

### **In this Issue**

In the context of confrontation and military conflict, political transformations occurring in various spheres of public life, processes reshaping these spheres in most Eastern Partnership countries and elsewhere, are taking shape within a global restructuring of global society. These transformations are impossible without the active intervention of the state, local governments, and other actors within the political system, and therefore without the formation of a specific set of means, methods, and new instruments for political governance in developed and underdeveloped societies.

Contemporary social realities require a thorough understanding of the resilience of political development in the context of transitivity, which prompts an examination of the existing dynamic imbalance of political exchanges and the asymmetry of political relations in communicative discourse through the prism of asymmetry and symmetry, stability, and sustainability. New demands for changes in the quality of public administration highlight the challenges of studying the nature of interactions between government structures, civil society organizations, the media, and communications. Sustainable political development and the increased social effectiveness of governing institutions necessitate an integrative approach to the legitimization of political change, allowing for the elimination of meaningful sociocultural gaps in the political space.

The key characteristics and development trends of the political system in modern global and regional societies reflect the specific nature of transformation processes, representing a complex set of qualitative changes in the structure, functioning, and interactions of the political system with the geopolitical and geoeconomic environment. Political institutions and dominant value orientations simultaneously act as both a condition of existence and a result of functioning in relation to each other. During the process of political transformation, global and regional societies have encountered a number of problems characteristic of countries in transition (high social costs of reform, oligarchic ownership, widespread corruption, and instability of democratic institutions). The transformation of the political systems of the Eastern Partnership countries took place in challenging social and cultural conditions, as traditional components of the value system, established types of political consciousness, and dominant strategies of political behavior to some extent hindered the adoption of democratic norms and the entrenchment of democratic institutions. Therefore, democratic transformations in many countries have been accompanied by a delegitimization of political innovations based on values.

In 'Measuring the Political System Stability of Armenia and Israel from 2008 to 2023: A Comparative Analysis Using the SIPS Model', Armen Mirzoyan analyzes the key political, social, and economic factors influencing the stability and instability of the political systems of Armenia and Israel. The influence of various factors in the context of challenges to the political systems of Armenia and Israel, integration, transparency, cross-border development, and the formation of economic and information spaces are so numerous and intense that it is difficult to quickly and accurately assess the extent of their destabilizing potential and make appropriate, timely decisions. In some cases, external actors outperform influencing factors in the speed and accuracy of decisions and actions. The recurrence and effectiveness of

destabilizing technologies in modern challenges, political upheavals, civil unrest, conflicts, and wars demonstrate the difficulty of developing effective technologies and template solutions for ensuring political stability in small states such as Armenia and Israel. The urgency of searching for technologies to ensure political stability in Armenia and Israel is confirmed by current political processes and attempts at external destabilization, as the Middle East and South Caucasus have been and remain territories of geopolitical competition, a struggle for military-political and geo-economic influence in these regions. Therefore, the issue of ensuring political stability in Armenia and Israel becomes a matter of strategic stability. Moreover, complex regional relations with neighboring countries are fraught with deep contradictions and divisions, which unfriendly countries or terrorist organizations attempt to exploit to wage proxy wars and destabilize the situation. In such circumstances, effective technologies are needed to ensure the stability of the political system and build social immunity in Armenian and Israeli societies against external destabilizing factors.

In her article ‘The difficult path of parliamentarism in Armenia’s democratic transition: how does the separation of powers affect political responsibility in an unconsolidated society?’, Khosrovadukht Azatyan analyzes the role of parliamentarism and constitutional reforms in addressing identified shortcomings in the state-building system and enhancing the effectiveness of public authority in Armenia. In particular, to consistently implement the principle of separation and balance of powers, it is necessary to develop a parliamentary form of government, a multi-party system, dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties, and civil society organizations in Armenia. The author believes it is important to subject the essence of the principle of separation and balance of powers to political and legal analysis, as well as to propose new solutions for improving the mechanism for implementing this principle at the current stage of building Armenian parliamentarism in the context of constitutional reforms. The principle of separation and balance of powers in the system of building a parliamentary form of government in Armenia was legally enshrined in constitutional and legal documents, but its political significance and meaning were not fully understood in political consciousness and civic culture.

In ‘A Rational-Functionalist Approach to Analyzing Cooperation within the BRICS Framework: multipolarity of international relations and assessment of its possibilities’, Franck Jiresert Techa Djoumessi analyzes the specifics of interstate cooperation within BRICS, taking into account that the transregional partnership among countries is based on the principles of equality and mutual respect and aims to intensively develop multilateral economic, political, social, and cultural cooperation. Furthermore, the BRICS transregional partnership offers the gradual development of an alternative to the current global governance system. In the political sphere, this entails jointly countering the international terrorist threat and resolving local and regional conflicts exclusively through peaceful means. In the economic sphere, the BRICS transregional community supports infrastructure projects in developing countries participating in the transregional partnership. The BRICS transregional partnership is based on the deep-seated national political and economic interests of its member states, far removed from short-term market considerations, making the BRICS factor a significant phenomenon in the global community. Through the multifaceted interaction

of its member countries, the BRICS transregional partnership strengthens their positions in the global political and economic arena through the creation of synergies. This study provides an opportunity to comprehensively examine the activities of the BRICS transregional partnership within the current system of global governance and analyze the potential for cooperation among BRICS member countries in reforming the architecture of the current global governance system. The relevance of this study is also determined by the existence of contradictions, as the BRICS transregional association is characterized by weak structure and the presence of contradictions between member countries. A detailed, specific strategy for the future activities of the BRICS transregional community has not yet been developed, nor have effective mechanisms been developed for implementing decisions made at BRICS summits.

In the article 'The Political Hybridization of Middle Eastern States: Iraq as a Case Study', Kardo Rached and Jalal Mistaffa discuss the current development of Iraq's political system in the context of Middle Eastern transformation processes. The problem of Iraq's political hybridization and the search for a model of state structure adequate to the changing geopolitical configuration persists. This search, its dynamics, results, political structure, etc., are linked to the formation of a new political elite. In the Middle East regional dimensions of modernity, the problem of the hybrid political regime and public authority in Iraq, the ruling elite, its nature, social and religious character, effectiveness and legitimacy has come to the fore. The example of Iraq is illustrative and particularly interesting because the formation of a new elite occurred against the backdrop of political and sectarian conflict, under American occupation, and later, amidst confrontation and the fight against terrorist groups. Furthermore, the emergence of a new Iraqi state and a new elite in Iraqi society occurred simultaneously with regional transformation processes characterized by global and regional confrontation between various centers of power, which, in turn, impacted Iraq's domestic political processes. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by US-led coalition forces led to the formation of a new administration. Despite the proclamation of democratic principles, ethno-religious and social challenges nevertheless shaped Iraq's future. The challenges of transitioning from an authoritarian form of governance to the proclaimed democratic principles of forming a hybrid regime, influenced by the ethno-religious composition of the Iraqi population, were revealed. The policies of the new political elite played a particularly important role in the hybridization of the political regime in post-Saddam Iraqi state-building, which is analyzed in this article.

In the article 'Homeland, belonging, and return: push-pull factors of Armenian repatriation during the Russia-Ukraine conflict', Nvard Melkonyan and Yuliana Melkumyan discuss push-pull factors and the specifics of Armenian repatriation in the context of post-Soviet conflict transformations and Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine since 2022. It is precisely in this context of a reconsideration of the value of interethnic relations that the differentiation and integration of communities, the increased migration and immigration of Armenians of all ages, affect psychological, social, economic, and other aspects of life. In this sense, homeland, belonging, and repatriation of Armenians have become processes of adaptation and resocialization that have new implications for human security and are therefore examined in this article across various dimensions of push-pull factors. Among the areas in which this issue is

being addressed, the study of the socialization and adaptation of people in a new socio-cultural environment, and the conditions for developing their readiness for responsible life management, is currently gaining particular significance. It is precisely in the area of the psychological characteristics of repatriates' assimilation into a new socio-cultural environment that the psychological and sociological study of intergenerational interactions is particularly relevant. It is noteworthy that the article analyzes the characteristic features of Armenian repatriates' attitudes toward their evolving life situation and the people around them at different stages of adaptation and maturation, subject to varying external and internal determinacy. These differences are determined by how they transform national identity and personal conformity during the stages of assimilating a new socio-cultural environment and its emotional acceptance. The solution to this problem lies in finding ways and means of organizing psychological and pedagogical support for the adaptation of generational strata within the socio-cultural environment of Armenian society.

In the article 'Legitimacy beyond performance: trust, accountability, and executive authority in transitional regimes', Marina Margaryan analyzes various dimensions of legitimacy in transitional countries, demonstrating how trust, accountability, and executive power influence the effectiveness and quality of governance. The author draws attention to how and in what ways the effective organization of social and political life determines the unique relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. The diversity of executive power forms in the transitional regimes of post-Soviet countries determines specific types of organization and functioning of public authority, the distribution of powers among state bodies, the use of electoral procedures inherent to these cultural types, and so on. In modern political discourse, the rules and procedures necessary for effective governance are inextricably linked to the concept of legitimacy. Moreover, Western political theory defines legitimacy as the primary criterion for democratic governance and the rule of law, through the prism of which the structure and operation of various mechanisms of interaction between society and the state are assessed. However, in the transitional regimes of post-Soviet countries that consider themselves transitional democracies, society views politicians, political parties, and political institutions with a considerable degree of mistrust. The author examines the case of Armenia as an example. With the advent of a democratic government, support and approval were expected from Armenian society. However, following the Velvet Revolution of 2018, citizens and CSOs began to demand greater support from the executive branch and parliament, viewing representative democracy, especially the mechanisms for its implementation, with doubt.

In the article 'New political growth points for strategic cooperation between Russia and Iran: sharing experience or strengthening trust?', Garik Keryan and Svetlana Jilavyan discuss the historical and contemporary characteristics of relations between Russia and Iran, taking into account the dynamics at the bilateral, regional, and extra-regional levels. Geopolitical factors and the potential for developing economic, political, cultural, and military relations provide fertile ground for Russian-Iranian cooperation in various areas. Advocating for each other's interests is a prerequisite for their significant influence on security in various regions, potentially even shifting the balance of power. Changes in the foreign policy strategies of the Islamic Republic of

Iran and the Russian Federation have led to a shift toward realism, aligning the two countries' views on cooperation and providing greater opportunities for developing bilateral relations. According to the authors, common points of contact that could serve as the basis for developing bilateral relations include: the transition to a multipolar world, an emphasis on non-Western centers of power, and the priority of developing bilateral, multilateral, and regional relations with a particular emphasis on shared interests and threats. In this sense, military-technical cooperation between Russia and Iran is developing dynamically and has achieved certain mutually positive results, overcoming previously inhibiting factors. Joint interventions in the Syrian and Afghan crises, along with strengthened cooperation in recent years, have elevated Russian-Iranian military relations to a new level, encompassing not only the traditional sale and purchase of arms but also joint military operations.

In her article 'U.S.-Iran Hostility and the Pursuit of Nuclear Technology Development in the Context of the Global Energy Transition: An Integrative Analysis', Rotimi Adeforiti analyzes the main factors driving the strategic conflict between the U.S. and Iran over the Iranian nuclear program, which remains unresolved and represents a serious confrontation and challenge to the international non-proliferation regime. Iran's potential emergence as a nuclear power is not only the cause of hostile relations between the U.S. and Iran, but will also, from time to time, trigger a crisis in the long-tested but still functioning nuclear non-proliferation regime. At the same time, many positions regarding the formation of a new security architecture in the context of Iran's nuclear program remain controversial, mutually exclusive, and therefore underdeveloped. In this article, the issue of Iran's nuclear program is somewhat politicized; approaches to it do not correspond to modern realities and require improvement. The danger lies not so much in the Iranian nuclear program itself, but in the confrontation and policy of sanctions, military threats, and Iran's isolation to achieve U.S. strategic goals. Therefore, the question of how to assess Iran's nuclear program in the context of regional and international security merits special study, which is undertaken in this paper. All of this necessitates examining Iran's nuclear program through the lens of broader global security issues. The situation surrounding Iran's nuclear program is also worth considering, largely in the context of the thirty-year standoff between the U.S. and Iran, the latter's aspirations for regional hegemony, the fundamental differences in the two countries' leaderships' views on the structure of the modern world and each other's place in it, and the resolution of many international problems, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. This has a significant impact on discussions regarding the preservation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the effectiveness of international organizations such as the IAEA and the UN, and has a significant impact on multilateral and bilateral relations.

This issue of the journal presents two book reviews on the geopolitics of the Balkans, digital humanism, and the humane dimension of the transformation of democracy, economy, and culture in the digital age. Geopolitically, the Balkans are one of the most significant cross-border regions in the global political landscape, boasting both a favorable geostrategic position and a high potential for conflict. The historical rivalry between great powers for control of the Balkans has now taken on a new form, based on geoeconomic principles. In the context of digitalization, the humanities are

striving to adapt to ongoing changes, attempting to enhance their own status and build a knowledge system modeled on the natural sciences, striving to operate with a formalized language and utilize methodologies characteristic of the natural and technical sciences. Thus, in the context of digitalization, both established and emerging technologies are actively developing: artificial intelligence, virtual, augmented, and mixed reality, distributed ledger technology or blockchain, additive manufacturing, and multidimensional printing. These technologies have a significant impact on both the economy and the social sphere, and they generate far more than just benefits.

***Editorial Board***