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**CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN.
DO THEORIES WORK IN PRACTICE?**

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The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan poses a great danger to the Afghanistan state itself as well as for the neighboring countries. A decreasing interest from the United States of America, NATO and other key players due to a long war and other geopolitical challenges will leave Afghanistan with the minimum outer support for the future. The science of conflict resolution is offering a variety of theories that could lead endless wars and conflicts to an end. The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan is challenging those theories, while the resolution is crucial for the Afghanistan people right now. But are those theories reflected in the current actions of the US, NATO and Afghanistan governments? And do those theoretical actions lead to a better future regarding conflict resolution? The purpose of this article is to analyze the current policies of third parties influencing the current conflict in Afghanistan to determine the most relevant conflict prevention theory that could support conflict resolution most effectively in the future.

**NATIONAL RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTERNAL
HYBRID THREATS: A HYPOTHETICAL MODEL**

REMIGIJUS ŽILINSKAS

Having originated from material science and ecology, the concept of resilience has recently become a fashionable topic in security studies as well. In the realm of security studies, resilience could be defined as the capability of the system or its components to withstand and keep unchanged its essential parameters in the context of permanent and longstanding internal and external risks factors or threats. National resilience is essential in ensuring

the prosperous development and welfare of any nation in the case of so-called “wicked problems.” The importance of resilience was stressed during NATO’s Summit in 2016 and further promulgated by numerous academic discussions in face of Russia’s hybrid threats to the Alliance. However, the arguments were mainly focused on the broad narrative of the politico-strategic debates and on how to build resilience rather than presenting a way on how to assess and compare the resilience levels in different countries. The main aim of this paper is to develop a hypothetical model of national resilience against external threats with hybrid nature (unconventional aggression) for empirical purposes in further researches.

MAJOR THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

MAXIM POPOV

This article explores the major approaches to the study of conflict resolution strategy from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. It argues that conflict resolution strategy, as a civil integration resource, is a necessary tool for overcoming the deep-rooted ethnic conflicts in the unstable North Caucasus. This research analyzes how the strength of civil integration can affect conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The author considers the essential factors of protracted ethnic conflicts and emphasizes the destabilizing role of the repoliticization of ethnicity in crisis society. The concept of ethnic, “identity-based” conflicts is the heuristic theoretical model of exploring causes for increased ethnoreligious tensions in the North Caucasus. The article focuses on the ability of conflict resolution strategy to de-escalate growing tensions and transform protracted identity-based conflicts. The need to stimulate civil integration is caused by moral and structural causes: from the ethical point of view, the creation of an inclusive society is the fundamental societal goal; structural factors are related to the need to reduce inequalities and differences leading to social fragmentation and the escalation of ethnic conflicts. Among the structural conditions of regional conflicts, the author names ethnosocial inequalities, a civil identity crisis, ethnopolitical neo-authoritarianism, a large-scale socioeconomic polarization, “ideological combat” between secular modernization and religious fundamentalism.

**TOO WEAK TO INFLUENCE?
A CASE STUDY OF THE LITHUANIAN NGDOs
IN FOREIGN AID POLICYMAKING**

MARTA GADEIKIENĖ

For the East Central European Countries (ECE), the membership to the European Union also meant an entry into the foreign aid donor community. To understand international development policy change in over a decade and a policy divergence among the ECE countries that have started from relatively similar situations, this article offers the case study of Lithuania and the analysis of domestic policy actors, namely the non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) as one of policy change facilitating factors. It provides an empirically rich account of how Lithuanian NGDOs participate in the national foreign-aid policymaking and explains factors that affect Lithuanian NGDOs' capacity to influence government decisions. Szent-Ivanyi and Lightfoot's theoretical model guided the analysis of the Lithuanian NGDOs umbrella organizations composition and power relations, their organizational capacities, foreign donor assistance and attitudes of the state actors. The article concludes a limited, yet increasing Lithuanian NGDOs' role in shaping Lithuanian foreign aid policies; however, undermined by the chronic lack of resources to fund advocacy from national sources and the dependency on the EU project-based funding. Consequently, these circumstances constrain the NGDO Platforms' focus mostly on the EU development agenda and therefore mimics the European NGO networks' policy agenda. The lack of capacities to adapt the European policy agenda to the national foreign aid policy reality makes it of limited domestic relevance to the policy makers.