
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY DURING THE WAR IN UKRAINE: THE ISSUE OF AGENCY

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Abstract

The authors of this article aim to clarify the specifics of the State-Society conflict, which reached its peak during the events of 2013–2014, to determine the essence of

the Ukrainian events of the last decade along the axis of the State-Society conflict in the context of further modernization of Ukraine.

To do this, it is proposed to analyse the dynamics of changes in geopolitical, socio-economic and political contexts; to investigate the peculiarities of the development of the confrontation in the border territories, which were of key importance in the process of transformation of the confrontation from the beginning to an armed conflict; through the prism of sociological research, to reveal the dynamics of relations between the State and Society during the last ten years and to find out their real state.

Key words: State and society, Russian-Ukrainian war, border region, Ukraine in 2014–2024, armed conflict, agency, education in war conditions.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the State and Society has a key influence on the modernization of the political system. The format of these relations determines the success of statehood, its ability to develop and stability under the pressure of internal and external factors. This problem acquires additional relevance in the conditions of the transformation of the world order, which is characterized by variability, destabilization of usual institutions, and redistribution of resources.

During the previous decade, in many states, in particular, those in the process of democratic transition, conditions arose in which societies, dissatisfied with the quality of public administration, tried to take responsibility for the fate of their countries. Ukraine was among them. As of the end of 2013, irreconcilable contradictions formed between the state power and society in the economic and political spheres: the growing influence of oligarchic groups, the lack of transparent circulation of elites, corruption, attempts by the ruling group to control both the legal and shadow sectors of the economy in their own, not state, interests.

The conflict was aggravated by the geopolitical situation. After all, Ukraine, although it is the largest country in Europe and has significant natural and human resources, for a long time could not realize its potential, being at the crossroads of the interests and conflicts of the USA, the EU, and Russia. The very decision of the State in the field of foreign policy (refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union) became the attractor that provoked mass protests in Kyiv and later throughout the country. It should be noted that despite the global trend of democratization, a large part of the states that were formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, under the influence of the Russian Federation, began to turn to authoritarianism. And the Ukrainian Society's resistance to autocracy and Russian aggression can be called part of the global struggle for democracy [Nagorniyak et al. 2023: 69–70].

The influence of these factors on the border regions (especially in Donbas and Crimea) was manifested even more vividly due to the peculiarity of the regions, which are characterized by the lack of a formed civil and national identity, where statism, the demand for a “strong hand” are even more concentrated than in the country as a whole, where the control of the state weakens, and the influence of neighboring countries and local specific actors creates an environment favorable for conflicts with the state center.

The result of the accumulated contradictions was not only the conflict between Society and the State, which was manifested by the Euromaidan and various protests throughout the country. They determined the further development of Ukraine and became one of the prerequisites for the aggravation of the situation in the country and the beginning of an international armed conflict.

As of 2024, the main challenge for Ukrainian statehood is a full-scale war with Russia. However, sociological services are increasingly recording the growing attention of citizens to problems, including those that led to the culmination of the confrontation between the State and Society in 2013–2014.

Previous studies of the problems of the relationship between the State and Society testified that, based on the results of the confrontation in 2013–2014, for the successful modernization of Ukraine, there had to be a “policy correction towards the transparency of the actions and decisions of the State and local self-government bodies, the strengthening of social capital in society and the reproduction of the political identity of the state-nation” [Nagornyak 2015: 87].

1. GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE STATE AND SOCIETY IN UKRAINE

As of the end of 2013, Ukraine was at the center of a geopolitical conflict between the US and the EU on the one hand, and Russian sub-imperialism on the other. Ukraine was at the same time one of the objects of the conflict and tools for weakening the opponents. Each of the parties tried to strengthen its control over the state's resources and keep it within its “sphere of influence”. The European Union proposed an Association Agreement, but, as further practice showed, it did not plan to include Ukraine as a full member soon. The Russian leadership offered participation in the Customs Union and a loan of 15 billion dollars in exchange for maintaining a loyal political regime.

With the beginning of the armed conflict in 2014, the USA and the EU tried to weaken Russia with sanctions, but at the same time to preserve economic ties

beneficial to themselves (supply of cheap energy carriers, nuclear fuel, cooperation in the space industry). Russia, on the other hand, used the border to destabilize Ukrainian statehood and increased the intensity of special operations in European countries. Analysts of the International Center for Prospective Studies correctly described the approach of European countries to the conflict: “Most EU countries and officials of European institutions are trying to balance between the need to put pressure on the Russian Federation, but at the same time not to cross the “red line”, after which the deterioration of relations can become irreversible and lead to direct security challenges or threats to the EU and NATO countries themselves” [Ivashko et al. 2015: 3].

By 2022, the geopolitical conflict only intensified, the circle of participants expanded, and some demands and intentions of the parties became public. In December 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation published a draft agreement on the so-called “security guarantees” that Vladimir Putin demanded from NATO [Radio Liberty 2021]. It was de facto about redistributing spheres of influence in Eastern and Central Europe. In two months, China supported the Russian demands. As of 2024, Russian aggression against Ukraine was supported and provided military assistance for its implementation by several authoritarian states: North Korea, Iran, and Belarus. Instead, NATO accepted two new members – Sweden and Finland.

During this period, Ukraine remained a subject of global conflict. It did not receive significant support from the EU and the USA, and it developed its defense policy under the conditions of a de facto embargo on the supply of Western weapons.

It should be noted that the Russian leadership effectively used its influence on the Ukrainian border and the system of myths and misinformation formed around it: “protection of Russian speakers”, “people of Donbas”, etc. Even after the start of the full-scale invasion of Russia, former US President B. Obama refused to recognize the weak reaction of the United States to the occupation of Crimea as a mistake, referring to the allegedly large number of pro-Russian population on the peninsula [CNN 2023]. European leaders justified their refusal to provide or sell weapons with participation in the “peace process” and attempts to “return Donbas diplomatically”, although later A. Merkel, as a direct participant in the Normandy Format, admitted that agreements and negotiations were needed only to delay time [Zeit Online 2022]. Against the background of these talks and the lack of a real desire for settlement, Russia realized the potential of the border areas as “conflict zones”. It established and for years strengthened actual control over Crimea and part of Donbas and used

these regions to put constant pressure on Ukraine and create risks and threats in the economic, political, and military spheres.

The global trend of the first half of the 2010s, of which the Revolution of Dignity was a part, was the self-organization of societies against the background of the inability of governments to protect national interests, and social and economic needs of the population given the increasing pressure from superpowers. In 2011–2016, protest actions spread from Rio de Janeiro to Moscow. All these movements were united by dissatisfaction with the institutions that limited the possibilities for implementing the Society's requests through legal means. The key demand was to overcome corruption and make political systems more open.

It is worth noting that most of these protests were unsuccessful and did not achieve their goals in the perspective of several years. Namely: N. Maduro remained in the position of president of Venezuela, V. Putin destroyed the remnants of the opposition for several years and continued to lead the aggressor country, L. da Silva, despite being accused of corruption, became the president of Brazil for the second time in a few years. The essential contradictions between the State and Society could not be overcome in all the conflicts mentioned above, and the conflict went into a latent phase. To a large extent, the Revolution of Dignity also remained another untapped chance for Ukraine, because the public protest never reached the stage of institutionalization, changing the elite only formally, without a substantial change in the model of public administration.

2. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF THE CONFLICT

The significant deterioration of the economic situation in 2010–2013 forced President V. Yanukovych to look for additional sources to fill the state budget. After an unsuccessful attempt to obtain foreign loans from the IMF, the government's efforts were directed at introducing strict control over the transfer pricing mechanism, which was used by all industrial and financial groups to optimize taxes and withdraw foreign exchange earnings to low-tax jurisdictions [Krut, Filipchuk 2015: 2].

In the efforts of V. Yanukovych and his entourage to gain a monopoly on the redistribution of resources, the authorities encroached on control over the shadow sector. It has traditionally been a space for the accumulation and preservation of capital not only for big business, but also for the population, and made up a significant (about a third) share of the economy [Ministry of Economy of Ukraine 2021: 2].

Partially negative phenomena in the economy and finances managed to be masked by spending reserves. About 7 billion dollars in a year were spent to maintain the dollar exchange rate [National Bank of Ukraine 2024].

Thus, on the eve of nationwide protests, the situation in the economy was in crisis, but stability was simulated. Therefore, economic slogans were not among the most important on the Maidan. However, immediately after the change of power, these problems were at the center of attention and became the basis for involving a wide range of citizens in the protests in Donbas. Pro-Russian separatists actively used anti-oligarchic rhetoric, which the residents of the region perceived as fair and urgent. However, the European integration slogans of the ideological leaders of the Maidan in Kyiv quickly turned into calls for a change of government, just as the protests in Donbas changed from economic demands to anti-government speeches (but already against the new government). In a few months, direct representatives of the Kremlin (O. Borodai, I. Strelkov) seized control over part of the region and started a military operation under completely different slogans.

In the fall of 2014, a wave of protests took place in the occupied cities, caused by the massive impoverishment of the population and the lack of food. But this activity was quickly suppressed by the occupation authorities.

The long-term risks that formed during this period in the border areas later led to more significant consequences. Direct military intervention and subsequent occupation of the border by Russia led to the economic isolation of these areas. The economic ties of the occupied part of Donbas and Crimea with Ukraine were almost completely cut off in 2017, and with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, transport connections were also interrupted. As a result of this and the purposeful policy of the occupiers in Donbas, the level and living conditions constantly deteriorated, and the local population became poorer. The Russians created the conditions for marginalization and impoverishment, which greatly contributed to the increase in the number of local armed formations (the so-called 1st and 2nd “army corps”), and after the start of a full-scale invasion – mobilization to the occupying army.

Meanwhile, due to hostilities, the loss of about 7 % of the territory, and accumulated economic problems, the government in Kyiv was forced to concentrate on solving the problems of the controlled territories. Without sufficient support from external actors, Ukraine did not have the military resources to return the territories, and the financial capabilities to settle with creditors.

Partly due to these objective reasons, and partly due to the inability of the new government in Kyiv to carry out reforms, real de-oligarchization and ensure economic growth, the conflict between Society and the State, although it entered a

latent phase, was not resolved. The ratings of all parliamentary parties (both coalition members and opposition parties) fell rapidly, and in 2019, this process ended with the electoral defeat of most of the “old” parties and President P. Poroshenko at the time. During the entire tenure of the Verkhovna Rada of the 8th convocation, sociological studies showed that the Society considered corruption to be one of the biggest problems. As of December 2018, according to sociological polls, 82 % of Ukrainians had a low opinion of the socioeconomic situation in the country, 78.6 % of respondents attributed the responsibility for this state of affairs to “incompetent and/or corrupt public figures who were in power” [KMIS 2018].

However, the change of president in 2019 did not bring the expected result. Sociological studies show that even despite the war, society's demand for reforms in the economy and, first of all, for the fight against corruption remains huge. Sometimes society puts corruption risks at the same level as the risks associated with war, even under the conditions in which the country has been since the beginning of a full-scale war [Savchuk, Shurenkova 2023].

3. EDUCATIONAL REFORMS DURING THE WAR AS A CONFLICT-CAUSING FACTOR IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE STATE AND SOCIETY IN UKRAINE

The occupation of a part of the territory of Ukraine in 2013-2014 demonstrated the immaturity and inability of the State in terms of coordinating actions regarding the evacuation of educational institutions, their teams, and students. In 2022, this failure repeated and the Society self-organized to provide educational services in any way and restore the functioning of institutions in the relocated territories by the forces of teachers, students, and their parents. Thus, according to statistical data, at the beginning of 2023, 13,875 preschool education institutions, 12,976 general secondary education institutions, 670 vocational (professional and technical) education institutions, 332 higher education institutions, 740 institutions of vocational pre-higher education were operating in Ukraine. In total, about 6.5 million students studied in these institutions and almost 0.7 million pedagogical and science-pedagogical workers worked. As a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as of the end of July 2023, 337 educational institutions were destroyed and 3,199 were damaged. [Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2023: 7]. More than 30 institutions of higher education were relocated and resumed their activities at new legal addresses. Since the full-scale invasion of Russia, Ukraine has lost more than 20,000 foreign students, increased the number of male students in master's and postgraduate education programs,

reoriented the vector of its scientific research and grant applications in the direction of studying stress resistance and resilience, reskilling and upskilling programs for adult education (including veterans and internally displaced persons), innovative teaching and learning methods, interdisciplinary educational programs aimed at the formation of specialists for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Higher education in Ukraine today is a space with a large number of random people who study and teach without motivation for self-development, which does not contribute to strengthening the culture of quality or forming a national elite of the highest quality. Correlation between the number of applicants and the salary of a teacher (in most higher education institutions), the existence of universities with outdated infrastructure (including research), the conditionality of specialized universities, the unpreparedness of the entrant to learn the content of educational programs of higher education institutions due to the “loss of knowledge” in the conditions of the covid pandemic – 2019 and online training during wartime. The consequences of such things are dangerous for the recovery of the country's economy already. In Ukraine, more than 150,000 people have the status of unemployed (excluding those citizens of Ukraine who left the country due to the war), among whom half have higher education. The analysis of the regional dimension of the process of filling vacant positions demonstrates that graduates of higher education institutions do not possess sufficient knowledge and competencies that employers need, therefore the competition for one vacant position of a manager (in various fields of activity) can range from 11 to 23 people per position and remain open for several years. The labor market of Ukraine is already filled with unemployed graduates and continues (to a greater extent) to train specialists without taking into account the needs of the country's reconstruction in wartime conditions. The correction of the situation is possible due to a careful study of the labor market, personnel collaboration of universities in order to concentrate a critical mass of researchers and teachers who can solve the tasks of the national economy, flexibility in employment issues, a dynamic trajectory of the teacher's professional activity and a broad individual training trajectory of the student. Inevitable trends in this context are those that have already started in 2023 with the new structure of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and which also turned out to be a conflict-causing factor in the dialogue between the State and Society. Including:

1) Optimizing the network of state and municipal institutions of higher education with the help of short-term (1–2 years) support programs for their unification. Such programs will aim at legal and technical assistance, transitional

management, and additional financing at the start of a new economic entity from the State and recognition of the need and promotion of reforms from the Society.

2) Reduction in the number of state and municipal higher education institutions due to the reduction of educational programs that have the lowest percentage of employment and less need during the post-war recovery of the state in favor of specialists in post-war recovery and strengthening of the military industry of Ukraine.

3) Corporatization and possible further point privatization of universities (creating opportunities to attract private investment to the field of higher education).

5) Development of adult education (targeted training and reskilling programs, active use of educational vouchers, short-term programs for IDPs and other vulnerable population categories, interdisciplinary educational programs).

6) Restarting work with foreign students and postgraduates (ensuring the attractiveness and competitiveness of Ukrainian higher education institutions in the world market of educational services).

7) Development of English-language educational programs, English-language research platforms and system of activities joint with foreign scientists (integration of higher education of Ukraine into the European Educational and Scientific Research Center and global open science).

For the successful implementation of the mentioned reforms, which are very necessary for Ukraine, Society needs a consistent and open dialogue with the State, first of all regarding the strategic priorities of the development of the state / education / higher education / universities / teachers; target indicators of the expected development model in each direction; clear and transparent performance evaluation indicators, etc.

4. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE CONFLICT

As of 2013, an authoritarian system was formed in Ukraine with a single center of power – V. Yanukovych and his entourage, which had a territorial attachment to the Donetsk region. Manual management through party and clan proteges and “watchers” permeated the entire vertical of state administration. The parliamentary opposition did not demonstrate readiness to actively oppose.

However, the arbitrariness of law enforcement agencies, from the police to the tax office, intensified the conflict with the Society. The first significant blow to the system of power was the long protest actions in the village of Vradiivka, which later

turned into a march on Kyiv. Citizens demanded the punishment of policemen-rapists, and later the resignation of the Minister of Internal Affairs O. Zakharchenko. The authorities responded by violently dispersing the tent city when protesters began to rally in the capital. Protest actions due to the crime in Vradiivka took place in at least 15 cities of the country.

The key event of 2013–2014 was the Euromaidan, which began as a student demonstration against the decision of M. Azarov's government to refuse to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. However, the forceful reaction of the authorities and the introduction of repressive laws radicalized the protest and it turned into an anti-government one. The several-month-long confrontation ended with the shooting of protesters and V. Yanukovych's flight from the country. Immediately after that, Russia began annexing Crimea and later unleashed aggression in Donbas. In Kyiv, the authorities were reformatted: O. Turchynov began to perform the duties of the president temporarily, a return to the 2004 version of the Constitution took place, early presidential elections were called, and the balance of power in the parliament changed. The situation on the streets worsened – demonstrations continued in the eastern and southern regions, during which clashes took place between supporters of the integrity of Ukraine and sympathizers of Russia. Several dozen people died as a result of the confrontation in Odesa on May 2, 2014.

As of mid-2014, there were three fronts in Ukraine:

1) Institutional. An external vector of development can be considered a formalized subject.

2) Armed (official, voluntary and illegal military groups). The subject of the military conflict that unfolded in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine was the administrative-territorial status of Donbas.

3) The socio-political (participants of mass protests and public interest groups) front acquired the names “Maidan” and “Anti-Maidan”. [Nagorniyak 2015: 84].

Against this background, P. Poroshenko won the presidential elections in the first round. However, it is worth noting that voting did not take place in Crimea, and in two regions of Donbas, polling stations were not opened in 25 districts. During the next 9 months, two events took place that determined the state's policy for several years to come. At the early elections, the reformation of the parliament took place, which strengthened the power of P. Poroshenko. The conflict in Donbas was “frozen” for seven years.

The transfer of power in the conditions of the revolution and the flight of President V. Yanukovych continued for three months, during this transitional period the state

system was in a state of chaos. That made it vulnerable to external influences and unable to respond quickly and adequately to security and political decisions.

In this period, the features of the border area with Russia became critically important. The unformed civic (national) identity of residents, the low level of political participation, and the state center's ignoring of the region's problems created prerequisites for citizens' vulnerability to the influence of external players. This tendency was strengthened by the influence of Russian propaganda – the residents of the border regions trusted the Russian media [Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2013], which always dominated the local information environment. Moscow infiltrated its agents of influence and intensified actions of defiance throughout southern and eastern Ukraine and effectively seized control of protest activity in several regions. At anti-government rallies in Donetsk and Luhansk, one could hear the pronunciation characteristic of Russian regions. Russian citizens were among the participants in attempts to seize administrative buildings in Kharkiv – later they became commanders of militant units. In Crimea, the situation immediately turned to the intervention by military formations.

In all these regions, part of the local population tried to resist the occupation (the rallies in Donetsk in March 2014, the rally near the Crimean Parliament in Simferopol on February 26, 2014, etc.). But this resistance had no chance. First of all, it was relatively small in number – even a ten-thousand-strong rally for a united Ukraine was an abnormal phenomenon, most residents were not ready to go out into the streets. Most of the patriotic events took place at night (cities dressed up in yellow and blue ribbons, leaflets appeared at the entrances of multi-store buildings, social networks united patriotic citizens, etc.). The arrests continued and it was clear that the State had removed itself from solving these issues. The mass media did not spread information about the struggle of Ukrainian activists and the pro-Ukrainian population in the border areas, which over time strengthened the false stereotype about the “pro-Russian region that brought the war to the country”.

There were several prerequisites for this, related to the peculiarities of the Ukrainian border territories and the State's inability or unwillingness to control them.

For decades, the central government had a very limited influence on Donbas and Crimea, and for at least ten years it showed no desire to change the situation. These territories were managed by financial and industrial groups. After the 2010 presidential and local elections, the Donetsk financial and industrial group only consolidated its positions: in addition to informal control of Donbas, it finally

monopolized state power and undivided control over local self-government: the Party of Regions had 80 out of 100 mandates in the Verkhovna Rada of Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and 166 of 180 in the Donetsk Regional Council [Kohut, Sidash 2011: 49, 74], this party received comparable shares of deputies in the Luhansk Regional Council and regional centers of these three regions.

If after the escape of V. Yanukovych and a significant number of representatives of the Party of Regions, the opposition was able to seize power in the center, then in the border regions in the east and south, the state was completely paralyzed. The police and security forces initially did not intervene in the clashes, and then a significant part of their personnel began switching to the side of the occupiers. Local councils, which were used to orienting themselves to an authoritarian leader and following instructions from Kyiv, turned out to be ineffective. For example, in Donetsk, pro-Russian (and Russian) forces easily captured the premises of local councils, gained access to the stand, and later literally dispersed local deputies.

In the absence of Kyiv's levers of influence and the paralysis of local self-government, the further development of events was largely determined by local elites, who usually have a special influence in the border areas. Ukraine clearly demonstrated how the position of the elite at the borderlands could change the fate of the entire region at the beginning of 2014.

In Kharkiv, on April 8, 2014, the special unit "Jaguar" liberated the regional administration building and effectively put an end to Russia's attempts to destabilize the region. The decision to carry out the operation was made by A. Avakov, the Minister of Internal Affairs at the time and one of the most influential politicians of the Kharkiv region.

A different scenario played out in Donetsk. For several weeks, local elites tried to use protest activity to "bargain" with the new government and promote the idea of autonomy. They prevented the storming of the regional administration. When the influential businessman R. Akhmetov went to the Regional State Administration to personally negotiate on the unblocking of the building, it turned out that the protesters did not respect his authority. Time and influence were lost. Russia took control of the situation in the region, and further appeals by R. Akhmetov to stop the protests and abandon separatist activities had no effect.

The third scenario was implemented in Crimea. First, the Russian military took over the authorities by force. And secondly, part of the local elites, who suffered from the pressure of the Donetsk clan and did not want to negotiate with the new authorities in Kyiv, betrayed Ukraine. O. Chalyi and S. Aksyonov were given leading positions in the occupation administrations in return.

Thus, as a result of the culmination of the confrontation between Society and the State at the national level, as of 2014, there was a change in power, and at the border, where “a large number of actors are actively operating, who form a spectrum of security threats and vulnerabilities that the central government has to deal with” [Vrey 2012: 195]. Under the influence of external players and local elites, this confrontation took the form of an armed conflict and allowed Russia to occupy significant territories.

The change of faces in the government offices did not lead to overcoming the conflict between Society and the State. On the contrary, the winners moved away from the path of democratization and changing the economic model: the new government was formed by people who were connected to large financial and industrial groups, and the new president began the process of power concentration by dissolving the parliament. The elections that took place in the fall of 2014 only cemented the situation for years to come. Parties with a significant share of representatives of financial and industrial groups in the electoral list entered the parliament. P. Poroshenko's attempts to concentrate power continued: he succeeded in appointing representatives of his party as prime minister and prosecutor general. This period is characterized mostly by the imitation of reforms to obtain funding from international actors and situational alliances and conflicts between representatives of different financial and industrial groups over resources and power. Society was not among the key actors. Its conflict with the State, which took an open form in 2013–2014, entered a latent phase.

Unprepared for large-scale protests against the background of hostilities, the Society expressed its protest in the 2019 elections – V. Zelenskyi was elected president by a huge margin, and his party won a mono majority in the parliament, while most of the parties that were represented in the previous convocation of the Verkhovna Rada, could not overcome the passage barrier.

However, the huge creditworthiness and the entry of new faces into the government offices did not lead to the realization of society's demand for de-oligarchization, social justice, and a change in the economic and political model. In his first years in office, V. Zelenskyi followed his predecessor's example: dissolving the parliament on dubious grounds, appointing “100 % his prosecutor general”, and transferring the decision-making center to the President's Office. Situational alliances with oligarchic groups were used to maintain control over the parliament. At the same time, opposition groups were subjected to media attacks and pressure from law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

Management trends that did not match the expectations of the population, disappointment in “new faces”, government inefficiency in the economy (the Ukrainian economy began to shrink even before the pandemic and was slowly recovering after it) led to the continuation of the conflict between the State and Society. It manifested itself in street activity (rallies “No to surrender”, “SaveFOP”, rallies in support of the activist S. Sternenko) and a steady decrease in the ratings of the ruling party [Sociological group “Rating” 2021].

Rallying around the flag" with the start of a full-scale war temporarily changed the situation in the polls and made it possible to talk about record support for V. Zelensky in 2022–2023. However, since the fall of 2023, there has been a decrease in trust, both in the president and in his party.

Characteristic of the entire decade (2014–2024) is that the State quickly disappoints Society with each change of power, and state institutions, which are primarily associated with power in the mass consciousness (president, government, parliament), steadily lose electoral support after the elections. While social institutions as volunteer organizations, volunteers, the Armed Forces (which now largely represent a cross-section of society due to mobilization and quantitative composition) – remain perennial leaders in terms of trust.

For more than a decade, none of the above-mentioned “fronts” has disappeared. The objects of confrontation have partially changed, and some actors have gained more importance within the opposing groups, but the “fronts” themselves remain relevant even 10 years later. European integration has become a common slogan for most political forces. However, pro-Russian politicians who cannot publicly maintain ties with the aggressor country are still represented in local councils and even in the parliament. Russia is trying to change the foreign policy vector not through its agents of influence, but by force. That does not exclude constant attempts to impose more convenient leaders on Ukraine.

Now the occupied borderlands of Ukraine can hardly be considered the subject of an “armed” front – Russia is trying to subjugate our country as a whole and has moved to direct full-scale aggression. Illegal formations with residents of the occupied Donbas, who also have Ukrainian passports – “1st and 2nd army corps” have become part of the occupying army, residents of Crimea participate in hostilities on the side of the aggressor as contract soldiers and drafted. The border areas, which were zones of instability, turned into conflict zones in 2014, and in 2022 they became the main bridgeheads for the expansion of Russian aggression and attempts to destroy Ukrainian statehood.

The socio-political front moved away from the “Maidan/Anti-Maidan” confrontation format. However, this is primarily due to the obsolescence of these categories and the fact that the full-scale armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia overshadows all others. It should be understood that the socio-economic basis of the protests has not changed significantly in 10 years. While the value confrontation was hidden due to the occupation of part of the territories. After the liberation of the occupied lands (the authors consider only this variant of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict), these problems may come to the surface again. And taking into account the losses on both sides in hostilities, the ten-year influence of Russian propaganda in Donbas and Crimea, finding ways to overcome the conflict and reintegrate residents of the territories occupied for ten years may turn out to be an extremely difficult task for both the State and the Ukrainian Society.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ukrainian protests of 2013–2014 can be called part of a global trend in which societies in different parts of the world demonstrated the ability to a high degree of self-organization and spoke out against the governments of their states, which are unable to overcome corruption, transparently distribute resources and protect national interests. However, the further development of events showed that even the highest level of self-organization does not guarantee the realization of citizens' aspirations. Governments in many countries (especially autocracies) have proven to be more stable, have retained power, and increased pressure on their societies by reversing democratization.

In Ukraine, a change of government took place and did not bring the expected results. One by one, the leaders of the state repeated the path of their predecessors, trying to concentrate power in their hands as much as possible, without seeking a dialogue with the Society. Oligarchic groups continue to maintain their influence on the political system, and Society remains outside the list of determining subjects. The communities of the border areas, which today suffer more than others from the war with Russia, remain just as ineffective.

Considering the state of dialogue between the State and Society in the period 2014–2024, it is worth noting that the subjects of the conflict were the ineffective State and the self-organized Society. And even today (during the war and as a result of all the changes of political elites), the Society still has the same demands regarding de-oligarchization, the fight against corruption, and the protection of Ukraine's national interests. In Donbas and Crimea, the socio-economic background of the

protests did not differ from the national one. However, value conflicts developed within the regions, which were actively fueled both by the state center and by local elites and Russia. The slogans quickly became politicized, and in the conditions of the collapse of state institutions, the incapacity of self-government, and the destructive activities of local elites, the confrontation went beyond peaceful confrontation and beyond the borders of the regions themselves, turning into an international armed conflict with the active participation of Russia. Ukraine, against the background of the unfavorable geopolitical situation and its buffer status, did not have the resources and adequate support to repel the aggressor. This allowed Russia to develop its occupation management system over part of the territory of Donbas and Crimea over the next few years, turning these Ukrainian borderlands into its own bridgeheads for the expansion of aggression by 2022.

In Ukraine, during 2014–2024, the renewal and rejuvenation of the political elite took place. However, it did not lead either to overcoming the conflict between the State and Society, or to the development and implementation of a modernization model for the development of European Ukraine. The spread of an activist political culture in the second half of the 2010s resulted in a series of protests in Kyiv, but since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the majority of active representatives of the Society have concentrated on the defense of the state, both with weapons in their hands and through volunteer activity. To date, they have limited influence on changes within the country due to martial law, hostilities, corresponding restrictions on rights and the postponement of elections. However, it can be reasonably assumed that after the end or a significant reduction in the intensity of hostilities, Society will demand the modernization of the political system. The state of the State will also contribute to this. It will be no less a test than the war itself and victory in it.

As of April 2024, there is a parliamentary crisis in Ukraine, a crisis of confidence in government institutions (except for the defense sector), half of state budget expenditures are financed by external loans and grants, and the oligarchic model has exhausted itself. Under such conditions, additionally burdened by the consequences of hostilities, the need to reintegrate difficult border areas, and the pressure of external players, the State will be forced to compromise and dialogue with Society. Attempts to reproduce another cycle of autocracy with an orientation towards oligarchs may lead to new protests and the collapse of the State.

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