

## **ПОЛІТИЧНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ МІЖНАРОДНИХ ВІДНОСИН**

УДК 327.5(478)

### **THE THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDYING OF THE PROBLEM OF THE SETTLING THE “FROZEN CONFLICTS” IN THE POST-SOVIET AREA**

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### **ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ПРОБЛЕМЫ УРЕГУЛИРОВАНИЯ «ЗАМОРОЖЕННЫХ КОНФЛИКТОВ» НА ПОСТСОВЕТСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ**

#### **Doroshko M.**

Doctor hab., Professor, Head of the Department of International Regional Studies of the Institute of International Relations of Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University. E-mail: doroshko7@ukr.net

#### **Alexeichenko O.**

PhD, Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations and International Information of the Ukrainian-Arab Institute for International Relations and Linguistics the name of the Averroes Interregional Academy of Personnel Management. E-mail: Alexeychenko@gmail.com

#### **Voloshenko I.**

PhD, Assistant Professor of the Department of International Regional Studies of the Institute of International Relations of Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University. E-mail: voloshenkoinna@gmail.com

#### **Дорошко М. С.**

Доктор історичних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри міжнародного регіонаознавства Інституту міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Електронна пошта: doroshko7@ukr.net

#### **Алексейченко О. В.**

Кандидат політичних наук, доцент кафедри міжнародних відносин та міжнародної інформації Українсько-Арабського інституту міжнародних відносин та лінгвістики імені Аверроеса Міжрегіональної академії управління персоналом. Електронна пошта: Alexeychenko@gmail.com

#### **Волошенко І.О.**

Кандидат політичних наук, асистент кафедри міжнародного регіонаознавства Інституту міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Електронна пошта: voloshenkoinna@gmail.com

#### **Дорошко Н. С.**

Доктор исторических наук, профессор, заведующий кафедрой международного регионоведения, Института международных отношений Киевского национального университета имени Тараса Шевченка. Электронная почта: doroshko7@ukr.net

#### **Алексейченко А. В.**

Кандидат политических наук, доцент кафедры международных отношений и международной информации Украинско-Арабского института международных отношений и лингвистики шимени Аверроеса Межрегиональной академии управления персоналом. Электронная почта: Alexeychenko@gmail.com

**Волошенко І.А.**

Кандидат политических наук, ассистент кафедры международного регионоведения Института международных отношений Киевского национального университета имени Тараса Шевченко. Электронная почта: voloshenkoinna@gmail.com

**Abstract.** *The article is devoted to the analysis of such threats of regional and global security as "frozen conflicts", and the approaches of their settlement in the post-Soviet space. The aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in relation with Ukraine, actualize this topic, because there is a threat of appearance a similar conflict on the territory of Ukraine.*

*The paper analyzes the theoretical approaches to the research of "frozen" and ethnopolitical conflicts by domestic (G.Perepelitsa, O.Kartunov, A.Kisse, V.Kotygorenko) and foreign (R. Bruebooker, E. Hobsbawm, R.Dahrendorf, J. Rothschild, E. Smith) scientists. Considerable attention is paid to the study of the understanding of such conflicts by russian scientists (M. Lebedeva, A. Zdravomyslov, A. Tsigankov).*

*The paper determined the main reasons and preconditions of interethnic contradictions on the post-Soviet area. Also determined the main approaches to the category of "frozen conflict" and their peculiarities in the region. The process of resolving such conflicts and their mechanisms, proposed by different scientific schools, is thoroughly studied. In the paper is determined the role of mediation in resolving conflicts of this kind.*

**Key words:** *"frozen conflicts", interethnic relations, ethnopolitical conflict, settlement, post-Soviet space, political science.*

**Анотація.** *Статтю присвячено аналізу таких загроз регіональної і глобальної безпеки, як «заморожені конфлікти», а також підходів щодо їх врегулювання на пострадянському просторі. Агресивна політика Російської Федерації по відношенню до України, як ніколи актуалізує дану тему, оскільки існує загроза появи подібного конфлікту і на території України.*

*В роботі проаналізовано теоретичні підходи до дослідження «заморожених» та етнополітичних конфліктів як вітчизняних (Г.Перепелиця, О. Картунов, А. Кіссе, В. Котигоренко), так і зарубіжних (Р. Брюбейкер, Е. Гобсбаум, Р. Дарендорф, Дж. Ротшильд, Е. Сміт) вчених. Значну увагу приділено дослідженню розуміння подібних конфліктів російськими вченими (М. Лебедева, А. Здравомислов, А. Циганков).*

*З'ясовано основні причини та передумови виникнення міжетнічних суперечностей на пострадянському просторі, визначено основні підходи до визначення категорії «заморожений конфлікт» та особливостей їх існування в регіоні. Докладно вивчено процес врегулювання таких конфліктів та його механізми, запропоновані різними науковими школами. Визначено роль посередництва у врегулюванні конфліктів подібного виду.*

**Ключові слова:** *«заморожені конфлікти», міжетнічні відносини, етнополітичний конфлікт, врегулювання, пострадянський простір, політична наука.*

**Аннотация.** *Статья посвящена анализу таких угроз региональной и глобальной безопасности, как «замороженные конфликты», а также подходов к их урегулированию на постсоветском пространстве. Агрессивная политика Российской Федерации по отношению к Украине, как никогда актуализирует данную тему, поскольку существует угроза появления подобного конфликта и на территории Украины.*

*В работе проанализированы теоретические подходы к исследованию "замороженных" и этнополитических конфликтов как отечественных (Г.Перепелица, О.Картунов, А.Киссе, В.Котигоренко), так и зарубежных (Р. Брюбейкер, Э. Хобсбаум, Р.Дарендорф, Дж. Ротшильд, Е.Смит) ученых. Значительное внимание уделено исследованию понимания подобных конфликтов российскими учеными (М. Лебедева, А.Здравомислов, А.Цыганков).*

*Выявлены основные причины и предпосылки возникновения межэтнических противоречий на постсоветском пространстве, определены основные подходы к определению категории "замороженный конфликт" и особенностей их существования в регионе. Подробно изучен процесс урегулирования таких конфликтов и его механизмы, предложенные различными научными школами. Определена роль посредничества в урегулировании конфликтов подобного вида.*

**Ключевые слова:** «замороженные конфликты», межэтнические отношения, этнополитический конфликт, урегулирование, постсоветское пространство, политическая наука.

**The current problems.** The conflict in the east of our state provoked by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine actualized the theme of the ethnic conflicts that usually represent a legacy of the former empires. It is known that after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 a number of the post-soviet states encountered the problem of the settlement of the ethnic armed conflicts. Some of them, like the conflict between the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and Russia or the war of clans in Tajikistan were fortunately resolved one way or another, the rest of the conflicts – in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova, Abkhazian and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, as well as the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorny-Karabakh – evolved into the “frozen” ones and became a threat to the regional and international security. Therefore, the development of the approaches to the settlement of the “frozen conflicts” has now become not only an important political issue but also a pressing scientific problem for scholars – foreign affairs experts, conflict-resolution experts and ethnopolitical scientists.

The researchers of the past and present time have created a rich body of scholarly works devoted to the definition of the theoretical and methodological approaches to the studying ethnic and ethnopolitical conflicts. Among Ukrainian researchers we mark out the papers by O. Kartunov [12-13], A. Kisse [14], V. Kotyhorenko [17], O. Maiboroda [19], H. Perepelytsia [24-29], and among the foreign scholars – the scientific research results achieved by R. Abdulatipov [1-2], R. Brubaker [6], R. Dahrendorf [7-8], E. Hobsbawm [11], M. Lebedeva [18], E. Pain [22-23], J. Rothschild [35-36], E. Smith [39], V. Tishkov [41-43], A. Zdravomyslov [46-48]. The authors of these papers define the essence, typology and conflict resolution mechanisms, but the theme of the settlement of the postponed or the “frozen” conflicts is still on the periphery of the scientific discourse. We will try to fill up this gap focusing on the definition of the essence of the “frozen conflicts,” the analysis of the theories of and the mechanisms for their resolution remembering that all the postponed conflicts we study have a common origin – they are engendered by the imperial practices of Russian tsarism and bolshevism based on the assimilation of peoples of the former imperial entities.

**The aim of the article.** The aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet area, the emergence of new and the prolongation of the existence of old conflicts in the region, requires elucidation of the basic approaches to understanding the concept of "frozen conflict". The main objectives of the paper are to analyze the scientific approaches to the study of the problem of "frozen conflicts" in the post-Soviet space in domestic and foreign political science of international relations.

**Important research results.** The contemporary scientific literature studying conflicts in the field of interethnic relations does not offer the clear-cut division of the conflicts into interethnic and ethnopolitical ones. The interethnic conflicts defined as a variety of social conflicts where interests of two and more peoples/ethnicities intersect are inherent in any empire-type state entity, as the Soviet Union undoubtedly was. For a long time, the interethnic antagonisms in the USSR whose potential had been laid in the formula of the arbitrary definition of frontiers among the constituents of the soviet federation without regard to the ethnic factor were contained by the repressive nature of the communist regime, the official course of the soviet government towards the strengthening of the so-called “peoples’

friendship” and the military might of the state. All these, combined with the course of the communist party towards the creating of a classless, hence deprived of the ethnicities society, was not conducive to the obtaining even by the titular nations of the union republics of the “official” authorization to create a structured group aware of their difference from the rest. In that way, according to the German researcher of totalitarianism H. Arendt, the “fragmented sameness” was necessary created to strengthen totalitarianism [3, pp. 217-233].

It is known that the ruling stratum imposed on the population of the USSR the idea of the absence of conflicts in the national development of different ethnic groups in the communist society disregarding the generally accepted definition of the conflict resolution scholars stating that a conflict as the social interaction whose participants (individuals, groups, organizations) consciously and openly stand in the opposition to each other because of the real or imagined incompatibility of their interests, aspirations, views, is an integral part of the functioning of any society. Such opposition is not a pathology of the social life but a mode of the existence of society. That is why, widely promoted in the Soviet Union the idea of the conflict-free development of the society is utopic, since, as R. Dahrendorf said, “where the society exists, there are also conflicts...” [8, p. 31]. The scholar believed that such communist ideologemes as the “unity of the people” and the “classless society” are only two of many manifestations of the suppression of conflicts under the guise of their resolution [31, p.710].

Therefore, as long as the regime of the communist party’s total power functioned in the USSR, such science as conflict resolution studies and conflicts themselves were tabooed. The age of perestroika and glasnost in the USSR revealed the interethnic antagonisms hidden for years and triggered a mechanism of their escalation on the wave of the national state rebirth of the peoples oppressed by the communist empire. The official myth of the “final resolution of the issue of interethnic relations” in the USSR and the “creation of a particular community of the soviet people” set in the text of the last soviet constitution was then ultimately buried, instead, the communist government in the USSR, and after its collapse – the leaderships of a number of the new independent states faced the problem of the resolving interethnic conflicts, which evolved in the early 1990s into the ethnopolitical conflicts where the basic struggle is for the power, territories, and resources.

The international practices in the resolving conflicts and the conflict resolution studies argue that any conflict, including an ethnopolitical one, has a typical structural-semantic form the key elements of which include the subobject, the object and the matter of a conflict, the conflict-ridden consciousness and the conflict behavior. The subjects of the ethnopolitical conflicts commonly involve 1) an ethnically and politically conscious individual; 2) the ethnic groups, nations, indigenous peoples and the ethno-national minorities; 3) the ethno-national organizations, associations and movements; 4) the state and its agencies” [31, p. 501]. The experience in the developing and the functioning of the criminal oligarchic model of power established in the bigger part of the territory of the former USSR enables, in our opinion, to add to the list of subjects of conflict also the representatives “of the criminal groups pursuing certain goals” [47, p. 210].

“The political power, the material and spiritual values of the members to a conflict (land, human and natural resources, culture, language and so on) usually serve as the object of an ethnopolitical conflict,” while its matter or the basis consists in “an endeavor of an individual, ethno-national communities, society and the state to create the most favorable conditions for their existence and development” [31, p. 501].

The conflict-ridden consciousness is an indispensable element of the conflict structure representing a special, specific state of the social consciousness when conflicting parties are aware of the differences, even antagonism of their interests, goals, interests, needs and values and their transformation into the motivation of their behavior and activity. According to the noted Ukrainian conflict resolution scholar H. Perepelytsia, the conflict-ridden consciousness is characterized by the presence of a specific, ideal, unique to it entity – “an enemy image” in

the form of the certain perceptions, ideas and ideological deviations regarding the other party. In “an enemy image,” the conflicting party is reflected and assessed subjectively, perversely, through the prism of such notions as the “hostility,” the “evil,” the “hate,” the “aggression,” the “anti-humanity,” the “damage,” the “inferiority,” and the “meanness.” An “enemy image” is shaped at both the everyday and the ideological levels” [32, p. 31].

The enemy image building technology was the most effectively employed for the political purposes by the soviet totalitarian system, for whose authorities the creation of an “image of the enemy,” especially domestic, became a convenient and the effective tool for the suppression of any manifestations of the ethno-national consciousness. Under the slogan of the struggle against the “enemies of the people,” the ethnic and the national rights, the the equality in interethnic and the cross-national relations were unprecedentedly violated, which was displayed not only in the cultural and spiritual but also in the political spheres.

Consequently, it is arguable that the real conditions developed under the totalitarian system in the USSR for the emergence of the conflict-ridden consciousness in the ethnopolitical area, but the repressions, the “purges” and the other heavy-handed methods, as well as the “ideological brainwashing” of the population kept them in an embryonic latent state. The breakup of the USSR the “unfroze” conflict-ridden consciousness and, accordingly, the fostered conflict behavior development, having provoked a number of the interethnic and the ethnopolitical conflicts resembling the “frozen conflicts,” which is the subject of our study.

Officially pursuing a unique policy of the ethnonationalism cultivation, the soviet leaders forged in fact a weapon for the destruction of the USSR. It is noteworthy that as early as in 1976 the renowned American sovietologist R. Pipes had predicted at the international conference “ The nationalities and the nationalism in the USSR” the future collapse of the USSR just for the ethnic reasons [37, pp. 23-24]. Since by the time of the demise of the USSR a crisis hit both the political and the ethnic spheres of the social life, their symbiosis resulted in a number of the ethnopolitical conflicts based on the desire of the elites of the ethnic communities to establish their own states.

The essence of the ethnopolitical conflicts, the American ethnopolitical scientist J. Rothschild believes, that there occurs the so-called “politicization of ethnicity” (or identity), that is, the “mobilizing ethnicity from a psychological or cultural or social datum into the political leverage for the purpose of altering or reinforcing such systems of structured inequality between and among ethnic categories” [35, p. 2]. The process of the politicization of the ethnicity accelerates or hinders the political development of a state so that the old and new international actors respectively disappear and appear on the political stage of the world. The politicization of the ethnicity is accompanied with the conflicts on the ethnic, cultural, social and economic grounds, while the political component of such conflicts is central. That is to say, the interethnic antagonisms in any case move to the political level where an ethnopolitical conflict arises.

Consequently, if the ethnic datum, as defined by J. Rothschild, turns “into the political leverage” [35, p. 2], a conflict in the society becomes inevitable. The ethnopolitical conflicts usually assume a destructive nature and cannot serve (unlike other forms of the social conflicts) as a source of the positive changes. The ethnic separatism, which often takes the form of the armed confrontation, is the most dangerous among the ethnopolitical conflicts.

The armed separatism represents a special form of the ethnopolitical conflict, where one of the parties identifying itself in the ethnic terms declares its intention to set up its own state and forms the armed groups holding themselves out as a basis for the future army. The state, which faced the problem of the territorial integrity, acts as the other part to the conflict. In addition to an armed struggle, separatists launch the information warfare against the state and the society. As the Russian scholar V. Tishkov notes, the slogan of the attaining independence is supplemented with the propaganda based on a hostile stance towards the state and the rest of the population, the creation of a distorted picture of the state of affairs in the state – the

subject of the secession [43, p. 351]. The example of the Russia's armed and the information support for the separatists in Ukrainian Donbas once again convinces us of the urgency of information countermeasures against the threat of separatism.

The public consciousness manipulation technologies are crucial in the mobilization of the ethnicity. At present, according to J. Smith, the political leaders can quite easily manipulate the ethnicity to mobilize the population, especially during the fundamental socioeconomic changes in society [10, p. 126]. The separatist movements in the territory of the former USSR whose intensification fell on the time of its collapse are a dramatic confirmation there.

Consequently, the process of the politicization of the ethnicity (identity) leads to the disintegration from the complex society into its integral components. Therefore, politicization of the ethnicity, the aspiration of the ethnic minorities for the self-determination, the power and the resources, in particular, the own territory, inevitably lead to the confrontation, which gradually passes into the stages of violence, disintegration of the social system and further into that of non-violence and a lengthy negotiating process.

The ethnopolitical conflicts are peculiar and inimitable in time. At the same time, the researchers in the ethnopolitical conflicts engage in an attempt to classify or typologize them. One of the generally accepted typologies provides for the division of the ethnopolitical conflicts by the specifics of the character of the conflicting parties. There are conflicts between and the ethnic group and the state (Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Basque Country in Spain) and the conflicts between the ethnic groups (Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo; Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the Osh region of Kirgizstan).

The practice of settling "frozen conflicts" in the post-soviet area has shown that an ethnopolitical conflict is the most difficult to resolve, since as distinct from an interethnic conflict it is characterized by a larger scale, severity, sphere of its outbreak, and settlement complexities [45, p. 342].

The ukrainian researcher M. Plaksenko defines the "frozen conflicts" in the post-soviet area as the "mothballed ethnopolitical conflicts which cannot be resolved because of the reluctance of the conflicting parties to settle contradictions, which is fraught with the destabilization across the region and the dependence on the external influence" [30, p. 8]. Examining the "frozen conflicts" in Moldova's Transdnestrrian region, Nagorny-Karabakh, Georgia's Abkhazian and South Ossetian regions, the author concluded that the definition of the "frozen" conflict M. Plaksenko formulated and the features peculiar to the Transdnestrrian conflict she studies are also the characteristic of the other "frozen" conflicts in the post-soviet area (differing in the prevalence of a particular conflictogenic factor -- linguistic, religious, economic, and geopolitical).

The russian researcher A. Bolshakov considers the "frozen conflicts" as a phenomenon of the post-soviet area and defines them as "conflicts that were not politically settled but already went through the stage of the direct armed confrontation" [4, p. 28]. Comparing the "frozen conflicts" with an overt armed confrontation, A. Bolshakov gives the preference to the former, since, in his opinion, the "freeze" of the ethnic armed conflicts halts the process of the ethnic cleansing, allows time for a truce and attempts to develop a political solution" despite the fact that "it cannot completely resolve the problem of the refugees and the forced migrants, effectively develop the process of the post-conflict recovery of the economy and social sphere" [5, p. 17].

Thus, the advantages of the "frozen" conflicts over, tentatively speaking, the "hot" ones lie in the cessation of the hostilities, the attainment of a truce and in an attempt to find a settlement formula mutually acceptable to the parties to the conflict using the political and diplomatic tools.

The presence of the disinterested mediators working solely towards the reaching of a compromise solution is an ideal theoretical construct, but in reality, it does not exist. From a logical point of view, any ethnic armed conflict passes through three main stages (phases): an

initial stage of the conflict development, an armed (power) stage, and a stage of the political settlement of the conflict. All these stages are no more than the ideal types, although scientifically important for comparative the analysis and analysis structuring.

Such an important parameter of the methodological pattern of an ethnic armed conflict as the “conflict completion” is considered in the current conflict resolution studies as a part of three basic theoretical models – the “model of the conflict settlement,” the “model of the conflict resolution,” and the “model of the conflict transformation.” All these models are in demand both academically and practically when settling current ethnic armed conflicts.

It is just the settlement of conflicts that is actually the only possible strategy of its completion. At the same time, the before-the-fact prevention of the overt ethnic conflicts, particularly in their armed forms, also seems the important. The conflict resolution studies and the political science have developed the various methods of settlement, the resolution and the transformation of the ethnic armed conflicts. The negotiations, the mediation, the arbitration, the public diplomacy, and the controlled communication are rather effective means of the performing the current peacemaking activities. They are of a universal nature, that is to say, applicable in different regions, countries, cultures, although their expediency depends, of course, on the specific conditions of a given ethnic armed conflict. Such methods as the federalization, the building of a communal democracy, humanitarian intervention and so on are only suitable in a limited number of cases under certain circumstances.

The search of the mechanisms of the reconciling hostile parties promoted the formation in the research environment of a separate scientific field – the settlement of conflicts. It is relatively young and consists of the mutual influence and the interaction of various academic disciplines with the leading role of the political science, whose environment gave rise to a few scientific schools that suggest mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts [18, p. 6].

The representatives of the “conflict settlement school” regard the conflict as an art of the choosing such forms of the intervention that enable to come to a political agreement, which will be implemented by the authorized officials having adequate resources and powers to make the conflicting parties to enter into an agreement [10, p. 76]. Instead of trying to end a conflict, the conflict settlement provides for, according to the representatives of this school, the cooperation of the parties to a conflict. Thus, it is the search of the mutually acceptable agreement between the parties to a conflict by way of the negotiations and the mediation procedures that forms the basis for the political settlement of the conflicts [18, p. 28].

For the most representatives of the “school of the ethnopolitical conflict resolution,” consideration of the latter of the point of view of the power politics is unacceptable. An emphasis is put here on the intervention of the third parties not vested with the authority and their search for the solutions based on the careful examination of the causes of a conflict and the building of the new relations. The prominent British conflict resolution scholar C. Mitchell refers to the true completion of a conflict only its resolution reached in the course of the lengthy mutual analysis by the adversaries of both the origins and the content of their controversy whereupon a stable balance of the parties emerges. C. Mitchell regards a compromise reached through the settlement as fragile and short-lived, since the underlying cause of antagonism is not eliminated, and the settlement itself is only a result of the successful compulsion of one of the adversaries to an action advantageous to the other party or mediator [20, pp. 89–90].

The representatives of the “school of conflict transformation” consider as a priority the providing support, including military, to the groups within a conflict rather than the mediation of the third parties [38]. But in general, the conflict transformation theorists advocate for the integration into the conflict settlement process of the largest possible number of actors and the maximum use of the multi-track diplomacy.

The category of the “institutionalization of the conflict” holds an increasingly important place in the conflict resolution theoretical discourse. According to the Russian scholar M. Kosolapov, an institutionalized conflict differs from a non-institutionalized one only in

having been entered into the certain limits, while the resolution is the subject to rules whose violation entails rather stringent sanctions oftentimes not only against the violator but also vis-à-vis all parties to a conflict [15, p. 176].

Amid increasing proneness to the conflict in the international relations, the problem of the international intervention in conflicts to prevent, the settle, the resolve them, as well as to mitigate negative implications comes to the fore, as the conflicts represent a threat and the destabilizing factor to some of the neighboring nation states and entire regions. When it comes to intervention in a conflict of someone other than its sides, the general concept of the “third party” is used for the settlement purposes [18, p. 181]. It is customary to distinguish such means of the influence of the third side as the provision of the assistance in the seeking a peaceful solution and the using of the negotiation approach, including by the direct mediation and the supervision of the course of the negotiations, on the hand; as well as by enforcement, exertion of pressure through application of sanctions, blockades and other restrictive measures. The mediation is considered as the most common form of the influence on the conflict on the part of the third side being understood more widely than as one of the procedures performed by the diplomacy along with such procedures as the accommodation or the shuttle diplomacy [9, p. 49].

The russian scholar A. Nikitin rightly notes that currently it is difficult to draw a distinction between the intervention in conflicts of outside forces in their own interests, as new sides of a conflict and relatively impartial intervention in order to restore international peace and stability [21, p. 3]. Also, it is rather widely believed among researchers that in the event conflict situations arise outside the field of the geopolitical interests of the great powers, the international activities aimed at settling a conflict come down to simulation of the activity without exerting significant efforts [16, p. 292].

It is rather widely believed among the representatives of the western school of the conflict resolution studies that the impartiality of the third side is not necessarily a key to success of negotiations. Despite the fact that as far back as several decades ago the need for the impartiality of the third side was generally acknowledged, today, as disputes over the expediency of the outside intervention in a conflict without the consent of the conflicting sides, as well as without an appropriate mandate from the international legal institutions intensify, the issue of the admissibility of partiality of the third side emerges full blown. Thus, for example, C. Reimann holds that “given the nature of the most global intra-state conflicts, it seems appropriate not to treat the notions of impartiality and partiality as mutually exclusive characteristics of the third sides, but rather to focus on their somewhat ambivalent and complementary nature” [10, p. 53].

The american researcher R. J. Fisher concludes in one of his papers that the mediators most often join the settlement process solely “to advance their own unilateral interests, with no intention of compromise or joint problem-solving, and at times to stall for time while they develop new capacities to pursue the alternative strategies” [10, p. 232]. At the same time, he comes to a conclusion that “if biased mediators with the political agendas and tangible interests in the dispute can be effective, the range of the mediation possibilities is broadened” [10, p. 232].

The international peacemaking is one of the conflict settlement activities having become over the last years one of the priority lines of the foreign and domestic policies of many states. Peacemaking is based on a whole system of conflict settlement tools, international legal means, and the international treaty framework. Today, peacemaking acts simultaneously as a political process of the accommodation and interaction of interests of political entities and diplomatic activity, as well as a form of the interference in affairs of the individual states, and a type of the military operations, forms of armed struggle [21, p. 5].

The application of sanctions – trade, financial, and political – is a common method of the third side’s influence on the sides to a conflict. The introduction of sanctions does not depend on the will of the conflicting sides and in its classical form should occur based on a



the decision of the specially authorized international institutions in the case of a threat to peace, breach of peace or an act of aggression. In practice, sanctions are quite often applied by the decision of one state or a group of states and in situations where the probability of an armed scenario development is extremely low. It is not uncommon that sanctions are imposed in the guise of the applying some restrictive measures or new regimes (customs, frontier etc.) to the conflicting sides or one of them.

As the Russian researcher M. Lebedeva notes, sanctions do not resolve the problem of political settlement and quite often lead to the isolation of a country from the outside world, which limits the opportunities for the seeking conflict resolution by peaceful means [18, p. 236]. Moreover, sanctions can result in both enhanced internal unity and cohesion, and the polarization of society, which, in its turn, can also lead to the hardly predictable consequences and escalate the conflict. Overall, the application of all types of sanctions inevitably gives rise to their adverse impact on the development of the economic processes in the country on which they are imposed and, as a result, can provoke all kinds of the social deformations: changes in the demographic processes, increased migration, especially that of the employable population, from the zone of conflict, declining social living standards in the zone of conflict, and impossibility for the state to maintain social guarantees. All this is able can encourage the radical sentiments both within political elites and among various segments of the population. These consequences most often influence both the course of the negotiation processes and the degree of the public confidence in the mediation institutions, since impartiality of the third side is challenged.

When talking about the negotiations as a mechanism for settlement of conflicts their quality evolution should be noted. Thus, today multilateral comprehensive mechanisms significantly prevail over traditional bilateral political negotiations. Currently, multilateral negotiations on the settlement of conflicts provide for availability of a three-level format: the highest political level – the heads of the state or government, the diplomatic level and the expert level. Higher effectiveness of the multilateral diplomacy mechanisms as compared to the traditional bilateral format of negotiations is exemplified by the history of the negotiations on the Transdniestrian settlement. Thus, for example, in 2001, when the authorities of Moldova and those of the self-proclaimed Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic stopped the official high-level negotiations, the guarantor countries and the third side intermediaries had to establish in a very short time an auxiliary negotiation mechanism that would have enabled to maintain a dialog between the sides to the conflict at the level of their political representatives. For that end, the establishment of the “Permanent Conference on the Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement” was initiated. At present, it is just the consultative forum that represents the sole permanent multilateral comprehensive negotiation mechanism operating in the Transdniestrian settlement process.

As to the current interpretation of negotiations as a means of settling conflicts, the special mention should go to the most general definition of negotiations as a special type of the discussion focused on the resolving contradictions of interests of its participants in the event that the participants consider contradictions as a problem subject to the resolution by the means of an arrangement and (or) agreement between the sides.

However, the practice has shown that seeking of compromise to resolve a specific problem by no means always underlies the motivation for the negotiation process. For example, when a conflict is not resolved for a long period, and it is hard to find motives for reaching a compromise, the sides often simulate the negotiations intended to stall for time or discredit the other party. Quite often negotiations begin just to accuse after some time the adversary of their failure, reluctance to resolve the problem through the negotiations and engaged in armed activities against it. The political science defined this phenomenon as “quasi negotiations,” “instrumental negotiations,” “camouflaging negotiations” and so forth [18, p. 241].

The british conflict resolution scholar C. Mitchell refers voluntary acceptance (without any outside pressure) of an agreement, its adequacy and lack of necessity for its support by a third side to be executed to the key parameters of the conflict resolution [20, pp. 89–90]. The russian scholar M. Lebedeva distinguishes three types of the agreements on conflict settlement – a truce (ceasefire) agreement in cases where a conflict was at the armed stage before signing; a conflict settlement agreement (to be reached as a result of negotiations); a conflict resolution agreement (moving negotiations to a fundamentally new level) [18, p. 42]. The russian researcher P. Tsygankov discerns four conflict resolution methods: 1) an agreement by consensus of all sides; 2) an agreement according to the legislative or moral will of an external force; 3) an agreement imposed by one of the sides to the conflict; 4) a situation where an old conflict becomes irrelevant and is resolved by itself [44, p. 150].

Generally speaking, the ultimate objective of a mediation mission consists in the implementation of the arrangements formalized in an agreement and ensuring their observance by the parties to the conflict. Because there are many examples in the world practice when peace agreements imposed from outside met with the very first obstacle and did not exercise any guarantee function. The research data presented by the russian author O. Stepanova can partially lend evidence thereof; she points out that in spite of 144 peace agreements concluded after the end of the “Cold War” to settle conflicts, the armed confrontation resumed in the territory of about 40% of the countries sides to conflicts [16, p. 37].

The scholars of the University of Notre Dame (USA) calculated that in 2008 the international mediators participated in the process of settling nearly 77 conflicts of various degrees of intensity. Overall, they contributed to signing of 52 peace agreements half of which were not implemented even at the initial stage [34]. In that context, the Transdnestrian settlement during which several tens of agreements were concluded none of which the sides of the conflict execute provides an illustrative example. In this connection, the most conflict resolution scholars hold that the settlement process is effective only provided those agreements made with the assistance of the mediators are backed by a safeguards system and the third-side supervision of their implementation, so that conflict resolution ensues as a result of the compliance with an agreement.

Usually, the ethnopolitical conflicts are hard to resolve, because there arises an extremely difficult task to find ways to meet both non-material interests and demands as to raising of the status, the recovery of the “ancestral” territories, the increasing economic opportunities, and greater access to the political power and the like. Therefore, one may talk rather of settlement, the “freeze” or the transformation of the ethnopolitical conflicts into a less destructive than of their resolution [33].

The “frozen conflicts” represent a phenomenon of the post-soviet area; they are preferable to overt the armed confrontation of antagonists, which results in numerous victims, refugees, material losses and destruction. The “freeze” of the ethnic armed conflicts halts the ethnic cleansing process, allows time for a truce and attempts to develop a political solution but it cannot completely solve the problem of refugees and forced migrants, effectively develop the process of the post-conflict recovery of the economy and social sphere.

Most often, to settle the ethnopolitical conflicts coercive (ethnic dominance) and consensual (consolidation, arbitration) methods are used; the provision is also made for the territorial methods of power distribution (regional autonomy, federalism, and cantonization). Since the political self-determination within the framework of territorial integrity of the state is unacceptable to the unrecognized states of the post-soviet, division (secession) serves as an important territorial method of settling the ethnopolitical conflicts as part of the strategy of the depoliticizing ethnic antagonisms. In the context of the secession, a territory inhabited by an ethnic minority withdraws from a state; as a result of this, the ethnic minority becomes a majority in a new state entity. The right to self-determination constitutes the regulatory framework for secession based on the territorial division; in practice, however, the secession

is a rare phenomenon. The International community responds rather cautiously to the secession processes (Transnistria, Abkhazia, Chechnya and so on). The principle of self-determination successfully works where there is no large discontented minority. Norway's withdrawal from the union with Sweden in 1905, the establishment of Slovakia and the Czech Republic in 1993 are perfect examples of the secession. In other cases, the secession engenders more problems than achievements (the partition of India, breakup of the USSR and SFRY). The analysis of the political practice shows that it is next to impossible to resolve an ethnopolitical conflict, while its settlement presents one of the most challenging problems of the international relations.

**Conclusions.** Hence, the determination of a conceptual and theoretical framework for studying ethnopolitical conflicts and developing the "frozen conflict" settlement mechanisms has convinced us that most views and concepts developed by the political scientist and conflict resolution scholars and available to researchers contain the heuristic potential and can be productively used in scientific analysis of the causes and the mechanisms for the settlement of the "frozen conflicts" in the post-soviet area.

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