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Full Length Research Article

Russia- Ukraine war and International Law: A Study on the Socio-Economic Impact

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ABSTRACT

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The intense and dangerous turmoil provoked by the breakdown in Russo-Ukrainian relations has escalated into a crisis that now afflicts both European and global affairs. Since the beginning of the confrontation, a lot has been written about its root causes, the motivations of the main actors, and possible scenarios for the future. However, few have looked at what came to be called the 'Ukraine crisis' from the point of view of Russo-Ukrainian relations, and grasped the perspectives of various groups involved, as well as the discursive processes that have contributed to the developments in and interpretations of the conflict. No study so far has been conducted to access the humanitarian, economic and financial impacts of the war between the two countries. This study therefore will address such impacts and be the first among many to come which will analyze the socio – economic effects on Ukraine. One common paraphernalia among the responses is that a few respondents are aware of what President Zelensky is doing in Ukraine to facilitate the recovery roadmap for civilians and map the future of Ukraine. Many respondents did allude that Ukraine needs a \$750 billion fund to facilitate a national recovery plan, and this fund will be able to cater for all the infrastructural losses and damages. A loan is highly possible in the way to get this money, processes are underway.

Introduction

The roles of the international community in the internal affairs of a sovereign state have been changing since the development of the state system in different regions in the world. The major contentious topic on external intrusion into the internal affairs of a state relates to military intervention and supporting 'rebellions. In close particular, the international community recognizes one of the ongoing political disasters and struggle for power through the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The intense and dangerous turmoil provoked by the breakdown in Russo-Ukrainian relations has escalated into a crisis that now afflicts both European and global affairs. Since the beginning of the confrontation, a lot has been written about its root causes, the motivations of the main actors, and possible scenarios for the future. However, few have looked at what came to be called the 'Ukraine crisis' from the point of view of Russo-Ukrainian relations, and grasped the perspectives of various groups involved, as well as the discursive processes that have contributed to the developments in and interpretations of the conflict. No study so far has been conducted to access the humanitarian, economic and financial impacts of the war between the two countries.

When, on 21 November 2013, former Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich decided to postpone the EU Association Agreement, few would have predicted that this, in consequence, would lead to a prolonged inter-communal conflict in Europe's borderland. What started as a peaceful demonstration of support for Ukraine's pro-European course by thousands of people in Maidan Square in Kiev has developed into a vicious confrontation dividing families, communities and the Ukrainian nation (Balmaceda, 2013). According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR, 2015), since the beginning of the conflict, over 500,000 people have left their homes looking for a safe place elsewhere in the country, and hundreds of thousands have fled from Ukraine, mainly to Russia. By February 2015, over 5,000 have been killed and well over 10,000 seriously injured in the conflict in the Donbass (Bohm, 2016). The scale of the human tragedy is immense, and, at the time of writing, the conflict is getting increasingly intense and militarized, despite the official ceasefire imposed as a result of the Minsk Accords of 5 September 2014. Since the beginning of the confrontation, a lot has been written about its root causes, the motivations of the main actors, and

possible scenarios for the future. However, in spite of the largenumber of analyses produced, few have looked at what came to be called the ‘Ukraine crisis’ fromthe point of view of Russo-Ukrainian relations, and grasped the perspectives of various groups involved, as well as the discursive processes that have contributed to the developments in and interpretations of the conflict. With this in mind, the author has decided to undergo research whichis primarily linked with the concern of human suffering, economic cost of the war as well as strategies to prevent future wars (Gower and Timmins, 2021)

To understand this settlement better, it is of paramount importance to understand Ukraine; in the scope of the nations’ identity and allegiance to the Russian empire, known as Russophone. The cultural and political differences besetting Ukraine are the product of very different patterns of regional settlement (Gretzky *et al.*, 2018). Among these, the settlement of eastern and southern Ukraine stands out, for in these traditionally Russophone regions, political conflict has arisen whenever the legitimacy of Russian culture in Ukraine has been challenged. After the destructionof Kiev by Batu Khan in 1240, the land ‘beyond the rapids’ [za porog] of the Dnieper River becamea no man’s land disputed by the Kingdom of Muscovy, the Tatar Khanate, and the Polish- Lithuanian Kingdom. It is in this region (shown in Figure 1 in yellow) that the political life of theUkrainian people begins, as the settlers known to history as Cossacks sought to preserve their independence, while defending their traditional Orthodox Christian faith (Gower and Timmins, 2021).

One of the earliest distinctions that arose among them is the geographic distinction between thosewho settled west of the Dnieper River, known as the Right Bank as the river flows, and those whosettled east of the river, known as the Left Bank. The Left Bank, which includes the current regionsof Crimea, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkov, Kherson, Lugansk, Odessa, Nikolayevsk, and Zaporozhye, forms a relatively compact ethnic and cultural community that is distinguished by thestrong influence of Russian culture, even where the majority of the population defines itself as Ukrainian (Bohm, 2014) . The big emphasis as outlined earlier on, has been of Russian’s preseidentVladimir Putin’ statement of intent that he wants to rule both Russia and Ukraine, and control botheconomies; simply because he believes Ukraine and Russia are one and the same thing and it should be perceived as such. His objective was to eliminate America’s influence through NATO in any affairs which affect Ukraine (and hence Russia). Notwithstanding this, the war began, and military assistance was sought from the US, and the UK also sent assistance in the form of a navy,food and financial assistance to assist the victims of the war in Ukraine. An uproar erupted and many countries, and leaders alike did not condemn the Russian invasion in Ukraine.



Fig 1 Simplified historical map of Ukrainian borders: 1654-2014

Military intervention for humanitarian purposes is, however, highly contentious. Theoretically, military intervention for humanitarian purposes is traced back to the writings of classical jurist andtheorist, Hugo Grotius, in his work, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis (On the Law of War and Peace)* of 1625. The concept which is based on the Grotian argument that, “... where [leaders] provoke theirpeople to despair and resistance by unheard of cruelties, having themselves abandoned all the lawsof nature, they lose the rights of independent sovereigns, and can no longer claim the privilege ofthe law of nations” (Grotius, 2018), supports the use of military force, or the threat of it, by a sovereign state in order to stop the commission of gross human rights violations and heinous crimes by another state on its subjects/citizens. Although scholars like Emmerich de Vattel (1758)also wrote in support of the concept, critics such as Bartolome de las Casas argued that the sanctityof every life made it impossible to justify it taking even if it is for the defense of those who are threatened by the culture of human sacrifice (las Casas, cited in Sorabji; 2006: 20). So was in the case of the Russia/Ukraine war, military intervention was needed to save Ukraine, since Russia has one of the best army navies in the world.

In modern times, military intervention for humanitarian purposes was used by the European powers (Austria, Britain, France, Prussia and Russia) to extensively intervene militarily in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire beginning in the 19th century (Cheikh; 2013). It is however difficultto judge the legal standing of military intervention for humanitarian purposes in the period beforethe end of the Second World War (WW II) given that the use or threat of force was not proscribedas a foreign policy tool in international relations.

The carnage of the two world wars left international leaders with the conclusion that the use or thethreat to use force except in cases of self-defense should be proscribed as a foreign policy tool in the international system. The Charter of the United Nations which created the United Nations organization, therefore clearly stated in Article 2 (4) that, “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.” The

founding fathers of the United Nations were pre-occupied with the issue of wars of aggression and accorded little attention to the rise of internal unrests and civil wars as a major threat to international peace and security.

This research work will also discuss the international efforts to come up with a universal position on military intervention for humanitarian purposes by redefining the old concept of military intervention for humanitarian purposes that was propounded in the absence of a formally recognized apex body to suit the current international system in which the UN is the apex universal body that regulates state behavior in the international system. It analyzes efforts by contemporary interventionists like Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General (1997-2006) to reinterpret the UN charter in order to justify the legality of military intervention for humanitarian purposes under UN law. The work of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) is discussed at length. The thesis argues that the commission's "The Responsibility to Protect," Report is the main tool that the international community tried to use to legalize military intervention for humanitarian purposes and co-opt it into the UN law. The document classifies international crimes, an exercise which, this thesis argues, was simply a re-codification of what had already been codified by the international criminal tribunals like the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (ICTY and ICTR respectively), International Court for Sierra Leone (ICSL), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Statement of the problem

The intense and dangerous turmoil provoked by the breakdown in Russo-Ukrainian relations has escalated into a crisis that now afflicts both European and global affairs. Since the beginning of the confrontation, a lot has been written about its root causes, the motivations of the main actors, and possible scenarios for the future. However, few have looked at what came to be called the 'Ukraine crisis' from the point of view of Russo-Ukrainian relations, and grasped the perspectives of various groups involved, as well as the discursive processes that have contributed to the developments in and interpretations of the conflict. No study so far has been conducted to assess the humanitarian, economic and financial impacts of the war between the two countries. This study therefore will address such impacts and be the first among many to come which will analyze the socio – economic effects on Ukraine.

Justification

Human suffering remains an integral concern of mankind. The economic cost calculations of the Russia/Ukraine war cannot be overestimated without considering the loss of life, which is indispensable and cannot be replaced. This study therefore will aim to discover the impacts of the war in terms of the humanitarian, economic and financial aspects. Proceeds from this research will be used for scholarly research, and mapping out advises which may prevent future wars. This is also one of the first few series of studies to be conducted on the Russian invasion of war, especially on matters concerning human suffering.

Objectives

Main objective

The main aim of the research is to assess the humanitarian, economic and financial impacts of the Russian invasion on Ukraine, with special emphasis on the Ukrainian civilians.

Specific objectives

- a. To assess the economic, humanitarian, and financial impacts of the Russian invasion on Ukraine.
- b. To determine the post-war recovery strategies by Ukraine following the invasion by Russian war navy
- c. To analyze the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) concept in line with customary international law and United Nations law, in relation to the Russian/Ukraine war.

Methodology

Research Design

The mixed method research design will be used for this research. There may be differences in research design depending on the problems under study, but all the designs seek to systematically, collect, present and analyze data. Research design refers to the outline; plan or strategy you are going to use to seek answers to the research questions for testing the research hypothesis. It is a logical model of proof that allows the research to draw inference in the relations among variables under the investigation.

Population

The Target Population is the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn. In addition, Cook *et al.*, (1985), says population refers to the target to which investigators generate the study result. The target population is the total collection of the elements from the target research focus. Thus, all people or subjects falling within the inclusion criteria are considered as the study population. Mcleod (1994) states that study sample is made up of 10% of the total population. Mcleod (1994) also defines the research population as "the totality of persons or objects with which a study is concerned". A sample in turn is inclusive of the population considered for inclusion in the study. Respondents for this study were drawn from the various tribes of the Indian community, and one resident from Russia who happens to be a friend to the author.

Sample and Sampling Strategy

The study adopted purposive sampling method. The method enabled the researcher to obtain specific and relevant information from the sample. Again, the method also served the researcher's time since he gathered information from known and

knowledgeable sample about the research area. Since the researcher was travelling from one point to next, he felt it was prudent to use methods that are not time consuming.

Key informants

These are the people who form the core of the participants of the research informants. They were drawn from the Indian population and Russia.

Data collection process/strategy

Data was collected online by means of Survey gold application. The link for the data collection is as pasted below:

Research objectives guided the researcher in questionnaire formulation. Questionnaires were distributed for completion to the respective participants and issues of reliability and validity were of concern to the researcher, hence the researcher would emphasise to the research participants the real purpose of the study. Participants were given enough time to respond to the questionnaire after which they were collected for analysis by the system. Aspects to do with confidentiality were also explained to the participants so that whatever data they would provide could be valid and reliable. Interview guide will also be employed to gather more data from other participants.

Data collection and analysis

This researcher will use a questionnaire and interview guide. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis will be employed, and this involved, first, the identification of core domains and ideas before cross-analysis of the same. This is based on the strengths embedded in thematic analysis; a theme captures a common, recurring pattern across a dataset, clustered around a central organizing concept. A theme tends to describe the different facets of that singular idea, demonstrating the theme's patterning in the dataset. This is because the theme itself is a conceptually founded pattern. Thereafter coding will be done. The advantages of this are that codes tend to be more specific than themes. They capture a single idea associated with a segment of data and consist of pithy labels identifying what is of interest in the data, that is, in relation to the research question. Codes can be conceptualized as the building-blocks that combine to create themes – so multiple codes typically are combined to create themes, during the process of data analysis. This will be by first identifying the concepts in the research interview, like the content analysis, and then go beyond that to explore relationships between the concepts. This involves noticing concepts and ideas relevant to the study. Secondly, it goes on to collect examples of these concepts and then analyse these concepts to find the commonalities, the differences, the patterns and the structures. There was a review of the transcripts and compiling a list of provisional domains. Thereafter, presentation was done in tabular and graphical structure to turn raw numbers into meaningful data through the application of rational and critical thinking. Quantitative data analysis will include the calculation of frequencies of variables and differences between variables. Since a quantitative approach is usually associated with finding evidence to either support or reject hypotheses you have formulated at the earlier stages of the research, findings from the questionnaires were presented in form of tables and detailed analysis of each question that was responded. The data collected will be put in tabular forms of percentages and discussions of results followed. The analysis will be used to reject or disapprove the hypothesis incidentally covered under the research objectives.

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics and response rate

Upon the collection of results online, the questionnaire sought to solicit responses pertaining demographic characteristics of the following: Age, gender, level of education, country of origin, region or district and whether or not the respondents have heard about the Russia/Ukraine war.

While the target goal was 40 people, it was only managed to solicit responses from not more than 22 people and this represents a response rate of 55%, and it is deemed less than what was expected as the survey was allowed to run for over thirty (30) days online. This can be attributed to the nature of the questions, which people found difficult to answer.

Summary of the demographic characteristics

Regarding age, the oldest age from the respondents was found to be 46 years old, while the youngest of them all was found to be 21 years old, the average age of the respondents is 29 years, which is a fairly young population averagely. About 12 (54.55%) of the respondents were found to be male and only 10 (45.45%) were found to be females. The results therefore showed that there were more males than females. The responses also showed a great variation in as far as the qualifications possessed by the responses, the lowest qualification presented was a Primary Teachers' Diploma (PTD), while the highest qualification presented was a Bachelors 'degree. Furthermore, the countries of origin of the respondents were dissimilar from each other, with some admitting that they're from India, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Eswatini and South Africa. Lastly, it was interesting to note that all 22 (100%) respondents admitted being familiar with the ongoing Russia/Ukraine war, denoting their political consciousness.

The economic, humanitarian and financial impacts of the Russia/Ukraine war

Respondents were requested to show their thoughts regarding the economic, humanitarian and financial impacts of the war, and these were some of the responses as shown below, the theme color shows familiarity in terms of the responses for grouping, as in accordance to thematic analysis;

Respondent A: Economically- The world market was tempered with due to the war, there's an ongoing increase in the fuel prices and oil reserves due to the war which has affected a lot of import and export productions from other countries around the

world. Humanitarian impacts were loss of lives, shelter and homes as people had to flee from the war, buildings were damaged, and families disrupted and financially the price markets gave increased. Things are now expensive.

Respondent B: Wheat prices skyrocketed and with that food prices went up. The sanctions on Russia knocked out oil supplies from the 3rd largest oil producer in the world. With that petrol prices went up and inflation followed globally. LPG prices in Europe are going up as Russia cut supply which will negatively hamper production and economic growth and coupled with pandemic a sluggish growth, the future is bleak to say the least. We are all paying for the war through higher prices which are mostly due to price gouging by firms.

Respondent C: Russian economy suffered as the country faced sanctions all over the world hence, they couldn't export their products mainly oil. Not only did they do that but also businessmen of Russian origin plying trade in other countries had their assets frozen, a relevant example being the recent forced sale of Chelsea Football Club, which was previously owned by Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich

Respondent D: - Higher commodity prices intensify the threat of long-lasting high inflation which increases the risks of stagflation and social unrest. Certain sectors such as automotive, transport or chemicals are more likely to suffer.

Respondent E: Economic- Resources such as people, farming land and crops in the Ukraine supplying the world were destroyed which caused shortages and led to price hikes of essential products like petrol and oil. Because the Ukraine was supplying sunflower seeds and could not trade worldwide, its GDP was greatly affected, and countries were fighting for themselves impacting poor nations which depended on them like African countries. Scholars in both Ukraine and Russia were disrupted by the war and potential workers and breadwinners were left unemployed or worse.

Humanitarian - lives were lost, soldiers from Russia reported that took innocent lives because they were given orders, children, mothers were crushed under buildings and in hospitals for a war no one knew the cause of or justified it.

Financial impacts - European countries banned the use of the Russian currency in their countries to sanction it so that its Economy can crumble. This affected the lives of the people in Russia and those outside of it who had business with the Russian currency. Money was spent on war missiles and defense which could have been used to improve the country and its people. Financial resources were wasted in this war.

Respondent F: It affected gas prices, wheat products and other essentials. The world is slowly going towards a hard recession due to the impact from the Ukraine/Russia war. The war has resulted to highly inflated prices of essential commodities such as fuel, cooking oil etc. general people have difficulty in coping with life.

Respondent G: The war has resulted to Ukrainian displacement, others were left homeless with essential services like food, water, electricity, access to health care, etc. The world economy has been greatly affected by the war.

Respondent H: Ukraine was a small part, its financial, economically small and population also low, when compared to Russia, because Russia is a large country and high population, and very much developed country because of this Russia/Ukraine war, many people died in Ukraine, other countries are also affected, because many things are coming from there to other countries, and the oil etc. costs are increasing in our country, it affects financially.

Discussion

The frequency of the responses highlight that Ukraine was most affected nation in this ongoing war, with majority of the respondents pushing the blame to Russia. Predominantly, many of the respondents cited the global impact of the war, which is mostly social and humanitarian. The effects felt by respondents in appalling countries as prices of daily commodities like bread (wheat) and petrol (LPG) on the rise by at least 50% over the past 2 months. This has made life very tricky and difficult to manage. Other respondents illustrated their concern on the invasion, including the damage and loss of physical buildings, structures and schools which were destroyed during the war, above all; the loss of human life cannot be compared nor compensated by any billions of dollars; once human loss occurs, a standing ovation occurs because of how sensitive the matter is. In this war, thousands of people died and this highly unacceptable and regrettable.

The post recovery strategies used by Ukraine following the invasion by Russia

This section seeks to examine the post recovery strategies which are used by Ukraine following the invasion by Russia as provided by the respondents. While a majority of the respondents showed little or no knowledge on the subject matter, the following sensible suggestions were captured from various respondents.

Respondent A: Ukraine is working towards rebuilding the shattered infrastructure and recovering the economy post war. They are looking into grants and loans

Respondent B: It is difficult to talk about recovery while civilians are still under attack, while hospitals are being bombed, and where cities have lost power and water, but thinking about recovery means envision.

Respondent C: Helping the people in the immediate aftermath of the disaster—ensuring clean water, adequate power, medical care to the sick and wounded takes priority.

Respondent D: Ukraine said it would need \$750bn to fund a national recovery plan as it maps out a strategy to rebuild its shattered infrastructure and revitalize its economy after war with Russia.

Respondent E: An integrated approach to recovery through sustainable economic development and social transformation; transparent and innovative approaches to governance; resilient, modern, and state-of-the-art infrastructure; and a safe, educated, healthy, and sustainable society.

Conclusion

There is a need to follow the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi i.e., non-violence to come out from the problem (Abraham, 2022). Social Work profession has to provide the emergency relief services to the victims of war. They have to use case work, group work, community organization to provide the therapeutic help to the war victims (Mutluri, 2021). One common paraphernalia among the responses is that a few respondents are aware of what President Zelensky is doing in Ukraine to facilitate the recovery roadmap for civilians and map the future of Ukraine. Many respondents did allude that Ukraine needs a \$750 billion fund to facilitate a national recovery plan, and this fund will be able to cater for all the infrastructural losses and damages. A loan is highly possible in the way to get this money, processes are underway.

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