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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

The object of the research is the social and economic processes triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war, in particular their impact on migration, international trade, and the institutions involved in conflict resolution mediation. The aim of the article is to identify the interrelationship among these processes, assess their implications for Ukraine's social and economic development, and determine the prospects for post war recovery.

The scientific hypothesis of the article is that the Russia-Ukraine War has generated interconnected migration, trade, and institutional shocks that mutually reinforce negative social and economic effects in Ukraine, while the effectiveness of international mediation mechanisms remains insufficient to mitigate these impacts without a comprehensive alignment of economic and migration policies.

The methodological framework is based on a systems approach, comparative analysis, statistical methods for evaluating macroeconomic indicators, and structural functional analysis of mediation institutions. The results of the research indicate that the war has led to large-scale external and internal migration (over 6 million people), a significant decline in exports—particularly in metallurgical products—and an increased share of the agricultural sector (up to 32.4% of total exports). The trade deficit in 2023 reached –USD -27.3 billion, driven by reduced production

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СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНІ НАСЛІДКИ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Об'єктом дослідження є соціально-економічні процеси, спричинені російсько-українською війною, зокрема їхній вплив на міграцію, міжнародну торгівлю та інститути посередництва у врегулюванні конфліктів. Метою статті є визначення взаємозв'язку між зазначеними процесами, їхніх наслідків для соціально-економічного розвитку України та перспектив відновлення у повоєнний період.

Наукова гіпотеза дослідження полягає в тому, що російсько-українська війна спричинила взаємопов'язані міграційні, торговельні та інституційні шоки, що взаємно посилюють негативні соціально-економічні наслідки для України, тоді як ефективність міжнародних механізмів посередництва є недостатньою для їхнього пом'якшення без комплексного узгодження економічної та міграційної політики.

Методологічну основу становлять системний підхід, порівняльний аналіз, статистичні методи оцінювання макроекономічних показників і структурно-функціональний аналіз діяльності інституцій посередництва. Результатами дослідження свідчать, що війна призвела до масштабної зовнішньої та внутрішньої міграції (понад 6 млн осіб), сумісного скорочення експорту, особливо металургійної продукції, та зростання частки аграрного сектору (до 32,4% у структурі експорту). Від'ємне сальдо зовнішньої торгівлі у 2023 р. сягнуло -27,3 млрд дол. США, що зумовлено зниженням виробництва у прифронтових регіонах і зростанням



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in frontline regions and rising logistics costs. Mediation institutions (the UN, OSCE, EU, Turkey) demonstrated limited effectiveness due to political divergences and asymmetric interests, although their efforts laid the foundation for new formats of economic and diplomatic coordination (including the Black Sea Grain Initiative). The most adverse consequences of the war manifest in regional export disparities, demographic imbalances, and declining trust in international negotiation frameworks.

The findings highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to overcoming the consequences of the war, which should include a coordinated migration policy, diversification of foreign trade, and reforms of international mediation mechanisms. Future research perspectives involve the empirical assessment of regional trade and migration shocks and the development of adaptive mediation models in protracted conflict settings.

Keywords: russian-Ukrainian war, migration processes, international trade, mediation institutions, social and economic development, conflict, recovery, export, import, diplomacy.

логістичних витрат. Інститути посередництва (ООН, ОБСЄ, ЄС, Туреччина) продемонстрували обмежену ефективність через політичні розбіжності та асиметричні інтереси сторін, однак їхня діяльність стала основою для створення нових форматів економічного та дипломатичного врегулювання (зокрема, Чорноморська зернова ініціатива). Найбільший негативний вплив війни проявляється у регіональній диференціації експорту, демографічному дисбалансі та втраті довіри до міжнародних переговорних форматів. Результати дослідження свідчать про необхідність комплексного підходу до подолання наслідків війни, який включає узгоджену міграційну політику, диверсифікацію зовнішньої торгівлі та реформу механізмів міжнародного посередництва. Перспективи подальших досліджень пов'язані з емпіричною оцінкою регіональних торговельних і міграційних шоків та розробкою моделей адаптивної медіації в умовах затяжних конфліктів.

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна, міграційні процеси, міжнародна торгівля, інститути посередництва, соціально-економічний розвиток, конфлікт, відновлення, експорт, імпорт, дипломатія.

JEL Classification: F35, H56, O15, O19.

Introduction

The russian-Ukrainian war, which began in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas, and escalated into a full-scale war in February 2022, has become one of the most serious crises in contemporary Europe. It has caused profound social and economic, demographic, and political changes not only in Ukraine but also in neighbouring countries and in the global context. The conflict has highlighted the high sensitivity of international trade systems, migration flows, and mediation institutions to violent and politically unstable processes.

One of the most significant consequences of the war has been changes in migration processes, affecting both internally displaced persons and refugees abroad. Mass migration has created new demographic and economic challenges, ranging from a shortage of skilled labour to increased pressure on infrastructure and social systems in recipient countries. A significant proportion of displaced persons consists of women, children, and the elderly, which further exacerbates structural imbalances in Ukraine's demographics and economy.

The war has also had a substantial impact on international trade, which has experienced serious disruptions due to restricted access to seaports, blockade of logistics corridors, and disruptions in production chains in frontline regions. Ukraine, as one of the world's key exporters of grains,

oilseeds, and metal products, has lost a significant share of its traditional markets, leading to a sharp decline in exports and an increase in the negative trade balance. At the same time, the agricultural sector has become dominant in the export structure, necessitating its modernization and diversification of external markets.

In the context of armed conflict, international mediation institutions (UN, OSCE, EU, Turkey) have faced a range of challenges. Their effectiveness is limited by political disagreements, asymmetrical interests of the parties, and difficulties in ensuring compliance with ceasefires. At the same time, international initiatives, such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, have demonstrated the potential of combined economic-diplomatic approaches to conflict resolution, which represent an important element in the post-war economic recovery.

The scientific interest in these issues is driven by the need for a comprehensive understanding of the interconnection between migration processes, international trade, and the activities of mediation institutions. Most existing studies examine these aspects in isolation, without exploring their mutual influence and the broader social and economic consequences. This highlights the relevance of the present research, which allows for the assessment of the scale of transformations, identification of risks for the economy and society, and the development of recommendations for recovery and development policies.

An analysis of recent research on the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on migration processes, international trade, and mediation institutions in conflict resolution confirms significant changes in the global dynamics. Based on analytical work reflecting the effects of the war on migration processes, international trade, and mediation institutions, we have compiled the following *Table*:

Table

Key findings of recent studies on the impact of the war on migration processes, international trade, and mediation institutions

Sphere of impact	Main findings of recent studies	Sources
Migration processes	Ukrainians became refugees; mass migration to the EU; demographic and economic changes in recipient countries; forced deportations to Russia; violations of children's rights.	Ophoke (2024), Yves Bossavie et al. (2025), Adema et al. (2024)
International trade	Disruptions in the supply of food and energy resources; disturbances in global trade chains; changes in wheat export patterns; crop losses in Ukraine; rising prices on global markets	Paryan et al. (2024), Ophoke (2024)
Mediation institutions	Limited effectiveness of third parties in achieving peace agreements; challenges in the activities of the UN, OSCE, EU, and Turkey; geopolitical barriers and loss of trust; need to combine diplomacy with social and economic recovery programs	Ophoke (2024), GPPi (2025)

Source: compiled by the author.

Despite numerous studies on individual aspects of the Russian-Ukrainian war—such as migration, changes in trade, or diplomatic mediation—a comprehensive analysis of the interconnections between these spheres remains insufficiently developed. The majority of existing works examine demographic and economic consequences in isolation, without considering the impact of migration on trade structure and the international capacity of the state, as well as the effects of sanctions and humanitarian crises on the effectiveness of mediation institutions. This highlights the relevance of the present study.

The aim of the article is to identify and substantiate the social and economic consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war for Ukraine through the interaction of migration processes, international trade transformations, and the functioning of mediation institutions, as well as to determine priority directions for post-war recovery and institutional reform.

The research hypothesis is that the Russian-Ukrainian war has generated interrelated migration, trade, and institutional shocks that mutually reinforce negative social and economic outcomes in Ukraine, while the effectiveness of international mediation mechanisms remains insufficient to mitigate these effects without integrated economic and migration policy adjustments.

The methodological framework of the research is based on a systemic approach, comparative analysis, statistical evaluation of macroeconomic indicators, and structural-functional analysis of the activities of mediation institutions.

The first section examines the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on migration processes, focusing on the scale, structure, and social and economic consequences of forced internal and external displacement.

The second section analyses changes in Ukraine's international trade under wartime conditions, including export contraction, shifts in commodity structure, regional trade disparities, and the dynamics of the negative trade balance.

The third section explores the role and effectiveness of international mediation institutions in conflict resolution, assessing their limitations and the emergence of hybrid economic-diplomatic mechanisms, such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The final section summarizes the key findings of the study and outlines priority directions for Ukraine's post-war recovery, emphasizing integrated migration policy, trade diversification, and the reform of international mediation mechanisms.

1. Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on migration processes

Military actions have led to a range of consequences and impacts (*Figure 1*), primarily including the mass displacement of the population both internally and beyond Ukraine's borders. According to the Migration Data Portal, over 6 million people have left Ukraine as a result of the conflict

(Migration Overview, n. d.). Such migration affects not only the demographic burden in Ukraine but also has a significant impact on the economies of recipient countries. For example, expenditures by Ukrainians abroad in 2022 reached approximately USD 2 billion per month, stimulating consumer demand in host countries such as Poland and Estonia (Poharska et al., 2023, March 7).

Military actions have led to a wide range of social and economic consequences, foremost among which is the mass displacement of the population both within Ukraine and beyond its borders (*Figure 1*). According to the Migration Data Portal, over 6 million people have left Ukraine as a result of the conflict. Such large-scale migration has significantly affected the country's demographic structure, exacerbating labour shortages and increasing demographic pressure in certain regions.

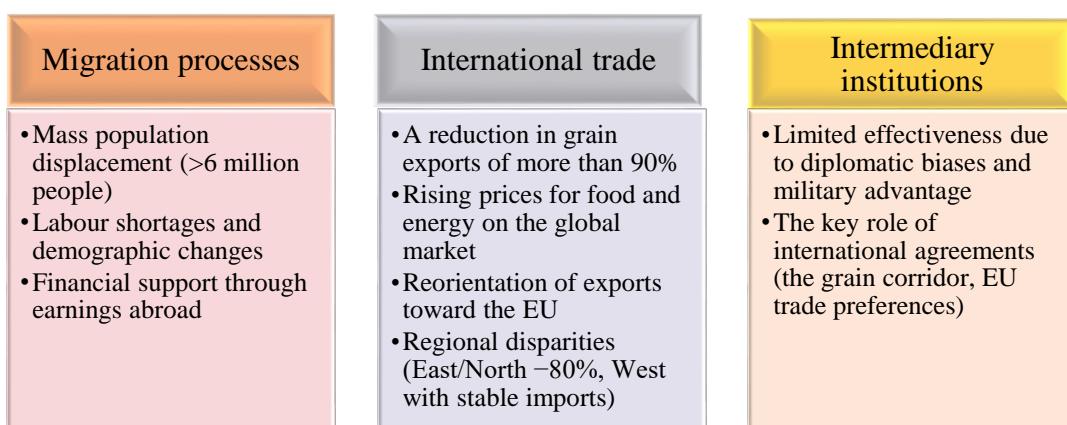


Figure 1. Impact of the war on migration processes, international trade, and mediation institutions

Source: compiled by the author.

At the same time, migration has had a noticeable economic impact on recipient countries. For instance, expenditures by Ukrainians abroad in 2022 reached approximately USD 2 billion per month, stimulating consumer demand in host countries such as Poland and Estonia. (Poharska et al., 2023, March 7). Migration flows are heterogeneous and predominantly consist of women, children, and the elderly, as men of conscription age are generally restricted from leaving the country. In the long term, these trends contribute to structural imbalances in the labour market, particularly in sectors that were critical to Ukraine's economy before the war, such as agriculture and industry.

2. Transformation of Ukraine's international trade under wartime conditions

The Russian-Ukrainian war has caused substantial disruptions to Ukraine's international trade due to restricted access to seaports, the blockade of logistics corridors, sanctions and counter-sanctions, and production losses

in frontline regions. According to WTO estimates, exports of key agricultural products declined sharply following the blockade of the Black Sea, with grain exports falling by more than 90% during the summer of 2022 compared to pre-war levels.

The introduction of the Black Sea Grain Initiative partially restored maritime exports; however, even with alternative logistics routes and “solidarity corridors,” trade volumes remain below pre-war indicators. Increased transportation and insurance costs have reduced the competitiveness of Ukrainian exports. As a result, the structure of exports has shifted significantly, with the agricultural sector becoming dominant, while metallurgy and heavy industry have experienced substantial declines. These factors contributed to the sharp deterioration of the trade balance, which reached USD -27.3 billion in 2023.

3. Role of mediation institutions in economic and diplomatic regulation

Armed confrontation has significantly complicated traditional diplomatic conflict resolution mechanisms, increasing the role of international mediation institutions such as the UN, OSCE, the EU, and Turkey. However, their effectiveness remains limited due to political disagreements, asymmetrical interests of the parties, fragile ceasefires, and challenges in enforcing agreements.

Despite these limitations, certain mediation initiatives have demonstrated practical results. The Black Sea Grain Initiative serves as an example of a hybrid economic-diplomatic mechanism that combines security guarantees with trade facilitation. Such initiatives highlight the potential of mediation institutions to mitigate economic risks even in conditions of ongoing conflict. At the same time, changes in the global trade system have expanded the scope of institutional involvement in resolving disputes related to export-import contracts, transit routes, and sanctions regimes.

4. Regional and global social and economic implications

Before the war, Ukraine and Russia played a crucial role in global markets, supplying a significant share of wheat, sunflower products, and energy resources. The disruption of these supplies led to rising global food and energy prices, disproportionately affecting import-dependent countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Within Ukraine, the war has intensified regional economic disparities. Eastern and northern regions, where heavy industry was concentrated, experienced the most severe export declines, correlating with increased migration flows. In contrast, western regions and Kyiv maintained relatively stable import dynamics and became key logistical hubs. These regional imbalances underscore the need for targeted economic recovery policies, modernization of production capacities, and diversification of foreign trade relations.

As Ukrainians increasingly sought employment abroad, wages earned in host countries became the primary source of financing for migrants' expenses. Migration flows are heterogeneous—predominantly women, children, and the elderly—since men of conscription age are generally restricted from leaving due to mobilization (Havlin, 2025). In the long term, this leads to a labour shortage, particularly in the agricultural sector, which was a key component of the Ukrainian economy before the war (Kilfoyle, 2023, October 24). Before 2022, economic and educational motives dominated migration; after the full-scale Russian invasion, the primary reason shifted to threats to personal safety (Lytvynchuk, 2023).

Restrictions on access to seaports, the introduction of sanctions and counter-sanctions, and disruptions in logistics have drastically affected Ukraine's import-export flows. According to WTO estimates, trade volumes, especially of agricultural products, declined significantly due to the blockade of the Black Sea. Between June and August 2022, grain exports fell by over 90% compared to pre-war levels (How the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 2025). As a mitigation measure, the Black Sea Grain Initiative was established, partially restoring maritime grain shipments (Black Sea Grain Initiative, 2025). However, even with the rerouting of logistics through "solidarity corridors", exports remain below pre-war levels, and increased transit costs and logistics expenses have reduced competitiveness. Additionally, the conflict undermines trust and social capital between goods and trade partners, especially across regions, which has reduced trade even in non-conflict areas due to the loss of intergroup trust (Korovkin & Makarin, 2023).

Conditions of armed confrontation complicate traditional diplomatic resolution, necessitating greater involvement of multilevel mediation institutions. Their effectiveness is limited by inconsistent intervention, diplomatic bias, fragile ceasefires, and the military advantage of the parties involved (Ophoke, 2024; Aji & Setiyono, 2023). Mediation models – including bilateral, multilateral, and digital approaches – are applied to facilitate reconciliation, but success depends on the willingness of parties to make concessions, the pressure of sanctions, and international oversight (Lintang & Farida, 2025). Changes in the global economic and trade system also transform the role of institutions in resolving disputes over export-import contracts and transit flows (Ma, 2025).

Before the war, Ukraine and Russia supplied a significant share of global food and energy resources – approximately 25% of wheat exports, 45% of sunflower products, and 20% of fossil fuels (WTO, 2023). The armed conflict disrupted these supplies, leading to rising food and energy prices, which were particularly burdensome for import-dependent countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Turkey.

The full-scale war has significantly affected the volumes, directions, and commodity composition of Ukraine's exports and imports. The conflict has sharply exacerbated the problem of *a negative trade balance*: the balance fell from *USD -6.2 billion in 2021 to USD -27.3 billion in 2023*, due to declining exports and rising imports. This negative trend has been mitigated only by international financing and restrictions on capital mobility, which were critically important for maintaining the stability of the hryvnia.

Changes in Ukrainian trade are directly influenced by the actions of mediation institutions and international support: *unilateral trade preferences granted by the EU in 2022* significantly increased the EU's share in exports, mainly in the agricultural sector, while the operation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the establishment of the Ukrainian maritime corridor after its suspension proved critically important. The war has also intensified *regional disparities*: exports from the eastern and northern regions, where heavy industry was concentrated, fell by 80%, correlating with increased migration; western regions and Kyiv maintained stable import dynamics, serving as logistical gateways; the Odesa region remained a key agro-hub due to the maritime corridor. Regions that lost access to CIS markets face logistical challenges and require modernization of production, implementation of European standards, and the search for new EU markets (Okhrimenko, 2024).

The results of this study and directions for further research are presented here. The Russian-Ukrainian war has had a substantial impact on migration processes and international trade: Ukraine's population has decreased, its demographic structure has changed, and agricultural exports have experienced logistical shocks, blockades, and sanctions, while trade routes and models are being reformed. The war has deepened the negative trade balance and reduced export diversification, particularly in metallurgy, which has amplified regional disparities in the East and North. Mediation institutions have limited effectiveness in a large-scale conflict; however, there is an urgent need for adaptive, hybrid mechanisms, including digital mediation and economic instruments.

Future research should focus on the empirical assessment of migration and trade shocks across Ukrainian regions, as well as on experimental mediation models that account for multilevel interests and conflict asymmetries.

Conclusions

Impact on migration processes: the Russian-Ukrainian war has triggered large-scale internal and external migration, affecting over 6 million people. This has led to demographic imbalances, labour shortages in the agricultural and industrial sectors, and changes in the social and economic burden on recipient countries. Migration flows are uneven, predominantly consisting of women, children, and the elderly, which exacerbates regional challenges in economic recovery and workforce replenishment.

Impact on international trade: the war has caused a significant reduction in exports, particularly in metallurgy, and an increase in the share of agricultural exports, including grains and crop products. Ukraine's negative trade balance reached USD -27.3 billion in 2023 due to port blockades, production disruptions, and increased logistics costs. The conflict has also intensified regional export disparities, especially in the eastern and northern regions, highlighting the need for production modernization and diversification of foreign economic relations.

Role of mediation institutions: international organizations (UN, OSCE, EU, Turkey) have demonstrated limited effectiveness in ensuring

peaceful conflict resolution due to political disagreements and asymmetrical interests of the parties. However, initiatives such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative have shown the potential of hybrid economic-diplomatic mediation models, combining trade and security instruments.

Need for a comprehensive recovery approach: to stabilize Ukraine's social and economic situation post-war, it is necessary to implement coordinated migration policies, diversify foreign trade, modernize production, and reform international mediation mechanisms, taking into account hybrid, digital, and multilevel mediation models.

Future studies should focus on the empirical assessment of regional trade and migration shocks, the long-term demographic and economic consequences of the war, and the development of adaptive mediation models for protracted conflicts with asymmetric interests.

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