their relation to internal political conflicts and the transition of an internal political conflict into an international one. In this case, an internal political conflict within a country may serve as a reason for other states to interfere in its internal affairs or cause tension between other countries over this conflict. Examples include the Korean conflict in the late 1940s and early 1950s or the Afghan conflict in the 1970s and 1980s. An international conflict may become one of the reasons for the temporary settlement of an internal political conflict. For instance, during the Second World War, the French Resistance united in its ranks the representatives of the political parties conflicting in peacetime.

The relevance of studying the factors affecting the international conflicts settlement is also due to the changing of basic conditions giving rise to the conflicts:

• heightened conflict of the modern world system due to blurring the borders between foreign and domestic policy, strengthening of the interdependence of states, and the spread of regional and local conflicts;

• legitimized conflicts based on the principle of national self-determination;

• escalated conflicts related to radically oriented social institutions and small groups, the manifestation of national extremism and racial-ethnic terrorism;

• increased number of new generation conflicts, which are based on irreconcilable contradictions, most commonly of a religious nature. These are the "battle" type conflicts with only one possible winner, where no consensus may be reached.

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[1] Bezruk, O., Tesfaiie, L. (2022). Political leadership in the electoral process: the experience of the united states. *European Political and Law Discourse, 9(1)*, 53-60. DOI: https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2022.9.1.6.

[2] Wright, Q. (2009). *The Role of International Law in the Elimination of War.* Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press-Oceana Publications Inc.

• Modern global political science does not provide a sufficient number of methods for predicting such conflicts. Neither does it present any practical ways of preventing them. It is possible to implement current theories of conflict resolution only partially.

• Political institutions and legislation do not fully meet the challenges of our time and do not have effective mechanisms for preventing and resolving international conflicts.

Fisher R., Ury W., Patton B.[1] propose to consider the following structure of the international conflict:

• Conflict participants and their characteristics – actors, parties to conflict relations (individuals, small or large groups, their position in the international structure, relevant characteristics).

• Reasons and sources of conflicts – contradictory goals and interests.

• Main parameters – objective (structural) and subjective, caused by differences in perceptions of conflict at the individual or group level. Interaction, i.e. all possible forms of conflict behaviour and participants' actions in the international arena to achieve their goals in the conflict. The scale of violent and non-violent actions – from conversation with open argumentation to war.

• Physical and social environment – the conditions in which an international conflict takes place (peculiarities and traditions, the level of the conflict participant's development, national background, crisis or success, extreme or peaceful conditions).

• The conflict consequences – depend on how the conflict proceeded, what were its reasons, conditions, severity, duration and scale. The main characteristics – destructive or constructive consequences.

Various fundamental factors influence the constructive or destructive nature of the conflict development. These include the nature of the problems affected by the conflict, characteristics of the conflicting parties, the degree of similarities and differences between the parties, factors of the situation, conflict management skills, and strategies of behaviour in the conflict. According to Deutsch M. [2], the problem's nature and severity, as well as the conflict magnitude are more critical for constructive or destructive conflict development than its specific content.

According to Burton J. and Dukes F.[3], conflict development factors include attributive tendencies, need for power and control, personal cooperative or competitive orientation, an individual's ability to generate possible alternative solutions, etc.

Krisberg L.[4] points out three main factors that make conflicts difficult to resolve:

1) the participants view their interests as mutually exclusive and perceive the conflict as a struggle;

2) different perceptions of the conflict essence relate either to the initial differences in the parties' values, or to the diverging interpretation of the essence of what is happening;

3) institutionalization of the conflict, thus "perpetuating" it in a certain way. As an example, the author cites environmental conflicts that escalate whenever a previously achieved equilibrium is disturbed.

Halperin E. and Bar-Tal D.[5], summarising the results of various studies and practical experience, have identified the following factors that influence the process of successful international conflicts resolution:

• sufficient time for a decision-making process;

• participation of third neutral parties in the negotiation process;

• timeliness in conflict resolution, working with it at early stages;

• balance of forces with the relative equality of capabilities;

• high level of the general culture of the conflict participants;

• unity of values, agreement of the conflicting parties on an acceptable solution;

• experience of the conflict party or parties to solve the problems;

• well-established relations between the parties before the conflict.

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[1] Fisher, R., Ury, W., Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving*. New York: Penguin Books.

[2] Deutsch, M. (1994). Constructive Conflict Resolution: Principles, Training and Research. *Journal of Social Issues 50(1)*.

[3] Burton, J. Dukes, F. (1990). Conflict: Practices in Management. Settlement and Resolution. New York: St. Martins Press, *XXIV*, 145-146.

[4] Krisberg, L. (1973). *Sociology of Social Conflict.* New York, *XIV*, 273-276.

[5] Halperin, E., Bar-Tal, D. (2011). Socio-psychological barriers to peace making: an empirical examination within the Israeli Jewish society. *Journal of Peace Research, 48(5),* 637-651.

The degree of similarities and differences between the parties. This factor is usually interpreted through the socio-cultural context. The common context allows us to "speak the same language", which facilitates the process of communication and understanding. It is thought that intergroup differences reinforce social contradictions.

Factors of the situation. These usually include the general climate that can ease or exacerbate the conflict; available social regulations; history of relations between the parties; participation of third parties interested in intensification or reducing the conflict.

Conflict management skills. In this context, conflictologists mainly refer to communication and decision-making skills, such as constructive methods and techniques of active listening, dialogue, the ability to distinguish positional requirements and primary interests, and perspective vision. Effective communication and a successful negotiation process are crucial tools for constructive conflict management.

Conflict management strategies. Traditionally, these strategies are described through cooperative or competitive dimensions, i.e. orientation of the conflict parties to their or third parties' interests and needs.

Lee S., Adair W., Seo S.[1] highlight such a significant factor as conflict maturity. By this, he understands a stage of conflict when all participants are ready to take their conflict seriously and want to do everything to stop it. Then follows what the author calls the "size of the bets", i.e. what is the value of the participant's loss in case of an unsuccessful outcome of the conflict for them.

The structure of the parties is the next factor. In organizational terms, the conflict parties are represented by groups. The support of the opposing sides from the strong leaders is an essential issue in the context of ease or difficulty of conflict resolution[2]. The degree of ease or difficulty of resolving a conflict situation is affected by the involvement of a neutral third party enjoying the trust of the conflicting parties.

The perceived progress of the conflict is the next factor. Is there a possibility of an equal "price" of the conflict for both sides, or does one of them feel more affected? The latter circumstance makes it difficult to find a way out. Concerning intergroup conflicts, which may extend to international ones, Zartman I.[3] emphasises the importance of the below-mentioned factors for conflict escalation or de-escalation:

1) intra-group conditions related to the processes inside the group affecting the degree of the group member's agreement or disagreement on the key conflict issues;

2) nature of the parties interaction – their actions may be provoking and causing an intensification of the conflict or, on the contrary, mitigating the confrontation and reducing escalation;

3) involving the participants who are not its direct parties though are interested in its de-escalation or protecting their interests, which also affects the mitigation or aggravation of the conflict.

The psychological approach also focuses on creating optimal conditions for conflict resolution. Thus, Rakhlis V.[4] provides the following list of necessary conditions in his research:

- the parties' representatives are sincere and open;
- the negotiators constantly maintain an emotional engagement;
- the disagreements are acknowledged;
- the both parties strive to achieve unanimity on some issues and come to mutually beneficial solutions;
- the conflict parties are open to dialogue;
- the negotiators are professionally competent;
- the both parties respect the dignity of each other.

Our analysis is based on the study "Successful Negotiation in International Violent Conflict" by Richard Jackson[5], where the author provides data on the proportion of successful negotiations that ended with the signing of a settlement agreement among the total number of international conflicts in the period from 1945 to 1995. Having analysed the history of conflicts that took place in the second half

[1] Lee, S., Adair, W. L., Seo, S. J. (2013). Cultural perspective taking in cross-cultural negotiation. *Group Decision and Negotiation, 22,* 389-405.

[2] Jeffrey, Z. R. (eds). (1988). Leadership and Negotiation in the Middle East. New York: Praeger, 70-95.

[3] Zartman, I. W., Faure, G. O. (2005). *Escalation and negotiation in international conflicts.* Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511550584.

[4] Rachlis, V., Pavlenko, O. (2020). *Negotiation and mediation: a textbook for training a professional negotiator.* Dnipro: University of Customs and Finance.

[5] Jackson, R. (2000). Successful Negotiation in International Violent Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research, 37(3).* DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037003003.

of the 20th century based on the available data, the author identified groups of factors (number of fatalities, duration of the conflict, reason of the conflict, conflict management initiator), which in his opinion influence the negotiation process:

Table 1

Factors influencing the negotiation process (according to R. Jackson)

Group of factors	Percentage of successful negotiations, %	Total number of conflicts
1	*2*	*3*
Number of fatalities		
0–500	2	304
501–1000	65	68
1001–5000	50	180
5001–10000	47	60
10000+	41	540
Issues in Dispute		
Sovereignty	47	649
Security	36	129
Self-determination	48	125
Resources	63	16
Ideology	51	101
Ethnicity	76	33
Timing		
1–2	44	62
3–12	42	159
13–16	53	191
36+	47	739
Conflict management initiator		
One party	41	656
Both parties	51	322
Third party	25	106

With regard to the military conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it would be appropriate to consider such factors as:
• the number of fatalities (according to various sources, the number already reaches tens of thousands and is growing every day);
• the concept of the conflict reason (to date, the parties have not reached a consensus on this issue and have conflicting views);
• the duration of negotiations (taking into account military and economic support from the West, Ukraine has every chance of full-fledged resistance to the actions of the Russian Federation, which may develop the conflict into a protracted one);
• a unilateral or bilateral initiative of the negotiation process, and the third party's involvement (since

Turkey has already attempted to mediate within the framework of this conflict and organised one of the rounds of negotiations on its territory).

Several authors emphasise that negotiations were an effective method for addressing such issues as ideology and ethnicity. Meanwhile, Licklider's[1] study on the settlement of hostilities found little difference between non-material issues such as issues of national identity and more tangible issues such as socio-economic ones. Harzell, who obtained similar results, suggested that adversaries in the identity conflicts and politico-economic conflicts face the same security issues related to their current relationship[2].

We fully agree with the opinion that if security problems are not resolved, it is unlikely that the negotiation process will be successful and sustainable. This is typical for all types of conflicts. Negotiation success rates declined sharply when the issue involved competing perceptions of security. Security is perhaps the most intangible issue of all in international conflict. Adversaries have to ensure their security and continue to interact in a lawless environment, which does not provide any guarantees. Unsurprisingly, negotiations over a party's sense of safety show the lowest success rates. These data indicate that identity conflicts are the most likely to be negotiated successfully, followed by conflicts over resources. However, low cell counts for these categories make it difficult to attach much significance to these results.

Thirdly, the development of the conflict into the protracted one, taking into account other circumstances, can positively influence the prospects of its resolution by diplomatic means. Based on the foregoing data, we can conclude that a conflict that lasts less than a year has lower chances of a successful negotiation than a protracted confrontation. On the other hand, in proportion to the increase in the number of fatalities in the conflict, the chances of a peaceful resolution decrease. This may be due to the influence of public opinion, which always reacts sharply to civilian casualties. In the context of the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it is worth noting that after the terrorist attacks of the Russian army in the Ukrainian cities of Bucha, Irpin and Melitopol, diplomatic negotiations were no longer perceived as a potential way to resolve the conflict. It is evident that although this list contains the most important factors for conflict management, it is not exhaustive.

Another important factor in the effectiveness of the resolution of international conflicts in the information age has become public opinion, the perception of the essence of the conflict and the prospects for a peace agreement by the citizens of the countries participating in the conflict. Debs and Goemans[3] present a model in which leaders' wartime choices are constrained by the effect those decisions have on their probability of retaining office, where the likelihood of losing office is determined by the type of audience they face at home. Similarly, Croco[4] finds that the threat of punishment induces culpable leaders to continue conflict at differentially higher rates, while Beardsley and Lo[5] suggest audience types may help account for why some countries intervene as third-party actors in ongoing conflicts.

While indicating that public opinion and especially public cohesion on matters of war are essential to actors at the negotiating table, many of these theoretical accounts largely assume that the public has some level of unified support of or opposition to conflict termination. However, empirical accounts[6] make clear that the public is rarely unified in its preferences for negotiation; more often than not, the public becomes highly polarized on these issues, both across and within the groups that are party to the conflict.

In the context of Ukrainian realities, in wartime conditions, the influence of public opinion on government decisions becomes even more significant. According to Sychova V., current two types of worldview, two archetypes – authentic Ukrainian and Soviet or pro-Russian worldview polarize Ukraine, threatening its civil consolidation and social stability. In particular, the Soviet archetype manifests itself in the curtailment of democratic views during the electoral process and in extreme situations, particularly

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[1] Licklider, R. (2003). The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993. *American Political Science Review, 89(3)*, 681-690.

[2] Hartzell, C. (1999). Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 31(1)*, 3-22.

[3] Debs A. and Goemans H. E. (2010) Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War. American Political Science Review 104(3): 430–445.

[4] Croco SE (2011) The decider's dilemma: leader culpability, war outcomes, and domestic punishment. American Political Science Review 105(3): 457–477.

[5] Beardsley, K., Lo, N. (2013). Democratic communities and third- party conflict management. *Conflict Management and Peace Science, 30(1)*, 76-93.

[6] Carlin, R.E., Love, J.G. (2018). Political Competition, Partisanship and Interpersonal Trust in Electoral Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science, 48 (1)*, 115-139.

in the conditions of today's military confrontation with the Russian Federation[1]. That is why we decided to investigate in more detail the public opinion of Ukrainians on the key issues of the confrontation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as to study how it impacts the prospects of the negotiation process.

In order to determine the current public opinion of the citizens of Ukraine regarding the key issues of the military conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the attitude of respondents to the resumption of the negotiation process and the resolution of the conflict by diplomatic means, as well as factors that have a major impact on the conflict resolution, we conducted an online survey (using the Google Forms resource) in the period from 3 to 23 June, 2022. The survey was associated with certain difficulties: inability to use traditional survey tools (face-to-face interviews), problem of forming a sampled population, complexity of interpreting the data obtained. However, this was the only opportunity to find out the public opinion of the citizens of Ukraine. The survey involved 1,000 respondents, aged from 18 to 70 years old, living in different regions of Ukraine (including those who were temporarily forced to leave their places of residence due to military operations). In order to form a general idea of the current public opinion on several key issues of the military conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it was decided to engage the respondents from eleven oblasts of Ukraine: Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Cherkasy and Kharkiv (the trend of internal displacement of citizens who suffered from the actions of the Russian Federation was also taken into account when choosing oblasts).

Based on the results of Richard Jackson's[2] research on how a conflict reason impacts the likelihood of its resolution by diplomatic means, it was decided to include in the questionnaire the question "What, in your opinion, is the reason of the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation?." The results are shown in Fig. 1.
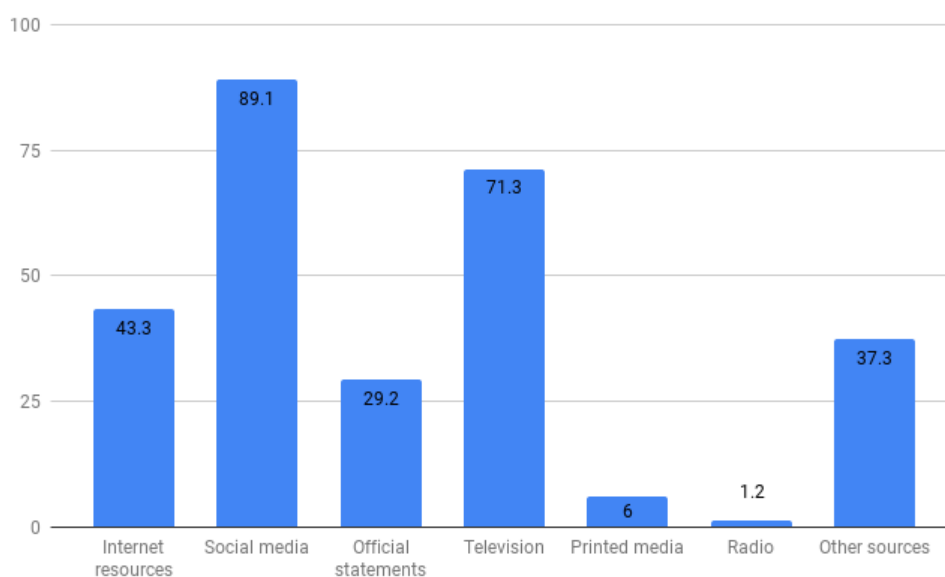
**Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question
"What, in your opinion, is the reason of the conflict between Ukraine
and the Russian Federation?"**

As the diagram shows, the overwhelming majority (73.4%) of respondents consider the desire of the Russian Federation to destroy the sovereignty of Ukraine as the main reason of the conflict. The remaining options, including ensuring the security of the Russian Federation (3.2%), the status of individual territories (3.2%), the competition for resources (10.3%), ideological contradictions and ethnic causes are practically not considered significant by Ukrainian society.

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[1] Sychova, V. (2019). Soviet Archetype In Interaction Authorities And Political Opposition As Threat To National Security Of Ukraine. *Public management, 3 (18), June (special edition)*, 444-460.

[2] Jackson, R. (2000). Successful Negotiation in International Violent Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research, 37 (3)*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037003003.

Conflicts of sovereignty are as old as the concept itself[1]. According to Rawlings and other theorists of public and constitutional law[2], sovereignty is a political attitude based on an abstract and normative statement about where political authorities should be located. It is also worth mentioning that Ukraine is in an active phase of integration into the European political space, which is confirmed by obtaining the candidate status for EU membership. Therefore, the issue of its sovereignty acquires a special character.

Some politicians saw the complete overcoming of national sovereignty in the cooperation with Europe, and some researchers associated sovereignty with war, empire and political violence[3]. For the theorists of European integration, as well as for politicians, it was more common to think about a compromise: the integration may be beneficial only if some measure of national sovereignty is "shared" with the EU institutions. That is, only by abandoning "outdated" concepts, such as national sovereignty, the EU will be able to survive and prosper in the 21st century.

In an attempt to reconcile these positions by national elites, "EU policy has been progressively reframed as compatible with a modern and pragmatic conception of sovereignty"[4]. Most recently, French President E. Macron has made much of "European sovereignty". By this, he means more European "strategic autonomy" in areas such as defence and digital technology[5]. Thus, the public opinion of Ukrainians about Russia's desire to destroy the sovereignty of Ukraine as the main reason for the military conflict echoes the public opinion of citizens of many states, in particular, Europe.

To present a comprehensive picture of public opinion in Ukraine, it was necessary to find out the sources of information about the current political situation (Fig. 2).
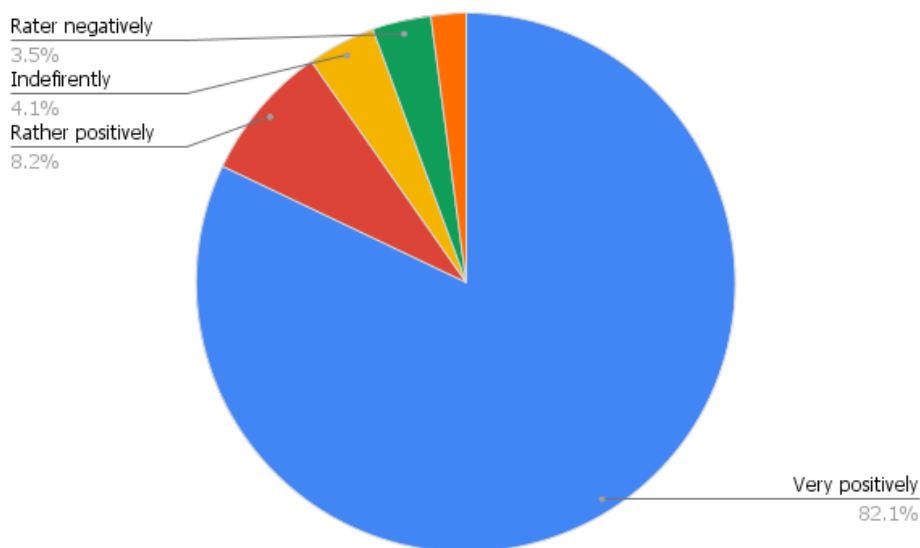
**Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question
"What sources do you use to get information
about the current situation?"**

Given the specifics of our research, it would be appropriate to argue the choice of the information sources that were given as options in the survey. Today, Internet resources can be represented as improved print media. Thus, a lot of reputable and popular publications ("Ukrainska Pravda", "Holos

[1] Grimm, D. (2015). *Sovereignty. The Origins and Future of Political and Legal Concepts.* New York: Columbia University Press.

[2] Rawlings, R., Leyland, P., Young, A. (ed.) (2014). *Sovereignty and the Law. Domestic, European and International Perspectives.* Oxford University Press.

[3] Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M. (ed.) (2006). *Debates on European Integration: A Reader.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

[4] Jabko, N. (2020). Sovereignty Matters. The Mainstreaming of Populist Politics in the European Union. *Political Sociology, 27*, 149-173.

[5] Macron, E. (2017). Discours du Président à la Sorbonne, texte intégrale. *Eu-Logos* <https://www.eu-logos.org/2017/10/19/discours-de-la-sorbonne-demmanuel-macron-les-intentions-europeennes-devoilees/> (2023, January, 18).

Krainy", "Censor.net") have their own online counterparts, where information is presented both in text form (interviews, analytical materials), as well as in audio (podcasts, interviews) and video (reports, video blogs) formats. Users also can leave comments to the news and exchange opinions on the current political events.

Social networks are a phenomenon of the information age being similar in form (also refer to the format of a site) but different in content. Spontaneous communication environment, instant delivery of information to the recipient (since the message's author is the same user), and an expanded range of active tools with the information made messengers (Telegram, Viber) practically the primary source of information in wartime. It is worth noting that such a level of interactivity also predisposes to serious security risks and opens up opportunities for manipulation (including by the enemy).

The concepts of "media-political system" and "mediacracy" have become common in the modern world due to the close connection between politics and the media. Finally, giving importance or, on the contrary, distraction from any political events often occurs through the formation of a political "agenda", which is recognised as one of the key functions of the media. Thompson J. in his work "The Media and Modernity"[1] describes the mass media as an institution that forms stereotypes of behaviour in a society, turning real politics and its integral parts into a set of constructed ideas and symbols transmitted within the information flow.

Although television is still very popular (71.3% of respondents indicated it as a primary news platform), social networks have already become the most optimal space for political communication and, as a result, a mechanism for shaping public opinion (89.1%). A distinctive feature of social networks is high interactivity and a huge number of feedback channels (comments, messages, video blogs, voting), as well as limited control (unlike the media) by the authorities. Thus, Donges[2] suggests considering social networks as a new format of political space. Besides the fact that it shapes the current public opinion, it also allows it to be actively expressed and conveyed to the country's leadership, which in turn, impacts significantly the government decisions.

As discussed earlier, the authorities tend to make populist decisions that will translate into support from the population. Amidst the military conflict, this determinism becomes even stronger, and the decisions relating to the negotiation process are made with an eye to public opinion. In order to predict the prospects and possible ways to resolve the international conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, we decided to identify the current level of public support for Ukraine's foreign policy. The results are shown in Fig. 3.
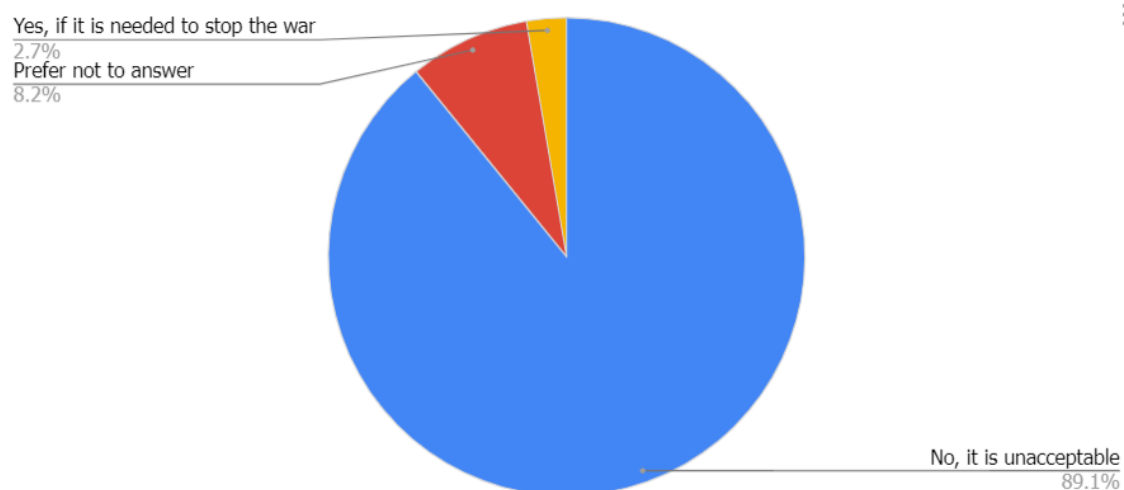
**Fig. 3. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question
"How do you assess the current actions of the central government
of Ukraine?"**

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[1] Thompson, J. B. (1996). *The Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media.* Stanford, CA: Stanford. University Press, 336.

[2] Donges, P., Jarren, O. (2019). Differenzierung und Institutionalisierung des Medien- und Kommunikationssystems. *Medien Journal, 43(3)*, 27-45.

As the diagram shows, the overwhelming majority of respondents fully support the foreign policy course of Ukraine. Active communication in the media, regular President's addresses to the people, as well as a considerable number of government representatives' pages on social networks and open political communication significantly increase the level of support for the central government by citizens of Ukraine. Unlike previous Presidents of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky's political style is characterised by a high level of interactivity[1], which along with effective foreign policy (agreements on arms supplies, economic assistance to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia), provided him with a high level of citizen's trust.

To date, Zelensky V. demonstrates a confident and quite transparent rhetoric about the prospect of resolving the military conflict. Having analysed Zelensky's statements, we identified three main points upon which Ukraine's current position in the conflict with the Russian Federation is based:

1) the President does not doubt Ukraine's victory on the battlefield[2];
2) allows the conflict to be resolved through diplomatic negotiations[3];
3) insists that any territorial compromises are unacceptable[4].

In terms of the political leader, this position proves effective for a democratic country ready to fight for its sovereignty. However, in terms of the conditions for effective negotiation process, such a position actually jeopardises a chance to resolve the conflict by diplomatic means. Thus, several scientists[5] focus on compromise as a key principle of the negotiation process. In their work, Shelef, Nadav G., and Yael Zeira argue that territorial compromises, although painful, are one of the most effective tools for an effective negotiation process. However, the authors insist that they should be applied only if there is a high level of public support[6]. Therefore, we decided to find out the level of readiness of Ukrainian society for territorial compromises in the negotiation process with the Russian Federation (Fig. 4).
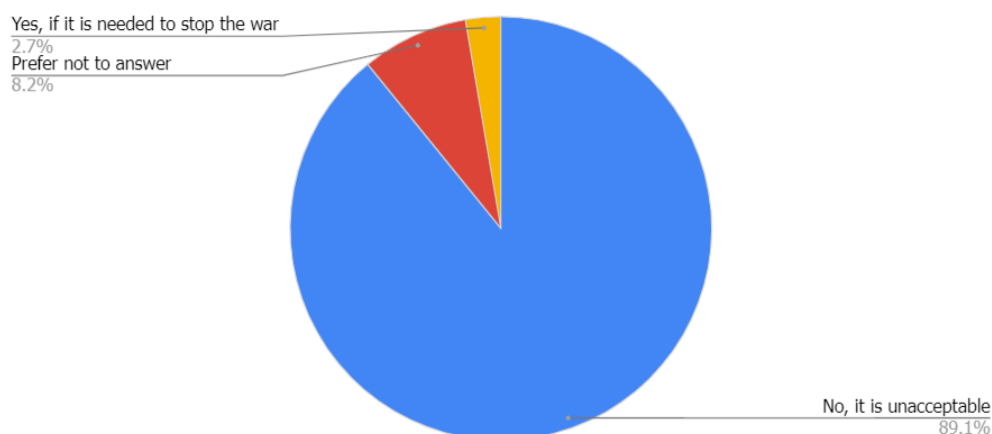
**Fig. 4. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question
"Do you consider Ukraine's territorial concessions
to the Russian Federation acceptable?"**

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[1] Chester, J.; Montgomery, K. C. (2017). The role of digital marketing in political campaigns. *Internet Policy Review, Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society. Berlin, 6(4)*, 34.

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As the above diagram shows, Ukrainian society is consolidated around the issue that any territorial concessions are unacceptable, and Ukrainian authorities take it into account. Since the population sees the Russian Federation's desire to destroy Ukraine's sovereignty as the conflict reason, this position looks quite justified and understandable.

We also decided to find out whether the President's conviction of Ukraine's victory "on the battlefield" coincides with the Ukrainian's public opinion (Fig. 5).
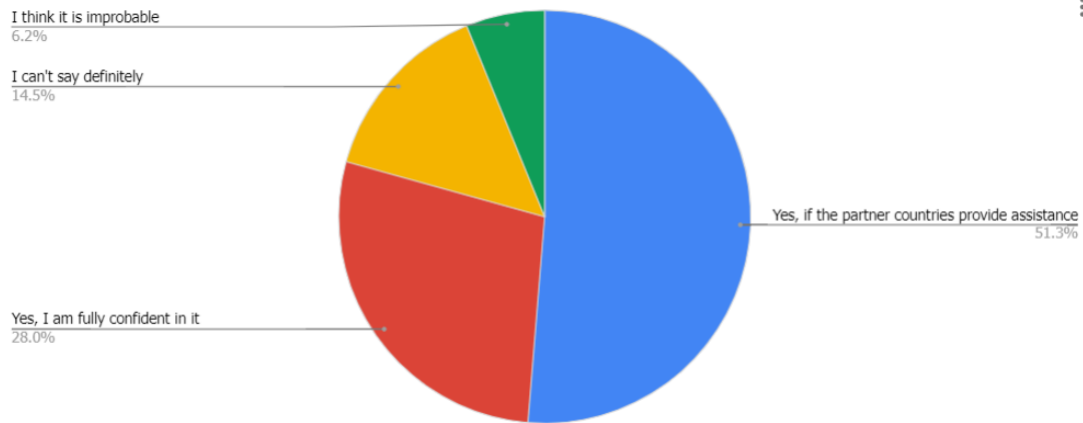
Fig. 5. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question
"Do you think a positive military solution to the conflict is possible for Ukraine?"

The overwhelming majority of respondents (51.3%) are confident of Ukraine's victory provided the partner countries give us military and economic assistance, and 28% of respondents do not consider this factor to be a key one. This public opinion influences the decision-making of the Ukrainian authorities. Successful mobilisation (no problems with the size of the army), volunteering, fundraising on social networks significantly increases Ukraine's chances of winning a long-term conflict.

Thus, it can be concluded that Ukrainian society practically does not perceive negotiations as a real mechanism for a diplomatic solution to the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. For clarity, the statistics obtained by using the Google trends tool allows us to analyse the popularity of a selected query in the Google search engine within a certain area in a limited period of time. In order to see the dynamics of the public response caused by the topic of negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, we analysed the frequency of the request "negotiations" since the beginning of the war (Fig. 6).
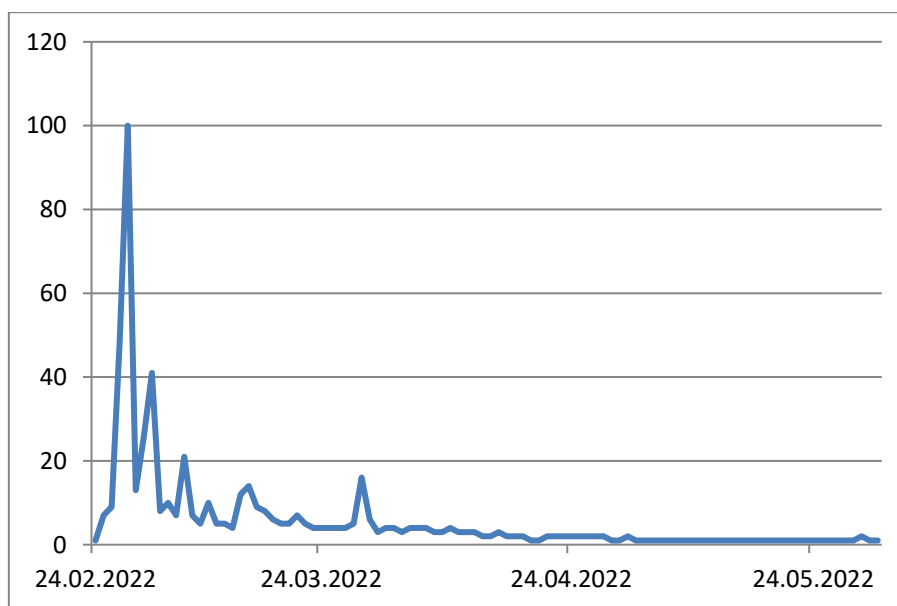
Fig. 6. Analysis of the frequency of the request "negotiations" among Ukrainian users
according to Google Trends

As the graph shows, the peak of interest of Ukrainian Internet users in the negotiation process between Ukraine and the Russian Federation occurred on 28 February, 2022, when the first meeting of negotiating groups took place in Belarus. The second round of negotiations, which took place on 2 March, 2022, caused much less public resonance. The last surge of interest in the negotiation process was recorded on 29 March, 2022, when the last (to date) round of negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation took place in Turkey. It seems that the main reasons for the decline in public interest in the negotiation process to almost zero level are as follows:

- Wide publicity of the war crimes committed by the Russian Federation in Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities, which leveled the potential of the negotiation process in the minds of Ukrainians (also noted by the President[1]).

- The inefficiency of the previous rounds of negotiations and a significant degree of disillusionment of the population.

It is worth noting that the negotiation round on 22 March, 2022 was the only one that took place at a neutral venue, and which was marked by the first steps that seemed then to be the partie's rapprochement. The negotiating groups drafted guarantees of Ukraine's security and defined the procedure of discussions on the status of disputed territories[2]. Although the negotiation process was then wholly suspended and the negotiating groups' achievements in Turkey were practically cancelled, the involvement of a mediator in the negotiation process was thought to be a possible way to settle the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

However, a "third party intervention" into the international conflicts today leaves the researches with many questions unanswered. Thus, scientists are wondering about the real results of involving third parties in international conflicts: what were the short-term and long-term effects of these interventions[3]? Is the "international community" doing its job effectively and are its actions really aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict[4]? What exactly should this intervention be in order to lead to a peace agreement[5]?

At best, mediation and peacekeeping procedures may be applied in order to reduce violent methods of influence in the conflict, which often leads only to its "freezing". Such procedures are carried out by international organisations (UN, OSCE, etc.), as well as individual states and non-governmental organisations. An example here is the work by Shtanski N. V., where the author considers the negotiations on Transnistria case settlement[6].

It is noteworthy that this conflict had similar dynamics with many other conflicts, including those of the Cold War: the negotiation stage was followed by the stage of strengthening conflict relations. In this case, as in most other modern conflicts, negotiations are resumed with the mediation of external participants. Each party may have its own mediators. Thus, in the conflict between Great Britain and Argentina, called the Falklands War, over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas Islands) in 1982 the United States, represented by Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and then UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, offered their assistance in mediation and good offices. For the United States, a military conflict between allied states, namely the NATO members and the Organisation of American States, meant the need to choose between them, which the United States sought to avoid. The UN was directly involved in the conflict, since Argentina's actions by that time had already been condemned by the Security Council. All UN member states were concerned about the current situation and realised the need to intervene in the conflict to further prevent hostilities[7].

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In 1978, when a military conflict over the Beagle Channel between Chile and Argentina seemed inevitable, the Pope proposed Cardinal Antonio Samoré to be a mediator. In this case, the Vatican's involvement was explained by a potential war between Catholic states, as well as the fact that the Pope had been involved in the internal affairs of South America for five centuries. Thus, the prerequisites for the intervention of the Catholic Church in the settlement of disputes were of a historical and religious nature[1].

However, despite the mediation by a third party in the negotiation process has been recognised as highly potential diplomatic tool, it also has a number of disadvantages, which include high risks of conflict escalation, increased demands on the mediator, long duration of the mediation process, as well as the high professionalism of mediation specialists[2].

Conclusion

Thus, international conflicts in the modern world represent a complex system of a range of political, economic and social problems. That is why their resolution by diplomatic means is so difficult to achieve. The parties to the conflict often view their positions as mutually exclusive, and its essence may be associated with insurmountable contradictions. The military conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation today poses a direct threat to the sovereignty of Ukraine, which in fact, levels the possibility of restarting a negotiation process. A sociological survey conducted in 11 regions of Ukraine shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (79.3%) are confident in Ukraine's victory (resolving the conflict with the Russian Federation) by military means; 89% are strongly against the territorial concessions. The public opinion of Ukrainians is a decisive factor that does not allow a diplomatic way to resolve the international conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

However, it is extremely important today to prepare for the negotiation process in the future, as well as to train mediation specialists who professionally solve negotiation issues and possess the skills and abilities to conduct negotiations at different levels. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian school of mediation originates and develops in the conditions of war, people without sufficient professional qualifications and motivation are involved in the negotiation process, changes in this area have a positive trend. An additional study on this topic is currently planned to consider the dynamics of attitudes towards a possible negotiation process.

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