

UDC 339.92:339.98

JEL Classification B15

Frederic Labarre

Neo-Feudalism: Paradigm of Russo-Ukrainian Trade and Commercial Relations

State weakness, expressed as the inability to fulfill its obligations as welfare provider, is a condition which forces constituents into developing their own system of protection, which breeds new loyalty structures. These structures do not always correspond to the exact border delimitation of a State, and frequently transcend geographic boundaries. Evidence of this can be seen, for example, in the progressive privatization of healthcare in countries that prided themselves in publicly-funded health services, in the "gated communities" sprouting in the United States, employing private security firms, and, most prominently, in the proliferation of private security firms of an increasing level of coercive capacity. These are employed to protect oil and gas workers in Western Africa, and, most tellingly for the prospect of neo-feudalism, have emerged as auxiliary State structures in Ukraine and Russia. In the latter case, the existence of privately-funded security forces may complicate the understanding and exercise of sovereignty over disputed territories — like the Donbas. It can also complicate the deployment of international peace missions and the execution of a mandate which would normally see the belligerents as State actors, and obviate non-State security participants. This study argues that State weakness is a harbinger of neo-feudalism. By identifying the markers of feudalism from the literature, this study supports the argument for neo-feudalism by showing where these markers are found in current affairs, and particularly in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which is used as a case study. While the study does not identify trends widespread enough to provide for a generalization, there are nevertheless grounds to support the notion that neo-feudalism can occur in certain conditions. The implications for the deployment of State forces and multilateral peace support forces are that non-State security actors (like private security companies, or sponsors of private armies) should be considered as party to a conflict, and, absent international legislation forbidding the use of such forces, should also be among the international interlocutors of peace support elements.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, feudalism, trade, international commerce, oligarchy, national economy

DOI 10.37659/2663-5070-2024-12-10-17

Introduction

Centres of authority and control (not to say government) can be multi-varied; sororities or fraternities at university, labour unions, criminal groups, tribes, ethnic groups, or groups with geographical particularities. The *New Scientist* exaggerates the comparison of today's City of London and the World Trade Organization (WTO) with medieval Florence and the Hanseatic League. These cities and institutions are *not the same* [1]. However, the relative lethargy of established States faced with the emergence of non-State actors is telling; the collapse of the Carolingian empire a millennium ago was answered by medieval feudalism. Hans Delbrück argues that the "creation of nations" had to go through the process of erosion of central imperial authority as early as the Carolingian empire (that is, a thousand years ago). He says that "...the vassals, who were directly obligated to their feudal masters and providers, placed the system of power, once the royal authority was shaken, in the hands of the great families, holding large territories..." [2, pp. 93-94]. The neo-liberal State model under duress may usher in similar upheaval [1]. It has been predicted in official documentation that social and technological upheavals will make relations between non-state actors more important than traditional international relations [3, pp. 87-88, quoting the United States' National Intelligence Council's Global Trends 2010].

Is feudalism a valid illustration of post-modern individual, group, and in the case of this paper, international relations and the application of force? Societal fragmentation in the welfare state and the inability of central authorities to meet the obligations of the social contract suggest that feudalism is a form of coping mechanism. The hypothesis is that personalized relationships will become more important than loyalties to central authorities, as the latter become unable to honour their social contract commitments. This contribution aims at finding indicators to this question through a case study focusing on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. First, we define features of feudalism. Then, we evaluate how the pre-war pattern of Ukraine-Russia relations suggest feudal relations through a case study. In conclusion, we underscore the implications of neo-feudalism on conflict management and interpretation.

Unpacking Feudalism

To Shlapentokh and Woods, socio-economic and political change is driven by the essential nature of human interactions. Patterns of interaction are universal across societies (and, medievalists would say, across periods: Genêt [4] concludes that "feudalism" is a characteristic of relations not necessarily a type of human relationship that corresponds neatly to the medieval period), but are obscured by modern aspects of social organization (such as state centralization, bureaucracy, law, etc.) [5, p. 4]. According to medievalists Ferdinand Lot and Jean-Philippe Genêt, imperial decomposition creates countless relations of fealty; the sovereign having become unable to govern all subjects. Nobles are therefore forced by the Crown to take on vassals to enable devolution of authority to reach the tens of thousands of individuals who compose society. Proximity between the security provider and the beneficiary becomes the crux of loyalty [6, p. 12].

What makes feudalism possible is the central authorities' inability to provide overall security [5, p. 7; 4, p. 6; 7, pp. 42-55; 6, p. 6]. Feudalism corresponds to a "type" of State, not to a locality or period. This type of State can morph into other types, and the reverse is also true; a modern State can morph into a feudal State ([8, p. 329], quoting [9]). If so, then the collapse of the Soviet Union may have engendered feudal relations throughout the eroding state, across to newly-independent political constructs. Contemporary political boundaries would not impede personalised relations. As a result, the aim state-building would be to have its government solidify its legitimacy against alternative foci of loyalty between people. Ukraine has struggled greatly in meeting this challenge after independence.

Ward has identified characteristics of feudalism [7, pp. 40-46] which reflect the complexes witnessed in many former Soviet Socialist Republics. For ease of reference, they are outlined here:

1. Ties of dependence between individuals. Individuals "commend" themselves in a reciprocal relationship to a social superior.
2. Land tenure or fief-holding. A defining feudal characteristic, it would nowadays be replaced by industrial ownership.

3. Beneficiary service. Beneficiary service is a logical outcome of the symbiosis of the two characteristics above; but the vassal also owes military service to his protector [7, p. 43].
4. Vassalage as a military relationship. The privatization of military service and armies is frequently pointed to as the most prominent feudal characteristic. The problem posed by the creation of private armies in Ukraine, such as the Azov Battalion, is an indicator [1].
5. Fragmentation cum centralism. The feudal relationship is a compromise with anarchy [7, pp. 48-49]. The objective of the central authority is to mitigate the unraveling of the State, and to secure the realm from threats within and without.

Societal and State Fragmentation Today

A “failed” State is usually little more than a collection of warlords, or oligarchs [4] (see also [8, p. 343]). These personages’ authority radiate from a centre which has nominal authority, but whose control depends on the frail loyalty of captains of industry, who themselves control not only economic sectors, but the territory on which this economic activity depends. This model of governance is important to understand in the application of defence and security. For instance, oligarchic and national interests may differ.

So, patterns of relationships may emerge where ordinary individuals “commend” themselves to oligarchs (either as partners or as employees), and in turn, oligarchs, who benefit from the autonomy granted by wealth, enter in a co-dependent relationship with central political authorities. The co-dependency is clear; oligarchs require protection from the central authorities. In return oligarchs provide political support, through their workforce. The implication is that the tendency towards centralisation after State or imperial collapse in the post-Cold War experience would tend to favour captains of industry located in large municipalities, as it did in the medieval period.

Russia-Ukraine Relations: A Case Study

The new political entities that emerged out of the dissolution of the Soviet Union were held together by the relations that individuals had

with one another [10]. Thus, relations among post-Soviet States and especially between Ukraine and Russia:

can only be understood as embedded in a diffuse oligopoly in the control of the means of violence. Against this background, the limits of demarcation between pacified domestic politics and essentially hostile international relations between criminal law and international law become... impossible to draw. [10, pp. 346-347]

In the mid-1990s, the Ukrainian government attempted to limit the political and financial influence of industrial groups and individuals who had benefited from privatization. Legislation aimed at making commercial relations and accounting practices transparent — ostensibly to ensure the proper collection of tax revenue to the central authorities. By 1999, however, this legislation had been repealed [11, p. 77].

The picture painted by Kostyuk *et al* of the Ukrainian corporate and commercial sector resembles fiefdoms controlled by a few lords. Hence the bank “Finance and Credit” controlled by Konstantin Zhevago and Aleksey Kucherenko indirectly controls nearly a dozen different joint stock companies (JSCs) operated by other directors responsible to Zhevago and Kucherenko, the aim being to achieve vertical integration and political control on industrial sectors [11, pp. 79-80]. By the time of the 2004 Orange revolution, three corporate actors emerged; “Privat-Invest” (Ukraine’s Igor Kolomoyskiy with Gennadiy Bogolyubov and Andrey Martynov), “UkrSibBank” (Russia’s Oleg Deripaska and Roman Abramovich), and the “Industrial Union of the Donbas” created by JSC “Vizavi” (Vitaliy Gayduk and Sergei Levochkin), the Academy of Technologies of Ukraine, the Donetsk City Chamber of Commerce and the town of Mariupol [11, pp. 80-83]. Seven captains of industry commanded the fates of thousands of workers. Whereas such competition is normal to gain market share, the reality has more to do with political stability than the profit motive. Oligarchs had become lynchpins of political stability:

The Ukrainian presidents managed relations with Russia with a view to securing the economic benefits specifically sought by the oligarchs (such as access to the Russian market and lower energy prices for Ukraine’s energy-intensive industries), who *in return* [em-

phasis added] facilitated the political survival of the successive presidents. [12, p. 681]

The Ukrainian presidencies eventually became "vassals" of Russia because political survival came to depend on the harmony between Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs [12, p. 682]. Ukrainian oligarchs lost leverage relative to Russian interests the more the Russian state re-consolidated political power versus oligarchic power.

Dragneva and Wolczuk argue that the "gas wars" of 2006 and 2009 were the consequences of an attempt by the Ukrainian central government to escape vassalage from Moscow [12, p. 682]. The rent costs exacted by Moscow for Kyiv's apparent disloyalty were significant, and led to a shrinkage of the Ukrainian economy by 15 percent, leading to Victor Yanukovich's return as president in 2010 and his decision to seek integration in the Eurasian Economic Union in November 2013 [12, pp. 689, 692-693].

In Russia, captains of industry including well-known banking tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, arranged the re-election of Boris Yeltsin as president of Russia [13, p. 503]. With this, oligarchs gained extreme leverage in the Kremlin. *A contrario*, Russian President Vladimir V. Putin quickly compromised with Russian oligarchs when he came to power in early 2000. As William Tompson, OECD economist, wrote in 2004:

...having promised prior to his election that the oligarchs would "cease to exist as a class" and that [Mr. Putin] (and, by implication, the state) would adopt a position of "equidistance" from all of them, Putin sought, in the interests of stability, to tame them rather than to exterminate them, redefining and institutionalizing their relationship with the state. [14, p. 1]

However, Putin eventually insisted that oligarchs; "share...wealth, or risk losing it" [15]. By 2007, the number of government-controlled companies surpassed that of oligarchs by some 25 percent, while the number of fully-fledged private companies had dropped by 50 percent during the same period [16, p. 23]. Vladimir Putin had consolidated the Russian State. Ukraine had been unable to match Russia's feat of consolidating and controlling its oligarchic class for two reasons; because the oligarchs themselves had business interests (loyalties) that transcended national boundaries, and because the polit-

ical base of the Ukrainian presidential incumbents depended on oligarchs' control of labour.

Once Russian power was consolidated, the government there could focus on prizes beyond the border. Seizing the Donbass, Russia installed sympathetic leaders in Luhansk and Donetsk reminiscent of viceroys. When Moscow-backed "agitators" (Mr. Zakharchenko and Mr. Plotnitskiy) had become too embarrassing, the Kremlin simply replaced them with Rinat Akhmetov and Yuriy Boyko [17].

The fact that Akhmetov and Boyko were well-known to both Kyiv and Moscow suggests a pattern of inter-oligarchic relationships that supersedes political borders. However, while "thousands of well-armed men are a serious force [it] is unlikely that they would be prepared to surrender their weapons for the sake of Akhmetov's interests..." [17, p. 9]. Separatist militias exist through the grace of a Moscow oligarch's charity, and not for the interests of the Donbass [18, pp. 2-3]. Russia sought to impede state-consolidation so that "Ukraine... would start disintegrating into various artificial formations and, most importantly, a politician would come to power in Kyiv with whom the Kremlin [would] be able to reach a compromise" [19, p. 22]. In short; so that it can better control every sub-national relationship.

It is not surprising then that the most successful military units are *privately* funded by oligarchs. Individuals therefore see less connection between their personal fate and that of the country, and greater connection with smaller units and the identity of the sponsor. Volunteers have *commended* themselves to the battalions. It is those smaller oligarch-funded battalions that have "saved the country from collapse" [20]. This is perhaps the most striking example of feudalistic relationships. They, who hitherto had been slaving away in metallurgy and mining in the Donbas now are called by wealthy individuals to join the fight. The fight for what? For industrial — not political — control, disputed not merely by Moscow and Kyiv, but by their respective oligarchs — or barons [21].

The drama of the AzovStal plant in Mariupol, which played out in the first three months of the Russia-Ukraine War of 2022 is a case in point. The Azov Battalion, privately-funded, had attempted to free Mariupol from Russian occupants, and in stubbornly fighting, consumed Russian forc-

es and equipment. Strategically speaking, it also pinned down those forces so that they would not cause damage to the Ukrainian war effort elsewhere. Infamous by reputation, it can be argued that the Azov Battalion was the closest approximation of Putin's "ukro-nazi" elements. However, it is telling that the Russian forces hesitated for a long time to put the sort of pressure which may have resulted in intolerable damage to the steel plants. Although the Ukrainian authorities are shy with their reports of the goings on there, the implication of the Azov Battalion's sacrifice (if not success) would mean that its members might benefit from significant political clout within the Ukrainian system.

Another example of the emergence of alternative foci of loyalty is the appearance of a group of armed individuals paying visits to Russian-oligarch-owned economic assets, such as the Premier Palace Hotel in Kyiv, owned by Alexander Babakov, a Putin ally who owns several hotels and shopping malls in Russia and Ukraine [22]. (This is the hotel the former Duma Member Denis Voronenkov was exiting when he was shot dead by an alleged Praviy Sektor activist (See 23).) This property was visited on 13 and 21 April 2022 by armed men claiming to be from "Economic Front" NGO of Ukraine, led by Vasily Miagky and Roman Sovich, the latter claiming to be leader of a Special Operations Battalion (this information can be viewed on the Premier Palace Hotel's Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/PremierPalace>). This sort of raid perfectly represents the situation of Ukraine; parlous central control, peripheral initiative from social entrepreneurs, and the targeting of economic assets whose rules of origin intersect with oligarchic nationality.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing cursory examination, neo-feudal relations would therefore have these characteristics:

1. The central power mitigates its weakness by delegating economic and political power in the regions to oligarchs whom it can nominally trust;
2. As political and economic power is parcelled out, regional oligarchs hold whole sectors of the labour force in vassalage;
3. International relations are conducted above the heads of regional oligarchs as long as the

central power holds some authority. While this may be for public and international consumption, the real relations are conducted between oligarchs across border;

4. There is a competition for industrial sectors and local/regional markets that takes place among oligarchs across meaningless international borders;
5. Oligarchs are rich enough to raise private armies, not only to challenge central power, but also other oligarchs across the border;
6. There is rent-seeking through commercial exchanges; industry is weaponised;
7. The central power of one State behaves as the suzerain to other States and oligarchs. "Homage" and "tribute" are owed to it.

There are important implications for understanding the character and parameters of armed conflict. First, civil-military relations within the State become difficult to conceptualize and therefore to control. Political authorities may not have full monopoly over the means of coercion. In Russia, oligarchs have been heavily sanctioned precisely because they could muster large and somewhat competent forces — like the Wagner Group — from private wealth. The sanctions are meant at rupturing the co-dependency between the "lord" and the subordinates. In Ukraine, the spontaneous appearances of "private battalions" challenges the monopoly over violence internally; among oligarchs, and between the oligarchs and the legitimate political authorities. Analysts would be hard-pressed to determine the interests and motivations of actors. Indeed, they may be unable to really understand who the real actors are in a conflict. In Ukraine, for instance, there may be broad correspondence between regional/ethnic and industrial interests, but this does not necessarily mean we are witnessing an ethnic conflict.

Second, feudalization complicates the balance of power in the theatre, and how support for the war effort may or may not affect the consolidation of the Ukrainian state. For instance, foreign powers that supply arms and ammunitions should ensure that capabilities support the national effort, and not private commanders' ambitions; for the inclusion of privately-funded battalions in the regular army does not necessarily mean that loyalties follow organizational lines.

Third, feudalization happens in parallel to international law. In the current conflict between

Russia and Ukraine, Geneva conventions and international norms of the law of armed conflict are meaningless — not least because Russia is not officially in a state of war with Ukraine. This means that a further erosion of the authority of international organizations and multilateral agencies is to be expected as either they are unable to uphold the writ of international norms in that conflict because speaking directly to Kyiv or Moscow has no effect on the ground, or because they are caught interacting with unacknowledged power-holders in theatre because it is the only way to have humanitarian and international legal norms stick.

Finally, we must remain open to the possibility that the current existential threat to Ukraine will, by itself, achieve the sort of State consolidation which has eluded Ukraine for thirty years (in particular, 78% of respondents to the poll approve of President Zelenskyi's handling of the war) [24]. On the Russian side, the utter failure of the oligarch and government in achieving their delusional goals may, as usual, end in revolution or civil war.

References:

- Mackenzie, D. (2014, September 3). End of nations: Is there an alternative to countries? *New Scientist*, 2985. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22329850-600-end-of-nations-is-there-an-alternative-to-countries/>
- Delbrück, H. (1982). *History of the art of war: Vol. III. Medieval warfare* (W. J. Renfro, trans.). University of Nebraska Press.
- Norwood, P. R., Jensen, B. M., & Barnes, J. (2016, Summer). Capturing the character of future war. *Parameters*, 46(2), Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.2922>
- Genêt, G.-Ph. (1997). La genèse de l'État moderne: Les enjeux d'un programme de recherche. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 118(5), 3-18.
- Shlapentokh, V., & Woods, J. (2011). *Feudal America: Elements of the Middle Ages in contemporary society*. Penn State University Press. https://doi.org/10.26530/open_625752
- Lot, F. (1947, January-February). Qu'est-ce-que la féodalité [Review of the book Qu'est-ce-que la Féodalité? (2nd ed.), by F. L. Ganshof]? *Journal des Savants*, 1, 5-20.
- Ward, J. O. (1985). Feudalism: Interpretative category or framework of life in the Medieval West? *Sydney Studies in Societies and Cultures*, 2, 40-67. <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/SSSC/article/view/8015>
- Teschke, B. (1998, Spring). Geopolitical relations in the European Middle Ages: History and theory. *International Organization*, 52(2), 325-358. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898753162848>
- Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Addison-Wesley.
- Dresen, F. J. (2011, July 7). *The privatization of Russia: Privatization gone awry*. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-privatization-russia-russian-reform-goes-awry>
- Kostyuk, A. N., Tchernyshov, K., & Kostyuk, H. (2004). Financial-industrial groups at the markets for corporate control and investments: The case of Ukraine. *Corporate Ownership & Control*, 2(2), 77-90. <https://doi.org/10.22495/cocv2i2p7>
- Dragneva, R., & Wolczuk, K. (2016). Between dependence and integration: Ukraine's relations with Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(4), 678-698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1173200>
- Reddaway, P., & Glinski, D. (2001). *The tragedy of Russia's reforms: Market bolshevism against democracy*. US Institute of Peace Press.
- Tompson, W. (2004, April). *Putin and the oligarchs: A two-sided commitment problem*. Organization for Economic and Cultural Development.
- Belton, C., & Startseva, A. (2003, November 17). Oligarchs bow to Putin's new deal. *Moscow Times*. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/2003/11/article/oligarchs-bow-to-putins-new-deal/234625.html>
- Fadeev, P. (2008). *Political connections and evolution of ownership structure in Russian industry* (Working Paper No. BSP/2008/099). New Economic School.
- Kazanskiy, D. (2016, April). A second coming for Akhmetov? *The Ukrainian Week*, 4/98, 8-9.
- von Twickel, N. (2018, February 28). Russia and the "people's republics" in eastern Ukraine. *Russia Analytical Digest* (Centre for Security Studies Zurich), (214), 2-5.
- Old goals, new methods: MP Andriy Levus on Ukraine's security and Russia's ways to destabilize it from within. (2016, December). *The Ukrainian Week*, 12/116, 22-23.
- Rahemtulla, R. (2016, November 30). Ukraine defense reform leader "could write book on how to sabotage change." *Kyiv Post*. <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukraine-defense-reform-leader-write-book-sabotage-change.html>
- Ponomarenko, W. (2017, May 26). Close combat: 'Black Brigade' wages urban war in Avdiivka factory. *Kyiv Post*, 22(21), 1, 3.
- Laurenson, J. (2019, March 29). Kremlin House: Ukrainian empire of top Putin ally. *Kyiv Post*. Retrieved June 29, 2022, from <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/kremlin-house-ukrainian-empire-of-top-putin-ally.html#:~:text=The%20>

- Premier%20Palace%20is%20evasive,several%20regional%20electricity%20supply%20networks
23. British Broadcasting Corporation. (2017, March 23). *Russian ex-MP shot dead at Kiev Hotel*. BBC. Retrieved June 29, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39364542>
 24. Zitner, A. (2022, June 29). In new poll, 89% of Ukrainians reject ceding land to reach peace with Russia. *Wall Street Journal* (online). <https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-new-poll-89-of-ukrainians-reject-ceding-land-to-reach-peace-with-russia-11656504002>

Bibliography:

1. Allen, Ch. (2016, May 20). At war front, Ukrainian soldiers feel abandoned. *Kyiv Post*, 27(21).
2. Dembitski, A. (2013, September 09). The progress of privatization in Russia. *CEIC Russia Data Talk*. https://www.ceicdata.com/Public/Public00/DataTalk/sep_2013/Russia/first/datatalk.html
3. Frantzman, S. J. (2016, November 27). International NGOs: The new feudalism. *The Jerusalem Post*.
4. Honcharova, E. (2017, July). One-on-one with the war. *The Ukrainian Week*, 7/113.
5. Labarre, F. (2009). The sources of Russian neo-mercantilism. In J. L. Black & Michael Johns (Eds.), *From Putin to Medvedev: Continuity or change?* Penumbra Press.
6. Lot, F. (1947). *Histoire du Moyen-Âge: Tome 1*. Editions Gustav Glotz.
7. Marples, D. R. (Ed.). (2022). *The war in Ukraine's Donbas: Origins, contexts, and the future*. Central European University Press.
8. Morozov, E. (2016, April 27). Féodalisme 2.0. *Le Monde Diplomatique: Cilicon Circus Blog*. <https://blog.mondediplo.net/2016-04-27-Feodalisme-2-0>
9. Sullivan, J. P. (2013). How illicit networks impact sovereignty. In M. Miklaucic & J. Brewer (Eds.), *Convergence: Illicit networks and security in the age of globalization* (pp. 171-187). NDU Press.
10. Strasheim, J. (2016, June). *Domestic explanations for war and peace in Ukraine* (GIGA Working Paper No. 287/2016). German Institute for Global and Area Studies.
11. Thompson, A. C. (2014, August 23). Our return to feudalism. *Dissident Voice*. <https://dissidentvoice.org/2014/08/our-return-to-feudalism/>
12. Harding, L. (2010, February 8). Yanukovich set to become President as observers say Ukraine election was fair. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/08/viktor-yanukovich-ukraine-president-election>

Лабарр Ф.

Неофеодалізм: Парадигма російсько-українських зовнішньоекономічних відносин

Слабкість держави, що виявляється у нездатності виконувати свої зобов'язання як постачальника добробуту, є обставиною, яка змушує її громадян створювати власну систему захисту, що породжує нові структури лояльності. Ці структури не завжди відповідають точній делімітації державного кордону країни і часто виходять за межі географічних кордонів. Свідченням цього є, наприклад, прогресуюча приватизація системи охорони здоров'я в країнах, які досі пишалися державним фінансуванням медичних послуг, зростання в Сполучених Штатах кількості «закритих поселень», що винаймають приватні охоронні фірми, і, насамперед, збільшення кількості приватних охоронних компаній, які мають дедалі більший рівень примусового потенціалу. Такі охоронні фірми залучаються для захисту нафтогазовидобувних компаній у Західній Африці, і, що найбільш показово в перспективі неофеодалізму, вони виникли як допоміжні державні структури в Україні та Росії. В останньому випадку існування безпечових структур, які фінансуються з приватних джерел, може усклад-

нювати розуміння і реалізацію суверенітету на спірних територіях, таких як Донбас. Це також може ускладнити розгортання міжнародних миротворчих місій і виконання мандатів, де воюючі сторони розглядаються, зазвичай, як державні суб'єкти і не допускається участь недержавних суб'єктів безпеки. Дане дослідження доводить, що слабкість держави є передумовою неофеодалізму. Визначаючи маркери феодалізму за допомогою існуючої дослідницької літератури, це дослідження підтримує аргументацію на користь неофеодалізму, демонструючи, де ці маркери можна знайти в поточних подіях, зокрема в російсько-українському конфлікті, на прикладі якого ми розглядаємо це явище. Автори дослідження не виявили тенденцій, розповсюджених достатньо широко для того, щоб дозволити зробити узагальнення, проте є вагомі підстави стверджувати, що неофеодалізм може виникнути за певних умов. При розгортанні державних збройних сил і міжнародних миротворчих контингентів це означатиме, що недержавні суб'єкти безпеки (наприклад, приватні охоронні компанії або спонсори приватних армій) повинні розглядатися як сторони конфлікту і за відсутності міжнародного законодавства, що забороняє використання таких сил, також повинні бути серед міжнародних учасників переговорного процесу з підтримки миру.

Ключові слова: Росія, Україна, феодалізм, торгівля, міжнародні економічні відносини, олігархія, національна економіка