

The model of Russian-Hungarian relations under sanctions: the security aspect

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Abstract

On the example of Russian-Hungarian cooperation in the conditions of sanctions the methodical approach to modeling of bilateral relations of the states adjacent to Ukraine on the basis of the theory of asymmetry of international relations is offered. This approach makes the analysis of the bilateral relations of European countries with Russia more objective and helps to assess them in terms of threats to the European security environment.

Key words: Russian-Hungarian bilateral relations, sanctions policy, asymmetry of international relations, national security, European security environment.

Introduction

The problem of parity in international relations will remain relevant, despite changes in international systems. The methodology of analysis of the interaction of the subjects of international relations, which obviously have different resource-economic, military, scientific and technological potentials, is theoretically much less developed than the methodology of the analysis of the interaction of global centers of power.

International political science has several scientific schools that generate approaches to the classification of countries, study the role of small and medium-sized countries from the standpoint of unipolarity, multipolarity of the world, develop theories of international hierarchy, regional leadership and more. Most of them are historically Eurocentric in nature, aimed at addressing a range of mechanisms to ensure that smaller players adopt norms set by dominant geopolitical centers. The international conflicts of recent decades, especially the violation of sanctions against the Russian Federation (RF) since 2014, are an indication of a paradoxical situation where apparently strong countries can oppose each other, but often

cannot make concessions to their weak neighbors. Adequate answers to the reasons for this are given by the theory of asymmetry of international relations, which today has several conceptual dimensions in the Western school of political science (Womack B., 2016). An example of a kind of bilateral relations in the confrontation between the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation (RF) is the Russian-Hungarian cooperation, which is developing dynamically against the sanctions policy of the international organization of which Hungary is a member. Analysis from the conceptual standpoint of the theory of asymmetry can reveal hidden levers of influence on the positions of Ukraine's neighbors and help build an adequate strategy not only for relations in the triangle Ukraine – Russia – Hungary, but also bilateral relations of EU members. The relevance of the topic is also due to the fact that Hungary has repeatedly been the subject of EU sanctions in recent years.

In Ukraine, the theory of asymmetry has been developing not so long ago. Theoretical problems of asymmetry of international relations were set out in 2005 in a joint work of

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Ukrainian and foreign scientists edited by G.M. Quails and OM Subtle “Asymmetry of International Relations”. However, the leading concept is a unipolar model of world order: the main criterion in the study is the degree of influence on the United States as a superpower (Perepelytsa G., 2005). Ukrainian researcher N. Ostash starts from this in her dissertation “Asymmetry of Canadian-American relations in the postbipolar world” (Ostash N., 2011). In the future, the asymmetry of relations between regional leaders and such leading countries as

the United States, Israel, Russia, Ukrainian scholars studied quite actively (Goncharenko A., 2012). They also studied the asymmetry of interstate conflicts, including in eastern Ukraine (Rozumnyi M., 2016).

In Ukraine, Hungary’s foreign policy is mainly studied in the context of bilateral relations, but the influence of the Russian factor on it is not given enough attention. There are also no attempts to model and predict cooperation between the two countries, between which the territory of Ukraine is located.

Material and methods

The purpose of the article is to assess the state of Russian-Hungarian bilateral relations under sanctions through the prism of the theory of international asymmetry and to substantiate

a methodical approach to their modeling in order to determine Ukraine’s place in them and identify factors that are projected to affect the security environment in Europe.

Results and discussion

Among the well-known theoretically substantiated models of international relations, it is expedient to choose dynamic modeling to assess the state of Russian-Hungarian relations on the basis of asymmetry. This methodological approach allows us to study nonlinear relationships in systems, taking into account the unpredictability of the historical process, to introduce into the model various factors and subsystems. This approach considers the functioning of the model as a living organism: on the basis of logical-intuitive analysis, the elements of the system of bilateral relations, the factors of their development are built. Dynamic modeling involves identifying critical points in the development of the system, when there is a transition from quantity to quality, transformation or destruction of the system. The method of dynamic modeling is based on the method of event analysis of bilateral relations, which allows to assess not only quantitative indicators (in particular, the number of negotiations, agreements, etc.), but also to determine the coefficients of their effectiveness. In the presented study, the source base of the event analysis is the Internet resources of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, where the numerical legal

framework of bilateral relations and the characteristics of the state of cooperation are presented.

In the field of theoretical modeling of international relations, there are traditionally several paradigms, which also hold the concept of asymmetry of international relations. Most researchers tend to the paradigm of realism (neorealism), the main representatives of which are such classics as E. Carr, J. Kennan, G. Morgenthau, R. Aron, B. Buzan. They are characterized by the recognition of the decisive role of states in the system of international interactions, concentration on the balance of power and the category of national interests, and military-political issues. At the same time, the essence of the national interests themselves is mainly reduced to the security of the state and increasing its prestige. The theory of “buffer states” is also a product of realism.

At the same time, neorealists emphasize the integration security potential of supranational associations – international intergovernmental organizations. In contrast to this concept, supporters of the paradigm of liberalism / neoliberalism (R. Cochain, J. Nye, B. Russet) emphasize the tools of “soft power” in the international arena, neglecting the priority of

military capabilities, contrasting it with economic and socio-cultural, legal levers. Representatives of the liberal paradigm are criticized for appealing to what should be in the international arena, not to what really exists.

Structuralism in international relations to this day is represented by the paradigm of Marxism, which divides the world into a developed center and a backward periphery, where the center exploits the latter, because everything is based on the class struggle. In recent decades, geopolitical determinism has also become widespread, which a priori views countries as asymmetric in terms of geographical location and resource base. All classical paradigms of international relations claim to understand international relations in general, which prevents understanding the subtleties of the international process at the regional and local levels.

From the above paradigms follow conceptual approaches to understanding asymmetry in international relations and views on what should be considered an asymmetric strategy of the state in the international arena. For example, the use of instruments of “soft power”, historical heritage, ethnic factor in international relations is considered an asymmetric strategy to achieve foreign policy goals for those countries that cannot parity the military power of rivals.

According to (Perepelytsya G., 2005), symmetry and asymmetry characterize the type of relations, not the type of subjects of these relations. The approaches set out in the theories of interactionism and structuralism are mainly used to characterize countries. Interactionism uses the following indicators to determine the ratio of subjects of international relations: the territory of the state, population, natural resources, indicators of national power of the state (its potential), which is considered the main parameter.

Identify the following options for the type of relationship between the subjects – symmetrical, asymmetric or symmetrically asymmetric, evaluate their ability to influence each other. Depending on the nature of the relationship, they are divided into the following

relationships:

confrontations – there are sharp contradictions between states; peaceful coexistence – a set of contradictions between the states-subjects, the vast majority of which are not antagonistic in nature;

cooperation – there are certain common interests between the states-subjects in separate spheres or branches, thus existence of sharp contradictions between them is not excluded;

partnerships – the absence of significant contradictions between states, the existence of a common problem and a common approach to its solution, mutual interest in mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields of national security and defense;

allied – national interests completely coincide. In the latter case, the evaluation of the relationship in terms of asymmetry loses its meaning.

This approach in the analysis of relations practically does not take into account the set of relations of each country in the system of international relations and its subsystems, which also affect the formation of bilateral relations between them. The structural approach to assessing the state of bilateral relations of countries complements the interactionist one, as it takes into account the place of each state in the systems and subsystems of international relations, their membership in international organizations, cross-alliances, and so on.

In the case of bilateral relations between Russia and Hungary with the coming to power of the last Eurosceptics led by V. Orban, there is clearly a consensus between “unequal” in territory, resources, military potential, etc. countries, which allowed Hungary to violate EU sanctions, although maintaining its membership remains essential for this country. It should be noted that Hungary is a member of several other cross-security alliances (in particular, the Visegrad Group and the Bucharest Nine), which are dominated by Poland's tough anti-Russian stance. By deepening cooperation with Russia, Hungary is exposed to the displeasure of its Western allies and such a strategic partner as

the United States.

Obviously, the factor of Russian-Hungarian cooperation is asymmetric in relation to the sustainable EU policy in Central and Eastern Europe. From the point of view of Ukraine, which is located between such “partners” and has significant contradictions with each of them (including territorial ones), the main task is:

assess the degree and manifestations of asymmetry in Russian-Hungarian relations, taking into account the influence of the EU as a center of power;

identify weaknesses in the asymmetric strategies of the two countries;

to develop a model of asymmetric bilateral Russian-Hungarian relations, on the basis of which it is possible to predict the behavior of both countries in the event of a change in the security situation around Ukraine.

In terms of application, the task is to identify in a timely manner the signs of transformation of the partnership intentions of Ukraine's neighboring countries into a symmetrical confrontation in the event of the implementation of dangerous scenarios for Ukraine.

The model of bilateral relations is proposed to be understood as a stable relationship between the elements of competition and cooperation in the relations between the two states for a long time. In the case of our subject of study, we can highlight the chronological period of the last decade since 2010 (the coming to power of the Fidesz party in Hungary in a coalition with Jobik). This period will include 2014, the events of which are an indicator of the stability of the model of Hungarian-Russian relations in the context of the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The modeling is based on the thesis that there is an upward dynamic of bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and Hungary during the period under study. The author conducted a comprehensive multidisciplinary correlation analysis of bilateral relations between the two countries on a number of indicators such as the volume of export-import transactions, the number of contracts, the number of diplomatic routes, etc. proves this thesis. We illustrate its results with the following diagram.

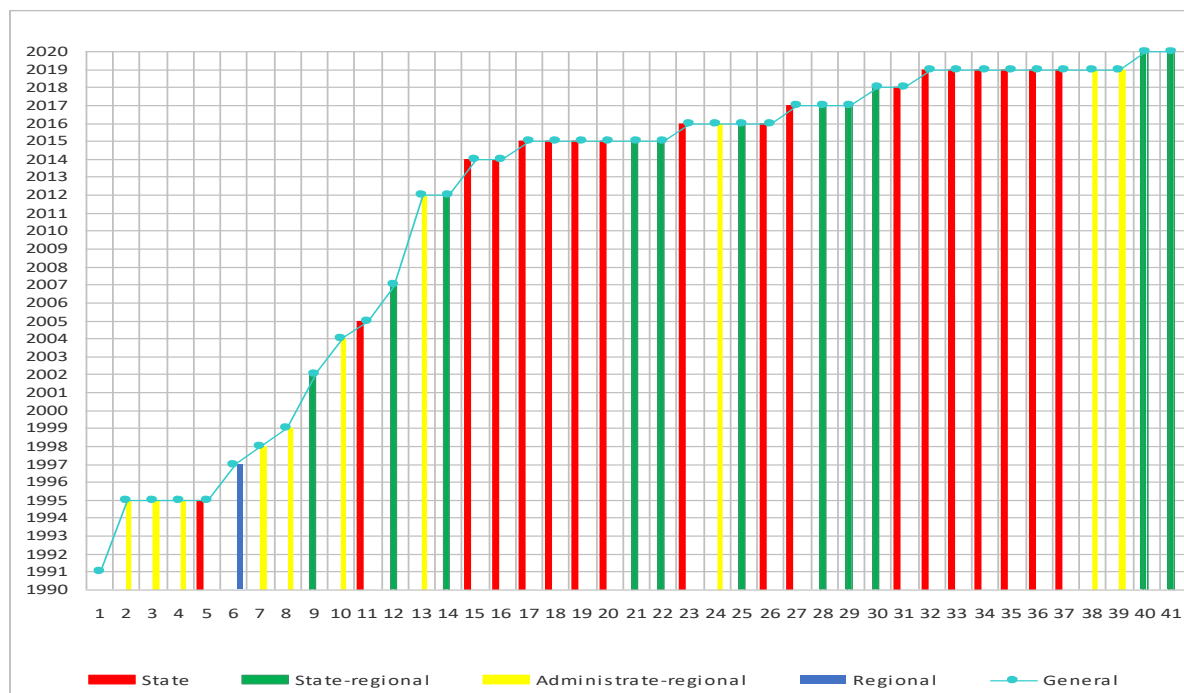


Fig. 1 – Dynamics of signing the bilateral agreements between Hungary and the RF through the levels of cooperation. Conducted by the author according to data from the foreign offices of Hungary and the RF

It should be noted that the growth of cooperation between the two countries in the face of EU and US sanctions against Russia is taking place against the background of the annual increase in Hungary's exports to Russia and its critical dependence on Russian energy supplies. Although a number of Hungarian experts consider the estimates of Hungary's dependence on Russia exaggerated (Jarabik B., 2017), as well as the degree of influence of Russia's special services on the Hungarian elite (Novak B., 2017, Panyi, S., 2017).

Hungary's Eurasian foreign policy, its desire to be present in Central Asian markets, in Chinese-led investment projects and, in the long run, to diversify energy supplies through Caspian oil, all need a certain ideological basis that would justify the participation of the European community in the eyes of the European community. In projects in which Russia's position is fundamentally strong. This was based on the concept of tourism in Hungary's foreign policy, a semantic dimension of the asymmetric use of the Hungarian model of "soft power" in relation to distant countries. At the same time, the introduction of the idea of tourism has enshrined in the system of Russian-Hungarian bilateral relations a phenomenon that has an ambiguous interpretation in terms of international legal personality. These are direct agreements between the Hungarian government and the Russian Federation. This is especially true of relations with the Komi Republic. Also, in essence, the Soviet tradition of friendship and cooperation of individual cities is being revived.

It should be noted that increasing the role of non-traditional subnational actors is considered a trend in international relations and attracts the scrutiny of experts, most of whom recognize this phenomenon as legitimate (Foreign Policy Analysis, 2015). However, in the context of sanctions against a particular state, such

cooperation is an asymmetric act to avoid it. One way or another, but in the structure of Russian-Hungarian bilateral relations there is a shift towards the importance of substate actors. Conceptualization of subregional cooperation is generally supported in Russia and at the federal level. The described phenomenon can be considered as an essential feature of the model of Russian-Hungarian bilateral relations formed after 2014.

In the structure of this model we can identify the relevant elements:

- levels, spheres and directions of cooperation (practically all traditional directions of international cooperation, including military-technical) are presented;

- state and substate actors;

- transnational corporations (key competing investors) as non-traditional actors in bilateral relations.

A separate element of the model are the vectors of coincidences / contradictions of national interests of the parties, which are enshrined in their security documents. In particular, it is fundamentally important for Ukraine that both models contain the same vector of "protection of foreign national communities". An important element of the proposed model are traditional and non-traditional mechanisms for the implementation of bilateral cooperation. The traditional ones include diplomatic channels, the work of bilateral interdepartmental advisory groups, and so on. A feature of non-traditional mechanisms are the transfer of emphasis to non-governmental organizations. In particular, the influence of non-governmental information and analytical centers on tourism issues, information structures, etc. has significantly increased.

The structurally characterized model can be represented as follows.

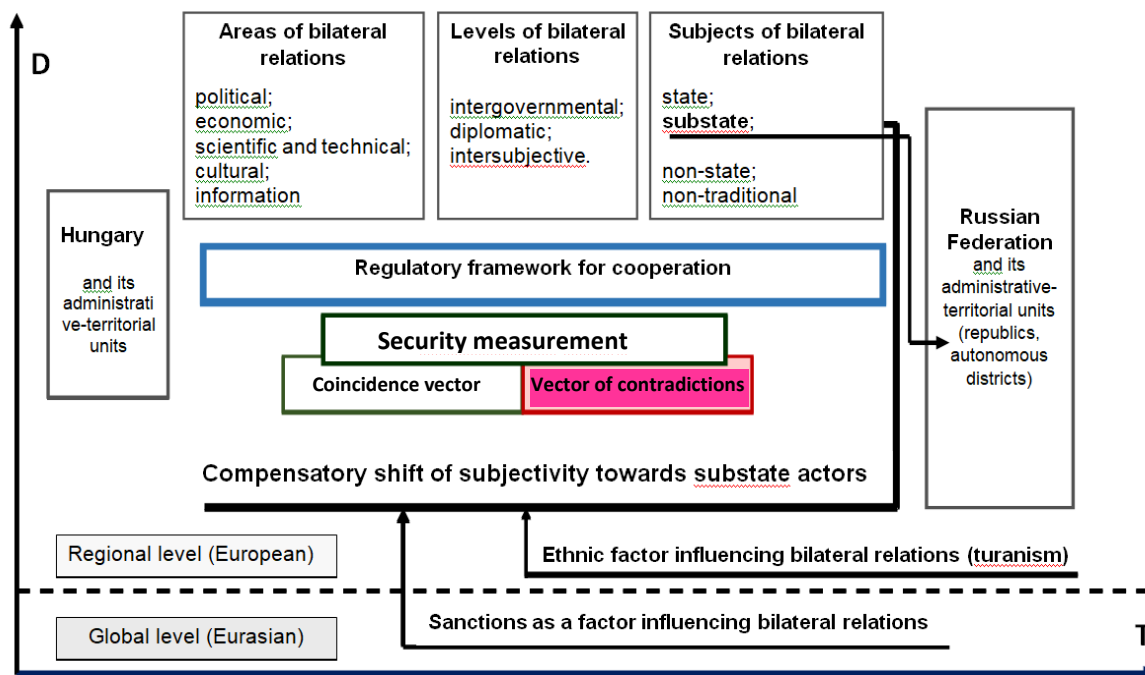


Fig. 2 – The model of the bilateral relations between Hungary and the RF
Developed by the author

In addition to the geopolitical factors influencing the centers of power, a significant external factor influencing the model of Russian-Hungarian relations is the factor of regional leadership, which is manifested among the members of the Visegrad Group. It is possible that it was he who became decisive in a certain stability of this model after 2014. The most dangerous thing for Ukraine is that today both countries give Ukraine the place of a buffer state

in its own relations. If the countries of Central Europe continue to underestimate Ukraine's capabilities in European security processes and its European integration potential, Hungary will look for asymmetric levers towards Russia. The purpose of this will be to defend their ambitions as a member of European organizations, to balance the potential influence of European investors (primarily British) on the country's foreign policy.

Conclusions

The model of bilateral Russian-Hungarian relations developed on the basis of the principles of asymmetry in modern international relations is a scientifically substantiated attempt to visualize the key processes that pose a danger to Ukraine. In terms of its functions, the model corresponds to the partnership model, but cannot be classified as a strategic partnership due to the fundamental differences between the parties in their views on Euro-Atlantic security integration, which is enshrined in the documents. The partnership model should exclude ideological confrontation, which may hinder the implementation of cooperation in

those areas where the interests of the parties coincide. This model of cooperation assumes that in matters where the views of the parties differ, each act in accordance with its own national interests. Thus, when assessing the security environment in Europe and around Ukraine, it should be borne in mind that in the event of increasing threats to the territorial integrity of Ukraine by one of these countries, the other will use it.

The proposed model allows to study the influence of both systemic and non-systemic factors that determine the direction of its dynamics. Sanctions, which at the beginning of

the study period were considered as a new factor, today can be assessed as a systemic

factor influencing the state of bilateral relations of Hungary, both with the EU and with Russia.

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