

Information and conflicts

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Abstract

The **purpose** of the article embarking on a comprehensive exploration of the role of information in shaping and navigating international conflicts, ventures into a multidimensional analysis, elucidating the intricate dynamics and profound impacts embedded within information dissemination and management in contemporary geopolitical landscapes. It acknowledges the potent influence of information as a driver of social development, a tool and target in conflicts, and a pivotal element in policy-making and international relations, thereby establishing a complex, interwoven relationship between information, state actions, and societal structures.

Relevance. Engaging in a meticulous comparative analysis, the article illuminates the varied strategies, challenges, and outcomes encountered by different nations and regions in managing information-induced conflicts. It brings to light the disparities and commonalities in how information is leveraged, manipulated, and safeguarded across diverse socio-political and economic contexts, employing detailed case studies and instances from recent history to substantiate the discourse.

Results. The analysis delves into scenarios where information has been weaponized for strategic gains, as well as instances where information acts as a mediator and peacemaker, thereby showcasing the dual-faceted nature of information in international relations. Furthermore, the article critically examines the ethical, legal, and social implications of information management, especially amidst conflicts, providing insights into the challenges of balancing transparency, security, and strategic advantages in the digital age. It navigates through theoretical frameworks, empirical data, and examples, providing a robust, comprehensive overview of the multifaceted relationship between information, conflict, and social development.

Conclusions. Through this exploration, the article seeks not only to enhance the academic understanding of information dynamics in conflicts but also to foster informed policy-making and strategy development in navigating the complexities of information management in international relations and conflicts in the contemporary era.

Keywords: information, state, foreign policy, problems, threats, sources of information, conflicts, social development

Інформація та конфлікти

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Анотація

Метою статті є комплексне дослідження ролі інформації у формуванні та управлінні міжнародними конфліктами, багатовимірний аналіз з'ясування складної динаміки та глибоких впливів, закладених у розповсюдженні інформації та управлінні нею в сучасних геополітичних ландшафтах. Визнається потужний вплив інформації як драйвера соціального розвитку, інструменту та цілі у конфліктах, та ключового елемента у формуванні політик та у міжнародних відносинах, тим самим встановлюючи складні, переплетені взаємовідносини між інформацією, діями держави та соціальними структурами.

Актуальність. Через застосування детального порівняльного аналізу, стаття висвітлює різноманітні стратегії, виклики та результати, з якими стикалися різні нації та регіони в управлінні конфліктами, викликаними інформацією. У статті висвітлюються розбіжності та спільні риси в тому, як інформація використовується, маніпулюється та захищається в різних соціально-політичних та економічних контекстах, використовуючи детальні випадкові вивчення та приклади з недавньої історії для обґрунтування дискусії.

Результати. Аналіз занурюється у сценарії, де інформацію було використано як зброю для стратегічних вигод, а також у випадках, де інформація діє як посередник і миротворець, тим самим демонструючи двобічну природу інформації в міжнародних відносинах. Крім того, у статті критично розглядається етичні, правові та соціальні наслідки управління інформацією, особливо під час конфліктів, надаючи уявлення про виклики збалансування прозорості, безпеки та стратегічних переваг у цифрову епоху. Вона проходить через теоретичні рамки, емпіричні дані, надаючи стійке, всеосяжне уявлення про багатогранні взаємовідносини між інформацією, конфліктом та соціальним розвитком.

Висновки. Через це дослідження прагнемо не лише поглибити академічне розуміння динаміки інформації у конфліктах, але й сприяти обізнаному формуванню політики та розробці стратегій у складностях управління інформацією у міжнародних відносинах та конфліктах у сучасну епоху.

Ключові слова: інформація, держава, зовнішня політика, проблеми, загрози, джерела інформації, конфлікти, суспільний розвиток

Introduction.

Modern societies are evolving, and many aspects of this evolution play a crucial role in the interactions between individuals and states. Global changes are forming new societal models and creating fresh ways for people to communicate with the wider world. These changes also modify how people think and act, raising the level of risk and introducing new threats to states. People face real, sometimes unavoidable, risks every day. In such conditions, states encounter serious challenges that often call for the collective effort of all participants in international relations.

In the ongoing development of states and societies, certain features have emerged that necessitate exploration and analysis. These features have become a focus of scientific research, including the role of information in current conditions and continuous conflicts.

The subsequent sections will examine each of these features in isolation, seeking to understand their distinct influences and characteristics.

Overview of previous research and publications.

At the beginning of this article, it is pivotal to provide an overview of the extensive research and numerous publications that have shaped the discourse on Information and Conflicts. Christopher A. Bail et al. (2018) in their paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, delved into how exposure to opposing views on social media can lead to an increase in political polarization, highlighting the dual role of information in conflict.

S. Benhabib in her seminal work, 'The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era' (2002), explores the intricate relationship between information, cultural claims, and global conflicts, providing a theoretical framework that is foundational to understanding the broader implications of information in global affairs. Further, J. Eriksson and L. Newlove-Eriksson (2021) in their book 'Theorizing Technology in International Relations: Prevailing Perspectives and New Horizons' present an in-depth analysis of the role of technology and information in shaping international relations, offering new perspectives and future directions for research. S. Mammedli (2018) explores the media policy of the Council of Europe and the OSCE in his work published in 'Science and Education', providing valuable insights into the policy dimensions of information in conflicts.

Kh. G. Niyazov (2014) in his article published in the Institute on Philosophy and Law's 'Scientific works' journal, examines the role of Information policy and political power in the formation of civil society, with a special focus on media, offering a unique perspective on the topic. T. Orr in his book 'The Information Revolution: Transforming the World Through Technology' (2020) provides a comprehensive overview of how information and technology are transforming global affairs and conflicts, positioning the Information Revolution as

a central force in contemporary conflicts. Lastly, N. Westcott (2008) in his work at the University of Oxford, delves into 'Digital Diplomacy', examining the profound impact of the Internet on international relations and conflicts, highlighting the transformative role of digital information.

Together, these works provide a multifaceted understanding of the complex interplay between information, technology, and conflicts, setting the stage for the discussions and analyses that follow in this article.

Information.

Information has consistently been a key driver of development. Its creation, reliability, and volume have been and remain subjects for negotiation. Information can forge both positive and negative relationships. Having information provides advantages in negotiations, goal attainment, and can enrich or impoverish a country. The veracity and volume of information disseminated, especially in the digital age, are paramount in shaping international relations. The reliability of information becomes especially pivotal in crisis scenarios, where accurate data is imperative to formulate strategic responses. Consequently, the control, manipulation, and management of information can serve as a potent tool for states to guide both domestic and international perceptions. This strategy, often employed through various media channels and digital platforms, can significantly influence diplomatic relations, negotiations, and even the trajectory of conflicts. Moreover, the voluminous nature of information in the digital era poses additional challenges in discerning authenticity, thereby necessitating robust mechanisms to validate and verify data before it is utilized in decision-making processes at the state level. Information of national importance often becomes a reason for blackmail and threats. Over time, information and its sources have become one of the most valuable resources in global politics. The creation and use of information have become foundational for the effective functioning of modern society, impacting all spheres and areas.

In the geopolitical arena, information, particularly that which pertains to national security, economic stability, and socio-political dynamics, becomes a linchpin around which conflicts can spiral. The strategic leaking of sensitive information or the intentional dissemination of misinformation (disinformation campaigns) can be wielded to destabilize nations, sow discord among allies, and manipulate international perception. A prime example of this can be observed in the contemporary cyber-espionage and information warfare tactics employed by states, where digital platforms become battlegrounds to gain tactical advantages. Consequently, the management and safeguarding of critical information become paramount in not only preventing conflicts but also in ensuring the sustainable social development of a nation. The societal implications of information management in conflicts extend beyond immediate geopolitical

consequences, permeating aspects of citizen trust, social cohesion, and national identity, thereby establishing a complex interplay between information, conflict, and social development (Talishinski, 2021).

Information also encounters inevitable challenges that reflect current societal development trends. Relatively free access to information sources through technology leads to wide-ranging problems, including criminal aspects. The World Wide Web allows access to numerous sites and portals, making it difficult to control the vast flow of information and to separate needed from unnecessary data. States also struggle to enforce age restrictions for Internet usage, as new educational materials are developed considering the study of information technology. Like any process, this has its own positive and negative aspects.

Today, it is widely believed that humanity is experiencing an information explosion. The immense and somewhat uncontrollable flow of information does not allow individuals to fully comprehend it. This state is beyond human capabilities, both physically and psychologically. The data scale is so large and fleeting that it is truly impossible to assimilate it, even in required amounts.

Information has permeated all facets of life, evolving into a subject of legal relations, encompassing personal, industrial, and confidential data that is often safeguarded against disclosure. In contemporary society, the information environment is densely saturated, engrossing all societal members – a condition that presents its own set of challenges. The accessibility of information technologies is not restricted, and their utilization is generally unproblematic. Whereas in the past, it was feasible to limit access to information for certain population segments (e.g., children, seniors, individuals with illnesses), such limitations are now practically unenforceable. This accessibility has significantly impacted mental health in contemporary society. With unrestrained access via devices like telephones and smartphones, mentally vulnerable individuals and children can become targets for criminal acts, such as engagement in hazardous online games or viewing content that negatively impacts their psyche and behavior, often with fatal outcomes. An examination of recent suicide statistics among children and youth underscores this.

The permeation of information into societal structures invariably shapes the contours of social development. In an era characterized by the ubiquity of information, access to reliable and accurate data becomes a cornerstone in fostering an informed citizenry, thereby facilitating enhanced civic participation and societal advancement. Moreover, information acts as a catalyst in educational spheres, enabling access to knowledge, fostering research and innovation, and bridging educational disparities through digital platforms. However, the double-edged nature of information also presents challenges, such as the propagation of misinformation, which can hinder social development by perpetuating untruths, creating

societal divisions, and undermining trust in institutions. Therefore, while information stands as a pillar supporting educational and societal progression, it necessitates stringent checks and balances to mitigate its potential adversities on social development.

The surge in information resources is currently expanding exponentially. Both individuals and states now possess limited abilities to control and regulate this proliferation, which has subsequently altered modern lifestyles. Information technology has solidified its position within society, playing a role that is not always positive.

In the present day, information has become an indispensable life component, evident in daily activities, studies, work, and leisure. The Internet has overshadowed all other media forms, including television and radio, offering the capacity to explore virtually any subject within one's boundaries.

In discussing information and the role of information technology, it is imperative to underscore both the positive and negative facets of this development. The positive aspects certainly include:

- The capacity for rapid connectivity to various information channels and live broadcasts of assorted programs;
- The availability of additional distance education opportunities;
- The ability to participate in various conferences, symposiums, debates, and courses online;
- Extensive opportunities for scientific activity beyond national borders, such as publishing works in global scientific journals, exchanging experiences, and participating in internships, among others.
- Securing international certificates of a global standard broadens job-seeking horizons, an issue that is particularly pertinent today given the substantial migrant flows.
- Information technologies significantly impact a country's economic indicators since harnessing the outcomes of scientific and technological advancements enables their comprehensive and profound application.
- Information technology has emerged as a pivotal factor in the development of states and societies.

Employing modern technologies facilitates the study of the theory behind any applied profession, which can subsequently assist in applying this knowledge in practical activities and developing requisite skills. This succinct list could be extended, corroborating that information and associated innovations are sculpting a new society and human behavior in the 21st century. Information and information technologies have become an inseparable element of contemporary society and the state, catalyzing the formation of a new image and quality of human existence (Niyazov, 2016).

Negative Aspects:

- Information technologies have permeated all domains, some of which, regrettably, have seen a diminution in their deeper intrinsic purpose. Such areas include culture. For instance, theaters, which once

facilitated live interaction and direct viewer engagement with performances, have lost their erstwhile popularity. Now, any performance can be viewed through computers and home theaters.

- Museums and cinemas have witnessed dwindling attendance. Concert venues often lack live sound, opting instead for soundtracks enabled by information technology, and so forth.

- The internet has made it possible to execute trade purchases, which in turn, impacts health due to factors like immobility and the risk of obesity.

- Reading has been virtually excised from curriculums, with electronic libraries offering publications in abbreviated forms, significantly impacting the intellectual level of youth.

- The adoption of final assessments in a test format diverges from classical forms of education and science, as, arguably, no technology can truly supplant books. Technology may facilitate access and expedite library usage, but it simultaneously fosters a reluctance to engage with books comprehensively.

- The utilization of computers impacts health, limiting opportunities for physical activity and nature interaction, as computerization consumes considerable time and restricts physical movement.

The list of negative aspects arising from the advent of information technologies could continue; nonetheless, their usage has become inevitable. This inevitability has exacerbated the issue of ensuring security for both individuals and the state. Notably, information can either fortify or render a subject vulnerable. This poses a threat since controlling the massive flow of information is unfeasible, and protection under such conditions is imperfect.

Comparative Analysis: Navigating Information in Conflicts.

Regional Variations in Information Management.

Different regions around the globe demonstrate varied approaches and susceptibilities to information management and its consequential impact on conflicts. For instance, Western nations, with their robust digital infrastructures and high internet penetration, often grapple with issues like cybersecurity, disinformation campaigns, and digital espionage. Contrastingly, developing regions, while not impervious to the aforementioned challenges, might contend more prominently with issues related to information accessibility, digital divides, and the utilization of traditional media in propagating information. A comparative exploration of how nations within these regions safeguard, regulate, and leverage information, particularly during conflicts, can provide nuanced insights into the multifaceted nature of information management across varied geopolitical and socio-economic contexts.

Information-induced Conflicts: A Tale of Two Nations.

Drawing a parallel between two nations, for example, Nation A and Nation B, which have experienced information-induced conflicts, can elucidate the nuances

and intricacies embedded in information management and conflict navigation. Nation A, perhaps with a more centralized and stringent information control mechanism, may employ state-led media and internet censorship to guide public perception and mitigate internal conflicts. In stark contrast, Nation B, with a more liberalized information dissemination framework, might contend with the proliferation of varied narratives, necessitating different strategies to manage and mitigate conflicts. Each approach, while having its merits and demerits, underscores the complex, multifaceted relationship between information, citizen perception, state intervention, and conflict evolution.

Conflict Resolution Strategies: An Analytical Perspective.

Analyzing the conflict resolution strategies of different countries or entities, especially in the context of information-induced conflicts, provides a rich tapestry of tactics and methodologies that have been employed in varied contexts. For instance, some nations may prioritize diplomatic channels and international mediation to navigate conflicts, while others might leverage military or economic prowess to assert their stance and negotiate resolutions. The role of information in these strategies is pivotal, as it shapes not only the international perception of the conflict but also influences the negotiation and resolution processes. A comparative analysis of these strategies, with a keen eye on the role of information as both a tool and a challenge, enriches the discourse on the multifaceted utility and management of information in international relations and conflicts.

Another pivotal aspect in contemporary society pertains to conflict. Conflicts, both domestic and state, have perennially existed within society. However, the evolution of information technology has presented new challenges and risks, making conflicts an integral component of social development.

Regrettably, information and information technologies have escalated conflictual relations between individuals and nations. Numerous reasons and arguments underpin this and exploring them is arguably as vital as examining the conflict itself. Why have contradictions between people and states expanded to such a magnitude and scale that no single state can halt these events independently?

A brief historical overview allows us to posit that while humanity was once limited in access to information about conflicts and problems, learning of them only after certain events had transpired, today, by simply connecting to the global Internet, we can observe ongoing global processes every minute and even become their theoretical participants: leaving comments, condemning or supporting the conflicting parties, provoking them, posting any information online that may be perceived due to a specific situation, etc. This so-called "participation" process can exacerbate an already tense atmosphere, wherein the falsification and dissemination of inaccurate,

unverified information give rise to baseless rumors, sowing panic and aggression and initiating an information blockade. The spread of unreliable data creates optimal conditions for igniting an already complex atmosphere.

The might of information and information technology can instigate tangible clashes between individual groups, societies, and even states. Information in the modern world has attained weapon status, which can be as challenging to counteract as military weaponry. The image formulated by the information environment holds significant importance in international relations because a country's behavior in a given situation is typically either corroborated or refuted by data extracted from information sources (Paul, & Balazs, 2020).

Contemporary, pertinent social conflicts are also influenced by information technology. Social relations have become so contradictory that the battle between opposing forces has garnered international problem status, impacting all areas. This issue affects numerous countries, and preventing social conflicts has ascended as a state policy priority. The internal and external problems confronted by people today suggest that they are the cause and source of many interstate disputes. In pursuit of improved living conditions and a stable environment, people are departing from problem areas en masse, attempting to evade participation in military conflicts, and thereby disrupting the balance in the overall development of a specific country and entire region.

Numerous researchers posit that conflict, while being a fundamental driving force in society, necessitates the presence of agreement, unity, and the harmony of collective interests to enable individuals to not only compete but also coexist harmoniously. Presently, the topic of social conflicts is more prominent than ever, and addressing it has become a priority for states. Ongoing reforms within large countries attract migrants, explaining their desire to settle therein. However, this same impetus becomes a source of social conflicts within these larger states. The adaptation process itself poses questions that demand serious attention. In this context, managing social conflict emerges as a pertinent topic. Conflicts have become an intrinsic component of contemporary development. A notable reason for their intensification is the inadequacy of government structures in responding to and regulating them in a timely and comprehensive manner. For a favorable outcome, a detailed examination of the conflict itself, the demands of the involved parties, and, crucially, the establishment of a robust mechanism for swiftly addressing problematic aspects are imperative. Bureaucracy, a characteristic feature of officialdom, often gives rise to social conflicts in management. The state apparatus is structured in such a way that a step-by-step resolution of an issue can be protracted. In fact, this delay often becomes a source of dissatisfaction and, subsequently, conflict.

While the utilization of information technology somewhat accelerates communication processes with

government services, it is insufficient in everyday life. The gathering of necessary documents, such as issuing permits, passports for entry and exit, visas, and letters, is invariably accompanied by bureaucratic hurdles and consumes time, which accounts for public dissatisfaction.

It's also worth noting that an important facet of the current global conflict situation is the stirring of disparities among people based on criteria like region, language, and religion. In our view, the religious aspect is the most perilous. Although religion is separated from the state, it emerges on the international agenda. For instance, Muslims are reproached for the adaptation challenges of migrants in Europe, and disrespect toward Islam is openly displayed. In addressing international crime, religious terrorism is distinctly highlighted, which is fundamentally incorrect since criminals do not belong to a nation and their primary objective is typically personal gain, whether material or political. The most perilous aspect of this trend is that it often becomes uncontrollable, and certain forces exploit it, further intensifying the conflictual nature of the overall situation and obstructing the assurance and guarantee of stability in a specific region or globally.

In summary, information and the processes it incites, as well as conflicts, have become inherent elements of the development of modern society and the state, attributed to several factors, including:

- Relatively straightforward access to information for a broad audience;
- The extent of development and necessary utilization of information technologies in daily life;
- The impossibility of controlling the massive information flow;
- Liberal borders, which also become a source of conflicts;
- The state's inability to fully resolve conflicts, which further engenders new problems and inhibits atmosphere stabilization;
- The lack of a unified system of international relations, permitting false information to prevail and become a source of social conflicts.
- The intimate interplay between information and conflicts is evident: one often begets the other, and information can act as a conflict catalyst.
- The untimely response to information and the inability to manage conflicts can instigate social chaos and exacerbate the problem of addressing global issues.

While this list is not exhaustive, it underscores that the information factor and its influence are emerging as pivotal elements and characteristic features of international relations in the new century. Today, as always, the principal task of states is to safeguard their national interests. To achieve this, they must contemplate the incorporation of information technologies into society and regulate their use in a manner that fosters a positive trajectory in both the domestic and foreign policies of the country, and for the future of humanity as a whole.

Conclusions.

The digital age, characterized by a prolific abundance of information and the mechanisms for its dissemination, has indelibly shaped the contours of international relations and conflicts. Information, in its various forms, serves not only as a tool for transparency and enlightenment but also as a weapon that can exacerbate conflicts, manipulate narratives, and influence global politics. As explored throughout this article, the nexus between information, conflict, and societal development is inextricably intertwined, presenting multifaceted challenges and opportunities within the international arena.

The article delineated the pertinence of information in contemporary geopolitics, extending from its role in reinforcing national security to its impact on socio-political dynamics. The omnipresence of information technologies has birthed new dimensions of conflicts, where data, misinformation, and cyber capabilities become tools of warfare, concurrently facilitating and undermining state objectives. Moreover, the double-edged sword of information technology, while catalyzing advancements and connectivity, also poses threats in terms of cybersecurity, privacy, and the propagation of false narratives.

The comparative analysis underscored variances in how different states navigate the complex web of information management, elucidating disparate strategies and outcomes. The case studies and examples illuminated the tangible impacts of information on real-world conflicts and diplomatic relations, extending beyond theoretical discourses to actual geopolitical implications.

In an era where information is both a catalyst and a barrier to social development, it becomes paramount to develop robust mechanisms for information verification, cybersecurity, and ethical information dissemination. Balancing the scales between information accessibility and control, and ensuring the veracity of data that shapes national and international policies, is crucial in navigating the future landscape of global relations.

In light of the complexities and nuances explored, it is evident that the realm of information will continue to be a pivotal domain in international relations and conflicts. Future research and discussions in this field should pivot towards developing ethical, secure, and equitable information management frameworks, safeguarding the integrity of global communication channels and ensuring that the informational era becomes a beacon of true enlightenment rather than a harbinger of discord.

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