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PEACE PROCESSES, VIOLENCE, AND DE FACTO STATES: INTRODUCTION

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Abstract   Only a quarter of outcomes of armed conflicts that ended during the first two decades of the 21st century resulted from negotiated peace or ceasefire agreements. While comprehensive, final, and conclusive peace agreements are in relative decline, ceasefires, limited, or partial, accords, and local agreements proliferate. The dynamics of peacemaking and the critical interplay of talks and violence during peace processes become increasingly nonlinear, complex, and unpredictable. In this special issue, a mix of actors, dynamics and factors at the interface of peace processes and violence is narrowed down to contexts that involve de facto states, most of whom experience both an ongoing or stalemated peace process and recurring violence of different types and varying degree of intensity. The article provides the analytical context for the special issue and discusses basic terminology and concepts, such as "peace processes" and "de facto states", and some of the global data-based trends and research literature on the volume's subject. The first part of this article focuses on peace processes and the interplay of peacemaking and violence, the second one looks into the "state of the art" on de facto states, while the third one presents a summary of, including the main take-off from, the authors' contributions to this special issue.

Keywords   peace processes, peacemaking, violence, armed conflicts, ceasefires, de facto states, contested states, terminology, definitions, methodology, data, trends

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Название статьи   Мирные процессы, насилие и де-факто государства: введение

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Аннотация Лишь около четверти всех исходов конфликтов, завершившихся в течение первых двух десятилетий XXI века, стали результатом мирных соглашений или перемирий. В ходе мирных процессов все реже заключаются полноценные, комплексные мирные соглашения, в то время как растет число перемирий, частичных соглашений и локальных договоренностей. Динамика мирного урегулирования, а также взаимосвязи и взаимовлияния переговоров и продолжающегося насилия на стадии мирного процесса приобретает все более сложный, малопредсказуемый и нелинейный характер. В данном спецвыпуске изучение комплекса акторов, процессов и факторов, характеризующих взаимосвязь и взаимовлияние мирных процессов и вооруженного насилия, сосредоточено на анализе тех (пост)конфликтных контекстов, которые связаны с де-факто государствами. Большинство таких контекстов служат ареной и для продолжающегося или застопорившегося мирного процесса, и для возобновляющегося насилия разных видов и степени интенсивности. Во вводной статье научных редакторов спецвыпуска представлены его основные исследовательские цели, задачи и аналитические рамки, а также содержится обзор таких базовых терминов, понятий и концепций, как «мирные процессы» и «де-факто государства», и ряда тенденций, массивов данных и научной литературы по теме. Первая часть статьи посвящена общим вопросам, связанным с процессами мирного урегулирования, а также взаимосвязи и взаимовлиянию мирных процессов и насилия, вторая часть – дискуссиям по проблематике де-факто государств, а третья содержит краткий обзор статей спецвыпуска и их выводов.

Ключевые слова мирные процессы, насилие, вооруженные конфликты, перемирия, де-факто государства, спорные государства, терминология, определения, методология, данные, тенденции

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In the first quarter of the 21st century, neither armed conflicts, nor other forms of violence widespread in conflict-torn areas have been in overall decline. Only a quarter of outcomes of 160 armed conflicts that ended during the 2000s and 2010s were negotiated peace or ceasefire agreements. Of the rest, most were inconclusive solutions when violence declined to a (semi-)frozen state of neither war, nor peace, and retained potential to recur or even relapse to full-scale fighting. Comprehensive peace agreements, especially those resulting from heavily internationalized peace processes, have been in relative decline, giving way to (often unstable) ceasefires, limited, or partial, accords, and agreements struck at the local level. While armed violence almost never fully stops with the start of peace negotiations and forms an "unavoidable background"[1] of most peace processes, the dynamics of peacemaking and the critical interplay of talks and violence during peace processes have become increasingly nonlinear, complex, and unpredictable.

A mix of actors, dynamics and factors at the interface of peace processes and violence is a wide subject for research. In this volume, it is narrowed down to contexts that involve de facto states.[2] Most of such entities experience *both* some form of an ongoing, often on-and-off, peace process and recurring violence of varying degree of intensity. In rare cases, even in the absence of an established peace process or agreement(s), following the initial civil war, de facto state's tensions or confrontation with the mother state falls short of armed conflict (Taiwan) or such an entity manages to build and retain a degree of order and stability that exceeds that of a mother state (Somaliland). However, the majority of (post)conflict settings involving de facto states have been subject to either a nascent (short-lived or on-and-off) peace process, or a more complex, full-fledged one that has nevertheless failed to produce comprehensive,

final peace accords, with respective conflicts remaining "frozen", mostly at the stage of some kind of a ceasefire. While in exceptional cases, stable ceasefires in frozen conflicts persist(ed) for several decades (Transnistria), many de facto states remain heavily contested, and a relapse into armed conflict is not infrequent. In terms of conflict intensity measured in battle-related deaths/year,[3] such renewed hostilities range from sporadic low-intensity violence (Kosovo) or minor armed conflict (in and around South Ossetia in August 2008) to a major war, as in the case of a new war for Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 or a far more intense armed conflict in and around Donbass, ongoing since February 2022, compared to the initial fighting than took place in 2014–2015.

How does the interplay of talks and use of force manifest itself in contexts that involve de facto states? What are the main related cross-cutting issues, more specific to conflicts with participation of de facto states, as compared to other conflicts? How does the issue of sovereignty, domestic and international, correlate with viability and functionality of de facto states, including heavily contested entities, in active or frozen conflicts both in and beyond post-Soviet Eurasia? What are the factors that led to a new violent escalation in and around Donbass since February 2022, following the long stalemate in, and eventual collapse of, the Minsk peace process? These are some of the questions that this special issue seeks to address and is structured around.

The first part of this special issue provides the analytical context for it, including a discussion about the basic terminology and concepts, such as "peace processes" and "de facto states", and a critical review of some of the research literature pertinent to the volume's thematic angle. The second part explores some key cross-cutting issues in various contexts involving de facto (contested, unrecognized, or partially recognized) states, with the central focus on contested sovereignty in its domestic and international forms, on how it relates to viability and functionality of such entities in (post)conflict settings, and how it both influences and is itself affected by the dynamic interplay of peace processes and recurring armed violence. The third part addresses internal and international aspects of the main violent confrontation in Europe and the post-Soviet space of the 2010s – a major armed conflict in and around Donbass, including the rarely addressed dynamics behind talks and violence within the contested republics of Donbass themselves, and a critical analysis of the Minsk peace process, of whether or not is was doomed to failure, and of the role of international (Trans)European institutions, notably the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU).

The introductory article written by the editors sets the rationale and framework for the volume, and discusses basic terminology, concepts, and some of the global data-based trends and research literature on the volume's subject. The first part of this article focuses on peace processes and the interplay of peacemaking and violence, the second one looks into the "state of the art" on de facto states, while the third one presents a summary of, including the main take-off from, the authors' contributions to this special issue.

I. Peace processes and violence

While the notion of a "peace process" is rather vague, the term is commonly used to refer to a process centred on negotiating, preparing, signing, and basic implementation of a peace agreement and also, technically, to a series of agreements to resolve the same conflict.[4] This distinguishes peace processes from the broader processes of "conflict resolution" and "conflict management". In the standard UN lexicon, a peace process is centred on *"peacemaking"* (arranging, facilitating and managing

peace negotiations, or diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement).[5] Peacemaking is distinct from *"peacekeeping"* (deployment of peacekeepers with the consent of the main parties to the conflict, impartiality in dealing with them, and non-use of force), *"peace enforcement"* (the application of coercive measures, including the use of military force, to restore international peace and security), and *"peacebuilding"* (a long-term process of creating conditions for sustainable peace and development and of reducing the risk of (re)lapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels and).[6]

When it comes to peace talks in armed conflicts, the very notion of "negotiations" should be clarified. Not all contacts between the main armed parties or other actors involved in conflict or conflict management qualify as negotiations, but only those that involve exchange of concessions and compromise offers with an adversary. In other words, negotiations imply direct or mediated dialogue with the opposite side or its representatives (rather than mere consultations with partners and allies or coordination of armed groups and factions loyal to a conflict party). If the adversaries are not ready to make mutual concessions and compromises *in principle*, than contacts between them can hardly qualify for a negotiating process or could only be seen as an imitation of such. Apart from these important reservations, negotiations should be interpreted broadly enough to include both bargaining between representatives of the parties at the negotiation table and accompanying process of action and counter-action outside negotiation table.

The term "peace process" is widely used, but remains quite controversial. The notion of "peace", as opposed to "war", tends to have a strong positive meaning. A perception that even *"a bad peace is better than a good war"* is more than an academic thesis, political imperative, or conventional wisdom: it is, indeed, deeply rooted in the public (sub)conscience. It goes without saying, especially for those who come from countries that were or remain areas of deadly armed conflicts: the costs of peace are always lower than the costs of war. Positive meaning and perception of "peace" as the root term are, however, often mechanically extended to also apply to a "derivative" notion of a "peace process". This tendency to conflate "peace" with a "peace process" makes the latter to be seen as something benign by default and inherently positive, as an end in itself to be backed at any price. A popular and largely indisputable thesis that "peace is always better than war" thus gets transformed into a belief that "a peace process is [also] always better than the absence of such" (a far more disputable thesis that is hardly supported empirically or proven scientifically). Consequently, anyone who opposes a peace process is often automatically listed as an enemy of peace. The overly positive perception of "peace processes" remains widespread in political and public circles across the world. A more sober, but complimentary interpretation of this notion and phenomenon is not infrequent in the academia, including the lead peace scholars.[7]

The downside of an overly positive image of a peace process is that it tends to create heightened expectations about its potential outcome and results. Somehow, it is assumed that, at the end of the day, a peace process *must* lead to sustainable peace (which does happen sometimes, but not always), that violence should definitely end following the conclusion of a peace deal (which is less frequent), or even that the very fact of having a peace process in place should in and of itself ensure radical reduction or end of armed violence (which is quite rare, indeed). It is symbolic that the longest running peace process – the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks that have been in place, on-and-off, since the early 1990s and are themselves a follow-up to the first Arab-Israeli agreements of the 1970s that produced the term "peace process" – could be more accurately described in terms of continuing confrontation, failure, and deadlock than in terms of

peace.[8] Mixed or disappointing outcomes of many peace processes have done certain damage to the term itself compromising it in those parts of the world that lived through "peace processes" and saw them fail or produce little positive impact.

Mixed record

The overly positive perception of, and heightened expectations from, peace processes and agreements also run against the record of their outcomes and general effectiveness. While the end of the Cold War stimulated some short-lived optimism about global prospects for peaceful, negotiated resolution of conflicts, the longer-term trends are much less encouraging. The record is mixed, at best. The data shows that, in late 20th – early 21st centuries, a minority of armed conflicts experienced any peace processes and agreements, in the first place. According to Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), in 1975–2021, 152 peace processes (and 375 peace agreements) took place in just about a third of armed conflicts.[9] To put it simply, in two thirds of armed conflicts, there were no negotiated agreements and peace processes. Negotiated outcomes (peace agreements and ceasefires) also comprise a minority of contemporary conflict terminations. During the Cold War, negotiated settlements accounted for about 20 percent of conflict terminations in civil wars.[10] In 1991–1994, this was followed by a sharp increase in their share (up to 40 percent of civil war terminations),[11] with the overall number – 82, or an average of 20 peace agreements/year – amounting to the highest peak in half a century (that also correlated with the respective peak of armed conflicts in the early 1990s).[12] However, in the new century (2001–2020), negotiated solutions accounted for just a quarter (25 percent) of all conflict outcomes.[13] To put it simply, *a negotiated outcome is not how most contemporary armed conflicts end*. Nor has the new, ongoing peak in conflict numbers, observed in 2015–2021 (with 52–56 armed conflicts recorded annually)[14] been accompanied by a proportional peak in peace agreements (as it was the case in the early 1990s). Furthermore, in mid- to late 2010s, successful peace agreements that led to sustainable end of conflict were seven times fewer than in the early 1990s.[15]

Traditional interpretation of a peace process as a "technical" category secondary to a peace agreement and as a structured, linear progression of accords culminating in a final peace agreement also becomes less relevant. The reality of contemporary peacemaking is increasingly nonlinear, complex, fragmented, and competitive, which in a way reflects the evolving character and nature of contemporary armed conflicts themselves. It is increasingly rare today that a path to peace leads to a comprehensive peace agreement resulting from a high-level, heavily internationalized peace process, and complex, final peace accords that aim to resolve conflict as a whole are in relative decline.[16] This is not to mention the former "grand deals" between the world's "great powers" to manage various local and regional conflicts in the rest of the world: the time for such deals may have passed for good.[17] Instead, other formats and modes of negotiation and their outcomes are coming forward, with ever growing role for regional peacemaking by (often multiple) regional powers and mediators,[18] further proliferation of ceasefires and partial accords, and the spreading phenomenon of the so-called local agreements[19] in the context of broader conflicts, especially major and complex internationalized civil wars (the most intense armed conflicts of the first two decades of the 21st century that have become the main form of regional conflicts of the past two decades).

Against this background, two interim findings could be made. First, a negotiated outcome achieved through a workable peace process is neither the way most

contemporary armed conflicts end, nor a panacea for conflict resolution. This dictates the need to refrain from idealistic, inherently positive view of, and strong bias towards, peace processes. "Peace process" is most useful as a notion and method of conflict resolution, but only as long as it is employed in a neutral way, as nothing more, but nothing less than "a road to peace", as long as it is not turned into an icon. Second, a technical understanding of a peace process as a subsidiary category, secondary to a peace agreement, or as a mere sequence of formal agreements to resolve the same conflict is inadequate. While individual agreements are certainly easier to identify and count for dataset coders, from methodological point of view, a peace process cannot be adequately defined and identified without *qualitative analysis of its substance*. This dictates the need to pay attention not just to the mere fact of talks, but to their substance and quality, and to construct a more substantive definition of "peace process" that better accounts for realities of contemporary conflicts and peacemaking.

Substantive criteria to define a "peace process"

What are the qualitative characteristics that make talks in conflict qualify for a peace process? The main two substantive criteria of the "peace process" definition deal with *what the parties are talking about* and *who the negotiating parties are*.

The first criterion is the focus of the negotiating process on the *key contested incompatibilities* between the conflict parties. Ironically, this fundamental condition is no longer seen as a must for any talks to qualify for a "peace process" and appears to wane away in more recent definitions. For instance, one of the broadest and latest definitions of peace process as "a formal attempt to bring political and/or military protagonists of conflict to some sort of mutual agreement as to how to end the conflict"[20] (formulated by methodologists of the PA-X database) does not even mention the need to focus on key contested incompatibilities. This neglect is out of tune with some classic definitions formulated largely on the basis of two best researched peace processes in the Western literature (the ones on the Arab-Israeli/Israeli-Palestinian and the Northern Ireland conflicts). However, even such lead authors in the field, as John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty, explicitly use this criterion to assess the factors of success or failure for individual peace agreements only, while defining peace processes more technically as "persistent peace initiatives involving the main antagonists in a protracted conflict".[21] UCDP methodologists put the strongest emphasis on the need for the parties to peace negotiations to focus on key contested issues between them, but the way they define a peace process is too narrow and confined to formal talks only held just in state-based conflicts: as "a formal process in which the warring parties either have decided to settle the incompatibility in a process in which one issue at the time is regulated by an agreement, or where an agreement that builds on a previous peace agreement is signed".[22]

Against this background, it is time to both revisit this criterion and reconfirm its critical importance as a *sine qua non* condition for any negotiations to qualify for a peace process. Unlike technical contacts or ceasefires, peace processes are not mainly about discussing forms and methods of warfare or its symptoms, including humanitarian consequences. Peace processes are primarily centred on *dialogue between conflict parties on key underlying incompatibilities over which the conflict has been fought*. These key contested incompatibilities always have some clear political dimension (that could be socio-political, ideological, related to ethnic/religious/socio-cultural identity, political economy, and/or international (geo)politics, or their combination in any configuration). Sticking to this criterion allows us (*a*) to distinguish peace processes from more

technical talks, including most ceasefires; (*b*) to account for a broader range of substantive negotiation formats (including initiatives that did not lead to a peace agreement); and (*c*) to at least solve the task of identifying when a peace process begins (i. e., whenever substantive talks on key contested incompatibilities start).

While such recent trends in global peacemaking, as decline in sustained, comprehensive, final peace agreements coupled with the rise in ceasefires, temporary partial agreements and locally negotiated deals may put in question the centrality of individual, classic "peace agreements" as main reference objects and units for analysis, these trends do not necessarily imply decline in, or marginalization of, broader peace processes. On the contrary, they only underscore the imperative of studying – and managing – a focused, substantive negotiation *process* over frantic race for an(y) agreement that is often premature, indecisive, and/or externally imposed upon the conflict parties, with little or minimal local and/or regional support or buy-in.

The second criterion refers to the *inclusiveness of a peace process*. The negotiation process towards peaceful resolution of an armed conflict, which does not involve the main conflict parties, is likely to be a non-starter or doomed to failure. The problem of the peace process's inclusiveness has a quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

In quantitative terms, fragmentation of violence, growing numbers and diversification of armed actors in most contemporary conflicts lead to multiplication of conflict (and negotiation) dyads. Heavily internationalized conflicts (Afghanistan until August 2021, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria, Yemen etc.) may involve armed forces of several or many (sometimes dozens of) states from and beyond the region. Violent non-state actors may be so diverse and fragmented that prospects for any meaningful peace process are unlikely or futile until and unless the conflict itself becomes more structured, and violent non-state actors consolidate, integrate, and form broader force(s) or coalitions.

This also actualizes the need for qualitative analysis of participants in negotiations from the conflict parties. The main issue here is (*a*) whose participation is of critical importance for settling the key contested incompatibilities (and these are usually the most active armed groups on the ground, with at least some degree of social support), and (*b*) who could be sidestepped without causing any particular damage to the peace process.

This means, first, that talks that do not involve the main military actors on the ground hardly qualify for a peace process as such. Without them, any talks, discussions, contact groups, or "groups of friends" (involving, e. g., external/international actors, and/or domestic actors who are not involved in the armed conflict (even as they may back one or the conflict parties) or are not direct or authorized political representatives of the military parties, such as "Sinn Féin" for the Irish Republican Army) fall short of a peace process, even if they try to focus on the conflict's main issues at dispute. Nor should the inclusiveness of a peace process be mistaken for the involvement of civil society, NGOs etc. While the latter is important, it can only supplement, not substitute for the involvement of the main armed parties.

Second, a peace process should involve the main *protagonists* (i. e., armed parties confronting each other, or forming a conflict dyad), directly or, at the earlier stages, via their representatives or agreed mediators. This precludes automatic listing of any armed actors in a conflict area, with whom any contacts were ever held, as participants in a peace process. This also applies to cases when one of the conflict parties or external stakeholders willfully select for talks "from the menu" of armed actors only the weakest or more accommodating ones, often splinters from the main conflict parties (e. g., in

Darfur), or only external patrons of domestic armed actor(s) while refusing to hold a substantive dialogue with direct protagonists in a civil war (e. g., in Donbass). In the long run, such approaches usually do not lead to progress in ending the armed conflict and may be counterproductive and lead to relapse into violence or even to the conflict's further escalation. To sum it up, when it comes to a peace process, "you don't choose your enemies and, hence, negotiation counterparts". Also, talks with major, militarily active groups contesting the same incompatibility (e. g., in the same party of the country) may be seen as parts of the same broader peace process, even if these talks follow separate or parallel negotiation tracks and different time frameworks. However, once, at any conflict stage or after the fighting faded away, new major armed actors emerge who are not directly connected to, or generate from, previous combatants, and contest a different set of issues, this refers to a new armed conflict and, consequently, requires a new peace process.

Third, given the high fragmentation of violence and growing numbers of violent actors in contemporary armed conflicts, the issue of a degree of, and limits to, inclusiveness of a peace process also comes forward. It boils down to the need to disaggregate the pool of violent actors into (*a*) key protagonists ("veto players"), central to settling the main contested incompatibilities and (*b*) the rest (usually either smaller and more localized, or ultraradical and irreconcilable armed groups). Differentiation between these categories is always heavily contextual, often difficult, and, in complex multi-party conflicts, may also dynamically evolve. Still, some broader conditions could be identified for an armed actor to qualify for a "veto player" and, hence, a *sine qua non* party to peace negotiations, if any. They include significant social support among (segments of) the population of a conflict area, sometimes culminating in some electoral mandate, as in the case of Hamas in the Gaza strip or Hezbollah in Lebanon). However, a no less, or more, important characteristic of a key actor that cannot be excluded from a peace process without depriving this process of any serious prospects, is if an actor's military potential (capability) is sufficient to destabilize a peace process in case it is left out (a characteristic shared by the two above mentioned movements with, e. g., the Afghan Taliban).

There are several ways to better adjust the definition of a peace process, including the criterion of its inclusiveness, to fragmented and nonlinear realities of many contemporary conflicts. One such way is, for instance, to extend this criterion to apply not only to state-based conflicts (with participation of a state of at least one conflict party), but also to non-state conflicts (between non-state actors). Another issue is whether or not the local agreements and talks, whose agenda, coverage area, and composition of actors remain geographically limited and often confined to local ceasefires and humanitarian issues, sometimes or often with no direct link to the broader armed conflict's main issues at dispute, qualify for a part of a peace process (the PA-X Local database recorded 332 such agreements in 1990 – early 2022).[23] This issue could be addressed by combining two criteria analyzed in this section: if a local agreement in any way relates to any of key contested (ethnic, religious, socio-political) incompatibilities and its participants affiliate themselves, even loosely, with one of the conflict parties, such as agreement may be seen as part of the overall peace process. Also, sometimes, a peace process itself helps the parties to crystallize and become more structured and streamlined (most commonly, in the form of merger of various smaller armed opposition actors into larger groups and coalitions, specifically to form a more consolidated party to peace negotiations, in the contexts ranging from the Tajik civil war to, to a certain extent, the internationalized civil war in Syria).

Needless to say that many negotiations carelessly referred to as "peace processes" do not stand up even to these two basic criteria: the need to address key issues at dispute and to ensure the inclusiveness of the process that has to involve all major armed players who enjoy at least some degree of support from the population of the conflict/contested area and have a capacity to disrupt any negotiation process it is not a part of. More generally, given the mixed record and outcomes of peace processes, a peace agreement should not be seen as an end in itself, to be achieved at any price – it is the *nature* and *substance* of a peace agreement, its inclusiveness, and its relevance to the central issues of the conflict that really matter. An agreement that ignores the critical issues at dispute, delays their solution, or overlooks and excludes or one or several main parties to the conflict hardly qualifies as peace process, in the first place or, at best, carries the seeds of its own destruction and failure.

Role of violence

The uneasy and complex interplay of armed violence and negotiations that dynamically evolves during peace processes has been understudied in research literature. Apart from individual case studies of (post)conflict settings, major theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies are few.[24] Other exceptions include several methodological studies linked to existing datasets in the field and related quantitative reports confined to tracking some data-based trends, e. g., on ceasefires.[25]

Earlier in the 21st century, the so-called "spoiler problem"[26] pretended to assume the focal role in research literature and scholarly discussions on the role of violence in peace processes. After an agreement is reached, actors unwilling to accept it and undertaking overt or less-explicit policies and actions aimed at undermining its implementation are commonly characterized as "spoilers". The spoiler-centred approach has both its advantages and shortcomings. A peace process may fail even if it does address the key issues of the armed conflict and represents a genuine attempt to move forward to resolve them. A peace process can both fall victim to factors external to the process itself (such as changes in international environment) and suffer from several internal design flaws, procedural defects, and other faults. One of the common flaws of peace processes is inadequate attention paid to the subjective dynamics of the conflict: characteristics that are more closely and directly related to the parties themselves than to the key issues of disagreement between them or to the underlying causes of violence. Spoiler-centred approach is actor-oriented, i. e., it helps draw attention to the parties themselves and emphasizes the dynamic nature of violent conflicts and peace processes.

The main disadvantage of this approach is that it tends to reduce challenges posed by violence to peace implementation to the existence of spoilers. The presence and activities of spoilers are not, however, the only explanations of why peace processes are disrupted: inability of the parties to agree on the main issues at dispute, a lack of progress towards political settlement, and a lack of trust between the parties may all be more significant in undermining a peace process. Also, the excessive focus on spoilers brings us back to the somewhat simplified vision of a peace process as an inherently positive notion and of all those actors who, for various reasons, may oppose a particular peace process as being "spoilers". Clearly, not much needs to be done to spoil something that is inherently flawed, e. g., perceived at least by one or several key parties to the conflict as inadequate, biased, unjust, and/or imposed entirely from the outside with little regard to realities on the ground and interests of the main protagonists.

A peace agreement that does not reflect realities on the ground (such as the stalemate between the main parties to the conflict) and is driven solely by the urgency of the problem, the scale of violence, and/or by the strategic interests of the outside powers might be doomed to failure even with a lack of concrete and identifiable spoilers. In that case the presence of violent spoilers might not necessarily be a problem in itself or the source of failure of a peace process, but an indication or manifestation of more fundamental, inherent flaws of the peace process and of unaddressed critical issues of the conflict.

As noted above, there could be many different factors affecting a peace process and reasons for it to fail or succeed. Of the six most relevant variables (violence and security issues; the economy; external actors; public opinion; symbols; progress towards political settlement), Darby and Mac Ginty identified (*a*) progress towards a political settlement of the central issues at dispute and (*b*) violence/security issues, as two determinant factors for success or failure of peacemaking.[27] While the former amounts to a substance of peace negotiations and a sine qua non criterion for defining and identifying a peace process itself, the latter directly pertains to the interplay of violence and peace negotiations.

One of the main immediate goals of the peace process is to end armed fighting. However, violence almost never stops with the start of negotiations, does not necessarily stop with the conclusion of a peace agreement, and often continues during peace implementation. Still, there is a perception that a more or less stable ceasefire should precede any serious peace negotiations. In practice, declaring a ceasefire may help kickstart negotiations, but ceasefires are not the necessary prerequisites for negotiations to start. In fact, sustainable cease-fires are more likely later in a peace process than at its earlier stages: inter alia, ceasefires remove the dynamic interaction of force and talks that involves the chances for last-minute readjustment of power relations. In sum, a degree of continuing violence, sometimes in modified forms, is a largely inevitable downside of a peace process.

The effects of violence on negotiations and peace implementation are multiple and diverse.[28] The most obvious impact of violence is that of destabilizing negotiations or peace implementation that may put the peace process on pause, disrupt or undermine it, or even provoke a relapse to armed conflict. In particular, violence tends to increase before, during, or immediately following such key turning points in a peace process as, for instance, the signing of a peace agreement – one of the most risky stages of the process, when the scale and intensity of violent incidents can temporarily be on the rise. Targeted or indiscriminate violence against civilians can be particularly effective in destabilizing ongoing peace process (often at the end of the conflict, during the lull(s) in the fighting, or after a ceasefire or a peace agreement has already been reached). Terrorism in particular appears to be a tactic best suited for violent spoilers and one of the easiest ways to disrupt ongoing peace negotiations and destabilize a peace process.[29] At times, however, violence appears to be counterproductive – and then it may even serve as a catalyst for the peace process, increase pressure on the main parties to (re)start negotiations, and raise the profile of a conflict itself and a level of external interest in conflict management efforts (e. g., terrorist attacks by "Islamic State" affiliate and followers in Afghanistan during the peace process involving the Taliban insurgency).

During a peace process, violence often appears in modified forms and may involve a variety of motivations, tactics, and goals, different from those that had been put forward before negotiations started, such as attempts to block or reverse the peace process and to prevent one's own marginalization as a result of a peace process). These new

motivations and tactics do not fully replace the previous ones: some actors, particularly those excluded from, or retaining reservations about, the particular peace process, may still use violence for the same purposes they had pursued before the process started (to destroy or seriously weaken an opponent by violent means). Also, a peace process creates a new set of intra-party dynamics, by creating or widening the split between moderates and irreconcilable hardliners, with much of residual violence during even successful peace process accounted for by smaller and more radical splinter groups acting as violent spoilers.

In sum, the dynamic interaction of force and talks not only serves as "unavoidable background" for most peace processes, but appears to be an almost essential characteristic common to most peace processes. Thus acts of violence by parties and factions, including acts designed specifically to disrupt negotiations, should be expected and taken into account in the design of the peace process. On the one hand, the ability of a peace process to go on despite continuing incidents of violence could even be seen as an objective indicator of the soundness and sustainability of the peace itself. On the other hand, there are limits of what a peace process can achieve in principle, including in putting an end to armed violence. The maximum of what successful implementation of a workable, substantive, and inclusive peace agreement can achieve is to terminate major violence related to particular armed conflict that it was addressed to, but it should not be expected to achieve more than that. At the stage of peace implementation, peace process (peace-making) overlaps with peacebuilding – a process that covers a wider range of long-term activities and aims at changing political, social, economic, institutional structures underlying the conflict and attitudes of the conflict parties and their social base. While a peace process, centred on reaching and implementing a peace agreement or set of agreements, aims first and foremost at war termination, a lasting peace could be achieved only if peace process is supported by the longer-term peace-building efforts.

II. De facto states

As Pål Kolstø's article in this special issue demonstrates,[30] there is a number of terms that denote the polities that are not recognized by the United Nations, but actually enjoy sovereignty and effective control over their territories. Most often, these polities are called de facto states. There are different opinions on whether polities can qualify as de facto states if they do not formally proclaim their independence. Some scholars also discuss whether those polities, that are not recognized by the UN but recognized by some individual UN member states, should be called differently (e. g., as "partially recognized states").[31]

Unlike recognized states, de facto states enjoy only partial sovereignty. In line with Stephen Krasner's classification of sovereignties,[32] de facto states have only domestic sovereignty (monopoly for using violence within their territories) and intra-border sovereignty (capacity to control intra-border movements) but do not enjoy Westphalian sovereignty (de jure and de facto independence from external authorities) and international legal sovereignty (international recognition). Thus, the deficit of international legitimacy is the key issue faced by de facto states, in contrast to most of recognized states. This deficit manifests itself in many domains and forms, such as restricted international contacts, problems with attracting loans and investments, obstacles for international trade and additional transaction cost for involving intermediaries, reduced transportation infrastructure (most of de facto states do not have their airports), and militarized and securitized domestic politics. Ordinary residents of de facto states have

serious problems with international mobility (as their passports are not recognized by most of states), access to the tertiary healthcare, and international recognition of their education diplomas.

Among other things, non-recognition deprives a de facto state of proper legal defense against external interventions by or on behalf of parent states. This threat forces de facto states to pay special attention to its defense potential at the expense of social development.[33] As facto states do not have Westphalian sovereignty, they have to control their borders (especially borders with parent states) mostly thanks to their military power. However, parent states normally can violate these de facto borders when a power balance is changed without a risk of being accused of aggression by the international community (parent states can be accused of massive human rights violations though). The deficit of a de facto border's legitimacy can work both ways though, as territorial gains of a de facto state at the expense of a parent state can be considered by the international community as a result of internal conflict rather than transgressing the principle of territorial integrity. While arbitrary violation of a border with use of military force is not quite untypical for border disputes between recognized states, the difference is that disputes over borders of recognized states usually aim at limited (and often minor) territorial changes (positional disputes) while in typical disputes between de facto states and their parent states the former's entire territory is claimed by the latter more or less persistently. In some cases (such as the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh), the likelihood of territorial conflicts between parent states and de facto states is increased by the fact that making de facto borders according to the ethnic identity of the dominant group was accompanied by exclusion of other ethnic groups, forced migration, and ethnic cleansings. Now wonder that those borders that emerged as a result of secession are among particularly troublesome ones.[34]

Taking into account the mentioned problems that are derived from non-recognition, it is quite understandable that achieving international legitimacy is the top external political priority for most of de facto states. This priority, however, is not the only one, as de facto states simultaneously face serious domestic problems. Moreover, as Caspersen argues, international recognition can be at odds with domestic political priorities of survival/ safeguarding one's security and securing popular support. Safeguarding one's security works for solidifying de facto states' political regimes and defending it against domestic and external criticisms, while trying to obtain international political legitimacy prompt a large part of de facto states to fit international human rights and democratic standards.[35]

In this vein, the key issues related to domestic sovereignty are state-building and nation-building. De facto states emerge after separating from those recognized polities that are called parent states. This doesn't mean that all territories controlled by successful separatist movements are eligible to qualify as de facto states. Separatist movements and their leaders (warlords, political activists etc.) should be capable not only of effective control over a claimed territory for a long time and not only of collecting resources from this territory (e. g., for the purpose of self-enrichment) but also of state-building, that involves establishing a capable government, regular defense forces, border controls, law enforcement bodies enjoying the monopoly for legitimate violence, and revenue services. Secessionist governments should be capable of providing their populations with at least basic social services (physical infrastructures, health care, education, pensions etc.).[36] Statebuilding is closely related to nationbuilding that is about constructing civic identities to safeguard public support for the de facto statehood.[37]

National flags, emblems, anthems, and holidays are used for the purpose of nation-building, as well as the aspiration for international recognition as a key narrative to

solidify the national identity.[38] Most typically, national identity strongly correlates with identities of de facto states' titular ethnic groups. These ethnic identities often refer to certain territories now controlled by de facto states.[39]

The results of state-building and nation-building efforts by de facto states proved to be mixed. On the one hand, they managed to take control over extensive and usually compact territories, to monopolize legitimate violence and tax collection, to create functional governments and relatively stable political systems. Most of these systems proved to be capable to deal with social discontent and to survive power transitions. Even when faced severe political and economic problems, elites of de facto states, as Kolstø and Blakkisrud argued, usually proved to be efficient in nation-building, as they managed to explain state-building deficiencies by efforts of external enemies (mostly parent states) and by specific problems of the transition period.[40]

On the other hand, most de facto states achieved just modest results in satisfying social and economic demands of their populations. The majority of de facto states can be conceptualized as "small states" that face deficit of available resources.[41] As discussed below, this deficit is most typically covered by institutions and resources of patron states. Political systems of de facto states are influenced by tough authoritarianism (the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics), administrative pressure during elections (e. g. South Ossetia), ethnocracy (Abkhazia), informal influences by ethnic clans (Somaliland) and powerful economic groups (Transnistria). Even if being relatively successful for some time, de facto state building can quickly be reversed when external conditions change dramatically: after suffering crushing defeat in the 2020 war the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (that was among the most successful post-Soviet de facto states in the domains of state-building and nation-building) lost control over three fourths of its territory, most of its agricultural areas and power generation system.

Among those key specific features that characterize de facto states are their special relations with parent states and patron states. In most of cases, contemporary de facto states border their parent states and a large part of them also border their patron states. Most of post-Soviet de facto states have no neighbors apart from patron states and de facto states. This dramatically narrows down their range of options for cross-border interaction and force them to choose between overreliance on a patron state and a risk to be drawn into uncontrolled reintegration with a parent state.

The relations between de facto states and their parent states are controversial at best (as it is in such largely "peaceful" cases, as relations between the Cyprus proper and the Northern Cyprus and between Moldova and Transnistria) and explicitly hostile at worst (relations between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh and between Ukraine and the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics). For a parent state, claiming a breakaway territory its own is normally a matter of principle, as abandoning this claim could undermine its political regime's internal legitimacy and could be a precedent for some other separatist movements inside this state. For a de facto state, a parent state is the hostile "Other" that plays the key role in the nationbuilding and the key threat that solidifies domestic cohesion and legitimizes a ruling regime. To reaffirm the claim that independence is the only viable option, governments and pro-governmental media of de facto states routinely appeal not only to threats that emanate from respective parent states but also to advantageous comparisons that highlight their own social and economic achievements and denigrate performance of their opponents. This propaganda works effectively at least in some cases: for example, in the beginning of 2010s most Abkhazians and Transnistrians were convinced that they lived better than the Georgians and Moldovans, respectively.[42]

Whereas de facto states try to distance themselves from parent states to avoid subjugation (that in some cases does not exclude limited cooperation though), the policy of parent states varies. Some (e. g., Azerbaijan and Ukraine) choose tough political pressure and counter-recognition efforts (resisting to any forms of recognition) while others (Transnistria and, with some reservations, China) are more tolerant to its external contacts and try to reintegrate their opponents bit by bit through cooperation initiatives, offering de facto states options for legitimate cooperation with the external world among other things. The "tough" approach is justified by a parent state's reluctance to contribute to solidified de facto statehood while the "soft" one is justified by the needs to win hearts and minds of de facto states' populations and to provide de facto states with a legitimate gateway to connect with the external world as an alternative to growing dependence on a patron state.[43]

While it is hardly possible to imagine a de facto state that does not has its parent state, there is at least one contemporary case of a de facto state (Somaliland) that does not have a patron state. Still, in most of cases a patron state plays a crucial role for a de facto state's survival. Patron states cover budget deficit, provide de facto states with military protection and with those institutions, infrastructures, goods and services (e.g. cellular communication and tertiary health care) that are in deficit for some reason. Integrating with a patron and delegating it with some government functions reduces a burden for a de facto state, strengthens its defense potential vis-à-vis a parent state and its capacity to meet its population's basic demand. For non-governmental actors residing in a de facto state, a patron state in many cases provides a legitimate window to the external world by granting its citizenship (and thus a passport valid for international travel), issuing internationally recognized higher education diploma, and registering businesses on its territory. The reverse side of a coin is a growing dependence on a patron state up to the total incorporation. The prospect of being absorbed by a patron is not always perceived positively by de facto states' public. Among populations of the post-Soviet de facto states, the South Ossetians explicitly support incorporation, while the Transnistrians and especially the Abkhazians are more hesitant.[44]

The key issue of de facto states' relations with other countries, international organizations, and the international community as a whole, is a degree of recognition that de facto states can enjoy. The present-day de facto states failed to persuade the international community in their compliance to certain standards, including democratic governance and observance of human rights, especially of the rights of ethnic minorities.[45] Most typically, recognition is blocked mainly by stances and interests of some or other global powers, including China, Russia, and the United States. Failure of recognition efforts in some cases is aggravated with bad images of de facto states due to the information vacuum and counter-recognition efforts by parent states. As a result, some de facto states are perceived by foreign politicians and public as "hotbeds of anarchy" and "criminal black holes".[46]

Dealing with unrecognized polities, states other than "parents" and "patrons" are guided both by the international law and by their particular interests. In most cases, their stances are informed by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a recognized state and hence by reluctance to recognize a de facto state. The non-interference principle seriously hinders de facto states' official contacts. Still, in some cases such contacts are still possible if they are based on the ad hoc principle when it comes to such issues as conflict management or humanitarian aid. Governments can be also tolerant to those contacts that can be framed as paradiplomatic, such as cooperation between de facto states and regional actors.[47]

III. The volume

The concept and definition of de facto states are discussed in more detail in Pål Kolstø's article that completes the introductory part (*Part 1*) of this special issue. *Pål Kolstø* (University of Oslo) describes the state of "terminological anarchy" in attempts to define and to denote political entities that broke out of control of their respective parent states, developed state-like qualities, and function autonomously, sometimes for years and decades, without gaining international recognition or with only partial recognition. He argues that the choice of terms to denote these entities goes beyond name games and academic ambitions and also reveals real differences in underlying approaches to this phenomenon which have serious methodological, analytical, normative, practical, and policy implications. Kolstø explains why "de facto states" is one of the most appropriate and neutral terms to describe such entities, by focusing on *de facto statehood* (the ability to function as a (nascent) state) as the central definitional criterion and juxtaposing it to *de jure* status that such entities lack and seek. His preferred definition of de facto states is *"entities which have seceded from a parent state, have managed to capture and retain control over a specific territory for a reasonable period of time, and have declared their independence from the parent state".* This view and definition are shared by the special issue editors, even as several other terms, such as "contested" and "unrecognized" states, are also used by the volume's authors to reflect and fit their specific research goals and focus.

In *Part 2*, cross-cutting issues for cases and contexts involving de facto states are explored and analysed in comparative perspective. The main focus of this section is on sovereignty as the key cross-cutting theme. Sovereignty is both the most heavily contested incompatibility in armed conflicts involving de facto states and the most complex of the key issues to be addressed by a peace process and a comprehensive peace settlement, if any. The cases involving de facto states and comparatively analysed by the authors include Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, South Ossetia, Taiwan, and Transnistria.

First, *Bruno Coppieters* (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) addresses the concept of sovereignty framing it as a fundamental contradiction between a parent state's policy of nonrecognition, intended to prevent permanent separation, and a breakaway (contested) state's policy of recognition aimed to achieve its preferred states. He also disaggregates the notion of sovereignty into "domestic" and "international", finding this distinction particularly useful to apply to and explain the status conundrum faced by de facto states and the dynamics of respective conflicts fought primarily, even if not exclusively, over sovereignty. Another useful concept employed by the author is that of a status asymmetry between the conflicting parties, with the contested state's lack of recognition weakening its position in the international order. While the parent state uses this asymmetry to weaken the contested state's claims to sovereignty, the latter, in turn, tries to transfer and upgrade the control it de facto exercises at the domestic level (in the territory under its control) to the international level and to achieve legal recognition through international agreements. Coppieters then analyzes the cases from three different parts of the world – Abkhazia (post-Soviet Eurasia), Northern Cyprus (Europe), and Taiwan (East Asia) – through the prism of the categories of domestic and international sovereignty that, in the editors' view, may also be interpreted as "de facto" and "de jure" sovereignty. More specifically, the author explores how nonrecognition policies by parent states and recognition policies by contested states at the international level affect the domestic sovereignty de facto exercised by such entities.

Next, *Vladimir Kolosov* (Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences) draws upon the distinction between internal and external sovereignty to apply it to unrecognized or partially recognized de facto states in the post-Soviet space. In terms of methodology, he also focuses on how to measure these two types of sovereignty. The empirical base for his analysis includes statistical and other information on demographic and socio-economic situation, and foreign economic relations of such post-Soviet de facto states as Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, as well as the impact of these factors on neighboring countries and regions. His comparative analysis of public opinions and popular identities is based on surveys and 13 focus groups conducted the fall of 2020 in Transnistria and Abkhazia (the two cases that, unlike the rest of relevant post-Soviet contexts, remained relatively "well-frozen" (post)conflict settings since the initial fighting in the early 1990s, with on-and-off, but largely stumbled peace processes. On the one hand, Kolosov's findings show a noticeable and sustained trend of decline in and outflow of population in these two (and most other) post-Soviet breakaway entities, mostly due to the poor state of their economies. On the other hand, he also demonstrates a significant degree of viability and sustainability of such entities that can hardly be explained by economic and demographic factors. He identifies a professed "political identity" among the residents of both de facto states' as the main basis for their sustained domestic (de facto) sovereignty. In both cases, the author also points out a strong "deficit" of, and drive towards, "external sovereignty" that remains a shared value, albeit with a more disappointing outcome. While the author notes both the specifics and limits of the two entities' Russia-centric approaches to geopolitics and external relations, he also explores both multiple risks that Russia faces as the main patron states of all four entities and the main interests it pursues towards them, including in its involvement in respective conflicts and peace processes.

Part 3 of the special issue explores the dynamics, interplay and mutual impact of the peace process and violence, with the focus on various aspects of the armed conflict in, and the peace process on, Donbass and on the respective entities that broke away from Ukraine, with the main attention paid, consequently, to the 2014–2021 period.

The main research object addressed by *Anna Matveeva* (King's College London) in her article for this special issue, as well as in some of her previous work,[48] is the phenomenon of self-proclaimed republics of Donbass in southeast Ukraine – the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics – a focus that still remains relatively rare for research literature published in English. She identifies what she calls the "limbo stage" (from 2016 to early 2022) of the "interwar" period between the first conflict in and around Donbass in 2014–2015 and the new violent escalation since February 2022. Matveeva suggests to analyse the Donbass case "from within" by combining three interpretations of it as (*a*) an irredentist movement to join the "historical homeland" which the region had been "separated from", (*b*) a civil conflict for a "different" (multiethnic, multilingual, more decentralized) Ukraine, better disposed towards the aspirations of the people of Donbass, and (*c*) an international geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West. She makes a point of studying the breakaway entities of Donbass and related developments in their dynamic evolution, with a special attention to the later stages of the interwar period. On the one hand, at this limbo stage, the two entities developed and sustained a degree of self-government and some proto-state institutions. On the other, it was also as characterized by the republics' governance deficit, economic decline, further cut-off from Ukraine, reinforced by a strict economic blockade by Kiev, and creeping dependency on and de facto integration into Russia. The author also describes how and explains why the Minsk Agreements were initially taken positively and helped reduce the

level of hostilities, but then progressively lost their value, as security remained fragile and on-and-off minor, but routine violence balanced on the verge of renewal of hostilities. In tune with Coppieters's and Kolosov's focus on centrality of sovereignty and status issues for contested states, Matveeva identifies, in the specific case of the DNR and LNR, a lack of clarity about the two entities' future status (return to Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk agreements, joining Russia, or building up their own "statehood") as the central, overwhelming issue and concern, in both security and socio-political terms.

Nadezhda Arbatova (Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences) presents a detailed analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the Minsk peace process centred on the Minsk Agreements of 2014–2015, including repeated attempts to secure a ceasefire between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian separatists in southeastern Ukraine (Donbass). While the agreements ended large-scale fighting, they did not help prevent or stop creeping violence that posed a major obstacle for the implementation of their substantive provisions aimed at the political settlement of the conflict. The author focuses on two main themes throughout the article. First, she pays special attention to the role and pitfalls of the Normandy format, or "Normandy Four", (France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine) as the main negotiation framework for the Minsk Agreements, as well as to the EU's political goals and instruments related to the Minsk peace process. She also explains why the Europeans have not been able to take on a more visible and effective role in the implementation of their proclaimed goals of political settlement of the conflict in southeast Ukraine. Second, she tries to explore potential alternatives to the collapse of the Minsk process in February 2022 by raising the issue of whether the Minsk Agreements were doomed to failure and whether the new, broader armed conflict could have been prevented had the Minsk agreements been implemented. The author suggests bearing in mind that, whatever the inherent shortfalls of the Minsk process, a peace agreement and/or a stable ceasefire forms only one of the stages in, and conditions for, a complex transition to peace. Arbatova insists that deploying a full-scale peace operation under the mandate of the UN Security Council, with the use of military contingents from the OSCE countries, equipped with armored vehicles, artillery, helicopters, and drones, could have been the best guarantee against a major escalation of the conflict, could have excluded any critical external meddling, and, by freezing hostilities, could have provided unlimited time to work out a compromise on the political provisions of the Minsk process.

Andrei Zagorski (MGIMO-University and IMEMO) picks up on this theme by looking specifically at the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in supporting and facilitation the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, especially their ceasefire provisions. He notes that since the start of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the OSCE acted unexpectedly promptly for an organization deeply divided for years, and the deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission raised the threshold for resuming violence. The Trilateral Contact Group (the special representative of the OSCE Chairperson, Russia and Ukraine) proved instrumental for translating political solutions enacted by the Normandy Four into practical measures. While the author critically analyzes such obstacles to and shortfalls of the OSCE mission, as its limited mandate, restrictions of the freedom of movement, inability to verify the withdrawal of weapons and enforce ceasefire and military disengagement, he argues that the ultimate failure of the Minsk process can hardly be attributed to these shortcomings. Zagorski identifies the increasing divergence of Russia and Ukraine on central issues of the peace process, such as the sequence of steps to implement agreed measures and the inclusiveness of the process regarding the participation of separatist regions in talks with Kiev, as the key

factor that undermined political process, eroded the fragile consensus, and led to the escalation of the situation around Ukraine in 2021 – early 2022, the launch of a direct military campaign by Russia, and the termination of consensus-based OSCE operations in Ukraine.

Part 4 of the special issue includes several book reviews written by a group of young scholars at the European University at Saint Petersburg. They focus on four notable recent academic studies on peace processes and violence, nationbuilding and land-for-peace agreements as crosscutting issues for de facto/contested states in comparative context, and the Donbass case.

ENDNOTES

[1] Mac Ginty R., Darby J. Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. P. 4.

[2] For a detailed discussion of the term "de facto states", see an article by Pål Kolstø in this special issue: Kolstø P. What's in a name? "De facto states", terminological choices, and normative consequences // Pathways to Peace and Security. 2022. No. 1 (62). Special Issue: Peace Processes, Violence, and De Facto States. P. 30–46. In this issue, a term "contested state" is also used to denote a de facto autonomous statelet contested by its mother state and its patron state. See Coppieters B. Domestic and international sovereignty: the disputes over the status of Abkhazia, Northern Cyprus, and Taiwan // Pathways to Peace and Security. 2022. No. 1 (62). P. 47–66.

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Petersson T., Hogbladh S., Oberg M. Organized violence, 1989–2018, and peace agreements // Journal of Peace Research. V. 56. No. 4. P. 594.

[13] Calculated by E.Stepanova on the basis of data from: UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset, Version 3-2021. 1946–2020. Uppsala Conflict Data Program. Department of Peace and Conflict Research. Uppsala University (Sweden). URL: https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/index.html #termination (accessed 30.06.2022).

[14] Davies Sh., Pettersson T., Öberg M. Organized violence 1989-2021 and drone warfare // Journal of Peace Research. 2022. V. 59. No. 4. P. 594.

[15] Högbladh S. Peace agreements in armed conflicts: focusing on finding a solution to the conflict incompatibility // Pathways to Peace and Security. 2021. No. 2 (61). P. 20.

[16] PA-X Peace Agreements Database and Dataset, Version 6. 1990–April 2022. Political Settlements Research Programme (PSRP), The University of Edinburgh. URL: https://www.peaceagreements.org (accessed 15.07.2022); Badanjak S. The PA-X Peace Agreement Database: Reflections on documenting the practice of peacemaking // Pathways to Peace and Security. 2021. No. 2 (61). P. 29 (Fig. 2), 30.

[17] See, e. g., Stepanova E. Russia and conflicts in the Middle East: regionalisation and implications for the West // The International Spectator. 2018. V. 53. No. 4. P. 37.

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[19] Badanjak S. Op. cit. P. 27-29; PA-Local: Peace Agreement Dataset (Local Agreements). 1990 – April 2022. Political Settlements Research Programme. The University of Edinburgh.
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