

NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND ARMENIA'S INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION: AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE PATTERNS OR MECHANISMS OF THEIR APPLICATION?

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Abstract

The article examines neoclassical realism and Armenia's international orientation as one of the directions in the transformation of the theory of international relations of small states. In this article, neoclassical realism is analyzed from the point of view of subjective aspects of policy formation and the influence of domestic political features of a small state on its foreign policy. Taking into account that neoclassical realism is a completely independent development of neorealism with a complementary elemental level of analysis of international politics. In terms of content, neoclassical realism of Armenia clarifies such concepts as resilience, national security, balance of power, balancing policy and others. The neoclassical model of Armenia's foreign policy as a small state allows us to study the conditions under which great powers and small states deviate from the policy of balancing. From this point of view, the article proposes to analyze international politics through the prism of a global rollback to state-centric politics. The article takes into account that globalization presents new challenges for small countries such as Armenia, which risks being marginalized as a result of the restructuring of both global and regional economic relations.

Keywords: Armenia, neoclassical realism, small states, national security, globalization, international orientation, European Union.

Introduction

At the present stage, the deepening processes of formation of supranational institutions and norms of international law, the strengthening of the role and importance of non-state players in the South Caucasus present new opportunities and new challenges for regional actors. In general, discussion about international relations is one of the most distinguished things for modern scholars including newcomers in scientific research. Different theoretical schools provide enough scientific base to provide useful information for different researchers including once belongs to social science. Political

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scientists are those who intended to deeply understand impacts of external politics on international relations acquired by particular countries.

The main topic of this paper is Armenia, especially political elites who currently has a different preference toward international cooperation. Assuming main variables of neoclassical realism, help to understand Armenia's treat in foreign politics. Rose and his colleagues estimate about importance of external actors on foreign policy. leader's decision is regarded as the key aspects for it, even though society is not accepting them. However, their interaction on outsider actors is very fascinating to be focused on it.

The main research question is based as following: How do Armenia's political elites is reacted on foreign policy actors (EU and Russia)? How do formal and current politicians intend to establish adequate relations with Russia and EU? In case to answer this question, here is discussion about different members of Armenia's political elites (Formel and current): Ter-Petrosian, Nikol Pashynian, and Serzh Sargsyan. Their attitudes to foreign policy are worth understanding. There are main arguments related to their decision making, even though we don't agree. However, core issue of this paper is not to judge their interaction. Discussion is based on the assumption done by neoclassical realists.

Research implementation is supported by secondary literature, that includes information regarding theoretical schools, as well as breaking news about Armenia's politicians. Different online resources are widely used as well. Understanding international relations is very vital for every scientist involved in scientific research. For this reason, here are different interesting literature consist of variety of theoretical schools helping us to emphasize general behavior of states, especially how they react on international cooperation supported by internal actors (Aleksanyan 2020; Minasyan 2020). Realism and Liberalism are one of the greatest theories presume interaction of individual souvenir republics with in environment. Realism mostly, argue about egocentric issues of state actors. However, Liberalism is quite different-the followers discuss about importance of cooperation and reciprocity. In our case main theoretical thought is neoclassical realism-emerges the role of internal actors on external issues e.g. their influence on foreign politics.

This particular research paper, is mostly based on evidence-based literature. They accelerate main international politics implemented by Armenia's local political elites. I intend to emerge them as a individual and party level. Those terminologies refer their decision as an individual as well as analyzing their political parties as a whole in general terms. In case to better understand Armenia's international political orientations, here is general historical narratives from 1990s years when they had new government headed by Ter-Petrosyan. His general assumption about European and Russian values is generally rewired. Another one is Saerz Sargsyan and last one Pashynian. I decided to select those public figures because their international interaction is better understandable for us. Ter-Petrosyan and Sargsyan are regarded as a formal leader of the countries who, however, stayed neutral in terms of close relations to EU. Despite the fact that Pashynian was on power after velvet revolution his political interests is not purely pro-European, neither pro-Russian.

To be obvious Neoclassical realism emphasize about internal political elites. In our case here is Armenia and their political leaders from the past and current one. Their interaction in international environment is really worth understanding without any hesitation. That's why particular research could be vital for some scholars comprising in such topics.

Research Methodology

In general, research methodology is really main body of such particular paper. Despite the fact, that I do not implement quantitative research in valley like Survey, there is importance to briefly describe the activities done, for the article.

Since this paper, is mostly based on analyzing already existed literature, qualitative methods are mostly used in cases. Collection different scientific arguments, support us to provide useful literature for this issue. At first some kinds of online resources are downloaded from the internet to have a general overview about neoclassical realism and political elites in Armenia. In addition to this, visiting local library, as well as discussion with professors from university give me right direction in terms of using suitable literature. Advice given to me had a dedicated impact on this paper.

In case to understand general preferences and attitudes of politicians to European Union and Russia, generalization is widely used. For example, I study generalized arguments of political elites while noticed from the meeting with local citizens. Comparison of formal and current political leaders is also used with this paper when I assume relationship between EU Russia with Armenia. Their interaction on foreign policy is understandable with this research method.

Theoretical frames

In this particular section there is discussion about general framework of states behavior in world politics. Especially, on hand is concentration on neoclassical assumption on international relations, especially action of local actors with international organizations or neighbors. Despite the fact, that Classical realism generally speaking about international cooperation's including stability of bipolar systems, neoclassical realism assumes that particular political elites use country's power (it could be welfare states, or poor one) to influenced on main decision-making process in International environment. So, this section refers some of the main challenges existed by world scholars. (Rose 1998, 1-3)

International Relations is one of the most interesting topics for scientists especially the one, engaging in world politics. It helps us to have a deep and comprehensive behave of states, especially how they cooperate between each other shaped by political leaders. It is worth mentioning that internal actors play a vital role in outside cooperation (Aleksanyan 2024). Their decision is widely based on main preferences of the society, however in some countries we cannot directly say that international cooperation is called by the society. Gedeon Rose and colleagues are one of the most significant authors of International Relation theories who mostly argues about of influence of local leaders on world politics. There are some scholars like Richard Berts

and colleagues who emphasized whether a multipolar system generates more conflicts than a bipolar one (Rose 1998).

In general, neoclassical realism states if international organization are able to had for international cooperation. Actually, Neorealism has differences from Neoclassical one, because that argus results of states interactions in IR field. It does not cover everything in detail. So, we need to understand deeply why states are acting in particular way? Who are main actors treats as a local authority in particular way?

Scholars from World politics also argue that innterpolitik covers case of states actors and their behaviors while they acting as a main decision maker in international environment as called domestic factors. Neoclassical realism explore incorporates both ex ternal and internal variables. Its adherents that the main aim and ambition of a particular country's foreign policy is called by its place in international system and, of course real capabilities. In terms of that, Foreign policy preferences are formed by actual political leaders and elites, however they may could not use all of the country's potential national resources to create political environment in world politics (Rose 1998).

Actually, some scholars are mostly focused on comparative issues related to this particular power that can be used by the states. There a three wave of books on those realistic themes. The first one appeared for societies in 1980 when Rober Gilpin and colleagues used relative power as a medium principle to impressive studies of international politics. As colleagues argued security issues is one of the most important one for particular country. It is emerged by internal actors. As Kennedy wrote "that there is a very clear connection in the long run between individual Great Power's economic rise and fall and its growth and cline as an important military power (or world empire)". Gilpin said that wealthier and more powerful states will have much ambition to have a larger bundle security than less developed one. (Rose 1998).

In addition to this there are some important scholars with whom there is a discussion about nature of international relations. Chris Aldan and his colleagues are one of the researchers who mostly focus on state's behavior in particular way. Their book mostly emphasized different approaches in international relations, however in our case discussion about domestic sources of foreign policy is very vital. They think that engaging in internal issues is very worth to understand. Generally, scholars may have a huge possibility to analyze deeply different political elites and not all. Some interest groups also influenced on foreign policy. They suggest three main approach. The first one is related to the institutions and regimes. A second one sees foreign policy making as being driven by economic system within states. And third one sees international cooperation as a results of different interest groups, even non-governmental organizations and media are acted. Now let's look each of them separately very briefly (Alden, Aran and Alves 2016, 63-65)

While talking about institution and regime, there is importance to understand state and the domestic environment including society to understand their react on international politics. Generally, state politics is emerged by local actors and country's apparatus and it is legitimized. So there is particular interest that is drown by the local elites. When we argue about society , historical experience plays an important role especially in international trades. If particular country had an open relation with its

neighbors and Europe, their citizens will have the same preferences in the future. Constitutionally elected local government delegated by the society has a obligation to protect their citizen's interests even though in international field. Society should react on other state's behavior and decide themselves correct direction of particular domestic government (Alden, Aran and Alves 2016, 65-68)

Here we argue about economic factors. Structuralists also identify well-being in economic way as a crucial thing in terms of international cooperation. Here is an example, that center-periphery relations based upon the economic exploitation of non and semi-industrial states. The third world's country produces a international politics with highly industrial states to gain main benefits from them. In such case, local elites use local consideration to support their capitalist interests. Different political leaders from rich country's also use their ambitions to gain a lot from developing country.

Formulation of foreign policy is not only depending on legal public government, other non -state actors also are able to play an important role in that scene, Christ Aldan and colleagues called it as a pluralism. The NGOs including different media organization are able to appear most important issue for public to forced local government to establish outside relations with particular actors. Especially when there is election in particular recognized territory, different non state cooperation intensively talks about main goals of each politicians to ensure citizens how well they behave. Sometime interest groups offer political mobilization for electoral support to government and political party to back their foreign policy decision. In addition to this, having public opinion in terms of foreign policy is also important to analyze. Especially, using social media and different computer tool help us to understand how people reacts on decision of any local or international recognized leaders. Their preferences should be understandable in a logical way (Alden, Aran and Alves 2016, 68-70)

At the same time with the expectation of Hagan and Hilsman, they mostly neglect the part played political parties. They can be seen as a main site for number of activities attributed in using domestic resources to influenced on international cooperation. Actually, there can be some political union who are directly financed by the outsider donors. In such case having loyal preferences with them is very acceptable to understand. Partis utilize their international networks to contradict the formal diplomatic bilateral agreements (Alden, Aran and Alves 2016, 70-80).

In our case there is Armenia and their political elites, since the restoration if independence. It is worth mentioning to analyze how they behaves in terms of international cooperation with some of their neighbors and European Union. Despite the fact that there were different political parties in the states power, I will only argue some of them which are still active in terms of determining country's joining international society. In case to understand their perception, I should review their political programs in general. In addition to this international cooperation of the local political parties is also important to be including in this paper. It will help us to identify main international orientation of some political parties in this country.

To sum up, there is a discussion about general frameworks of neoclassical realism and its influenced on different scholars. There is a much more to say about this theory, however I only analyze some main issues needed for this particular paper. In addition

to this, we understand that nongovernmental organization and media including different political parties, play a huge role on shaping international cooperation with outside actors. They sometimes have a power to forced local government to implement any particular steps to have a close relation with foreign partners. In this paper, discussion is mostly related to the member of Armenia's political elites and their determination in international policy.

Historical review of Armenia's political spectrum in 1991

In this particular paper there is general information about political elites of Armenia after restoration of Soviet Union. Arguments are related to the first president of the county and his international and local diplomatic relations with society. In addition, there is information about important events happened at the end of 20th century related to the Ter-Petrosyan.

Armenia is regarded one of the developing countries in South Caucasus region. According to the latest historical backgrounds, the country was under the soviet ruling in 1936-1990. It was a length of time of Armenia's dissolution from its independence roots. Like other South Caucasus countries (Georgia, Azerbaijan) Armenians were suffered lack of freedom and democratic values. However, after restoration of independence Armenia become sovereign states and since 1991 was headed by official directly elected president Ter-Petrosyan. It was period when first independent seat of ministers appeared in political spectrum. The president starts first international cooperation when he put Armenia from occupied countries to independence republic as he signs agreement with "Commonwealth of Independence States", that formed after abolishment of the Soviet Union (Iskanderyan, Mikaeilian and Minasyan 2016, 42-45).

It is not wondering, that Armenia's political life was related to the issues in Karabakh. Some politicians from the Karabakh committee were nominated as a chairman of the Council of Ministers. Vazgen Manukyan head for the position of Prime Minister of Armenia. And Petrosyan become a president, he served as a Chairman of the Parliament. There was another Karabakh committee leader Ashot Manucharyan who was appointed as a minister of the interior. At first glance after restoration of independence Armenia's political life mostly was feed by the member of Karabakh committee. However, in the second half of 1990 and the first period of 1991 was not clear because the new power had been institutionalized in an original way (Iskanderyan, Mikaeilian and Minasyan 2016, 45-47)

Let's look at CPA. The leaders from the Communist party of Armenia were not popular among society in late 1991. They were unable to head for main changes for the local citizens. The country needed more democratic reforms and international recognition as well as close tie with European family. With those communist ideas it was not possible. The main weaknesses of the party, was old fashioned ideas supported by Soviet Russian Federation. They intended to have a deep and comprehensive relations to nominate presidential candidates in 1991. However, something had to be happened and different preferences having particular individuals could not meet each other. The first presidential election was held in 1991 after independence referendum. Ter-Petrosyan was one of the luckiest persons who intended to take the main ruling

power in his hand. His main goal was to establish a democratic system as the main issue on Armenia's agenda. He had diplomatic characteristics regarded as compromise leader in terms of international and local relations with political elites. Due to his physical and mental skills the Armenia's political system was becoming more stable. Ter-Petrosyan was supported by his political party (Pan Armenian National Movements (PANM)), whose ideology was based on liberal movement and open relations with other countries. There is discussion about that political party in next section of this paper. Actually, PANM became the country's ruling party and create new political elites in Armenia. (Iskanderyan, Mikaeilian and Minasyan 2016, 45-47)

Here is some main facts about Ter-Petrosian's international relations with its neighbors especially with Turkey. According to the historical fact, Ter-Petrosian was one of the most distinguished politicians in terms of establishment normal relations with Turkey. Despite the fact that the country was in ongoing conflicts with Azerbaijan, the president decided to increase awareness of the country abroad. Turkey was one of the main challenges in that time. Actually, their kinship with Turkey started after restoration of independence. First official international cooperation dates back in April 1992 when Turkey formal ambassador in Russia Volkan Vural met Ter-Petrosyan in Yerevan to discuss about mutual relationship in terms of good neighborhood. The Armenia's president attended founding meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and it becomes one of the founding members. There was another offer to Turkey's government as it called "Football diplomacy". However, it was not successful because the case of "Genocide" recognition is more important for Armenia's citizens. Since the Turkey did not recognize it, the border between those two countries is still closed. (Iskanderyan, Mikaeilian and Minasyan 2016, 45-60)

To conclude this information, some of the representatives of Armenia's formal elites was not so successful in their political career. However, they do their best to establish normal and comprehensive relations with Turkey regardless conflict with Azerbaijan. Ter-Petrosyan the formal president of Armenia strongly follows liberal values of the political party called Pan-Armenian National Movement.

To be or how European to be?

Here is a general discussion about European Union's neighboring policy and its attitude to the South Caucasus countries including Armenia. At the beginning of this section, I review general historical facts about EU-Armenia relations, however it will be only in general level and does not includes all projects. Only some of them is considered as a main core of the EU Armenia relations. Attention is drawn mainly regarded EU as one of the main partners in conflict resolution. In terms of neoclassical realism, it is worth understanding main attitudes of local governments to European Union.

While being Ter-Petrosian as an Armenian president from 1991 until 1998 (in 2 terms he resigned in 1998) relationship between EU and Armenia started in so called progressive way. Since the restoration of independence, The EU start cooperation with south Caucasus countries including Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. It starts regionalization of the territory of south Caucasus that means implementation of

different economic and social instruments to boost democracy and security reforms in each particular country.

In 1990, the EU began to form a new configuration of regionalism, a new European regionalism emerged, which led to a more active contribution of the EU to the creation of new international economic and political regimes. The EU together member states government and NGOs, has been major advocate of regional cooperation in the South Caucasus. The government of Ter-Petrosyan was motivated to establish acceptable relations with its neighbors and use Russia's power in conflict resolution with Azerbaijan, however being involved in EUs project was more or less successful implemented. Before We moved to EUs role as a peacemaker here is some main information about EUs foreign policy with south Caucasus (Vasilyan 2019, 121-123)

In 1991 the EU became involved in the territory of the former Soviet Union including South Caucasus. The particular members of Armenia's government start joining in grant project called (TACIS) the aim of this one to booster market economy and democracy reforms as well as information and educational exchange programs. In 1993 there was another one called TRACECA it put in to the force in case to developed transportation infrastructure of Armenia and the South Caucasus countries. Those projects covered three South Caucasus countries. The EU not only helps local governments it also implements special instruments to facilitate civil society including non-governmental economic body to provide special platform for cooperation between third countries businessmen and economic actors resisted in EU. There was educational and scientific cooperation called TEMPUS helps locals to gained experience in EUs states. In addition to this the cooperation between public sectors and NGOs is also vital for EUs members as well. The Eastern partnership also help to boost regional cooperation in terms of economic and social issues of those countries including Armenia. (Vasilyan 2019, 123-125)

According to some theoretical frames of neoclassical realism NGOs also impose close relations with international organizations. The Armenian Center fo Public and Development was among such union that booster to cover some projects financed by EU. In 2002-2008 the subsidized activities implemented called "To unite the efforts of all people" this one including South Caucasus countries as well as Turkey. People from young initiatives were welcome to participate in such particular project. They considered that being together regardless different believe, would have positive results in human integration. In 2001 there was Alternative Star project it has a value to bring together representatives of NGOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the separate states like Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. its intended to provide mutual cooperation. (Vasilyan 2019, 125-130)

EUs involvement in democracy reforms in Armenia is one of the most distinguished. This step also includes having implementation fair election within the territory of Armenia. In 2003 there was a meeting with president of the RA Robert Kocharyan and Javier Solana (EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy). They discussed about main challenges in democracy referring to follow of the CoE commitments and cooperation with the EU on Media issues to avoid informational vacuum for citizens. Solana also indicated his anxiety against clash between society and local police. As a result, 10 people died in massive meeting

against government. Therefore in 2008 Solana congratulated the newly elected president Sargsian winning in presidential election.

After all EU still continue his role as a main observer in Armenia's political life. As a result, in July 2015 President Tusk visited Yerevan and had a meeting with formal president Sargsian. He openly expressed readiness to cooperate "working together to open markets and by advancing on democratic reforms including economic growth and better business environment". Helping against corruption promotion would have helped Armenia to stay by the developed countries in EU (Vasilyan 2019, 130-135)

Despite the fact that there are mutual cooperation preferences between Armenia and EU, there is main issues that makes it impossible to subside regional cooperation within states itself. Long-lasting conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as the issue of Genocide, stop implementation of main projects. Azerbaijan's opposition to Armenia's self-determination erase with Yerevan in any policy space.

In this particular section, we discuss generally main historical facts about EU Armenia relations. There was a issue about different projects that had already been implemented with great success. We understood that in terms of mutual cooperation from both political elites from EU and Armenia, their integration is highly acceptable for public and non-governmental sectors. Financial aids spent for peaceful promotion had a huge impact on people's well-being, however clash between Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan had an negative effects one peoples to people cooperation. These ongoing conflicts put main things behind from the mutual reciprocity and cooperation.

In the next section of the paper there is general discussion about current relations with EU including the steps implemented by current government of Armenia. Some of the information from their pre-electoral campaign is collected and being prepared for analytical review. Despite the fact that there were much more projects from EU than we enumerated, I only discuss main that showed us intention of political elites to European path (Vasilyan 2019).

Armenia and International Relations: general discussion about some of the political leaders from the past

In that section, there is general discussion about some political parties including current parliamentary one, who has different or the same preferences regarding European Union and Russian. Since the main core of this article is to attached neoclassical realism with Armenia's case, I discuss how do they implement international cooperation with foreign actors. Even though some of them nowadays are not able to influenced on country's political preferences, their view can be considered as an additional resource to fulfill our theoretical frame.

While arguing about local governments, there is main importance to analyze how political parties react on European issues in Armenia. In case to solve this particular gap, I will assume about main ideas related to the formal and current parliamentary political parties in this country. In some case, may I could not include all parties, however I arrange some of them that creates political environment in Armenia. And, of course, their preferences and ideas about European integration is also crucial to figure it out.

As far as already mentioned in the previous chapter, Ter-Petrosyan was representatives of the Pan Armenian National Movements (currently it is called Armenian National congress) currently appeal on nationality and liberality of the country. According to their ideological backgrounds they are purely liberal democracy. That one intended to support elections in multiple district political parties that even have different preferences. So, they strongly support human rights, among as civil rights without clash between society. They support independent judiciary reforms and check and balance between branches and government. Sine this party is center-right they strongly support free market without main challenges. Private property among capitalism and less intervention in business by the government, is their one of the key topics to be accepted¹.

Members of Tha Armenian National congress does not have a seat in national assembly. However, it is worth looking inside their political ideas. Generally speaking, this political party is truly open minded regarding international relations, even though close relationship with European Union and UN. Despite the economic and social clash between EU and Russian Federation, the members of the Armenian National congress still believe peaceful mediation role of Russia between Armenia's and Azerbaijan's conflicts.

Their electoral campaign in 2021 was completely based on future development of relations with their neighbors. They probably blamed on Aliyev's government due to less possibility for future cooperation to solve Karabakh's conflict. The Armenians National congress was only one party who called for peace of dignified compromise. As far as the peace environment is one of the main factors for Armenians, their political campaign mostly argues how to solve the problems with Azerbaijan. They probably blamed Pashynian on not having enough communication with international community about this problem.

Due to this fact Russia become only one guarantee for peace in this region, as they argue. However, they still accept the ideas that the country should stay close with European union and its partners, as well as play the major role in Eurasia to avoid economic isolation. It sounds like that, their behave could be neutrally- not too close with Russia neither nor with EU. They usually emphasize that integration in the global economic system, more working place will be created. Scientific and social cooperation with European Union is regarded as a main key for success.

Despite the fact, that Ter-Petrosyan (One of the leaders of Armenian National Congress) was one of the most pro-European by the end of 20th century, he still argues fundamentally about not having association agreement with European Union. On December 2013 He emphasized during radio interview, that Armenia become one of the most pro-Russian countries differ from Azerbaijan and Georgia. Refusing sign on association agreement would not results negatively on social disorder, as he said. So people could not have been rebelled against the previous government, since they were disappointed with western due to double standard. As he was representatives of political elites, his arguments are strongly stay beyond from democracy and European values. In Armenia many young people prefer European integrity, they have already

¹ Armenian National Congress. 2021. The electoral program of the Armenian National Congress. Accessed April 10, 2024. <https://anc.am/4241/>.

participated in numbers of international scholarship competition. However political decisions are not associated with people's preferences.²

Russian Narratives probably influenced on Politicians attitudes. As far as already mentioned Ter Petrosian regarded Russia as one of the main security guarantees in Armenia. To understand it briefly here is scientific view of the science Aram Terzyan. Probably in his particular paper there is discussion about Armenia's international cooperation that is influenced by foreign actors. According to his article Russia treat a "friend in need" to protect national security of Armenia and support both countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan) to solve this devastating conflict in peaceful way. Being in blockade of Turkish Azerbaijan union is additional economic problem for Armenian citizens.

It is useful to understand how Russia reacts on Armenia's foreign policy in terms of Sargsyan's presidency within country. This person ruled Armenia from 2008 until 2018. Currently he is a leader of Republican party of Armenia. The main ideology of this one is based on conservative ideals. The main core issue is to protect nationality from outside forces and facilitate communication of people within Armenia as well as the members of diaspora. They argue that each politician should handle with the main ideology of Armenian people even though, for international politics. The people of the nation are accepted to respect to the traditions and historical experience of Armenia³.

The international political ideology of Sargsyan's party itself was based on Russian narratives. Here are some one of the latest online publication about his preferences in favor to Russian federation. We can regard him as a political leader's internal actor who had an active role in foreign policy, while being a president of Armenia. On March 7, 2023 he was still thinking about close relations of Russia with Armenia. Despite the fact, that Putin had an intention to build "Soviet Union", his preferences to him was not changed. According to his point of view Russia is regarded as a main security guarantee for solving conflicts with Azerbaijan. He pointed out that it would be necessary to change interlocutor in terms of peaceful relations with Aliyev's government. He argued that negotiation process should go in a different way and not as Pashynian wanted. About Russian influence on Armenia's national security he assumed, that there was not better ally or alternative than Russia: It found useless to talk about NATO's military bases in this country, since their leaders are not interested in such things. Sargsyan never been anti-European he never had any arguments against EU and NATO, however he believed that their security interests are not as understandable as Russia's⁴.

In addition to this, A. Terzyan (2017) mentioned Armenia's security strategy noted in 2007 that argue about "Russia's main role for the security of Armenia as well as friendly linkage between those two nations are very important for future development". Being a main "Peacekeeper" in Armenia's political spectrum it something ridiculous

² Stepanyan, David. 2013. Levon Ter-Petrosyan explains why there can be no Euromaidan in Armenia. Accessed April 10, 2024. <https://arminfo.info/index.cfm?objectid=31C3EB20-6BDB-11E3-A7A00EB7C0D21663>.

³The Republican Party of Armenia. "RPA Program." Accessed February 20, 2024. <http://www.hhk.am/en/program/>.

⁴ Caucasus Watch. 2023. "Serzh Sargsyan: "Armenia Has No Better Ally than Russia"." March 9, 2023. Accessed January 20, 2024. <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/serzh-sargsyan-armenia-has-no-better-ally-than-russia.html>.

because this country among Putin never protected human right even in conflict zones. His ambition to create an empires ruled by Soviet mentality. Despite this fact formal politicians of Armenia still regarded Russia as a “good friend” more than European Union. At first glance internal public actors in this country used to identify both actors in different way. During the presidency of Kocharyan the concept of strategic partnership was not full of identity related or cultural references is mostly focuses on shared economic and military interests. Regardless close kinship with Russia , Sargsyan preferred to establish European standards in Armenia, however he assumed that being a full member of European Union was not yet decided since it disappeared from their foreign policy agenda. Relations with Russian never contradict European values (Terzyan 2017, 183-190).

In 2013 it was not very successful for Armenia-EU relations because of Russian factor. Generally signing to Association agreement would give Armenia more benefits than being behind the Russian Federation. However, in 2013 Putin’s government warn country’s government to avoid any close relation with western partner. They offered local government to join Eurasian Customs Union led by Russia. Here we can clarify that European identity outweighed by Russian influence on domestic decision makers. Even for opposition parties such decision was not harmful for Armenia’s independence since they also assumed that the Russia was main security partner. About this decision Sargsyan emphasized that by signing to Free trade agreement mean increasement of gas price and electricity for the citizens. As he ensures economic interests was much important, then civilization (Baltag and Romanyshyn 2023; Khvorostiankina 2021).

In this case, we can argue that internal actors are able to decide themselves their action in foreign policy. At first glance here is Sargsyan’s decision to protect country’s economic interests however on the second side there is Putin’s interest to influence on Armenia’s local and international politics. According to the neoclassical realism the country is ruled by the preferences of main political elites, however non state actors also play one of the important roles in establishing international cooperation with outside actors. In this section of this paper, there was only general outlook decided by country’s formal presidents. Discussion was built in terms of local level of incumbents as they are representatives of particular political parties (Terzyan 2017).

International vector of Armenia in current time

In this particular section here is assumption about new government of Armenia, which was nominated after the revolution within whole territory of this country. We discuss about Pashynian’s international outlook and his perception and preferences in terms of international relations. He as an internal political leader. Arguing about main reforms implemented for future cooperation with EU, is widely reviewed over here. Before moved to analyzing general international relations of this country, here is review of Pashynans government How did he return in Armenia’s political elites as a leader of “Velvet Revolution”.

Probably this kind of revolution was one of the peaceful in Europe’s history. There was not an massive violence against peaceful citizens, who were asking better

European future in community. Due to this reason, society starts fighting against dictatorship. Also, they stayed against massive increase of communal costs. It had negative effects on each Armenia's family. This kind of revolution was not only based on asking better life. These massive protests were a result of massive violent repression supported by Sargsyan's government and fraudulent election. According to the expert A. Gregoryan, this particular revolution was not only implemented by the society, NGOs leaders promoting democratic values and various informal organizations that support European Union, stayed together to overcome these massive problems. After April 2018, Pashinyan and a small group of different associates encouraged people for massive mobilization (Grigoryan 2021).

Pashinyan currently is a leader of Civil Contract. That particular political union was created on January 2013. In this period joining application was published in the daily newspaper that unsure citizens to join in. In general, the founder of the party among leaders, noticed main challenges existed in Armenia and therefore implementation reforms in democracy, is a core task for them. They assume the importance of velvet revolution, since the electoral fraud requires abolishment. To overcome this problem kinds of peaceful revolution is one of the solutions. Their programs is mostly based on the following main issues: 1. Creating long lasting peace with neighbors; 2. Formulating high quality electoral systems with accordance of Armenia's law as well as appointing states program for education and science. 3. Professional training for local military servants and adopting new technologies, is regarded as a vital for them⁵.

The main aim of the civil contract, was to abolish main conflicts with Azerbaijan. They intended to accept Pashinyan's peaceful agreement and never follow the mistakes done by the previous governmental body. The unwillingness to return under the rule of the "Karabakh clan" as well as desires to achieve changes during the period of his premiership. After Pashinyan had arrived in politics, corruption index of Armenia had already been increased. Their politics probably influenced on the society, it is reflected on the general telephone sociological research. According to the research implemented by IRI Public opinion poll, 54 percent of respondents see security as the main challenges of the country, while political instability was ranked second at 10 percent and 9 respectively. Economic and social problems is crucial only for 5 percent. In 2020 research carried on by International Gallup organization, almost 37 percent thought that EU's interaction with "Armenia's September events" was positive (Haindrava 2022, 1-4).

On November 10, 2020 decided to sign one page statements that stops 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It includes deoccupation of all Azerbaijani territories adjacent to Karabakh occupied by Armenia as well as development peacekeeping operation and humanitarian aids for locals. In Such issue, Armenians mostly blamed every international actor for such resolution of conflicts including EU and Russian Federation. However, this statement did not change (Haindrava 2022, 5-10).

We can say that as a political leader, Pashinyan is the main decision-maker on the foreign policy of post-revolutionary Armenia. His interaction with EU is more positive, as it is seemed, than Serz Sargsyan may have. It looks like that current premier is much

⁵ "Civil Contract" party program. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.civilcontract.am/hy/1622886298>.

more pro-European, rather than Pro-Russian. And his international cooperation mostly aims to become the country as one of the most developed in the whole South Caucasus. On November 17, 2023 he was appointed as a leader of delegation in Strasbourg, where European Parliament meeting was held. He refers on common values and democracy. As he said it was strategic choice and not by circumstances. He promised that Armenia was with EU as much close as it possible. He was so grateful because of dedicated support implemented by EU council to create peaceful environment between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is considered as main plus between EU-Armenia relations. Among other European political leaders, Pashinian expected to negotiate with its neighbor however President of Azerbaijan Alyev refused to seat behind them and talk about peace negotiation. However, in 2023 He attend the meeting to recognize sovereignty of each other's territory. Actually, the agreement to recognize territorial integrity with concrete numbers, was reached previously that states neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan never accept ambiguities while recognizing each other's territorial integrity. Despite his cooperation with Azerbaijan, he blames Alyev due to less capabilities to join different meeting hold by European leaders⁶.

Another one of the main steps, that was implemented for more closeness with the EU, was related to the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)⁷. In 2017 The EU and Armenia set out to deepen their relationship by adopting this particular agreement. This one turned the page of the failed Association Agreement, however it manifested parties' ambitions to ask more comprehensive relations with each other. Despite the fact that it seemed very sceptics for some scholars, it still regarded as the main cooperation tool, which has just negotiated. Despite the fact that this agreement was negotiated before the velvet revolution, it's progressiveness is arguable during Pashinian's period. According to the Federica Monnerini, this legal notes, will have a real positive influence on peoples well-being in Armenia. It helps European to strengthen cooperation on security matters, as well as the improvement of climates for investors and etc. Its probably repeat the same goals was set on May 2015 in Riga Summit. According to the power-based explanation, external governance it is determined by the EU's power and its interdependence with regard to the third countries. With this example, internal actors especially political elites mostly are depended on foreign policy's decision makers. In our case here is EU and its politics toward other states. there is hierarchical interdependence that influenced on international cooperation. According to the DeClour and colleagues' domestic structure of international actors like EU and others, probably assume compatibility with domestic institutions of the partners. Their influence is generally is one of the huge (Khvorostiankina 2018, 15-20).

Actually, to be obvious, the current leader of the Armenia's government was one of the "European Friendly" while he was in opposition. His attitudes to Russian

⁶ European Parliament. 2023. "Armenian Prime Minister: "We must move steadily towards peace with Azerbaijan"." October 17, 2023. Accessed February 10, 2024. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231013IPR07127/armenian-prime-minister-we-must-move-steadily-towards-peace-with-azerbaijan>.

⁷ EUR-Lex. 2018. "Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part." OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, p. 4-466. Accessed February 10, 2024. http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2018/104/oj.

influences was not as positive as for example May Sargsyan had. Due to this reason Pashynyan mostly accepted the effectiveness of EU-Armenia relations in a positive way. Due to this fact he, in 2017 the opposition party member of Armenia denounced countries membership in EAEU on all side, with a focusing on its negative effects on countries economic development as well as on deepening its relations with neighboring Georgia and Iran. We can explain such narratives with Russia-Armenia close relations. Most probably they saw Putin's power as a main economic guarantee in the South Caucasus (Khvorostiankina 2018, 25-30).

Such attitudes to Russia, probably dates back EU-Armenia relations even though after velvet revolution. Therefore for Armenian politicians it is quite difficult to treat both actors in the same way. Future Visa-free movement and other benefits dedicated from EU, is regarded as a threat for Russian. Their massive intervention in country's external affairs is quite notable. Sometimes Pashynyan argued negative dependence of Armenia on EU. He assumed that with such decision, EU's leaders are able to dictate political elites how to act in every case. However, he was not able to understand that Putin's decision to have a close friend on behalf of Armenia's government is a serious security challenges for local citizens (Khvorostiankina 2018, 30-35).

All those above mentioned prompt made us think that currently it is still difficult for Armenian elites to have a adequate international orientation. Both actors EU and Russia are still regarded as one of the main security partners of this country, however different preferences for each one is acquired by Pashynyan. The reforms of new government leded by current primer ministers will be more pro-European and their intention to fight against corruption, as well as creating different social security for locals, will be one of the guarantees for EU-Armenia close relations. Improvement of business claimants and implementation of good governance principle, is a plus for close tie with EU (Khvorostiankina 2018).

To summarize, currently international relations of Armenia is more or less depends on reciprocity and common values. Resolving conflicts with Azerbaijan is argues, as a one of the main challenges existed within country. Therefore, active participation of EU's leaders insures both parts to recognize each other's territory. With such decision, public trust to European Union increased, as the latest survey implemented. The discussion is mostly based on Russian and European narratives. Even though Pashynyan, like the previous leaders of country, regards Russia as one of the main partners in conflict resolution and in economic issues. We see that Armenia currently stay neutral with EU's leaders. Neither Russia nor European Union cannot be regarded as a close friend for Armenian's. It is points I made after analyzing secondary literature.

Conclusion and discussion

To be obvious, this particular research analysis is based on gathering information from different resources, including papers, books and interview with local formal and current politicians. There was a research question, that required deeply investigation. How do Armenia's political elites is reacted on foreign policy actors (EU and Russia)?

How does formal and current politicians intend to establish adequate relations with Russia and EU?

According to the general summarize of the paper, we see that still Armenian local government is not precisely very Pro-European, because they still regard Russia as one of the main security guarantees in post conflict situation with Azerbaijan. The core things, that probably related to the neoclassical realism is internal actors, especially how do they react on foreign policy decision makers. Sometime we see how Armenia's politicians are reacts on international narratives including being pro-European, however some of them including Sargsyan is not able to identify really interests of EU within Armenia's society. He argued about less interests from EUs leaders to Armenia. Despite this fact, we enumerate different reasons why Armenia still stay as a neutral between Russia and EU.

Generally, using secondary literature from different resources support to identify general problems occurred between Armenia with international partners. However, we did not discuss about non-state actors that are influenced on international cooperation, according to Chris Alden and colleagues. Because main core plan of this article is to compare different political leaders and believe of their political parties to understand how do state politics influence on their international relations.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2024.3.7.070>

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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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