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## ***Journal of Political Science: Bulletin of Yerevan University***

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## **In this Issue**

At the present stage, the global community is looking for an answer not only to military and conflict challenges, but also to the ecological challenge of our civilization, which is the quintessence of the results of its destructive economic and nature-forming activities. The deterioration of the standard and quality of life in many countries of the Eastern Partnership, emerging difficulties in the development of the world economy, and finally, the general systemic crisis of modern civilization are associated with the ecological problem, military clashes and threats of new escalations in the post-Soviet region. The conditions of human survival require more active development and implementation of a single global strategy for safe social development, guaranteeing the transition to a society where the interests of the economy, politics, and social life will be purposefully coordinated with the possibilities of nature. This can be considered a discovery of our time and the main reason for the formation of the strategy of co-evolution of society and nature.

The concept of resilience in the modern South Caucasus is more of a rational idea than a model for future social development. It has become an alternative to the contradictory processes taking place in societies, when economic, political, intellectual inequality between individuals, social groups, regions and countries, contradictions between states have reached their culmination. The question of a fundamental change in sustainable development guidelines has arisen, which was caused by social, economic and environmental changes and is aimed at finding new alternative models and ideals for the future. The main ideas of co-evolution and Armenia's Crossroads of Peace project are extremely consonant with the traditions, spirit and mentality of post-war Armenia and meet the interests of its actors. The implementation of Armenia's Crossroads of Peace project should guarantee peace, ensuring a civiliarchic transition of the country from uncontrolled spontaneous development to controlled, harmonious, safe in all respects progressive development with the preservation of the natural environment.

The transformation of geopolitical competition in the South Caucasus and the split of international law and the regional community in realpolitik and the digital environment continue. The systemic earthquake of integration processes and humanitarian law, which happened and continues with the Second Karabakh War of 2020, with the blockade of the Lachin corridor for 9 months and which was opened by the Azerbaijani authorities only so that Armenians would simply flee Nagorno-Karabakh due to ethnic cleansing.

Political scientists have yet to analyze the main factors that, despite international and European efforts, led to Azerbaijan initiating large-scale aggression against the peaceful population of Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, 2023. Political researchers have yet to explain why the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, EU, NATO and other intergovernmental organizations were unable to guarantee the security and rights of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, who were blockaded by Azerbaijan from December 2022 until the ethnic cleansing and mass exodus in late September 2023.

In 'Persecutory policies against Roma in Nazi Germany', Andrej Pupik analyzes the repressive mechanisms of persecution directed against Roma in Nazi Germany. The

article discusses the arrest of Roma and their transfer to concentration camps in Nazi Germany, where Roma wore black triangular patches, considered to symbolize “antisocial elements”, or green ones, denoting “professional criminals”. The article emphasizes that one of the first decisions taken by the agency was to extend racial laws to the Roma. It is noted that after 1936, the Nuremberg Laws began to apply to the Roma. It is emphasized that in 1936 the xenophobic mechanism of the Nazi German police towards the Roma became centralized and bureaucratic measures for the systematic persecution of Roma were expanded.

In his article ‘Russia’s Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus in the Context of Increasing New Regional Competition’, Zhak Manukyan, based on a comparative analysis of various factors of Russia’s foreign policy in the South Caucasus during the Second Karabakh War of 2020 and in the post-war period, gives his assessment of Russia’s regional strategy and hard power. The author provides a generalized description of the consequences of the Second Karabakh War, which radically changed the geopolitical and geo-economic situation in the South Caucasus region. The idea is substantiated that new realities have emerged for further regional dimensions in the South Caucasus. The author examines the main factors that determined the comprehensive analysis of key changes in Nagorno-Karabakh and in the countries of the South Caucasus, located in close proximity to the Russian and Turkish borders.

In the article ‘Human Security as a Factor of Sustainable Security in Post-War Armenia: Global Responsibility of Small States’, Michele Barbieri and Nane Aleksanyan discuss various dimensions of security in the contemporary post-war Armenian society, which is becoming increasingly aware of the need for an organized confrontation with the countless dangers, risks, challenges generated by the unfolding escalation and militarization of Azerbaijan. The article examines the characteristic features of global threats and the outbreak of the new coronavirus infection COVID-19, negative manifestations of a social, economic and political nature, increasing the seriousness of biosecurity and environmental disaster, which led to the understanding that the solution to the problem of human security by simple protection from threats is impossible, and the search for ways out of the current crisis situation must be considered in conjunction with the development of the post-pandemic and post-war Armenian society. The transformation of geopolitical interests after the Second Karabakh War of 2020, associated with the acquisition of conflict features by the system of international relations, is accompanied by growing political instability. The desire of post-war Armenia to take the most advantageous position in the new hierarchy of the world leads to an increase in contradictions between global players. The authors conclude that geopolitical tensions complicate the already difficult social and economic situation in the South Caucasus. The problems of the right to privacy, information and trade wars, sanctions policy, and declining economic growth call into question the well-being and safe development of the countries of the South Caucasus. The emergence of the new coronavirus infection COVID-19 and its spread in a short period of time to almost all regions of the world, as well as the Second Karabakh War and the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian War, have once again confirmed the urgent need to revise the existing system of ensuring human security.



In 'Theoretical Approaches to Political Stability: How Do Theories Interpret the Factors Influencing It?', Armen Mirzoyan examines the features of applying scientific and theoretical approaches to studying political stability in changing conditions. The author gives a generalized description of political stability as the ability of a political system to be stable, resilient and effective. The idea is substantiated that modern political systems contain numerous contradictions that make the system unresilient and destabilized. The issue of rethinking and understanding political stability and the configuration of factors that ensure it continues to be a controversial one. This direction is also supplemented by the consideration of the fact that in a number of countries, waves of instability have taken both politicians and the expert community by surprise. This indicates a significant change in modern reality, as well as the fact that operational political and ideological schemes of the past may have reached the limits of their applicability. The author suggests that the revolutionary wave of destabilization from below in the modern world will not subside, rather, on the contrary, we should expect an escalation of tension, further weakening of political regimes, and an increase in the entropy of the world system.

In her article 'Corruption and neo-colonialism in Latin America', Nubia Nieto analyzes the main factors of corruption that hinder the development of Latin American countries. The main content of the study is the analysis of various aspects of corruption and neocolonialism that affect the economic sphere of Latin American countries, disrupting the market-competitive coordination mechanism and reducing the efficiency of the economy, slowing down its growth. The article analyzes the mechanism of corruption and anti-corruption policies in Latin American countries, showing how it hinders the inflow of investments, complicating the implementation of state social programs. Ultimately, all this has a negative impact on the standard of living of the population of Latin American countries, affecting a large part of it. This article attempts to reveal the relationship between colonialism and corruption in Latin America, influencing the stratification of the population and the formation of oligarchic groups through artificial and unfair redistribution of finances. Among other things, corruption creates mistrust of society towards the state and, since it affects the judicial system, towards all legal institutions.

In the article 'Rethinking the Mosul Dam: A Reassessment of Its Impact Beyond the Traditional Narratives', Filippo Verre examines the issues surrounding the Mosul Dam in the context of key infrastructure projects in Iraq. The author's research objective was to attempt to assess the role of the Mosul Dam, as water has become one of the main limiting factors for economic development in many countries and regions, and as the growth of global water consumption, along with increasing levels of water pollution, leads to an increase in the number of countries with decreasing availability of water resources. Climate change will also intensify contrasts, especially droughts and floods, which will be more intense. All this will generate new conflicts around water, both domestic and international. The author concludes that the Mosul Dam has been the subject of extensive debate and scrutiny, often overshadowed by negative narratives regarding its safety and environmental impact. The high hydrological dependence between the countries in the region is characterized not only by the large number of actors, but also by the uneven nature of water distribution.

This volume of the journal includes three book reviews on cyberspace, cyber conflict and cyber arms control, preserving peace in troubled times, and populism and accountability. These books analyze key dimensions of contemporary cyberspace, thereby becoming a critical factor in global, regional, and national strategic stability. New types of cyber weapons can lead to an escalation of tensions up to a full-scale military conflict between nuclear powers. Thus, ensuring cybersecurity is becoming one of the key factors that directly impact strategic stability. At the same time, no state is able to protect itself from all cyber threats on its own. These books focused on such aspects as maintaining peace in troubled times; principles of regulation of national and international security in the digital environment; spheres of information security; public bodies in the sphere of national security and cybersecurity, their powers, interaction with each other; perception of the role of information and communication technologies as a factor of strategic stability.

An analysis of the contradictory processes of democratization taking place in modern democratic and authoritarian countries allows us to conclude that it is necessary to include in the legal system effective mechanisms for monitoring the use of democratic institutions for populist purposes. In everyday reality, the spread of the values of freedom and democracy often gives rise to the abuse of information channels to influence public opinion, leading to political and legal demagoguery that has replaced effective mechanisms for ensuring the rule of law, law and order, and legal regulation in general. The emergence of democratic institutions and mechanisms designed to implement the will of the people enables individual participants in the political process, using modern technologies for manipulating consciousness, to realize their selfish interests without formally violating the law.

*Ashot Aleksanyan*

## PERSECUTORY POLICIES AGAINST ROMA IN NAZI GERMANY

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### Abstract

The article provides an analysis of the persecution measures against the Roma in Nazi Germany, identifying what measures were taken and, in particular, what tragic consequences they led to on a practical level. The article comparatively analyzes various aspects of the persecution of Roma in Germany, and indeed throughout Europe, preceding the totalitarian seizure of power by the Nazis in 1933 and the emergence of Nazi Germany. The main focus is on identifying the stages of the persecution policy in Nazi Germany against Roma, as well as the chronology of the adoption of the persecution policy against Roma in Nazi Germany in 1933-1945. As a result, a turning point in the anti-Roma policy is identified and characterized, which included both the freezing of Roma mobility and the resettlement of Roma, as well as their deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

**Keywords:** German society, enemies hierarchy, persecutions, Roma, foundation, Nazi Germany, Slovak state.

### Introduction

Roma in Germany are a minority with deep historical roots. Throughout the entire historical period, the Roma in Western Europe were discriminated against by various steps and measures. With the emergence of Nazi Germany, the systematic persecution of various minorities began, including the Roma. However, it was not something new in the case of the Roma, because the Nazis followed up on some measures from previous historical stages.

We can learn about these persecutions against Roma during the Third Reich and not only during it from important historians and their works. Compared to the Slovak historiography during the Slovak state, the German one deals in depth with the past - the position of the Roma during the Nazi empire.

The aim of this article is the analysis of persecutions against the Roma, as well as the synthesis of key facts. The article will consist of four main chapters, and the fourth

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chapter will contain several subsections related to the given issue. In terms of methodology, the article will use analysis and synthesis.

### **The rise of Nazi Germany and the Roma issue**

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of the German Reich and his political party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), came to power. Within the first weeks of their rule, Nazi officials eliminated political opposition, abolished basic democratic rights, and began to shape German society as an Aryan and homogeneous national community based on the leader principle. Related to race, the Nazi regime in Europe regarded the Aryan race as superior to all. Although the Roma were enemies of the National Socialists, they represented the lowest position in the hierarchy of enemies (Aretakis 2024; Fings 2016). They formed the so-called group 'unworthy of life' (Rupprecht and Koenig 2010).

At the beginning of 1933, the Roma minority was represented to a small extent in Nazi Germany. There were approximately 26,000 of them, and the Nazi leadership considered them a community that could not adapt to society. There were several reasons - a nomadic way of life, not accepting the values of regular work, and they also faced accusations that they were burdening social institutions. The state saw in them the so-called 'foreign element'. For that reason, the society began to deal with the 'solution' of the Roma issue (Lewy 2000).

Historical statistics on the number of victims of the Nazi regime show that 21,500 Roma died in Nazi Germany and annexed Austria, which represented 68.9% (Lutz 1995). In total, 258,000 Roma perished during the Third Reich and occupied Europe (Rummel 1991).

After the seizure of power by German fascist officials, there was an escalation of the persecutory measures taken before the Third Reich (in the Weimar Republic). The campaign first applied to nomadic Roma, but later it developed as a comprehensive measure against all Roma (Barany 2001).

The attitude of the general public towards the Roma was distrustful for a long time, and the Nazis had no positive intentions with the Roma issue (Kenrick and Grattan 1972). The policies that were subsequently adopted by the Nazi government were a stricter version of the measures adopted during previous historical periods (Zimmermann 2002).

There were several circumstances that facilitated the Nazis' path to power. They were helped by the widespread interest in German society in moral decay and the spread of crime. The Nazis exploited these public fears, presenting themselves as advocates of law and order. They pledged to untie the hands of the police and to deal radically with criminals, who allegedly included Roma (Lewy 2000).

In its initial phase, National Socialist propaganda addressed the frustrated classes as well as the declassified groups it relied on, or it was based on their interest in National Socialist politics. The atmosphere after the lost war in 1918 contributed significantly to this. Based on this, even the layers of society that did not agree with A. Hitler signed up for Nazism. The Nazis used mass gatherings, marches, and torchlight processions of members of the NSDAP (Lužica 2004).

The Nazi regime was based on certain foundations. He primarily took the concept of genetic drive (rooted in the ideas of 19th century social Darwinists) and took it a step further. Based on this, Hitler based his entire ideology on the premise of struggle, which he considered to be the root of everything. In connection with the Roma issue, he advocated the denial of the Indo-Aryan origin of the Roma (Lee 2008). His ideas were translated into practice, while in the practical sphere he not only followed the laws of the Weimar Republic, but also found inspiration in the laws from the 17th and 18th centuries directed against the Roma (Yates 1982; Yates 1949).

Also, at both levels of the state administration, the National Socialist ideology perceived the Roma from three points of view - the work-social, racial-political and economic point of view. From a work-social point of view, they allegedly represented a "burden on the social system" due to frequent unemployment and poor productivity, or not increasing the national product. The basis of the racially-politically motivated persecution of the Roma was the racial laws promulgated as a result of the Reich Freedom Party Assembly in Nuremberg in 1935. Economically, the Roma presence meant unused labor and local industry disrupted by nomadism (Gilsenbach and Hohmann 1992).

In general, Nazi policies resulted in a reduction of public and social benefits, police authorities exacted extremely high rents for itinerant hostels serving Roma. Several places where Roma stayed were also destroyed (Zimmermann 2002). As a result of these policies, the Roma were also labeled as an "unproductive and racially inferior class" who were allegedly prone to crime. These stereotypes defined them as social outsiders, facilitated repression by multiple authorities, and provided the rationale for their exclusion and eventual extermination (Milton 2001).

### **Stages of the policy of persecution of Roma in Nazi Germany**

The policy of the Nazis towards the Roma minority developed in several stages. In the first period, 1933-1937, local and state authorities intensified the control and bullying measures they had used in the earlier years of the Weimar Republic. In the second period, from around 1937, the Nazi regime subjected the Roma to in-depth investigations and sometimes to imprisonment in concentration camps. Roma were used for the 'crime prevention' program, which placed them in preventive police custody within concentration camps. In the third part, the racial legislation against the Jews was extended to the Roma. The third stage began in 1938, the so-called Himmler's decree on the "Fight against the Roma Plague". For the first time, this decree was based on racial criteria. From 1938, the alleged racial inferiority of the so-called mixed Roma was explicitly mentioned in the decrees issued against the "gypsy plague" (Lewy 2000; Lewy 1999).

Several relevant historians dealing with the topic of persecution in Nazi Germany present several approaches, or views. Guenter Lewy and Michael Zimmermann oppose each other on the issue of racial annihilation of a racial group - the Roma. While Lewy does not recognize that the Roma were under the influence of genocide, because the intention and explicit plan to kill the Roma cannot be proven. On the other hand, Zimmermann counters that the extent of the killing and persecution of Roma differed

depending on the geographical area. Gilart Margalit portrays the persecution of the Roma as secondary extermination. According to him, there was no detailed plan for the physical extermination of the Roma minority. Henry Friedlander, another important historian, links the killing of the disabled, Jews and Roma. In the case of the Roma community, he claims that the Nazis only tightened and intensified the already valid anti-Roma regulations and describes the initial exclusion of the Roma from society as a beginning towards the final solution (Knesebeck 2011).

The Nazis, headed by A. Hitler, adopted several fundamental laws during the period of the Third Reich. These laws were adopted from the first year of Hitler's reign. These were, for example, laws starting with the Law on the Prevention of Hereditarily Sick Offspring and ending with the Decree on Deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Despite this, no comprehensive anti-Roma law was passed during the Third Reich, but many decrees were passed (Hancock 1991; Lewy 2000; Heuss 1997).

During the Nazi empire, the German Roma were subjected to unprecedented discrimination and bullying, mostly by local authorities. This was so despite the fact that these measures were not applied in a uniform manner (Margalit 2002). From a chronological point of view, the following laws and decrees were passed: Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseased Offspring (1933), Denaturalization Law (1933), Law against Habitual Criminals (1933), Expulsion Law (1933), Reich Citizenship Law (1935), The Law on the Protection of German Blood and Honor (1935), the Decree on the Preventive Fight against Crime (1937), the Decree on the Fighting the Gypsy Plague (1938), the Decree on the Freezing of the Mobility of the Roma (1939), the Decree on Resettling Roma (1940), Decree on Deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau (1942), Decree on Cancellation of the right to regular tax deductions for Roma (1942), Law on Exemption of pure Roma from work and military service (1943) (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991; Lewy 2000; Reemtsma 1996; Friedlander 1995; Hübschmannová 2005; Nečas 1994; Kenrick and Puxon 2009; Milton 2008; Zimmermann 1996, 235-262; Wippermann 2018; Margalit 2002).

### **Chronology of the adoption of the policy of persecution of Roma in Nazi Germany in 1933-1945**

On July 14, 1933, the sterilization law was adopted. Based on this law, sterilization was to be carried out in the state administration and university institutes of anthropology were to be involved (Bock 2010). The law represented the beginning of the whole issue of plans to exterminate peoples who were allegedly biologically inferior. The program resulting from the law included, in addition to mass sterilization, euthanasia for the incurable and outright extermination by means of special treatment (Snyder 1998). The Roma were one of the communities subjected to this forced sterilization. This was done on the basis of their allegedly inherent anti-social behavior (Wippermann 2018). At the same time, it was true that the sterilization of Roma was related to the idea of preventing the right to reproduce in the case of "less valuable" members of society (Knesebeck 2011). According to this law, the Roma were forcibly and without any legal basis sterilized (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991). In the same year, the Denaturalization Act and the Expulsion Act of March 23 were also passed.

These laws also served to expel foreign Roma and Roma without German citizenship (Milton 2008). On November 24, 1933, the Law against Habitual Criminals was also applied to Roma (although they did not meet the requirements) (Reemtsma 1996).

On September 15, 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were also adopted, which became the most comprehensive means of excluding the Roma (Friedlander 1995). This was done on the basis of Hermann Göring's initiative during the session of the Reichstag of the NSDAP. According to these laws, only those persons who had German or related blood could be considered citizens (Hübschmannová 2005). Although the Roma were not directly mentioned in them, the laws applied to them in practice (Friedlander 1995). A year later, it was specified who belongs to a group of foreign species (Jews and Roma) and who belongs to German blood (Hübschmannová 2005). In other words, the comments on the racial laws resulted in the classification of Roma, together with other minorities, as racially different with alien blood. Roma and Jews had e.g. the ban on voting and participating in the 1938 plebiscite on the unification of Austria with the Third Reich (Friedlander 1995). It is also necessary to clarify that the Nuremberg Laws were primarily aimed at the Jews, but the Roma also became the focus of the state's National Socialist policy (Fings 2016).

The Nuremberg Laws also generally deprived all persons of their human rights and were used as relative legal acts to discriminate in the military, labor service, welfare, education and other areas of social life. Arguments for this procedure were provided by the already mentioned Dr. R. Ritter (Nečas 1992). The first two Nuremberg Laws - the Law on Reich Citizenship and the Law on the Protection of German Blood and Honor deprived the basic rights of anyone who could not prove German or species-like origin. Although the Roma belonged to the Indo-European language group, the Nazis did not consider them Aryans and were categorized as non-Aryans. On November 14, 1935, the term "Roma" was defined in connection with the Reich Citizenship Act. This only happened in the executive order for the Act on Reich Citizenship (Nečas 1994).

In practice, the Reich Citizenship Act distinguished between first-class citizens and second-class citizens. It is demonstrable that the Roma belonged to the second category, they even lost this status in April 1943 (Kenrick and Puxon 2009). In other words, the Reich Citizenship Law limited the definition of those who could be considered German citizens. Roma and other minorities never acquired citizenship and belonged to the already mentioned alien blood (Lewy 2000). Said law was supplemented by the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, which resulted in a cumulative pattern of intimidation, exclusion, and coercion (Milton 1991).

The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor of 1935 was also passed on 15 September 1935 and stated that a marriage could not be entered into if it could be expected to produce offspring dangerous to the preservation of the 'purity' of German blood (Kenrick and Puxon 2009). It was therefore obvious that the Law on the Protection of German Blood and Honor was the first in a series of laws dealing with the issue of 'alien blood'. It was followed by the Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People of October 18, 1935. In practical terms, the said law imposed the obligation of a marriage certificate certifying that the partners were suitable for marriage based on genetic and racial criteria (Lewy 2000).

The Law on the Protection of German Blood and Honor prohibited: First, marriages between people of German blood and members of foreign races (not only Roma). Second, it prohibited extramarital intercourse between the German nation and members of various minorities. In contrast, the Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German Nation prohibited the marriage of people regardless of their ethnicity and to “inferior” people. Among other things, he forbade the marriage of ‘inferior’ people. As already mentioned, although the Sinti and Roma were not directly mentioned in the racial Nuremberg Laws, this ‘gap’ was closed by the circular/circular decree of the Reich and Prussian Ministers of the Interior prohibiting mixed-race marriages (Zimmermann 1996; Reemtsma 1996; Fings 2016). Anyone who practically violated this prohibition was convicted of “racial defilement” and sentenced to a long prison term. This illegal and racially motivated practice was authorized in a commentary on German racial laws (Wippermann 2018).

Accepting the so-called of the Marriage Act (October, 1935) the Nazis pursued an interest in creating a comprehensive registration system to provide eugenic information on all individuals. The state intended to institute a census of race and heredity. On November 26, 1935, an advisory circular was issued by the Reich Ministry of the Interior to all local registry offices for vital statistics. It prohibited racially mixed marriages between persons of German and foreign blood. In an ever-escalating series of interconnected Nazi decrees (implementing the Nuremberg Laws), the Roma were progressively disenfranchised (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991; Margalit 2002). After 1935, many of the city governments and local social authorities appealed to the German police in order to detain the growing number of German Roma in the newly created municipal Roma camps. These became reserve warehouses for forced labor, compulsory sterilization and genealogical registration (Milton 2000).

### **1936 as a turning point in anti-Roma policy**

The anti-Roma policy had a ‘turning point’ in 1936, in which a process of reorganization took place. On its basis, an institutional infrastructure was created, which became the Reich’s “Center for Combating Harassment by Roma”. Since then, the Roma were ordered to settle in one place, they had the task of working in construction, factories in special camps that kept them ‘for a short time’. They were also denied social security and child support as they were branded as anti-social elements (Margalit 2000).

At the beginning of 1936 - on January 3, 1936, the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior, Frick, confidentially warned all members of the registers and health authorities that, in the interest of the necessary preservation of German blood, care must be taken that Roma and other minorities are not considered representatives of German blood and that they do not receive a certificate on the capacity to enter into marriage (Gilsenbach and Hohmann 1992).

In March 1936, the Memorandum of the State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior was created, which contained the first mentions of the preparation of the national Roma law and of the problems in achieving a complete solution to this issue at the national and international level. The preliminary recommendations included –



expulsion of stateless Roma, restriction of freedom of movement and issuance of permits for nomadic Roma, increased police surveillance, sterilization of Roma, etc. (Milton 1992).

In June 1936, a circular titled "Fighting the Roma Sea" was published, which was issued on the initiative of the Minister of the Interior of the Third Reich. The decree ordered for the first time that the Roma should settle in one place and was essentially supposed to regulate the treatment of the Roma at the national level (Margalit 2002). Based on this, on July 16, 600 Roma were arrested in the capital of the Third Reich (Milton 1992).

The decree also stated that while foreign Roma were to be banned from entering the country, a settlement project was to be implemented for local Roma so that Roma groups could be controlled by the police (Lewy 2000). In the same month, the Central Office for Combating the Gypsy Threat was founded. The initiative of this office led to an intensification of persecution, pressure and intimidation of Roma by the police (Milton 2008).

In August 1936, the Bavarian Political Police published general guidelines on the issuing of protective custody orders. At the same time, on a practical level, a distinction was made between the arrest of political and non-political antisocials, or perpetrators (Krausnick and Broszat 1970). On November 18, 1936, the decree on the fight against the existence of Roma established the German police to collect a lot of relevant information about the Roma in several areas (Alt and Folts 1996). Also during the year 1936, preparatory work for the National-Socialist Reich Gypsy Law took place. Although a separate law was not adopted in practice, the theoretical concept arose from the introduction of a preventive fight against crime, which enabled the police to monitor criminals and 'anti-social people' and carry out sanctions in the form of preventive detention (Freund, Baumgartner and Greifeneder 2004).

### **Decree on fighting crime through the police**

In 1937, the national and Prussian ministers of the interior informed the regional governments of the decree on the fight against crime by means of the police (decree on the preventive suppression of criminal activity by the police) and demanded the expansion of preventive police detention after evaluating the experience to date and the knowledge gained from criminal biological research. The duty of the police was to protect the population from every harmful element through the measures ordered by this decree. Roma were not directly mentioned in the decree itself. This happened only after issuing instructions for its implementation (Heuss 1997). For this purpose, the Minister of the Interior contacted Reich Police Chief Heinrich Himmler, whose secret police GESTAPO began to carry out a one-time nationwide arrest operation against 'people shy of work' on this basis. These persons were identified on the basis of reports from local labor offices and at the beginning of 1938 they were to be taken into preventive - protective custody (Bastian 2001).

At the end of 1937 - on December 16, 1937, a law was passed under which Romani people who were unemployed and who were habitual criminals or a threat to society could be taken into protective custody, regardless of whether they had committed a

crime or not (Alt and Folts 1996). On the same day, this transcript of the Reich Ministry of the Interior on the preventive fight against crime by the police ordered all criminal police units to establish permanent control over criminal and antisocial elements and to take them into preventive custody. This group included all the antisocials who broke the public order with minor and constantly repeated offences, e.g. Gypsies (Nečas 1992).

The order for the preventive control of crime was called the so-called 'basic decree'. This bond was considered a major element in the fight against crime (Zimmermann 1996). Preventive detention could be imposed on both career criminals, common criminals and people dangerous to the public. A career criminal was one who committed crime as a trade; a habitual criminal was someone who repeatedly acted in the same or similar manner because of crime or criminal tendencies. A person who has been repeatedly evaluated by the police as a threat to society has become dangerous to the public (Zimmermann 1996).

Preventive detention should have been determined as a priority for antisocial persons without a permanent residence. According to the implementing regulations, those taken into preventive custody were to be sent to concentration camps; the length of their stay there was unlimited. This was primarily Buchenwald concentration camp and the rest were sent to other camps such as Sachsenhausen, Dachau, Flossenbürg and Mauthausen (Lewy 2000). As part of the preventive fight against crime, Roma members were gathered in camps or ordered to settle in communities within the framework of permanent residence. However, the move did not last for a short time - the opposite was true (Gilsenbach and Hohmann 1992).

This decree also expanded the range of persons who could be taken into preventive custody (Freund, Baumgartner and Greifeneder 2004). Thus, the concept of 'crime prevention' could expand indefinitely, and in the end, more and more categories of 'offenders' were added to them - a list of people whose crimes were to be 'prevented' before they could act: Roma and others (Gellately 1990). From this moment on, the Roma were subjected to racial persecution (Willems 1998).

An important part of this concept was the prohibition to leave the place of residence without the permission of the police; other requirements related to the prohibition of going out at night, avoiding certain places (public facilities, etc.). It also applied to the permission to associate only with certain people up to the prohibition of correspondence. It was according to the pattern of protective custody (Zimmermann 1996).

Preventive detention could not be abolished even by the courts, and crime was attributed to behavior of certain segments of society that was harmful to the community and explained by group-specific genetic factors (Zimmermann 1996).

This category included anyone who showed a reluctance to integrate into the wider community by their contradictory behavior, even if it was not criminal. Based on this, he received the status of 'asocial'. According to this decree, Roma and the like had to sign a declaration that stipulated that if they left their permanent residence (which they had to have), they would be placed in a concentration camp (Kenrick and Puxon 2009). On a practical level, thousands of Sinti (pure Roma) and Roma were labeled as anti-

social on racial grounds and taken into preventive police custody or sent to concentration camps in April and June 1938 (Wippermann 2018).

The first concrete result of this measure was the 'Arbeitsscheu Reich' action. According to the circular of the Reich Criminal Police Office of June 1, 1938, preventive detention was imposed on June 13-14 on 200 anti-social men from each district of the Reich Criminal Police Station. Arrested in the number of 9,000 persons, among them a part of the Roma were also included, they were transported to the concentration camp in Buchenwald (Nečas 1992).

Since 1938, Sinti and Roma, who did not intend to give up their trade, were gradually and increasingly deported to concentration camps on the basis of a decree on the preventive fight against crime. Based on this decree, the criminal police could deport any number of Roma without giving a reason or trial (Fings 2016).

In 1938, the definition of long-term protective custody was also changed and expanded, which included not only political opponents, but also people whose behavior could threaten the existence and security of the state or its citizens. The authority to issue this preventive detention was to be limited only to the Gestapo (until then, orders could be issued by regional governments and other institutions) (Krausnick and Broszat 1970).

### **Decree on combating the Gypsy plague**

The open persecution and imprisonment of Roma in labor and concentration camps was based on random selection. After 1938, there was a radicalization of the policy towards the Roma during the so-called the annexation of Austria in 1938. In the same year, as part of the intensification of persecution, the Memorandum was adopted, which demanded the exclusion of all Roma children from schooling, the deportation of Roma to labor camps, and a radical policy of racial segregation in all sectors of society. The proposals that resulted from that Memorandum were put into practice over the next few years (Baumgartner 2014).

Also in 1938, the "Decree on Combating the Plague of Roma" was adopted, which was issued on December 8, 1938 in the name of H. Himmler. This decree confirmed the necessity of distinguishing between pure Roma and mixed people, or Roma nomads. He advocated the racial separation of Roma from German society and tried to prevent the mixing of pure and mixed Roma. For the purpose of categorization, they were issued identity documents of different colors (Fings 2016; Lewy 2000).

Professional literature has different interpretations of the date of the given law. Some sources state that the decree was issued only on December 18, and within it, the supposed dangerousness of the Roma and the need for sending their information from the regional police departments to the Reich were repeated. The measure was the result of a joint initiative between scientific and political authorities and ensured the registration of all members of the Roma community (Spinelli 2014). According to this circular, identification documents could only be issued to passengers with the consent of the criminal police. Above all, the strict standard applied to the issuance of a travel trade license. The decree obliged the registry and health offices to inform the criminal police of the necessary information (Zimmermann 1996).

The decree on the solution of the “Gypsy question” saw the transition from Roma policy conceived as part of a program to eliminate ‘foreigners’ to persecution as such. With the start of the Second World War, this persecution was multiplied and generally intensified. All minorities were affected by different methods, and Nazi officials tried to transport or resettle Roma to occupied Poland (Zimmermann 2007). With the Second World War, there was also an intensification of the National Socialist policy towards the Roma. However, the persecution was not based on a unified or centrally directed plan. Differences were evident within geographic area and administrative responsibility (Zimmermann 1996).

The law was contained in a circular and according to it Roma were to be treated on the basis of racial criteria. Race was thus established as a binding criterion of state policy towards the Roma (Reemtsma 1996).

For clarification, it should be added that Himmler’s decree also ordered that all Roma in the Reich over the age of six be divided into three racial groups: Roma, mixed, and nomads who behave like Roma. Registration of Roma by local police and public health authorities has become a mandatory part for all pure Roma. Photo identity cards were to be issued for mixed Roma (Milton 2001).

Based on this, the decree created an extensive database of the Roma population and those who lead the Roma way of life. Roma and nomads like them also had to undergo a biological examination to determine their race. If necessary, the police could use the detention center to obtain the necessary information. It was also authorized to use coercion to comply with this request. The decree brought several restrictions, e.g. ban on traveling in hordes, requiring a camping permit, expanding preventive police detention for anti-socials, treating white Roma the same as black. The decree gave formal legitimacy to the work of the racial scientists of the Ritter Institute, because it was this institute that drew up the assessments that guided the competent authorities. It was a decree based on racial criteria, whereby mixed people were considered the ‘evil element’ and pure Roma as the lesser evil. Systematic genealogical researches began precisely in this period (Lewy 2000; Kenrick and Grattan 1972).

For the leadership of the Reich Police, this decree meant a complex transition from anti-Roma policy, which was interpreted as the separation of Roma from the majority society, to persecution as such. The biological discourse replaced the socio-graphic view of the Roma (Zimmermann 2007). The decree required that both sedentary and nomadic Roma, as well as all people living a similar lifestyle as Roma, should be reported to the Reich Criminal Police Office. However, it was not implemented in practice until the spring of 1939. Based on this decree, both sedentary and non-sedentary Roma were to be under constant surveillance. After the adoption and application of this decree, the ability of Roma to be inconspicuous became more difficult. The local authorities interpreted this decree as continuous monitoring, and for that purpose, Roma camps were to be created, if they had not already been built and organized (Gilsenbach and Hohmann 1992).

On the theoretical side and according to the instructions of the Main Office of Reich Security from March 1 of the following year, the Roma population was to be excluded from the councils of the German nation and its racial mixing was to be further prevented, while the conditions of the racially pure Sinti were to be legislatively

adjusted only after the fact. From a practical point of view, on October 25-27, 1939, Roma were forbidden to leave their residences and places of residence, or of temporary residence so that their police inventory was carried out (October 25-27, 1939) and in some cases also concentration in concentration camps. The census of Roma was carried out in preparation for deportations to the territory of the Protectorate or the General Government (parts of occupied Poland). However, the removal did not begin until the spring of 1940, to the east (Nečas 1992; Nečas 1994).

The groups in question were required to be registered with the local police and the national center, while the authorities were ordered to keep all sedentary and non-sedentary Roma under constant surveillance (Taylor 2014). Among the adopted laws, it was the first racially based law against the Roma, and based on it, it was necessary to exclude 'Gypsyism' from the German national community and thus prevent its further racial mixing (Nečas 1994).

The registration documents, completed by R. Ritter between 1937 and 1940, with files on all Roma, but also partially Roma or Roma-like persons, together with the scientific conclusions that Ritter attached to his research, were of fundamental importance for the persecution policy introduced against these groups (Willems 1998).

The Second World War brought with it the most methodical and ruthless policies in relation to the Roma minority. These were primarily policies of internment, deportations, mass murders and finally genocide (Weiss-Wendt 2013). The social isolation of the Roma was also increased by the detention camps and the Roma communities in them, which in some places were rebuilt according to the models from the pre-war years (Zimmermann 1996).

The process of genocide of the Roma was the result of a complicated procedure and it was a largely inconsistent and decentralized mechanism for taking measures (Kapralski 2015). At the beginning of 1939, an order was issued to separate Roma children from schools, who were to be subsequently enrolled in a special school. The mayor of Kolín nad Rýnom was the first to come up with this proposal, and his initiative was followed by other cities in 1942. With the advent of war, Roma were used as compulsory labor, or cheap labor. They worked in construction or road construction (Lewy 2000).

In the period between 1939-1941, the persecution of Roma took place in parallel with the persecution of Jews. While before the war, a large part of the persecution against the Roma was the result of the disproportionate impact of more general measures against the so-called asocial, and the Roma problem was defined as a racial one. Subsequently, in 1941, both ethnic groups were deported together as part of ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering (Browning 2004).

### **Decree on freezing the mobility of Roma**

On October 7, a decree was published that did not allow Roma to leave their places. Subsequently, on October 17, 1939, a decree was adopted by Reynard Heydrich ordering the freezing of the mobility of Roma. It was about preventing the freedom of movement until the final deportation of Roma and Roma "crossbreeds", who were forbidden to leave their current place of residence. Failure to respect this decree was to

lead to imprisonment in concentration camps. Until then, they were to be arrested and placed in special concentration camps until their final removal. The decree requested information on social status (ability to support the family and whether they had a permanent residence and whether one of the married couples was Aryan and whether they led a sedentary lifestyle). Unlike previous decrees, the decree did not mention Gypsy travelers with German blood. This decree marked the transition to a stronger emphasis on racial criteria in the formulation of Roma policy, and its aim was to prepare the ground for the expulsion of the Roma. However, several exceptions were established. Allegedly, those who were socially adapted and sedentary, i.e. those who had a regular job during the previous five years, were to be exempted from deportation. In other words, on October 17, 1939, Reinhard Heydrich issued the so-called *Festsetzungserlaß*, which forbade all Gypsies and part-Gypsies who had not yet been interned in the camps to change their registered residence; this measure was necessary to carry out the deportations. In 1940, a number of additional restrictions were added to the ban on freedom of movement – the ban on various types of employment, social isolation in Roma community camps and new restrictions on social care (Lewy 2000; Reemtsma 1996; Zimmermann 2001; Milton 2008).

On a practical level, this measure was connected to the preventive control of crime, and Roma who refused to comply with this measure were threatened with deportation to the Dachau and Mauthausen concentration camps. The years 1940-1943 demonstrate the actual practice of this measure from October 17. Some labor offices, which were not aware of this regulation, placed Roma in foreign jobs, which provoked criticism from the criminal police (Zimmermann 1996).

From the same year, the Nazis, headed by A. Hitler, categorized the Roma as “parasites who lead a parasitic life.” This group included not only Roma, but also people who looked like Roma or had the same ways of existence. Therefore, they were divided into five categories: Z (pure-blooded Roma); ZM+ (Roma mixed with German blood, but mostly Roma); ZM (Roma with an equal proportion of German and Roma blood); ZM- (Roma, but dominantly German) and NZ (zero percentage of Roma blood) (Alt and Folts 1996).

### **Decree on the resettlement of Roma**

In April 1940, another decree was adopted by Reynard Heydrich - Resettlement of Roma, which ordered the first transport of Roma to the General Government (part of occupied Poland). From the point of view of deportation, several exceptions were established - older than 70 years, pregnant women, Roma married to Germans, as well as Roma whose family members served in the army and Roma of foreign nationality. All others were to be sent to special concentration camps for no more than three days. However, the practice was different and there were non-compliance with these principles. In these camps, Roma over the age of 14 were photographed and provided with an identity document, while Roma over the age of 6 were to have their fingerprints taken. Roma were subsequently transported to Hohensperg and Belzec (Lewy 2000).

Even rich Roma who owned real estate or a large amount of other property did not fall under the effectiveness of the said law, because at that time there were no legal means of confiscating property. Transports of Roma left for the General Government at the end of May 1940, and 2,800 Roma were deported. These were the only deportations in 1940 that were to continue after the invasion of the USSR. Until then, Hitler and his close community of Nazis decided to implement the final solution for both Jews and Roma. Other sources state that the deportation began on April 27, 1940. However, some criminal police offices violated this order (Friedlander 1995; Reemtsma 1996).

Deported Roma's property was confiscated and deportees were forced to voluntarily sign release forms confirming the transfer of their property under the Confiscation of Subversive and Hostile Property Act, which was originally established to seize the property of proscribed and denaturalized political opponents after July 1933 (Milton 2008).

In 1941, the sterilization law from 1933 was extended to several categories of Roma - based on this law, almost 2,000 German Roma who did not pass the deportation to Auschwitz were sterilized between 1943 and 1944 (Margalit 2002).

From the summer of 1941, Roma politics took on a new dimension. While the Roma were imprisoned and sent to concentration camps until this period, in 1941 they were reclassified based on the reports of Ritter's office. Based on this, Himmler stated that the problem should be solved exclusively on a racial basis. From that moment on, the process for the preparation of genocide was set in motion (Gilsenbach and Hohmann 1992).

### **Decree on deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau**

H. Himmler's order from December 16, 1942 represented the epilogue in the anti-Roma procedure (Nečas 1994). By order from Heinrich Himmler on December 16, 1942, the hitherto disparate persecution of the Roma was unified. This order ordered the deportation of Roma to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Deportation affected not only German Roma, but also Roma from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the occupied countries of Western Europe (France, Belgium, the Netherlands). The specific number was at the level of 22,000 Roma. Himmler's order was also the result of intense discussions and disputes about further Roma policy (Zimmermann 1995). This order was carried out at the beginning of 1943, and based on it, most of the Roma were deported to the already mentioned camp (Wippermann 2018). The deportation began and ended in February 1943 (Taylor 2014).

This order and subsequent additional decrees stipulated the deportation of Roma to the mentioned camp from Eastern (Russia, Lithuania) Europe as well. The guidelines for deportation, which in practice gradually became radicalized, created a hierarchy of three groups - pure-bloods and mixed-races (good for Roma conditions) could continue to multiply. While the second group of socially integrated mixed-race Roma was to be forcibly sterilized, the third group included Roma deported to the mentioned concentration camp (Zimmermann 2007).

Other sources indicate a different date of application of the decree. According to them, it should have started to pay in March 1943, when the first deportations to Auschwitz left, and for most of the deportees it meant a one-way journey. Planning for the deportation of mixed-race Roma had been in the works for some time, but its timing may have been influenced by the fact that by March 1943 R. Ritter had completed racial assessments for all Roma in Germany and the former Austria. Even within this decree, exceptions should have been granted, or exempted from deportation. This group mainly included: racially pure Roma (Lalleri and Sinti); mixed-race Roma who were part of a racially pure group in accordance with the decree of October 13, 1942; Roma legally married to persons of German blood; socially adapted Roma who previously had proper employment and permanent residence and others. Roma, serving in military service or discharged after injury or with distinction (in World War II); Gypsies engaged in work important to the war effort; Roma who could prove foreign citizenship and other categories. On December 24, 1942, the Minister of Finance issued a decree that with effect from April 1, 1943, Roma would no longer be entitled to regular deductions when paying their taxes. This decree, as well as all other regulations prohibiting the Roma, applied various rights and privileges extended to the German population by pure Gypsies and mixed-races with two or three Gypsy parents. The deportation, which began in 1943, was characterized by considerable ruthlessness. Compared to the expulsion order from May 1940, there was no release of weaker persons – elderly people, pregnant women, etc. (Lewy 2000; Reemtsma1996).

Many laws, which resulted in the legal punishment of Roma and Sinti, were introduced despite the fact that the Roma did not meet the requirements arising from them. These were mainly three generally valid laws - the Law on the Prevention of Hereditary Diseased Offspring, the Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals and the Law on Expulsion from the Empire. It was mainly an initiative of lower and middle authorities under the responsibility of the police, which supported the increasing radicalization of society against Roma and Sinti. In addition to the already mentioned laws, several other decrees, decrees, etc. were also adopted. These were primarily: the Decree of October 7, 1939, which allowed the Sinti and forbade the Roma to leave their places and facilitated their full registration; Heinrich Himmler's order of November 20, 1939, according to which women suspected of divination were to be sent to concentration camps; The decree of the Reich Minister for Education of March 22, 1941 stated the exclusion of Sinti children from schools. On March 12, 1942, orders were issued regarding employment, which put Sinti and Jews on the same level in the labor-legal and social sphere. On July 10, 1942, the high command of the Nazi army ordered the removal of Roma and mixed-race Roma from the army for racial and political reasons (Reemtsma1996).

## **Conclusion and discussion**

Persecutions in Nazi Germany against Roma found their application, or place and in the eyes of the public they were, so to speak, legitimate. The public had a long-term negative attitude towards the Roma, and these persecutions were only the expectations of the general public. The important goal of this article was to bring an analysis of the



persecutory policies in Nazi Germany, which were intended especially for the Roma community in the Third Reich. From the article, we were able to learn the facts about when the persecutions themselves began and until what period they were valid, respectively. were active. Based on this, we can clarify the fact that the first persecutory measures were taken already in the first year of the NSDAP government and continued until the end of the Third Reich.

### Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
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### 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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## RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS IN THE CONTEXT OF INCREASING NEW REGIONAL COMPETITION

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### Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study various factors of Russia's foreign policy in the South Caucasus during the 44-Day Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) war of 2020 and in the post-war period. Russia's mediation efforts to end the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and establish peace are considered. Particular attention is paid to the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh and the military-political significance of this initiative and the consequences, as well as the main reasons for the failure of this peacekeeping mission. The article also analyzes the multi-vector foreign policy pursued by regional states in the South Caucasus, in particular Türkiye and Iran. In this context, the prospects for Russian-Turkish cooperation in the South Caucasus, in particular, in the process of settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, are highlighted. This also makes a comparative analysis of the foreign policies of the United States, European Union (EU) and France in the region significant. The article examines Russia's ability to maintain its military and political influence and expand its economic presence in the South Caucasus. Issues that have hindered the establishment of peace and stability in the South Caucasus were also discussed.

**Keywords:** South Caucasus, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, trilateral statement, regional security, Türkiye.

### Introduction

For years, the military-political cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia has played an important role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus (Manukyan 2023a). Russia, together with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), occupies an important place in the security system of Armenia. However, the war that started in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020 and the events that followed it raised certain questions among society and political circles of Armenia regarding the policy conducted by Russia. It is important to understand how Russia

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fulfilled its obligations as the main strategic ally of Armenia, combining this with its policy of a peacekeeper in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its mediating mission in Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, as well as its role as a guarantor of the implementation of the agreements reached at the trilateral level with Armenia and Azerbaijan in this context (Ghazaryan 2023). Various authors have addressed the mentioned problems in the academic circles, who have presented the issues related to this topic from different viewpoints in their researches, analyzed them, and made conclusions, particularly Z. Makhmudova (2024), M. M. Aghazada (2023), R. R. Veliev and A. R. Veliev (2023), M. F. Oztarsu (2024), A. Ergun (2023).

### **Methodology**

Two methods have been used during this research: the content analysis method and the comparative analysis method. The military-political developments in the South Caucasus are the result of certain processes, which at some stage of development were fixed in interstate documents, and thus express the end of certain developments or the beginning of a new phase. From this point of view, the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, the subsequent statement of the President of Russia, as well as the texts of the trilateral statements of January 11 and November 26, 2021, and other official documents have been analyzed using the content analysis method. Meanwhile, in order to identify the possible changes in the policy conducted by Russia in the South Caucasus, as well as the factors influencing this policy, comparisons have been made with other processes running parallel in the region, in order to reveal how interconnected they are with each other, and what influence they leave on the policy conducted by Russia in the South Caucasus.

### **The policy of the Russian Federation in the South Caucasus during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh 44-Day War: The trilateral statement of November 9, 2020**

On October 7, 2020, President of Russia Vladimir Putin spoke about Russia's position and policy regarding the ongoing military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, which started on September 27, 2020, in an interview given to TV channel "Rossiya", stating that what is happening in and around Nagorno-Karabakh is a great tragedy and called on the conflicting parties to reach a ceasefire as soon as possible. At the same time, the Russian president emphasized: "As you know, Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and so we have certain obligations towards it under the treaty. It is deeply regrettable that the hostilities continue, but they are not taking place in the Armenian territory. As to meeting our obligations under this treaty, Russia has always honoured and will continue to honour its commitments<sup>1</sup>." Thus, President Putin highlighted that Russia is Armenia's ally and has obligations in that regard, which he does not reject, but at the same time clarified in which case these obligations will be implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> Kremlin. 2020. "Interview with Rossiya TV channel: Vladimir Putin answered questions from Pavel Zarubin, Rossiya 1 TV channel journalist, author and co-host of the Moscow. Kremlin. Putin programme". October 7, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64171>.

On October 8, 2020, the President of Russia made another statement in which he said that after a series of telephone conversations with the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, he called on the parties to stop military operations for the exchange of bodies of the dead and prisoners of war for humanitarian reasons. He also invited the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to hold consultations for this purpose on October 9 in Moscow<sup>2</sup>. This was a definite and tangible mediating mission that was carried out. As a result of a trilateral meeting in Moscow at the level of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, on October 10, the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan made a statement, according to which the conflicting parties stop military operations for humanitarian purposes in order to exchange the bodies of the dead and prisoners of war. It is also noteworthy that in the statement, the parties mentioned that, with the mediation of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, they are starting substantive negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement as soon as possible, and that the parties confirm that the negotiation format will not change<sup>3</sup>. However, the cease-fire reached with the mediation of Russia was violated by Azerbaijan on the same day<sup>4</sup>. In the following days, the military operations continued, as Türkiye supported Azerbaijan in an undisguised manner. Taking into consideration the military-political situation created in the region, as well as the unfavorable developments for Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, on October 31, 2020, the Prime Minister of Armenia sent a letter to the President of Russia presenting the situation created as a result of the aggression undertaken by Azerbaijan and Türkiye against Nagorno-Karabakh, including the transfer of foreign armed terrorists from the Middle East and the facts of their involvement in military operations against Nagorno-Karabakh. Taking into consideration the fact that the military operations had approached the border of Armenia and there had been encroachments on the sovereign territory of Armenia, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia addressed the President of the Russian Federation “to launch immediate consultations to define the type and the scale of assistance which the Russian Federation can provide to the Republic of Armenia for ensuring its security, based on the allied relations between Armenia and Russia and Article 2 of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of August 29, 1997.”<sup>5</sup>

On the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, in response to the letter of the Prime Minister of Armenia, announced that, “In accordance with this treaty, Russia will provide the necessary assistance to Armenia if hostilities spread directly to

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<sup>2</sup> Kremlin. 2020. “Statement by President of Russian Federation”. October 8, 2020. Accessed May 22, 2023. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64180>.

<sup>3</sup> MFA of the RF. 2020. “Statement by the foreign ministers of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia”. October 10, 2020. Accessed May 23, 2023. [https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/international\\_safety/conflicts/1443876/](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/international_safety/conflicts/1443876/).

<sup>4</sup> MFA of the RA. 2023. “Military aggression of Azerbaijan. Chronicle of developments”. October 10, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. [https://www.mfa.am/en/awaa\\_chr/2020/10/10/w\\_nk\\_2020/10563](https://www.mfa.am/en/awaa_chr/2020/10/10/w_nk_2020/10563).

<sup>5</sup> MFA of the RA. 2023. “Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan sent a letter to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin”. October 31, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2020/10/31/let/10617>.



the territory of Armenia.”<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia once again called on the conflicting parties to cease fire and resolve the issue through negotiations in accordance with the agreements reached between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on October 10, 2020<sup>7</sup>.

The military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh ended with the signing of the trilateral statement by the Prime Minister of Armenia, the President of Azerbaijan and the President of Russia on November 9, 2020. Russia acted as a mediator and guarantor for the implementation of the provisions of this statement. With this statement, the security zone formed around Nagorno-Karabakh in 1994 returned to Azerbaijan; besides, a number of regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, including Shushi and Hadrut, came under the control of Azerbaijan. With the signing of this document, new developments were initiated in the South Caucasus. The statement of November 9, 2020 reserved an exclusive role for Russia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If previously Russia was a co-chair and intermediary country in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group regarding the settlement of this conflict, now it also became the main guarantor of peace, as Russian peacekeepers were deployed in the conflict zone (Singh 2023; Ditel 2023; Morozov 2023). The next important circumstance was point 9 of this statement, which mentioned unblocking of communications. If we compare it with the 1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict cease-fire document, we will see it said nothing about the post-conflict situation, while the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020 clearly states further steps of the parties in the post-war period for the establishment of peace in the region<sup>8</sup>. After signing this document on November 9, in his statement, Russian President Putin also stressed the necessity for unblocking the economic and communication routes and emphasized that, “the blockade of the economic and transport communications in the region will be lifted. The oversight of transport communications will be ensured with the involvement of the agencies of the Border Guard Service of Russia.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, the President of Russia once again highlighted the need to create favorable conditions for further establishment of peace: “We proceed from the assumption that the agreements reached will create the necessary conditions for a lasting and full-scale settlement of the crisis over Nagorno-Karabakh on a fair basis and in the interests of the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan”<sup>10</sup>. On November 10, President Putin also signed the Decree “On measures to maintain peace in Nagorno-Karabakh”, where in paragraph 2 it was noted about the deployment of a peacekeeping contingent in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor.

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<sup>6</sup> MFA of the RF. 2020. “Foreign Ministry statement in connection with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan’s address to President of Russia Vladimir Putin”. October 31, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.mid.ru/en/maps/am/1445841/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Kremlin. 2020. “Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation”. November 10, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>.

<sup>9</sup> Kremlin. 2020. “Statement by the President of Russia”. November 10, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64381>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



And in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of the decree, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation was tasked with monitoring the provision of the Republic of Armenia transport communication between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan for the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions<sup>11</sup>. On November 18, 2020, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation adopted a resolution to give consent to the President of the Russian Federation to send the military formation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to Nagorno-Karabakh on November 10, 2020, in order to comply with the agreements on the cessation of fire and other hostile actions with Azerbaijan and the Armenian side, in order to avoid the mass death of the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and causing significant damage to civilian objects<sup>12</sup>.

Despite the efforts made by the USA and France on the one hand, and the open support of Türkiye to Azerbaijan in the war on the other hand, the conflicting parties agreed to stop military operations under a document signed with the mediation of Russia. This again demonstrated the primary role played by Russia in the ongoing developments in the South Caucasus. But the regional and extra-regional states did not drop out of the processes taking place in the South Caucasus, each of them activated their role based on the situational developments in the post-war period. The fact that the 5-kilometer-wide Lachin Corridor connecting Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh also remained under the control of Russian peacekeepers contributed to the growth of Russia's military-political influence. Thus, Russia *de jure* becomes the guarantor of the security of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, although the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020 defines the steps of the post-war period, this document does not say anything about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh or the further format of the negotiation process.

### **The policy of the Russian Federation in the South Caucasus after the end of the 44-Day War in Nagorno-Karabakh**

On November 11, 2020, Russia and Türkiye reached an agreement to establish a monitoring center to monitor the maintenance of the ceasefire regime in Nagorno-Karabakh. With this agreement, Türkiye got the opportunity to be legally involved in the post-war period processes of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed hope that Ankara-Moscow cooperation will have a similar result in Syria as well<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Kremlin. 2020. "Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 10.11.2020 No. 695 "On measures to maintain peace in Nagorno-Karabakh" ". Accessed May 20, 2023. <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/46042>.

<sup>12</sup> Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the RF. 2020. "Resolution "On the use of military formations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Nagorno-Karabakh" ". November 18, 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <http://council.gov.ru/activity/documents/121580/>.

<sup>13</sup> Hürriyet Daily News. 2020. "Turkey, Russia to set up joint center to watch Nagorno-Karabakh peace". November 11 2020. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-russia-to-set-up-joint-center-to-watch-nagorno-karabakh-peace-159920>.

The Russian-Turkish monitoring center started its work on January 30, 2021, but not in Nagorno-Karabakh; it was located in the Aghdam region of Azerbaijan<sup>14</sup>. It meant that the Turkish military did not have any direct presence in Nagorno-Karabakh. On the other hand, Türkiye received limited military presence in the South Caucasus, which can be considered one of the consequences of the 44-Day War and a concession made by Russia, which has traditionally had military presence in the region (Poghosyan 2022; Manukyan 2023).

The organization of the return of refugees and the provision of humanitarian aid was of particular importance from the perspective of ensuring stability in Nagorno-Karabakh. In early February 2021, according to the information provided by the Ministry of Defense of Russia, more than 52000 refugees returned to Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, the implementation of the points of the statement of November 9, 2020, continued to be a priority for Russia. Based on that goal, on January 11, 2021, a trilateral statement was signed by the Prime Minister of Armenia, the President of Azerbaijan and the President of Russia in Moscow, which specifically emphasized the implementation of point 9 of the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020. Namely, for unblocking the economic and transport routes of the region, at the recommendation of the Russian President, a trilateral working group was formed co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia, the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Government<sup>16</sup>. Thus, putting an emphasis on the economic component of cooperation, Russia attempted to create favorable conditions for the establishment of long-term peace. However, Azerbaijan's aggression against the sovereign territory of Armenia in May 2021<sup>17</sup> created tension in the region, which was accompanied by the activation of Türkiye's policy in the South Caucasus. This was demonstrated on June 15, 2021, by the President of Turkey Erdogan's visit to Shushi where he and the President of Azerbaijan signed the Shushi Declaration<sup>18</sup>. On the same day the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Armenia issued a statement saying, "We strongly condemn the joint visit of the Presidents of Türkiye and Azerbaijan on June 15 to the Armenian historic and cultural center of Artsakh–Shushi, which is currently under the Azerbaijani occupation, as an outright provocation against regional peace and security."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. 2021. "Turkish-Russian Center Begins Monitoring Nagorno-Karabakh Truce". January 30, 2021. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkey-russia-nagorno-karabakh-cease-fire-center-/31077154.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Sputnik. 2021. "More than 52 thousand refugees have returned to their homeland: the Russian Ministry of Defense presented data on Karabakh". February 6, 2021. Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20210206/Na-rodinu-vernulos-bolshe-52-tysyach-bezhentsev-MO-Rossii-predstavilo-dannye-po-Karabakhu-26363409.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Kremlin. 2021. "Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation". January 11, 2021. Accessed May 21, 2024. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5606>.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Defence of the RA. 2021. "Announcement". May 13, 2021. Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://mil.am/en/news/9398>.

<sup>18</sup> AzeMedia. 2021. "The full text of the Shusha Declaration". June 18, 2021. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://aze.media/the-full-text-of-the-shusha-declaration/>.

<sup>19</sup> MFA of the RA. 2021. "Statement of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia regarding the visit of the Presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan to the occupied territories of Artsakh". 15 June, 2021. Accessed May 25, 2024. [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2021/06/15/Erdogan\\_visit\\_Shushi/10994](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2021/06/15/Erdogan_visit_Shushi/10994).

With the Shushi Declaration, Türkiye and Azerbaijan plan to further deepen their alliance. It is noteworthy that in this declaration, the parties declare their allegiance to the Kars Treaty of October 13, 1921, which can also be considered a fact proving that the status quo established in the region by the 1921 Kars Treaty continues to be maintained. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan gave Türkiye a leading role in security matters. Parallel to such regional transformations, the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not weaken, which was manifested by another act of aggression by Azerbaijan in November 2021<sup>20</sup>. The reason for the tension was the absence of border delimitation and demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which became the subject of discussion at the trilateral meeting in Sochi on November 26, 2021, at the initiative of Russia and was also reflected in the joint statement. In the trilateral statement of Sochi, the parties first of all emphasized the important contribution of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in stabilizing the situation and ensuring security in the region. The next important point was about the mechanisms of starting the process of delimitation and demarcation of the state border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which would proceed with the consultation and support of Russia in case of request of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Sochi statement also referred to the activities of the working group formed by the trilateral statement of January 11, 2021<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, Russia continued to keep its hand on the puls of military-political developments in the South Caucasus, and in some cases outlined the directions of their further development. The declaration on allied cooperation between the two states signed by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia in Moscow on February 22, 2022 was also aimed at strengthening Russia's positions in the South Caucasus<sup>22</sup>. By signing this document, Russia wants to raise military-political cooperation with Azerbaijan to a new level. However, the start of a special military operation by Russia on February 24, 2022, in Ukraine had an impact on the politics of the South Caucasus, particularly the serious developments in this region, which proved to be not very desirable for Russia. For example, the activation of Türkiye and Azerbaijan in the region became quite noticeable, which caused certain concern to Iran, because this activity was taking place near its northern borders. On July 19, 2022 Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during a meeting with the President of Türkiye Erdogan in Tehran on the one hand he "expressed his satisfaction with Nagorno-Karabakh's return to Azerbaijan" as a result of the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war. On the other hand he added, "if there is an effort to block the border between Iran and Armenia, the Islamic Republic will oppose it because this border has been a communication route for thousands of years."<sup>23</sup> Despite such warnings, on September 13, 2022, Azerbaijan

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<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Defence of the RA. 2021. "Release". November 16, 2021. Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://mil.am/en/news/10111>.

<sup>21</sup> Kremlin. 2021. "Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation". November 26, 2021. Accessed May 22, 2024. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5741>.

<sup>22</sup> Kremlin. 2022. "Declaration on Allied Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan". February 22, 2022. Accessed May 22, 2024. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5777>.

<sup>23</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. 2022. "Khamenei Warns Against Attempts To 'Block' Armenian-Iranian Border". July 19, 2022. Accessed June 7, 2023. <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31950738.html>.

launched a large-scale military aggression against Armenia<sup>24</sup>. Taking into consideration the current situation and the fact that Azerbaijan was carrying out direct aggression against Armenia by occupying a part of its territory, the authorities of Armenia turned to the CSTO with the expectation of support<sup>25</sup>. Under the decision of the CSTO Collective Security Council, in order to carry out a monitoring mission the operational group of the CSTO Joint Staff headed by the Chief of the CSTO Joint Staff, Colonel-General Anatoly Sidorov arrived in Armenia on the evening of September 15, 2022<sup>26</sup>. However, such a reaction by the CSTO objectively caused dissatisfaction among the political and public circles of Armenia, because the provisions laid down in the founding documents of the CSTO clearly provide for the kind of assistance that should be provided to the allied state in case of aggression against a CSTO member state, as it happened during the events unfolded in Kazakhstan in January 2022, when after the request of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, CSTO mechanisms were operationally activated, thanks to which the situation in Kazakhstan was stabilized (Manukyan 2023b). However, CSTO's policy towards Armenia was different during Azerbaijan's September 2022 aggression. Such a position of the CSTO forced Armenia to review its future policy towards the CSTO. In addition, the security mechanisms that exist between Armenia and Russia on a contractual-legal basis did not work either.

As a result of the large-scale aggression of Azerbaijan in September 2022, the EU, France and the USA showed activity in the context of the developments in the region. On October 6, 2022, a meeting between the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan was organized in Prague with the participation of French President Emmanuel Macron and President of the European Council Charles Michel within the framework of the first meeting of the "European Political Community." As a result of this quadrilateral meeting in Prague, a statement was adopted, which was somewhat different from the trilateral statements signed with the mediation and participation of Russia, firstly, this statement did not mention the statement of November 9, 2020, secondly, it did not directly mention the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, thirdly, it did not mention Russian peacekeepers, instead it mentioned "Armenia and Azerbaijan confirmed their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Alma Ata 1991 Declaration through which both recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty" that is, the legal basis for the regulation of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations was clearly stated. One of the important clauses of the Prague statement was the introduction of a new mechanism to ease tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was formulated as follows: "There was an agreement by Armenia to facilitate a civilian EU mission alongside the border with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan agreed to cooperate with this mission as far as it is concerned. The mission

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Defence of the RA. 2022. "Statement of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia". September 13, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://mil.am/en/news/11009>.

<sup>25</sup> CSTO. 2022 "Extraordinary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council has discussed the situation in connection with the sharp deterioration in certain areas on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan". September 14, 2022. Accessed June 7, 2023. <https://en.odkb-csto.org/session/2022/na-vneocherednoy-sessii-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-obsudili-situatsiyu-v-svyazi-s-rezkim-/loaded>.

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Defence of the RA. 2022. "The operative group of the CSTO Joint Staff has arrived in Armenia". September 15, 2022. Accessed June 8, 2023. <https://mil.am/en/news/11030>.

will start in October for a maximum of two months. The aim of this mission is to build confidence and, through its reports, to contribute to the border commissions.”<sup>27</sup> After the Prague meeting, the West began to publicly accuse Russia of hindering the establishment of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In particular, French President E. Macron, on October 12, 2022, accused Russia of deliberately provoking clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>28</sup>. On October 14, at the meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Heads of State Council in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, the Russian President Putin countered the French President Macron by stating that, “Russia has always been sincerely striving to settle any conflicts, including those linked with Karabakh and around it”<sup>29</sup>. The USA also assessed the Russian policy in the South Caucasus. Specifically, on October 14, the representative of the State Department announced that the USA did not see any efforts by Russia to support the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict<sup>30</sup>. Such political statements and accusations already showed the kind of competition that has developed in the region. Iran, in its turn, opened a consulate general in Kapan, the regional center of Syunik Region of Armenia, on October 21, 2022, to emphasize the importance of the border with Armenia<sup>31</sup>. With this step, Iran has already shown in practice how much importance it attaches to the border with Armenia, because it is not only the border of two states, but also one of the roads connecting Iran with the outside world (Al-kuwari 2024).

The EU also resorted to practical steps, in particular, on October 20, 2022, an EU observation group was deployed in Armenia from among the observers of the EU observation mission operating in Georgia, which was monitoring the situation in the border regions with Azerbaijan<sup>32</sup>. The EU monitoring group completed its activities on December 19, 2022<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Council of the EU. 2022. “Statement following quadrilateral meeting between President Aliyev, Prime Minister Pashinyan, President Macron and President Michel, 6 October 2022”. October 7, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/07/statement-following-quadrilateral-meeting-between-president-aliyev-prime-minister-pashinyan-president-macron-and-president-michel-6-october-2022/>.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters. 2023. France accuses Russia of stoking Armenia, Azerbaijan conflict. France accuses Russia of stoking Armenia, Azerbaijan conflict”. October 13, 2022. Accessed June 8, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/france-accuses-russia-stoking-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-2022-10-12/>.

<sup>29</sup> Kremlin. 2022. “Meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council: Vladimir Putin took part in a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States”. October 14, 2022. Accessed June 8, 2023. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69595>.

<sup>30</sup> United States Government. 2022. “Department Press Briefing”. October 14, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/briefings/departments-press-briefing-october-14-2022/>.

<sup>31</sup> MFA of the RA. 2022. “Opening ceremony of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kapan”. October 21, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2022/10/21/consulate-iran/11696>.

<sup>32</sup> EU Neighbours East. 2022. “EU Monitoring Capacity in Armenia becomes operational”. October 21, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/eu-monitoring-capacity-in-armenia-becomes-operational/>.

<sup>33</sup> Council of the EU. 2023. “Armenia: EU launches a civilian mission to contribute to stability in border areas”. February 20, 2023. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/02/20/armenia-eu-launches-a-civilian-mission-to-contribute-to-stability-in-border-areas/>.

Along with the activation of the West, Russia tried not to give up the initiative and to advance its agenda of establishing peace and security in the South Caucasus. This reality led to the tripartite meeting of the President of the Russian Federation, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan in Sochi on October 31, 2022, during which, as stated in the official statement, they discussed the implementation process of the tripartite statement of 2020 November 9, January 11 and November 26, 2021. In this document the parties once again emphasized that they recognize territorial integrity in accordance with the UN Charter and the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration. In the tripartite statement of October 2022 Sochi, the parties also emphasized the importance of the role of Russian peacekeepers<sup>34</sup>. It was clear from the meeting in Sochi that Russia, on its part, is trying to manage the development of events in the South Caucasus without the involvement of extra-regional forces. However, this meeting did not ease the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Moreover, on December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan violated the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020 and blocked the Lachin Corridor connecting Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>35</sup>. Actually, in order to avoid a possible military conflict, on December 27, 2022, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia appealed to the High Representative of the EU to deploy an EU civilian mission in Armenia. On January 23, 2023, the EU Council decided to establish an EU civilian mission in Armenia<sup>36</sup>.

On January 26, 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia issued a statement criticizing the deployment of the EU civilian mission in Armenia, at the same time expressing its belief that the Russian peacekeeping force remains the main factor of stability and security in the region in the foreseeable future<sup>37</sup>. However, contrary to this statement, on April 23, 2023, Azerbaijan, in violation of the November 9, 2020 statement, set up a checkpoint in the Lachin Corridor. On this occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia issued a statement about the following: “We call on the Russian Federation to finally fulfil the obligation under provision 6 of the Trilateral statement by eliminating the illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor and ensuring the withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces from the entire security zone of the corridor, and we call on the member states of the UN, having a mandate for the preservation of international security, to clearly record Azerbaijan’s actions undermining the regional security and take effective steps towards the unconditional implementation of the

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<sup>34</sup> Kremlin. 2022. “Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation”. October 31, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5860>.

<sup>35</sup> MFA of the RA. 2022. “Statement of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia on the Azerbaijani provocation in the Lachin Corridor”. December 13, 2022. Accessed May 25, 2024. [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2022/12/13/mfa\\_statement\\_lachin/11783](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2022/12/13/mfa_statement_lachin/11783).

<sup>36</sup> Council of the EU. 2023. “Armenia: EU launches a civilian mission to contribute to stability in border areas”. February 20, 2023. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/02/20/armenia-eu-launches-a-civilian-mission-to-contribute-to-stability-in-border-areas/>.

<sup>37</sup> MFA of the RF. 2023. “On the establishment of a civil monitoring mission of the European Union in the border areas of Armenia”. January 26, 2023. Accessed May 25, 2024. [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1849816/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1849816/).



decision of the ICJ, the highest international legal body.”<sup>38</sup> Before that, the armed forces of Azerbaijan had repeatedly violated the ceasefire regime in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh never restored communication in the Lachin Corridor. In September 2023, Azerbaijan again violated the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020 and resorted to military operations in the presence of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, as a result of which Nagorno-Karabakh was completely forcibly depopulated. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia issued a condemning statement<sup>39</sup>, the situation did not change. Some time after this act of aggression from the Azerbaijani side, the Russian peacekeeping forces, which were viewed as the main factor ensuring safety and stability in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, were withdrawn from Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>40</sup>.

The Armenian people living in Nagorno-Karabakh for centuries were not only completely displaced from their homeland, but also existing Armenian cultural and religious structures and monuments were threatened with destruction.

## Conclusion and discussion

New geopolitical realities appeared in the South Caucasus after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh 44-Day War, and it became evident that the interests of Russia, the USA, France, the EU, Türkiye and Iran are essentially clashing in the region, as a result of which the possibilities of establishing peace in the South Caucasus are not so visible. It is a fact that after the 44-Day War Russia managed to strengthen its military presence in the current situation by deploying Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the Russian peacekeeping mission suffered a failure, as a result of which Azerbaijan first blocked the Lachin Corridor and then militarily depopulated Nagorno-Karabakh, which reduced the chances of establishing peace in the region.

The next important circumstance is Russia's efforts to unblock the economic and communication routes, which could be a way to establish peace in the region. It has been confirmed in the trilateral statements signed by the Prime Minister of Armenia, the President of Azerbaijan and the President of Russia that the unblocking of the economic and communication routes is an important step to establish mutual trust and peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. All this was and now is also of great importance for Russia, as it creates a serious opportunity to deepen economic ties with the South Caucasus republics, and in case of success, to involve Azerbaijan in the Eurasian Economic Union in the future. The activation of Russian policy of unblocking economic and communication routes in the South Caucasus was to some extent conditioned by the developments around Ukraine. Before the start of the special

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<sup>38</sup> MFA of the RA. 2023. “The Statement of MFA of Armenia regarding the installation of an illegal checkpoint by Azerbaijan in the Lachin corridor”. April 23, 2023. Accessed May 25, 2024. [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2023/04/23/statement\\_lachincorridor/11980](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2023/04/23/statement_lachincorridor/11980).

<sup>39</sup> MFA of the RA. 2023. “MFA statement on Azerbaijan's aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh”. September 19, 2023. Accessed May 26, 2024. [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2023/09/19/MFA\\_Statement/12203](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2023/09/19/MFA_Statement/12203).

<sup>40</sup> Armenpress. 2024. “Azerbaijan announces complete withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Nagorno-Karabakh”. June 12, 2024. Accessed June 28, 2024. <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1193455>.

military operation in Ukraine, the Russian authorities realized that after the start of military operations in Ukraine, both the USA and the EU would apply economic sanctions against Russia. So, in order to mitigate the negative consequences of these economic sanctions, Russia was in need of new routes and markets, and in the case of unblocking the economic and communication routes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia could solve this problem to some extent. But, on the other hand, the USA and France counteracted Russia's policy in the South Caucasus, even putting under question its policy in establishing peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Naturally, such developments only increase the tension in the region. As a result, Russia failed to unblock the roads between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020-2023, although "logistics diplomacy" continues to play an important role in establishing peace in the region. At the same time, in terms of its policy in the South Caucasus, Russia was also concerned with the involvement of Türkiye and Iran in the affairs of this region. Both Türkiye and Iran, which also sought to increase their influence in the South Caucasus, were in opposition or competition with the Russian factor. On the other hand, the unabated tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the conditions of such competition and opposition has made it more difficult for Russia to advance its agenda of stability and peace in the region, although Russia's military, political and economic potential is quite sufficient, compared to other external actors in the South Caucasus, to influence the course of events and manage them.

The way to achieve peace or order in the South Caucasus could also be to establish the balance of power between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, Russia, which was the main supplier of arms to Armenia, could not provide timely supplies in the conditions of special military operation in Ukraine, and that is why Armenia faced difficulties in this field, which were related to the issue of acquiring new suppliers as well as logistical problems. In this context, it is important to note that Russia's policy towards pre-war Armenia in the military sphere allowed for a unique format of bilateral relations, which provided the Armenia with the opportunity to turn to Russia's military potential to ensure its own security. The deployment of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Russian military base on the territory of Armenia strengthens Russia's position in the South Caucasus and is a deterrent to potential threats to regional security.

Post-war Armenia continues to pursue a multi-vector foreign policy. As a member of the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union, the country is building relations with NATO and the EU and its Member States. The actions of Western countries demonstrate a desire to reduce Russian-Armenian cooperation in the political and economic spheres. The importance and necessity of using soft power in Armenia for Russia is increasing in the context of ever-increasing competition between regional (Russia, Türkiye, Iran) and extra-regional (the USA, the EU) players in the South Caucasus region.

### **Supplementary material**

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
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### 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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## HUMAN SECURITY AS A FACTOR OF SUSTAINABLE SECURITY IN POST-WAR ARMENIA: GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY OF SMALL STATES

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### Abstract

This article examines the problem of human security as a factor in sustainable security in post-war Armenia. In post-war Armenia, the scope of global responsibility of small states is expanding, and sustainable security and sustainable development are becoming the basis of the discourse on the problems of the future of the South Caucasus and the object of political aspirations to strengthen peace on the part of the UN, the EU, the NATO, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and Western countries. The article comparatively analyzes approaches to the study of human security and sustainable security in post-war Armenia, the position on the relationship between development and security in its modern broad interpretation, characteristic of contemporary political science discussions. Authors pay main attention to the analysis of the role of sustainable security in the evolution of the idea of sustainable development of small states of the South Caucasus to the modern approach of the link between security, resilience and development. Authors identified and substantiated the characteristic features of human security and sustainable security in post-war Armenia, which hinder the improvement of the quality of life and the formation of human capital.

**Keywords:** human capital, human security, sustainable security, sustainable development, civilarchic stabilocracy, post-war Armenia, surveillance.

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## Introduction

The relevance of the research topic addressed in this article arise from the expanding global responsibility of small states in the South Caucasus, which characterizes one dimension of the political system stability concerned to the interests of the post-war Armenian society. Emerging challenges to human security, human resilience and survival in post-war Armenia require the designation and implementation of a comprehensive global and European development strategy, to foster quality of life and environmental sustainability, guaranteeing the transition towards a knowledge-based society. This framework should account for the interconnected interests of individuals, society and environment. To address these challenges, post-war Armenia needs a transformative path towards a qualitatively new state, characterized by a sustainable development that harmonize human, societal and environmental relationships within a framework of sustainable-and-dynamic security and progress.

In post-war Armenia, issues related to this topic have acquired salience both at the at regional and national levels. The steady growth of interest in these issues is confirmed by numerous international initiatives and several scientific publications on the post-war Armenia.

As a matter of fact, many researchers highlight that the relevance and demand for studies on sustainable security and sustainable development in the small Armenian state stem from several theoretical and practical factors. These include the need to strengthen peace (Meister 2024), the emergence of long-term economic and social trends (Avdaliani 2022), and regional and global risks and challenges Armenia deal with (Makarychev 2024). Moreover, there is a growing focus on finding new models of growth and socio-economic development, which should prioritize building resilience in post-war Armenia (Ahmadi, Hekmatara, Noorali et al. 2023).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that nowadays there is no universally accepted interpretation of the sustainable security theory (or its associated theoretical framework), even within the context of civilarchic stabilitocracy. Ongoing debates focus on principles and factors that define sustainable security, the appropriateness of using sustainable development concepts to the South Caucasus region and the small Armenian state, as well as the role of sustainable development within the broader framework of sustainable security (Derluguian and Hovhannisyan 2022), particularly as it relates to global responsibility issues. This literature lack highlights the incomplete nature of theoretical foundations of sustainable security and sustainable development, as well as the continued relevance of efforts to integrate and harmonize existing approaches to understanding this phenomenon.

Accordingly, environmental security, human security, and, finally, sustainable security are interrelated concept in the context of sustainable development. Based on the core thesis that security and development are inseparably linked (Colibășanu 2023), this article aims to examine the evolutions of the first component-security. This work analyse the content and the development of key concepts in the social and humanitarian sciences, from the emergence of the sustainable development paradigm to the formation of sustainable security. The article shows how, during the early stages of the sustainable development formulation, the focus was primarily on the nexus between

sustainable development and environmental security, particularly in the post-coronavirus and post-war periods of Armenia.

Specifically, after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency on January 30, 2020, and escalated it to the pandemic on March 11, 2020, biosecurity threats arose for the small Armenian state. Additionally, since the beginning of the Second Karabakh War in 2020, concerns are extended also to military and human security. While the pandemic led to a surge in hospitalizations and increased demand for bioprotection measures, significant efforts were made to manage COVID-19 patients during the first year of the pandemic, up until September 27, 2020. However, the outbreak of the Second Karabakh War introduced a new dimension to the relationship between human security and sustainable security, as the armed conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh disrupted the conceptualization of human biosecurity. This shift could explain the extreme securitization of sustainable development and human biosecurity in the Armenian society.

### **Unbounded challenges against human security: from new coronavirus to continuous war**

2020 became the year of the contemporary most serious human biosecurity challenges for the countries of the world, the reasons for which were the spread of the new coronavirus and its negative consequences for national security, public safety, and the right to private life and quality of life (The Government of the RA 2021a; The Government of the RA 2021b).

In post-revolutionary Armenia, in which the processes of democratization and European integration had gained new activity, the new coronavirus pandemic caused tangible damage to the country's social and economic stable development and progress. The sharing of European values and the deepening of European integration became the key goal of the new government of Armenia, thanks to the non-violent, velvet and people's revolution that took place in Armenia in April-May 2018 (The Government of the RA 2018), as a realization of the ideas of civilarchic democracy.

The Government of Armenia adopted a decision "On declaring state of emergency in the RA" and thereby declared a state of emergency throughout the RA, which was due to the spread of the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the world and in the RA and the announcement by the head of the WHO on recognizing the spread of this disease as a pandemic (The Prime Minister of the RA 2020). In order to effectively combat the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic in Armenia, a commandant's office was created to ensure the legal regime of a state of emergency. Throughout the territory of Armenia, holding meetings and strikes, holding public events and participating in them were prohibited. During the entire period of the state of emergency, both in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in many countries, the activities of many states, community and non-state general and higher educational institutions were suspended, with the exception of educational institutions that have the possibility of distance learning (The Prime Minister of the RA 2020). Taking into account the issues of human security in the state of emergency, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

began to actively support the current situation with coronavirus in Nagorno-Karabakh. In fact, the countries began to self-isolate, which became a signal for the authoritarian regimes of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Russia to resolve issues of regional dominance. In particular, it is for the authoritarian regimes of Azerbaijan and Turkey to plan military aggression in the shadow of COVID-19, and then start a war simultaneously against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh while the United States and Western European democratic countries are under pressure from the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has triggered one of the most acute political crises of recent times in the post-Soviet space between Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh. The global spread of infectious diseases among Western European democracies has become an opportunity for authoritarian countries to realize their inhumane military and political goals. As a result of full-scale hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh and the 44-day war in 2020, the Azeri-Turkish armed forces almost completely took control of the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. After that, the hostilities spread inside Armenia and to the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Since 2020, that is, with the onset of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the Second Karabakh War of 2020, there has been and continues to be a reformatting of national, public and human security, the hierarchy of threats and the growth of fears of the population associated with the spread of infection, and then military action and their short-term and long-term social and economic consequences.

The legal and political dimensions of human security have long been the focus of research, and much of the work focuses on the influence of human security on the formation of the political agenda, and sometimes on populism and manipulation of public opinion. The Armenian experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 44-day war of 2020 indicate the use of human security as an important source of hybrid warfare and the growth of support for populist parties and movements against the government's agenda of European integration and democratization of Armenia. In this view, human security is perceived by anti-European and anti-democratic forces as a resource for the implementation of their hybrid goals and influence, a tool for maintaining legitimacy or an electoral technology. Moreover, it can be stated with a certain degree of certainty that the game on the risks of human security and the 'cultivation of the image of the enemy of the Armenian people' was constantly and purposefully used during the election campaigns and the Early Parliamentary Elections in Armenia on June 20, 2021 (OSCE ODIHR 2021) by all anti-European and anti-liberal political forces, be they centrists or populist projects (see Table 1). To a large extent, the anti-liberals who do not believe in the best qualities of man and moral solidarity used the image of the enemy of the Armenian people, but it is also more difficult for them to win in parliamentary and local elections (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Results of the Early Parliamentary Elections on June 20, 2021 (OSCE ODIHR 2021)**

<i>Party/Alliance</i>	<i>Number of votes received</i>	<i>Percentage of valid votes cast</i>	<i>Direct seats</i>	<i>Minority seats</i>	<i>Compensatory Seats</i>	<i>Total seats</i>	<i>Percentage of seats</i>
Civil Contract Party	688,761	53.9%	68	3		71	66%
Armenia Alliance	269,481	21.1%	26	1	2	29	27%
With Honor Alliance	66,650	5.2%	7			7	7%
<i>Total number of voters who participated</i>	<i>1,281,997</i>						
<i>Total number of registered voters</i>	<i>2,595,512</i>						
Total	1,276,693	100%	101	4	2	107	100%

Table 1 shows the results of the Early Parliamentary Elections on June 20, 2021, and also that the ruling Civil Contract party won them. It is important to note that the government and the ruling Civil Contract party went to early parliamentary elections due to the political crisis after the Second Karabakh War of 2020, thus the government of Pashinyan managed to politically resolve all the issues that illiberal political movements wanted to use for the unconstitutional coup d'état attempts in February 2021. It can be assumed that in the context of the pandemic, military escalation and the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, starting in 2020, there was a revision of the dimension of human security and individual perception of biothreats and risks towards securitization and consent to the use of stricter restrictions and force mechanisms by the state and public authorities in order to achieve the common good.

The mass attitude towards epidemics and war brought Armenian society closer to the logic of political leadership. Since 2020, political elites have viewed war and military escalation in the context of dominant threats to national security over human security, which suggests the possibility of exceptional and extraordinary measures and responses. On the one hand, the individual and society act as actors in whose interests a set of measures to counter challenges, war and security is implemented. On the other hand, they are at the same time a source of threat and an actor of regulation. Since 2020, citizens of Armenia are called upon to take restrictions and actions for the sake of achieving individual and social benefits, and at the same time, effective management of human capital and security is considered a priority task.

### **Theory of human security management**

The theory of human security management is a direction that was formed at the junction of the transformation of values and demands in the conditions of existential threats and associated risks in political communication (Pandit 2024). For studies

within the framework of the theory of human security management, a grouping of positions around the conservative and liberal dimensions of ideological orientation is characteristic (Majee 2024). In addition to this, they bear a clear imprint of Western European anthropocentric exclusiveness, manifested in the duality of the cultural and economic dimensions of conservatism, multiplied by the desire to fit ideological differences into the democratic system. In relation to the explanation of the vector of value transformations within the theory of human security management, different approaches coexist. Practical political effects differentiate existential threats to human security and in this case are manifested in the strengthening of ideological polarization, that is, the indirect strengthening of various political parties and civil movements due to their consolidation (Biswas and Murai 2024). A separate dimension of legal and political research within the framework of the theory of human security management concerns the influence of existential threats on political communication. First of all, we are talking about orientations to support specific types of political leadership that are specific to the situation of human security awareness (Babu 2016; Paleri 2022).

The theory of human security management argues that in times of existential challenges, charismatic political leaders act as a support for the political and psychological security of citizens. An example is the strengthening of the ratings of Prime Minister Pashinyan during and after the Second Karabakh War in 2020. The same principle demonstrated a noticeable increase in the ratings of Prime Minister Pashinyan and his Civil Contract party in 2018-2020, that is, during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period and after the harsh reaction to the Velvet Revolution, the intensification of protests in Yerevan and other regions of Armenia. In this sense, it is important to conduct empirical research within the framework of the theory of human security governance in order to understand how support for the ruling Civil Contract party contributed to the shift of the electorate towards more liberal views, and this process also affected supporters of conservative and nationalist parties (Paturyan and Gevorgyan 2021). A number of comparative studies of other countries show that awareness of the threat to human security sharply increases support for charismatic leaders compared to problem-solving and relationship-building types (Di Mascio, Barbieri, Natalini and Selva 2021; Natalini, Barbieri and Di Mascio 2021). At the same time, for the post-war Armenian reality, it is effective to use such concepts of political leadership, within which a charismatic leader would be understood as a political leader with high demands on followers and confident in their abilities; prone to risky but thoughtful behavior; emphasizing the importance of group identity (Khvorostiankina 2021).

The most obvious effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second Karabakh War of 2020 is the rallying around the rising ratings of the ruling Civil Contract Party and the current political leaders of Armenia. It is especially important that the improvement in positions was achieved primarily due to a change in the positions of the electorate from the area of political opponents.

The effect of rallying around the ruling Civil Contract party may be long-term, as all leaders managed to maintain the same levels of support. Similar dynamics were demonstrated by the ratings of the Prime Minister of Armenia. The growth of support for the current leaders in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second



Karabakh War serves as a confirmation of the orientation towards maintaining the status quo and is considered within the framework of the theory of human security governance and is interpreted as an element of the conservative shift (Yavuz and Gunter 2023). Other data also support the strengthening of conservative orientations. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second Karabakh War, not only patriotic feelings and a sense of unity with one's people come to the fore, but also the demand for order, growing distrust of fellow citizens, and the rejection of freedoms in favor of national security (Paturyan and Melkonyan 2024; Markosian, Layne, Khachadourian, et al. 2022). As the crisis grows and citizens realize the significance of the threat of military escalation and war, their priorities noticeably change towards those associated with a conservative view of politics (Ziemer 2020).

The demand for maintaining the status quo and order, typical of crisis situations, is amplified by information exchange and interpretations in cyberspace, traditional and digital media, as well as social media, which increase fears of full-scale military action and hyper-infection. The effect is amplified by mistrust of fellow citizens, among whom not all are ready to support the status quo and order in the country or to comply with the strict quarantine regulations of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second Karabakh War, the most confident leaders are those who fit into the logic of the current crisis and military situation demands and political orientations. The cases of Prime Minister Pashinyan and other leaders of his Civil Contract party, who from the very beginning emphasized the patriotic agenda in their rhetoric and speeches, are indicative.

The experience of the results of the 2021 Early Parliamentary Elections (OSCE ODIHR 2021) and the 2023 Yerevan Council of Elders Elections show that in the next similar elections, the following types of leaders will be electorally successful: 1) politicians inclined to charismatically manage the trust of their supporters based on a confident and uncompromising focus on their own political capital, most often based on previously acquired wide fame; 2) politicians who are capable of expressing simple human closeness to ordinary people and are focused on creating and maintaining social relations. In the context of the Armenian society of 'neither war nor peace', the above-mentioned types of leaders are clearly inclined to emotionality and demonstration of closeness to the difficulties of citizens and threats to their private lives, which can be described structurally as a populist game or as a manifestation of learned or genuine sincerity.

In the conflict conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second Karabakh War, the impossibility of sufficiently relying on a rational and consistent assessment, two popular ways of leadership behavior are clearly manifested. In the context of human security, the first is charismatic, making decisions at one's own risk, and the second leadership is avoidance, largely offering to simply shift the final decision to other members of the post-war Armenian society, entering into a horizontal dialogue with them, rather than vertical relations of power and subordination. As a rule, leaders of opposition political parties and movements, focused on creating the maximum number of personal connections, are inclined to this style of leadership. If we add to this that the 'Armenian model' of reaction to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the military situation, which has already become a stable way, was based on the

principle of allowing people to do what they themselves consider necessary. It is significant that the main critics of the 'Armenian model' of combating COVID-19 and the military situation developed precisely around the ever-increasing demand of Armenian society for security and alternative responses from charismatic leaders.

The trend towards an increase in demand for charismatic leaders in post-war Armenia was observed both before the COVID-19 pandemic and before the Second Karabakh War, so it can be argued that during the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of trends simultaneously intensified.

The trend is when the desire of political elites to be ahead of the demands of Armenian society and offer for sale on the political market images of charismatics who want to speak directly with people without the mediation of expert environments. Another trend is when the catalytic effect due to the pandemic and war, which generated special effects described within the framework of the theory of human security management. These trends further reinforced each other and led to quite serious, temporary, but extraordinary restrictions on personal freedoms and rights of citizens in exchange for conditional security guarantees from the charismatics who declared a real war in an 'emergency situation and martial law'.

There are certain difficulties with the unambiguous interpretation of the effect of strengthening the orientation of the post-war Armenian electorate towards traditional values in comparison with the simple effect of consolidation around the ruling Civil Contract party. The modern turbulent world order offers every country and every person an extremely large number of identities and ways of acting, that is, a diversity of identities. A careful and even critical attitude towards traditionalism in the modern world order is a resilient need for the security of small states and their citizens. The abundance of rhetoric of political leaders of post-war Armenia, calling their supporters to traditional or non-traditional values and the digital age of society, should not be deceiving.

In the post-war Armenian society, tradition is most often understood as simply a certain previous period, that is, the pre-war period, in which there were much fewer crises and wars, and the social and political conditions were relatively stable, with hierarchical ways of delegating representatives of political parties to power, etc. Such a traditional appeal is closely intertwined with the attitudes of the political leader himself, being most often not an institutional, but a de-rationalized program. The political and social fabric of the post-war Ayarman society itself has changed and the previous institutions, well preserved in the memory of charismatic leaders, simply cannot work in it. But this does not mean that political slogans or society do not function, it is just that the political tradition itself, which should be relied upon, becomes so easily constructed that it inevitably includes certain personal attitudes of the leader. In light of the above-mentioned features of the political moment, it seems that in the current situation of post-war Armenia, the role of the personal qualities of leaders will only increase, both as their attitudes and difficulties from the side of society, and as actors in the political process, making difficult decisions for the post-war Armenian statehood and society. At the same time, human security in post-war Armenia is under threat due to various external circumstances of military aggression by

Azerbaijan, which is why Armenia needs the assistance of the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, EU and other international organizations to maintain peace.

The experience of post-war Armenia shows the following shortcomings in the management of human security in small states: 1) Human security in the South Caucasus must be viewed as a global phenomenon through which order can be brought to chaos; 2) Human security theory is used as an approach, not as a recommendation; 3) Security can be more easily ensured only in conditions of international stability and cooperation; 4) International stability and cooperation by themselves do not guarantee human security in small states; 5) Sudden and abrupt changes in the political orientation of small states pose a threat to human security; 6) In order for human security priorities to make sense, it is necessary to take into account the obstacles to their implementation.

It is obvious that ensuring human security in post-war Armenia is one of the most important dimensions in solving the problem of regional and international security, taking into account various factors of human security in the South Caucasus. With the growing importance of effective protection of human rights and freedoms, the role of the individual as an actor acting within the state and the whole world, the understanding of security as ensuring human security in the broad context of global political, social and humanitarian problems is also of particular importance.

### **Challenges sustainable security and human development**

Starting with the 1994 Human Development Report, when the concepts of security and human development were first combined (UNDP 1994). The report explained that these concepts, although different, are complementary: the first refers to the expansion of human freedom, the second to protection from threats to vital freedoms. From this, we can conclude that sustainable security requires attention to all risks not only to security, but also to human development.

The annual Development Programme Reports subsequently refined and structured the concept of human security. In 1997, the Development Programme focused on personal development, which meant not only eliminating the material causes of poverty, but also poverty as a deprivation of the opportunity to live in dignity. A distinction was made between income poverty and personal poverty, as these two dimensions are closely interrelated. By the late 1990s, human security had become central to foreign policy discussions. The 2000 report focused on human rights, which were closely linked to the concept of human security (Adly et al. 2000). In particular, it was noted that a decent standard of living, adequate nutrition, health care, education, and protection from disasters are human rights, not just development goals, and that poverty is a threat to the enjoyment of human rights. Themes of ecology, rational water use and global warming dominated the Human Development Report in 2006 and 2007-2008 (UNDP 2006; UNDP 2008).

The concept of human security is still in the process of formation, so there is no single interpretation of human security (UNDP 2024). Even in the West, there are different definitions of personal security, which focuses on different aspects. From all their diversity, two main directions can be distinguished.

The first direction of personal security is based on the activities of the UNDP program, building a two-tier system of personal security. The first or external level is based on a very broad model of development, where the latter is the main value on the basis of which all other freedoms and public goods can be achieved. Development is considered a means, not an end, and the core of this model is the idea of a partnership between different types of actors: government, CSOs, NGOs, business and the private sector. Within the framework of this model, it is postulated that globalization and its consequences should not be left to market forces. Minimal mechanisms of regulation and institutionalization are required to level the distribution of the fruits of globalization and minimize its negative consequences. For adherents of this interpretation, globalization has a paradoxical meaning. On the one hand, it confirms the need to revise political priorities. By making the world more integrated and interdependent, globalization makes the classic threat of interstate war less likely. On the other hand, globalization increases the sense of danger emanating from phenomena that previously seemed too distant and did not affect everyday life. In the 2010 report, UNDP defines development based on three components (UNDP 2010): 1) well-being; 2) empowerment and agency; 3) justice.

The second, narrower level of human security according to UNDP focuses on basic human needs, which is based on several key provisions (UNDP 2010): 1) the subject of human security is people, not states or social groups; 2) although the intensity of various threats to human security varies, they remain threats to everyone; 3) the components of human security are interdependent.

The concept of human security includes the concept of freedom, which is based on the ability and opportunity that allow each individual to live without limiting others. Thus, human security is related to the quality of life of people, the resilience of society, the state and the stability of political institutions and processes. It is assumed that anything that reduces this quality and the resilience of social, economic, political and other public institutions and processes poses a security threat. For example, the level of resilience of society and policies against disinformation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, since low levels of societal resilience to disinformation increase the incentives for political leaders to ignore the problem of disinformation (Di Mascio, Barbieri, Natalini and Selva 2021). On the contrary, anything that can increase this quality increases human security. In this regard, the adoption of the idea of human rights by states obliges them to revise the traditional understanding of sovereignty. By signing up to internationally recognized human rights norms, states thereby agree to take into account the interests of the individual when pursuing national interests.

The second direction is based on the fact that the security of the state does not always coincide with the security of its citizens. The trends of modern conflicts demonstrate the prevalence of internal conflicts associated with civil wars and the collapse of states, which leads to high mortality rates among the civilian population. In this regard, there is a need for actions to reduce the consequences of conflicts for the population, even if these actions affect the sovereign prerogatives of the state. Hence the need for humanitarian interventions to ensure personal security. The conviction that state sovereignty is not an insurmountable obstacle to forceful actions in situations requiring it is reflected in the UN Security Council decisions on Nagorno-Karabakh on

the prospect of peace and genuine dialogue to resolve outstanding issues. All this links civil rights and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The same direction can be attributed to the idea of post-conflict peacebuilding, which includes actions to identify and support structures that will seek to strengthen and consolidate peace in order to avoid the emergence of conflicts. This expression first appeared in a speech by the UN Secretary-General, who proposed a wide range of tasks for post-conflict peacebuilding, including disarmament of former warring parties and restoration of order, protection and possible destruction of weapons, repatriation of refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, election monitoring, assistance to efforts to protect human rights, reform or strengthening of government institutions and assistance to formal and informal processes of political participation. It is obvious that human security does not yet provide a clear framework for analysis or political decision-making, but it already contributes to the study and development of a new type of international security. Therefore, it can be used in the field of research into factors of sustainable security that are associated with various threats to the security of societies, groups and individuals, as opposed to more traditional approaches that focus on protecting states from external threats.

In post-war Armenia, several dimensions of human security can be identified from the UNDP perspective: 1) human rights and freedoms and the rule of law; 2) humanitarian security, according to which human security is the primary goal; 3) sustainable development of society; and 4) sustainable security. In this context, sustainable security of the individual, society and the state is defined as freedom from threats to the privacy of the individual and its quality, while simultaneously creating conditions for its free development and the realization of its rights and opportunities to participate in public life both at the national and global levels. The concept of sustainable security in this sense allows us to overcome the contradiction between the individual and society (since the opportunity to participate in public life is its component), the individual and public authority (the state, for example, thanks to the police, is still a mechanism for ensuring the physical security of the individual), society and public authority (civil society and its interaction with the authorities is largely a mechanism for creating conditions for free development). In the context of the transformation of international relations into world politics, human security may well be the link between the individual level and the global level.

### **Quantitative and qualitative measurements of personal security**

The concept of human security is being practically applied in the post-war Armenia's real policy, including it in its foreign policy. As defined in the RA Government Program Progress and Results Reports for 2021-2026, as well as the RA Government Program Implementation Reports for 2021, 2022 and 2023, the Armenian government defines human security as including all threats to human survival, daily life and dignity, and taking steps to combat these threats (The Government of the RA 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024). For example, the Armenian government, while assessing the conditions of 2021, noted a number of key issues of the security system, which were exacerbated by the crisis caused by the 44-day war in 2020, as well as the political,

social and economic uncertainties that emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which went deeper for the safety management system (The Government of the RA 2021). The 44-day war took place under the conditions of the state of emergency of the pandemic of COVID-19, which was also increased by the martial law, causing thousands of victims, tens of thousands of displaced people, hundreds of missing people, many prisoners, disrupted personal and public life, an atmosphere of hatred and aggravation of the internal political crisis and other threats (The Government of the RA 2021).

The deepening geopolitical instability, the uncertainties and tensions that are becoming evident in the world order and international security are further exacerbating the threats to Armenia's external security (The Government of the RA 2023, 2024). Analyzing the Armenian government's assessments of the security issues of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, it becomes clear that starting from 2020, the key challenge of the Armenian government's activities continues to be the procedures for managing internal and external security challenges. After the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan's aggression continued not only against Nagorno Karabakh, but also against Armenia. Thus, the next aggression of Azerbaijan against Armenia on September 13, 2022, the ongoing occupation of the sovereign territories of Armenia, the constant threat of new aggression, the unresolved issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the invasion of the Azerbaijani military into the territory of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh, the illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor, the ban on the supply of natural gas and electricity to Nagorno-Karabakh and the humanitarian, food, energy and environmental crises caused by them in Nagorno-Karabakh, which unfortunately did not allow the Armenian government to fully concentrate all resources on the implementation of development programs (The Government of the RA 2023).

In the Armenian version, human security means the protection of people from both violent and non-violent danger. This is a state characterized by the absence of an increasing threat to human rights, security and even life. In order to determine whether it is appropriate to consider a particular issue in the context of human security, it is necessary to find out to what extent the security of people is threatened. It is also emphasized that personal security does not replace national security, but that they are complementary concepts. However, the concept of personal security differs from traditional security concepts, where states are the main object of analysis. Instead, citizens and their economic and social relationships become the main actor in security policy. In this sense, personal security is associated with the ability to protect people to the same extent as with the protection of states.

The growing importance of personal security is also due to the fact that after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Second Karabakh War, interstate conflicts in the South Caucasus and other regions have become more common. These conflicts are waged using high-tech weapons, and, unlike the conflicts of the early twentieth century, most of the victims of the Second Karabakh War and other modern wars and military conflicts are civilians. Here it is important to understand that personal security has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitative dimensions are associated with material sufficiency. The qualitative dimension is related to the protection of human dignity, which includes personal autonomy, control over one's

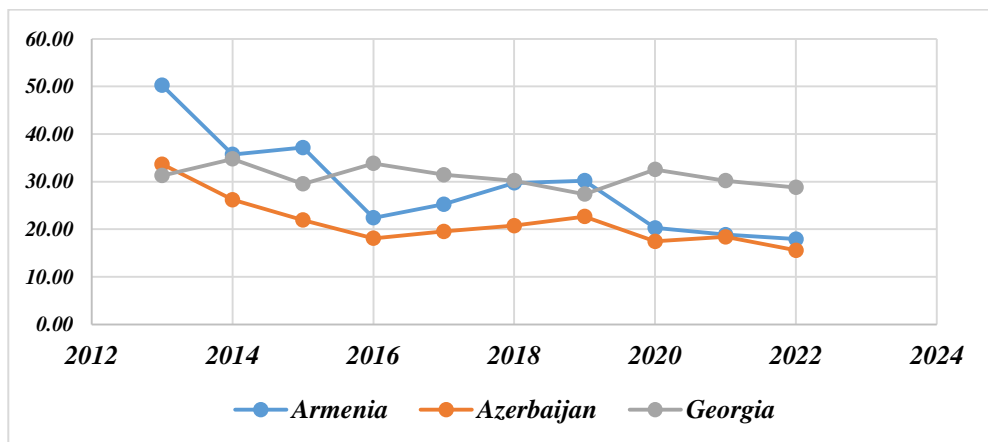
own life and participation in the life of society. Liberation from aggression and oppression by power structures (global, national or local) is a prerequisite for ensuring the security of the individual.

Table 2 and Figure 2 show the indicators of Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism in the South Caucasus from 2013 to 2022, which measures the achievements and failures of the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the area of governance quality and effectiveness.

**Table 2. Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)**

Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Armenia	50.24	35.71	37.14	22.38	25.24	29.72	30.19	20.28	18.87	17.92
Azerbaijan	33.65	26.19	21.90	18.10	19.52	20.75	22.64	17.45	18.40	15.57
Georgia	31.28	34.76	29.52	33.81	31.43	30.19	27.36	32.55	30.19	28.77

**Figure 1. Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)**



A comparative analysis of the decline in political stability indicators of Armenia with Azerbaijan and Georgia for the period 2013-2022 shows that sustainable security and ensuring sustainable development of political and economic systems is one of the priority issues in post-war Armenia (see Table 2 and Figure 2). This problem has been attracting increasing attention in the political agenda of Armenia from 2013 to 2023 due to the growing discussions about the growth of military threats, risks of military escalation and war. In 2013, Armenia found itself in a dilemma of choosing between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), thus in 2013 Armenia abandoned the Association Agreement with the EU, joining the Customs Union (CU) of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, and then becoming a member of the EAEU. In 2017, Armenia signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU, thus European integration became one of the directions of Armenia's foreign policy

(EUR-Lex 2018). In this CEPA between the EU and Armenia, the European norms of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights are inextricably linked with the principles of trade liberalization and peaceful resolution of conflicts. However, the trends of political stability and development from 2013 to 2022 in Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan in recent decades have been contradictory (see Table 2 and Figure 2), and despite the success of some reforms carried out with the support of the EU, the South Caucasus is one of the most unstable regions in the world.

Unplanned deviations of significant indicators in the integration processes, military escalation and the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan led to a decrease in the level of political stability and sustainable security of Armenia. Here, an undesirable loss of stability took place precisely during the period of democratization and deepening of integration processes with the EU in 2018-2019 after the Velvet Revolution, because the stability and effectiveness of their work determines the development of the country's economy and the strategy for sustainable social development of the regions. It is important to reliably identify and analyze possible problems, promptly assess the potential of post-war Armenia and establish ways to increase the sustainability of their development. The key feature of ensuring the effective functioning of the political system of post-war Armenia is the economically competent management of its economic activities, maintaining a sustainable competitive state, and achieving leadership. Therefore, the sustainability of development should be considered as the most important tool for assessing the effectiveness of the government in the field of sustainable security.

The instability in the post-Soviet space is characterized by the presence of a fundamental imbalance in the distribution of power between the states in the South Caucasus. The imbalance lies in the significant strengthening of military cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to a large-scale war by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and ethnic cleansing in 2023 due to the weakening of Armenia. We can argue that the reason for such anti-Armenian aggressive military policy of Azerbaijan was the COVID-19 pandemic, and then the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 and the instability of the international system, thereby pushing smaller imbalances and regional war. The authors of this work believe that the presence of regional imbalances in the South Caucasus does not mean that the system is unbalanced as a whole, since small imbalances will sooner or later be balanced by the largest players in the global system. In other words, wars and small conflicts may arise around Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, imbalances of power between small and/or medium-sized states in the South Caucasus, but with the stabilization of the international system, these imbalances will be neutralized and corrected by the largest players.

*Table 3. Government effectiveness in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)*

<i>Country</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
<b>Armenia</b>	58.77	44.23	41.90	40.00	42.38	47.14	42.38	39.52	40.00	39.15
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	38.86	42.79	45.24	46.67	46.67	47.62	46.19	47.62	58.57	50.94
<b>Georgia</b>	70.14	68.75	64.29	67.62	68.57	71.43	75.71	74.76	70.95	72.64



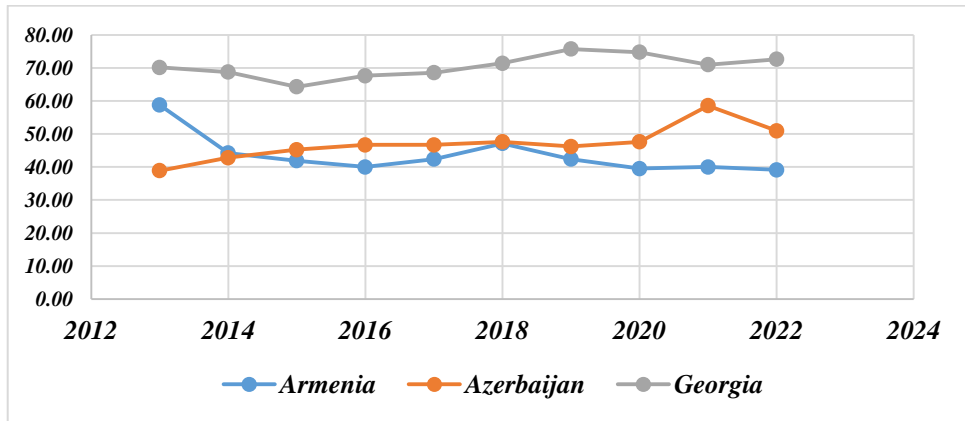
*Figure 3. Government effectiveness in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)*

Table 3 and Figure 3 show that Armenia's Government effectiveness index scores have declined over the period 2013-2022, while they have increased in Azerbaijan and Georgia. The changing configuration of the political space in the South Caucasus, the emergence of new centers of power and political actors in the context of globalization cause scientific interest in the study of the problem of effective governance in post-war Armenia, the prerequisites and factors for ensuring its security for the period 2013-2022 (see Table 3 and Figure 3). In this context, one of the most influential global political trends of our time is manifested in the growing interdependence of countries and peoples. It is accompanied not only by positive phenomena, but also by the emergence and strengthening of regional threats to the national interests of Armenia, its political, economic, social, geopolitical and military spheres, international cooperation and strategic stability.

These threats are implemented through the desire of certain foreign policy actors to dominate the information space and through information impact on individuals, social groups, political associations, organizations and society as a whole. They are also implemented through the use of the latest information technologies aimed at destroying traditional values of society, eroding the identity of the individual and destabilizing the political system, undermining sovereignty, violating the territorial integrity of the state. In this regard, the focus of the government and parliament of Armenia is on issues related to the effective governance of new technologies of interaction in the political sphere, as well as identifying opportunities for confrontation, emerging threats and ensuring the security of political communication at the global, regional and national levels. No less urgent is the effective governance of such threats to national and human security as the use of hybrid technologies in the preparation and implementation of terrorist acts, the commission of socially dangerous crimes, the unleashing of new interstate conflicts, the interference of Azerbaijan, Turkey or Russia in the internal affairs of sovereign Armenia, the incitement of interethnic and interfaith strife in the South Caucasus. In terms of governance effectiveness and regulatory quality, the Government of Armenia assessed a number of dimensions of Armenia's security environment amid global instability, noting that the security mechanisms that Armenia

has traditionally relied on have continued to change (The Government of the RA 2024). Their ineffectiveness was noticeable after the war events of 2020, 2021 and 2022, when the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was found to be ineffective, the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh could not prevent the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor, which began on December 12, 2022, and then in September 2023, the Armenians forced displacement from Nagorno-Karabakh. In the context of raising the bar for the regulation of national and human security procedures, the Armenian government initiated a number of steps aimed at diversifying security relations (The Government of the RA 2024). For example, since February 2023, the EU has deployed a long-term civilian mission along the state border of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Government's conceptual approach in the field of ensuring external security is based on regional policy, with the aim of diagnosing the negative and aggressive manifestations in the region towards Armenia, managing them, and then reducing them thanks to a regionally thought out policy and completely overcoming them in the long run.

**Table 4. Regulatory quality in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)**

Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Armenia	59.72	56.25	60.00	62.38	62.86	64.29	61.43	59.52	57.14	51.89
Azerbaijan	36.49	43.75	40.00	39.05	38.10	39.52	44.29	39.05	50.48	48.11
Georgia	72.99	75.48	74.76	78.57	80.00	81.43	81.43	81.43	82.86	81.60

**Figure 4. Regulatory quality in the South Caucasus (Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)**

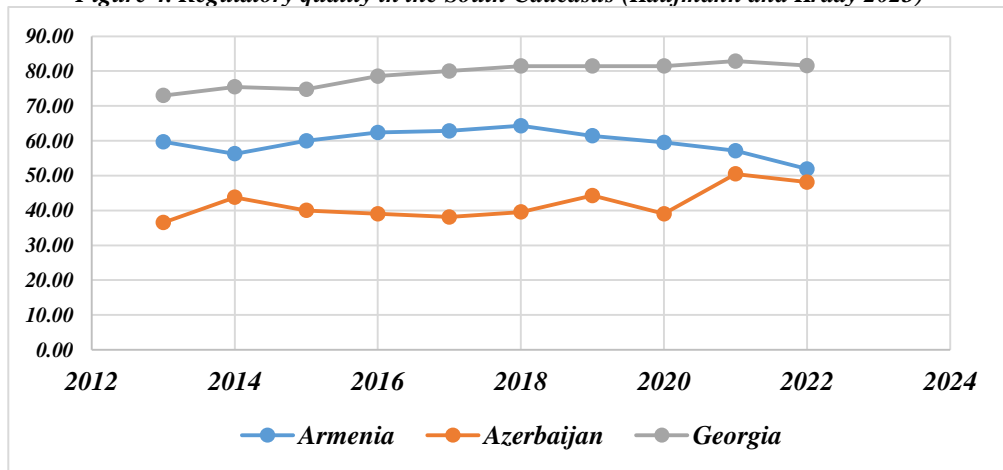


Table 4 and Figure 4 show that Armenia's Regulatory quality index scores have declined compared to Azerbaijan and Georgia over the period 2013-2022. The reasons for this situation are difficulties in the areas of quality of public services, quality of development and implementation of domestic public policy, level of trust in domestic policies pursued by the government, quality of functioning of the state apparatus and

work of civil servants, their competence, degree of their independence from political pressure, etc.

The analysis of the legislation showed that four levels of assessing the quality of human security regulation can be distinguished in regulatory legal acts: national or republican, regional, local and personal. The quality of human security regulation is understood as the ratio of the results obtained and state efforts, that is, the search for an optimal balance between human capital, available resources and the volume of necessary expenses. The issues of the quality of regulation and formation of post-war Armenia institutions as rules and norms to which public authorities and CSOs are subject, in the European integration of Armenia have led to difficulties in view of the spread and institutionalization of formal and informal rules.

According to the authors, a balanced system of target settings for the activities of public administration bodies in the field of sustainable security can become the key to high-quality regulation and effective management activities of post-war Armenia. It is necessary to subject to a detailed analysis the disparate goals enshrined in various legislative and by-laws in the field of human security, to form a toolkit for determining the goals of the law, to classify them, highlighting the main, root goals, and then the goals of the second, third level, etc. Thus, the formation of a 'goal tree' of the sustainable security system will allow us to determine the paths of law enforcement activities, determine the means of achieving it, as well as the criteria for the effectiveness of public administration bodies.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

Since the early 1990s, the concept of human security has been a central focus in social and humanitarian sciences, political institutions and international organizations. Traditionally, national security was understood as the protection of the state from external threats. However, in the case of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, this understanding has shifted to emphasize protection against ethnic cleansing and widespread human rights violations by the Azerbaijani military against civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh and border regions of Armenia from 2020 to 2023 (UN 2020a; UN 2020b; UN 2022; UN 2023; UN Security Council 2023). For example, from 2022 to 2023, Nagorno-Karabakh was under a de facto blockade by the Azerbaijani army, which was also ignored by the Russian peacekeeping contingent (MFA of the RA 2023; Amnesty International 2023; Ertl 2023). This shift highlights the growing salience of the individual as a central actor in both national and international security, moving the focus away from state-centric defense toward the protection of human lives.

The outbreak of the Second Karabakh War further catalyzed new attention in how security is conceptualized. On the one hand, traditional security frameworks pay insufficient attention to ethnic and cultural differences. On the other hand, the increasing number of humanitarian crisis and military conflicts underscores the need for a broader understanding of security. Furthermore, conventional security theories and approaches struggle to develop predictive models for emerging threats and risks. Hence, human security involves protecting the foundations of human life in ways that

enhance human freedoms and promote their fulfillment. However, while the area of human security analysis is expanding and deepening, its conceptualization remains incomplete.

Considering human security as a normative and political issue raises a number of questions for post-war Armenian society, most notably regarding how the lack of a clear definition of human security affects its normative possibilities. Despite its widespread use, human security could indeed align with different interpretations of the concept, such as: security of nations, security of the individual, security of the person, personal security, as well as sustainable security. However, in post-war Armenia, human security is usually understood as national security, the protection of Armenian society, and the preservation of the country's civilizational and cultural heritage. In this context, it's worth of mention that personal security in post-war Armenia implies the protection of not only the individual, but also society, civilizational and cultural heritage, which are the main elements of the broader concept of security. From this point of view, people act as the key actor in ensuring personal security, supported by public authorities, with an emphasis on both security and freedom. At the same time, the interpretation of personal security through non-traditional security approaches highlights additional issues, such as the risk of military escalation, terrorism, and threat of ethnic cleansing and genocide by Azerbaijani armed forces. These aspects thus complement traditional concepts of national and international security.

Thus, the analysis of new approaches to international security leads us to the following conclusions. *Firstly*, there is a pressing need for new approaches to security that move away from the traditional emphasis on state security. This need is especially evident in the emergence and development of concepts based on human security. *Secondly*, the concept of personal security remains underdeveloped, with different interpretations coalescing around the idea that the object of protection should also be the individual and the people, and not just institutions, territory and state sovereignty. *Thirdly*, new approaches to security are not a substitute for traditional concepts of national and international security, but rather complement and expand them. *Fourthly*, the concept of personal security integrates the sphere of sustainable development and security. Hence, a kind of fusion of sustainable security and development policies occurs, which leads to a redistribution of financial flows from military needs to development needs. *Fifthly*, the rise of the human factor in international security reflects broader transformations in the global order, including transnationalization, increased public participation in international affairs, and the emergence of new actors in global governance. In the future, this concept may develop into a valuable analytical tool for applied political strategies, enabling both individual and collective empowerment.

### **Supplementary material**

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
<https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2024.3.8.042>

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### 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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## THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO POLITICAL STABILITY: HOW DO THEORIES INTERPRET THE FACTORS INFLUENCING IT?

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### Abstract

Political stability is a crucial concept within political science, yet its theoretical foundations and influencing factors are often dispersed across various perspectives. This article presents the first comprehensive attempt to synthesize and analyze the theoretical approaches to political stability within a single work. Drawing from both political science and sociology, this study aims to explore how political stability shapes and is shaped by political, economic, social, and cultural systems. By examining the reciprocal relationships between these systems and political stability, the article identifies key theoretical frameworks that explain its trends and impacts. Notably, this is the first effort to address these theories in a unified manner, filling a gap in both Armenian political science literature and broader global scholarship. This work contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence political stability and offers insights into their implications for societal development.

**Keywords:** stability, political system, instability, Influencing factor, modernisation theory, institutionalism, conflict theory, state-centered theory, structural functionalism, rational choice.

### Introduction

To understand the trends in political stability within political science, identify the factors influencing it, and examine their subsequent impact, it is essential to explore specific theories in political science and sociology. From various perspectives, these theories can analyze the effects of political stability on the development of political, economic, social, and cultural systems in society and the reciprocal influence of these systems and factors on political stability. This article is unique, as no scientific works in Armenian political science literature or global political science thought examine political stability within the framework of theories commonly found in political science and sociology in one article. This work is the first attempt in this direction and aims to

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identify the theoretical aspects of political stability by applying the critical features of these theories.

In the academic literature, there is an approach that considers political stability as a dependent variable (Goldsmith 1987, 471; Tabassam, Hashmi, and Rehman 2016; Cebula 2011). In other words, it is influenced by various factors and emerges due to their systemic interaction. In this context, Arthur Goldsmith emphasizes that even analysts with radical views share the approach that stability is more of an outcome than a cause.

Studying events that transition the political system from stability to instability involves analyzing their underlying foundations. Political theorists employ various paradigms when exploring the factors that lead to instability. For example, Samuel Huntington argues that instability arises when demands exceed the capabilities of the political system; in other words, a failure to meet the socio-political demands of the population can lead to riots and mass protests (Huntington 1973, 49). In contrast, Ivo and Rosalind Feierabend explain instability in terms of psychological causes, noting that it can result from frustration and perceived deprivation (Feierabend et al. 1966, 256). Douglas Hibbs also used factor analysis techniques to identify social, economic, and political aspects to explore the causes of political instability (Hibbs et al. 1973). Nevertheless, some authors in the academic literature consider political stability as an independent variable and note that it can influence other critical socio-economic processes. Perhaps the most well-known among them is Mancur Olson, an American economist and professor of economics at the University of Maryland, who developed Olson's theory of stability and growth (Olson 1982). In this regard, Goldsmith adds that the primary reason for the lack of research on political stability as an independent variable is that most scientists regard stability as valuable and do not investigate its consequences as thoroughly as they study its causes (Goldsmith 1987, 471). As a second reason, Goldsmith highlights that many theorists assume stability is a valuable tool for economic development. According to him, these theorists are confident that stability is a crucial condition for economic growth and prosperity but do not take the initiative to examine it empirically. As an exception to this approach, Robert Green and William Cunningham highlight the numerous studies on the impact of political stability on foreign investment (Green et al. 1975, 114). The volume of foreign investments is directly proportional to the level of risk, so both the academic community and the private sector are interested in periodically conducting such research. People tend to invest in countries with low political unrest, wars, or other factors threatening investment.

In this article, political stability and the factors influencing it will be examined within the framework of the following theories: Modernization theory; Institutional theory; Conflict theory; State-centered theory; Structural-Functional theory; Rational choice theory. The selection of these theories is based on their close connection to the concept of political stability and their broad range of factors contributing to stability.

## Modernization theory

Modernization theory is one of the most widely applied theories in political science. This theory bases its approaches on economic growth and development and examines the social evolution process and societies' development. In brief, the primary approach of Modernization theory suggests that as a state develops and modernizes economically, its political institutions tend to become more democratic. In their book *"Non-Modernization: Power–Culture Trajectories and the Dynamics of Political Institutions,"* Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson define Modernization theory as a cornerstone of contemporary political science. They note that the essence of this theory is that richer, more educated, and economically developed societies or states tend to have more advanced political institutions. These institutions become more democratic, respect basic civil and human rights, and create other socio-political characteristics typical of Western democracies (Acemoglu et al. 2022, 324). Notable theory representatives include Marion J. Levy Jr., Gabriel Almond, Seymour Martin Lipset, Walt Rostow, Daniel Lerner, David Apter, Cyril Edwin Black, Myron Weiner, and Karl Deutsch.

However, the American sociologist and political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset developed the classical approach to the Modernization theory. According to him, democracy directly results from economic growth. In his book *"Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,"* Lipset emphasizes that the more prosperous a nation is, the more likely it is to maintain a democratic order (Lipset 1959, 75). Modernization theory dominated political science during the 1950s and 1960s when liberal democratic approaches and views were actively developing in the Western world after World War II. Two decades after the war, American political scientists and their students, with financial support from public and private institutions, primarily studied economic development issues in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, along with processes and socio-cultural changes related to political stability (Tipps 1973, 200).

In the academic literature, two levels of study of classical modernization theory are distinguished: studies at the microcosmic level, which focus on the constituent elements of social modernization such as urbanization, gender and income inequality, skills acquisition and education, the role of political communication and the media, bureaucratic corruption, etc (Bhambra 2023; Gorelikov 2021). The other level is studies at the macrocosmic level, which focus on empirical trajectories and observable processes of modernization of nations and societies, including their economics and politics (Goorha 2010, 3). Thus, it can be assumed that Modernization theory, when assessing a particular state's political stability or instability, focuses exclusively on socioeconomic and political factors that directly impact the democratic development of that society. In the context of political stability, at the micro level, the focus is on individuals, families, or even companies, whose discontent can lead to societal protests. These protests, in turn, can undermine political stability. In this case, political instability originates from the 'down top'. While, at the macro level, the focus is on systems in general—whether political, economic, or social—and political instability typically originates from the 'top down'. At this level, political theorists and

economists do not develop models for transforming individual sectors of the economy or social systems. Instead, they create universal and comprehensive development theories that, according to proponents, directly lead to the state's and society's modernization.

Within the framework of Modernization theory, political scientists and economists also emphasize Olson's theory of stability and growth. As mentioned earlier, Mancur Olson is one of the economists who consider political stability as an independent variable influencing other critical socioeconomic processes. In his book "The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities," he argues that political stability has a much more complex relationship with economic growth than previously thought. According to Olson, wars, revolutions, and other events that destabilize the political system negatively affect economic activity in the short term. However, he argues that these disruptions create conditions for faster growth in the medium term. However, Olson argues that long-term political stability can lead to slower economic growth (Goldsmith 1987, 472). Olson also presents a reason that, in the long term, leads to decreased economic activity. According to him, political stability can negatively impact the economy due to the mercenary activities of certain powerful interest groups. These groups sometimes hinder society's ability to introduce new technologies and redistribute resources, thereby slowing economic growth (Goldsmith 1987, 472). At the same time, Olson does not explicitly state that chronic political instability contributes to economic growth.

Based on this, Olson identifies four types of political systems:

1. Chronically unstable countries that are expected to experience sustained slow economic growth.
2. Invariable, stable countries are expected to experience relatively rapid economic growth but may see a decline over time.
3. Stabilizing political systems that adapt to new models of political stability and, as a result, are expected to experience sharp economic growth.
4. Regimes that are becoming less stable. Olson does not make specific predictions about these regimes but concludes that their economic growth rates will likely decline sharply (Goldsmith 1987, 472).

Olson developed his classification by studying the experiences of Western countries and Japan, but he believes this approach is also applicable to developing countries. In their works, proponents of Modernization theory have identified political and socioeconomic factors that affect political stability. Moreover, some of them have also highlighted extreme political instability as a phenomenon influenced by four factors: 1) Assassinations of high-ranking officials and politicians, 2) Illegal seizure of power, 3) Armed attacks, 4) Deaths resulting from political violence within the state (Bollen et al. 1982, 1077; Torres Jarrín and Daza Aramayo 2023; Agbloyor, Nyeadi, Opperman and Dankwah 2024).

From the perspective of the state or society, all these factors are internal and exclude external causes of instability (such as foreign invasions or wars), which Olson also considers (Goldsmith 1987, 472). The exclusion of external causes of instability is one of the main criticisms of this theory.

Critics of Modernization theory argue that many economically developed countries have political systems that are not free and are, in fact, undemocratic. In the second half of the 20th century, critics of modernization theory almost unanimously cited the Soviet Union as an example. They pointed out that, despite being a significant power with abundant resources and rapidly increasing industrial strength, a totalitarian regime completely eliminated the features inherent in democracy. The example of the Soviet Union challenges the absolute assertion of Modernization theory supporters that as a state develops and modernizes economically, its political institutions become more democratic. Critics have also cited Japan and Germany at various times, noting that industrialization in the initial stages did not lead to establishing a stable democratization process (Treisman 2020, 242). In this regard, a group of experts argues that the opposite approach may be practical: establishing democracy and political stability in a country might more likely lead to economic modernization (Acemoglu et al. 2014, 908). Others argue that economic modernization helps democracies survive but does not necessarily promote democratization (Przeworski et al. 1997, 166).

Critics of modernization theory question whether modernization expands the rights of citizens. China is a primary example cited by critics of Modernization theory in the modern world. According to the World Bank, as of 2023, China is the world's second-largest economy by GDP in absolute value after the United States (The World Bank Group 2024). According to the logic of Modernization theory, political freedoms and the protection of human rights should have expanded in parallel with China's rapid economic growth. However, the situation in China reveals the exact opposite. According to Freedom House's "*Freedom in the World 2024*" report, China is considered a "Not Free" country (Freedom House 2024), with most human rights organizations reporting severe repression of Turkic-speaking Uyghurs (Amnesty International 2021). Additionally, China has become a classic example of a digital dictatorship (Mirzoyan 2023, 66).

Thus, based on the essence of classical Modernization theory, it could be argued that the more economically developed a particular state or society is, the more stable its political system will be. However, having a developed economy or social system alone is insufficient to ensure a country's political stability. One of the most striking examples of this is Israel. Israel has a relatively developed economy and ranks highly in social welfare. Nevertheless, it is among the countries where weekly protests occur, sometimes leading to clashes with the police.

### **Institutional theory**

This theory is also one of the most prevalent theories in political science, focusing on the more profound and more enduring aspects of social structure. It explores the processes and mechanisms by which structures, schemas, rules, norms, and everyday practices become essential guiding principles of social behaviour. The various components of institutional theory explain how these elements are created, distributed, accepted, and adapted over time and space and how they are neutralized, fall out of use, or form the basis for new structures (Ritzer 2005). The theory focuses on the key institutions of the political system, including legislative and executive bodies. In the

context of public policy, institutional theory is the process of policy development itself, specializing in the legal and judicial aspects of public administration in the transformation and change of political regimes and forms of governance (Hédoin 2024; Mazzoleni 2024).

In his article “*Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*”, Guy Peters presents several approaches to institutionalism (Peters 2019, 28). The first approach to institutional analysis is the normative approach, proposed by James March and Johan Olsen. They argue that the best way to understand individual and collective political behavior is to apply the ‘logic of appropriateness’ people acquire through participation in institutions (March et al. 1998, 951). March and Olsen believe that individuals working in an organization should follow the institution’s normative standards rather than be guided by narrow personal interests (Peters 2011). This means that relative stability can be ensured in a system if the members of a community or society follow the same game rules set for everyone. When examining political stability, normative institutionalism emphasizes how adherence to shared norms and values contributes to the legitimacy and stability of political institutions.

The second approach considers institutionalism from the perspective of rational choice. The basic logic of rational choice institutionalism is that institutions are a set of rules, and members of these institutions behave in accordance with the core components and requirements of the institutional structure (Peters 2011). In this case, institutions provide their members with clear guidelines on political behaviour while also creating an environment in which actors can predict outcomes and make rational choices that contribute to overall stability (Peters 2019, 61). Unlike the previous approach, in this case, people's preferences do not change based on their affiliation with the institution. Rational institutionalism focuses on subjects who make informed choices based on costs and benefits. In the context of political stability, this approach emphasizes the role of institutions in creating incentives and constraints that guide policy choices toward stable and predictable outcomes, thereby ensuring stability in a given society.

As a third approach, Peters identifies historical institutionalism, which holds that the political direction established or chosen at the creation of an institution will have a decisive influence on its policy in the future. In other words, the decisions made at the initial stage set a path that is difficult to deviate from and will, in the long term, have a lasting impact on further policy development (Peters 2019, 80-82). This approach is widely applicable for explaining compliance with a policy or policy course but is less helpful in explaining changes in policy or structure. This highlights the dependence of institutions on their chosen path. According to Peters, past events and decisions shape current institutional mechanisms. According to him, well-established institutions with a long history of legitimacy and effectiveness are often present in modern political systems. He argues that these institutions create an ‘isolation effect’ that can help organizations remain stable during radical changes, but this effect can also undermine stability (Peters 2019, 100). In political stability, historical institutionalism emphasizes the enduring influence of institutional heritage and the importance of adherence to the chosen path (Peters 2019, 80-82).

The following approach is empirical institutionalism. This approach focuses on the systematic observation, measurement, and analysis of political institutions to understand their structure, behaviour, and impact on political stability. Empirical institutionalism is based on empirical evidence and rigorous methodologies for studying how institutions function in practice and how they contribute to maintaining political stability. The empirical analysis allows for assessing how healthy institutions achieve their goals, how public order is maintained, and whether authorities in a given country ensure accountability and transparency in governance. The logic of this approach is that political stability depends on the performance of institutions; thus, lower performance results in a higher risk of political instability. Empirical institutionalism is primarily associated with Samuel Huntington. Huntington stressed the importance of creating structures mediating between the demands of society and state authorities (Huntington 1973, 8-11). According to Huntington, the mediation body also needed to be state-owned. In contrast, Robert D. Putnam argues that civil society can fulfill this intermediary role, contributing to the establishment of a stable and effective democracy (Putnam 1993).

Peters also highlights sociological institutionalism. This approach emphasizes institutions' cultural and cognitive aspects, arguing that they are deeply rooted in social practices and collective identity (Webber 2024; Aidnik 2024). Sociological institutionalism views institutions as social structures created through interactions and shared ideas (Peters 2019, 144-148; Aleksanyan 2020). Based on this, we can assume that cultural norms, shared ideas, and cognitive frameworks influence the stability and functioning of political institutions. This approach emphasizes the socio-cultural aspects of institutions and their role in maintaining political order and stability. Some scholars argue that legitimacy, transparency, and political activity grounded in the norms and values of political culture are crucial for political stability (Samuels 2024; Goldberg 2024).

### **Conflict theory**

Conflict theory is one of the most prominent theories in political science. It emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s and is based on the approaches and views of Karl Marx (Fornet-Betancourt 2024; Tarrit 2023). This theory views society as a complex system characterized by inequality and competition for limited resources. Classical conflict theory primarily focuses on differences in power, such as class conflict. Classical conflict theory views political stability through power dynamics and the ongoing struggle between different social groups. Political stability often reflects the control of dominant groups over resources (Tusalem 2015, 7). These groups maintain stability to protect their interests and, in addition, exert control over the groups under their authority. According to the classical theory approach, public authorities, especially law enforcement bodies, are seen as tools of the ruling class. The ruling class attempts to maintain political order and suppress any disobedience or unrest by applying laws, policies, and political institutions. Any deviation from these characteristics can lead to political instability. However, modern conflict theorists diverge significantly from classical approaches to the theory. Contemporary proponents of the theory believe that



fundamental conflicts of interest constantly arise in society and that social order is achieved through a balance of forces, where the interests of the powerful restrain and direct the desires and demands of the less powerful (Shi 2022; Beck and Grayot. 2021; Orsini 2024). From the conflict theory perspective, it can be noted that stability resulting from existing inequality is a fragile phenomenon. Economic inequality, social polarisation, and other forms of social stratification create a basis for tension, upheaval, and political instability (Deitelhoff and Schmelzle 2023; Leonardi 2024).

Nevertheless, political instability in such societies, which may be accompanied by mass protests, violent actions, and revolutions, can eventually lead to overthrowing the ruling power and the political regime. Significant political changes are often initiated from below in such societies through protest actions. Some theorists argue that stability in these societies can be partially maintained by fostering false consciousness among subordinate groups (Thompson 2015, 450), compelling them to accept their position in the social hierarchy (Balázs and Molnár 2024; Kortesoja 2023).

In conflict theory, political stability is maintained through force, ideological approaches, and unity based on coercion. Any deviation from these methods can lead to instability in the system. Additionally, political stability can also result from the resolution of these conflicts.

### **State-centered theory**

Unlike the other theories mentioned, the State-centered theory is less common in political science practice. This theory emphasizes the role of government in shaping the social system and civil society, highlighting the exceptional role of the state as a political entity (Sharp 2009, 184). German political scientists, notably Max Weber and Otto Hintze, primarily advanced the claims about the state's central role in political life and politics. Max Weber defines the state as an entity capable of formulating and implementing its goals (Luiz 2000, 228). Based on the Weberian approach to the ideal state, Joel S. Migdal views the state as an organization composed of various bodies managed and coordinated by the executive branch, which has the authority and power to govern people in a specific area (Garzarelli, Keeton and Siteo 2023; Ray, Jain, Thakur and Miglani 2023). John Martinussen adds that the state can be analyzed from several perspectives, including as a platform for conflicts and cooperation and from the standpoint of its independent functioning. The last two statements reflect a state-centered approach, emphasizing the importance of the actual use of the state's tools (Garzarelli, Keeton and Siteo 2023; Ray, Jain, Thakur and Miglani 2023). The theorists of the state-centered approach argue that state structures and actors should have a central influence on politics and political processes.

The logic of state-centered theory is based on the idea that having a strong, centralized government is crucial for ensuring political stability. Moreover, this government must possess high legitimacy. Authorities with high legitimacy, efficient administration, and high operational effectiveness can ensure political stability. In countries with legitimate governments, the probability of political instability is lower. The theory emphasizes the importance of solid governments, public authorities, fragile and institutions in general. It is also crucial for these bodies to implement effective

policies addressing socio-economic issues, maintaining political order, and increasing public confidence in state power. Implementing social welfare programs and providing public goods by public authorities are seen as means to prevent social unrest and discontent while addressing social needs (Cherepanov 2024; Finlay 2024). By meeting the population's needs, the state can mitigate potential sources of discontent and ensure stability. Since the monopoly on the legitimate use of force belongs to the state, ensuring political stability during critical moments requires using this force proportionally to prevent violence.

### **Structural-functional theory**

Structural-functional theory, or structural functionalism, is one of the most well-known theories in political science and sociology, developed by Talcott Parsons. This theory views society as a social system composed of various structures, with each structural element interacting and performing specific functions to maintain the stability and functioning of the system. The key feature of this theory is that all aspects of society—including individuals, institutions, events, and actions—must be interconnected, as only in this way can the society or social system function and survive. According to the theory, society survives by fulfilling its needs, meaning that the system and its parts must interact harmoniously. This harmonious interaction leads to the maintenance of social order (Deitelhoff and Schmelzle 2023; Leonardi 2024). If this order is disrupted, the system's stability is also compromised. To ensure effective interaction and maintain stability within the system, it is essential first to understand the needs of individuals (Bhambhri 1973, 456; Bungraz 2024).

This theory also examines the role of institutions and social behaviour in society. In addition to the social aspect, it also considers the economic interests of the system. The economy cannot function properly if societal issues disrupt interactions within the system.

Parsons divides human actions into two types: logical, based on rationality, and illogical, which may manifest unconsciously through sensory states. In his view, society must address four main problems: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and maintaining hidden models. By adaptation, Parsons refers to finding and allocating resources within the system. According to him, this is the role of economic actors in society. By integration, Parsons refers to the mechanisms that help maintain the cohesion of society. He criticized theorists who viewed humans as purely rational beings. According to him, people often make irrational choices, particularly in economic activities. According to this American scholar, this is the most crucial factor to consider when studying the social model of society. Unlike conflict theory, Parsons downplays the significance of conflicts, viewing them merely as temporary disruptions within society. This perspective has become one of the main points of criticism against his theory.

Robert Merton also made significant contributions to the development of structural functionalism. Merton's observations on structural functionalism often contrast with Parsons' approaches. While Parsons viewed society as a single, unified system, Merton introduced a perspective that examines society in distinct segments (Merton 1968). The

scholar emphasizes that not all functions necessarily meet the system's needs. According to him, functions can positively or negatively impact the system, with the latter being termed 'dysfunctional'. Unlike Parsons, Merton does not hold an optimistic view of society. Merton argues that the significance of values in society is not absolute, as customs and norms may be functional for some groups within a society but non-functional for other similar groups within the same society (Merton 1968).

As mentioned earlier, according to this theory, society is a complex social system, with one of the goals of the interaction among its elements being the maintenance of social order or stability. When there is harmonious interaction within a society, the state's political stability is ensured. Any factors that affect this chain of interaction can lead to instability. To ensure stability, society coordinates cooperation and communication among its individual elements and interacts with other systems. Most importantly, stability is maintained when individuals' primary and secondary needs are met. The theory posits that political institutions are crucial to ensure stability, as they are primarily responsible for organizing this interaction. Their decisions and laws regulate the parameters within which this interaction occurs. Effective political institutions, through predictable and transparent management, maintain stability in society.

Nevertheless, many theorists criticized structural-functional theory, with the most significant criticism occurring in the mid-20th century. Critics argued that the theory did not adequately address social order and stability factors, such as poverty, economic inequality, or dissent. Some American theorists have also criticized the theory for its near-complete disregard of racial, class, and gender issues. Additionally, one of the most significant criticisms was directed at the theory's subordination of the role of individual personality.

### **Rational choice theory**

The final theory discussed in this article is the theory of Rational choice. This theory helps to understand political, economic, and social behaviour by analyzing how individuals make decisions in specific situations (Oppenheimer 2012). It is widely used across various social sciences and forms the basis for cognitive choice theory in psychology. Rational choice theory posits that people's behaviour should align with their accepted values, and their actions should be based on these values (Oppenheimer 2012). The theory defines 'rationality' as the process by which a person evaluates costs and benefits to take actions that maximize personal gain (Friedman 1953, 21).

The theory's origins are rooted in Thomas Hobbes' book "*Leviathan*". Later, the foundations of the theory were further developed by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill in their respective works.

The rational choice approach assumes that human behaviour is driven by personal interests, with individuals aiming to maximize benefits or achieve specific personal goals (Petracca 1981, 289). Rational choice theory posits that when making decisions, individuals consider their interests before making a choice. This theory examines political stability through the lens of individual interests. Moreover, political stability can be viewed as the result of individual actions. Political actors, such as voters,

politicians, or interest groups, interact with one another from a strategic perspective, prioritizing their preferences in their actions. The stability of the political system depends on the actions and interactions of key political players, which helps to balance and restrain the ambitions of each player. Since individuals prioritize their interests when making decisions, political stability will be achieved if these interests are satisfied to a degree that is acceptable to them. People can cooperate to achieve their goals through collective action when individual interests align. A stable political system facilitates such cooperation, allowing for the formation of new political and public associations. However, suppose a political system exhibits significant inequality, where a large portion of society cannot access resources available to a smaller, privileged group. In that case, collective actions can lead to political instability. This may give rise to political movements and provoke riots or revolutions, potentially resulting in the collapse of the existing system.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

Thus, a comprehensive study of political stability through the lens of various theories enables a deeper understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing stability and helps develop effective strategies and programs to address and mitigate potential risks. Each theory provides insights into political stability—whether through modernization, conflicts, rational choice, or other approaches—highlighting the diverse elements contributing to or undermining stability. This article presented the first comprehensive attempt to synthesize and analyze the approaches of political stability theories within a single work, offering a unified framework for understanding how these various perspectives intersect and complement one another. This effort aims not only to fill a significant gap in both Armenian and global political science literature but also to pave the way for more cohesive strategies in addressing political stability challenges.

Applying these theories in concert allows for a nuanced analysis of how various factors interact to shape political stability. It also helps in identifying specific vulnerabilities within a political system and crafting targeted interventions. Understanding these dynamics from multiple theoretical angles ensures that strategies and policies are well-rounded and more likely to effectively address the root causes of instability. By exploring these theories together, researchers and policymakers can develop a more comprehensive approach to analyzing political stability, considering both structural and individual factors, as well as potential conflicts and inequalities that may impact the resilience of political systems.

### **Supplementary material**

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
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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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## CORRUPTION AND NEO-COLONIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

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### Abstract

Corruption is deemed one of the main drivers of development challenges in many countries, mainly in those territories that drag the shackles of colonialism. The roots of corruption in underdeveloped countries can be traced from Colonial times from South America, Asia to Africa the pattern seems to be repeated: populations subjugated to new masters, disenfranchised indigenous people, labour and sexual exploitation, brutal punishments for those who resisted colonial power were commune features for countries that experienced colonialism. Many of those power excesses have been recognised historically, however one of the most persistent element of Colonialism that survives until nowadays is corruption. The present text aims to shine a light on the relation of colonialism and corruption in Latin America. The hypothesis raised suggests that corruption was installed through colonialism in the Latin America region. The text is presented in three parts; the first one offers some historical considerations about European colonialism, the second one describes the strategies used by colonisers and the use of corruption as a tool to impose their rule and consolidate their power, and the third one exposes the new colonial form of corruption carried out by the West, led today by the United States.

**Keywords:** colonialism, corruption, Latin America, rule of law.

### Introduction

Many countries in Latin America were colonised by European rule between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. They shared many historical features: An historical past permeated by genocide, exploitation, human suffering, slavery and colonialism<sup>1</sup>. Certainly, there are regional, geographical, cultural and social differences, but their past has resonances in the present. Today, many ex-colonies are countries considered as undeveloped countries<sup>2</sup>. There are many criteria used to describe the under developing of these

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<sup>1</sup> Colonialism is defined for the purpose of this text as “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods (...) and as the takeover of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structures of another territory or nation.” (Loomba 2015, 20-27).

<sup>2</sup> The term of underdeveloped country is an unofficial term to describe a country with widespread chronic poverty, corruption and less economic development in comparison to developed countries. Underdeveloped countries are also named low- income countries or least-developed countries. The most common method to

countries, however the most commune consideration is the lack of rule of law<sup>3</sup> and the rampant corruption. In this context, the present text aims to analyse the intertwined relation between corruption and colonialism. The study of colonial corruption in Latin America can help us to disentangle the argument of civilising narratives and questioning the legitimacy of colonial rule. The objective of this work is to study corruption as a tool that eased colonialism in Latin America. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that corruption was established under colonialism in the region. The text is presented in three parts the first one exposes some historical reviews regarding colonialism and its relation with corruption. The second one describes some methods used by colonisers to consolidate colonialism in Latin America among the most important was corruption. The third one offers some examples of new colonialism, where corruption continues being used as part of tools of control by the West, mainly the United States. Finally, some conclusions about the most important ideas of corruption and colonialism in Latin America.

### **A brief historical review**

The arrival of Christopher Columbus and Americo Vespuccio in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries ushered in the discovery of the New World in Latin America. The names of Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro are common in the history of the conquerors in the region. The Spanish colonisation in Latin America began in 1493 on the island of Hispaniola, in the Caribbean, through the exploration of Christopher Columbus. Later on, Hernán Cortés landed also in Hispaniola, nowadays Santo Domingo, from where he reached Mexico in 1519 and defeated the Aztec Empire in 1521, ushering in the colonisation of many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. While, in Perú Francisco Pizarro toppled the Inca Empire in 1532. In Brazil, Pedro Alvares Cabral landed in 1500 with a crew of 1,200 Portuguese, subjugating immediately the native people. These conquests set up the foundation of colonial regimes that transformed the continent.

The colonisation of indigenous people in the region has had many political, social, ethnical, economic and cultural consequences that continue resonating until today. The social class division established between “colonisers” and “colonised” people were

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categorise the development of a country is the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI) that evaluates each country's human development by measuring indicators such as life expectancy, education and income per capital, considering Human Development Index (HDI), the countries are ranked from 0 to 1, where 0 is the less developed and 1 is the most developed. There are four categories: low human development (0-.55), medium human development (.55-.70), high human development (.70-80), and very high human development (.80-1.0). The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living (UNDP 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Following to the definition of the United Nations (UN), the concept of “Rule of law” is defined as “a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are promulgated publicly. The laws are applied equally to everybody and they are applied independently. Besides, the laws are adopted in order to ensure the respect of the principles of supremacy of law, equality before law, accountability to law, fairness in the application of law, separation of powers, participation in the adoption of decisions, legality, avoidance of arbitrariness, and transparency legal and procedural.” (UN 2004).

reflected in the caste system<sup>4</sup>, classifying people according to their ethnic and biological background.

According to Eakin, the peninsular – a person born in Europe, whose parents were both European – was at the top of the social and economic hierarchy; the second group was the Creole – a person of mixed race, from European and indigenous background –, the creoles were also known as *Mestizos* or *criollos*; the third group were the indigenous people or Indians – both parents indigenous (Eakin 2007)

The descendants of the conquistadors, along with new arrivals from Spain and the *Mestizos* formed a new elite class in the country. The Spaniards and *mestizos*, assumed the idea of superiority based on their biological and cultural roots, who reached the highest positions of power and prestige, unlike the indigenous people, who accepted the assumption of “inferiority”. In this sense, social class was defined based on biological and ethnic features.

The high positions in the administration of new colonies and the concentration of wealth were also associated with ethnic background, therefore Europeans and *mestizos* occupied the better jobs, while marginal and overexploited jobs were given to the indigenous people such as agriculture or mining, while women were used mainly as domestic or sexual slaves.

According to Alan Knight, the difference between the indigenous people and the Spanish people was that the Spaniards were racially identified with power and privilege, cultural and biological superiority, in which Europeans and *mestizos* enjoyed better access to power and property (Knight 1990).

Ferguson argues that since the arrival of Spanish conquerors in Latin America, land, wealth, and political representation have been controlled by a tiny elite, who had the right to exploit indigenous people. The land distribution and property rights played out a key role in the economic structure of colonialism. Under the *encomienda* system<sup>5</sup>, the Spanish elite gained the right to exploit labour for the Crown; in the *haciendas* – large landholdings allocated for plantations, mines, and factories –, the *hacendados* or *patrones* acquired the right to own land and control labour. The *hacendados* were the owners of the land, and the indigenous people worked as *peones* – farmer workers – on the land belonged to the *patrón*-owner (Ferguson 2011).

The *Encomiendas* were not granted by the Spanish crown in perpetuity to a man and his heirs, since the property belonged to the Spanish central colonial power, by Castilian law. However, slowly they evolved into hereditary properties through *haciendas*. The ultimate result was that the conquistador class became the idle rich of America (Ferguson 2011, 113), controlling not only the economic wealth, land property, but also the political structure.

Colonialism in Latin America not only brought a new social division, economic inequality, brutal labour division, cultural and religious differences, since the

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<sup>4</sup> Caste system is used as a social system that combines some elements of ethnic background, hereditary occupation, social class, religious hierarchy and social identity, and it is defined at birth (Young 2003).

<sup>5</sup> The *encomienda* –trustee- is a labour system that was employed mainly by the Spanish Crown during the colonial rule, in which leaders of the indigenous communities paid a tribute to masters or colonisers in the form of food, cloth, minerals such as gold or silver or providing work force as required by the masters (Angeles and Neandis 2015).

Europeans also assumed a superiority given by Catholicism and pure blood<sup>6</sup>, while the indigenous were considered as “savages” and “ignorant”, but also Colonialism imposed a new political administration and government structure.

The colonial government based on the *encomienda* system, implemented by Spanish colonizers in Latin America was the milestone not only to rule the new territories, but also the keystone to give birth to corruption, providing extra-privileges and money to the masters.

The Crown granted a number of indigenous people to a Spanish colonizer in order to instruct them in the Spanish language and Catholicism. The coloniser received in return a tribute in the form of labour, gold, animals, and agricultural products from indigenous people. This system resulted in serious administrative abuses that led to not only the inhuman treatment of indigenous workers, but also to embezzlement of resources by the local elite (Keen and Haynes 2008).

The legacy of colonial rule and its influence on local elites was paramount to consolidate colonialism in Latin America and Africa. Since the beginning of the colonialism, corruption was embodied in the administrative structure. The colonisers considered fair to use the administrative structure for their advantage, since they had put their lives in risk going to the new world. Therefore, it was the “natural right” to rule and to exploit that position for their advantage. The same mentality was transmitted to the *encomenderos*—administrators used by the colonisers, who were usually indigenous elites—, since “Columbus instituted a law of tribute which meant that if a native did not meet their quota of collecting gold, they would have limbs chopped off. The brutal conditions in which the indigenous people were forced to work, made them to succumb” (Andrews 2022, 29), in this way, the “*encomenderos*” readdressed their loyalty towards their master as form of survival, rather than serving to their communities, considering this premise, the colonialism in Latin America and Caribbean was more a genocide than a simple power subjugation over native people.

Pre-Columbian Mexico had a population that ranged between 25 and 30 million indigenous people. A similar population existed in the Andean region. Central America and the Antilles had between 10 and 13 million inhabitants. The indigenous people of the Americas numbered no less than 70 million or perhaps more, when the foreign conquerors appeared, in a century and a half, the indigenous people had been reduced to only 3 and a half million in the whole continent (Galeano 1971, 45)

According to Andrews “when Columbus arrived to the Americas, he found millions of people living in complex societies. The genocide in the Americas was without precedent, wiping up 99% of the natives. For example, just in the Caribbean, the Taino indigenous groups passed from the first contact with Columbus in 1492 until 1509 from 8 million to just 100,000 and by 1542 there were only 200 left. The scale of death has no parallel in human history. Certainly illness and viruses were part of the killers of native people, but the genocide inflicted by Europeans was without parallel” (Andrews 2022, 28)

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<sup>6</sup> The idea of “*Limpieza de sangre*” —pure blood— was created to protect the old Christians faith. The Spaniards used the concept of “purity of blood” in the New World to explain their political and economic domination over indigenous people and justify their position of bringing indigenous people into the church’s fold to save their souls (Martínez 2008).

Other authors such as Ali, Fjeldstad and Shifa (2021) consider that colonial power could impose its rule through violence and corruption through local elites. These authors studied colonialism in Africa, but their findings are more prominent in Latin America, since the chiefs considered as custodians of native land shifted their loyalty from their communities to their colonial masters, and in this scenario the colonial control happened through chiefs, rather than the formal legal systems introduced by colonial powers that depended of the central State of the mother land (Ali et al. 2021). This new strategy of control through the local chiefs was based on corruption, in which the chiefs were not accountable by the central colonial state, but rather by their masters. This logic also undermined the pre-colonial rules in which the chiefs were accountable by their communities and other members of the pre-colonial rulers such priests, “*chamanes*” –wise men- military leaders, and members of the supreme council (Portilla 2007).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the structure of the judicial apparatus of the Colony had three levels. Local legal authority was in the hands of a minor judicial official called Corregidor. The Royal Court was the highest court, and it was in charge of receiving appeals from local courts. Additionally, for the most important cases it was possible to appeal the decisions through the Royal Court before reaching the Council of the Indies, a special court located in Spain that had jurisdiction over the entire empire. The most important institution of the colonial legal system was the *Audiencia*, a court appointed by the King and based in the New Spain, which had simultaneously administrative and judicial responsibilities. This institutional arrangement was widely criticized, because it did not have a formal separation of legislative, executive, judicial and fiscal functions, which left a wide gap for abuses of power (Luis Eduardo 2002, 25). “The colonial service was endowed with broad discretionary powers, and worked closely with local interests to strengthen the status quo, manipulating colonial legal codes in favour of whoever paid for the services. Thus, the administrative positions were a source of rents. In this context, colonial elites in Latin America and Caribbean seized positions in the colony’s judicial bureaucracy as a way to capture rents -financial profits- and prestige. During the viceroyalty - colonial government-, occupy a position in the judicial system was a lucrative business for the ruling classes. In the 17th century, the most prominent men sought to take a position in the colonial administration as an opportunity to create fortunes for themselves, members of their extended families, friends and their clientele. Then, the colonial bureaucracy became a main source of income and social position for the Spanish aristocracy.” (Luis Eduardo 2002, 25).

The Royal Court of the New Spain was the scene of scandals related to nepotism and corruption among the *Oidores* - magistrates - who used to marry or become related to local families to multiply assets. For example, according to historical records, in 1792 a colonial official wrote to the Council of the Indies about the mismanagement of the *Oidores* José Martínez Malo and José Quintana, who not only occupied public positions, but also they become business partners of some miners of Chocó in Colombia (Luis Eduardo 2002, 25).

Another example of earlier forms of corruption dated from the report of the Viceroy of Peru, Manuel Guirior (1708-1788) in 1776 who assured that the administration of

justice in the Viceroyalty, that depended largely on governors and magistrates, had accepted payments for their food from illicit sources, due to the lack of payment or salary for their services (Luis Eduardo 2002, 25).

In the same line, Enrique Semo (2000), asserts that the colonial period (around 1521-1821) entrenched corruption into the public institutions, as the colonial administration resorted to selling public offices in the New Spain, from the lowest to the highest public positions: The practice of selling public offices was common in the Colonial times. Selling only lower positions of the government did not represent too much risk, but due to the lack of money in the Spanish government and the voracious appetite for money, the Crown began in 1633 to sell treasury functions, court hearings, as well as the posts of magistrates and mayors. There are even reports that on an occasion the post of Viceroy in the New Spain was sold (...) the public positions became private investments and the beneficiary had the right to exploit that investment as a form of wealth, influence peddling and power (Semo 2000, 70).

Nevertheless, authorities in Madrid, often turned a deaf ear to reports about corruption in its colonies and considered that corruption was a minor price to be paid in comparison to the benefit received, and it was a price to pay in order to maintain the Spanish empire (Dalmau 2021).

Certainly, becoming a public servant in the nineteenth-century Spanish empire was a risky adventure. To begin with, there was the long journey to the destination, and the cost of that adventure was covered by the same public servants to be (the state only reimbursed the amount afterwards). Travel expenses included train and boat tickets, accommodation, as well as leaving a maintenance allowance for family members who remained in Spain. The majority of candidates, most of who were of humble origins, could not afford all these expenses and were forced to request a loan, which carried high rates of interest at that time. As a result, by the time the employer took up his role, he had to devote a considerable part of his new salary to pay all of the incurred costs—with the added problem that salaries were rather modest and were often paid with a delay of two, three or even four months (Dalmau 2021, 245-246).

Public servants in the Spanish Empire could not rely on a long-term job. The reason for this is that “the Spanish political system worked according to a spoils system, by which every change in government was followed by a change in the public administration. This had to do with the patron–client networks” (Dalmau, 2021, 246) Following to Dalmau, it has been estimated that in each election during the Spanish Empire, between 1,000 and 5,000 public positions changed in order to make room for the new government’s client base (Dalmau 2021, 246).

Corruption in the Spanish Empire was fed by clientelism that was a prevalent form of political recruitment in Spain; the volatile character of the Spanish administration, and the voracity of colonial officers to amass large amount of wealth in short time, before being removed or displaced by the new administration.

The corruption of the empire was not limited only to the public servants in the colonies, but also in the whole Spanish government. “Irregularities in the customs office alone amounted to losses in state direct contributions of four million pesos a year, to the point that the customs office was regarded as the main black hole in the Spanish administration.” (Dalmau 2021, 246). Bribes, extortion, favouritism and

misappropriation were common practices in public Spanish institutions at all levels: tax authorities, public servants in infrastructure, hygiene, agriculture and trade among the most important.

### Corruption as tool to rule

The study of corruption<sup>7</sup> in Latin America implies to understand this phenomenon from different axes from the history to the roles that has played in different periods of time, as well as the perception of this phenomenon among the members of society<sup>8</sup>.

Mulinge and Lesetedi (1998) point out that colonisers used corruption as a tool to subdue and control over colonised people mainly through the practice of divide and rule communities, violence and allowing local tax collectors or “*encomenderos*” to abuse the colonial system to amass private wealth to their advantage.

Enrique Semo (2000) believes that corruption was exported by the Spanish colonisers, and gradually was expanded from the public institutions of the new colonies, political elite, and religious representatives to the rest of society, until it became a systemic form of transgression of the rule of law in the State nations in Latin America.

Guillermo Marín, whose studies focused in Mexico but his contribution can be serve to understand the corruption in Latin America, considers that corruption was a strategy of cultural resistance, a product of the clash between the two types of “Mexicos”: the “*Mexico profundo* –Mexico deep–” and the “Mexico imaginario –Mexico imaginary–”. The former emanated from the indigenous people and pre-colonial societies, who had a traditional vision of the world, and the latter was formed by *mestizos*, people with Spanish and indigenous descendants, who yearned to have the same European model of civilization in the new territories (Marín 2001; Leon-Portilla 2007).

In the same vein, Luis Eduardo asserts that the clash between the two visions from indigenous people and colonisers has had important consequences in the respect to the rule of law emanated from their Nation States through their public institutions and governments. One of the most popular phrases, reflecting this clash of perception is: “*Obedezco pero no cumpla*” – I obey but will not comply –. For the colonial elites, the

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<sup>7</sup> The term corruption is taken as the abuse of public power for private purposes. This definition assumes the distinction between public and private roles. In many societies the frontier between both spheres is not very clear, and it seems to be natural to give some gifts in exchange of assigning contracts and jobs. The distinction between public and private spheres seems to be strange and not clearly defined (Rose-Ackerman 1999, 91). The most common forms of political corruption are embezzlement, bribery, collusion, influence peddling, fraud, nepotism, cronyism, and clientelism.

<sup>8</sup> It is important to mention that the concept of corruption has evolved historically. It has been used as a deviation or decomposition of a healthy nature of an object or subject. In the middle age (about 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century), corruption was associated to the sins of the representatives of the Catholic Church, the lack of compliance with their role for caring poor people and the disproportionate exercise of the king’s powers. This period is associated between the fall of the Rome and the beginning of the Renaissance in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Szeghyová 2011). During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, there was the period of discoveries of the new world and the colonialism led by the Spanish, Portuguese, French and later on by the English colonialism in 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, without forgetting other colonial powers such as Germany, Holland, Portugal and Russia that perceived corruption a tool to maintain the empires (Burbank and Cooper 2011).



law became a norm that was an honour to break it. For the poor indigenous people, the law was arbitrary and strange, and therefore, had no moral force to respect it (Luis Eduardo 2002, 25).

Andrea Revueltas (1995) also points out that the lack of adherence to the law in Latin America, particularly in Mexico, is the result of contradictions of two projects: modernity and tradition: “we must not forget that behind the modern image of the Mexico civilised, it was an asymmetrical relationship of domination and subordination, which was imposed to the traditional societies”. Therefore, there was a conflict between two value systems and behaviours: the traditional and the modern based on the Western modernity (Revueltas 1995, 253).

Following to Revueltas, the modernity, embodied in the nation State and represented through administrative organisation and the respect of rule of law, was not expanded in a homogenous way, since the metropolis or mother land was modernised faster than the colonies. As a result of this, indigenous people felt alienated in the construction of colonial institutions and later alienated from the nation State and its institutions emerging from the colonial independence process (Revueltas 1992).

The independence of colonial Spanish and Portuguese powers in many Latin American countries happened between 1808 and 1826 did not eradicate corruption among urban elites formed mainly by *mestizos* groups, local indigenous elites led by caciques –strong local men–, and indigenous people who were also socialised under corruptive schemes. All social groups were socialised under corruption schemes, Christianity, violence, exclusion and natural acceptance of the superiority of *mestizos* and colonial descendants (Nieto 2023; Nieto 2011).

The colonialism also was the pillar for the development of capitalism in the world and the creation of wealth among the west elites, which was accompanied with the corruption. According to Loomba, the brutal gap between wealthier elites and over exploited indigenous labour force, contributed to the creation of economic differences and social class divisions giving birth to the capitalism in Latin America. Colonialism was the means through which capitalism achieved its global expansion (Loomba, 2015). Racism and corruption simply facilitated this process.

Kehinde Andrews in the same line considers that social class divisions prevalent today in colonised countries have also their roots in the colonial structure imposed by Europeans: “Industrial labour in the West was only possible because of the wealth generated from colonial exploitation. Without genocide, slavery and colonialism there is neither the wealth nor the resources for the revolutionary proletarian toiling in the European factory to come into existence.” (Andrews 2022).

In the same vein, Galeano (1971, 44) affirms that the Latin American colonial economy had the greatest concentration of free labor. The Spanish and Portuguese crown received one fifth of the value of the metals collected by the subjects of the New World, in addition to other taxes, which made possible the greatest concentration of wealth that any civilization has ever had in world history, which it served to create the capital in Europe, stimulated ‘the spirit of enterprise’ and financed the establishment of manufactures that gave a great boost to the industrial revolution, although for Latin America it meant historical impoverishment (Galeano 1971, 35-45).

Andrews affirms also that erasing the natives was a necessary foundation to build the development of the West. “The Americas provided the territory necessary for the production that fuelled the development of the industry of sugar, cotton, coffee, cacao among some. Then Colonialisation of the region was a precondition for slavery. Once the natives were made extinct the transatlantic slave trade began to provide the labour that built the modern world (...) the entire Western economic system depended on the wealth from slavery. We think that slavery belongs to the distant past, but the world we live in remains created in its image.” (Andrews 2022, 35, 59).

Thus, colonialism was not only the base of building capitalism, class division, and creation of wealth in the West, but also the fundament of human exploitation, ransacking, appropriation of territories and natural resources such as gold, silver, cacao, sugar and so on, as well as the seed for corruption in Latin America, since corruption was a tool used by colonisers to impose, control, exploit and rule the region.

### **Corruption in the post colonial Latin American countries**

In recent years have appeared a few studies regarding the history of corruption in Europe. These studies have exposed that corruption has existed since the foundation of the Nations-States<sup>9</sup> in Europe and “it has played an important role in the history of modern politics and state-building process” (Kroeze et al. 2021, 2) not only in Europe, but also in its colonies.

According to Kroeze et al., (2021) the history of corruption in Europe highlights the complexity of corruption in the modern era not only for Europe, but also for their colonies in Latin America, for example, corruption practices continued to exist even though “modern” elites proclaimed they had freed their regimes from this phenomenon. Moreover, in the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries, accusations and debates about corruption served to initiate reforms or, simply, as a pretext to undermine old structures and representatives of the so-called “Ancient Regimen” on overseas. Therefore, anticorruption campaigns have been used as a political weapon to get rid of opponents and to promote politicised institutional reforms in Europe and on abroad (Kroeze et al. 2021, 2).

European colonial elites in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries have used the idea that corruption was a problem of traditional regimes to justify colonial rule (Kroeze et al. 2021, 3). Latin America countries since their independence process until nowadays, they have been considered as “traditional societies” with high levels of corruption due to their traditional social structures where nepotism, clientelism and cronyism are part of these societies. The Latin American region has also been

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<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this text, Nation-State is used to defined a political unite, where the state is ruled by the principle of State sovereignty that recognised the right of the States to govern their territories, without external interference, and the principle of national sovereignty that recognises the right of citizens to govern themselves and share a cultural entity. The nation state implies that a state and a nation coincide. The modern nation-state is relatively new to human history emerging after the Renaissance and Reformation, associated with the efficient application of the law through the bureaucratic machinery of the State. As some modern nation-states prospered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they were promoted as a model form of governance (Anderson 2006).

characterised by inefficient bureaucracy<sup>10</sup>, and the lack of modernity to adopt “anti-corruption reforms”.

However, the studies of corruption show that all countries suffer from the cancer of corruption. Certainly, the intensity, frequency and ferocity are different on developed countries than countries with colonial background, particularly those in Latin America and Africa. Corruption has been present in the history of empires and the construction of Nation-State in Europe, as well as in the rest of the world from the Egyptian to the Roman Empire and from the East to the West. The differences have been that the perceptions on the corruption have changed. In “traditional societies”, nepotism, favouritism, influence peddling, cronyism were embedded in the social structures (Buchan and Hill 2014). Therefore, we need to change the analysis perspective, in which corruption is a specific problem from the “South” or from the underdeveloped world, since colonialism promoted this view as a way to impose superiority over “poor countries”.

Andrews considers that the independence of the colonies is relative, because when the European powers departed, they left behind local elites who took the place of colonial administrators, but with power limited. Local elites needed to follow the rules laid down by the departing colonial powers, otherwise they would be deposed. “Leaders who opposed to the West interest, they are removed from office on the grounds of authoritarianism or corruption.” (Andrews 2022).

Andrews exposes the logic of Western imperialism from its formation until the New Age of the Empire<sup>11</sup>, in which United States is at the heart of this empire after the Second War World. According to Andrews, the framework established by the new age of empire is clear: Leaders who comply with the prevailing order are supported and lavished with money to keep them in power and build staggering personal wealth, through allow them or close the eyes when they exercise corruption or any other crime against citizens (Andrews 2022). There are numerous examples in Latin America that confirm this theory.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Max Weber, bureaucracy is an organisation highly structured with impersonal, rational and hierarchical rules, regulations and lines of authority. It is formed by professionals who are paid for their services. Weber believed that bureaucracy’s goal was to end corruption (Weber 2012).

<sup>11</sup> The new age of empire functions on the basis of financial intervention, manipulate political agendas, impose “puppet governments”, intervene in foreign policies, tolerate corruption of political leaders in exchange of obedience to the West and favour the economic interests of the Western companies, destabilise countries through the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), destroy social ties and divide communities through social, ideological, political or economical problems such as organise crime, terrorism, racism, migration and so on, control development in underdeveloped countries in line with Western’s interest, training and educate administrators and rulers that will care and promote Western interest in Western universities and around the world, empower local elites in representation for the West’s goals, grant legitimacy to pro-west governments and political parties, encourage “cooperation” with multinational and Western trade and abolish State controls. The United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organization all play their part in administering colonial logic and neo-colonialism. In the New Age of Empire, the “independent colonies” are administrated by local elites at the service of the West. The West produce an army of graduates trained in development orthodoxy to justify the underdevelopment world and superiority of the West (Andrews 2022). The governments of Britain and the U.S., who had styled themselves as the world’s policemen, have also invaded numerous countries on apparently “humanitarian” grounds” as a way to perpetuate their colonial power (Akala 2018, 210).

In Chile, the dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet (1974-1990), after taking the power following a CIA- backed coup d'état against socialist leader Salvador Allende in 1973. "Relations between the United States and Chile deteriorated in the 1960s due to U.S. concerns regarding the Chilean Left and the rise of Chilean nationalization of certain industries, especially copper. The prospect of the nationalization of two of the leading Chilean copper companies, Anaconda and Kennicott—both owned by corporations based in the United States—along with the growth of socialist sentiment throughout the hemisphere led the United States to overtly and covertly send aid and assistance to the Chilean Government, as well as to political parties such as the Christian Democratic Party (PDC)" (Office of the Historian, 2000) The government of Pinochet was also backed up by UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). She not only lifted a British embargo on the sale of weapons to Chile imposed by the previous Labour government, but also during her government, it was sold arms that could be used for internal repression, her government also provided training of hundreds of Chilean soldiers. After the fall of the Pinochet's dictatorship, a truth commission confirmed that more than 40,000 people were tortured, 3,200 were killed or "disappeared" and over 200,000 fled into exile (Livingstone 2020).

In Nicaragua Anastasio Somoza García (1896-1956), known as Tacho, became president after a coup d'état in 1937, he was dictator in Nicaragua from 1937 to 1947 and a second time from 1950 to 1956. Anastasio Somoza along with his sons Luis Somoza and Anastasio Somoza Debayle formed the Somoza Dynasty dictatorship that governed the country from 1936 to July 1979, for a total of 43 years. Anastasio Somoza García was invited by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) to the United States as a way to recognize his government. During his government he was characterized by committing thousands of acts of torture, repression, mass rapes, corruption, nepotism, influence peddling, bribery and many other crimes against Nicaraguans. One of the main crimes attributed to the dictator Somoza García was the murder of the revolutionary leader Augusto César Sandino. Somoza Garcia claimed that he had received orders from U.S. ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane to kill Sandino. Another murder attributed to the Somoza government was the killing of American journalist Bill Stewart, committed by the National Guard, the body in charge of the largest repressive actions of the Nicaraguan government. This murder motivated the film "Under Fire" and had political effects that it influenced the decision of the United States government, headed by President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), who promoted an image of a defender of freedoms and human rights, to abandon its support to the Somoza Dynasty dictatorship (Guerra 2020).

In Guatemala, General Efraín Ríos Montt, who stayed in office (1982-1983), (2000-2004) and (1995-1996), was another USA's government favorite ruler, during his first five months in power, according to Amnesty International, soldiers killed more than 10,000 peasants and he tried to exterminate the Ixil ethnic group, a Mayan Indian community, whose villages were wiped out by his forces. President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) was General Ríos Montt's most prominent admirer. After meeting him in 1982, Mr. Reagan said the general was "getting a bum rap on human rights (...) I know that President Ríos Montt is a man of great personal integrity and commitment". However, in 2013 Ríos Montt was convicted by human rights crimes and corruption

(Linares 2018) and USA's government abandoned their endorsement to Ríos Montt's government.

In Peru, Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000), was another USA's asset, educated at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, was accused of multiple cases of corruption, fraud, misappropriation of public resources and other human rights abuses. During his government he granted 28 contracts to the company Odebrecht, company linked with other corruption cases in Latin America, for the construction, agriculture and irrigation sectors. Those contracts were overvalued by U.S. millions of dollars (Collyns 2021). Fujimori and his chief of Peru's secret police, Vladimiro Montesinos were also accused of embezzling for more than 75% of the Peruvian intelligence service's funds to pay bribes to public officials and the press in order to modify his public image and increase his popular approval. Montesinos was one of the most trusted CIA's allies in Latin America. According to the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C., the CIA gave the narcotics division of Montesinos's National Intelligence Services (SIN) an estimated \$10 million in the 1990s. Some of these funds, the Center for Public Integrity alleges, ended up in Montesinos's personal coffers. He is serving multiples sentences for human rights crimes, corruption and arms and drugs trafficking in a maximum security naval base prison (Berzon et al. 2005).

The list of Latin American dictators, who have amassed immense fortunes under the umbrella of the United States is endless: Jean-Claude Duvalier, president of Haiti (1971-1986); Manuel Noriega Moreno, president of Panamá (1983-1989); Jorge Rafael Videla president of Argentina (1976-1981); Alfredo Stroessner president of Paraguay (1954-1989); Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco president of Brasil (1964-1967); Hugo Banzer president of Bolivia who held the presidency twice (1971-1978) and (1997-2001); and Juan María Bordaberry president of Uruguay (1972-1973) and head of the civilian-military dictatorship up to 1976 are some of the most representative cases in the region (Merino 2019). The resonance of "the extreme inequality and particular history that makes Latin America one of the most violent regions of the world is due in no small part to a long history of the United States supporting dictators in the region" (Akala 2018, 210).

As Andrews says if you are still questioning the complicity of the West in the neo-colonial system that rule the world today, then just examine where all the wealth generated in underdeveloped countries or ex-colonies ends up (Andrews 2022, 128): Banks and financial centres based on the West: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Luxemburg among the most important. Certainly, corruption in Latin America would not be possible without the support of the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom and others developed countries.

## **Conclusion and discussion**

Colonialism left the new independent countries under of a situation of underdeveloped. Most of the ex colonies found themselves trapped in debt, poverty, chaos and lack of knowledge about how to manage their own institutions, not long after the mirage of their liberation, not to mention the internal divisions and inter-ethnic conflicts

creating by the colonial power that continue prevailing until nowadays in Latin America. For example, most of the conflicts in the region continue being driven between *mestizo* elites, who endorse transnational company's interest and neo-colonial powers, and indigenous groups, who continue being the most disadvantage people in the Latin American continent, and who constantly face land dispossession, natural resources looting, human rights infringements, inaccessibility of the rule of law, unfair judiciary process and the target of corrupt politicians and public servants. Indigenous people continue facing poor public services, high levels of poverty, illiteracy and social, political and economical exclusion.

According to the report on Indigenous Latin America released by the World Bank, there are an estimated 42 million indigenous people in Latin America, and it is not by chance that poverty affects 43% of the indigenous population in the region, which more than twice the proportion of non-indigenous people. Besides, 24% of all indigenous people live in extreme poverty, which is 2.7 times higher than the proportion of non-indigenous people living in extreme poverty (The World Bank 2015). Following the same report, it is considered that having indigenous parents substantially increases the probability of being raised in a poor household, contributing to a poverty trap that hampers the full development of indigenous children (The World Bank 2015).

Another important element to maintain the control in the Latin America after the departure of the colonial powers was corruption, since “the old masters needed to make sure that natural resources of their ex-colonies would end up in the hands of their own foreign companies.” (Andrews 2022, 116).

Latin American leaders have used corruption as a form of personal enrichment under the support of the Western countries, mainly the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The dictatorships that were established in Latin America were characterised by coming to power through coups d'état, and by the imposition of the doctrine of national security engineered by the United States that trained around 125.000 soldiers between 1950 and 1998, and the operation of the Condor Operation – strategy created by the U.S. government to wipe out the opposition regimes in the region (Merino 2019). The American strategy to tolerate corruption of Latin American governments in exchange of compliance with U.S. policies and support U.S. companies' interest has been endorsed for decades by the foreign policy of the United States, since the Monroe Doctrine: “America for Americans” enunciated in 1823 by President James Monroe; the Manifest Destiny, a phrase coined in 1845, that asserts that the United States is destined by God to expand its dominion; and not to mention many American Presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt (1933-1945) and his good neighbour policy, John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) through the Alliance for Progress, Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) and Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) among the most prominent (Williams 1957; Merino 2019).

The new Latin American leaders who came to power after the transition to democracy were supported by the United States and relied on the military forces, CIA's intelligence services, selective corruption tolerance, as well as compliance and appliance of U.S. economic policies commonly named neoliberalism (Nieto 2019).

The new age of empire functions on the basis of the financial intervention that plunder the economies of the underdeveloped world to support the interest of the West, particularly of the U.S.'s stakes. The West is not rich because its genius, democracy or capitalism. It is affluent because it has appropriated the wealth from the underdeveloped world: The rest is poor because the West is rich (Andrews 2022, 119).

In this sense, the west's economy, mainly the U.S., is nourished by the money coming from underdeveloped countries through payments of credits, cheap work force or inexpensive payments for natural resources in poor countries. The neoliberal doctrine, proposed by U.S. economists such as Milton Friedman, indicates that a successful economy must abolish controls on imports, imposing austerity to reduce the size of the state, opening the doors to foreign private investors, open free-market capitalism and reduce corruption.

However, since the end of 80s, neoliberalism in Latin America has proved exactly the contrary. Increase of wealth concentrated in a few hands, high levels of corruption, increase of poverty levels, upsurge of violence, increment of organised crime, money laundry, rise of social discontent and human suffering. Thus, this economical model is designed to keep poor countries underdeveloped in order to continue exploiting them.

Latin America countries need to change their relation with United States and the rest of the Western countries on more equal basis. Far from imposing anticorruption reforms dictated by the US and the West, and all the hegemonic institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation of American States (OAS), even the United Nations (UN), where the U.S. has a veto power to block the UN Security Council resolutions over the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the U.S. The hegemonic institutions have had so far a decisive role not only in the underdevelopment of Latin America, but also in the development of corruption, since this phenomenon has been exercised selectively according to the hegemonic interest imposing an unique vision of governance, democracy, accountability and anticorruption narrative that is designed to serve the U.S. and the West's interest rather than helping to the region to unlock its potential and get on to the train to development.

This vision has a colonial and racist dress, where Latin America is perceived as inferior and unable to rule by themselves. In this framework, the creation and functioning of regional institutions without the hegemonic influence of the U.S. or the rest of the Western countries at all levels - the judiciary, the banking system, trade, public policy, the media - are of paramount importance not only for the empowerment of the region, but also for the reduction of neocolonialist influence and selective and permissive corruption in Latin America.

### **Supplementary material**

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
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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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## RETHINKING THE MOSUL DAM: A REASSESSMENT OF ITS IMPACT BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL NARRATIVES

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### Abstract

The Mosul Dam, one of Iraq's most significant infrastructural projects, has been the subject of extensive debate and scrutiny, often overshadowed by negative narratives concerning its safety and environmental impact. These narratives overlook the dam's significant function in creating food and energy and fostering local, regional, and global water cooperation. This article seeks to provide a comprehensive revaluation of the dam's contributions to water management and diplomatic relations. By systematically addressing the prevalent criticisms, this study highlights the recent renovation works that extended the dam's lifespan. These works, which will be examined with a quantitative methodology in the study, involved the Iraqi Government, the Kurdish Regional Government, the United States and Italy. These four entities contributed with joint efforts to make the dam safer, forging trust and collaboration on multiple levels. The Mosul Dam serves as a model for international water cooperation, illustrating the potential for large-scale infrastructure projects to contribute to peace and stability. The reassessment provided in this study advocates for a more nuanced understanding of the Mosul Dam, recognizing its pivotal contributions to water security and international cooperation, which are essential for the region's sustainable development and beyond.

**Keywords:** Water strategy, constructive ecologism, water cooperation, dam management, Middle East.

### Introduction

Hydraulic infrastructures have been essential to the well-being of human societies since the earliest civilizations arose. The latter, nurtured by the silt of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, were born in Mesopotamia, the cradle of ancient civilization. From Mosul all the way down to the Shatt al-Arab, where the twin rivers meet before emptying into the Persian Gulf, the distribution of human settlements followed the bends of the two watercourses, which were organized in an extensive system of

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irrigation and drainage canals to enable crop cultivation in areas with small rainfall and were bordered by floodwalls to reduce damages from the seasonal inundations that used to sweep the basin (Husain 2021).

Nowadays, dams are a prominent tool in flow regulation, flood prevention, hydropower generation, and many other critical sectors related to the development of human communities settled near a waterway (Obertreis et al. 2016). However, mega-dams, i.e., major hydraulic constructions capable of altering the course of the river on which they are located and changing the topographical features of entire regions, can often pose a threat rather than being an asset to communities and territories. In addition to their large environmental impact, mega dams have very high construction and maintenance costs. Financing extensive water infrastructures involves multiple players, including investment funds, international organizations, and development banks. Indeed, single states seldom can afford the expenses required to complete an infrastructure project that aims to build a mega dam. Moreover, once completed, these infrastructures need expensive and ongoing maintenance to ensure better energy performance and prevent dangerous accidents.

Being one of the largest dams in the Middle East, the Mosul Dam (MD) fully falls into the category of mega dams, with all the technical, environmental and financial complexities associated with this type of hydro facilities. Moreover, the peculiar geological characteristics of the land on which it was erected make the dam susceptible to collapse if not constantly maintained and supervised by teams of experienced engineers. In this regard, several authors (Adamo et al. 2017; Warren 2006; Milillo et al. 2016; Annunziato et al. 2016) stressed on the dam's precarious condition and warned of the potentially devastating effects that its destruction would have on not only the city of Mosul but also all north-central Iraq. Expressly, Adamo Nasrat, a former senior official at the Iraqi Ministry of Irrigation and a prominent civil engineer who participated in the construction of the MD, has repeatedly and openly declared that the dam's collapse would have devastating consequences. Given the dam's precarious geological and technical conditions, Adamo and Al-Ansari believe that its collapse is "rather plausible" (Adamo and Al-Ansari 2016, 237).

Considering numerous studies carried out over time and following the considerations of one of its most prominent builders, Nasrat Adamo, the MD has been regarded as a dangerous infrastructure for the region for many years. The situation became so severe that in 2016, an international consortium in which four entities participated - the Government of Iraq (GoI), the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the United States and Italy - carried out rehabilitation work on the dam, yielding significant improvements and a brighter future for the dam. However, despite the redevelopment work, even nowadays, the general perception of MD is decidedly negative both in Iraq and in the Middle Eastern context.

This article aims to answer the following questions:

- What improvements have been made by the international engineering team to make the hydraulic infrastructure safe?
- How is it possible that the MD is still perceived negatively despite the work of one of the most specialized engineering teams in the world?

- What are the hydro-strategic consequences from a local, regional, and global collaboration perspective as a result of the work completed by the international consortium?

## **Methodology and Structure**

The overarching aim of this article was to conceptually and empirically refute the MD's negative perception in the Middle Eastern context and on a global scale. A mixed methodological approach was used, consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods. Specifically, this article entailed a structured qualitative literature review of relevant academic literature, reports and policy documents and a quantitative analysis of the most crucial criticalities concerning the MD. The critical method for conceptual discussion on the perception of the MD in Iraq was a literature review, complemented by the relevant findings from quantitative approaches. The literature was analytically reviewed to identify definitions and descriptions of the technical problems that prompted the distrust toward the dam. The identified descriptions were then compared and analyzed with the renovation works carried out by the team of international engineers, showcasing the power of local, regional and global collaboration. This led to the categorization of the three different positive outcomes in terms of water cooperation which involved multiple actors.

The article consists of an initial section describing the structural problems that the MD has encountered since the beginning of its construction. The location and the geological features have laid the foundations for the spread of a negative perception of this infrastructure. In fact, the initial skepticism about the dam, which Saddam Hussein strenuously desired to regulate water flows in northern Iraq and generate hydropower, became increasingly widespread over the years until it turned into open distrust towards the infrastructure's real benefits. The destructive potential in the event of a collapse slowly but gradually took over the benefits the MD had brought to the northern Iraqi region. Moreover, after the dam came under the control of ISIS terrorists in August 2014, the fear that it might collapse due to lack of constant maintenance increased tremendously, contributing to spreading uncertainty and fear regarding the fate of the dam.

Subsequently, the article included a section devoted to a quantitative analysis of the technical improvements that were made to expand the lifespan of the dam. In 2016, a team of Italian engineers from Trevi S.p.A. (Trevi Group), assisted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) through an international bid launched by the Government of Iraq, carried out a total upgrading of the dam by structurally solving many of the problems that had characterized the MD from the beginning. After this section, an analysis of the benefits related to hydro-strategic cooperation followed. In addition to bringing significant systemic and technical benefits to the infrastructure, the dam upgrading project carried out by Trevi had significant local, trans-regional and international impacts.

Locally, the main result has been the relevant operational cooperation between Kurds and Iraqis, two peoples who have often been enemies. Kurdish peshmerga - the military groups defending the Kurdish Regional Government - have, together with an

Italian contingent, defended the dam, where Iraqi engineers work, from possible attacks by ISIS militants. This collaboration represented a critical meeting point between Kurds and Iraqis that could inaugurate a new phase in which the two entities - the GOI and the KRG - can collaborate on other projects in the future.

On a trans-regional level, it is prominent to emphasize the deep collaboration between Italy and Iraq, two allied countries that are part of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern region, respectively. Italy, in addition to providing technical, technological and engineering support, has sent a contingent of military personnel to defend the MD, a strategic Iraqi infrastructure. This multi-pronged collaboration - military and technical - has improved relations between the two nations, helping to spread stability in the region.

Finally, on a global level, it is worth noting the collaboration between the United States and Italy, two critical players in the Atlantic Alliance that have cooperated jointly on both technical and logistic levels to secure the dam. The work carried out by Trevi was perfected by the technical support provided by the USACE. Undoubtedly, this project stimulated the sharing of data, the joint handling of sensitive technical issues, and boosted the general operation of the Italian and U.S. engineers.

### **Constructive ecologism and the perception of reality**

Mega dams significantly alter local economies, social structures and, often, entire regions. While some observers and communities may perceive these projects as opportunities for development, with promises of improved irrigation, electricity, and employment, others experience disruption and displacement. The forced relocation and resettlement associated with dam construction often lead to a loss of ancestral land, cultural heritage, and social networks. These experiences shape a territory's perception of mega dams, with displaced communities likely to view them with skepticism and resentment (Dryzek 2013). Environmental changes caused by mega-dams also contribute to how they are perceived. Alterations in water flow, changes in fish populations, and loss of biodiversity impact communities differently based on their reliance on the natural environment. For instance, communities with a deep spiritual and cultural connection to the river may view these environmental changes as a violation of their way of life, leading to strong opposition to the dam. Furthermore, perceptions of risk and uncertainty, which are socially constructed, vary widely. The potential for dam failure, environmental degradation, and long-term sustainability are viewed through the lens of past experiences and trust in authorities (Dryzek 2013; Peet et al. 2010).

In this article, Constructive Ecologism (CE) was used as the theoretical framework to evaluate how different environmental perspectives shape the perception of reality. The constructivist ecologist perception of mega dams offered a rich profound understanding of how these massive infrastructure projects are experienced and interpreted by local and international experts. Constructivism, as a theory of knowledge, posits that individuals and communities construct their understanding of the world through their experiences, interactions, and cultural contexts (Naess, 1989). This perspective is particularly valuable in examining the diverse and often conflicting

views surrounding mega dams. At the heart of the CE is the recognition that the perception of reality plays pivotal roles in shaping how mega dams are perceived. In this regard, the negative narrative of an event, a fact or, in the case of MD, a water infrastructure, significantly impacts how it is perceived locally and in a broader context. From the beginning, the dam has been surrounded by an inherently negative representation due to several well-documented features. Over time, the image of the MD has taken on a granitic negative connotation that represents only part of the reality. In fact, the perception of the dam, even after the upgrading works carried out in 2016, has remained the same. This is because, despite the activities completed by an international team of experts involving highly qualified engineers, the dam continues to be portrayed as a threat rather than an opportunity for the region.

Through the lens of CE, this article aims to provide innovative insight to academic scholarship regarding the actual impact of the MD on various fronts. The perception of the dam, which has been the subject of numerous quantitative studies for many years, has been fed negatively, contributing to the portrayal of a very complex and dangerous reality. However, following the upgrades, there were fewer quantitative studies aimed at understanding what had been accomplished and what improvements had been made. Consequently, the dam remained “captive” to a pessimistic narrative that not only prevented its structural progress from being verified but also prevented light from being shed on the remarkable achievements of hydro-strategic collaboration on the local, regional and global fronts. Using a CE theoretical approach, this article sought to make an original contribution by attempting to overturn the negative perception constructed around the MD.

CE, as a theoretical variant of Constructivism, has allowed for an alternative representation of the reality surrounding the perception of the MD. The works of Dryzek (2013), Sessions (1995), Merchant (2005), and Peet, Robbins, and Watts (2010), among others, have been instrumental in the comprehensive theoretical and conceptual analysis of the distorted perception of the MD in the Middle Eastern context. By recognizing the multiplicity of environmental realities and the importance of multiple perspectives, CE can provide valuable and alternative insights for developing more holistic and sustainable approaches to the environmental challenges associated with the MD.

### **Historical overview and the structural problems of the Mosul Dam**

To fully understand the negative perception that has been floating around the MD, it is essential to provide a historical overview of some structural problems concerning its technical features and the projections of potential damage in the event of a systemic collapse. As previously mentioned, besides being the biggest dam in Iraq, the MD is one of the most relevant water facilities in the Middle East. The dam, constructed between 1981 and 1986, is located on the Tigris's shores in the northern part of the country (42°49'19''E, 36°37'48''N). With an impoundment of 11.1 billion m<sup>3</sup>, it adds to Iraq's water resources another 8.16 billion m<sup>3</sup> of live storage, forming an artificial lake that holds 11.1 km<sup>3</sup>. This quantity is a vital resource in an arid country like Iraq, supporting the irrigation of 1 million hectares of fertile land. The dam also plays a



significant role in electricity generation, housing a 750 Megawatts (MW) power station. This capacity is further enhanced by an additional 60 MW installed in its reregulating dam (8 kilometres south of the main dam) and another 200 MW installed in the pump storage scheme on its right part (Adamo et al. 2017).

It is relevant to consider that the MD is situated in a region characterized by varied topography, including mountainous terrain to the north and relatively flat plains to the south. The dam itself is located approximately 50 kilometres north of the city of Mosul. The Tigris River, which the dam impounds, originates in the mountains of southeastern Turkey and flows through Syria and Iraq, creating a diverse and complex river basin. The average annual rainfall in the Mosul Dam's catchment area varies significantly due to its extensive geographical coverage. In the northern mountainous regions, the rainfall can exceed 800 mm per year, while in the southern plains, it decreases to around 200-300 mm per year. This variation impacts the flow and storage capacity of the dam (Adamo et al. 2017).

*Figure 1. The Mosul Dam geographic location*



*Data courtesy of the BBC. Accessed August 29, 2024.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28772478>*

The hydrological regime of the basin is characterized by significant seasonal variations. Snowmelt from the mountains contributes to high flow rates in the spring, while the summer months see reduced flow due to lower precipitation and higher evaporation rates. Consequently, the average flow of the Tigris River at the Mosul Dam site is influenced by seasonal changes, with higher flows occurring during the winter and spring months due to snowmelt and rainfall in the upstream regions. The

average annual flow rate of the Tigris River at this location is approximately 370 m<sup>3</sup>/s), though this can fluctuate significantly based on climatic conditions and upstream water management practices (Husain 2021; USACE 2017).

Although the dam was completed in the mid-1980s, the desire to build an extensive infrastructure capable of controlling downstream flows and generating hydroelectric power had already emerged in the early 1950s (Al-Abayachi 2016). In this regard, the Iraq Development Board took the first step to build the dam in 1952, when a joint venture of two European firms was selected to prepare a preliminary study by performing some investigations, selecting a dam site and drawing up a final design. In addition to flow control and energy production, the Iraqi government aimed to secure a vital water reserve to increase the portion of arable land. This led to contracting three more consulting firms to prepare the required designs. Finally, Bagdad rested with the Swiss Consultant Consortium in 1978 to do the designs the final draft of the project (Al-Abayachi 2016; Adamo et al. 2017).

It ought to be highlighted that all the consultants recognized the presence of soluble gypsum, anhydrite and limestone - i.e. water-soluble minerals - in the dam's foundations. Dams built on this kind of rock are subject to a phenomenon called karstification, in which the foundation becomes shot through with voids and vacuums. As a result, the experts warned that water could easily seep under the dam and compromise its stability, posing the risk of a systemic failure. The remedy suggested by the consulting firms that the Iraqi government contracted to carry out preliminary studies consisted of constantly maintaining the dam using the grouting technique. This technique, involving the injection of a cement mixture into compromised spots, is designed to prevent potential new leaks (Annunziato et al. 2016). In this way, the artificially injected cement prevents the constant erosion of the foundations from causing the dam to structurally fail.

Since the earliest stages, cement injection under the dam encountered several difficulties. Many areas in the layers could not be sealed despite repeated grouting using different types and mixtures of mortar. Although maintenance grouting over the past thirty years had succeeded in closing the holes temporarily, they kept cyclically opening to be plugged again and again (Kelley et al. 2007). As reported by Adamo: "these maintenance operations conducted over the years have only lengthened the life of the dam. (...) Experts consider them as not going to save it in the long run" (2017, 268). This critical situation has fuelled fears and concerns about the adequate structural stability of the dam. Given its size, a possible infrastructure collapse could have catastrophic consequences, potentially affecting hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens dwelling downstream. Consequently, several projections have been performed to calculate the dam break propagation from the MD into the downstream valley in the six days following the break event (Adamo et al. 2017; Kelley et al. 2007; Annunziato et al. 2016).

**Table 1. Projections of hydraulic calculations depending on the break size (Adamo et al. 2017; Annunziato et al. 2016)**

Item	Height (metres a.s.l.)	Distance (km)	Slope	Average speed (km/h)	Time of wave arrival (h)	Time of max height (h)	Max height (m)
Dam break	252	0	-		0	0	78
Mosul	217	69	-0.05	40.	1.7	6.2	26.4
Bayji	109	180	-0.06	11.	16.8	23.5	14.3
Tikrit	89	47	-0.04	11.	21.0	26.5	14.4
Samarra	66	54	-0.04	18.	25.8	30.8	16.1
Bagdad	38	108	-0.03	2.6	67.0	117.0	7.9

According to Annunziato's predictions (2016), the total population affected by flood waters would be just over 6 million people or a significant 16% of the total population of Iraq and the flooded area would entail almost 2% of the country's total area. Approximately a running total of more than half a million people would be exposed to floodwaters more than 5 meters in height, thus putting their lives at risk. As shown in Table 2, many people involved in this severe environmental crisis would have less than two hours' notice. Furthermore, a very significant surface area could be flooded, destroying critical infrastructure, homes, crops and all means of livelihood.

**Table 2. Projections of the population affected in the event of the collapse of the Mosul Dam (Adamo et al. 2017; Annunziato et al. 2016)**

Inundation	Population	Area (square km)
0.1-0.5 m	948 000	637
0.5-2.0 m	3 144 000	2022
2-5 m	1 626 000	2482
5-10 m	260 000	1 150
Over 10 m	270 000	916
Total	6 248 000	7 202

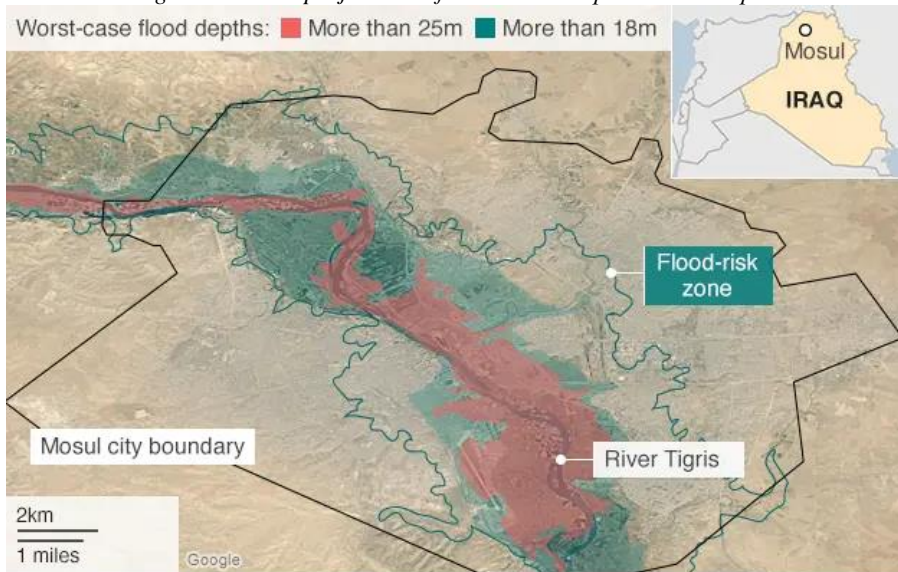
As reported in Table 3, a possible dam collapse would have repercussions throughout the whole country and not just in the northern territories. The lower part of Table 3 provides an estimate of the time for the arrival of the first volume of water, the projection of maximum height (which, in general, has a considerable delay of at least a several hours concerning the first wave) and the maximum water height in meters. Based on these projections, it is essential to note that Mosul, the largest and most important city in northern Iraq, would suffer the most devastating consequences within hours of the collapse of the structure. As pointed out by several scholars (Sissakian et al. 2014; Husain, 2021; Adamo et al. 2017; Annunziato et al. 2016), the city is built on either side of Tigris, with densely inhabited areas close to the river. As a result, a huge number of people would be exposed to prodigious peaks of floodwater. Specifically, approximately 183 000 people, more than 10% of the city's population of 1.7 million, would be affected by more than 10m wave height, which could entail catastrophic destruction. In addition, as Annunziato (2016) argued, the warning time would be very short; even if a dam breach is signaled immediately, within 3 hours, the water height in Mosul would have already reached close to 20m.

In the event of a dam's collapse, significant damage and loss of life should also be expected in other cities along the river, with very high-water levels exceeding 10 meters. Concerning Baghdad, projections have calculated heights of up to 8 meters; the average value in the Baghdad metropolitan area, however, is rather lower, around 2 meters. More than 1 million people would be exposed to depths of between 2 and 5 meters. What is worrying in this case, as can be seen in the height-time section in the lower part of Table 3, is that floodwaters take much longer to drain from the Baghdad area due to the flat morphology of the land. In the event of a dam collapse, the wave caused by the release of water would also reach the southern city of Basra, about 800 km away from Mosul, with a much lower destructive potential (Sissakian et al. 2014).

**Table 3. Estimates of the damage caused by the collapse of the dam on the main northern Iraqi cities and Baghdad (Adamo et al. 2017; Annunziato et al. 2016)**

Inundation	Mosul	Bayji	Tikrit	Samarra	Bagdad
0.1-0.5 m	21 000	0	0	0	746 000
0.5-2.0 m	55 000	300	100	3 000	2 949 000
2-5 m	41 000	400	2 500	100	1 134 000
5-10 m	60 000	17 000	14 000	5 500	26 000
Over 10 m	183 000	2 000	4 000	3 500	0
<b>First wave arrival</b>	1h 40 min	16h	21h	25h	67h
<b>Max wave arrival</b>	6h	23h	27h	31h	4-5 days
<b>Max wave height</b>	26 m	14 m	14.5 m	16 m	8 m

**Figure 2. Visual projections of Mosul Dam's potential collapse**



Data courtesy of the BBC. Accessed August 29, 2024.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35351888>.

In response to the catastrophic projections regarding the potential collapse of the MD, a solution may consist in the resumption of construction of the downstream unfinished Badush Dam. The latter has a history intertwined with the broader context of Iraq's water management efforts and the safety concerns surrounding the MD, which is located approximately 15 kilometres upstream. This relatively short distance emphasizes the strategic role of the Badush Dam as a secondary barrier to control and mitigate the effects of a potential failure of the MD (Sissakian et al. 2018). After its completion in 1984, the structural vulnerabilities of the MD propelled the Iraqi establishment to conceive alternative solutions to provide a secondary line of defence in case of failure. As a result, construction of another water facility - the Badush Dam - began in 1988. It was designed primarily as a flood control dam, intended, as mentioned, to mitigate the impact of a potentially catastrophic failure of the MD. However, the Badush Dam was also planned to generate hydroelectric power and provide water for irrigation (Sissakian et al. 2018; Adamo et al. 2017).

Despite its relevance, the construction of the Badush Dam was interrupted in 1991 due to the Gulf War. The subsequent years of sanctions and political instability in Iraq further delayed the completion of the dam, which was resumed in 2003, only to be interrupted again due to a lack of funds (Al-Muslih and Al-Ansary 2013). Currently, the Badush Dam remains incomplete. Financial constraints, security issues, and political instability have hampered efforts to complete the dam. However, it continues to be considered a critical project for Iraq's water management and disaster mitigation strategy (Sissakian et al. 2018; Al-Muslih and Al-Ansary 2013).

*Figure 3. The Badush Dam in relation to the MD and Mosul city  
(Saeedrashed and Benim 2018: 1-6)*





Figure 4. The Badush Dam abandoned construction site



*Data courtesy of Wikimapia. Accessed August 29, 2024.*

<https://wikimapia.org/29926635/Badush-Dam-construction-site>.

### **The Mosul Dam under ISIS' control**

The complex situation of the MD from a structural standpoint has been a severe problem since the very beginning of its construction. In fact, as previously analysed, the MD is one of the most strategic infrastructures in the Middle East and was built on unstable foundations that require constant and immediate maintenance by highly specialised experts. In the event of a lack of maintenance, the likelihood of the dam's structural failure is very high. Continuous and constant maintenance is not just important, it is indispensable for any mega dam, as these complex infrastructures always require special attention. However, in the case of the MD, given its precarious foundations due to the peculiar geological characteristics of the soil on which it was built, structural maintenance through grouting is indispensable.

The precarious foundations of the MD attracted significant international attention when the infrastructure came under the control of ISIS. In early August 2014, the Islamist militants launched an offensive to capture the dam, and on August 7<sup>th</sup>, after overpowering the defending Kurdish Peshmerga forces, they seized control of the water facility (Al-Ansari et al. 2015). The capture of the MD had several prominent implications. First, the control of the dam provided ISIS with a powerful bargaining chip. The potential to use the dam as a tool of warfare by either destroying it or manipulating water flow posed a severe threat to Iraqi national security and regional stability. In addition, the possibility of a dam breach created an immediate humanitarian crisis, prompting mass evacuations and heightened anxiety among downstream populations. As examined, the potential flooding could have resulted in

widespread loss of life and extensive infrastructural damage (Al-Abayachi 2016; Adamo et al. 2017; Annunziato et al. 2016).

The control exercised by ISIS militants over the MD did not last long. In mid-August 2014, a coalition of Kurdish Peshmerga forces and Iraqi troops, backed by U.S. airstrikes, launched a counter-offensive to retake the MD. After intense fighting, the coalition forces managed to reclaim the dam by August 18<sup>th</sup> (Adamo et al. 2017). Therefore, the dam remained under the control of Islamist forces for only 11 days. During this short period of time, the infrastructure received no maintenance and grouting was discontinued. Following the recapture, immediate efforts were made to stabilize and secure the dam. With international assistance, the Iraqi government resumed grouting and maintenance operations to address the structural vulnerabilities exacerbated by the period of neglect (Al-Ansari et al. 2015). As a result, the USACE and the Italian engineering firm Trevi SPA were contracted to provide technical support and ensure the dam's safety.

### **Trevi's intervention**

The contract between Iraq and Trevi was signed in early March 2016 (Trevi Foundation 2018; USACE 2017). The GoI assigned the roles of engineer and Contract Administrator to the USACE, which has been monitoring the MD since May 2015. To accomplish its tasks of monitoring and supervising the activity before Trevi was awarded the contract by the GoI approximately 70 engineers were deployed from the USA (USACE 2017). The contract awarded to Trevi, amounting to Euro 273M, envisioned six months for mobilization site installation and twelve months of drilling and grouting works. Along with the maintenance grouting, Trevi was awarded with the training of the owner's personnel and rehabilitation of the bottom outlet tunnels (i.e. guard gates and intake bulkheads) through electromechanical works and diving operations (Trevi Foundation 2018; Milillo et al. 2016; Sissakian et al. 2018).

Trevi's activities concerned the resumption of the grouting technique with an innovative approach and the use of remote-control technology capable of assessing the structural risks of the dam in real time. Regarding the first activity, the grouting works carried out by Trevi foresaw the execution of a double grout curtain line along the dam axis, from both the grouting gallery and the crest (between the spillway and fuse plug), and a single grout curtain line along the eastern side of the spillway (from grout lines on the crest to the river). Multipurpose drilling rigs for specific drilling techniques and space constraints were deployed (Trevi Foundation 2018). Two diesel crawler-mounted SOILMEC SM-16 units and six electric crawler-mounted SOILMEC SM-5 units were selected and mobilized for the drilling works in the crest and grouting gallery, respectively. The grout holes executed from the crest/surface required drilling through the dam's embankment and clay core. For this specific scope, the SOILMEC SM-16 was equipped with a powerful double rotary, allowing the dry encasement of the embankment while advancing the borehole with auger strings down to the bedrock (Trevi Foundation 2018).

*Figure 5. Trevi's engineers working at MD's project*



*Data courtesy of the Trevi Foundation. Accessed August 29, 2024.*

<https://www.trevispa.com/it/>

Concerning the second activity, Trevi developed a T-Grout system, where “T” stands for “Trevi”, which is a computer-automated web application allowing the remote management of grouting activities. It is a standalone software that also allows offline management and provides daily charts, information about stages and boreholes completed, volumes, solid takes and pressures. According to the company (Trevi Foundation 2018), T-Grout can remotely manage and operate the grouting pumps from a Control Room. The T-Grout system stores raw data into a relational database every second of grouting operations.

Through Trevi’s work and the techniques used in trying to make the infrastructure more stable, the dam is now fully operational and safe. During the months of activity, the Trevi workforce reached a peak of more than 700 units, with Italian management and supervision, third-country national staff and local personnel. According to the company (Trevi Foundation 2018), through June 2018, with 24/6 operations, Trevi completed 295 000 linear meters of grouted boreholes, injecting an equivalent to 25 353 tons of solids into the ground. The work carried out by the engineers involved in the renovation of the dam was characterized by significant logistical difficulties. Trevi commenced the works with the war conflict against ISIS at 13Km from the dam (Gerges 2016; Trevi Foundation 2018). The presence of the Coalition Forces, together with the Italian Army, guaranteed the required security of the Project Area. In 2018, as a reward for the technical reliability of the activity, carried out under pressure and not optimal conditions, the government of Iraq awarded Trevi with an additional 11 months of maintenance grouting works.

## Discussion

The dam rehabilitation and safety activities carried out by Trevi, supported by the technical and technological expertise of USACE, have effectively brought improvements to the MD. In this regard, the water infrastructure has undergone significant structural improvements in the grouting technique and the predictive



analysis of potential holes using T-Grout software. As proof of this, the Iraqi government not only extended the contract with Trevi for the supervision of the dam for 11 months but also asked the Italian company to provide support in training the local engineers involved in maintaining the dam. Therefore, from a technical and structural standpoint, the joint activities of Trevi and USACE were successful.

However, despite the clearly positive impact of the international engineering team in renovating the Mosul Dam, the perception of this infrastructure in the Iraqi and Middle Eastern context is still overwhelmingly negative. As mentioned, notwithstanding the extensive and costly maintenance work that has been carried out recently, the granitic negative perception of this dam over time still prevails. As reported by numerous scholars who have documented with quantitative analyses following Trevi's intervention (Sissakian et al. 2018; Sissakian et al. 2020; Hmaza and Msaewe 2023; Agha and Khattab 2023), it seems that the MD is destined to collapse in any case, entailing dire consequences for the populations living downstream.

To understand the reasons behind the MD's negative perception, it is essential to look at it through the lens of Constructivist Ecologism. The latter, which derives from the broader theoretical framework of Constructivism, provides a robust theoretical tool for understanding how the perception of reality shapes and is shaped by our efforts to decipher it, especially regarding environmental issues linked with quantitative methods. In the MD case, deciphering the perception around the dam is a complex matter. As extensively documented, the water infrastructure was built on an unsuitable site due to karstic soil characteristics that did not meet the standards required to support the dam's foundations. This fact, which is incontrovertible and not subject to any kind of interpretation, has laid the foundations for the spread of a very negative, alarmist and pessimistic narrative around the dam. In this regard, following the numerous articles that have been produced over time on the structural deficits of the dam, it would be appropriate to ask ourselves how it is possible that the dam, after almost 40 years of structural deficiencies, is still standing. In fact, in addition to the already highlighted serious structural problems, the MD has had a very eventful past.

During the First Gulf War, the MD was bombed multiple times as part of the strategic air campaign led by coalition forces. The primary objective of these bombings was to disable Iraq's ability to control water resources, which were seen as critical to both military and civilian infrastructure (Chin 2019; McMahan and McKim 1993). Specifically, the U.S. and its allies targeted the dam due to its importance in providing water and electricity to a large part of Iraq. The dam's destruction would have had significant downstream effects, potentially causing the already examined widespread flooding and disrupting the Iraqi military's logistical operations. As Fappiano and Baraniuk (2020) pointed out, the attacks on the dam were part of a broader strategy to weaken Saddam Hussein's control over vital infrastructure, thereby hastening the end of the conflict. However, despite the multiple bombings, the dam resisted (Chin 2019; McMahan and McKim 1993).

Furthermore, in addition to the bombings, maintaining the MD after the First Gulf War was fraught with difficulties, primarily due to the international sanctions imposed on Iraq. These sanctions, which were intended to limit Iraq's ability to rebuild its military capabilities, had severe repercussions on the country's infrastructure, including

essential maintenance operations for critical structures like the MD. As Chin (2019) and Adamo (2017) documented, the sanctions regime severely restricted Iraq's ability to import the necessary spare parts and equipment for the dam's upkeep. Critical machinery and technology needed for routine maintenance and emergency repairs became increasingly difficult to obtain, leading to a gradual degradation of the dam's operational efficiency. Essentially, the sanctions crippled Iraq's economy, drastically reducing the funds available for infrastructure maintenance. The Iraqi government prioritized immediate humanitarian needs over infrastructure, leading to underfunded and neglected maintenance programs for the MD which, as examined, necessitates constant attention (Pearce 2014). It is paramount to highlight that the sanctions also affected the ability of Iraqi engineers and local technical workers to receive training or collaborate with international experts. The lack of updated technical knowledge and reduced opportunities for capacity building further hindered effective maintenance efforts concerning the MD (Adamo et al. 2017).

Thus, in addition to the structural problems, since the 1990s the dam has faced phases of considerable difficulty due to both wartime actions and the lack of funds necessary to guarantee its maintenance. Even after the second Gulf War, the situation did not change. The lack of funds prevented renovations that could secure the water infrastructure. These circumstances of constant uncertainty, imminent danger and catastrophe crystallised the negative perception of the dam. Why has the narrative about the MD not changed over the years?

From the constructivist ecologist perspective, the MD is not merely a concrete and steel structure, but a dynamic entity deeply intertwined with the region's social, cultural, and ecological fabric. As Peet et al. (2010) and Sessions (1995) pointed out, constructive ecologism suggests that perception and reality are mutually constitutive. Perception is shaped by the immediate affordances of the environment, which are themselves influenced by the perceiver's prior knowledge and experiences. This dynamic interaction means that reality is deciphered through a continuous feedback loop: perception informs action, and action, in turn, refines perception. In this regard, the negative perception of the dam, which has been spread on a quantitative basis for many years, has fuelled a view of reality that does not correspond to the truth. Indeed, even from a quantitative standpoint, the negative portrayal of the MD does not correspond to reality. In fact, especially following the renovation works carried out between 2016 and 2018, the infrastructure is not just safer, but has also been equipped with advanced technological instruments capable of predicting potential structural failures before they can jeopardise the foundations of the whole infrastructure, providing a sense of reassurance which is seldom taken into consideration.

Through the lens of constructive ecologism, we can appreciate that deciphering the reality surrounding the MD is an active, dynamic process that involves multiple observations from multiple points of view. As mentioned, the hitherto dominant approach has been epistemologically and intrinsically negative, accompanied by an equally negative narrative and representation of events and reality. Specifically, this negative narrative can be traced in the language associated with the description of the dam issues. For instance, Annunziato (2016) repeatedly uses future tense in connection with the projections of the disasters caused by the giant wave in the event of a collapse:

“Moreover, a very significant surface area will be inundated, with subsequent destruction of critical infrastructure, houses, crops and all livelihood” (Annunziato 2016, 14)”. “(...) a very large number of people will be exposed to prodigious heights of floodwater” (Annunziato 2016, 16). This approach, based on the conceptual certainty that an event will occur, implies an almost mathematical certainty that the collapse of the MD is inevitable. Similarly, Nasrat Adamo also adopts this narrative approach. For instance, in one of his numerous articles, he underlines that the maintenance grouting is not a permanent solution and that the only answer for solving the MD case would be: “the resumption of construction of the unfinished downstream Badush Dam” (Adamo et al. 2017, 272). By recommending this solution, Nasrat Adamo almost takes it for granted that the dam will collapse sooner or later without considering the potential positive impact of renovation works on the management of one of the largest dams in the Middle East.

## **Results**

The negative perception surrounding the MD is still deeply crystallised in the region. This situation has hitherto prevented to acknowledge the several positive aspects that have resulted from the maintenance and renovation activities carried out by Trevi from a hydro-strategic standpoint. In fact, in addition to the infrastructural improvements and personnel training that have significantly improved the structural conditions of the dam, from a water cooperation perspective, important agreements involving various players have been reached.

### **Water cooperation on a local level**

On a local basis, it is crucial to highlight the collaboration between the Kurds and the Iraqis in managing the MD following the maintenance contract awarded to Trevi. This partnership became especially significant following the turmoil and security challenges posed by ISIS. The Kurdish-Iraqi collaboration manifested itself in two variants: military cooperation and civil-engineering joint activities. From a military standpoint, the recapture of the MD from ISIS in August 2014 was a significant operation that showcased the collaboration between Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi Army. As mentioned, this joint effort, which was supported by U.S. airstrikes, was essential in preventing ISIS from using the dam as a weapon of mass destruction (Tinti 2023). In addition, after the liberation from ISIS, the continued stability and security of the dam have necessitated ongoing cooperation between Kurdish and Iraqi forces. This collaboration was extended to ensuring that the dam’s infrastructure is adequately protected from potential sabotage and that maintenance operations can be carried out safely (Tinti 2023).

From a civil engineering standpoint, nowadays, the technical management of the dam involves engineers and specialists from both Kurdish and Iraqi backgrounds (Trevi Foundation 2018; USACE 2017). These teams work together to address the dam’s persistent structural issues, such as the need for continuous grouting to stabilize

its gypsum foundation. Trevi's activity fostered technical cooperation between the Kurdish and Iraqi components to train local experts to replace Italian engineers.

The military and technical cooperation between Kurds and Iraqis on the MD is a highly significant achievement, especially given the recent past of hatred and persecution between these two peoples. From being inherently rivals, the two segments of Iraqi society are now actively involved in a strategic project as important as the management and security of the MD. In this regard, the management of the water facility requires a high level of political coordination between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the central Iraqi government. This coordination is vital for securing funding, implementing maintenance projects, and managing the dam's operations in a way that benefits all communities relying on its resources (Pearce 2014; Tinti 2023). The hydro-strategic cooperation between Kurds and Iraqis around the MD represents a very significant step forward in the normalisation of relations between these two communities.

### **Water cooperation on a trans-regional level**

From a trans-regional standpoint, water cooperation between Iraq and Italy has brought these two countries diplomatically closer. In fact, the collaboration between Rome and Baghdad following the MD renovation has expanded beyond water management into broader political and economic spheres. This partnership reflects a strategic effort by both countries to leverage their cooperation on infrastructure to enhance bilateral relations and mutual economic benefits. The diplomatic rapprochement between Rome and Baghdad and the success of the work carried out by Trevi inaugurated a new phase in the management of trade relations between the two nations. In this regard, Italian companies have shown interest in participating in Iraq's broader reconstruction efforts beyond the MD. This includes infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and public buildings. As reported by Tinti (2023), Italian expertise in engineering and construction is highly valued in Iraq's post-conflict rebuilding phase. Moreover, following the joint management of the MD, economic cooperation has also seen an increase in bilateral trade and investment. Nowadays, Italian firms are exploring opportunities in various sectors, including energy, agriculture, and manufacturing. Iraq, in turn, benefits from Italian technology and expertise, which are critical for its economic diversification and development goals (Tercovich 2016).

In addition to the diplomatic partnership and increased commercial exchanges, the successful collaboration on the MD renovation has paved the way for enhanced military cooperation between Italy and Iraq (Coticchia and Ruggeri 2022). This partnership has evolved to address various security challenges and strengthen Iraq's defence capabilities through joint efforts in training, strategic support, and mission command. Notably, Italy has played a pivotal role in NATO Mission Iraq (NMI), a non-combat training and advisory mission of strategic importance that aims to build the capacity of Iraqi security forces (Tercovich 2016). Following the MD project, Italy's involvement has increased, with Italian military personnel providing training in various domains, including counterterrorism, bomb disposal, and military engineering. This training is crucial for enhancing the operational capabilities of the Iraqi army and

police forces (Tinti 2023; Coticchia and Ruggeri 2022). Similarly, Italy has supplied Iraq with military equipment and technology to support its defence needs. This includes vehicles, communication systems, and other tactical gear essential for modernizing the Iraqi military. The provision of such equipment is part of broader defence cooperation agreements aimed at enhancing Iraq's self-reliance in defence (Howard and Dayal 2018).

Military cooperation between Italy and Iraq has had significant local impacts, especially in relation to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Italy's strategic role in training the Kurdish Peshmerga forces, which were crucial in the fight against ISIS and in maintaining regional security in Northern Iraq, cannot be overstated. As highlighted by Tinti (2023) and Coticchia and Ruggeri (2022), Italian military trainers have provided comprehensive training programs focusing on counterterrorism, urban warfare, and advanced military tactics. These programs were meticulously designed to enhance the operational effectiveness of the Peshmerga and ensure they were well-equipped to handle various security challenges. The success of the MD project stands as a testament to the effectiveness of this collaboration. Following this achievement, high-level consultations between Italian and Kurdish officials have become a regular feature of their collaboration. These dialogues focus on assessing security needs, planning joint exercises, and discussing long-term strategies for regional stability (Coticchia and Ruggeri 2022).

The military collaboration between Italy and Iraq, following their successful cooperation on the MD, underscores a robust partnership aimed at enhancing Iraq's security and stability. Through training, strategic support, provision of equipment, and high-level dialogues, Italy continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening Iraq's defence capabilities and ensuring regional security. This comprehensive military partnership reflects the deepening ties between the two nations and their commitment to addressing mutual security challenges.

### **Water cooperation on a global level**

Finally, the collaboration between Italy and the US Government has deepened significantly following their joint efforts to renovate and stabilise the MD. This cooperation has expanded into various strategic, military, and technical domains, reflecting a robust partnership to enhance regional security and rebuild critical infrastructure in Iraq. From a military standpoint, the two countries have conducted combined military operations to combat ISIS remnants in Iraq (Tinti, 2023). These operations involved intelligence sharing, strategic planning, and logistical support. The collaborative military efforts aimed to disrupt terrorist networks and prevent their resurgence, ensuring the security of critical infrastructures, including the MD. The Italian soldiers sent from Rome to protect the Trevi engineers working a few kilometres from the front received considerable support from the American forces, who were also engaged in securing the region (Coticchia and Ruggeri 2022).

From a technical perspective, the collaboration between Italy and the United States has been very close. Trevi Group, which, as mentioned, was renowned for its specialized ground engineering capabilities, brought advanced grouting techniques to

the project. USACE, on the other hand, provided critical oversight and technical support, leveraging its extensive experience in managing large-scale infrastructure projects. USACE engineers worked alongside Trevi experts to design and implement the grouting strategy, ensuring it met the necessary safety and effectiveness standards. One of the significant contributions from the USACE was the implementation of advanced monitoring systems to continuously assess the dam's structural health (USACE 2017). These systems included piezometers, inclinometers, and automated data logging equipment to monitor water pressure, movement, and other critical parameters in real time. Trevi Group integrated these monitoring systems with their ongoing grouting operations.

The real-time data provided by USACE's monitoring equipment allowed Trevi engineers to make informed decisions on where to focus their grouting efforts, optimizing the repair process and enhancing the dam's stability (Trevi Foundation 2018; USACE 2017). The technological collaboration between the Trevi Group and the USACE was instrumental in the successful renovation of the MD. Combining Trevi's advanced grouting techniques and USACE's monitoring and technical oversight ensured that the dam's structural integrity was restored and maintained. This partnership not only addressed immediate safety concerns but also established a framework for ongoing maintenance and capacity building, contributing to the long-term stability and safety of the MD.

The collaboration between Italy and the U.S. Government after the MD project exemplified a comprehensive partnership between two key NATO allies to ensure regional security and rebuild critical infrastructure in Iraq. Through joint military training, combined operations, technical assistance, and high-level strategic dialogues, both nations demonstrated their commitment to stabilizing Iraq and supporting its long-term development. This multifaceted cooperation showed the importance of international partnerships in addressing complex challenges in the Middle East.

## **Conclusion and discussion**

The MD has been a cornerstone for the development and prosperity of northern Iraq. Its multifaceted benefits have not only supported economic growth and environmental sustainability but also improved the quality of life for the people in the region. The positive aspects of this significant infrastructure are manifold and cover many areas. The dam, in fact, besides playing a crucial role in providing water for irrigation in an arid country such as Iraq, ensures a reliable supply of potable water to the surrounding communities, improving overall living conditions and public health not only on a national level. In addition, the dam helps regulate the flow of the Tigris River, is a significant source of hydroelectric power and helps reduce Iraq's consumption of fossil fuels.

However, despite the multiple benefits, the dam is still associated with a strongly negative narrative that conditions the perception of reality. The karst foundations of the infrastructure are undoubtedly a complex structural problem and a critical fact. The karstification of the foundations and the fragility of the land on which the dam was built are factors that cannot be modified, and which represent - and will represent - a

constant problem for the structural stability of the dam. Nonetheless, today's engineering technologies allow the situation to be monitored much more efficiently than in the past and guarantee the resolution of problems promptly. In this regard, the work carried out by Trevi with the supervision of USACE has made the dam much safer by limiting potential catastrophic structural failures and extending its lifespan by many years.

Like the friability of its foundations, the structural improvement of the dam following the renovation work is also a fact. However, while a negative narrative of the dam has emerged due to the dangerousness of the foundations, after the structural improvement works, equally positive representations of the reality surrounding the dam have not emerged. This is because the MD still remains "captive" to a strongly negative conception that prevents the perception of reality from being distanced from reality itself. Furthermore, given that the dam has significant structural deficiencies, there are currently no alternative solutions to improving the existing infrastructure. The project to resume work on Badush Dam to build a defence barrier in the event of a collapse of the MD was halted in the late 1980s and never resumed due to lack of funds. Moreover, the demolition of the MD and the construction of an alternative infrastructure with more solid and secure foundations has never been seriously considered, given the prohibitive costs of this operation for the Iraqi government and because of the environmental and social inconvenience that dismantling the current dam would cause.

Over time, the negative perception of the MD has become so entrenched that it has prevented the work on its maintenance from being appreciated not only from a technical-structural standpoint but also in relation to hydro-strategic cooperation. The collaboration between Kurds and Iraqis for the defence and maintenance of the dam, the friendly diplomatic relations between Iraq and Italy, and the close relationship between Rome and Washington for the exchange of sensitive data are three significant achievements that deserve to be underlined. In an arid and desert region such as the Middle East, where water and water infrastructure management are often a source of conflict, the MD has been a paramount example of hydro-strategic cooperation with results on many levels. Considering such positive effects on cooperation between peoples, nations and organisations, the MD should be portrayed with an alternative narrative to the classical one, which defines it as inherently and atavistically dangerous. On the contrary, following the recent developments, the dam is an infrastructure that has had enormous positive impacts not only in regulating water flows, limiting floods and producing hydro-electric power but also in spreading a paradigm of hydro-strategic cooperation involving multiple actors with local, national and international results.

### **Supplementary material**

The supplementary material for this article can be found at  
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### 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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**REINHOLD, THOMAS. 2024. TOWARDS A PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF CYBERSPACE: DE-ESCALATION OF STATE-LED CYBER CONFLICTS AND ARMS CONTROL OF CYBER WEAPONS. SPRINGER VIEWEG, WIESBADEN. XXVIII, 361 PP. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-43951-4>.**

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**Abstract**

The book analyzes cyberspace issues and its global infrastructures, which are essential for the global political system, civiliarchy, political economy and effective administration of political processes. In the modern context, cyberspace is becoming an intelligence and military operational domain for various actors. According to the author, this is evident in the establishment of military cyber departments and the integration of cyberspace into the security and defense strategies of small and large states. Current military technologies as well as established instruments of transparency, de-escalation and arms control measures do not work for cyberspace due to its specific technical characteristics. In this context, it is important for international organizations to achieve de-escalation of state-led conflicts in cyberspace, but in reality it is simply impossible to develop arms control over cyber weapons. In this context, an effective system of classification of cyber weapons, an approach to mutual reduction of stocks of vulnerability and non-interference in cyber conflict are also important.

**Keywords:** cyberweapon, cyberpeace, military operational area, arms control, disarmament, peace building, peaceful development, cyberwar, confidence building measures, cyberattacks.

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This book analyzes the factors of peaceful development of cyberspace, various dimensions of cyber conflicts and cyber weapons that affect information and communication technologies and the transformation of international relations. A striking example of this are modern conflicts, the nature of which largely depends on the factor of cyberspace and information and communication technologies (Reinhold 2024, 3-22, 23-27). Due to the increasing role of cyberspace, an international information space was formed. With the advent of the Internet, the methods and timing of information dissemination have changed significantly. In about a second, information can be accessed almost anywhere in the world. However, modern cyberspace is characterized by a growing number of dividing lines and the introduction of information boundaries.

Cyberspace has transformed into a new field of confrontation and a new space for geopolitical competition. The boundary between the virtual and real worlds is becoming increasingly mobile, which means that confrontation in the digital environment is capable of transforming into a conventional war (Reinhold 2024, 29-36, 37-41). Cyberspace is becoming a new battlefield, just like land, sea and air. Escalation of contradictions in the digital environment can lead to escalation in the real world and conflict using not only information weapons, but also kinetic weapons, as well as weapons of mass destruction. Relations between countries in cyberspace and in the sphere of information and communication technologies are non-linear and often complex, confrontational (Reinhold 2024, 43-48, 51-72).

Earlier historical precedents show that the emergence of new technologies, such as nuclear weapons, encouraged countries to agree on confidence-building measures or create arms control systems, set limits on the development of offensive military technologies and create safeguards to prevent unintentional conflicts and their escalation. However, uniform international legally binding norms preventing cyber conflicts have not yet been adopted, let alone the creation of a system of control over cyber weapons. In this context, it seems important to maintain a dialogue between countries on the issues of the safe use of cyberspace and cyber weapons (Reinhold 2024, 73-84, 85-106). Only in this way can international security and stability be guaranteed. At the same time, states must have equal rights in this process. It is necessary to maintain channels for dialogue at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, primarily within the UN, which determines the practical relevance of the chosen research topic of this book.

The relevance of the study from an applied point of view is determined by the practical focus on developing proposals for the effective promotion of national interests of countries in the digital environment and coordinating elements of the future international legal regime for regulating the digital environment, as well as creating a mechanism for restrictive cyber measures and cyber restrictions at the UN level, approved by the UN Security Council.

The relevance of the study from the point of view of the development of international relations is determined by the insufficient study of the problems of cyberspace in the context of interaction between countries on digital issues, especially against the background of the aggravation of political relations at the bilateral level, as well as the need for an in-depth scientific comparative analysis of the approaches of the

United States and other Western countries in the digital environment. In addition, the problem of cyber sanctions is relevant due to the fact that it is studied by a small number of experts; as a rule, the focus of researchers is sanctions in general (Reinhold 2024, 107-137, 141-172).

The theoretical and practical significance of the study of cyberspace policy and counteraction to cyber terrorism is caused by the need for a deep understanding of the theoretical, organizational and political foundations for the development and implementation of this type of policy and is determined by the following circumstances (Reinhold 2024, 173-183, 185-196).

Firstly, one of the main factors in the development of the political system is the use of cyberspace and information. In modern conditions, they play a key role in the functioning of not only public and state institutions, but also the life of each person. Computers and information and communication systems are used in all spheres of human and state activity. This is ensuring national security, providing public services in the field of health care, education, housing and communal services, air and rail transport management, trade, finance, as well as interpersonal communication, etc.

The influence of global networks on the social and political development of society is multifaceted and contradictory. On the one hand, they contribute to the development of human potential through cyberspace and computer games, educational and entertainment programs, interactive television, and electronic press (Reinhold 2024, 197-226). Global networks influence the electoral behavior of political actors, the process of organizing and conducting election campaigns, the mechanisms of communication between the authorities and society, the presentation and defense of their interests by political actors (Reinhold 2024, 227-238). By modifying the system of relationships and interactions between civil society institutions and the state, global networks contribute to the formation of a constructive dialogue between them. On the other hand, the rapid development of cyberspace and the information and communication sphere has led to the emergence of new types of computer crime and computer terrorism. Thousands of network users, not only individuals, but entire states can suffer from the activities of cyber terrorists in virtual space. The number of crimes committed in cyberspace is growing proportionally to the number of computer network users (Reinhold 2024, 241-268). Modern terrorist organizations actively use information and communication technologies, along with traditional means. At the same time, the transition time from a threat to a real act of cyberterrorists is significantly reduced.

Secondly, the relevance of studying this type of policy increases in the context of the increasing complexity of the social structure and political life of society, which radically modifies the channels of articulation and aggregation of interests of actors in socio-political interaction, creating a danger for the formation of diametrically opposed approaches to assessing political events. The danger of destructive phenomena increases in the context of a decline in the level of legitimacy of power, public trust in political institutions in general and the policies of the ruling elite in particular. These and other phenomena to some extent initiate cyber-terrorist activity, since they often lead to instability in the functioning of the social and political system, inconsistency in the actions and interactions of political institutions and individuals whose functions are

associated with the development and implementation of policies to counter this phenomenon. The emergence of a new type of terrorism threatens the security of the individual, society and the state at all levels of politics, which necessitates its comprehensive study.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of the policy of countering cyber terrorism depends not only on the stability of the functioning of the social and political system, the development of state control over processes in the virtual space, compliance with legal norms in this segment of domestic and foreign policy, the development of the legal culture of the elite and the population, etc. In many ways, it is due to the presence of the ruling elite and representatives of special services of the tools for understanding the analyzed phenomenon, which is impossible without its conceptual understanding, expansion and enrichment of the methodological palette due to approaches that allow the most complete study of the essence and features of the new type of terrorism, as a political phenomenon (Reinhold 2024, 269-299).

In contrast to the position of Russia, China and Iran, the United States and other Western countries always advocate for ensuring international information security at a universal level, which is confirmed by the introduction of draft resolutions of the same name to the UN General Assembly for discussion. In many European and international legal doctrines, the prevailing view is that the powers of the United Nations as a universal international intergovernmental organization in regulating cyberspace and, in particular, international information security, should be revised.

Given the fact that in the 21st century a new branch of international law has emerged, namely cyberlaw, the law of the Internet, fundamental issues affecting the practical aspect of regulating the use of cyberspace remain unresolved. Is it possible in the current circumstances to agree on and adopt a universal convention devoted to the obligations of states? What is the U.S. approach to cyberspace at the international and national levels? Are there prerequisites for finding a compromise in international legal relations on this issue? What influence does U.S. legislation have on the formation of the agenda in the field of international information security at the UN level? Resolving these fundamental issues will help ensure the use of cyberspace for peaceful purposes, in the interests of all its users and avoid its use for military purposes. In connection with the above, there is no doubt about the relevance of studying the essence of the modern international legal regime of cyberspace from the point of view of the United States of America. Is this space still the so-called 'gray zone' in which each actor of international law, possessing the appropriate technological advantages, develops legal regulation not only in national but also in international legal systems? In modern realities, the issue of maintaining the decisive role of the UN in considering issues of legal regulation of cyberspace as a leading platform is recognized as particularly controversial.

Based on the analysis of approaches used in the United States to define the cyberspace regime, the following features can be identified: 1) the technical component of most terms (e.g., cybernetic operation, cybernetic attack, etc.); 2) the presence of conditional boundaries when conducting 'preventive protection' of the state; 3) expansion of the list of actors endowed with powers in cyberspace; 4) the use of not

only the framework of international law, but also legal structures characteristic of the American legal system.

The history of the formation of arms control systems demonstrates that the arms race is better regulated by binding agreements that help reduce tensions and increase the transparency of state actions. The emergence of new types of cyber weapons, the development of new military technologies inevitably led to decisions on the need to control and limit their use (Reinhold 2024, 301-317).

Modern military cyber activities in the war of Russia against Ukraine and the efforts of the United States and Western countries to contain cyber wars demonstrate the need for arms control and its applicability to cyberspace. Experts note a number of difficulties in creating a cyber weapons control system. *Firstly*, the problem of establishing the person responsible for committing cyber attacks, the so-called 'problem of attribution of cyber attacks', is noted. These problems have been successfully resolved for the most part thanks to strict prohibitions, their strict observance, strict reporting requirements, as well as thanks to international monitoring systems and high fines for fraud. *Secondly*, it is noted that a cyber treaty may quickly become obsolete. However, arms control systems, as a rule, face the problem of the speed of technological progress, therefore, states include in most international normative legal documents on arms control provisions for holding periodic review conferences, within the framework of which the possibility of updating the terms of previously concluded agreements is laid down. Thus, states parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have held more than 7 review conferences since the BWC entered into force in 1975, most of which focused on strengthening verification and review of the BWC, taking into account new scientific and technological developments. The cyber agreement will most likely require revision to adapt to technological changes. If it includes clauses prohibiting specific actions, such as first use of cyber weapons or the use of cyber weapons against civilian targets, the problem of adapting to technological change may be less serious than critics claim. *Third*, it is argued that it is too early to conclude an international cyber treaty, since digital technologies have not yet been used for a long time and states do not yet know all the intricacies, capabilities and limitations of their use. However, historically, states have acted far-sightedly, for example, concluding the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, which prohibits the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space. It seems that a similarly far-sighted agreement is possible for cyberspace.

Modern cyber weapons are available to a wide range of actors and are easy to conceal. However, we can draw on the experience of weapons control systems such as chemical and biological weapons, which set strict and unambiguous rules against their use in principle. It is important that the use of such weapons is completely prohibited, which is also true for cyber weapons. States must be sure that cyber attacks will lead to serious and inevitable consequences, such as sanctions. To this end, it is necessary to conclude a legally binding cyber treaty containing the relevant rules of conduct for states in the digital environment and liability for violating them. Confidence-building measures, which are currently used by states, contribute to the development of interstate dialogue and represent a first step towards mitigating destabilizing effects in the digital environment. It seems that the UN, NATO, the Council of Europe, the

OSCE, the EU and other intergovernmental organizations can agree on confidence-building measures in the digital environment, since their goal is to exchange information, not to change the balance of power. Confidence-building measures in the digital environment are important because they help ensure stability and transparency in an area characterized by secrecy and uncertainty. However, it is important to note that the cyber arms race is best contained through legally binding normative legal documents. Thus, both during the Cold War and in the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine since 2022, strategic nuclear deterrence based on the principle of mutually assured destruction and the arms control system neutralized the risk of a nuclear conflict, which is also true in the digital environment. Negotiations on concluding a cyber agreement between Russia and the United States will be associated with a number of difficulties, including due to differences in interests and the geopolitical situation. However, as history shows, its conclusion is not impossible. At present, the main obstacle is Russia's war against Ukraine and the continuation of this aggressive full-scale war, as well as the counteraction of Russia due to their intention to use their current strategic advantages in the digital environment and maintain maximum freedom of action in this area.

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### **Conflict of interests**

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### **Ethical standards**

The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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**KEEPING PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES: PERSPECTIVES FROM DIFFERENT  
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**Abstract**

The book comparatively analyzes past, present and possible future war and crisis situations. In doing so, the authors pay special attention to the nature of global conflicts and international actors, which international organizations and diplomacy of different countries are working to overcome. The book also examines the complexities of relations between governments of small and large states, NATO, the UN, intergovernmental and regional organizations, CSOs and transnational corporations, which despite their interdependence are still far from sustainable development. The authors discuss various issues of diplomacy, international relations theory, Eurasian politics, the European Union, international organizations, threats and challenges, global civil society, religion and culture as they relate to peoples in a complex world.

**Keywords:** international relations, global security, peaceful coexistence, political instability, terrorism, online radicalization, public diplomacy, conflict resolution, peace mission, reintegration, peacebuilding.

Maintaining peace in troubled times, modern conflictology turned out to be unprepared, one might say, caught unawares in the face of a new threat of global upheavals. Therefore, a thorough comprehensive study of conflicts, both internal and international, is an urgent task for social scientists. The relevance of the research topic of this book lies in the fact that in the conditions of an increasing threat to the existence of society, a painful process of finding means of survival is underway. New social theories and strategies are being developed that, taking into account the peculiarities of today, allow us to identify and resolve emerging contradictions, conflicts and

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effectively manage social processes. The science of conflicts, including international ones, is called upon to serve this purpose. It should be noted that a sufficiently developed theory of conflicts and crises in international relations does not exist in nature at the moment, and it needs further development.

An international conflict is a specific form of international relations, and is part of them. Conflicts between states have a huge impact on many aspects of world politics, on the life of the state, societies, and individuals. The general state of the international situation also has a significant impact on the state and dynamics of international conflicts, contributing either to their settlement or to their further aggravation. This relationship is clearly visible in the practice of modern international relations.

A person and society, subject to serious influences from events occurring in the world, need to know why certain phenomena of international life occur, whether they can be managed and controlled. Therefore, conflicts, being one of the forms of relations between states, are becoming the subject of constant study by science today. It is necessary to know the influence of conflicts, crises, and wars on the system of international relations in order to be able to regulate relations between states in the world society. The threat of conflicts spreading around the world, as well as in close proximity to state borders, stimulates the interest of society in understanding the causes of conflicts, the processes of their development, the behavior of participants, as well as the results of their consequences. With the help of knowledge obtained as a result of systematic study of conflicts, it is possible to identify an appropriate approach to their settlement, take control of their escalation and find a reliable way to predict the possibility of their occurrence. This will help to avoid destructive and negative consequences of conflicts in the international arena, minimize their destabilizing impact on the world community or a particular state. In the conditions of modern international relations, an interconnected, interdependent and dynamically developing world, the role of policymakers is steadily increasing. The destinies of people, states, continents depend on the decisions they make. Therefore, an urgent task of modern science is to study the problems of decision-making by politicians in historically defined situations that are important for the foreign and military policy of their countries. Understanding the patterns of behavior that arise in crisis situations, accompanied by stress, lack of information and time, will help to more effectively influence future conflicts and crises and will help to reduce their likely escalation.

Throughout the history of human society, war has been an invariable companion of its evolution, during which states and civilizations emerged, developed, flourished and collapsed, and historical eras changed. Maintaining peace in modern troubled times, as well as in the process of understanding wars and armed conflicts that took place in the history of civilization, military-theoretical thought was formed and developed, which ultimately transformed into a number of scientific theories and concepts. Research in the military field has acquired scientific status and provided broad opportunities for further understanding of the processes and phenomena associated with war, on a scientific and theoretical basis.

Military issues, understanding war as a social phenomenon, its nature, its eliminability and inevitability are becoming an important object of socio-political struggle. Various political parties, organizations and movements appeal to the masses

with their interpretations of war, its nature, with support or criticism of the position of governments, with their programs for ridding the historical process of military costs and disasters. At all times there were unresolved questions regarding the nature and essence of war, as well as the content of the main definitions that determine the specifics of this phenomenon in relation to a specific historical era, including modern political reality. But at different stages of human development, these were different questions, and scientists attempted to solve them.

The relevance of the research in this book is determined by the following:

- Firstly, the scientific and theoretical significance of views on conflicts, lessons of peacebuilding and war as a social phenomenon, since the solution of many practical and theoretical issues depends on them, from defining the subject of military science to developing the main directions of military policy and preparing the country and the armed forces for possible wars;
- Secondly, the need for a deeper development of political thought about war to resolve the problems of regional and world communities and states, their armed forces, the realization that the formation and practical application of qualitatively new views and concepts of military theory is impossible without understanding the historical experience of military and political activity;
- Thirdly, the complexity and inconsistency of ideas about war, which are reflected in the concepts of war developed in modern conditions, in which scientists try, on the one hand, to take into account the changes taking place in the modern world and build virtual structures of the future, and on the other hand, they cannot completely free themselves from the stereotypes and dogmas of the pre-nuclear era;
- Fourthly, the need for scientific analysis of changes in the concepts of war and taking these changes into account by military-theoretical thought in our country, when developing strategic planning documents of different countries and regions, implementing military construction, conducting military reforms and transforming the armed forces;
- Fifthly, the acuteness and importance of views on war in the modern country, since, on the one hand, there are significant differences in the interpretation of the nature and essence of war as a political phenomenon, and on the other hand, superficial opportunistic judgments about war are replicated in the public consciousness, which prevents an adequate reflection of reality and the resolution of problems in the course of military construction, reduces the effectiveness of activities to ensure the national security of all countries and peoples of the world.

Due to the above circumstances, as well as in view of the high social and political significance of scientific and theoretical knowledge about war and peace, the study of theoretical and methodological problems associated with the political scientific understanding of this phenomenon is one of the most important research tasks.

Conceptualization of war and peace, doctrinal consolidation of military and theoretical views on war and military conflicts, forms and methods of armed struggle is a global trend, manifested in the content and evolution of military policy, practice of military development, construction and development of components of the military

organization of the state and armed forces in the leading states of the world. This circumstance is due to a fundamental change in the situation in the world and the desire of a number of states to ensure their leading role in international relations, as well as the needs of forming structures for ensuring national security, capable of adequately responding to threats and challenges of a military nature.

Consistently and purposefully, the processes of doctrinal consolidation of military and theoretical views and military construction based on modern concepts of war are carried out by Russia, Turkey, Iran, postmodern jihadism and various terrorist groups, thereby trying to realize their goals and achieve military-political superiority over other members of the international community. A distinctive feature of the doctrinal consolidation of military-theoretical views and concepts of war in these states is the active use of the latest achievements in the field of production and use of weapons, as well as dual-use technologies. An example can be the transformation of the idea of war and peace in jihadist online radicalization, etc.

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**POPULISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCHES ON  
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**Abstract**

This book comparatively analyzes various forms of populism in countries with democratic political systems and regimes. In various chapters, the authors draw attention to the common elements of populism that have already emerged: the desire for political representation, a charismatic leader, a nationalist idealization of the historical role of ‘the people’, criticism of the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and international law. In this book, various authors point out that populist phenomena are used to destroy both the tools and the rules and culture of democracy. Most populist political parties gain widespread acceptance among young people because of their extreme views and statements, thereby calling for the abandonment of democratic principles, that is, the political order and the rule of law. In this book, the authors use an interdisciplinary approach to highlight the importance of political and social accountability and responsibility, examining the major challenges facing current and future corporate leaders. In its various chapters, the authors propose counter-populist approaches for effectively measuring political and socially responsible action and accountability. In this context, the authors offer tools to combat the causes of populism in both the political and social spheres, as well as in business.

**Keywords:** populism, political representation, active citizenship, accountability, direct democracy, civil responsibility, social responsible action, nationalistic idealization.

In the various chapters of this book, the authors analyze the factors of populism and accountability from a new perspective, based on interdisciplinary research on active citizenship. After numerous electoral successes, as well as failures, of right-wing populist parties, the authors of the chapters of this book see that the influence of right-

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wing populism on European politics cannot be underestimated. This is especially evident in the context of the migration crisis, which continues to irritate the right-wing populist electorate, the wave of terrorist attacks in Western Europe, the problems of the functioning of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), also exploited by populists, and the referendum on the UK leaving the EU. Consequently, there is an urgent need to improve the theoretical and empirical basis of research on right-wing populism and to fill the existing gaps in the study of this phenomenon, which is so important for understanding the functioning of modern European polities.

The authors of the chapters in this book consider it necessary to take political parties as a unit of measurement in this study, since this phenomenon is most clearly manifested in the institutional, party field. Of course, right-wing populism can also be considered in a more abstract context of political philosophy and the theory of ideologies, but in this case the subject and object of the study become poorly visible and go beyond the scope of our interest (Baggio 2023; Fioravante and Baldo 2023).

In various chapters of this book, on the one hand, the terms ‘populism’, ‘accountability’ and ‘active citizenship’ are very popular in academic and journalistic discourse, so some researchers even write about populist hype, and also warn against labeling all parties that we do not like for one reason or another, or all political outsiders, as populist (Baldarelli 2023; Tosetto 2023; Giusta 2023). But on the other hand, when considering examples of truly populist parties, a number of authors are faced with the question of how to justify their classification as populist parties in general, as right-wing and left-wing populists in particular, how individual right-wing populist ideologemes relate to other entrenched concepts, such as nationalism, radicalism, Euroscepticism. Therefore, a critical analysis of the above-mentioned problems, including specific examples, seems relevant for political science, which was undertaken in various chapters of this book (Barbaro 2023; Ropelato 2023; Cardillo 2023; Parolin 2023).

An analysis of the contradictory processes of the political system of the EU and EU member states, as well as democratization taking place in modern EaP countries, allows us to conclude that it is necessary to include in the legal system effective mechanisms of control over the use of democratic institutions for selfish purposes. In everyday reality, the dissemination of the values of freedom and democracy often gives rise to the abuse of information channels for influencing public opinion, leads to political and legal demagoguery, which has replaced effective mechanisms for ensuring legality, law and order and legal regulation in general (Deponte 2023; Gaudiano 2023; Vignini 2023). The emergence of democratic institutions and mechanisms designed to implement the will of the people gives an opportunity to individual participants in the political process, using modern technologies of manipulation of consciousness, to realize their selfish interests without formally violating the law (Idowu 2023). As a result, the goals of economic growth, improving the welfare of citizens, and combating corruption proclaimed at the beginning of the reforms have not brought any positive changes to life. Appealing to the mistakes of modernization reforms, the leaders of opposition movements of the EU political system, EU member states and EaP countries, under the slogans of fighting for the rights of the people, conduct anti-democratic actions against the legally elected authorities. For example, the rights of

citizens enshrined in the Constitutions of the EU member states and EaP countries in fact turn out to be formal, illusory, since they remain largely at the level of promises and declarations. Identifying and eliminating such barriers to building a social legal state in these countries seems to be an extremely important problem of modern political science.

Recently, along with the persistence of a number of crisis phenomena, a positive character of transformations has emerged, largely due to the implementation of sustainable development projects. Undoubtedly, this is the result of long and persistent work in the social sphere, which will be used by citizens and CSOs of these countries. However, a significant leap aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens of these countries can be made if the steps developed by the legislative and executive authorities do not contain features of populism, despite the fact that there is some negative experience of encountering this phenomenon. Legal demagoguery and political populism hinder the implementation of tasks on the implementation of the main goals of sustainable development. The study of these phenomena will allow us to determine ways to optimize the legal policy of the EU member states and the EaP countries, and the current legislation to increase the effectiveness of legal regulation, as well as to consolidate the efforts of the state and society in achieving the priority goals of sustainable development, building a democratic political system.

The contradictory nature of populist thinking gives researchers a reason to deny it an ideology or to point out its desire to sit on all chairs at once. The ideological weakness of populism lies in the fact that it can use various political content and, in addition, is subject to the danger of becoming dependent on strong ideologies such as national socialism or socialism, the content of which it uses. Against this point of view is the fact that populism today, as a rule, is right-wing. The connection between populism and right-wing political thinking is that populism is based on individual social responsibility (Aleksanyan and Aleksanyan 2024). On the one hand, they demand a strong state capable of protecting little people from the tyranny of corporations, unions, bureaucracy of all stripes, but, on the other hand, this state should be as little noticeable to citizens as possible (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2021).

Political populism does not weaken its ideological quality. Any ideology operating within a democratic system is forced to reconcile individual freedom with social integration. The individualist criterion applies above all to the economic sphere. The protest is directed against the irresponsible abuse of freedom, understood only as freedom of private property; the need for mutual support and concern for the public good is emphasized. The dilemma of populist politics becomes obvious when market principles and the interests of the public good come into conflict, for example, in economic policy. The more economic populism leans toward liberalism, the more it is forced to turn to such old connecting elements as a common national identity or a common religion. And if the construction of a common identity is carried out along negative criteria by dissociating oneself from others, then the radicalization of the ideological content is not excluded: a consensus of values turns into intolerance, fear of foreign influence into racism, demands for an active foreign policy into nationalism. The ideology of the new populist right replaces previous claims to national superiority with positions of ethnic and cultural particularism, recognizing the right of all races

and peoples to their own identity. This is its main difference from classical right-wing extremism. However, there are also assertions about the right to cultural and political autonomy. The reason for the new theoretical justification of nationalism is that today the threat to existing national identities comes not from outside, but from within societies, primarily in connection with migration processes and, accordingly, changes in the ethnic composition of the population.

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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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