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In this Issue

The paradoxical factors of war and peace are transforming the models of democratization of the modern world, irreversibly changing the hierarchy of the main actors in international, regional and national security. The democratization of the external environment, although proceeding inconsistently and contradictorily, does not give anyone the opportunity to trample on civilizational norms and procedures or ignore human interests and rights with impunity.

Economization, steadily leading to the formation of a single world economic space, makes national security models based on isolationism unviable, and integration into this emerging space is the only possible way to effectively protect national interests. To refuse integration means to abandon sustainable development, since such development is a key prerequisite for ensuring the resilience of national security. No society can be competitive without becoming part of the global economic space. This factor, among other things, determines the priority of geo-economic mechanisms for ensuring national security compared to geopolitical and geostrategic ones, since it is geo-economics that becomes a priority for global development.

Digitalization, which forms a single world information and communication space, creating a global network society, gives citizens of the countries covered by it access to all material and spiritual benefits, multiplies the intellectual resource, and therefore all other resources, promoting sustainable development, achieving well-being and security of the individual and society. On the other hand, information technologies are not an absolute blessing: they create new opportunities for control and manipulation of mass consciousness in domestic politics and new effective means of interstate confrontation, and, consequently, new threats to national security.

At this stage of world development, globalization creates advantages for the most socially, economically and technologically developed countries, which leads to a growing gap between them and developing countries. On the other hand, it is these countries, due to their development and accumulated wealth, lifestyle, values and behavioral stereotypes, that have become the most vulnerable to new challenges and threats in the context of globalization and the creation of a network society. The widespread spread of television, which made the images and standards of an unattainably rich Western society accessible to poor countries, stimulated a wave of anti-Western sentiment in some poor countries, manifested, in particular, in the form of war and international terrorism. As a result, the world at the beginning of the 21st century was faced with a new global security challenge.

In the context of globalization and the collapse of the world order that emerged after the Second World War as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the bipolar world, there was a sharp drop in the level of controllability of international processes. Previous systems and mechanisms of international security turned out to be ineffective, regional and, to some extent, global instability increased sharply. This, in particular, led to the fact that national security turned out to be closely connected with international security. The international dimension of national security, which was not disputed by anyone before, has increased many times over.

Globalization is blurring the line between foreign and domestic policy. From now on, any state can feel relatively safe only in the conditions of the formation of a new, fairer world order that meets the interests of all countries of the world community. Globalization processes, on the one hand, erode classical national sovereignty, and on the other, contribute to the rise of national self-awareness of small nations, supporting the trend towards an increase in the number of actors in international relations. The principle of self-determination up to and including secession, applied to national minorities of multinational states, leads to an increase in the number of incompetent state entities. At the same time, the crisis of national identity of already established states, including Germany, France, the USA and Great Britain, is intensifying. All this seriously affects the problems of ensuring both national and international security.

Thus, the consequences of globalization for ensuring national and international security are very contradictory. It creates both new, unprecedented opportunities for the development and prosperity of various countries, as well as new, extremely dangerous challenges and threats. For Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, which is in the stage of European integration, and at the same time, for objective reasons, maintaining the continuity of its not only regional, but also global interests, all these provisions are especially important and relevant.

In 'Comparative analysis of national security strategies of Armenia in the context of political realism, liberalism, and Marxism', Vardan Atoyán, Logan Brosius and Hovyan Vahram analyze one of the most important areas of comprehensive political science analysis, which is the study of the mechanisms for developing national security strategies. The article analyzes the National Security Strategies of Armenia for 2007 and 2020, taking into account the political system, geographical location, historical experience, ideology and culture, as well as resources and abilities of alternative actions in the field of strategic planning.

The authors give a generalized description that without a scientific understanding of the specific properties of effective political activity in the context of developing national security strategies in the South Caucasus, as well as in various regions, it is impossible to determine specific directions for ensuring the national security of Armenia.

The idea is substantiated that specific national strategic cultures are based on political, ideological, geographical, economic and other reasons. Therefore, when developing national security strategies, the diplomatic, economic and military resources of states are taken into account. This problem has been little studied and requires further research, since in such studies global dimensions of security have always occupied, are and will be occupied. In this context, when considering the practical implementation of a security strategy, an institutional approach is widely used, with the help of which the tasks, roles and functions of public authorities in the field of national security are determined.

The authors come to the conclusion that within the framework of various scientific directions there is a process of further accumulation of knowledge about national security strategies, clarification of issues is underway, which relates to the principles and content of national security, its objective and subjective dimensions, external and internal factors that influence the level of security person, society and public authority.

In his article ‘South Caucasus in the phase of Russian-Ukrainian war: new security challenges and possible scenarios for development’, Roman Karapetyan analyzes the development and implementation of Armenia’s foreign policy line from the point of view of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022. The article is devoted to a detailed analysis of materials published in the international media, the Armenian, Russian and Ukrainian press, which outline the positions of the Armenian leadership on certain issues of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The author identifies and describes the characteristic features of the economic, political and military situation in the South Caucasus after February 24, 2022, when the Russian war against Ukraine began.

The article gives a forecast of a number of expectations of the countries of the South Caucasus region if the Russian-Ukrainian war continues to remain full-scale. The author focuses the main attention in the article on the fact that the South Caucasus is also part of European and Middle Eastern security, therefore the latest events in this region are of an interregional nature. The issue of the prospect of problems in Armenia’s foreign policy in relations with the establishment of strategic certainty and pragmatic respect for national interests continues to remain controversial, which may become even greater than at the present stage. It is obvious that considerable efforts will be required from Armenia to realize national interests. The most important guarantee of its success is the strengthening of the Armenian statehood and its defense capability, the improvement of the national economy, and the improvement of the well-being of citizens.

In ‘Euronews as a tool for the formation of Europe’s image’, Yuliana Melkumyan and Karine Harutyunyan analyze the information and communication activities, as well as the effective publicity of the Euronews TV channel in transforming the image of Europe. The idea is substantiated that the financial and economic crisis, Brexit, illegal migration, the Second Karabakh War in 2020, the Russian-Ukrainian war from 2022 and other events began to actively influence the image of Europe. In recent years, against the backdrop of globalization and the development of information and communication technologies, the opportunities for citizens from EaP countries and non-EU citizens to influence the European integration policies of their states have significantly increased. This article attempts to reveal the main reasons for the key role of Euronews as an instrument of European public diplomacy, which includes technologies and instruments of foreign information policy, characterized by openness, aimed at implementing a comprehensive European diplomatic strategy by influencing European and non-European populations in order to influence on its political processes and political decision-making.

The article is also devoted to the phenomenon of the Euronews language, which covers aspects of the political life of the European community that are of public interest. The author traces the formation of the image of Europe, as all this is reflected in the linguistic field of Euronews in general, and in the verbal component of television news programs in particular. In Euronews broadcasts, this information is also reflected in the non-verbal components of the message. In conditions where Euronews is an important tool for shaping the regional image of Europe and influencing the audience, studying the linguistic specifics of messages, communication strategies and tactics of television political programs becomes extremely important. In international journalism, the Euronews effect has already been formed, the essence of which is during emergency

events in the regions or in the world, which results from mass sitting in front of televisions and watching news related to this event. A comparative study of the language of modern Euronews news programs allows us to identify not only linguistic trends in mass communication, but also current problems of European society. The features of the Euronews mass media political discourse highlight the dynamics of democratic transformations.

In the article ‘Digital authoritarianism as a modern threat to democratic stability: restriction of freedom or network politicization?’, Armen Mirzoyan examined the issues of global trends in the digitalization of political regimes, which actualize the problem of adapting to new network conditions of political regimes around the world. This, in turn, raises the question of the need for a comprehensive comparative analysis of cases of legitimation of different political regimes in order to develop recommendations for the democratic transformation of modern political regimes. The idea is substantiated that the primary task of a political scientist is to study the causal mechanisms and specific patterns of digitalization of political life. This becomes especially relevant in the difficult conditions of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has provoked accelerated and largely artificial digitalization imposed on society. The most difficult scientific problem seems, first of all, to determine the deep transformations of social and political reality under the pressure of accelerated digitalization. Meanwhile, before the pandemic itself, the prerequisites for the transformation of traditional political processes and institutions had already been created. The reason for this was the emergence of new global digital companies, which gave rise to digital platforms, algorithms and various network effects that subjugate the very communication channels of citizens and force, in turn, to reconsider the traditional concept of national sovereignty.

The author pays special attention to complete digitalization and access to personal information by an authoritarian regime, which will lead to total control over a person, and most importantly, will practically deprive him of the opportunity to go beyond this control. How severe this control will be will be determined by the political activity of the citizen. And, since the politically active class does not constitute the majority of the population, for the bulk of citizens the process of this control will remain invisible for the time being.

In ‘Decision-making: the process contributing to professional public administration’, Katerina Altunyan notes that professional public administration contributes to the effective functioning of government and the development of public policy. The article is devoted to the current problem of planning and making public decisions in accordance with democratic values and mechanisms. Therefore, there is an urgent need to consider management decisions in the context of ensuring a sustainable state of the public administration system. In this regard, it seems especially important to identify mechanisms for developing public decisions that are devoid of elements of situationality and uncertainty.

The author comes to the conclusion that the models of public decisions proposed for consideration only state a fixed sequence of actions when choosing alternatives. Often, undesirable results from incorrectly made decisions are attributed to the subjective human factor. The author focuses his work on the fact that the theory and practice of democratic government is faced with the task of creating effective methods for

developing, monitoring and evaluating public decisions. The viability of not only the government or parliament, but also the stability of the political system depends on this.

This issue of the Journal includes three book reviews about the peculiarities of politics between peoples and international relations, peace pedagogy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the role of Instagram as public pedagogy. In this context, it is important to study the experience of peace pedagogy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the patriotic and peaceful education of the younger generation is of particular relevance for a number of reasons: the level of informational awareness of the younger generation is increasing, democratization processes and the manifestation of a multi-party system create certain trends in the younger generation's understanding of the essence of patriotism, a culture of peace and tolerance, and civic duty.


These books analyze the leading trends of modern international development along with globalization, the increasing economic and political interdependence of states, on the basis of which regionalization and fragmentation of the international system occurs. There is no longer any doubt that the current system of international relations is undergoing fundamental transformations, and its basic principles are undergoing deep erosion. New actors and organizations, large financial, industrial and transnational corporations, as well as armed non-state groups, terrorist organizations, transnational movements, international trade unions and political parties are entering the arena of international relations and establishing themselves.

These books deal with the global dimension and the process of fragmentation of the system of international relations, which is characterized by high instability, volatility and increased conflict potential. In recent years, there has been an alarming trend of a large-scale return to political discourse of populism and right-wing ideas, a renaissance of xenophobia, radicalization and fragmentation, and re-ideologization of international and domestic relations.

Ashot Aleksanyan

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES OF ARMENIA IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL REALISM, LIBERALISM, AND MARXISM

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Abstract

The article examines the characteristic features of Armenian national security strategies, actively conducting interdisciplinary research with extensive use of systems analysis. Issues regarding the stability of the political system of Armenia in the interest of national security are considered not only from the standpoint of the general theory of systems but also using the methodological principles of synergetics. An independent section of the research was the study of regional conflicts in the post-Soviet space and their impact on the state of national security in Armenia. In this context, traditional international relations theory provides tools for analyzing the previous actions of states within a broader framework and making decisions on future actions.

The present article seeks to provide simple textual comparisons and analyses of the Republic of Armenia's National Security Strategies of 2007 and 2020. Those elements within the Strategies which have remained, changed, or been added will then be made the subject of contextual analyses with the theoretical traditions of liberalism, realism, and Marxism to draw out the Republic of Armenia's major priorities and assess the capability of its approaches to meeting the foreign policy problems that exist. Each theory of international relations will

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emphasize those positions in the National Security Strategies that most accurately reflect Armenia's past and current positions, and evaluate them in accordance with global and regional standards.

Keywords: international relations theory, Armenia, liberalism, realism, Marxism, national security strategy, foreign policy.

Introduction

Following Armenia's independence in 1991, the national security strategy was issued twice: in February 2007, and in July 2020. In the period between the two strategies, the global and regional security environments experienced essential changes that left Armenia's security environment more complex and multifaceted. Several international events had significant impacts that reverberated at the global and regional level during this time, of which, we highlight the following:

1. Russo-Georgian war, 7-12 August 2008: Thanks to the land blockade in force to Armenia's east and west, in addition to the disruptions brought by the Russo-Georgian war, the country faced an increased risk of food crisis. As Georgia serves as Armenia's primary window to the outside world, the possible prolongation of the war threatened Armenia with a shortage of essential goods.

2. The beginning of the Arab Spring, 2011, led to changes in power in Tunisia, Egypt, and later, most tragically, in Libya and Syria. In Libya, the political crisis that arose after the overthrow of President Muammar Gaddafi still remains unresolved. Likewise, in Syria, the crisis that seemed internal at first sight deepened and transformed into a protracted, multi-year war with the involvement of multiple external actors (the USA, Russia, Türkiye, Iran, etc.). Even today, it has not yet reached its resolution.

3. The beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, opened the most heated flashpoint in the conflict between the West and Russia. The Ukraine crisis deepened on February 24, 2022, following the initiation of what official Moscow calls a "Special Military Operation," (Kremlin.ru 2022) which opened wide the previously low-burning Russo-Ukrainian War to the risk of major continental and even global warfare.

According to experts, the world is currently in the midst of a new Cold War which started perhaps with the emergence of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, and with Russian military intervention in the Syrian conflict in the fall of 2015 (Breuer 2022). The supposed "End of History" postulated by Francis Fukuyama was reached thanks to the Soviet Union's dissolution and arrived at the climax of the First Cold War but also began a "New History" that is characterized by the intensification of contradictions between geopolitical power centers and different forms of conflict manifestation (Fukuyama 1992).

The South Caucasus, where Armenia is located, is at the intersection of three large regions which, therefore, means it is affected by the events and developments happening in these regions. It borders the post-Soviet region to the north and east; from the west and south, the South Caucasus borders the Middle East; and further to the east, awaits the Caspian basin, and by extension, it borders Central Asia.

All three mentioned regions bordering the South Caucasus are conflict zones and hotbeds of tension where the interests of both regional powers and global superpowers collide. The Ukrainian crisis, which has morphed into the Russian-Ukrainian war, is the best proof of this regarding the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region (Akhvlediani 2022; Holovko-Havrysheva 2021). In addition, numerous conflicts in the post-Soviet region – Transnistria (Baltag and Bosse 2016; Vacaru 2006), Abkhazia (Auch 2005), South Ossetia – remain unresolved. Despite the military aggression, ethnic cleansing, and occupations carried out by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023, that resulted in the near-total depopulation of a region predominantly inhabited by Armenians, the situation continues to be uncertain.

As the Georgian–Ossetian conflict of August 2008 escalated into the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and the 2020 44-day war over Nagorno-Karabakh exposed further conflicts brewing in post-Soviet territories which had previously remained unresolved, or “frozen”, and from time to time contained a serious risk of outbreak of military operations and wars. The same occurred in 2015, as the Donbas conflict was frozen by the Minsk Agreement. However, the Minsk Agreements, left unimplemented, led to the Russian-Ukrainian war at the end of February 2022.

The Middle East has unfortunately been a constant zone of conflict and civil war since the middle of the 20th century. The Arab-Israeli wars (Cordesman 2021), the unresolved Palestinian issue, the civil war in Lebanon 1975-90, the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Türkiye’s 1974 invasion of Cyprus, followed by occupation of its north until the present, the Gulf War of 1990, the Iraq War of 2003 are the proofs of the Middle East’s turbulence. During the contemporary period, the Arab Spring could be added to the list (Cordesman 2020; Fahmy and Mohamed 2020), as it led to crises and conflicts in Libya and Syria that still require resolution. Let us also not forget the ongoing international crisis surrounding Iran’s nuclear program and the risks associated with it.

As for Central Asia, in the post-Soviet period, apart from several ethnic conflicts (mainly Tajik-Kyrgyz), the civil war in Tajikistan in the 1990s can be considered as a serious conflict (Akiner and Barnes 2001; Di Maio and Abenstein 2011). The events that took place in Kazakhstan in January 2022 showed that Central Asia is also not free from the risk of destabilization and conflicts. Additionally, Central Asia borders Afghanistan, which remains unstable, from where there remains a risk for conflict, and also threatens regional proliferation of extremism.

In this context, the article aims to carry out a comparative analysis of Armenia’s national security strategies via three schools of international relations: political realism, Marxism, and liberalism.

The sources for the preparation of the work were: a) the strategies of the Republic of Armenia in 2007 and 2020 as objects of comparison, b) other official documents, c) academic and analytical works (monographs, articles, etc.) devoted to theories of international relations and global and regional military-political processes, and finally, d) speeches of political leaders.

In general, national security strategies pursue two goals that lead their content to be divided into two parts. The first is to highlight existing and potential challenges, whereas the second seeks to develop and point out effective means to face them.

In this regard, it is worth noting that both strategies adopted in Armenia thus far are not structurally perfect. However, the comparison shows that the 2007 NSS is structurally more consistent with the logic of the aforementioned “problem-solution” scheme. There, in a special section, the threats to Armenia’s national security, both external and internal, are pointed out. Although individual sections do not identify ways or measures designed to face or overcome these challenges, they can be drawn from other sections of the strategy. Meanwhile, the 2020 NSS has a different structural logic. First, the security environment of Armenia is presented. Then, the remainder of the document is dedicated to the country’s national interests and means to ensure them.

This analysis is based on a comparative method. As the 2007 NSS corresponds more to the “problem-solution” scheme, from the contents of the 2020 NSS, the sections related to the challenges of Armenia’s national security and the ways of facing them for comparison were separated and combined with the relevant provisions of the 2007 NSS. It is clear from the title of the article that this is about external security challenges and the potentialities of facing them.

Thus, in this article, analyzed with the theories of political realism, Marxism, and liberalism, an attempt is made to show the similarities and differences between the two strategies, as well as the dynamics that were recorded in the approaches to ensuring national security from 2007 to 2020. The comparison is carried out in two phases: firstly, the 2007 and 2020 strategies are compared to one another; secondly, both of them are analyzed with realism, liberalism, and Marxist theories of international relations. Content analysis is also used.

Generalities of National Security Strategies of Armenia

From the point of view of addressing the external challenges facing Armenia, strategies in 2007 and 2020 consider the following factors as external threats:

1) Possible military operations against Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). The 2020 NSS, like that of 2007, considers Azerbaijan’s policy regarding Nagorno-Karabakh as a threat not only to Armenia, but also to the security of the region¹. In other words, the Strategy considers Azerbaijani policy to be threatening to the entire region at large. This approach is characteristic of the entire document in general. If the 2007 Strategy considers the openly belligerent statements of official Baku at the highest level as a manifestation of Azerbaijan’s ambitions to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by military means, then the 2020 Strategy emphasizes of the 2016 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict itself: the four-day April war, continuous violations of the ceasefire, regular sabotage, concentration and movement of troops, as well as military exercises on both the contact line and the Armenian-Azerbaijani interstate border. The reason is understandable: while Azerbaijan’s belligerent policy in 2007 was manifested only at

¹ The Government of the RA. 2020. “National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia: A Resilient Armenia in a Changing World.” Accessed April 20, 2023. <https://www.gov.am/en/National-Security-Strategy/>; Arlis.am. 2007. “National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia.” Accessed April 20, 2023. <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=31189>.

the level of rhetoric, later, particularly from the beginning of the 2010s, it assumed concrete dimensions.

Both Strategies assign Armenia the role of security guarantor of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). At the same time, both documents consider the security of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a single package, not to be separated from one another. Accordingly, any encroachment on the security of Nagorno-Karabakh is an encroachment on the security of Armenia. Later, the 44-day war in 2020 demonstrated the rightness of this provision as Azerbaijan began to encroach on the borders of Armenia after violently assuming control of territories previously held by the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, even invading up to the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Both strategies make an important reference to the settlement of the Artsakh (Karabakh) conflict. The 2007 Strategy considers it in the context of the threat of armed force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Noting that the mission of supporting the peaceful and fair settlement of the problem was entrusted to the OSCE Minsk Group under the co-chairmanship of Russia, the USA, and France, the Strategy does not consider it appropriate to discuss and accept statements by other structures on the settlement of the problem, as well as the involvement of various international organizations in the settlement process. In other words, Armenia, pursuing the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exclusively in a peaceful and compromise way, recognizes the unique role of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group as the only mediating mission in that process. The document considers three principles as key to the settlement of the conflict: a) recognition of the irreversible reality of the actual existence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, b) uninterrupted land connection between Artsakh and Armenia, and c) fixed security guarantees.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS mentions a) Armenia's commitment to the peaceful settlement process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, b) the need to create a favorable environment for peace, c) Armenia's support for the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh without restrictions and coercion, d) in the conflict settlement process and in the post-settlement phase the primary condition is the security of Artsakh Armenians under which is also understood the existence of a system of safe, secure and diversified interconnection with the outside world, including Armenia, e) the validity of the full participation of the Artsakh population in the decision of its fate at all stages of negotiations through the authorities elected by the latter.

In fact, the 2020 NSS adds two provisions to the 2007 Strategy: the need to create a favorable atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which first of all means the formation of an environment of mutual trust, and the moral justification of the possible participation of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations.

Viewing the security of Armenia in the regional security system is more characteristic of the school of liberalism because the latter shows a systemic approach to international organization, considering the security of all states in one unified structure (Basu 2012; Cooke 2022; Song 2023; Burchill 2020). Meanwhile, political realism considers international relations to be chaotic and anarchic where each state is guided by its selfish interests and tries to ensure its security at the expense of others. Accordingly, political realism emphasizes raw power in international relations (Pashakhanlou 2017; Kumar

H.M. 2023). Therefore, from this perspective of threat assessment, the approach in both strategies is realistic.

In line with political realism is also the emphasis on the important, and almost irreplaceable role of the OSCE Minsk Group in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict recorded in the two strategies, as it seeks to ensure the balance of forces involved in the settlement of the conflict. And the principle of balance of power is one of the most important principles of political realism from the security perspective. However, the 2020 Strategy combines realism with liberalism in considering the threat to Armenia as a regional security challenge.

2) Possible instability or turbulence around Armenia. According to the 2007 Strategy, ethnic conflicts, internal clashes, and hostilities in bordering states present various threats: from sabotage against transit infrastructures to cross-border impacts of hostilities in neighboring states.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS focuses more on the Middle East, noting that Armenia's security environment is also affected by the processes taking place in the Middle East. Among the latter, the Strategy specifically mentions not only the displacement of religious and ethnic minorities, but also the consolidation and spread of the potential of religious radicalism, internal clashes, as well as debilitating, non-traditional, and mediated armed conflicts. Such an approach is natural as the situation in the Middle East sharply worsened as a result of the 2011 Arab Spring, and had both direct and indirect impacts on Armenia as well.

From the point of view of threat assessment, both strategies can be considered a combination of liberalism and realism because, on the one hand, possible threats are realistically evaluated (realism), but on the other hand, they are seen again in the context of international common security (liberalism).

3) Weakening of strategic alliances or insufficient involvement in them. The document of 2007 considers that membership in strategic alliances should exclude actions by one member of the alliance against the interests of another member. The strategy, in particular, considers it necessary to clarify the rules for the participation of other member states in case of an armed attack against a member state of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The 2020 NSS also considers the possible growth of disagreements between the military and political alliances affecting the South Caucasus region and the countries that are part of the latter to be worrying from the perspective of regional security. According to the document, no less alarming is the possible weakening of these alliances and actions of member states that contradict each other's interests, including the interests of Armenia, in particular, arms sales to Azerbaijan further threaten peace and stability in the region.

Although the document does not mention the CSTO in this context, the phrase "weakening of these alliances and actions of member states that contradict each other's interests" means that an organization whose member countries regularly carry out actions that directly or indirectly contradict with the interests of their ally Armenia.

Thus, both documents, emphasizing the role of the CSTO in ensuring the security of Armenia, at the same time see problems in the actions of its members.

From the perspective of assessing this threat, the approach in both strategies corresponds to political realism. Both documents emphasize the fact that Armenia's allies, guided by their selfish interests, carry out and may continue to carry out actions contrary to Armenia's interests. Political realism is also characterized by the fact that the country's security is viewed within the framework of a military and political alliance, in contrast to liberalism which sees the security of states not in the context of military and political alliances, but in the context of general regional and global security (Castellin 2021). The fact that there are regular problems within that alliance is another issue.

4) Terrorism and cross-border crimes. In this regard, the document of 2007 mentions that international terrorism with all its manifestations, proliferation and transportation of weapons of mass destruction and drugs, money laundering, and human trafficking are direct threats to the Republic of Armenia.

In the 2020 NSS, there is a clause consistent with the above-mentioned, according to which terrorism and transnational organized crime, transportation and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal drug trade, money laundering, illegal immigration and human trafficking are threats to Armenia.

The approach to this threat can also be considered comparative: a combination of realism and liberalism because on the one hand the challenges are evaluated adequately, and, on the other hand they are viewed in the context of international security, that is, the threats that face all states are threats to Armenia as well. Thus, according to the liberal approach, individual states are not isolated from the world, therefore, threats or challenges are common (Pedi and Wivel 2022).

5) Isolation of the country from regional programs. The document of 2007 emphasizes Armenia's participation in regional infrastructure programs, especially the European Union's TRASECA and INOGATE programs. The document considers Azerbaijan's efforts to push Armenia out of them as a direct threat.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS has a corresponding paragraph according to which the fragmented and non-comprehensive development of transport, energy and communication infrastructures in the region deepens the formation of dividing lines in the region and contributes to the further growth of instability.

The evaluation of this threat can be considered fully consistent with the liberal theory as both documents view Armenia's security in the context of close international integration, and consider integration systems as an important security component. Consequently, the exclusion of Armenia from the integration projects is seen as a security threat. Unlike political realism, according to which states must rely mainly on their forces, liberalism sees the security of states in close integration and interdependence.

6) Diaspora problems. The document of 2007 considers the weakening of the ethnic and cultural identity of the Diaspora as a threat to Armenia's national security. The strategy attaches great importance to the issue of the preservation of Armenian identity in the Diaspora, emphasizing the existence of the Diaspora that is well-organized and effectively involved in the countries of residence for increasing the level of international involvement of Armenia. Accordingly, the weakening of the Homeland-Diaspora connection and the lack of mutually enriching contact can endanger the fundamental values of Armenia's national security.

The document considers the complex of problems related to the Diaspora in the sphere of Panarmeniacy. According to the document, Armenia's efforts to strengthen the Homeland-Diaspora relations are aimed at resisting the assimilation of the Diaspora and at preventing the loss of linguistic and cultural identity, and ensuring the systematic participation of the Diaspora in solving vital problems for Armenia and Artsakh.

The document also addresses the problems of the Diaspora in the context of one of the fundamental values of Armenia's national security, i.e. the preservation of Armenian identity. The essence of the latter is the state's pursuit of the preservation and development of the national identity of the Armenian people in the Homeland and in the Diaspora.

The 2020 NSS does not address the problems of Armenian identity in the Diaspora as a national security challenge but sees the realization of the long-term goal of ensuring the perpetuity of Armenian statehood through the integration of all-Armenian efforts and capabilities. According to the Strategy, Armenian statehood, as the realization of the centuries-old aspirations of the Armenian people, belongs to the citizens of Armenia and the entire Armenian people who are the bearers and defenders of that statehood. The document focuses more on the physical security problems of the Diaspora, stating that Armenia will embark on organized repatriation in order to ensure the security of Armenians living in different regions in the face of the escalation of geopolitical confrontation.

Thus, both strategies give an important place to the problems of the Diaspora. However, if the 2007 NSS emphasizes the spiritual component of the issue, considering the retreat of national identity in the Diaspora as a threat, then the document 2020 deals mainly with the physical side of the issue.

The evaluation of this threat can also be considered comparative or parallel. On the one hand, the potential of the Diaspora is emphasized from the perspective of consolidation and development of the common national potential in order to effectively face common challenges (realism), on the other hand, the Diaspora factor is emphasized from the perspective of cooperation, dialogue, and international political, economic, military and cultural integration with other states (liberalism).

The Differences of National Security Strategies of Armenia

The 2007 NSS summarizes a number of external challenges that are not reflected in the document 2020. Thus, the 2007 NSS sees the disruption of the transit routes of the bordering states as an external threat. The document mentions that Armenia is already experiencing the negative consequences of the non-operation of the Abkhaz railway and Russia-Georgia highways. At the same time, the possible application of large-scale economic sanctions against the southern neighbor Iran may become an immediate threat to Armenia's national security. The mention of this challenge is also related to the school of liberalism because it sees the security of Armenia as interconnected with the security of neighboring states. The 2020 NSS makes no mention of this threat.

The 2007 NSS sees Armenia's energy dependence due to limited natural resources, as well as epidemics and natural and man-made disasters as external challenges. Since

there are no additional comments in the strategy regarding the mentioned challenges, we can consider the mere mention of these challenges as a manifestation of political realism in terms of their realistic and adequate assessment. Although from the very beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the world, the new national security strategy adopted that same year does not address epidemics, or natural and man-made disasters as a threat to national security.

From the 2020 Strategy, we can extract some challenges to Armenia's national security that are not reflected or are briefly reflected in the 2007 NSS. The reason is the above-mentioned global and regional changes that occurred between the adoption of these two strategies.

As the first such threat, one can point out the uncertainty created around the fundamental principles of the modern world in the conditions of extensive and rapid geopolitical changes. According to the document of 2020, power realignments are taking place, international multilateral platforms are weakening, and mutual trust between states is decreasing. As a result, unpredictable threats are added to traditional predictable threats.

The 2020 strategy notes that rapid and unpredictable changes in the modern world order and security architecture, along with existing threats, create new challenges for Armenia. In international relations, there are tendencies to weaken international security systems which are manifested, in particular, by the increase in competition between states that play a major role in strengthening of arms races, the weakening of multilateral platforms, as well as the deepening desires to resolve conflicts by force. At the same time, trends in the formation of new power centers further intensify international competition, favoring the use of force.

In fact, the 2020 Strategy of the National Security of Armenia considers the process of changing the world order: the weakening and disintegration of the existing world order and the formation of a new world order as a threat to national security which we can conventionally call the stage of world order transition. And more precisely, as a threat or challenge to the security of each state, there are the following: the manifestations of turbulence, chaos, uncertainty and the consequences arising from them which are characteristic of any geopolitical transition.

Thus, as a manifestation of the turbulence arising from the world order transition, the 2020 NSS of the national security points in particular to the disintegration of international security institutions and guarantees which creates the temptation to resolve conflicts by force, increasing the likelihood of such occurrences. Following the adoption of the strategy, the 44-day Nagorno-Karabakh war, in 2020, Türkiye's military operations in Syria three times by invading its territory, and the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict are likewise examples.

In this context, according to the 2020 NSS, tension between global and regional power centers and structures has a negative impact on Armenia's cooperation with these states and structures. At the same time, the ambitions of some regional states to play a more active role threaten to change the balance of power and question the stability in the South Caucasus.

Here, although it is not explicitly stated, Türkiye's desire to increase its regional role is taken into account. Turkish expert community and statesmen base the country's

foreign policy strategy on its geography. According to this approach, Türkiye is located in the center of three major regions: the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East (Özlu 2022, 217). The latter are conflict-prone regions where the ongoing processes affect Türkiye. Therefore, in order to effectively face the challenges arising from these regions, Ankara should conduct a more active policy in them.

In one way or another, the Caucasus is also included in the list of regions that are neighboring Türkiye and from where Türkiye feels pressure on its national interests. This means that Ankara will consistently try to increase its influence in the region where Armenia is located. And since Türkiye uses the diverse means to achieve its foreign policy goals, up to the point of force and further threats of force, on the other hand, there are no diplomatic relations between Ankara and Yerevan, and the land border is closed, as such activity of Türkiye also contains certain threats for the national security of Armenia.

Perhaps based on Türkiye's ambitions to increase its regional role, the 2020 NSS sees Türkiye's unneighborly policy towards Armenia as a separate challenge for Armenia's national security. As manifestations of this, the document mentions the blockade of Armenia, the refusal to establish diplomatic relations without preconditions, the denial of the Armenian Genocide, and in some cases, the latter's justification. In this context, it is necessary to mention that since 1991, Armenia has never made Türkiye's recognition of the Armenian Genocide a precondition for the normalization of bilateral relations and the establishment of diplomatic relations under any government.

At the same time, the 2020 NSS considers Ankara's policy regarding Nagorno-Karabakh as a threat to Armenia's national security: its military and political support to Baku, considering it as a strengthening factor for Baku's ambitions to resolve the conflict militarily. Türkiye's willingness to overtly or covertly intervene in case of Azerbaijan unleashes military operations is considered particularly problematic.

Türkiye's use of illegal force against neighboring countries and peoples is also, according to the 2020 NSS, endangering the stability of the wider region, and makes its possible actions towards Armenia even more unpredictable.

Although not explicitly stated, it is not difficult to guess that by 'the wider region,' the Strategy refers to the Near and Middle East. Logically, the South Caucasus is seen as a part of that region. And the use of illegal force by Ankara refers to the actions of the Turkish army in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. According to the logic of the document, the increase in the level of chaos in the Middle Eastern region generally which Türkiye promotes with its illegal actions, also increases the risk of threats to Armenia's security, primarily in the context of Ankara's unpredictable actions.

So, the 2020 NSS considers Türkiye's actions or policies as a threat to Armenia's national security in three categories: a) Türkiye's regional policy in the Middle East, b) Türkiye's policy towards Armenia itself, c) Ankara's unconditional military and political support to Baku on Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Clearly, the second and third points or categories are interrelated, or figuratively speaking, they are two sides of the same coin.

Thus, both strategies consider Türkiye's foreign and military policy as a threat to Armenia's national security. However, if the 2007 NSS considers the problem in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, taking into account Türkiye's unconditional

support to Azerbaijan, then the 2020 NSS considers the problem in a broader context, viewing Ankara's policy on the Karabakh issue as a component of the problem.

Nevertheless, considering the chaos from the world order transition as a threat can have either a liberal or a realist interpretation. It is liberal in the sense that Armenia's security is considered a part of the global security system. Hence, the disintegration of the international security system is perceived as a direct threat to Armenia's national security. At the same time, this threat also has a realistic perception, in the sense that chaos and uncontrollability in international relations lead to the increase of egoistic policies of states where force or diplomacy based on force are in the foreground.

As a threat reflected in the 2020 NSS we can mention hybrid wars. According to the document, security threats in the modern world are more often manifested in the form of hybrid wars which, in addition to military components, include complex tools of economic, cyber, fake news and disinformation. It can be seen as a continuation or privatization of this threat that according to the 2020 NSS, some of the threats to Armenia's national security derive from the increasing level of information and communication technologies (ICT) entry into the lives of society and individuals. New opportunities in all areas of life and activity, yet it has also led to new security challenges. Along with the development of the ICT sector, the security of the individual, society and the state has become vulnerable and needs protection in the information and cyber domains as well.

The 2007 Strategy refers to a private episode of the mentioned threat. The incomplete state of moral and psychological and patriotic education is mentioned as an internal challenge that makes Armenia vulnerable to external challenges, weakening its resistance. Pointing out this cluster of threats can be considered a manifestation of political realism from the perspective of their realistic and adequate assessment.

The 2020 NSS gives a much greater place to democracy in the context of national security. The 2007 NSS also refers to democracy but mainly as a value or goal. Meanwhile, the 2020 NSS considers the importance of democracy as the axis or pillar of national security in three dimensions.

First, democracy is perceived as a prerequisite and guarantee for the consolidation of national potential and comprehensive development. Therefore, according to the document of 2020, the core of Armenia's security policy is the democratic system of governance which creates a solid foundation for strengthening the country's economic, political, intellectual, and therefore also military potential.

Second, democracy is seen as a basis for receiving the support of the international community on security issues, particularly in the settlement of the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) issue. Therefore, according to the document of 2020, Armenia will make consistent efforts so that the Artsakh national population to the full extent recognize the universal rights of people to manage their destiny, freely determine the state structure, the forms, and methods of economic development, as well as democratically elect a government, the 2020 NSS also emphasizes that the Republic of Armenia will continue to support the further strengthening of human rights and democratic institutions, as well as economic and environmental security in Artsakh. And most importantly, in this context, the document stresses that human rights, including political, civil, economic,

social and cultural rights, are absolute values, and promoting and supporting their full realization should be a collective goal for the international community as well.

Third, democracy is seen as a guarantee of both regional and international security, and its retreat as a threat to regional and international security. Accordingly, the retreat from democracy in the neighboring countries of Armenia and the backsliding in the field of human rights are seen as a threat in Armenia's 2020 NSS.

Thus, according to the document, Armenia views democracy and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms as vital components of peace and stability in the region and will continue to support that these values are firmly established. With that, Armenia is concerned about the decline in democracy and human rights in the region and in the world. In particular, the backsliding in the fields of democracy and human rights protection in Türkiye and Azerbaijan has a negative impact on the fulfillment of international obligations by these countries and increases the latter's unpredictability for Armenia.

Focusing attention on the role of democracy in the context of national security is fully consistent with the liberal theory of international relations. According to that school, if all the states of the world build democratic regimes, that is, if all the countries of the world are democratic, democracy will move from the domestic sphere to the sphere of international relations (Lieber 2022). In this way, the spirit of peace and cooperation will prevail in the world ensuring the security of each state.

Marxist Conceptions of the Armenian 2007 and 2020 Strategies

Marxism's organized engagement of international relations has arrived in waves to match the increasing formalization of the field. Marxist theorizations have often tailed other professionalized theories' (e.g., liberalism and realism) agendas, especially in their attempts carve up the observable, to understand the totality of international life. Consequently, Marxism's vistas for engagements with mainstream theories of international relations – such as this review of Armenia's foreign policy and National Security Strategy – nonetheless retain their own expansive set of terms for debate and criticism of received wisdom. In this regard, several basic givens from the Marxist critique of political economy find their way to analysis of international conditions.

The Marxist school and critique approach many subjects, broadly speaking, mainly by way of two different methods: historicization and the materialist dialectic. In the case of the former, historicization entails a subject's concretization and contextualization within the social relations of a given class society, those most related to the subject at hand, and the re-explication of how events reached the present. Marxist historicization is relatively limited in its scopes in that its subject, either now passed fixedly into history or into a definite phase during the (near) present, is interrogated by the definite events which culminated in the emergence of the circumstance. As this subject is definite, but changing during study, the subject's qualities are subject to a relatively closed analysis. The historical materialist dialectic meanwhile seeks to register the ongoing transformation of subjects under conflictual tension so as to assess and note qualitative transformations in kind that alter material relations and contribute to the evolutionary

transformation of historical structures (Colburn 2021). Consequently, the materialist dialectic is well adapted to environments facing complex change (Kunz 2022; Davidson 2016; Cox 1983; Cox 1993; Cox and Sinclair 1996).

Notably, a medley of theorists has produced overlapping but significantly distinct literature in international relations theory. Many have applied and connected Antonio Gramsci's terms and schema to global events to theorize the actions of singular states within world capitalism. Typically, this involves applications of the Gramscian conception of hegemony, which differs from the realist application whereby explicit, forceful domination of another sovereign's power forms the goal. Instead, cooperation and degrees of consent, rather than coercion, in a state or cluster of states and between a society's classes and between its state and civil society, is understood to execute and order the practical reality of daily class society (Aleksanyan 2020). Subordinate classes assent, find homes within, and link into larger regimes of accumulation in which ruling classes' ideological claims to rule and *modus operandi* for administration, exploitation, and self-reproduction (Cox 1993; Williams 2020). By extension, 'historic blocs' come to be formed by distinctly powerful 'dominant classes' whose peculiar constellations of property and force reproduce capital at scale while in competition with other states' capitalist administration and historical ideologies (Lenin 1974; Magdoff 2003). Therefore, states, weak, middling, and great, all share complicity with their accession to policies acquiescent to world capitalist production as its global status quo supporters (Lehti and Pennanen 2020; Sinkkonen and Vogt 2020; Gindin and Panitch 2012; Pratt 1990; Jordaan 2003).

Others, operating specifically within the Trotskyist theoretical realm and critique, have built upon older Marxist theories of capitalist imperialism and competition to arrive at original and sometimes different ends than posed by the Gramscians (Callinicos 2007; Neufeld 1995; Rosenberg 1996; Rosenberg 2005; Brenner 2006). Individual nation-states exist within both an international system and world capitalism; individual states respectively compete for market share and capital growth and illumine their work with national(ist) ideals. Consequently, states have compulsions to both competition and cooperation on market and strategic levels, as befitting their method of accumulation, their struggle to occupy high-return industries, possess the relevant (raw) materials to continue, and association with other actors invested in its survival. That is, the internal and external politics of a state are unified and driven by the same material compulsion to expand and exploit limited resources to generate surplus value (Davidson 2016; Jordaan 2003). On a per state basis, growth and competition between states and economies can also be enflamed by what is known as uneven and combined development. In practice, states with real deficits and differences compete with one another to successfully combine some of the latest developments in economic and social organizations to leapfrog to the forefront of an industry and its manifold related social forms: those which do so fastest can experience internal revolt where others experience strategic transformations (Aleksanyan 2021; Davidson 2018).

Review of Armenia's Strategies thus means to capture and concretely historicize them in context and to further observe their trajectory in mid-air. Marxist analyses frequently strive to demonstrate National Security Strategies as statements of a local ruling class's desired relationship with its surroundings and its planned means for

managing its dominance – that is, as documents which unify internal with external priorities (Shoup 2021). Thus, the 2007 and 2020 Strategies will be examined as statements deriving from the Armenian and Yerevan ruling classes under particular circumstances of (sharpening) relative inter-state capitalist competition that desire a consistent theorization and approach to their own goals and managing their relations to competing regional and global hegemonies. Further, as these documents are statements of the respectively solidified and new political economic regimes of former and current administrations, it is argued that the NSS's changes reflect evolving distinct ties to the basic accumulation regimes that produced them. Consequently, the 'civil society' movements that conquered the Armenian state, as during the Velvet Revolution, are taken to possess and represent intrinsic differences in ruling class strategies for the country's internal and external politics with those of its other post-Soviet predecessors.

In the Armenian context, bourgeoisie mainly flows from the politically connected, exclusive manner of post-Soviet neoliberal development. This reality, captured in some literature as political capitalism, locked early republican Armenia into a developmental and strategic path reflective of the post-Stalinist elites' interests (Mihályi and Szelényi 2019; Levitsky and Way 2010; Yue 2018; Mladenov 2021). Deriving from the 1990s, such interests necessitated particular inclusion of military and administrative regard for the self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh's independence or autonomy, risks of largescale aggression from Azerbaijan and Türkiye, in addition to completing wholesale internal state capture and privatization of the former Soviet commons (King 2008; Solnick 1998).

Timely as such concerns remained, the growth of a layer of transnationalizing middle classes during the next two decades injected 'democracy promotion' politics above and beyond the Republic's own self-proclaimed commitments to republicanism. Their activation and leadership during 2018, in aspirant civil society and state reformers, small business leaders, and NGO actors, found strong purchase within Yerevan for their social justice sloganeering. Such successes within the Velvet Revolution provided implicit filial links to foreign color revolutions, affinity for their foreign inspirations, and the direct substitution of Americanized 'civil society' over the former leadership (Ohanyan 2020; Pee 2015; Way 2008; Rosenberg 1994; Mirzoyan 2010, 53).

The 2007 and 2020 NSS's primary differences must be expressed by the increasing ratchets of context: external developments surrounding each National Security Strategy make the oft-similar language contained within each to be read in highly differing manners. However, this difference lay primarily in appearance for the Republic of Armenia: elsewhere, even in the most consolidated 'democratic states,' such as the United States, government reflects class power and material wealth, and has further been demonstrated to be an oligarchy that biases massively against working and poor in its own right (Gilens 2012; Ferguson 1995; Miliband 1969). The problems in economy and social sector during the governance of the former authorities still weigh mightily upon Armenia even after the coronation of the Velvet leadership. But post-Soviet neoliberalism evidently faced disruptions which would shake the Republic and the region at large, bringing diverse consequences for Armenia's own platforms, as well as those of its partners (Lane 2013).

Therefore, particular issues within the Strategies come to the fore for their consistency and for their divergences. Defense of Artsakh and Armenia's responsibility

for the entire diaspora feature prominently. Specifically, where each NSS frequently spoke to the urgency of defending Artsakh and resolving its independence or recognized sovereignty peacefully and quickly, it referred to the task as one fundamental to assuring the Republic's population and that of the world diaspora of the Republic's capacity to protect the nation at large². However, the manner in which this goal was to be attained could only stretch as far as Armenia's own practical leverage in the region – a matter referred to at length within the Strategies' discussion of military preparedness and modernization³. For Artsakh Armenians, this defense depended upon Yerevan's consistent acknowledgement of the region's appeals for sovereignty, Yerevan's ongoing advocacy for such positions against Azerbaijani and Turkish negotiators, and reliance upon the OSCE Minsk Group to function as mediators. In 2020, shifts on this question had not yet occurred, and continuity remained on the Artsakh question⁴.

Aspects of this picture would quickly change. In such a vein, the 2020 NSS's initial declaration of faith in democratic principles – a feature it shares with the 2007 NSS—are announced to proclaim the Armenian leadership's concerns about weakening commitment to democracy around the world⁵. Likewise, the 2020 NSS further states Yerevan officialdom's worry about the creeping influence of online 'misinformation' upon domestic politics. Perhaps tangentially, international actors that work with regional actors that create problems for Yerevan (such as via arms sales to Azerbaijan) provided sufficient ire and concern for Prime Minister Pashinyan's direct comment within the 2020 NSS that 'foreign (subversive) interests were a cause for concern'⁶.

The quality and number of Armenia's international relationships, too, also shifted between the two NSS's. Most notably, references to complementarism – a viable policy enacted during high globalization so to overlap Armenia's foreign relations with diverse strategic blocs for strategic gains following 'multi-alignment' principles – was entirely dropped from the document (Pogosyan 2011; Minasyan 2012; Giragosian 2020). Instead, "Peace and International Cooperation" filled the breach, and here limited to a listicle of national security partners in Russia, the CSTO, the US, NATO, EU, and OSCE. However, the Pashinyan administration's predecessors had managed such relations and had also even expanded its international portfolio via multi-alignment to actors far afield from the Caucasus and Euroamerican and Russian actors (Minasyan 2012).

War has been a factor of Caucasian history, but it is nowhere its defining or its final, climactic feature. Instead, motifs and notes concerning explicit and implicit rivals in 2007 and 2020 indicate sharp changes in the Armenian bourgeois society. The Velvet vanguard's advanced, changed position on prior, long-term political economic strategic partners, and their historic hegemonic blocs, paces far ahead of their public. With opening shots fired against the official relationships of Yerevan and Moscow capitals, the fundamental patron of Armenian military wherewithal and its longstanding strategy

² Arlis.am. 2007. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia." Accessed April 20, 2023. <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=31189>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Government of the RA. 2020. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia: A Resilient Armenia in a Changing World." Accessed April 20, 2023. <https://www.gov.am/en/National-Security-Strategy/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

of awaiting a formal peace deal for Artsakh is in question, and Armenia's regional position jeopardized.

Concurrently, the 2007 and 2020 strategies indicate the sharpening competitions of capitalist rivalry flaring in the region, producing changes and fractures in the Yerevan capitalist class's strategic capacity and regional reserve alongside its wide new gambles. With the Turkish and Azerbaijani rivalry with Armenia a constant problem for its national leadership, their prior interest in foreign dealmaking in the previously unending era of globalization has dissipated as pressing national concerns have rushed forward thanks primarily to their internal logic – not contingency. Wider strategic changes, alongside an apparently transformed, revolutionized hegemony of prior concerns, are to be understood at once as the new presiding interests of the state and region, and thereby of the new hegemony surviving in the country, reproducing, and evolving its upper leadership, as well as their decisions.

Conclusion and discussion

Thus, there are elements characteristic of political realism and liberalism in both national security strategies adopted by Armenia after 1991, but both strategies can be considered a combination of political realism and liberalism. The liberal approach in the 2020 NSS is more expanded and has a greater specific weight than in the 2007 Strategy. It has mostly two manifestations: first, Armenia's national security is viewed in the context of regional and international security, and relevant organizations, and therefore, on the one hand, inter-state security threats are considered detrimental to Armenia's security, while on the other hand, attacks on Armenia are seen more broadly as challenges to international and regional security orders. Secondly, the document assigns a significant role to democracy, considering it almost as a key for both international and Armenian national security. Therefore, in the world and, in particular, in Armenia's neighboring countries, the retreat from democracy, as well as human rights violations are seen as challenges to Armenia's security. However, the presentation of creeping autocracy favored within the 2020 Strategy belies both the lack of substantive internal changes since 2018 and the specific kind of freedom offered by liberalism. Rather than producing a highly democratic society with rigorous involvement of the mass working public, participation instead remains meted out and most favorable to those with ample pre-existing wealth, connections to industry, or connections to specific sectors of the state bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie in Armenia supposedly displaced from political power in fact never disappeared, which renders its factoring in foreign policy statements more indicative of vector preferences or than substantive qualitative changes to Armenia's surroundings. Nonetheless, the military and political processes of 2020-2023 exacerbated the existing security problems in Armenia and caused new threats. Addressing these developments requires honesty and clarity to alter course toward the desired target openly. The created situation requires a review of Armenia's security strategy and an upgrade with new approaches and tools.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.011>

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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SOUTH CAUCASUS IN THE PHASE OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper mainly examines the economic, political and military situation in the South Caucasus after the start of Russian-Ukrainian war. In the paper we are focused on the question of what kind of consequences does the Russian-Ukrainian war has on the countries of the South Caucasus. Relying on the analytical-forecasting approach, we also are trying to forecast what developments can be expected in this region. On this regard we especially look onto the facts from Armenia's perspective. Of course, the discussion of the situation in Georgia and Azerbaijan was also under our great attention, because we also had set a task to compare the processes that took place in the three countries of the region.

The modernity of the topic can be measured, first of all, by its global political significance: Russian-Ukrainian conflict continues to be on the top of world political processes. On the other hand, it is actual when studying political and economic processes in the post-Soviet territory. By and large, as a result, the South Caucasus is a part of the European and Middle Eastern security sphere, or at least has an important role in them. Therefore, the ongoing developments in this region are not local and may also affect the European, Middle Eastern and the processes also in other regions.

Russian-Ukrainian conflict has affected on foreign policy behavior of the Southern Caucasus countries. The region is now under the turbulence zone, so we are not aware from being faced by new challenges and security issues. Since we have highly evaluated the impact of the conflict on the countries of the region, we have also tried to make certain predictions regarding possible future development scenarios, which could be as recommendations for foreign policy decision making structures of Armenia.

Keywords: Russian-Ukrainian conflict, South Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, security systems, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, energy and diplomacy, European integration, Belt and Road Initiative.

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Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war, perhaps, continues to be one of the top problems of world politics, if not the most urgent. The so-called “special military operation” launched by Russia in Ukraine in 2022, which immediately turned into a full-scale war, leaved its political, military and economic mark on all regions of the post-Soviet space, including the South Caucasus. The Russian-Ukrainian war, with its scale, with the number of participating and interested actors, could be said to be the largest-scale militarized process in the Eurasian region after the end of the Cold War. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict deeply affects political processes in South Caucasus. From the perspective of the countries of the South Caucasus, the start of this war had a distinctive impact, both in terms of new challenges and opportunities. However, one factor was common to the all countries of the region: it is the shocking effect and the need to quickly and correctly navigate the situation. From the regional perspectives, it is still early to exactly shape the results of the war and make final consequences, but the past year and half provides an opportunity to record certain facts and draw conclusions.

The research question of the study is the following: how the Russian-Ukrainian war affected and continues to affect the South Caucasus, what are the possible scenarios in the foreign political developments of the regional countries? The main goal of the topic is to first of all present what consequences the war between Russia and Ukraine has on geopolitical and economic developments in the South Caucasus, as well as how the conflict reshapes the relations between the regional countries.

For the implementation of our research, we first of all used the event analysis and historical argumentation methods. The method of event analysis gives us the opportunity to observe the existing facts in the chain of events. The next method of our research is scenario analysis, which will provide an opportunity to understand how the war in Ukraine can affect the geopolitical and geo-economic environment of the South Caucasus, what possible scenarios of development can be awaited at the region.

The research is entirely devoted to the developments that have taken place in the last one and a half years. The research has been done almost parallel to the ongoing events, striving to first of all give the actual chronology of the events with the means of content and event analysis, and then also to make predictions about their further developments. Therefore, official announcements, reports, and speeches were mainly the sources for the study. Press releases have been used only to record the chronology of events. And some research-analytical materials helped us to study the position of Russian, Ukrainian and Western researchers on the issue. We also used the official sources of Georgia and Azerbaijan, as well as research materials published by Georgian and Azerbaijani experts, in order to present the current situation in the two countries.

Southern Caucasus during Russian-Ukrainian war: evaluation for the first and half year

Economic dimensions

In classical theories of geopolitics, when a powerful state goes to war, the effects of the conflict are usually instantly felt in neighboring regions. This leads to a paradigm shift, or at the very least, a crisis of the global order (Minassian 2022). So the conflict not only touched the region with all the sides, but also turned the regional countries as a non-active players in the conflict.

As for the economic dimensions, the countries of the region found themselves in mostly advantageous positions as a result of the newly created situation. First, under the conditions of large-scale economic sanctions against Russia, the countries of South Caucasus became a more important market for Russia. On the other hand, South Caucasus countries got an opportunity to fill the demand vacuum created in the Russian market. In the foreign trade turnover of all countries of the region with the Russian Federation, a significant increase in export volumes has been recorded. In 2022, Russia's trade with the South Caucasus increased nearly 1.5 times, from \$7.4 billion to \$11.3 billion. Trade with the states of the South Caucasus in 2022 amounted to a mere 1.3 percent of Russia's foreign-trade turnover, about \$850 billion (Souleimanov, Fedorov 2023).

The transit importance of the regional countries was also increased for Russia. Although some companies have also imposed restrictions on exporting their products to the countries of the South Caucasus or transiting through them to Russia, international experts in the economic field state that the countries of the region continue to be the main source of diversification for the Russian market^{1 2}. Of course, similar conversations are still at the level of suspicion, but it is not excluded that the countries of the South Caucasus may still come under certain Western, especially US, sanctions.

Georgia has officially banned the entry of sanctioned goods to Russia through its territory. But if we talk about the facts, Georgia's trade turnover with Russia in 2022 increased by more than 50 percent compared to the previous year. The trade turnover between Georgia and Russia in 2022 exceeded \$2.4 billion, which is 52% more than in 2021, according to the Georgian National Statistics Office³. Now Russia is in second place among Georgia's foreign trade partners, second only to Türkiye in the amount of about 300 million dollars. Taking into account the growing indicators during the current year, it is not excluded that in 2023, Russia may overcome Türkiye.

Russia also increased its economic presence in Georgia. In the first six months of 2023, 6,539 Russian companies registered in Georgia, and a total of 21,326 companies have been registered since the start of the war in Ukraine. From January to June, Georgia received 2 billion USD in income from Russia through remittances, tourism, and the export of goods which is 1.6 times more than the income received from Russia in

¹ The New York Times. "Russia is importing Western weapons, technology, bypassing sanctions." *June 09, 2023*. Accessed June 11, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/business/economy/us-russia-chips-sanctions.html>.

² POLITICO. "'Ridiculous' to rope Georgia into Western sanctions against Russia, PM says." *May 24, 2023*. Accessed May 30, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/economic-sanctions-from-georgia-would-not-affect-russias-economy-pm-says/>.

³ TASS. "Russia becomes Georgia's main trading partner in 2022 with share of over 16%." *March 24, 2023*. Accessed May 28, 2023. <https://tass.com/economy/1592843>.

January-June 2022 from the same sources. In the first half of 2023, income received from Russia accounted for 14.2% of Georgia's GDP, whereas in the first half of 2022, this figure was 11.7%⁴. Direct money transfers are also to be raised from Russia. As Asian development Bank states, money transfer inflows in the first 7 months of 2023 increased at an annual rate of 27.5% to \$2.7 billion, with nearly half of it coming from the Russian Federation. The ADB also forecasts 5% of economy growth for Georgia in 2024⁵.

In this regard, Azerbaijan recorded more modest results. In 2022, the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Russia increased by 23.9% to reach \$ 3.71 billion and stood at 7% of the overall trade turnover of Azerbaijan. This means that Russia now ranks third among top trading partners of Azerbaijan after Italy and Türkiye⁶. However, Azerbaijan is assigned a different, more important role here. After the termination of the supply of energy resources from Russia, Azerbaijan got the opportunity to become one of the largest supplier of gas and oil to the EU. Currently, the issue is in the stage of preliminary rearrangements, but Azerbaijan has already increased the volumes of energy resources supplies to Europe. It is also no secret, at least there are reasonable basics to doubt, that Russian gas is also included in the share of supplied gas⁷ (O'Byrne 2022). In fact, it turns out that Europe is ready to buy Russian gas, but not from Russia. Baku perfectly uses the situation in Ukraine to solve his political problems, including the conflict with Armenia. We are sure that the energy factor can have a decisive influence on the formation of the position of European countries in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

With a remarkable economy growth of 4.6% in 2023, Azerbaijan was also faced with high inflation. Average annual inflation doubled from 6.7% in 2021 to 13.9% in 2022 on stronger domestic demand, rising food prices attributable to disruption caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and higher prices for other imported goods. Prices rose by 19.5% for food, 8.6% for other goods, and 10.4% for services⁸.

Armenia is the absolute record holder in economic matter. Armenia's trade turnover with Russia has doubled, exceeding five billion dollars⁹. Armenia stands out, for the first time in trade with Russia, the volume of exports exceeded imports. In 2022, Armenia also recorded its highest economic growth in the last 20 years, bringing it to 12.6 percent¹⁰. It must be mentioned, that relocations of about 2,600 companies, 6000

⁴ Transparency International Georgia. Georgia's Economic Dependence on Russia Continues to Grow: January-June 2023. *September 29, 2023*. Accessed October 29, 2023. <https://www.transparency.ge/en/post/georgias-economic-dependence-russia-continues-grow-january-june-2023>.

⁵ Asian Development Bank. ADB Sees Strong Growth for Georgia in 2023. *September 2023*. Accessed November 28, 2023. <https://www.adb.org/news/adb-sees-strong-growth-georgia-2023>.

⁶ Russia Briefing. "January 2023 Russia-Azerbaijan Bilateral Trade Up 62.4% YoY." *February 16, 2021*. Accessed May 29, 2023. <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/january-2023-russia-azerbaijan-bilateral-trade-up-62-4-yoy.html/>.

⁷ European Parliament. "Parliamentary question P-003854/2022. Increased gas exports from Russia to Azerbaijan." *November 28, 2022*. Accessed June 10, 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2022-003854_EN.html.

⁸ Asian Development Bank. "Outlook of Azerbaijan." *April 2023*. Accessed November 28, 2023. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/863591/aze-ado-april-2023.pdf>.

⁹ TASS. "Trade between Armenia and Russia for the first time exceeds \$5 billion in 2022." *February 8, 2023*. Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://tass.com/economy/1573399>.

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund. "IMF Reaches Staff-Level Agreement on First Review for Armenia's Stand-By Arrangement." *April 13, 2023*. Accessed May 27, 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/04/13/pr23118-armenia-imf-reaches-sla-on-first-review-for-armenia-stand-by-arrangement>.

individual entrepreneurs, and 113 thousand non-residents to Armenia since March 2022 have contributed substantially to this remarkable GDP growth. Data provided by the Armenian Migration Service shows that 372,086 Russian citizens arrived in Armenia between January and June of 2022. However, it should be noted that most of them later has left the territory of Armenia¹¹.

The trend continues apace. The total trade volume for January-August, 2023 surpassed 4.16 billion USD, a record level since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Exports from Armenia to Russia in this period totaled 2.3 billion USD and for the first time exceeded the import figure, which stood at 1.86 billion USD (Mghdesyan 2023).

In fact, if we try to generalize the short-term economic impact of the war on the South Caucasus, we can evaluate it in positive dynamics. Of course, it is not excluded that in the long term period it may create new problems for the regional countries as well, especially for Armenia, since the latter is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union together with the Russian Federation. Some conversations about including Armenia in some sanctions from official Washington and Brussels sometimes come. However, taking into account contemporary development in Armenia-West relationship, we don't see big perspectives for this scenario.

Armenia also became a new home for thousands of high-tech workers from Russia. Dozens of U.S. high-tech companies relocated from Russia to Armenia following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, increasing Armenia's high-tech labor force from around 20,000 to more than 30,000. However, US Department of State reports, many businesses have identified challenges with Armenia's investment climate in terms of the country's small market, limited consumer buying power, relative geographic isolation due to closed borders with Türkiye and Azerbaijan¹².

For the states of the Southern Caucasus, the new reality is a double-edged sword. Increased trade with Russia stimulates economic growth and helps solve socioeconomic issues. But it makes them more economically and politically dependent on a Russia whose international standing and internal order are deteriorating (Souleimanov and Fedorov 2023).

Political dimensions

The Russian-Ukrainian war started new transformations in the geopolitical environment of the South Caucasus. The created situation is a period of political trials for the countries of the region. The latter are facing a dilemma, because the collective West demands to express a specific position regarding the created situation. The either-or policy is more strongly felt by Georgia. If Armenia and Azerbaijan, as countries with traditionally closer political and economic ties with Russia, feel relatively little pressure from the

¹¹ EU Reporter. "How Armenia is helping Russia evade Western sanctions?" *January 27, 2023*. Accessed May 27, 2023. <https://www.eureporter.co/world/armenia/2023/01/27/how-armenia-is-helping-russia-evade-western-sanctions/>.

¹² U.S. Department of State. 2023. "Investment Climate Statements: Armenia." Accessed November 28, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-investment-climate-statements/armenia/>.

West, Georgia, probably, will not be forgiven for not joining the sanctions against Russia and not providing military support to Ukraine.

Official Tbilisi has adopted a rather interesting political course according to the conflict. The peculiarity of the latter lies in the fact, that two directions with different points of view have been formed in the country. The day the Russian-Ukrainian war started, Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced that Georgia would remain neutral to the conflict. So, when the US and European countries announced the launch of new packages of sanctions against Russia, the Georgian Prime Minister announced that they would refrain from joining them. On the other hand, President Salome Zurbashvili demands that the current government fully joins the anti-Russian struggle. In the first period of the war, even she confidently announced that Georgia would join all sanctions against Russia¹³. In this matter, she has quite a lot of support in Georgia. Although the conducted sociological polls show that the majority of the population of Georgia does not support this approach¹⁴. Zurbashvili also blames the ruling party for the failure of Georgia's European integration policy. As is believed, for more than one year Georgia was not granted EU membership candidate status for its position on the Ukrainian issue.

Georgia's ruling party, Georgian Dream, for one and half year tried to seek a neutral political behavior. Prime Minister Garibashvili has repeatedly stated that Georgia keeps the sanctions applied by third countries against Russia, it provides humanitarian aid to Ukraine, but does not join the sanctions against Russia. As Garibashvili noted at the economic forum in Qatar, joining to the sanctions would destroy Georgia's economy, it would damage the interests of the country and it would damage the interests of Georgia's people¹⁵.

Georgia is currently sheltering around 25,000 Ukrainian war refugees. Georgia was also one of the 38 countries that applied to the International Criminal Court to investigate Russia's war crimes in Ukraine, resulting in the issuing of an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin¹⁶. On February 1, 2023 the Parliament of Georgia adopted a resolution on possible military escalation in Ukraine. It states that Georgia recognizes the territorial integrity of Ukraine and condemns any encroachment on it¹⁷. However, there is no mention of Russian aggression in the text of the resolution, although the Georgian opposition demanded to include this position in the document. In fact, the ruling Georgian Dream party managed to pass a resolution with a rather restrained content and largely non-committal towards Ukraine. We believe, that Georgia's balanced policy in the Ukrainian issue is justified. The challenges that arose in Russian-Georgian relations after 2008 were instructive for Tbilisi, and now the latter evaluates the situation more

¹³ Agenda. "President Zurbashvili: Georgia participates in all int'l financial sanctions and resolutions to support Ukraine." *April 1, 2022*. Accessed May 29, 2023. <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/1036>.

¹⁴ Civil Georgia. "President Zurbashvili Talks EU, Russian Occupation, Ukraine." *November 21, 2023*. Accessed June 9, 2023. <https://civil.ge/archives/515613>.

¹⁵ Agenda. "Georgian PM: Gov't imposing sanctions on Russia would "destroy our economy"." *May 24, 2023*. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/2026>.

¹⁶ Politico. "Georgia hedges its bets on the EU—and Russia." *June 6, 2023*. Accessed June 11, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/georgia-bet-european-union-and-russia-independence-day/>.

¹⁷ Agenda. "Parliament adopts ruling party-initiated resolution in support of Ukraine." *February 1, 2023*. Accessed June 10, 2023. <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/228>.

rationally, putting the strategic approach of not putting its own economic interest at risk in the foreground.

Some Georgian experts think, that this policy does not have future, Georgia is playing with fire and it is very dangerous according European integration perspectives (Avdaliani 2022a, 2022b; Avdaliani 2023a, 2023b). On 8th of November, 2023, European Commission recommended to grant EU candidate's status to Georgia¹⁸. The European Council will take the decision on granting the status in December 2023. But it must be mentioned, that Georgia's future in EU integration processes is not as clear, as it can be shown. The European Commission recommended the European Council to grant Georgia the bloc's candidacy with nine conditions, with new conditions referring the fight against disinformation and foreign information manipulation about the EU and its values¹⁹. EU member states are yet to sign off on the recommendation: that decision will come in December, but the mood is already celebratory in Georgia.

For all the celebrations, Georgia still remains behind Ukraine and Moldova in the European waiting room. In its recommendation, the European Commission noted that Georgia is at odds with the European Union's common policy of economic isolation of Russia over Ukraine. The European Commission specifically said that Georgia needs to align itself with the trajectory of the EU's external relations to make progress toward membership²⁰.

EU ambassador to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski, gave some press remarks about the Publication of the EU Enlargement Report. Congratulating the Georgian people on this remarkable event, he also has mentioned - "...the recommendation to grant Georgia the candidate status is linked to fulfilling important steps. Addressing these steps will be crucial to move to the next stage. This is the nature of the enlargement process: constant reform so that the country can be ready to take its place as a full member of the European Union. While the report acknowledges the progress made by Georgia, it also underlines that important work remains to be done in essential reform areas such as the rule of law, the freedom of the media, and holding free and fair elections..."²¹.

To conclude, it must be mentioned, that candidate status is not a guarantee that a country will become an EU member state. Still, the announcement will likely calm political tensions in Georgia, which has been arisen after February 2022. Georgian Dream will, however, benefit from the fact that real progress on Georgia's path to the EU was achieved and it will use this argumentation as a tool for propaganda during 2024's election year.

¹⁸ Civil Georgia. "European Commission Recommends EU Candidacy for Georgia." November 08, 2023. Accessed November 24, 2023. <https://civil.ge/archives/568259>.

¹⁹ Front News Georgia. "EU Commission recommends Georgia's candidacy with nine conditions." November 08, 2023. Accessed November 24, 2023. <https://frontnews.ge/en/news/details/49022>.

²⁰ European Commission. "Georgia 2023 Report." *November 08, 2023*. Accessed November 24, 2023. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_697%20Georgia%20report.pdf.

²¹ Delegation of the EU to Georgia. "Press Remarks by the EU Ambassador to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski on the Publication of the EU Enlargement Report." *November 08, 2023*. Accessed November 24, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/press-remarks-eu-ambassador-georgia-pawel-herczynski-publication-eu-enlargement-report_en?s=221.

From the political perspectives, official Baku is one of the main beneficiaries from the results of this war. Russia's temporary withdrawal or weakened positions from the South Caucasus strengthened Baku's positions in the region and made him more unbending in decision making processes. The latter is trying to take advantage of the created situation and quickly implement its geopolitical plans. In this matter it enjoys the full support of Türkiye. We are sure, that the re-elected Erdogan will remain faithful to the policy of support towards Azerbaijan. Although today we see some external political pressure on Azerbaijan about his aggressive policy towards Armenia, it sometimes doesn't work.

On the top of Azerbaijan's foreign policy agenda we will find so-called "Zangezur corridor" issue. The corridor is considered to be an international level transportation way which will connect Azerbaijan and Türkiye by the territory of Armenia at regional level and China-Central Asia with Europe at a larger level. In general, from the point of political perspectives, this is a part of Türkiye-Azerbaijani pan-Turkish ambitious program, which aims to support land connection between Turkish-speaking countries. Azerbaijan's advantageous position in this matter is primarily determined by the fact, that the latter has received a new tool set to influence on European countries policy making processes: that is, to diversify the energy gaps created in Europe, which arose after the cessation of energy supplies from Russia.

'Zangezur corridor' got new geostrategic meaning for Azerbaijan after Russian-Ukrainian war. After some difficulties according implementing the northern belt in China's Belt and Road Initiative, connected with the war in Ukraine, the central route, which passes through the Southern Caucasus as well, gets higher importance. Over the past year, Azerbaijan has not only intensified cooperation with China in this direction, but also increased his relations with China in other spheres in economy and politics.

Armenia's interests coincide with Iran's in the matter. For the latter, the border with Armenia is of vital importance, so Tehran reacts rather harshly to the plans of Baku and Ankara to create a sovereign corridor through the territory of Armenia. Of course, the Republic of Armenia is not against becoming a part of the new international transport highway, but the peculiarity of the problem here is that Baku offers to take part in the management of the highway passing through the territory of Armenia. Official Tehran has repeatedly warned Azerbaijan that it is still unacceptable for him to form the corridor in this format. One of the direct warning came in October 2022, when Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned against any border changes in the region during his meeting with President Aliyev (Toroyan 2023). In addition to the verbal warnings, the Islamic Republic also opened a consulate general in the city of Kapan - the center of the Syunik region of Armenia. This can be interpreted as a direct indication of Iran's plan to expand relations with Armenia and warn Azerbaijan once again against border changes.

On the other hand, after the war in Ukraine, Azerbaijan's relations with Russia intensified. This is primarily due to the fact that both sides have increased their importance for each other. Azerbaijan can become a lifeline for Russia in its energy policy, and Azerbaijan needs to relax Moscow's vigilance as much as possible and complete its political plans in the region. On February 2022, before the war, Russia signed an agreement on cooperation in strategic fields with Azerbaijan (Heydar and Kucera). According to it, Azerbaijan is committed to supply gas to Europe with the

participation of Russia. In fact, with this agreement, Russia has somewhat balanced its tools of political influence over Azerbaijan. We also do not rule out, that under the conditions of Russia's failure in Ukraine, Azerbaijan can quickly get out of Moscow's influence.

What about Azerbaijan's policy towards Russian-Ukrainian war, it continues to play on two strings. As for official level announcements, Azerbaijan has been among the most vocal supporters of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Since the start of the war, Azerbaijan, through the subsidiary of its state energy company, SOCAR Ukraine, has been providing free gas and petroleum to vehicles in Ukraine used for humanitarian missions. Azerbaijan has also regularly dispatched humanitarian aid to Kyiv. Over the course of the ongoing war, Azerbaijan has sent medicines, medical supplies, and food products to the people of Ukraine, with the total amount of humanitarian aid reaching approximately 15 million euros (Toghrlu 2023). We could also see Moscow's complaint about Azerbaijan's policy on Ukrainian issue.

As for Armenia, it keeps neutrality in the Ukrainian conflict. Official Yerevan tries to avoid direct announcements about it. The reason is obvious: in the strained military-political situation created around Armenia by Azerbaijan and Türkiye, Armenia needs allies the most. Therefore, maintaining and developing relations with Russia and the West is of strategic importance for Yerevan. However, the dialogue with official Moscow does not seem to be going very well. We saw difficulties in this regard even after the 2020 war, but the situation sharply worsened after the new political situation in Nagorno-Karabakh on September this year. Armenian authorities began to accuse Russia of not fulfilling its direct responsibilities in this matter, which led to new tension in relations between Yerevan and Moscow. The two sides are now in a diplomatic exchange of fire, blaming each other.

If we look at the situation from the security point of view, we can surely state, that Armenia is on the list of the most affected by the situation. USA and European countries are trying to fill the political and military vacuum created here as a result of the weakening of Russia, but this policy works not so effectively as we accepted. There are several reasons for it. First of all, the South Caucasus has no strategic importance for the West, so the Western countries wait too long before showing any activity here. The USA and European countries are still showing restraint in areas of vital importance for Russia, and the South Caucasus is one of them. From all this we can conclude that Russia, although has been retreated from South Caucasus a little, it remains the main political player in the region. On the other hand, Türkiye has become stronger in the region, and the latter has its own tools to put pressure on Europe and on the USA. In fact, no matter how much Armenia tries to conduct a balancing policy, the official Yerevan has to first sit at the table with the traditional actors of the region.

As for official Yerevan's policy towards Ukrainian war, Armenia stays neutral. As Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told CNN Prima news during an interview on June 2023- "Armenia is not Russia's ally in the war with Ukraine. And our feeling from that war, from that conflict, is anxiety because it directly affects all our

relationships”²². On early September 2023, Armenia sends its first humanitarian aid to Ukraine since the start of the war. Both official Moscow and Russia’s political and expert field reacted rather painfully to this. Even Armenia’s ambassador to Russia Vagarshak Harutyunyan was urgently summoned to the Foreign Ministry of Russia to give some explanations on this regard²³.

Leaving aside the fact whether the humanitarian aid sent by Armenia to Ukraine was justified, especially taking into account the fact that the latter expressed its open political support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, two important issues should be emphasized here. First of all, this was a humanitarian aid that was not directed against Russia. Of course, since the issue concerns a state at war with your ally country, official Yerevan should have been much more cautious in the matter of Ukraine and maybe should not have sent aid with high level escort. On the other hand, official Moscow’s reaction to Armenia can’t be acceptable, if we take into account the fact, that it shows a much more tolerant behavior towards Azerbaijan, which’s support to Ukraine is much more.

Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict during the Ukrainian war

Russian-Ukrainian war and the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020 have a huge impact on security, connectivity and the conflict zones in the South Caucasus. With the comprehensive Western sanctions against Russia, Europe’s interest in the Middle corridor towards Asia through the South Caucasus is growing (Meister 2023a, 2023b).

Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict consists of two main components. The first is the status of Nagorno-Karabakh region. After the second Karabakh war in 2020, Russian peacekeeping troops has been settled around Karabakh-Azerbaijani border and in Nagorno-Karabakh region. The period of operation of peacekeeping forces is limited to 5 years, with the possibility of extension in the future. After the start of the Ukrainian war, Azerbaijan intensified its pressure in this direction, trying to get full guarantees from the official Yerevan that the latter has no claims according the region. The situation created in Ukraine has given official Baku hopes that sooner or later Russia will have to withdraw its troops from Nagorno-Karabakh. This scenario was not from the genre of fantasy, because Russia could go to concessions in Nagorno-Karabakh issue for the support of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in Ukraine. However, on the other hand, it should be remembered that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the only lever with which Moscow can exert pressure on Baku, so it will do everything to keep this tool under his control. In general, final solution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will mean the start of Russia’s ending influence in South Caucasus. On one hand, Russia will weaken its physical presence in the region, and on the other hand, it will lose its authority in Armenia. With Russian troops stuck in Ukraine, Moscow’s military and political weaknesses have

²² The Prime Minister of Armenia. “Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s interview with CNN Prima News.” *June 1, 2023*. Accessed November 25, 2023. <https://www.primeminister.am/en/interviews-and-press-conferences/item/2023/06/01/Nikol-Pashinyan-interview-CNN-primanews/>.

²³ Mediamax. “Russian MFA hands over a note of protest to Armenia’s ambassador.” *September 8, 2023*. Accessed November 25, 2023. <https://mediamax.am/en/news/foreignpolicy/52427/>.

become increasingly obvious. As a result, Azerbaijan has been taking steps toward resolving the conflict in its favor (Souleimanov and Fedorov 2023; Neset et al. 2023).

From December 2022, Azerbaijan subjected Nagorno Karabakh to a physical blockade. In September 2023, after a nine-month-long blockade Azerbaijan started military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The military operation was accompanied by a humanitarian crisis, as a result of which the entire Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh, facing the threat of physical annihilation, left the region. At the moment, Azerbaijan fully controls Nagorno-Karabakh. It is still not clear what awaits the people who left the region, but one question is clear: at this moment Azerbaijan does not intend to discuss the issue of the rights of the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabakh with official Yerevan.

At the end of September, the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh were forced to negotiate with Azerbaijan in order to save the population of the region from physical annihilation. As a result of the negotiations, Stepanakert was forced to give in to Azerbaijan's pressure, that is, to announce the dissolution of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. Nagorno-Karabakh President Samvel Shahramanyan's decree called for all institutions and organizations of the Republic of Artsakh to dissolve from January 1, 2024²⁴.

The next component in Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is about the normalization of bilateral relations. This task, besides the humanitarian and civil sides, also has two main political components: the issue of border demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the opening of the corridor from Azerbaijan to Türkiye through the territory of Armenia. Azerbaijan seeks to implement the border demarcation process based on data that is beneficial to him only, without real argumentation. So, using the favorable situation, Azerbaijan tries to get territorial concessions from Armenia. It also wants to control the corridor to Türkiye, which is going to pass the territory of Armenia (Galitsky 2022).

We are sure, that official Baku's hasty policy regarding both the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjustment of the borders with Armenia and the opening of the corridor through its territory to Türkiye, is due to the fact that the latter is hurrying to settle them until the end of the Ukrainian war. Azerbaijan is trying to implement a pressure strategy against Armenia. Azerbaijan has carried out military operations on the territory of Armenia or in the border zones several times after the war, trying to extract unilateral concessions from Armenia. After the end of the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the largest military operation carried out by Azerbaijan against Armenia was in September 2022. As a result of military operations, the Armenian side had more than 200 victims and almost 300 wounded soldiers. According to Baku, the Azerbaijani side had about 80 victims²⁵. It was possible to stop the military operations through the active mediation of all interested parties, including Russia, European countries, and the United States. Later,

²⁴ CNN. "Nagorno-Karabakh will cease to exist from next year. How did this happen?" *September 28, 2023*. Accessed November 25, 2023. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/28/europe/nagorno-karabakh-officially-dissolve-intl/index.html>.

²⁵ Reuters. More than 200 killed in Armenia-Azerbaijan border clashes – officials. September 16, 2022. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/armenia-says-135-soldiers-killed-clashes-with-azerbaijan-this-week-2022-09-16/>.

the European Union announced its intention to deploy a civilian observation mission on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. At the late autumn of 2022 this intention was realized (Krivosheev 2023). However, it should be noted that this mission does not have any real leverage in terms of curbing the aggression of the Azerbaijani side. The EU intends to increase the number of its monitoring mission in the near future. Also, the issue of expanding the functions of the mission and the tools used is being discussed.

We are sure, that the rhetoric used by official Baku on the issue does not give optimistic grounds to think that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict can be settled in a short term period. Official Yerevan sometimes makes statements containing some optimism, but they are immediately aborted by impulses coming from Baku. We are also sure that the settlement of the conflict can become a reality only at the price of compromises. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan is still guided by a strategy that demands unilateral concessions from the Armenian side. A lot depends on Türkiye's position regarding the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict: Azerbaijan cannot succeed in its large-scale initiatives without the latter's support.

Conclusion and discussion

Russian-Ukrainian war is to start new strategic order reschedule in the South Caucasus. The first steps are done, but it is never clear how Russia will act in a moment. So, the situation is unclear and full of treats and unstableness.

- The continuation of war in Ukraine may bring some global political and economic changes in the South Caucasus. It can weaken Russia's influence in the region. On the other hand, as a result of weakening in Eastern Europe, Russia can seek to strengthen its presence in this region. Thus, Russia will try to strengthen its influence in the South Caucasus as compensation for weakening in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the West will try to take advantage of the opportunity and increase the mechanisms of his direct influence in the region.
- Western countries, especially the USA, are trying to take advantage of the favorable geopolitical situation and strengthen their presence in the South Caucasus. However, it should be remembered, that the region has no strategic importance for the US, so the latter will show caution here, taking into account Russia's traditional influence.
- A fairly favorable international economic situation has been created for the countries of the South Caucasus. All the three countries in the region benefit from it. Armenia's and Georgia's benefits are mainly connected with direct financial inflows. As we have already stated above, Russian-Ukrainian war has greatly affected the development of Armenia's and Georgia's economy. Azerbaijan can take advantage in longer term perspectives, taking into account its involvement in global-shape energetic projects.
- As for military-political perspectives, the region will continue to be in turbulence zone, especially taking into account the new situation in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the start of the 2023 war between Israel and Palestine, the situation in the South Caucasus has calmed down a bit. However, we believe it could flare

up again at any minute. At this moment, it seems that the West is making great efforts to prevent the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan from entering a new phase of escalation.

- Armenia-Russia relations also faced new challenges during the Ukrainian conflict. Official Yerevan is moving further and further away from Moscow over time. Both the policy conducted by Russia regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, as well as the continuously developing relations of Armenia with the West, play a big role in this matter. Although official Moscow shows that it will not use hard power on Yerevan due to its foreign policy, recently Russia's pressure on Armenia is increasing. They are still mainly expressed in the form of economic sanctions and political statements.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.032>

Conflict of interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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EURONEWS AS A TOOL FOR THE FORMATION OF EUROPE'S IMAGE

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Abstract

The ongoing political and economic transformations affect the image of Europe: the economic crisis, Brexit, the migration crisis, the Russian-Ukrainian war and other events are a challenge to the image of Europe. Euronews, being Europe's leading TV channel, is used as a tool to shape Europe's image by demonstrating European democracy, unity, identity and values.

This article presents interpretations of the term 'regional image', analyzes the regional image of Europe, the role of the media and, in particular, of Euronews in shaping the regional image, and also presents the results of a content analysis of the channel's live broadcasts and publications of the official Euronews website. The study clearly demonstrates how Euronews uses the techniques of repetition, exclusion, framing, agenda setting, and the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war to shape the image of Europe in line with the main goals of the EU.

This article proposes the features of creating content for the regional image of Europe for the news television broadcast Euronews, scientifically argued from the perspective of communication theory, and examines the features of preparing journalistic material for broadcast.

Keywords: Euronews, regional image, European values, convergent media text, repetition, exclusion, framing, agenda setting, Russian-Ukrainian war.

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Introduction

Geopolitical changes have a significant impact on the image of various regions, including European territory. The formation of the regional image is influenced not only by the local public but also by the publicity in different regions.

The mass media remains the primary means of regional communication, despite undergoing significant technological changes over time. It becomes convergent and continues to play a unique and crucial role in the dissemination and transfer of information.

The regional image of a place is formed by various factors such as traditions, stereotypes, and mass media which shape the public perception of that region. Each region has its own unique set of characteristics. Euronews reports on Europe's and World news from a European perspective, using various techniques such as repetition, agenda-setting, and framing.

This article aims to analyze Euronews news releases, to study how the news blocks shape the regional image of Europe, addressing the information products centered on political issues. Fulfillment of these tasks will allow us to more clearly understand the processes of formation of the regional image of Europe by Euronews and the development of political journalism.

The concept of regional image

The term 'region' can be interpreted in various ways, encompassing multiple understandings and perspectives. It may refer to geographic space, economic interaction, institutional competence, or by other social and cultural characteristics (Van Langenhove 2013). According to American political scientist J. Nye, region is a limited number of states that are geographically connected and interdependent (Nye 1968). From a sociological perspective, the region is a complex interplay of political, economic, ecological, cultural, and mentality-related factors, which allow regions to be interpreted according to various concepts, and considered as a set of air-geographical area and transnational political economy (Radulović et al. 2015, 72-73). In the process of regional integration, the main criterion for membership is the geographical factor, but integration is also related to the following criteria: number of countries in the region, religion, language, culture, and functional criteria (for instance, the activities of the Council of Europe focus on human rights and the rule of law) (Behr and Jokela 2011, 7).

Pankrukhin suggests that the image of the region can be defined as a collection of emotional and rational concepts that arise from comparing various signs, human experiences, and stereotypes within a region. These factors heavily influence the formation of the image of that region (Stroev et al. 2020; Ergunova 2017). Additionally, Vazhenina offers a similar approach: "The image of the region is a set of people's beliefs, the formation of which is determined by the climatic, historical, socio-economic, political, and moral characteristics of the particular region" (Vazhenina 2006, 49-57).

According to Kotler, the regional image encompasses the beliefs, ideas, and impressions people have about the region (Kotler 2014). Therefore, same region can

have several different images, resulting in multiple perceptions and behaviors addressing the same image (Zimmerbauer 2011). This approach emphasizes the subjectivity of the perception of regional image (Kotler and Caslione 2009).

Summarizing these definitions, the regional image can be characterized as a set of individual and collective ideas. Individual perception depends on the experience of a certain individual in a given region (for example, living, visiting tourist places, doing business, etc.). Collective perception is a public opinion about the region, which can be formed, for instance, through the media.

Social and non-social components of the regional image have to be differentiated. The non-social components include geographic location, climate, sightseeing, and all regional characteristics that exist independently of the society that resides there. The social characteristics of the region include cultural and socio-economic characteristics. Cultural traits encompass the advancement of science and education, architecture, history, cultural attractions, sports, and socio-cultural events, as well as spirituality, customs and traditions. The socio-economic factors include the infrastructure (transportation, consumption, etc.), the quality of life (life support, environmental conditions, etc.) and the work of the state institutions (including criminal, legal, and other activities) (Ergunova 2017, 19-23).

The activity of political leaders plays a significant role in shaping the regional image. The image of politicians greatly affects the image of the region or the country, and mass media is one of the main means of their image making. The image of a politician is, foremost, based on his/her real qualities, but some qualities can be emphasized in appropriate situations, and others, on the contrary, can be relegated to second place (Dubova 2016).

Thus, the regional image is a set of ideas with a complex structure, which is formed on the basis of political, economic, social, geographical and other characteristics. All of them complement each other and have a great influence on each of them, as the processes carried out in the region are largely related to the population and their activities.

The image of Europe

Democracy has continuously expanded its influence in Europe since the time of the Roman Empire, becoming the most important of European forms of government. During the Renaissance, Europe became prominent for the creation of printing (1445), more attention was devoted to education, art, architecture, and the development of science (ESPON/EU. 2012, 20-24). The Industrial Revolution initiated economic development in the European region, which greatly affected the regional image of Europe. European technological and scientific successes spread beyond Europe and initiated the formation of a new regional image. In the 20th century the First World War and the Second World War were the challenge for the whole world, including Europe, and after this period Europe entered a new phase of development as a region.

Europe as a geographical region includes 45 states, but not all states are members of European institutions and organizations, which is mainly due to political and economic factors. As of April 2023, the EU consists of 27 European states, and there are 8

candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine. These states still do not meet the EU membership criteria¹. The criteria defined by the EU for the regional image of Europe are as follows: 1) competitiveness and stability, 2) territorial and social cohesion, 3) a global political actor, 4) “open territory” in economic activity, 5) an attractive region for students and workers with different origins, 6) implementation of integrated activities within the region, 7) cooperation with states of other regions².

The establishment of a united Europe is based on common values and goals that are acceptable to all member states. The values of the EU are: human dignity, free movement, democracy, equality, rule of law, protection of human rights. The EU stands as a model of welfare state with a humanistic vision (Minesashvili 2022; Starke 2021a, 2021b). The activities of the EU focus on 5 main objectives: 1) a competitive and smarter Europe, 2) a green Europe: the transition from a low-carbon to a zero-carbon economy, 3) a united Europe promoting mobility, 4) a social Europe, 5) a Europe closer to citizens contributing to sustainable and integrated development of different types of areas.

Convergent media as a tool for shaping the regional image

In the professional literature of the 20th century, three main types of mass media were distinguished: 1) printed media: newspapers, magazines, books, 2) broadcast audiovisual media: radio and television, and 3) outdoor or transit media: billboards, posters, banners. In the 21st century digital media has merged various forms of media influence, transforming into a unified and convergent media text, which includes written text, spoken word (direct and background), video and music (Farzindar and Inkpen 2018). Social media, video platforms, websites, mobile applications and podcasts differ in the characteristics of information dissemination: the secondary nature of the written text, the speed of transmission of information, diversity of interpretations, mass intertextuality, the parallel use of different symbolic systems, dependence on technical means, multifunctionality and specific feedback methods (Farzindar and Inkpen 2018b; Rahaman 2021).

Information conveyed by the mass media is presented with the expression of certain points of view. The same event may be conveyed emphasizing different aspects. Several theories of mass media interpret the characteristics of information transmission, reception and dissemination.

Agenda-setting theory claims that the mass media deliberately increase the importance of an issue, making it a public agenda issue. According to McCombs and Shaw, “The press is not very effective at telling its readers what to think, but it is effective at telling what to think about” (McCombs and Shaw 1993). According to the Cultivation theory, the content of the broadcast television is a unique text, with the help of which the

¹ Source: An official website of the European Union. Accessed February 10, 2023. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en; SchengenVisaInfo.com. 2023. The European Union and Countries in the EU. Accessed February 10, 2023. <https://www.schengenvisa.info.com/countries-in-europe/eu-countries/>.

² *ibid*

initially formed and planned information is transferred to the consumer to form appropriate reactions, emotions, thoughts, and behavioural manifestations (Sandhu and Sharma ²⁰²¹).

The concept of Framing was initially defined by G. Bateson in 1972. He described psychological frames as “the spatial and temporal boundaries of interactive messages” (Bateson 1972).

R. M. Entman distinguishes 5 types of framing: 1) conflict: the priority is given to the conflict between the parties, not to the actual decision-making, 2) personalization: the event is presented in the ‘face’ of a person, distracting from the main event, 3) influence: represents status, situation, 4) morality: alternative policies are presented and characterized as morally questionable, 5) responsibility, which is assigned to one party (Entman 1991).

An Overview of Euronews: Its Origins and Mission

The world’s first 24-hour news channel CNN was established on June 1, 1980, in Atlanta, USA. CNN (Cable News Network) is an international media, which currently has many branches and broadcasts from different countries of the world. Starting as a cable television station, the channel is now considered one of the most prominent American media outlets (Robinson 1999; Herzog and Scerbinina 2021).

Following the launch of the first news channel, the objective was to attain a globalized news agenda while concurrently upholding the significance of news for regional and national audiences. Consequently, international networks devised multilingual and multicultural broadcasting programs tailored for diverse news channels.

Following the footprints of American CNN, the British Sky News television channel began operations in 1989, becoming the first 24-hour news channel in Europe. In the 1990s, several news agencies, including Euronews, BBC World News, DW, Al Jazeera, and later RT and France 24, also emerged as noteworthy contenders in the industry (Kaye and Johnson 2021; Boyd-Barrett 2017; Oleinik 2023).

The idea to establish a European media outlet originated from a resolution by the European Parliament in 1980, which suggested the creation of a European radio and television channel to provide comprehensive content to the public, including political, educational, cultural information, entertainment and advertising programs (Theiler 2005).

In Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, there were three attempts to establish a multilingual European TV channel: Eurikon (1982), Europa TV (1985), and Euronews (1993). These endeavours were unsuccessful primarily due to financial limitations and conceptual difficulties. In 1988, the European Commission devised a forward-thinking plan to establish a brand-new European TV channel. The objective was to bring together pan-European broadcasters through joint financing. This channel would be operated by a European organization and offer programming in multiple languages. Its primary focus would be on engaging a multinational audience, spanning across the European region, and featuring content that promotes European values (Council of Europe 2016).

Euronews TV channel was established in January 1993 by broadcasters from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, France, Belgium, Finland, Monaco, Cyprus and Egypt (Theiler 2003; Theiler 2004). Euronews offers broadcasts in 17 different languages. The Arabic, Persian, and Turkish versions are available on the digital platform only³. By offering broadcasts in a diverse range of languages, the channel can appeal to a vast audience, resulting in a viewership of 3.5 billion people⁴.

The charter of the channel outlines the “Complete Summary of Editorial Responsibilities,” which highlights the core values upheld by Euronews. These values include impartiality and neutrality, objectivity, balance and fairness, accuracy and clarity, a European perspective, and a commitment to providing comprehensive viewpoints⁵.

Research methodology

To understand the Euronews strategies of shaping the image of Europe, research was conducted using a content analysis method to analyse the audio-visual content of the Euronews TV channel and the hypertext content on the Euronews website. The aim was to gain insights into the tools and techniques utilized by Euronews in constructing the image of Europe. Additionally, an analysis of news, releases, programs, and advertisements was conducted. The researchers studied the Euronews advertisements, programs, Europe-related words in the news, expressions describing Europe, and other tools used by the TV channel, including languages, music, pictures, and images, as the units of analysis. Three different periods were included for content analysis: February 25-27, 2022; August 25-27, 2022; and February 25-27, 2023. All the programs aired on Euronews during these consecutive three-day periods, were analysed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the TV channel’s agenda, considering the evolving events and their coverage by Euronews.

The research examined the English-language live broadcast of the Euronews TV channel, as it garners the largest viewership. This choice was based on the substantial number of subscribers, totalling 2.26 million, on the Euronews English YouTube channel⁶. In addition to analysing the live broadcast, the study also encompassed analysis of the official Euronews website for the same periods⁷. The analysis covered a total of 216 hours of broadcasted content.

³ Euronews Press Office. 2022. Press Kit Brochure. Accessed February 10, 2023.

<https://staticcycl.euronews.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Brochure-Press-kit-July-2022.pdf>.

⁴ Euronews Press Office. 2016. Media Kit 2016. Accessed February 10, 2023.

https://static.euronews.com/media/download/press-conference/media-kit/media-kit-2016-03_EN.pdf.

⁵ Euronews. 2022. Euronews Transparency Report 2022. Accessed April 20, 2023.

<https://static.euronews.com/website/pdf/euronews-transparency-report-2022.pdf>.

⁶ Source: Euronews YouTube channel in English. Accessed April 20, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/@euronews>.

⁷ Source: The official website of Euronews. Accessed April 20, 2023. <https://www.euronews.com/>.

The structure of Euronews

Euronews follows a structured schedule for its 24-hour broadcast, featuring three agendas throughout the day. These agendas are 'Wake up Europe' from 06:00 to 10:00, 'Euronews Now' from 10:00 to 18:00, and 'The European Debrief' from 18:00 to 06:00.

The agenda of 'Wake up Europe' covers the European and international news of the day that is of the greatest importance for the TV channel. In the 'Euronews Now' agenda, while the majority of the news focuses on events within the European region, coverage of events taking place in other regions is also included. The "European Debrief" agenda is specifically designed to provide a summary of both European and international news from the day. Euronews presents 4 main categories of programs: travel (Euronews Travel), technology-economy (Euronews Next), culture (Euronews Culture), environmental protection (Euronews Green). In the period between news releases, advertisements about the mission and activities of Euronews, thematic advertisements of Euronews, and cooperation advertisements are presented.

In the 'No Comment' rubric, episodes featuring events from various countries are showcased without any accompanying commentary. The weather forecast is presented within the sections labelled 'World News Today' and 'Europe News Today'.

News releases are aired in two formats: a concise presentation under the 'Headlines' section and a more detailed commentary called 'Bulletin News'. These segments are repeated three or four times per hour. If the fourth repetition is not available, only the news topics listed under the subheading 'Bulletin News Headlines' are accompanied by commentary. The presentation of the news does not exceed 11 minutes, typically covering about 5-6 news items per edition.

Euronews implements the techniques of news repetition, framing, and rejection to achieve effective messaging. By repeating the news, they can capture the attention of even inattentive and indifferent audiences. Additionally, by selectively covering events in a limited number of countries, they can shape the narrative and exclude news that is considered unwanted. This approach ensures that the airwaves are filled with targeted content while maintaining control over the messaging that is being delivered.

The content of Euronews

Euronews predominantly focuses its coverage on events occurring within European countries. News concerning states from other regions is featured by Euronews if the event holds global significance, has a direct connection to Europe (including any European country, event, or international relations), or offers an opportunity to showcase Europe's stance on the given matter.

The weather forecast on Euronews is presented in English, Italian, French, German, and Spanish, accompanied by visuals showing iconic landmarks in the capital cities of the countries. These visuals, such as the Eiffel Tower in France or the Acropolis in Greece, aim to depict European culture, historical heritage, architectural marvels, and tourist attractions.

Euronews demonstrates European integration and diversity by the team of multinational journalists and presenters. The programs are interpreted by individuals who represent diverse genders, ages, races, and nationalities, highlighting the inclusive nature of the channel and promoting a broader perspective on European news.

Euronews focuses on four key thematic areas that serve as the main directions of the TV channel in presenting Europe and shaping its image. These areas are culture (Euronews Culture), tourism (Euronews Travel), technology and economy (Euronews Next), and environmental protection (Euronews Green). They align with the activities and main goals of the EU. These thematic areas are consistently incorporated into both advertisements and programs, ensuring a comprehensive representation of Europe and its diverse facets.

The 'Euronews Next' section portrays Europe as a highly developed and innovative region with advanced technology. It highlights Europe as an appealing destination for employment and financial opportunities due to its high employability rates, quality of life, and mobility options. Public health holds immense significance in Europe, with a strong focus on promoting the well-being of European society and enhancing their quality of life. The main colours of the 'Euronews Next' ad are shades of blue and yellow, which are associated with the flag of the EU.

The 'Euronews Culture' section showcases the cultural values of Europe, highlighting popular tourist attractions, rich historical heritage, diverse architectural styles, unique national cuisines, and well-established industries. The advertisement evokes an immediate sense of unity and belonging in the viewer conveyed through the tagline 'How do we connect with culture'. It unites because European culture can be seen, heard, tasted, felt, touched and experienced. The main colours for the advertisement, shades of purple, which symbolizes nobility, creativity, mystery and elegance (Machill 1998; Erni and Zhang 2020; Peiren 2023).

In the 'Euronews Travel' advertisement, Europe is presented as a developed tourist destination, and the following expressions are used to describe Europe: 'change the way you see the world', 'get inspired to discover the world'. The advert shows various European countries, cities and locations. The main colours are black and orange, which have been carefully selected (Gromyko 2022). Black symbolizes strength, meaningful and rich life experience and modernity, while orange is one of the primary attention-grabbing shades and it also evokes a feeling of happiness (Löffelholz, Rothenberger and Weaver 2023).

Within the 'Euronews Green' section, Europe is presented not only for its efforts in environmental protection but also as a region known as green Europe. The advertisement emphasizes the unity of European values by employing inclusive language such as 'our' and 'we', and portrays Europe as a cohesive entity through the phrase 'Europe follows the world.' The advertisement highlights Europe's commitment to sustainability, promoting a healthy and united society.

The Euronews TV channel displays advertisements that fall under the category of cooperative advertisements. These advertisements align with the thematic directions of Euronews, which include culture, technology, environmental protection, and tourism. In simpler terms, the advertisements shown on Euronews are related to these specific topics and aim to promote cooperation in these areas.

Euronews features recurring advertisements that focus on showcasing European values and the mission of the TV channel. Two of these advertisements specifically highlight the channel but are not accompanied by commentary. In the first advertisement, a QR code is displayed with the subtitle ‘Don’t miss your connection with Europe,’ which is translated into several European languages. The most frequently repeated translations include English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In the second advertisement, a video slide appears with the subtitle ‘Euronews 30 years,’ as a reminder of the channel’s three-decade history. This slide emphasizes the long-standing presence and experience of Euronews in the industry.

Advertisements portray Europe as a unified, democratic, powerful and forward-looking entity, while Europeans are depicted as resilient, diverse and united. Similarly, the programs on the Euronews TV channel align with four main thematic directions. In the realm of politics, there are several programs: State of the Union (10 minutes), The Cube (2 minutes), Understanding Today’s World (2 minutes), Witness (3 minutes), Uncovering Europe (3 minutes), and Europe Decoded (3 minutes). These programs offer different perspectives and insights into political matters.

Euronews focuses on migration processes in Europe through a 4-minute program called ‘Migration.’ Another program, ‘Brussels my love?’ explores culture, politics, and contemporary challenges including equality, democracy, human rights, gender equality, and feminism in a 15-minute format.

Euronews Coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian War: An Example of Agenda-Setting and Framing

During the analysed period Ukraine was mentioned most frequently in news releases on Euronews⁸. Specifically, from February 25-27, 2022, the word ‘Ukraine’ appeared in 32 news headlines, while ‘Kyiv’ appeared in 10 headlines, accounting for 60% of the total coverage (70 news items). Russia was the second most frequently mentioned country, with 14 references, while other countries such as Poland, Finland, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, and Romania appeared in the headlines only once or twice. The words ‘Poland’ and ‘Warsaw’ were featured in five news headlines.

During August 25-27, 2022, 14 news items in Euronews referred to Ukraine, featuring the words ‘Ukraine,’ ‘Donetsk,’ or ‘Kharkiv’ in the headlines. This accounted for 25.4% of the total news coverage (55 news items). The United Kingdom was the second most frequently mentioned country, with names such as ‘Great Britain,’ ‘United Kingdom,’ ‘England,’ and ‘London’ appearing in 9 news headlines. Russia followed closely as the third most mentioned country, with 8 news headlines. Additionally, there were 1 to 3 mentions of other countries or relevant cities, including France, Denmark, Finland, Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Belgium, The Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, and Greece.

⁸ Despite the war in Ukraine breaking out on February 24, 2022, the coverage of Ukraine in Euronews surpassed not only the news releases from February 25-27, 2022, but also the news releases from two other periods: August 25-27, 2022, and February 25-27, 2023.

During February 25-27, 2023, 12 news items in Euronews referred to Ukraine, featuring the words 'Ukraine,' 'Kyiv,' 'Donetsk,' and 'Bakhmut' in the headlines. This accounted for 30% of the total news coverage (40 news items). Similar to the previous period, the United Kingdom was the second most frequently mentioned country, with 9 news headlines that included names such as 'United Kingdom,' 'Northern Ireland,' 'Wales,' 'England,' and 'London.' Other news items referred to countries including Germany, Sweden, Austria, Portugal, Türkiye, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, and Italy, with 1 to 3 news items for each country.

Euronews, being a European-focused news outlet, presents events from a specific perspective, resulting in the interpretation of news through different frames. This approach can shape viewers' opinions and contribute to agenda-setting. Political leaders play a role in influencing the agenda as well. Euronews often includes quotes from politicians' speeches that express distinct viewpoints, which significantly impact the perception of Europe. These quotes emphasize the importance of preserving European values and affirm Europe's commitment to its European identity.

In the news coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which prevailed throughout the research, the following examples of agenda setting can be distinguished. For instance, the Vice-President of the European Commission, F. Timmermans, emphasized the importance of resistance, since European democracy, society and freedom will be at risk if Europe does not resist (Timmermans 2023). He further highlighted that the conflict extends beyond Ukraine, characterizing it as an ideological clash between democracy and autocracy. According to Timmermans, any attack on these values affects us all.

Timmermans' speech stresses democracy as the most important European value, from which other values also derive: equality, protection of human rights, freedom (European Commission 2022a). The Russian-Ukrainian war is used as a context to represent European interests and the TV channel's agenda.

The President of the European Council, Ch. Michel believes that it is important to impose sanctions on Russia because Europe cannot tolerate actions that threaten regional security. Michel's words demonstrate the strength and power of Europe. In his speech, he emphasizes the European values of unity, solidarity, and humanity. He states that Ukraine and its people are part of the European family and that they will receive support from Europe (European Commission 2022b).

U. von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, places strong emphasis on the fight against aggression and makes it clear that the actions taken by the EU are specifically aimed at countering the aggressor (European Commission 2023). This serves to highlight Europe's role as a peacemaker.

The prominence of European universal values is evident not only in the speeches of EU leaders but also in the remarks made by heads of different European nations. Europe remains free and peaceful because the entire continent stands united in defending any European territory.

Chancellor of Germany, O. Scholz, acknowledges that the Ukrainian people are not only defending their homeland but also fighting for the shared values of freedom and

democracy (Mader and Schoen 2023). He expresses gratitude to all those who support an independent and peaceful Europe⁹ (Euronews 2022).

L. di Maio, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, emphasizes the importance of unity and freedom in Europe, and that the Ukrainian people are fighting not only for themselves, but also defending the freedom of all of Europe (Brighi and Giusti 2023).

Euronews TV channel utilizes the Russian-Ukrainian war as a platform to demonstrate the stance of European politicians, showcasing the unity and synchronized efforts of all EU member states. By sharing quotations from politicians' speeches, the channel conveys the 'European point of view,' emphasizing the utmost significance of safeguarding European values.

Taking into consideration the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war on February 24, it is important to note that Euronews' publications are covering the events of the given period. The channel's agenda is adjusted to adapt to the international situation while staying within Euronews' thematic areas. Each event is commented upon within these areas. Although the majority of news during this period focuses on the Russian-Ukrainian war, the content continues to prioritize the presentation of Europe's image, European values, and the democratic and humanitarian identity that European people embody.

The Ukrainian war is utilized as a newsworthy event, but the objective is to present European values in the political, economic, technological, and cultural spheres. The TV channel represents the support of Europeans, primarily towards the preservation of democracy and the protection of human rights. It is not specifically aimed at Ukraine, but rather at every European state (Bartnicki, Kuźelewska and Ożóg 2023). Ukraine defends democracy, and Europe is well aware of it¹⁰. According to Euronews, Europe stands firmly against any form of aggression, as it is known for its commitment to pacifism, conflict resolution through negotiations, and the pursuit of power and independence.

Conclusion and discussion

Euronews provides global news coverage and has an international audience, yet it remains rooted in a European perspective. The channel prioritizes presenting and evaluating facts in a balanced manner while staying loyal to its European identity. Euronews strategically selects a limited number of news items to ensure they become part of the public agenda. By focusing on specific events and framing them from a European perspective, the channel aims to set an agenda that aligns with European values. By covering a wide range of events, Euronews highlights the most significant

⁹ Office of the Federal Government. 2023. "Address by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany as part of the European Parliament's series of plenary debates "This is Europe"." May 9, 2023 in Strasbourg. Accessed June 20, 2023. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/address-by-olaf-scholz-2189412>.

¹⁰ Euronews. 2022. Ukraine war. Accessed September 20, 2023. <https://www.euronews.com/tag/war-in-ukraine>.

and pressing issues for Europe, demonstrating the strength and preparedness of the continent to tackle challenges and overcome obstacles.

The format of repetitions contributes to strengthening the image of Europe. Being a 24-hour TV channel, Euronews presents Europe as a competitive, stable, integrated, united and cooperative region, a global actor, and an 'open place' for economic activity through news, programs and advertisements at any time of the day.

Euronews is an effective tool to present the five main objectives of the European Union's activities and to shape the image of Europe as a politically stable, safe and democratic, economically and technologically developed, innovative, touristic and cultural region with a rich historical past which is committed to its European identity and values.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.047>

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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DIGITAL AUTHORITARIANISM AS A MODERN THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC STABILITY: RESTRICTION OF FREEDOM OR NETWORK POLITICIZATION?

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to the identification of contemporary instances of digital authoritarianism, exploring its definitions, characteristics, methodologies, and the tools employed by authoritarian governments to manipulate the social and political conduct of their citizens and control the flow of information. It aimed to consolidate power, control and manipulate information, and suppress dissent. The article delves into the various interpretations of digital authoritarianism by analyzing its fundamental elements and evident expressions. Through a comprehensive review of scholarly literature, reports, news publications and case studies, the article aims to unravel the dynamic nature of digital authoritarianism, shedding light on how it adjusts to technological progress and confronts conventional notions of liberty within the digital era. Digital authoritarianism materializes through mass surveillance, cyber attacks, information censorship, and the targeted utilization of citizen data. A thorough exploration of digital authoritarianism can empower democratic societies to preclude potential infiltration of such manifestations, uphold democratic principles, and arrange the landscape based on these principles while ensuring unfettered access to information.

Keywords: digital, authoritarianism, dictatorship, power, mass surveillance, regime, facial recognition, control, espionage, cyberattacks, censorship.

Introduction

The primary purpose of the study is to make a comprehensive analysis of the concept of ‘digital authoritarianism’, to understand if a universal definition exists, and to explore characteristics, methodologies, and the tools utilized by authoritarian regimes to influence the societal and political behavior of their populace, as well as its impact on the democratic order. No attempts have yet been made in the Armenian academic field to study the concept of ‘digital authoritarianism’, as well as its impact on the democratic

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order. Thus this article aims to find out whether there is a single definition of digital authoritarianism, and what are the main tools that authoritarian regimes use to purposefully manage society and information flow.

Back in 2018, when the Freedom House, a human rights organization published the 'Freedom on the Net 2018' report, Adrian Shahbaz the vice president for Research and Analysis of the organization published an article that clearly emphasizes the rise of digital authoritarianism around the world. Based on the conducted research and data from previous years, Shahbaz claimed that "the internet is growing less free around the world, and democracy itself is withering under its influence" (Shahbaz 2018). At the very beginning of his article, Shahbaz emphasizes that disinformation and propaganda spread across the internet have contaminated the realm of public discourse.

The importance of digitalization for society and the political regime

Digitalization and digital transformation have recently received great attention both from representatives of states and from international organizations. Digital technologies can benefit society by facilitating access to government services, increasing employment and economic growth, which can contribute to improving the well-being of citizens. State-driven digitalization complements and compensates for traditional and formal mechanisms of interaction between citizens and government, creating additional online institutions. Moreover, digitalization has significantly changed the relationship between state and society, gradually increasing the frequency and quality of interaction between citizens and government.

The unrestrained gathering of individual information has eroded conventional concepts of personal privacy. Additionally, a group of nations is progressing towards digital authoritarianism by adopting the Chinese approach of widespread censorship and automated surveillance mechanisms. He added that for 8 years, starting in 2010, global internet freedom declined for the eighth consecutive year in 2018 (Shahbaz 2018; Richey 2018).

In 2022, despite expectations that global progress would lead to an increase in democracy and its expansion to non-democratic regions, the situation deteriorated further. Compared to 2018, the problems, challenges and threats not only remained the same but worsened even more. The COVID-19 pandemic occurred and Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, as a result of which the free press was practically eliminated in Russia, free expression of will against military actions became criminalized, deprived of liberty or thousands of dissidents and Russians opposed to the Kremlin's policy have left the country (Kravtsov 2022).

Moreover, Freedom House in its report "Freedom on the Net 2022" repeats the same phrase that Adrian Shahbaz wrote about back in 2018, just this time the number 8 was replaced by 12. Freedom House continues to claim that Global internet freedom declined for the 12th consecutive year. According to this organization, the sharpest downgrades were documented in Russia, Myanmar, Sudan and Libya and at least 53 countries, users faced legal repercussions for expressing themselves online, often leading to prison terms (Freedom House 2022, 8). According to Freedom House, in the world, over 4.5 billion

people have access to the Internet, while 76% of them live in countries where individuals were arrested or imprisoned for posting content on political, social or religious issues. Even more, 69% live in countries where authorities deployed pro-government commentators to manipulate online discussions. Moreover, 64% live in countries where political, social or religious content was blocked online and 51% live in countries where access to social media platforms was temporarily or permanently restricted.

In the last two decades, when information technologies are rapidly developing, political processes are also being transformed and modernized in parallel with their development. Several political processes that have taken place over the past two decades, including election campaigns, debates, revolutions or military actions, are actively accompanied by the active use of modern technologies. A striking example of this was the Arab Spring, political changes in Armenia in 2018, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, etc. (Aleksanyan and Aleksanyan 2022).

Information technologies are also used to spread fake news and disinformation, the regulation of which is extremely difficult in democratic and transitional countries, since there may be a serious threat to the restriction of freedom of speech, but this does not mean that the field should be in a neglected state. Being well aware of the possibilities and means of controlling society through online media, social networks and modern information technologies, authoritarian regimes seek to take them into their own hands, restricting human rights and freedoms, as well as controlling any information flow that may harm the current regime (Aleksanyan 2022; Rothacher 2021).

Contemporary digital authoritarianism is often used in the scientific literature in the variants of digital dictatorship, techno-authoritarianism, or IT-backed authoritarianism, which shows that there is no single approach to the study of digital authoritarianism (Kravtsov 2022; Ellis 2022). Over the past two decades, the development of information technologies has led to changes in political science terminology.

Digital understanding of the legitimization of regime influences

Alina Polyakova and Chris Meserole digital authoritarianism define as the use of digital information technology by authoritarian regimes to surveil, repress, and manipulate domestic and foreign populations (Polyakova and Meserole 2019). Polyakova and Meserole note that digital authoritarianism is reshaping the power balance between democracies and autocracies. In their article published in *Foreign Policy* at Brookings, the authors consider the examples of China and Russia and note that China and Russia have created unique and technology-centered strategies for governing under authoritarian regimes, which they have also shared with other nations. “Beijing’s experience using digital tools for domestic censorship and surveillance has made it the supplier of choice for illiberal regimes looking to deploy their own surveillance systems, while Moscow’s lower-cost digital disinformation tools have proven effective in repressing potential opposition at home and undermining democracies abroad”, says Polyakova and Meserole (Polyakova and Meserole 2019).

A similar definition is given by the analyst of the Lowy Institute, Deakin University researcher Lydia Khalil, according to which Digital authoritarianism is the use of

technology by authoritarian governments not only to control, but to shape, the behavior of its citizens via surveillance, repression, manipulation, censorship, and the provision of services in order to retain and expand political control (Khalil 2020).

According to DW Akademie, which is the academic center of Deutsche Welle, Digital authoritarianism is mostly described as a way for governments to assert power and control information flows through digital tools and the Internet (Albrecht and Naithani 2022).

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen, researchers from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC, define Digital authoritarianism as the use of the Internet and related digital technologies by leaders with authoritarian tendencies to decrease trust in public institutions, increase social and political control, and/or undermine civil liberties (Yayboke and Brannen 2020). According to them, Digital authoritarianism appropriates and distorts the fundamental values of open and democratic societies. Its objective isn't solely to dismantle these principles, but to redefine and mold them according to its authoritarian model.

Categorizing digital authoritarianism within a nation's political structure is challenging. Instead, it encompasses a diverse array of approaches, tools, tactics, and technological measures that governments utilize to exert control and exert significant power over their populace. These methods and resources are increasingly undermining the progress of internet governance that prioritizes human rights. Additionally, they run counter to governments' obligations to safeguard individuals' rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly (Krapiva and Zhyrmon 2023).

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program's senior fellow Steven Feldstein in his 'The Global Expansion of AI Surveillance' report, which was published in September 2019, indicates that digital repression, which authoritarian regimes use, comprises six techniques: surveillance, censorship, social manipulation and harassment, cyberattacks, internet shutdowns and targeted persecution against online users (Feldstein 2019). According to him, these six techniques are not mutually exclusive. "Intrusive spyware, for example, implanted by government security services on a user's computer, is both a form of surveillance as well as a cyberattack. But each technique offers a specific set of objectives and draws from a unique set of tools in order to fulfill its function", says Feldstein.

Feldstein is among the researchers who are alleging that digital authoritarianism is being propagated not only by authoritarian governments like Russia and China, but also by several democratic nations such as the USA, Israel, United Kingdom, and France. This involves the creation of tools and software that significantly undermine human rights, democratic values, and political freedoms. Democratic countries also supply advanced capabilities to repressive regimes — from location-tracking spyware and hi-resolution video surveillance, to hacking software, and censorship filtering applications. Analysts who overstate China's role run the risk of oversimplifying a complex environment and ignoring other culpable actors who are supplying powerful capabilities to bad governments, writes Feldstein (Feldstein 2019, 8).

Information hegemony and digital sovereignty

Hybrid mechanisms for introducing digital technologies, similar to those in China, Russia and Kazakhstan, are emerging all over the world. A variety of political regimes are constantly looking for new ways to legitimize themselves through the formation of citizens' trust in their activities. The cardinal goal of various innovative legitimation practices is to create agreement between representatives of the political elite and civil society that the existing political regime is effective, fair and capable of solving complex problems.

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen in their 'Promote and Build: A Strategic Approach to Digital Authoritarianism' report put forward four overlapping problems that democratic systems face and which further strengthen the position of digital security (Yayboke and Brannen 2020). According to them, the first is that digital authoritarianism is expanding within existing authoritarian-led states, like in China, Russia, Iran or Saudi Arabia. These countries spend huge sums on population control, information flow management, and artificial intelligence. Facial recognition has enhanced their capacity to monitor and manipulate the activities of individual citizens to a greater extent. The most striking example of this is the Social Credit System, a national credit rating and blacklist developed by the government of the People's Republic of China.

The social credit project aims to create a system where the trustworthiness of businesses, individuals, and government entities is monitored and assessed through a record-keeping system. Various versions of the social credit system are being tested, with the primary national approach involving the utilization of blacklisting and whitelisting methods for regulation. Like Feldstein, Yaybroke and Brannen also draw attention to the issue of authoritarian regimes sharing the tools they employ with other regimes that do not oppose their usage. At the same time, as the researchers note, this is done not only to strengthen the connection between the regimes but also for commercial benefit.

As noted above, this practice is often used by democratic countries that sell various software and tools to authoritarian regimes. Israel is a fresh example of this: The Israeli NSO Group is the creator of the Pegasus, a famous spy program. Over the past few years, this software has been caught up in a number of political scandals (Mirzoyan 2021). It was used to eavesdrop on world leaders, journalists, representatives of civil society, and especially activists (BBC 2021). At the same time, the process of eavesdropping or the orders for it were mostly given by non-democratic regimes, including Azerbaijan.

On May 25, 2023, Amnesty International's Security Lab, Access Now, The Citizen Lab, and CyberHUB.am published an investigation, according to which at least 12 people in Armenia were targeted by the Pegasus spy program in the period from October 2020 to December 2022 (Amnesty International 2023). The authors of the investigation, who are also IT security specialists, suggest that the Karabakh conflict could have caused such persecution, and Azerbaijan could become the customer. Experts claim that this is the first documented evidence of the use of the Pegasus spyware during military operations. According to Samvel Martirosyan, an Armenia media expert, during the hostilities, if the Pegasus spyware's customer was Azerbaijan, it means that the Israeli government officially allowed that country to use cyberweapons against Armenia (Factor

TV 2023). According to Martirosyan, Karlen Aslanyan and Astghik Bedevyan, journalists of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, former human rights defender Kristinne Grigoryan, turkologist Varuzhan Geghamyan, lawyer Ruben Melikyan, former MP from RPA Samvel Farmanyan, former press secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan eavesdropped through Pegasus.

The next important challenge is that authoritarian regimes abroad are expanding access to their digital tools by spying and eavesdropping on their citizens and citizens of foreign countries. The same investigation by Amnesty International and other organizations notes that there were revealed more than 1,000 Azerbaijani phone numbers which were selected for targeting by a Pegasus customer. Some of these phone numbers belonged to journalists, including Khadija Ismayilova (JAM-news 2021), opposition politicians, from which researchers suggest that the Azerbaijani government may also be behind this, since, according to NSO Group, Pegasus is sold only to state bodies. In addition, the company claimed that the entity provides only technology, and its launch and data collection is carried out by the customer.

Lastly, these techniques or challenges used by digital authoritarianism might also find application in democratic nations by political parties, special interest organizations, or businesses driven by an anti-democratic set of principles that disregard public confidence, individual liberties, human rights, and other fundamental civil freedoms.

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen in their ‘Promote and Build: A Strategic Approach to Digital Authoritarianism’ report highlight tools that are very characteristic of digital authoritarianism and are used by non-democratic regimes. These tools include surveillance, cyberattacks and espionage, censorship, social and electoral manipulation (Yayboke and Brannen 2020). Nonetheless, this doesn’t imply that democratic systems cannot utilize these techniques, albeit typically on a smaller scale and often for different intentions compared to how authoritarian governments employ them (Sinkkonen and Lassila 2022).

Each of these tools can be applicable to the challenges mentioned above, or be general. So, mass surveillance, which can be carried out using cameras, phones, Internet-connected equipment, GPS systems or other modern technologies, is perhaps the simplest and, as noted by Yayboke and Brannen, the most accessible. Contemporary advancements in technology enable us not just to comprehend the whereabouts and potential actions of these individuals, but also to gather and convey essential data. Intelligence agencies, including those in democratic nations, are involved in the acquisition of such information as well, and modern technologies offer ample possibilities to acquire the required data (Schatz 2023; Isaacs 2022).

Recently, the rising features of artificial intelligence have given even more opportunities for the modernization of mass surveillance technologies. For example, Xi Jinping has spearheaded the development of digital authoritarianism in China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This strategy involves employing censorship, propaganda, and AI-powered population-wide surveillance. In 2017, China’s government unveiled an ambitious strategy to position itself as a prominent worldwide center for AI advancement by 2030. The government designated Baidu, Tencent, Alibaba, and iFLYTEK, a speech recognition software company, as the key players in the field of AI on a national level. As individuals’ lives progressively hinge on their

technologies, these corporations have amassed significant sway. Ranging from smart voice assistants to sensors that gather data for analyzing living conditions, their inventive solutions aspire to elevate the overall quality of life (Roberts et al. 2021).

The Chinese population has grown accustomed to big tech companies and the state overseeing various aspects of their lives, including personal interests, education, health, academic qualifications, economic status, consumption habits, social interactions and even reading preferences. Utilizing an extensive network of cameras with facial recognition capabilities and a crowdsourced reporting system enables an unparalleled level of monitoring granularity and the potential for individual behavior manipulation. In 2019, data leaks revealed that Chinese authorities were closely tracking the locations of almost 2.6 million people in real time through a facial-recognition company and police contractor called SenseNets (Yang and Murgia 2019).

The problem is that the Chinese government has exported surveillance systems to more than 80 countries around the world, raising concerns about democratic backsliding and the rights of individuals there (Greitens 2020).

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen indicate that surveillance is used for all four challenges. Authoritarian regimes often apply for cyber attacks and online espionage, which allows them to obtain sensitive information that can be valuable from a strategic and tactical point of view. Digital espionage encompasses a wide range of strategies, such as hacking, distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, phishing emails, spyware, malware, ransomware, and network intrusions. This form of espionage may be motivated by economic interests, as it involves stealing sensitive commercial data and intellectual property, which gives the private sector a competitive advantage.

Cambridge Dictionary defines cyberattacks as an illegal attempt to harm someone's computer system or the information on it, using the internet. Cyberattacks can be aimed not only at obtaining information but also at creating internal political confusion in a given country. A striking example of this was the cyberattack on the Democratic National Committee computer network in 2015 and 2016, which, according to the American government and cybersecurity experts, was backed by Russian hacker groups (Perez and Diaz 2017). As a result, hackers published personal correspondence, documents, and materials of the internal turnover of the Democratic Party. One of the scandalous publications concerned Hillary Clinton, who was the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party at that time. This was done in order to show that the former secretary of state during her office, instead of having an email in the @state.gov domain, the official correspondence conducted by her personal email, which caused a serious scandal around security and accountability in the United States.

Representatives of the Democratic Party and independent experts argued that this was how Russia interfered in the internal affairs of the United States, helping to elect the Republican candidate, billionaire Donald Trump, who was the most preferred candidate for Moscow.

Another well-known example of a disorder in another country's internal political sphere and influence on the electoral process is the attack on the emails of Emmanuel Macron and his campaign headquarters, which occurred in 2017, two days before the presidential elections in France. Unlike the American one, this leak, containing about 20,000 emails, did not affect the elections in France. One of the main reasons for this

was that according to the Electoral code of this country, the Day of Silence in France lasts 44 hours, and the media, based on this, could not publish them. Macron and his political team accused Russia of the attack, claiming that by doing so Vladimir Putin was trying to support his most preferred candidate, the right-wing politician Marine Le Pen. Both in the case of the American attack and in the case of the French one, the Kremlin denied its involvement.

Independent experts claim that the Kremlin has also used cyber operations to disrupt organizations that are essential to the functioning of democracy, including legislatures (such as the German Bundestag and UK Parliament) and political parties (in Estonia, France, and Germany) (Brandt and Taussig 2019; Glazunova 2022).

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen note that this tool is used in the frame of the second (sharing the tools they employ with other regimes) and third challenges (spying and eavesdropping on their citizens and citizens of foreign countries abroad).

The next tool is censorship, in this case, online censorship and Internet control. In authoritarian regimes, Internet control is generally explained by domestic power preservation: to curtail dissent within their borders, authoritarian regimes censor, monitor, and shape online communications (Michaelsen 2018; Sinkkonen and Lassila 2022). They use various methods to limit access to information, control the flow of data, and suppress dissenting voices to maintain their hold on power and control the narrative. Several tactics for censorship may include Internet filtering and blocking, content removal, surveillance and monitoring, online misinformation and propaganda, legal and regulatory measures, etc.

During critical political times, authoritarian regimes are compelling internet service providers to deliberately reduce or restrict their services, a practice known as ‘throttling’. This action encroaches upon the freedom of expression, obstructs journalists from disseminating crucial updates to the public, and hampers the unrestricted dissemination of information (Woodhams 2020).

The governments have also imposed challenging legal requirements on online platforms, compelling them to remove objectionable content. Another method is in China, where the government uses AI to screen video footage for images of objects like tanks and candles that could be associated with protest messages - a feat made possible by technology, as the video was previously difficult to monitor because it required too much manpower (Mozur 2021).

Modern countries with authoritarian regimes also create their own version of the Internet, for example, in North Korea with a totalitarian regime, the ordinary population does not have access to the Internet. This advantage is reserved for a group of people related to the ruling political elite of this country (Williams 2010). Instead, ordinary citizens can connect to the internal intranet system from libraries or other institutions, where the available information is filtered out by the North Korean authorities and presented in a way that benefits Pyongyang and the ruling Kim family (Yilmaz and Yang 2023).

China has gone the other way. As mentioned above, it has created local websites and applications that not only provide the authorities with the necessary information but are also directly related to people’s daily lives (Qiaoan and Teets 2020; Taylor 2022). For example, through WeChat Chinese people do social networking, including sending

messages, and doing stories. Any government organization, company, or group can register a WeChat Official Account to send articles and messages to their followers, order in a restaurant, shop, pay, etc. (Zheng 2020).

Russia has also been developing the so-called 'Runet'. The latter is a general term that defines the Russian and Russian-speaking parts of the entire Internet. Experts say that the Russian authorities are moving according to the Chinese scenario. They are trying to create Russian versions of the world's leading websites and platforms that will not only be under their own control but also independently of the West. These countries very often claim that they are going for digital sovereignty which gives the state greater political control over the use of the Internet in its jurisdiction.

Erol Yayboke and Samuel Brannen indicate that this tool is used in the first (digital authoritarianism is expanding within existing authoritarian-led states), second (sharing the tools they employ with other regimes) and fourth (digital authoritarianism might also find application in democratic nations by political parties, special interest organizations, or businesses driven by an anti-democratic set of principles) challenges.

The last tool is social and electoral manipulation. Non-democratic regimes use digital technologies and online platforms to control, influence, and manipulate public opinion, suppress dissent, and shape electoral outcomes. In this process, they use Social Media bots, Troll farms, Fake News, Social Media Advertising, Content Amplification Networks, disinformation campaigns, etc. For example, social media bots create and spread pro-regime narratives. These bots mimic human behaviour on social media by engaging in activities such as commenting, liking, posting, and sharing content. They give the illusion of being real users, but in reality, they are automated programs designed to interact and behave like humans.

"Many governments are finding that on social media, propaganda works better than censorship. Authoritarians and populists around the globe are exploiting both human nature and computer algorithms to conquer the ballot box, running roughshod over rules designed to ensure free and fair elections", said Mike Abramowitz, President of Freedom House (Freedom House 2019). Besides that, authoritarian governments target the computers and mobile devices, as well as social media and email accounts, of civil society leaders, seeking access to confidential communications and contacts.

The most difficult scientific problem seems, first of all, to determine the deep transformations of social and political reality under the pressure of accelerated digitalization. Meanwhile, before the pandemic itself, the prerequisites for the transformation of traditional political processes and institutions had already been created. The reason for this was the emergence of new economic players and global digital companies (Google, IBM, Apple, Microsoft, Alibaba and others), which gave rise to digital platforms, algorithms and various network effects that subjugate the very communication channels of citizens and force, in turn, to reconsider the traditional concept sovereignty (Gosztonyi 2023; Yilmaz 2023).

Authoritarian governments employ computer programs capable of accessing, sorting, and analyzing vast amounts of gathered data to analyze information. Among the commercially available software used for this purpose are SolarWinds, NetFlow, Traffic Analyzer, etc. (Schlumberger et al. 2023).

Conclusion and discussion

Modern digitalization actualizes other problems associated with the risk and threat of information wars, politicized fakes, that is, attempts to distort historical memory that can trigger processes of delegitimization of the political regime. At the same time, digitalization provides additional prospects for political regimes in terms of the use of social networks by government agencies and the transformation of communication models of parties. Citizens get the opportunity of electronic democracy, participation in monitoring the actions of authorities through special digital platforms and applications. True, on the other hand, accelerated digitalization does not at all exclude the creation of entire Panopticons on the basis of a number of political regimes, within the framework of which flexible technologies for the manipulation of consciousness will be practiced, as well as the establishment of mutual surveillance procedures. Thus, the digitalization process is a kind of civilizational fork, providing both cyber-optimistic and cyber-pessimistic scenarios for political regimes.

This study has delved into the intricate landscape of digital authoritarianism, scrutinizing its multifaceted definitions and implications. The exploration of its manifestations, tools, and strategies employed by authoritarian regimes has provided valuable insights into the ways in which power is wielded, information is controlled, and dissent is stifled in the digital age. Through an analysis of scholarly works, case studies, and real-world instances, this article has underscored the evolving nature of digital authoritarianism, emphasizing its adaptability to technological advancements and its challenge to the fundamental ideals of freedom and democracy.

The study showed that there is no precise definition of digital authoritarianism in the academic literature. Each of the specialists focuses on one of the features of digital authoritarianism. After researching we ended up forming the following definition: Digital authoritarianism, through the help of information technologies, internet censorship, mass surveillance, social media manipulation and data control, is aimed at restricting people's rights to receive information, exchange information, controls and manages people's social behavior, restricts people's social freedoms.

Surveillance, cyberattacks and espionage, censorship, social and electoral manipulation are the main tools that authoritarian regimes use to strengthen their position not only within the country but also beyond its borders. The diverse dimensions of digital authoritarianism were highlighted, ranging from mass surveillance and censorship to cyber attacks and data manipulation. By considering these facets, societies and policymakers can formulate proactive measures to safeguard democratic principles, thwart the encroachment of authoritarian practices, and ensure the unimpeded flow of information. As technology continues to evolve and shape our world, a keen awareness of the nuances surrounding digital authoritarianism will prove essential in preserving the integrity of democratic societies.

The imperative to prevent digital authoritarianism stems from the recognition that its unchecked proliferation could lead to dire consequences. It threatens the essence of open societies by silencing dissent, restricting access to information, and concentrating power in the hands of the ruling elite. The urgency is heightened by its ability to surpass

geographical limits, allowing its impact to stretch well past the borders of its originating nations. It is clear that digital authoritarianism is expressed in specific countries, the measures and legal frameworks put in place to counter it, and the impact of fake news on political processes and programs.

The political experience of digitalization of the post-Soviet region demonstrates not only new risks of the democratic trajectory of stability, but also cases of digitalization of authoritarian regime consolidation. In this regard, an urgent scientific task is to measure the digital regime diversification of post-Soviet states not only within the framework of the ‘digital authoritarianism - digital democracy’ dichotomy, but also on the basis of an analysis capable of recording transitions from one non-democratic regime form to another type of authoritarianism.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.062>

Conflict of interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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DECISION-MAKING: THE PROCESS CONTRIBUTING TO PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

This article analysis one of the main issues of public administration theory and practice, which is helpful in government functioning and policy-making. Research study includes the discourse on how to plan and make decisions on behalf of democratic attitude. Public administration is utmost outcome, and the success or failure of the government depends on it. Theoretical debate on decision-making process, accordingly, surveys the fundamental perception on rational and incremental decision-making processes. It refers basically to the administrative institutions. Decision making is important for organizational effectiveness because of its central role in the overall process of directing and controlling. Decisions do not automatically guarantee all programmed outcomes, but denoting actions with professionalism and public support. As a valuable process it is likely to be a central element of management and leadership. Comparative study of examples of developed democratic systems shows the high responsibility of public institutes and government as key actors. Particular attention is paid there to the professionalism of government, which is a vital characteristic of any democratic public administration and virtually a policy quality. Findings of current research shows that decisions are not based solely on laws and regulations. Moreover, as the study shows, many other appropriate skills of decision-makers are important that will be seen with the close linkages with strategic governance.

Keywords: public administration, Herbert A. Simon, incrementalism, decision-making process, organization theory, government's role, bounded rationality, strategic management, Armenia.

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Introduction

To name a phenomenon is not to explain it.
Herbert A. Simon

Research into decision-making process within the public administration springs from a practical desire: to help country (generally the government) achieve better outcomes. Accordingly, the paradigm of public administration has changed because it deals with the specific decision-making process. It is known that with the sudden emergence of new organization structures, capable of producing results, public administration helps create appropriate public organizations. At the same time, one of the core aspects, besides the structure and organization analyzing is the issue of decision-making process. Consequently, the study of decision-making is one of the palimpsests of public administration to call alternatives and better achievements.

Based on the above mentioned, it is critical to observe structure-organization-decision-making triangle for proposing practical suggestions on good governance and democratic government. As a rule, the structure and organization effectiveness depend on the environment, specific values and behavior of society and elites. Unlike the structure and organization, while a good decision does not guarantee a good outcome, it emphasizes the professional nature of public administration, which is one of the most important factors that impact on outcomes. Moreover, decision is a solution, and for better outcome, the government ought to outline problem and suggest solutions, but also be professional to explain the decision. Decisions must be subject to examination.

Decision-making process within the Public Administration Theory

The study of decision-making process began, roughly, in the public administration classical theories. Studies shows that public administration is defined as an extended decision-making process. This statement has been approved by those academicians, who discussed the topic using references to the leadership, management and team-building. From theoretic perspective, it is interesting to remind the opposite views of Follett and Drucker. In her "The New State: Group Organization – The Solution of Popular Government", Follett wrote about the importance of team that made decisions. To use Drucker's term, the country is an organization, and public administration is the specific function to make organizations capable of producing results (Drucker 2007a, 39). Approving former idea, Stein clarifies that the kind of structure necessary for organization, as a rule, is being analyzed by an academician, while an administrator focuses on the issue of how to build the structure (Stein 2010, 119-120). Contrary to Follett's opinion, Drucker suggested that rather the management and how to use the team were important, than the team itself (Drucker 2007a, 2007b). Despite differences in the approach, both agreed that in its sense effectiveness introduces and enhances into the decision-making bodies.

Other theorists laid the foundation for the study of managerial decision-making. The research of early approaches revealed also two-direct practices, which relate to the persons at various levels in public administration who are making decisions. The

followers of the first direction state that the effective decisions are made by specific groups or levels. The followers of the second direction disagree with the former ones and insist that persons at all levels are constantly making decisions. The analysis of both finally allows us to conclude that regardless of whether the decision is made up by a person of any level or all the levels, demand is the following: to maximize utility as far as possible to understand the facts and situations, to weigh the values that seem relevant.

The World War II brought large numbers of scientists trained in the use of mathematical tools into contact for the first time with operational and managerial problems. By the end of the 1970s, the socio-political and economic issues challenged the classical model of "Old Public Administration". Many of the new public administration and management issues stem from the need for government to evolve and innovate the process of decision-making. The most widely used one is bounded the rational model that was cultivated by Herbert A. Simon. In his book, Simon wrote that "managing" and "decision making" are synonyms. Managing is decision making to the conclusion that the important skills for an executive are decision making skills. These include habit, memory, simple manipulations of things and symbols, which are relatively simple psychological processes understood at the practical level (Gow 2003, 120-127). As we see, making decisions depends on psychological processes that, until recently, have not been understood at all. But for rational (programmed) process, decision making comprises three principle phases: *finding occasions for making a decision; finding possible courses of action; choosing among courses of action*. Each of these phases illustrates rational skills of decision makers. For example, the first phase of decision-making process - *searching the environment for conditions calling for decision* – is called by Simon as intelligence activity. The second phase – *inventing, developing and analyzing possible courses for action* – called by him as design activity. The third phase – *selecting a particular course of action from those available* – is a choice activity (Simon 1960, 1-2). Simon's approach was inspired by pessimistic view of rationality. He focused on studying the processes of the cognitive system in order to develop a bounded-rationality theory of decision-making.

Additionally, Simon gives another definition of decision-making process. It is pictured as a three-layered cake. In the bottom layer, we have the basic work processes. In the middle layer is the programmed decision-making processes, that governing the day-to-day operation of the distribution system. In the top layer, we have the nonprogrammed decision-making processes that are required to design and redesign the entire system, to provide it with its basic goals and objectives, and to monitor its performance (Simon 1960, 40). Making decisions within the framework of a rational model implies that the subject excludes the unpredictable situation by modeling decision options and developing ways to solve problems. And when the probability of an uncertain situation is high, in that case, governing bodies often use the concept of bounded rationality of Simon. According to professor Gobet Fernand from the London School of Economics and Political Science, Simon's approach to decision making essentially consisted of the following assumptions. Decisions are not performed by agents with perfect rationality, they are made by agents with bounded rationality. The quality of decisions varies as a function of the expertise of a decision maker. And the last assumption is that if you want to understand decision making, it is paramount to

investigate the cognitive processes involved, and the analysis based on performance only is not efficient (Campitelli and Gobet 2010, 3).

Here again, there is a need to state that the New Public Administration theory provides an important system of principles that helps in guiding decisions calls policy. The policy can assist in objective decision-making and they are usually operational in nature. Public policy is the principle guide to action taken by the executive branch of the state with regard to a class of issues, in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs. Public problems can originate in endless ways and require different policy responses (such as regulations, subsidies, quotas, laws). Generally speaking, the public policy exists for creating a successful state building strategy and doing this mostly with three approaches, which are good governance, the New Public Management (NPM) and decentralization. The NPM represents a reform attempt that emphasizes the professional nature of public administration. It advocates the aim to replace the academic, moral or disciplinary emphasis of traditional public administration with a professional focus. As a market enhancing process, which emerged in the 1990s, good governance used successful ways to create the institutions protecting people's rights (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). At the same time, the NPM provides the government with the necessary power to implement a development plan on the economy while also using competitive market-based techniques to enhance public sector production. As for decentralization, it seeks to reduce rent-seeking behavior and inefficient resource allocation associated with centralized power by dispersing such power to lower the government levels. A close look at literature on the policy effectiveness shows that there are six contemporary dimensions to policy analysis. The first dimension is effects – effectiveness, unintended effects and equity. The second dimension is implementation – cost, feasibility, acceptability etc.

Above we have discussed Simon's approach to decision-making process, while the public administration theory's study emphasized the importance of analyzing the interests of those who make decisions. Here is the incremental model, which is a subject of special interest. Basically, the decisions impact on the society in terms of purposefulness, social significance and managerial influence. Decision-making with the incremental model assumes that the decision maker is maximally practical. The practical nature is insured by the possibility to define goals not so clear and correct, to change the existing situation or transform it by step-by-step approach. One of the main privileges of incrementalism is the following: with a rational and bounded-rational approaches, it is possible to develop a good policy without reaching a broad consensus, which can delegitimize the decision and policy. As an alternative to this possibility, incrementalism suggested a compromise, to get the desired rather step by step than at once. Because of rational model the compromise cannot be reached and the situation can be blocked, and incrementalism provides the best solution. In the famous article of Lindblom, entitled "The Science of muddling through", the latter criticized Simon, saying that it dealt with a mythical world. In the real world, values and means are examined together, policies are agreed without agreement on basic objectives, a limited number of policy alternatives are considered and policy is made or remade by the endless adjustments (Lindblom 1959). According to him, the values are the object of disagreement, difficult to rank and change over circumstances. Political pressures cause policies to be adjusted without great comprehensive examination. Lindblom's later works made it clear that there is no logical

way to say whose interests are relevant to an important decision, nor what kind of time-frame should be adopted when evaluating the consequences of different alternatives. He gave more attention in the future to different types of decisions, trying to distinguish among them one-of-a-kind (Lindblom 1959; Lindblom and Woodhouse 1993, 24-25).

The comprehensive research of decision-making process revealed that its study is based also on concrete methodology and mechanisms. A special interest presents Martin's *strategic decision-making* research, who systematically introduced components of process. For example, as the notion of problems expanded, opportunities and other issues requiring decisions are now being labeled as "challenges". The next component is the necessity to utilize consequences analysis in all the steps of the decision-making process. One of the most important components is requiring a thorough and comprehensive feedback looping effects analysis, whether single-loop, double-loop, or triple-loop feedback analysis, in each step of the decision-making process. Finally, Martin finished with the component that require continues application of the '5 Rs' approach (reanalyze, redevelop, refine, re-sort, and reprioritize) in all remaining thinking elements after a convergent list has been established (Martin 2016, 34). Making decisions is a work, where objective analysis, methods and means, in-depth study of the situation in accordance with the overall strategy is carried out. The goal is the ideal manifestation of the desired.

Professional Nature of Public Administration

The close eye on public administration bibliography reveals that it has everything to do with the common sense of the decision-making process. Public administration benefit is based on a complex formula derived from the theories, concepts and practices of decision-making. According to Simon, as we have not understood them at all, due to its psychological aspects, our theories have been rather empty and our practical advice is only moderately helpful. One thing we have known about decision making is that it can be programmed and not programmed, and improved by training in orderly thinking.

Although people make decisions both with thought and on emotional basis, anyway, they are maximizing utility in both cases. Surely, those, who form the government, exercise in a different logic. *First* of all, decisions of government are based solely on legal analysis. *Second*, they make decisions having relevant facts and information. To claim that it is possible to provide maximum utility through legality and information seems naïve, because laws are imperfect, capacity to learn facts varies from individual to individual, and information is bounded (has limits). *Third*, the government must be able to balance multitude of competing public and personal interests and/or values.

The ability to understand, as a practical function of executive power, shows that the institutional linkages between public and private sectors are blurred. For example, while executives try to reduce program costs, the private sector wants gain monetary advantage. So, how to make good decisions! In this sense, according to a number of researchers, since decisions can be challenged, the government should consider how it will defend its decision (Stewart, Langer and Erasmus 2019; Zekos 2022; Naarttijärvi

2023). And since public administration is the practical functioning of the executive branch, decisions affect professionalism.

It is vital to mention that with the emergence of the NPM, the measurement of professionalism by the criterion of decision-making is emphasized even more. The government no longer gives priority to its direct functionality (as it was in public administration's classical perceptions), it gives priority to the development of competences necessary for making decisions, such as thinking objectively, reasoning, teamwork etc. This new approach was demonstrated firstly in the United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand, partly in Australia, the United State of America (USA), the Scandinavian Countries, Germany etc. More detailed study of country - cases will help analysis the issue. The government has always been a supreme institution that makes decisions in the UK public administration system. For the XX century, as a result of many challenges of the era, up to now government's role is permanently rising. The mechanism of party democracy has played a decisive impact, especially when the legislative activity begins to be managed by the government. It means that since the government formed by the leaders of party, who had majority in the House of Commons, it allows the government to lead the public administration system. Beside the political reasons, the various spheres of public life have changed as a result of a new division of labor market (between public and private), reintegration and reorganization (hard rulers came to replace mandarins), which were the results of influence and pressure on government and public administration bodies (Cloarec 2018). Even Prime Minister of the UK Margaret Thatcher¹ resigned under public pressure on her wave of reforms (Spencer and Forest 2023). Another case for research is the USA, that is known as a country with powerful presidents and government, especially in the 50s and 60s of the XX century. Probably the most influential author in the American public administration after the World War II was Simon, who proceeded to propose a new approach based on decision-making with the emphasis on the efficient use of resources in pursuit of well-defined goals. After analyzing the Watergate scandal and the war in Vietnam, Simon sought to replace the highly simplified classical approach to economic modeling based on a concept of the single decision-making, profit-maximizing entrepreneur with an approach that recognized multiple factors contributing to decision-making. Both cases discussed above illustrate that the law effectiveness of public administration is caused by the decisions of government. The logic of American practice is based on the perceptions of the "Mother of Modern Management" of Follet, who recognized the holistic nature of community and advanced the idea of 'new state'. Follet advocated the principle of what she termed 'integration,' or noncoercive power-sharing based on the use of her concept of 'power with' rather than 'power over'. The new state proposed by her is rooted in coactive power, jointly developing power, power of the sort that grew out of the groups and neighborhood associations. Power usually means 'power-over', the power of some person or group over some other person or group, which is linked usually to domination and control (Kariel 1955; Althans 2005). While 'power-with' is social, and introduces the consultative style of leadership (Héon, Damart and Nelson 2021). Having in mind these perceptions, Follet mentioned in her writings that all the Americans

¹ Margaret Thatcher Foundation. 2023. "Speeches, interviews & other statements." Accessed May 30, 2023. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches>.

need a government as a directive force of consciously integrated thought and will (Follet 1998, 8).

For a period of time, governments, particularly in the developed countries, enjoyed the high prestige and importance, while under the influence of reinventing philosophy, even they were criticized for being inadequate and inefficient. The leading role of the government in promoting social changes and economic transformation come under fire because of the financial crisis and a number of limitations were underlined and pointed as a main cause of the financial shortage of governments. These include, market regulation, production rules, universal provision of public services. Also, the absence of any accountability of both politicians and managers, the authoritative power of bureaucracy and the spreading corruption of political parties, were identified as determinants for the poor performance of public institutions. According to the modern role, governments are with individualistic culture and pro-business attitude, which is reflected in the prevailing ideology of the public interest view of the government. This explains why they 'all think in terms of 'the government' rather than 'the state'. However, in developing world still theorists and practitioners are continuously searching methods and policies to stimulate people to join the government. The unsolved problem of the new public administration, as studies shows, is the integrity research of regulatory links between changing role of government and decision-making process.

By the end of the 1990s, public administration is moving forward the organizational theory, the governance theory. Evidently, many issues of public administration are strongly connected with the theory of organization. For example, capitalism refers to a system in which the society's means of production are held by organizations. But many authors' post-capitalist approaches gave birth to the modern structure of organizations re-evaluating the meaning of governance and government's role. Accordingly, Khan see no difference between governance and public administration, emphasizing that governance is a broader term and covers all aspects of the society (Khan 2018, 6-8). While Drucker explains that the government plays the role of a manager, a policy maker and negotiator (Drucker 2007a, 25-26). Along with globalization government need to develop capacity of 'striving'. Striving means better conditions in economic and social environments, standards of living, opportunities for sustainable growth in science and technology. Studies show that organizations mostly have the same structures both in public and private sections. For example, according to Mintzberg, every organization has five parts: (1) *technical core*, which includes people, who do the basic work; (2) *technical support*, that helps the organization adapt to the environment; (3) *administrative support*, that is responsible for the smooth operation and upkeep of the organization, including its physical and human elements; (4) *management*, that is responsible for directing and coordinating other parts of the organization. Another scholar, Gulick developed a comprehensive, generic theory of organization that emphasized the scientific method, efficiency, professionalism, structural reform, and executive control. He summarized the duties of administrators with an acronym; POSDCORB, which stands for planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. The latter consists of two parts: top and middle management (Daft 2019, 56-57; Kalani and Kamrani 2017). We can find the same in public administration system. A government is the system or group of people governing an

organized community. The study of governmental structures must always proceed hand in hand with an investigation of the actual facts of the political process. Governments develop the organizational capacity characteristics also as a result of the rapid spreading of bureaucracy. Public administration has traditionally been somewhat synonymous with the government bureaucracy (Osborn and Gaebler 1993, 5-8).

Brief Overview on Decision-Making Process within the Armenian Public Administration System

In the wide sense, public administration and management is the activity of authorities of the Republic of Armenia (RA). Consequently, the qualitative development of decision – making process within the public administration system, in general, realized through the national reform program and normative framework for its successful implementation (Altunyan and Kalantaryan 2019, 17-26).

The overall process of public management reforms¹ according to several studies in Armenia consists of three stages. The first stage (1999-2003) was known as the period of government reconstruction. During the second stage (2003-2008) all the government programs focused on service delivery, mechanisms of civil participation and effective, transparent public relations. Finally, the third stage (2009-2014) aimed to introduce international (mostly European) standards of effective governance. In the 2000s, a group of Armenian scholars and public figures published recommendations to improve the public sector and reorganize the government (Khudaverdyan 2008, 15-17).

According to another classification, the first phase from 1991 to 1999 is marked by building the public administration system, which included the creation of institutions, administrative-territorial division, privatization, land reform, budget-treasury, tax-customs, and statistical systems. In the second phase, from 2000 to 2009, a number of new institutions were introduced, such as civil service and remuneration systems, public procurement, local government and community service, debt management etc. Finally, in the third phase, from 2010 to 2020, the institutional priorities² were proclaimed, such as e-Government, program budgeting, auditing, strategic planning etc.

Analyzing the Armenian processes after the revolutionary elite came to power within the context of these scenarios, it should be stated that the bureaucracy reacted sometimes negative, which was assessed by the political authorities as sabotage. As a response, in September 2019, the Prime Minister signed a decision to establish a Council for the Development of Public Administration Reform Strategy and to approve its Action Plan. As of 2019, several public administration reform strategies have been adopted in parallel, particularly the e-Government, the Anti-Corruption, Public Financial Management Reform Strategy, which have huge influence, but not qualitative impact (Altunyan 2021, 131). From the beginning of the 1990s, the Armenian people wanted the state and its public administration to act as a social and economic promoter, capable of ensuring

¹ Public Administration Reforms in Armenia: An Evaluation Report. 2015. “Protection of Rights without Borders” NGO. Accessed May 30, 2023. <https://prwb.am/en/>.

² “On the adoption of a package of strategies for reforming public administration until 2030.” Accessed May 30, 2023. <https://www.e-draft.am/en/projects/3438/about>.

equitable distribution of opportunities, sustainable management of resources and equitable access to opportunities, but many factors, including the absence of strategic decision-making prevented the process of rapid modernization. Although many reforms have been implemented since then, however, several have been irrelevant and limited in scope. The logic of public administration system changed from a semi-presidential system to a pure parliamentary system in 2015 conducted by the constitutional referenda. In the new system, the PM enjoys strong executive powers (the 'super PM' system). To make reforms systemic and sustainable, strong political will needs to be reinforced by strengthened institutions and enhanced administrative capacity. Understanding such transition under the condition of war and the immaturity of political parties, the society conditionally agreed to adopt a new constitution. The Armenian society did not fully understand the need for a transition to parliamentary rule, but the vote in favor of constitutional reform took place under the condition that the acting President, as he had publicly promised, would not run for the Prime Minister. Much of Armenia's population interpreted the constitutional referendum as a political maneuver.

Summing up the overall, it is evident that despite small steps taken to build a modern system of public administration in the second stage of state development, the formation of public administration actors, the gap between them all, did not allow the system to develop in a harmonious manner. To date, almost all the public administration institutions are in need of development, and the current legislative framework needs to be improved. From the point of view of the possible impact on the public administration system, based on the tendencies of public administration and the developments at the national level, transforming the role of the government and spreading the new concept of public administration has been distinguished since 2018.

Conclusion and discussion

The comprehensive research of the decision-making process with the public administration theory helps formulate the following conclusions. Public administration is defined as an extended decision-making process. Although a good decision does not guarantee a good outcome, it emphasizes the professional nature of public administration. As a complex process, decision-making process has three comparatively important phases. The mentioned phases are designed by one of the leading theorists Herbert A. Simon, who see the most important are intelligence activity, design activity and a choice activity. Though furtherly, the approaches of decision-making process are continuously developing, Simon's categorizing is useful, because of its practical perceptions.

The better understanding of the decision-making process requires the continuous study of the methodology and mechanisms of decision-making process, analysis of interests, policy-making, and after all the qualitative assessment of decisions. The need to pay attention on methodology and mechanism for decision-making derives from the strategic necessities, strategic planning and strategic government. At the same time, it is impossible to realize strategic government without counting the interests of public administration all actors. One more important aspect, reached by our research is the

critical role of policy, which is important for guiding the decisions. Policy assists in objective decision-making. And finally, the basic approaches of the organization theory state that the relevant expertise impact on decision-making process. Accordingly, the quality of decisions depends on expertise function. Here, the explanation of expertise function underlines clear distinction between an academician and an administrator. An academician thinks about the kind of structure and functions necessary for organization, while an administrator works on how to build that structure and execute the functions.

This research based on the statement that public administration is the practical functioning of the executive power or the government. Mostly, as the government makes decisions based on legal analysis, relevant facts and information, and also on balance of competing public and private interests and values. Consequently, we have considered any decision as a possible solution developed and proposed by the government. Thereby organization theory analysis the whole system of public administration, it becomes possible to formulate multiple roles of government as a manager, a policy-maker, a negotiator and a 'striver'. Hence, fragmental references from the Anglo-American cases in the article clearly illustrated that for better outcomes, the government should not only outline the problem and suggest solutions, but also explain the decisions with high professionalism. Otherwise, the policy fails and the adopted decisions lose their legitimacy. For better outcomes, the government should not only outline, but also explain the problem, thereby professionally justifying the decision-making.

In the RA, public administration and policy do not play a major role in the delivery of services and the provision of much needed economic infrastructure. Capacity development, that will impact on decision-making process in the public administration needs to be addressed at three levels: individual, institutional and societal. Key in this process is decision-making for policy support.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.076>

Conflict of interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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Abstract

This book comparatively analyzes global conflicts and diplomatic relations between international players, as well as the mechanisms of public diplomacy, the difficulties of peace diplomacy and hard power war. In the book, the authors pay special attention to the issues of the modern world order, relations between various geopolitical, regional and national actors in an environment of increasingly complex international relations, emerging challenges and threats. The authors pay special attention to the efforts of intergovernmental organizations, the problem of terrorism, including international terrorism, and the violation of global stability, which still remain serious challenges and threats that national states, as well as international institutions, are called upon to solve. The authors analyze various dimensions of the intensification of terrorism, military conflicts and threats to national states emanating from military blocs, and update the issues of terrorist danger and international instability. They note that this state of affairs in the world system puts on the political agenda the importance of enhanced interaction between national states with international weight, resources and capabilities. In this regard, constructive and civilized interaction of all countries in the international arena to counter terrorism and strengthen international stability is of particular relevance.

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Modern conflicts and military policies between countries, the concept of soft power have become a response to the changes that have occurred in the international system, since with the advent of the era of globalization the system of international relations has changed dramatically. New actors entered the world stage and were capable of exerting a powerful influence on the course of world history. The new composition of international actors faced completely new problems and challenges that had not been faced either in the 20th or 19th centuries. And finally, new dimensions of power and new sources of power emerged in the struggle for world dominance. One thing has remained unchanged: the goal of all international actors remains power, strength and influence on the world stage. The versatility of the globalization process has reduced the scope for the use of traditional power mechanisms by states and led to changes in models of global competition. In the new era, economic success, ideological credibility, and a country's cultural attractiveness have become more important factors than military power and nuclear weapons.

In modern conditions, characterized by an increase in the number of intercultural conflicts, a deepening gap between developed and developing countries, and the strengthening of the military power of states, the author believes that the thesis that today requires a new look at the fundamental idea of the founders of the UN, the Council of Europe, and the EU is especially relevant and other international organizations about strengthening peace in the minds of people. In addition, it is obvious that the formation of dialogue and the development of interstate cooperation is impossible without abandoning the stereotype of war and violence, the dominance of a particular civilization to the detriment of the development of others (Akande and Goodman 2023; Anderson 2023a).

In the context of ongoing wars and conflicts, the main task of international organizations is to promote the strengthening of peace and international security by expanding cooperation between peoples in the field of education, science and culture in the interests of ensuring universal respect and justice, facing serious challenges associated with the peculiarities of modern international relations and complex internal processes.

American superiority and leadership in NATO, its doctrinal guidelines and activities have traditionally attracted the attention of many scientists. At the same time, there is a lack of works that examine the evolution of NATO and its political doctrine throughout the history of the alliance (Stivachtis 2023a). NATO is the product of the Cold War between two superpowers and two social and political systems. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the change in NATO's political doctrine during the Cold War and after its end, when one of the poles of world politics disappeared, and with it, it would seem, the grounds for NATO's existence disappeared (Pinto 2023b). Studying the dynamics of NATO's political doctrine over a long period is valuable for understanding the processes taking place within the organization, makes it possible to identify the main

patterns of the existence and activities of NATO, and allows one to reasonably draw conclusions about the prospects for the evolution of the North Atlantic Alliance. On the other hand, NATO is of interest to the United States as a tool for achieving and maintaining American dominance over any other power in the world, as well as as a means of ensuring geopolitical control in the territory of Europe and penetration deep into Eurasia. If NATO no longer meets this requirement, Washington will lose interest in NATO, which will lead to the disintegration of the alliance. This could happen if a center of power arises in Europe equal to the United States in military capabilities, independent, neutral or disloyal to American interests. Therefore, the United States, insisting on increasing the military potential of its allies and bringing it to the American level, has always emphasized the importance of its presence in Europe, which means, in essence, that Washington retains a decisive voice in European affairs. The North Atlantic Alliance still occupies an important place in the global plans of the United States, so the United States, as in the Cold War, is ready to support the military capacity of the European component.

In the context of global challenges, cosmopolitan peacekeeping is very valuable in the context of international humanitarian assistance and sustainable development (Rendtorff 2023a; Tonon 2023). Strategic multinational peacekeeping operations will be a key feature of future international security policy. Thus, it is important to learn from the lessons of the past to improve the efficiency of future operations. This book has identified a number of such lessons and also raised questions that require further detailed study (Akande and Goodman 2023; Rendtorff 2023a; Tonon 2023). There are some important issues that need to be addressed, not least the need to ensure that larger and smaller players work effectively together and small and medium powers do not feel excluded, planned and carried out by powerful powers with little regard for their interests and interests. feelings. In addition, it is necessary to improve the organization of the peacekeeping unit and the mechanisms of interaction between national contingents. The very complex form of cooperation can lead to friction and clumsiness in operations as opposed to individual national units. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain and improve the organization of the national peacekeeping unit, its skills of interaction with the population of the conflict territory and other national units of the peacekeeping mission. In order for the actions of a national peacekeeping force to be viewed positively, these actions must be as ethnically, religiously and culturally de-ideologized as possible. Mixed multinational units, trained in appropriate international centers, can help improve intercultural understanding between national contingents and civilian populations. At the same time, the optimal form of their interaction with national units should be worked out.

Improve monitoring of potential conflict zones, long-term planning and strict adherence to legal rules at all stages of the preparation and implementation of peacekeeping missions. Practice preventive deployment under the auspices of the UN to prevent the outbreak of a violent clash between the parties to the conflict. International monitoring of the actions of peacekeeping structures in the context of compliance with the relevant UN and OSCE resolutions, legal norms for conducting peacekeeping operations in the context of compliance with laws and human rights standards, creation, training and consulting of local territorial and border police forces, implementation of

border and customs control, assistance in conducting electoral operations (Tonon 2023; Pinto 2023a; Stivachtis 2023a, 2023b).

The success of a peacekeeping mission largely depends on the diplomatic support of those states that are the main participants in the conflict resolution process in its international legal and international political part. Analysis of diplomatic negotiations and national and international initiatives, peacekeeping projects and plans, as well as the implementation of a number of them in practice, indicates the need for further development of the ideological and political scientific basis of peacekeeping as part of world politics and the foreign policy of national states (Stivachtis 2023b, 2023c). The main emphasis should be on the problem of interaction and cooperation in the peacekeeping process.

In this context, the global security system has become even weaker after Russia's failed attack on Ukraine and the policy of military incompetence on the part of the Russian ruling elite (Anderson 2023b; Goodman 2023a). It is obvious that before February 24, 2022 and even after 2014, Russia still managed to establish regular, multi-level mechanisms for bilateral relations on security issues with the EU and NATO. At the same time, the established bodies were mainly focused on consultations and information exchange, rather than the implementation of joint decisions and actions. Among the reasons hindering the development of security cooperation, the following can be identified: 1) Russia's disinterest in the real influence of the EU and NATO on the process of developing and making important decisions regarding the internal development of these institutions; 2) concerns of Western countries about the advisability of deepening relations related to political instability, the economic crisis, the state of the Russian armed forces, and the prospects for the development of the country as a democratic state; 3) disagreements between Russia, NATO and the EU regarding the formation of a European security system and the distribution of functions between organizations; 4) methods of conducting anti-crisis operations, often ignoring the opinions of NATO and the EU on certain regional security problems on the part of Russia; 5) for the EU and NATO, dialogue with Russia was mainly important for obtaining approval from Russia for its plans for expansion and military-political transformation.

Changes of a military-political and conceptual nature taking place within the EU and NATO, of course, also had and continue to have a serious impact on the level of their cooperation with Russia. The EU's military-political initiatives, like enlargement, were perceived as part of the natural development of the European integration process, as an attempt to maintain solid economic potential by strengthening its role as an influential international player (Goodman 2023b). Strengthening the military-political dimension of the EU was considered by Russia from the point of view of the concept of multipolarity.

In the context of global and regional conflicts, the protection of human rights, sustainable development and climate change are considered in various aspects and from the point of view of various sciences, both natural sciences and the humanities (Rendtorff 2023b; Akande et al. 2023; Chaney et al. 2023). The task of international organizations is to find, justify and establish the best ways to implement ambitious recommendations resulting from natural science research, for example, to reduce global greenhouse gas

emissions. Indeed, law has enormous regulatory potential. It should be noted that in the issue of preventing climate change, legal regulation must be carried out both at the international and domestic levels (Stivachtis 2023d). National law and international law are in constant interaction, especially regarding the issue of climate conservation (Afolabi 2023). What is important is the fact not only of the creation of norms of international law, but also of their consistent implementation. States have a direct responsibility to set in motion the mechanism of legal norms and turn it into a permanent regulator of behavior.

The increasing pace of the threat of nuclear war to the West and social changes in the world are making the future less stable and more unpredictable (Goodman 2023c). The main contradiction in the modern world has clearly emerged, arising as a result of the desire of Russia and China to neutralize the democratic influence of the United States, thereby trying to dominate the world community. Another reason for the contradictions in the modern world is also the fact that the desire of many states to take into account their interests in the world community, the growing conflict, fueled by economic, geopolitical, ethnic, religious, intercivilizational contradictions, deforms the existing state of global and regional relative stability (Cimbala and Lowther 2023). The number of military actors operating on the world stage that are capable of disrupting existing regional balances of power is increasing.

Many both positive and negative factors of interstate and intrastate relations in their interaction will increase their influence on global and regional stability in the world. Among the many factors complicating the international situation, the main one is the destabilizing geopolitical dynamics of terrorism and crime, expressed in the emergence of imbalances of power in a number of regions and the associated fears of countries, and the revival of competitive relations between former geopolitical rivals (Gray and Seltzer 2023; Pinto and da Silva 2023). In addition, increased armament with modern types of conventional weapons, preconditions for the proliferation of nuclear weapons (Russia, China, Pakistan, North Korea) lead to increased dynamics of processes, shifting; regional balances of power are increasingly unstable. As emerging trends intensify, a significant qualitative difference arises between the present and future worlds. The modern world is conflictual and all conflicts are interconnected, as a rule, from each other in geographical space and actively interact with each other. Moreover, they dominate world affairs because they arise in an international system with relatively unstable structural characteristics.

The increase in global stability is accompanied by an increase in regional instability. The collapse of some states and the emergence of other states, the transformation of bloc structures are accompanied by the aggravation of interethnic contradictions, the renewal of territorial claims and outbreaks of armed conflicts, including in the immediate vicinity of Russia and on its territory.

Regional instability is stimulated by the competitive struggle of states for the redistribution of spheres of influence, sources of raw materials and leadership in individual regions and in the world as a whole. In resolving interstate problems, the tendency to rely on the active use of military force to the detriment of political and diplomatic means continues. In the immediate environment of the United States, along with traditional global centers of power, new regional centers of power have emerged

and are strengthening (Russia, China, Japan, Türkiye, Iran), with comparable US armed forces. A particular danger of this trend lies in the fact that these states have military-doctrinal guidelines that provide for the use of military force, including nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction, to achieve their foreign policy goals.

The establishment of global stability and, above all, nuclear security occurs in conditions of increased risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. And this process will be long-term, since the measures taken by the international community are aimed only at containing it.

A serious danger to global development is posed by the increase in the number of nuclear states, and this can lead, firstly, to the emergence of new nuclear threats; secondly, to an increase in the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons, due to a misconception about their capabilities by political leaders of states who view them as conventional weapons; thirdly, to a violation of military-strategic stability based on the balance of strategic weapons and the threat of nuclear terrorism, nuclear blackmail, unauthorized missile launches, emergencies and disasters (Anderson 2023c; Salavrakos, Palmadessa and Radvila 2023; Cimbala 2023).

One of the most striking characteristics of modern international politics is its secular nature. The process of a clear distinction between the religious and political spheres can be considered completed in the vast majority of democratic states of the West: the motives for interaction on the world political arena are determined, first of all, by the interests of politics and economics, and only lastly by the interests of religion. However, in regions where Islam spreads, we observe the opposite trend, the growing influence of the religious factor on the political process. Today we can state the desire of the “Islamic State” not only to become isolated players in world politics, but also, what is much more important, to consolidate within the Islamic world (Sheikh 2023). Uniting under the auspices of international organizations, they are making attempts to create an alternative to the Western world, politically, economically, and ideologically. Determining the conditions and logic of the formation and development of Islam at the initial stage of its emergence will largely contribute to understanding the meaning and true goals of those political and legal norms that are reflected in the sources of Islam. Such an understanding makes it possible to guard against blind adherence and maintain a reasonable selection of values.

Over the years, attempts have been made to overcome these difficulties, to develop a different vision of the “Islamic state”, in which it becomes possible to consolidate democratic principles and values, as well as the achievements of secularization. These attempts are associated with the development of various projects of an “alternative Islamic state”, presented in various interpretations by many Muslim thinkers. Today, when the need to take into account the Islamic factor in international politics is more than urgent, they acquire particular relevance both in theoretical and practical terms. Therefore, the study of the phenomenon of the reformist movement in Islamic political thought is rightfully an important task of modern political science.

The book analyzes the trends in the new strategy of relations between the EU and Africa, as well as the development and formation of foreign economic relations (Mișcoiu and Petrica 2023; Lulat 2023). In the context of globalization of the economy and the deepening of the international division of labor, countries are increasingly interacting

with each other, introducing new elements and forms into this process. Economic relations between European and African states are of great theoretical and practical interest. The study and analysis of the interaction of two completely different groups of states, not only in terms of their level of economic and social development, but also in relation to factors of production, deserves increased attention, due to insufficient knowledge of this problem (Mișcoiu and Petrica 2023; Lulat 2023).

Since African countries gained independence, Europe has not lost its interest both in the natural resources of the continent and in the markets for its products. Moreover, the importance of possessing raw energy resources of a particular African country increases the impact on its internal socio-economic development, and therefore on the foreign policy and foreign economic policy of the state. It is this circumstance that gives oil, gas, water and many other factors the character of economic development, especially in a situation when the needs of most states for them are growing, and the supply is steadily declining. Accordingly, the interaction of countries in the field of extraction and use of natural resources contributes to the closest cooperation. For African countries, strengthening and diversifying the forms of foreign economic relations is even more important due to their economic backwardness. Thanks to Euro-African economic cooperation, African countries have the opportunity to implement political and economic reforms, prevent military conflicts and maintain stability in the region. Cooperation makes it possible to implement interregional, regional and subregional integration projects, and the creation of new economic actors at the primary level creates the preconditions for the development of European integration.

The book also comparatively analyzes the issues of Europeanization of Romania and the significance of US international relations with Poland (Mișcoiu 2023; Jones 2023; Anderson 2023c). The authors pay attention to the fact that integration associations play an important role in modern political realities, which are a reflection of the growing trend of interconnection between states and the need to solve a number of problems to ensure political stability, economic prosperity and security in different parts of the world. The geopolitical importance of Romania and Poland for the EU and the US is related to the promotion of future political, energy and economic projects, as well as the creation of a strong political union capable of confronting Russia and China.

The complex of internal transformations in Romania and Poland, arising as a reaction to the impact of the European integration agenda, is described by the phenomenon of Europeanization. The study of the mechanisms and effectiveness of external Europeanization of Romania and Poland expands the understanding of the capabilities of the EU as an actor in international politics. Against the backdrop of a radical restructuring of the symbolic space of Europe, the study of subregions with a specific historical fate and corresponding identitarian complexes is of particular importance. Understanding the internal political dynamics of post-socialist countries involved in the process of European integration indicates development trends and challenges formed around the core institutions of the European security system.

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PEACE PEDAGOGIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: THEORY AND PRACTICE
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Abstract

This book is dedicated to the problem of peace pedagogy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is becoming increasingly important throughout the world, taking into account the level of hostility, xenophobia and hate speech, as well as other potential threats and risks to humanity. The book analyzes the international development of peace pedagogies and the mechanism for their implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, identifying key words and formulating key questions. In this context, current issues and problems in the education system and political context of Bosnia and Herzegovina are analyzed. With the assistance of international organizations and Western countries, the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina advocates a more active and systematic strengthening of peace pedagogy in order to more effectively harness the potential of education as a means of reconciliation. The book examines the wide range of international and local initiatives that arose in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of integrating the values of peace and peace education into the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through formal and informal European educational mechanisms.

Keywords: peacebuilding competences, divisive ethnonationalist politics and narratives, ethnic divisiveness, country's teacher education policies, pre-war political and pedagogical grammar,

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post-war education reform process, cross-border pedagogical initiatives, peacebuilding through curriculum and pedagogy.

During UN peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, unique experience in practical interaction between the UN and regional organizations has been accumulated. It is important to be aware of what UN peacekeeping can and cannot achieve in a civil war. International and European peacebuilding and integration assistance provide an important channel of communication between parties, facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation. Their very participation and presence in the region brings relative calm and stability to the situation.

In the post-war society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, peace pedagogy should turn to personal communication between teacher and student, their dialogue, which contains limitless opportunities for the formation and development of human individuality based on European values. Pedagogical dialogue acts as a civilized, the only reasonable and humanistic alternative to ethno-political ambitions that impede peace and the search for balanced and reasonable solutions. It is pedagogical dialogue that meets the needs of peace education and democratization of social structures.

In the various chapters of this book, the authors analyze the mechanism of decolonization of education systems and peace education, which are becoming increasingly important throughout the world. In this sense, emphasis is placed on the key work of educators and teachers in the post-war society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby contributing to the Europeanization of the education system. It is no coincidence that the authors of the books problematize the Western understanding of peace and peacebuilding from the point of view of multi-perspective dialogue, without which it is not possible to create or maintain peace both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other post-war countries (Kasumagić-Kafedžić and Clarke-Habibi 2023; Pašalić-Kreso 2023; Emkić 2023).

This book consists of four main parts, each of which includes several chapters.

In the first part, the authors focus on peace pedagogy, concepts and contexts, thereby analyzing the international development of peace pedagogy and ways of their implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the chapters of the first part, the authors analyze problems in the education system and political context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The authors argue for more active and systematic strengthening of peace pedagogy to more effectively harness the potential of education as a vehicle for reconciliation. From the perspective of European values and the future membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU, the authors analyze the wide range of international and local initiatives that arose in the post-war period with the aim of integrating the values of peace and peace education into the education system of Bosnia and Herzegovina ((Kasumagić-Kafedžić and Clarke-Habibi 2023; Pašalić-Kreso 2023; Emkić 2023).

In the second part of the book, the authors focus on the mechanism of peacebuilding through teacher education. In this context, peacebuilding mechanisms through teacher education are important, as is the experience of the Western Balkans. The authors provide a comparative analysis of the main steps to modernize school curricula,

discussing the special role of teacher education and the importance of networking in the field of human rights and democracy and peace. The authors explore and focus on the unique opportunities in the education system of Bosnia and Herzegovina that open up for teachers to become critical researchers (Dujković-Blagojević 2023; Kasumagić-Kafedžić 2023; Mavrak 2023; Clarke-Habibi 2023).

The results of the authors' research on reflective practices and cultural mediators in foreign language lessons are interesting, thereby emphasizing the special value of integrating critical and intercultural pedagogy into teacher education. In this sense, the book emphasizes Gestalt psychology in adult education as a path to inner, interpersonal and intergroup peace (Mavrak 2023). Clearly this is a process of self-awareness in the general approach to adult education and teacher training. It is also important that the authors analyze the teacher's identity and its role in the context of post-conflict peace education practice, thereby using narrative analysis of interviews with teachers (Clarke-Habibi 2023). This provides an opportunity to explore such issues as teachers relate to peace education in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third part of the book examines ways of building peace through curriculum and pedagogy (Plasto and Dujković Blagojević 2023; Ljubojević 2023; Karahasanović-Avdibegović 2023; Sobhani 2023; Šiljak and Šahinović 2023; Cerić, Alić and Habibović 2023). It is clear that the key challenges and opportunities for promoting peace pedagogy are possible through history education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To achieve this goal, a comparative analysis of curricula, textbooks and examples from the practice of teaching world and national history is important for the authors. It is of civilized importance that the authors share their practices of peacebuilding in the classroom, drawing on their teaching experience. It is very interesting to learn how language and literature education can enable young people to develop an analytical perspective on issues in post-war society and their own role as social actors in the European integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Plasto and Dujković Blagojević 2023; Ljubojević 2023).

Peace Pedagogy in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides an empirical assessment of intercultural sensitivity among high school and university students, revealing important implications for the success of peace pedagogy in the post-war society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this part of the book much can be learned about practical methods of engaging students in a transformative pedagogy of peace based on drama, as well as the role of theater in promoting social and political change in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ljubojević 2023; Karahasanović-Avdibegović 2023). The practical example of the Education for Peace project and the inclusion of pedagogy peace themes in all curricula are also very educational. The authors provide further examples of a case study of the the ETOS Initiative and SAPERE program, which introduced ethical reflection using intercultural pedagogy, competencies and methods (Šiljak and Šahinović 2023; Cerić, Alić and Habibović 2023).

The fourth part of the book examines the challenges of partnerships for peace education at the community level. All research efforts focus on issues of peace, citizenship, democracy and difference, demonstrating the potential for community participation in development and promoting a culture of peace (Millican and Kasumagić-Kafedžić 2023; Kasumagić-Kafedžić, Pickering and Brown 2023). In this part, it is interesting to learn about the most important results of 23-year-long American-Bosnian

Collaboration (ABC) project, which combines non-formal education with interinstitutional, intercultural, intergenerational, school-based learning (Kasumagić-Kafedžić, Pickering and Brown 2023). In particular, it is interesting to learn about models of community and student cooperation in order to promote a culture of peace and intercultural understanding among Bosnian youth.

The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is closely connected with the transformations that modern Europe and the EU political system are experiencing. The interweaving of the processes of globalization and regionalization, the aggravation of security problems, the introduction of new technologies and much more is important for both large and small European countries, and largely determines the direction and pace of their sustainable development. At the same time, the long-term development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other Balkan countries on the basis of the European social, economic and political model integrates the economy, social values and political culture of these states.

The Balkan region is heterogeneous in terms of the level of economic and political development of its constituent countries, and is also characterized by a high level of conflict potential. Solving the problem of stabilizing the region, the UN, EU, NATO and other organizations specifically developed a long-term strategy for integrating the Balkan countries into their structures, which took into account not only the possibilities of peaceful coexistence, but also the escalation of armed conflicts and the growth of crisis phenomena.

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REVIEW BY:

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Abstract

This book provides a comparative analysis of the public pedagogy of Instagram in the social networking system, which today is not only one of the leading channels whose content is actively consumed by young people, but also a platform where content from various information and communication environments is posted and distributed. In this context, modern research into Instagram public pedagogy is aimed primarily at studying the phenomena of civic and social activity, communication barriers and ways to overcome them.

The book provides examples of various social and humanities studies that occupy the study of public pedagogy, as well as the influence of social networks and virtual reality on behavior and perception of various events.

In this book, the political science research problem lies in the formation of digital political pedagogy and the pedagogical contradiction of applying traditional theoretical approaches to the formation of public attitudes in the new environment of virtual social networks. Knowledge of the peculiarities of the formation of civil and political attitudes on Instagram and other social networks will allow us to develop effective methods for diagnosing and leveling the influence of social networks.

Keywords: visual political methodology, political ecojustice, digital political science, public pedagogy, political Instagram, activism, extractivism.

The development of Internet technologies in the modern communication space is a new stage in the modernization of the information society. Improving electronic resources, as well as digitalization of all spheres of life, allows us to take a fresh look at public space.

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Informing citizens about a particular event occurs very quickly, new and flexible channels of interaction between society and the state are created.

This book examines various issues of digital political pedagogy and the public pedagogy of Instagram, uses both innovative and digital methods to politically analyze civil disobedience, and resists the case study of the online controversy over the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The purpose of this study is to identify the civil and political mechanism for the formation of personal and public attitudes in social networks (Karsgaard 2023, 1-20, 21-74).

The book examines social activism and opposition to the Trans Mountain Pipeline in Canada, where there are overlapping networks of concerned citizens. With the goal of protecting the lands of indigenous peoples and environmental activists, the book explores the ways Instagram can be used to document pipeline construction, as well as policing and land degradation (Karsgaard 2023, 75-130, 131-181). This is what the author considers important in public pedagogy, where social networks acquire civic and political educational power, influencing real publicity and virtual reality.

The objectives of this book were the following: 1) Theoretical research on social networks in digital political pedagogy is summarized; 2) The specifics of Instagram and other social networks in political life are determined; 3) Social and political models of the formation of civil attitudes are analyzed; 4) The public grounds for the formation of political attitudes in virtual social networks are considered; 5) A model of the social and pedagogical mechanism for the formation of political attitudes in social networks has been developed; 6) The methodological features of the study of the process of formation of political attitudes in social networks are determined; 7) An empirical analysis of the formation of political attitudes in social networks was carried out; 8) The main strategies and counter-strategies for the formation of political attitudes in virtual social networks are substantiated.

Noting the significant role and flexibility of Internet communication channels of public policy, citizens can in one way or another influence public authorities when solving problems of a socio-political nature. With the help of such a mechanism as social media, citizens are able to exchange received information, comment on it, as well as publish and disseminate their own, conveying this or that position not only to the public, but also to government authorities. Thus, social media are a set of communication tools of the modern Internet space, with the help of which participants in this space are able to receive, create and integrate the necessary information in order to form a certain political agenda and public opinion; influence the civic position of participants and government authorities (Karsgaard 2023, 183-229, 231-254).

The analysis of interactive mechanisms using the example of the Instagram page of the Trans Mountain Pipeline civic initiative reflects several aspects. The first of these is the proactive use of tools to attract large audiences to cover the issue of the construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline (Karsgaard 2023, 255-271). The use of posts, comments, and reposts became not only a starting point, but also contributed to a truly wide dissemination of information about the problem. The second side of the issue lies in the final results of appealing to the authorities. Giving wide publicity as one of the stages of dissemination and involving a large number of people. Obviously, many famous people and bloggers with large audiences shared information about the construction of the Trans

Mountain Pipeline on their page and encouraged the public to actively cover the situation on social networks.

Some of the influencers on their Instagram page openly appealed to Canada's political elite to focus attention on the Trans Mountain Pipeline issue. The initiative really gained public resonance and spread quite quickly on social networks. The project leaders were not only able to interest ordinary network users, but also attract opinion leaders, which led to decisive action by the authorities. Using interactive mechanisms, coverage of the Trans Mountain Pipeline was carried out not through direct channels of influence, but through indirect ones. This approach is explained by the desire of the project initiators to give the problem significant public resonance and gather a fairly wide target audience around them. The use of mechanisms to highlight the problem was necessary so that not only ordinary users, but also opinion leaders would pay attention to the initiative.

Interactive mechanisms used in social networks effectively and accurately convey the problem to government authorities. They can only be a catalyst or part of a large-scale campaign by the project initiators and act offline: going to rallies organized through social media, sending appeals to regional authorities, filing complaints with the prosecutor's office, etc. Having indirect channels of influence (through ordinary users and opinion leaders), initiators of movements using social networks are able to launch an information and communication mechanism and gather the necessary target audience around themselves. This is done so that the authorities that can influence the solution of the problem are aware of the initiative. Through such mechanisms, constructive dialogue with the government can be effectively carried out.

The Trans Mountain Pipeline Citizens' Initiative is an active example of the use of Instagram, online activism, and crowdsourcing technologies in social media. The project leaders, not having effective legal instruments of influence at hand, used the necessary mechanisms to attract a huge number of people on the network. At the same time, using not only the potential of ordinary Instagram users, but also opinion leaders with a large audience. All this was carried out using interactive mechanisms: publication of posts on relevant topics; using comments as a mechanism to attract famous people and ordinary users; distribution of hashtags and reposts for posts; active tagging of opinion leader pages.

Noting all the points on which the initiative can influence the decisions of public authorities, the question remains about the effectiveness of the created project. When using social media as a tool of public policy, it seems possible to evaluate any social movement. This is necessary in order to determine the characteristics of the information field around which events are formed and to analyze the feedback of interactive mechanisms and technologies.

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