

# **REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Science

### **THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: ESTABLISHMENT, CURRENT STATE, AND CHALLENGES**

Speciality: 5901.01 – International relations

Field of science: Political sciences

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**Baku – 2025**

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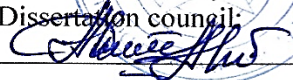
Dissertation Council BED 2.30/1 of the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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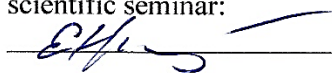
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## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION.

**Relevance of the topic and degree of development.** The study of relations between Armenia, which, like other former Soviet republics, declared the restoration of its state independence in 1991, and the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), a pivotal actor in geopolitics of the Middle East, holds significant relevance on multiple levels.

The analysis of the formation, contemporary dynamics, and challenges in the bilateral relations between the two states holds considerable global relevance, due to the strategic positioning of these states within a pivotal geopolitical corridor, acting as an intermediary zone between powers embodying thalassocracy and tellurocracy. Several scholars argue that the outcome of the strategic competition between the U.S.-United Kingdom coalition and the Russian-Chinese alliance is likely to be determined within this critical intermediary region. Against the backdrop of the decline of Russia's influence in the region, France, which is not reconciled to the growing influence of its arch-geopolitical rival, the United Kingdom, has completely different goals in the South Caucasus and its influence on Armenia and Iran. From this point of view, the relations between the states of the region, including Armenia and Iran, cannot be viewed simply as relations between two actors of the international political system. Both states are influenced by different power centers. In light of these considerations, an in-depth examination of the factors influencing the bilateral relations between Armenia and Iran, the study of the current level and problems of relations will allow to understand the essence of the struggle between the power centers in the region, the modeling and forecasting of the future development scenarios.

The relevance of this topic at the regional level is underscored by the necessity to delineate the characteristics and trajectories of regional alignment trends, which are pivotal for fostering peace and security in the Caucasus under the prevailing circumstances. An evaluation of the national security interests of the IRI, alongside an analysis of Armenia's role in safeguarding these interests, grounded in rigorous scientific methodology and facts, has the potential to engender significant shifts in practical policy implementation. Iran possesses not only political and

economic interests but also security concerns in the Caucasus region. Characterized by its distinct organizational framework and conceptual approach to foreign policy within the global political arena, it becomes imperative to conduct a nuanced examination of this country's policy toward each of the South Caucasus states individually.

From the perspective of Azerbaijan's national and state interests, the examination of the establishment, current dynamics, and challenges of Armenian-Iranian relations holds significant relevance. Both Iran and Armenia share physical boundaries with the Republic of Azerbaijan and possess intersecting or conflicting interests. Consequently, their bilateral relations exert both direct and indirect influence on Azerbaijan. The dynamics between Iran and Armenia, which had occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory for many years and suffered a significant defeat in the 44-day war of 2020, are marked by distinct characteristics that shape their interactions.

Taking into account the common historical past, similar traditions, and belonging to the same religion, the Republic of Azerbaijan expressed its concern and dissatisfaction with the political and economic support provided by the IRI to the aggressor Armenia at different times. Azerbaijan has repeatedly emphasized that the development of close relations between the Islamic Republic and a state responsible for massacres and genocides against Muslims, while also engaging in the systematic destruction of Islamic historical monuments in both occupied territories and within its official borders, runs counter to the principles publicly stated in Iran's foreign policy. The National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, said in his address to the official representatives of the Iranian state:

*"Iran-Azerbaijan relations cannot be equated with Iran-Armenia relations. A deep history, shared historical roots, common culture, traditions, and a shared religion binds our countries and peoples. In contrast, your relationship with Armenia is likely limited to economic interests. Therefore, I urge you to view these relationships through a different lens".<sup>1</sup>*

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev,

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<sup>1</sup> Əliyev, H.Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir: [46 cildə] / H.Ə.Əliyev. –Bakı: Azərnaşr, –2011. –c. 38. –s. 58.

suggested that Armenia displays insincerity toward Muslim countries, including Iran, and engages in covert subversive activities:

*"...when Armenian officials are in Europe, their main argument is that they live surrounded by Muslim countries—three of their neighbors are Muslim. Yet, in their dealings with Iran, they consistently speak hypocritically about friendship".<sup>2</sup>*

The significance of this topic is further underscored by the evolving geopolitical landscape in the South Caucasus. Armenia's nearly three-decade-long occupation of Azerbaijani territories not only posed security challenges for Iran but also served as a lever for expanding its political and economic influence over Armenia. The Armenia-Azerbaijan war from September to November 2020 resulted in the liberation of occupied territories, the restoration of full control over the Iran-Azerbaijan border, the reopening of regional communication lines, and the proposal of new frameworks for cooperation. As a result, a new geopolitical architecture is taking shape in the region. It should be clarified what changes this situation may cause in the relations between the Republic of Armenia (RA) and the IRI, as well as to identify what threats and opportunities it will create for the two countries. Predicting what steps these states can take in the circumstances and the possibilities of joint action on the basis of scientific and methodological principles is important both for peace, security and cooperation in the region, and for Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

In light of the above, a comprehensive study of Armenian-Iranian relations will provide valuable insights into the policies of regional and global actors vying for influence in the South Caucasus. Determining the factors affecting the formation of relations, clarifying the reasons for Iran's close cooperation with Armenia despite presenting itself as the protector of the Muslims of the world, revealing the problematic points in bilateral relations are necessary in terms of defining an effective and preventive policy.

This topic has always attracted the scholars, researchers, and political scientists in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which shares

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<sup>2</sup> Əliyev, İ.H. İnkişaf məqsədimizdir: [100+ cildə] / İ.H.Əliyev. –Bakı: Azər nəşr, –2020. – c. 105. –s. 307.

boundaries with both Iran and Armenia. One of the earliest Azerbaijani studies on Iranian-Armenian relations is Mirza Bala Mammadzadeh's work '*Ermənilər və İran*' ('*Armenians and Iran*'). Mammadzadeh, who lived as an émigré in Iran during the 1920s, provided critical insights into the anti-Turkish activities of Armenian organizations within the country. He also highlighted how Armenians at that time manipulated the concept of Aryanism or pan-Aryanism to advance their own political agendas.<sup>3</sup>

The scholarly contributions of Azerbaijani researchers, including Hafiz Pashayev, Musa Gasimli, Elman Nasirov, Hikmet Babaoglu, Seyidagha Onullahi, Eynulla Madatli, Atamoglan Mammadli, Subhan Talibli, Vusal Gasimli, Zaur Shiriyev, Zulfiya Valiyeva, Kamala Ruintan, Hatem Jabbarli, Fakhreddin Huseyn, Masiagha Mahammadi, Nasib Nasibli, Yegane Hajiyeve, Alimusa Ibrahimov, and others, have played a pivotal role in advancing the study of various dimensions of the issue.

Pashayev's '*Bir səfirin manifesti*' ('*The Ambassador's Manifesto*') is a critical resource for comprehending Iran's role in the Karabakh conflict, which stemmed from Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territories, as well as the motivations behind the activities of Armenian organizations operating in various countries of the world, including the Islamic Republic. Although primarily presented as a memoir, the book offers insights and information that are often absent from official sources. The work also includes the opinions of some political figures and congress members from the United States regarding Armenia-Iran relations.<sup>4</sup>

In his researches, M.Gasimli examines Iran's role in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which emerged from Armenia's military aggression against Azerbaijan. He analyzes the implications of this involvement on bilateral relations, drawing upon credible sources to provide a nuanced understanding of the situation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Məmmədzadə, M.B. *Ermənilər və İran* / Əski əlifbadan çevirəni, ön söz müəllifi A.Paşayev. –Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı, –1993. –s. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Paşayev, H.M. *Bir səfirin manifesti* /H.M.Paşayev. –Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, –2007. –248 s.

<sup>5</sup> Qasımlı, M.C. *Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasəti (1991-2003): [2 cildə]* / M.C.Qasımlı. –Bakı: Mütərcim, –2015.–c. I. –664 s.; *Beynəlxalq münasibətlərdə Azərbaycan məsələsi* / M.C.Qasımlı. –Bakı: Azərnaşr, –1993. –91 s.; *Ermənistanın*

In the chapters of E.Nasirov's political science doctoral dissertation focusing on the anti-terrorism policies of the United States and Iran, significant insights are presented regarding the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the United States' anti-terrorism framework. The dissertation offers valuable information for drawing parallels and conducting comparative analyses with Iran-Armenia relations.<sup>6</sup>

In H.Babaoğlu's works, a thorough analysis of the geopolitical conditions in the Caucasus region is presented, focusing on Iran's position within Azerbaijan's foreign policy framework and examining the potential implications for relations with Armenia.<sup>7</sup>

Onullahi's work *'Erməni millətçiləri və İran' (Armenian nationalists and Iran)* adopts a more journalistic tone, presenting information that is analyzed primarily through the author's personal perspective rather than adhering to rigorous scientific methodological principles.<sup>8</sup>

E.Madatli's research primarily centers on Azerbaijan-Iran relations and the portrayal of Azerbaijani issues within Iranian historiography.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, A.Mammadli's articles examine the evolving dynamics of political and economic relations between the two

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sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalınadək erməni iddiaları: tarix olduğu kimi (1920-1994) / M.C.Qasımlı. –Bakı: EIF, –2016. –520 s.; Azərbaycan parlamentarizm tarixi: [2 cildə] / M.C.Qasımlı, B.Ə.Muradova. –Bakı: Mütərcim, –2018. c. 2. –680 s.

<sup>6</sup> Nəsirov, E.X. ABŞ və beynəlxalq terrorizm problemi:/ siyasi elmlər doktoru dis./ –Bakı, 2010. –320 s.

<sup>7</sup> Babaoğlu (Məmmədov), H.B. Azərbaycan Respublikasının müasir dünya siyasətində yeri və rolu / H.B.Babaoğlu (Məmmədov). –Bakı: Aypara-3, –2009. –328 s.; Azərbaycan beynəlxalq münasibətlərin aktoru kimi (siyasi, ideoloji və diplomatik məsələlər) / H.B.Babaoğlu (Məmmədov). –Bakı: Elm, –2007. –515 s.; Dünya siyasəti və beynəlxalq münasibətlər. Dərslik. / H.B.Babaoğlu (Məmmədov). –Bakı: Çinar-çap, –2010. –564 s.

<sup>8</sup> Onullahi, S.M. Erməni millətçiləri və İran / S.Onullahi. –Bakı: Maarif, –2002. –87 s.

<sup>9</sup> Mədətli, E.Y. Azərbaycan tarixi məsələləri İran tarixşünaslığında (XX əsrin əvvəli) / E.Y.Mədətli. –Bakı: Turxan NPB, –2017. –288 s.; Azərbaycanın vətən müharibəsinə İranda münasibət: ənənəvi yanaşma və yeni reallıq // –Bakı: AMEA Fəlsəfə və Sosilogiya İnstitutunun Elmi Əsərlər jurnalı, –2020. № 2 (35), –s. 8-18.

countries.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, S.Talibli's studies provide a comprehensive overview of Iran's policy in Armenia.<sup>11</sup>

The publication 'Iran-Armenia Relations: Geopolitical Reality versus Political Claims', the result of the collaborative research by Gasimli, Shiriyeve, and Valiyeva, stands as one of the rare scholarly works in Azerbaijan directly addressing this subject matter.<sup>12</sup>

K.Ruintan's numerous articles on Armenian-Iranian and Azerbaijani-Iranian relations are distinguished by their rigorous analytical depth and extensive utilization of Persian-language sources.<sup>13</sup>

In H.Jabbarli's book on Armenia's foreign policy, the relations between Armenia and Iran are briefly addressed, providing a succinct yet informative overview of the diplomatic interactions between the two states.<sup>14</sup> A distinguishing feature of the author's articles is the predominant reliance on Armenian sources, which adds a unique dimension to these works.<sup>15</sup>

F.Huseyin's research primarily focuses on the political relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, with a chronological scope encompassing the years 1991 to 1997. His works examine both the development and periodic decline in Armenian-Iranian relations, analyzing these dynamics within the broader context of each country's interactions with Azerbaijan.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Məmmədli, A.A. İran-Ermənistan siyasi əlaqələrinin inkişafı // –Bakı: Dünya Azərbaycanlıları, –2008. №2 (5), –s. 40-47.

<sup>11</sup>Talibli, S.Ə. İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində Dağlıq Qarabağ problemi (1991-2005-ci illər) / S.Ə.Talibli. –Bakı: Elm və Təhsil, –2016. –359 s.

<sup>12</sup>Qasımlı, V. İran-Ermənistan münasibətləri: geosiyasi realıq versus siyasi iddialar / V.Qasımlı, Z.Şiriyev, Z.Vəliyeva. –Bakı: SAM, –2011. –47 s.

<sup>13</sup>Ruintən, K.F. Dağlıq Qarabağ problemi və İran İslam Respublikası // –Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri, –2010. №4, –s. 138-147; Ermənistanda baş verən ictimai-siyasi proseslər İranlı mütəxəssislərin gözü ilə və İran KİV-lərində // –Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri, –2011. № 1, –s. 131-137; Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü və dünya siyasəti / K.F.Ruintən. –Bakı: Adiloğlu, –2008. –260 s.

<sup>14</sup>Cabbarlı, H.Q. Ermənistanın xarici siyasəti (1991-2012) / H.Q.Cabbarlı. –Bakı: ATSAM, –2014. –508 s.

<sup>15</sup>Cabbarlı, H.Q. Ermenistan'ın İran Politikası // –Çankırı: Karatekin Üniversitesi Uluslararası Avrasya Strateji Dergisi, –2012. № 10(10), –s. 147-174;

<sup>16</sup>Hüseyn, F.Ş. İran-Azərbaycan siyasi münasibətləri (1991-1997-ci illər): / tarix elmləri namizədi elmi dərəcəsi almaq üçün təqdim edilmiş dis. avtoreferatı. / –Bakı,



M.Mahammadi's deep knowledge of Iran's political system and social structure determined his unique approach to Armenian-Iranian relations.<sup>17</sup>

In Y.Hajiyeva's monograph, the issue of national rights within the Islamic Republic of Iran is explored, with a comparative analysis of the scope and nature of the rights afforded to the large Azerbaijani population and the smaller Armenian community.<sup>18</sup>

In several of A.Ibrahimov's articles, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is examined, with particular attention to its key strategic directions in the Caucasus. These works also address various aspects of Iran's relations with Armenia.<sup>19</sup>

Iranian researchers living both in Iran and abroad have discussed various aspects of the subject in their books and articles. Marziyya Kuhi-Esfahani, Elahe Koolayi, Bahram Amirahmadiyan, Ahmed Kazemi, Mohammadjafar Javadi Arjmand, Yazdan Keikhosrov-Dovlatyari, Ehsal Fallahi, Akbar Valizadeh, Shiva Alizadeh, Javad Heydari, Nura Kaysari, Mahnaz Gooderzi, Mohsen Nezamabadi, Aresh Iftikhari, Ali Reza Davudi, Ebadullah Abdulnasir Fayyazi and others' works attract attention in this respect.

The role of regional and foreign powers in the South Caucasus, as well as Iran's foreign and regional policy, were studied in Kuhi-Esfahani's work entitled *'Iran's Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus: Relations With Azerbaijan and Armenia'*, published in 2019. The last chapter of the work is directly about Armenian-Iranian relations. The author analyzed the political factors that brought the

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2005. –25 s.; Azərbaycan-İran siyasi münasibətləri (1991-1997) / F.Ş.Hüseyn. – Bakı, –2008. –192 s.

<sup>17</sup> Məhəmmədi, M. Azərbaycan İran münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu/. –Bakı: “Poliart” MMC, –2017. –904 s.; Azərbaycan-İran siyasi əlaqələrinin hazırkı durumu və perspektivləri // Azərbaycan-İran əməkdaşlığı: əsas istiqamətlər və imkanlar / redaktorlar: C.Vəliyev və M.Məhəmmədi. –Bakı: Az SAM, –2018. –203 s.; Məhəmmədi, M. Güney Azərbaycan məsələləri (Məqalələr, Müsahibələr, Tərcümələr) / M.Məhəmmədi. –Bakı: Bakı Çap Evi, –2012. –224 s.

<sup>18</sup> Hacıyeva, Y.Ə. İslam İnqilabından sonra Cənubi Azərbaycanlıların ana dili uğrunda mübarizəsi (1979-2005-ci illər) /Y.Ə.Hacıyeva. –Bakı:Adiloğlu, –2017. –306 s.

<sup>19</sup> İbrahimov, Ə.G. İran İslam Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas prioritetləri // –Bakı: Qafqazşünaslıq jurnalı, –2021. № 1, –s. 77-88.

two countries closer together.<sup>20</sup>

In his articles, E.Koolayi explores a wide range of dimensions in bilateral relations, offering a comprehensive analysis of political, economic, and cultural interactions between the involved states.<sup>21</sup>

B.Amirahmadiyan is a prolific author of numerous analytical articles on Iran-Armenia relations. His work, framed within the theory of neoclassical realism, tends to adopt a politically conjunctural approach rather than one grounded in strict scientific objectivity.<sup>22</sup>

In his article, A.Kazemi argues that Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day war in 2020 had detrimental repercussions for Iran, presenting a unilateral evaluation of the events and processes involved.<sup>23</sup>

Arjmand and &Keikhosrov-Doulatyaree examine Armenia-Iran relations through the lens of various political theories, assessing how changes in Türkiye-Armenia relations influence these dynamics with Iran.<sup>24</sup> In another article, Arjmand&Fallahi conduct a comparative analysis of Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the implementation of policies by Türkiye and Iran in the South Caucasus. Those authors look at the relations of the IRI with the Caucasian countries, especially the relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan, from an imperialist point of view. In many cases, they even come up with

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<sup>20</sup> Kouhi Esfahani, M. Iran's Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus: Relations With Azerbaijan and Armenia. / M. Kouhi Esfahani. –Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, –2019. –318 p.

<sup>21</sup> Koolae, E., Hosseini, S.M. Science Diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the South Caucasus // International Studies Journal (ISJ), –Spring 2019. Vol. 15, № 4 (60), –pp. 99-131; Koolae, E., Hafezian, M.H. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the South Caucasus Republics // Iranian Studies, –June 2010. Volume 43, № 3, –pp. 391-409.

<sup>22</sup> امیر احمدیان، ب. تحلیل روابط ایران و ارمنستان با استفاده از چارچوب نظری واقع گرایی تدافعی \ ب. امیر احمدیان، ح. رضازاده، ا. جرفی \، تهران: مطالعات اوراسیای مرکزی، - سال نهم بهار و تابستان 1395. شماره 1 (پیاپی 18). ص. 19-41.

<sup>23</sup> کاظمی، ا. تاثیر جنگ دوم قره‌باغ بر ظرفیت‌های ژئوپلیتیک ایران در حوزه انتقال انرژی: [منبع الکترونیکی] \ موسسه مطالعات ایران و اوراسیا (ایراس). - ۲۸ آبان ۱۳۹۹.

تاثیر جنگ دوم قره‌باغ ظرفیت‌های ژئوپلیتیک ایران- / <http://iras.ir/iras.irfa/doc/note/4178/> URL: <http://iras.ir/iras.irfa/doc/note/4178/> حوزه انتقال انرژی

<sup>24</sup> ارجمند، ح. ج.، کیخسرو دولتیاری، ی. تحلیل ژئوپلیتیکی روابط ایران و ارمنستان در چهار چوب تئوریک اندرسون و طرح یک همکاری منطقه‌ای بعد از خرابی عادی‌سازی روابط میان ارمنستان و ترکیه // - تهران: فصلنامه ژئوپلیتیک – سال هشتم، شماره دوم، تابستان ۱۳۹۱، - ص. 192-223.

ideas that question the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>25</sup>

Valizadeh&Alizadeh studied the opportunities and threats created by the Armenian community for Iran.<sup>26</sup> Several of Heydari's articles address the security challenges faced by Armenia.<sup>27</sup>

Gaisari&Goudarzi focused on analyzing the opportunities and threats that Iran's relations with Armenia present.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, in one of Nezamabadi's works, the cultural relations between the two countries are examined in detail.<sup>29</sup>

In his dissertation on the Caucasus policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, A. Iftikhari examined the main directions of regional policy in 1991-2005.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Dawoodi's work, '*Müasir dövrdə İran-Azərbaycan münasibətlərinin əsas istiqamətləri*' ('Main directions of Iran-Azerbaijan relations in the modern period')<sup>31</sup>, along with E. Fayyazi's '*Müasir dövrdə İran və Rusiyanın siyasi əlaqələri*' ('Political relations between Iran and Russia in the modern era')<sup>32</sup>, discusses the impact of Azerbaijan-Iran and Russia-Iran relations on Armenia.

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ارجمند، م.ج.، فلاحی، ا. بررسی تطبیقی سیاست خارجی ایران و ترکیه در قفقاز جنوبی (با تاکید بر ارمنستان و جمهوری آذربایجان) \\\ - تهران : مطالعات اوراسیای مرکزی، پاییز و زمستان 1394-، دوره 8، ضماره 2، ص. 228-211.

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حیدری، ج. اصلاحات اقتصادی ارمنستان پس از استقلال \\\-تهران: مطالعات آسیای مرکزی و قفقاز، - 1381. شماره 40، ص. 151-145.

حیدری، ج. دیدگاه امنیتی ارمنستان در قفقاز جنوبی \\\-تهران: فصلنامه مطالعات آسیای مرکزی و قفقاز، - تابستان 1383. سالن سیزدهم دوره چهارم. شماره 46. - ص. 118-97.

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نظام آبادی، م. روابط فرهنگی ایران و ارمنستان: ظرفیتها و پتانسیلها \\\-تهران: فصلنامهانجمن ایرانی مطالعات فرهنگی و ارتباطات، -1395، سال دوازدهم، شماره 144، ص. 87-66.

İftixari, A.H. İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasəti (1991-2005-ci illər): / tarix elmləri namizədi dis./ –Bakı, 2007. –161 s.

Davudi, Ə. R. Müasir dövrdə İran-Azərbaycan münasibətlərinin əsas istiqamətləri: / Siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru alimlik dərəcəsi almaq üçün təqdim edilmiş dissertasiyanın avtoreferatı./ –Bakı, 2010. –24 s.

Fəyyazi, E.A. Müasir dövrdə İran və Rusiyanın siyasi əlaqələri: / Siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru elmi dərəcəsi almaq üçün təqdim edilmiş dissertasiyanın avtoreferatı/ –Bakı, 2014. –27 s.

Armenian authors residing in Armenia and various countries worldwide have produced a range of books and articles on relations with Iran. However, many of these works are characterized by an abundance of ideological and propagandistic materials, often featuring fabricated information. The works of Armenian authors such as Nikolay Hovhannisyan, Andranik Hovian, Alla Mirzoyan, Njdeh Asisian, Girard Libaridiyan, Ruben Galichyan, Edward Abramyan, Garnik Asatryan, Gohar Iskandaryan should be specially mentioned in this regard.

Hovhannisyan examines Iran's place and role in Armenia's foreign policy<sup>33</sup>, while Hovian authored a book detailing the Armenian community in Iran, focusing on its primary activities and organizational structure.<sup>34</sup> Mirzoyan evaluates Armenia's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran within the historical context and geopolitical processes in his dissertation on Armenia's foreign policy from 1991 to 2004.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, in one of his articles, Asisian analyzes the impact of relations between Armenia and Iran on the regional security dynamics of the Caucasus.<sup>36</sup>

In his work *'Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State'*, Libaridiyan discusses the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in obstructing the opening of the Megri-Zangazur corridor during the mid-1990s, as well as the territorial exchange plan proposed to resolve the conflict stemming from Armenia's occupation of

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<sup>33</sup> Hovhannisyan, N. The foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia in the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern Geopolitical Region / N.Hovannisyan. – Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Institute of Oriental Studies, –1998. –108 p.

<sup>34</sup> Hovian, A. Iranian Armenians / A.Hovian. –Tehran: Center for International Cultura, –2002. –414 p.

<sup>35</sup> Mirzoyan, A. Armenia's foreign policy, 1991-2004: between history and geopolitics: / A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy in international relations / –Miami, Florida, 2007. –322 p.

<sup>36</sup> Asisian, N. An Overview of Iran-Armenian Relations in the Post Soviet Era and Their Impact on Caucasus Regional Stability // Journal of the European Society for Iranian Studies, –August 2018, –pp. 37-48.

Azerbaijani territories.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Galichyan's research provides numerous insights into the effects of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, highlighting the complexities of their diplomatic interactions.<sup>38</sup>

In his article, Abramyan examines Armenia's new strategy toward Iran following Nikol Pashinyan's ascent to power.<sup>39</sup> Asatryan's writings emphasize the necessity for Armenia to leverage Iran's influence in its efforts against Azerbaijan.<sup>40</sup> G.Iskandaryan's articles delve into the dynamics of the Armenian community in Iran and their implications for Armenian-Iranian relations, highlighting the community's role in shaping diplomatic interactions between the two countries.<sup>41</sup>

The topic has garnered significant attention from researchers across various countries. When composing dissertations, monographs, books, articles, and analyses, scholars from the United States, such as Thomas De Waal and Petros Tiffany, have made notable contributions. UK-based academic Barry Buzan, Danish researcher Ole Vaver, and French intelligence and security expert Claude Moniguet, Belgian scholar William Racimora have also provided valuable insights.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, Turkish researchers Barış

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<sup>37</sup> Libaridian, G.J. *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* / G.J.Libaridian. –NJ: Transaction Publishers, –2007. –340 p.

<sup>38</sup> Galichian, R. *The invention of History. Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Showcasing of imagination* / R.Galichian. –London&Yerevan: Printinfo Artbooks, –2010. –s. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Abrahamyan, E. *Pashinyan Formulates Armenia's New Iran Strategy: [Digital resource]* / *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 15, Issue 145. –October 15, 2018. URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/pashinyan-formulates-armenias-new-iran-strategy/>.

<sup>40</sup> Asatryan, G.S. *Armenia and security issues in the South Caucasus* // –Yerevan: *The Quarterly Journal*, –September 2002, №3, –pp. 21-30.

<sup>41</sup> Iskandaryan, G. *The Armenian community in Iran: Issues and emigration* // *Global Campus Human Rights Journal*, –2019, № 3. –pp. 127-140.

<sup>42</sup> De Vaal, T. *Qarabağ: Ermənistan və Azərbaycan sülh və savaq yollarında* (Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War) / T.D.Vaal. –Bakı: İlay MMC, –2008. –344 s.; Tiffany, P. *Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy* // *Armenian International Policy Research*, –2003. –p.1-17; Buzan, B., Wæver, O. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* / B.Buzan, O. Wæver, –Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, –2003. –564 p.; The Armenia-Iran

Doster, Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, and Göktürk Tüysüzoğlu have contributed to the discourse.<sup>43</sup> Russian experts including Vladimir Mesamed, Alexey Kurtov, Vladimir Yurtayev, Ekaterina Andreyeva, and Yuri Bondar<sup>44</sup>, along with Georgian scholar Giorgi Sanikidze, have further enriched the academic landscape surrounding this topic, whose works were widely referenced in the dissertation.<sup>45</sup>

During the development of the dissertation, numerous sources in Azerbaijani, Turkish, English, Russian, Persian and Armenian languages, a number of authoritative archival documents, that first

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relationship. Strategic implication for security in the Caucasus / Ed. by C.Moniquet and William Racimora. –ESISC, –2003. –65 p.

<sup>43</sup> Doster, B. Bir Bölgesel Güç Olarak İran'ın Ortadoğu Politikası // –Ankara: Ortadoğu Analiz, –2012, Ağustos. Cilt 4, Sayı 44, –s. 44-51; Kelkitli, F.A. Soğuk savaş sonrası Ermenistan-İran ilişkileri: gelişen ve derinleşen bağlar // –Ankara: Ermeni Araştırmaları dergisi, –2013. № 46, –s. 129-142.; Tüysüzoğlu, G. How demand for security influence the shaping of foreign policy: Using the theory of securitisation to understand Armenia–Iran relations // Journal of Eurasian Studies, –2014. № 5, –p. 192–201.

<sup>44</sup> Месамед, В.И. Иран и немусульманские страны Южного Кавказа (Армения и Грузия) / В.И. Месамед. –Москва, –2015. –254 с.; Куртов, А.А. Армяно-иранские отношения // Армения: проблемы независимого развития / Ред. Е.М.Кожокин. –Москва: РИСИ, –1998. –с. 383-448.

– كورتنف، ا. روابط ايران ارمنستان از دیدگاه روسیه // - تهران: مطالعات آسیای مرکزی و قفقاز، تابستان ۱۳۷۷، شماره ۲۲، - ص. ۱۱۳-۱۴۴

Юртаев, В.И. Иран: регионализация и геополитика // –Москва: Вестник РУДН. Серия: Международные отношения, –2010. № 4, –с. 19-28; Особенности внешней политики Ирана (1979-2013 гг.) / В. И. Юртаев. –Москва: РУДН, –2014. –162 с.; Андреева, Е.С. Интересы Ирана на Южном Кавказе сквозь призму отношений Тегерана с Арменией // –Москва: Проблемы Национальной Стратегии, –2019. № 1 (52), –с. 110-122; Бондарь, Ю.М. Обзор экономической ситуации в Иране за сентябрь 2019 г.: [Электронный ресурс] / Сайт Институт Ближнего Востока, –30 октября, 2019. URL: [www.iimes.ru/?p=62320](http://www.iimes.ru/?p=62320); Иран: июнь 2019 г. Военно-политическая ситуация: [Электронный ресурс] / Сайт Институт Ближнего Востока, –29 июля, 2019. URL: <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=58643>. Обзор экономической ситуации в Иране за июль 2019 г.: [Электронный ресурс] / Сайт Институт Ближнего Востока, –5 сентября, 2019. URL: [www.iimes.ru/?p=59971](http://www.iimes.ru/?p=59971).

<sup>45</sup> სანიკიძე, გ. ირანი და სამხრეთ კავკასიის ქვეყნები განსხვავებული რეალობები, განსხვავებული შესაძლებლობები / გ.სანიკიძე. – თბილისი: ილიას სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, –2022. –308 გ.

time have been brought into scientific circulation, documentary films and videos, periodical press and internet materials were used.

In the course of the research, speeches and statements by key statesmen, notably the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev, who played pivotal roles in shaping Caucasian geopolitics, were also used. Additionally, the statements and speeches of officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia were critically analyzed.

Documents and reports housed in the National Archives and Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the State Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, along with other archival collections, were thoroughly examined. In the preparation of the dissertation, materials were utilized from various sources, including collections of documents published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan over different years, the unified internet electronic database of normative legal acts of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan (E-ganun.az), the official database of Armenian legislation (ARLIS), and documents from Wikileaks. Additionally, certain documents and acts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Armenia, along with materials published or disseminated online by these foreign ministries, as well as government programs and national security doctrines adopted at different times, were incorporated into the analysis.

Websites of official state bodies are grouped as special information sources. The information of the some official websites (The websites of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the websites of the Supreme Religious Leader of the Republic of Iran, the President of the IIR, Islamic Council Assembly, the MFA of the IIR, the State Statistics Center of the IIR, East Azerbaijan Province, the websites of the President of the Republic of Armenia, the National Assembly, Cabinet of the Ministers, the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of AR, the websites of the US State Department, the European Union, the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation,

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia) were content analyzed and used in the comparative analysis of the facts reflected in the sources.

The materials of the mass media of Azerbaijan, Türkiye Iran, Armenia, Russia, USA, Great Britain were also collected, systematized and included in the research.

**The object and subject of the research.** The object of the study is bilateral relations between Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Factors affecting bilateral political relations, the dynamics of development and decline of political ties, the level of institutional political cooperation, the nature of ties in the field of security and defense, the main directions of economic cooperation, factors determining it, the state of cooperation in the fields of energy, industry, agriculture, tourism, trade relations, the activity of free trade zones, issues of cooperation in the field of transport and communication, mutual investment flows, cooperation in humanitarian, cultural, religious, media fields, national policy in Iran, attitude towards the Armenian community, activities of Armenian organizations are the subject of the research.

**Research Purpose and Objectives.** The primary objective of this study is to examine the establishment and evolution of relations between Armenia and Iran, conduct an in-depth analysis of the current state of these relations, identify existing challenges, and forecast potential development scenarios.

In order to achieve the set goal, the following tasks were delineated in the course of dissertation research:

- Analysis of the factors influencing the relations between the two countries;
- Identification of distinct phases in bilateral relations, along with an examination of the developmental and regressive dynamics, based on scientific and methodological principles;
- Studying the current level and problems of political relations and the possibilities of using these problems in practical politics;
- Research of Armenian-Iranian cooperation at institutional level and international multilateral platforms;



- Determining the factors that identify the establishment of trade and economic cooperation, analyzing the current state of relations in the economic field;
- Researching the level and problems of cooperation in humanitarian and cultural fields;
- Study of Iran's attitude towards Armenian terrorist organizations, the occupation and anti-Turkish policy of the Armenian state;
- Forecasting the future of Armenia-Iran relations and their effects on Azerbaijan.

**Research methods.** The methodological basis of the research is the principles of scientific objectivity, reliability, integrated approach. Behaviorist methods have a special place among the main methods used during the research. By applying a number of methods typical for quantitative sciences, important results were obtained for the characterization of relations. The method of systematic analysis was used to study the main features of the development of bilateral cooperation between Armenia and Iran in the context of regional processes.

In addition to established political science methodologies, the indicator method—an approach relatively novel within this field—was applied to assess the dynamics of relations. The use of this method enabled the identification of situational crisis periods within the bilateral relationship.

**Main clauses defended.** The dissertation work presented and examined the following scientific propositions:

- A discrepancy exists between the principles articulated in the foreign policy doctrines and legal frameworks of Armenia and Iran and the actual implementation of their respective policies in practice.
- Five distinct stages in the evolution of bilateral relations, each characterized by unique attributes, can be identified: the stage of establishment and definition of primary directions (1991–1997); the phase of interconnected evolution (1998–2008); the period of rapprochement in response to geopolitical threats (2008–2018); the phase of ambivalent or duplicitous diplomacy (2018–2020); and the post-2020 stage.

- The activity of Armenian deputies in the Islamic Council Assembly is aimed at disrupting Iran's relations with countries such as Azerbaijan and Türkiye.
- In the near to medium term, the proposed plans to transport Iran's fossil fuels (hydrocarbons) to the European market via the Armenia-Georgia-Black Sea route are unfeasible. Although Armenia has long attempted to sell a portion of its electricity to Iran, evolving dynamics within the European energy market may introduce new conditions in the foreseeable future.
- While the Islamic Republic of Iran has established economic relations with Armenia across multiple sectors, it adopts a relatively cautious stance regarding investments. This caution stems from bureaucratic challenges within Armenia's economic management system and perceptions of the country as an unreliable investment destination. Iran's investment strategy in Armenia has historically served more as a tool for political leverage than as a purely economic endeavor.
- Armenian press of Iran plays an important role in carrying out anti-Turkish propaganda. The state's influence over the media indicates that Iran occasionally permits such propaganda to occur deliberately, utilizing it as a tool for exerting pressure.
- Armenia, which officially designates Iran as a "friendly state" and seeks to strengthen its relations with Iran to mitigate isolation in the context of regional geopolitics, is simultaneously working against this country.
- The fact that Iran maintained its neutrality during the 44-day war in 2020, and expressed its support for Azerbaijan at various levels near the end of the war, was not caused by the bigotry of the Islamic Ummah, but by a cold attitude towards the current regime in Armenia, and by the intention not to be left out of the game in regional processes.

**The scientific novelty of the research.** The primary contributions of the dissertation are as follows:

- ✓ For the first time, the indicators method was defined for

studying the dynamics of interstate relations and the development dynamics of Armenia-Iran relations was evaluated based on this method. As a result of the application of this method, was researched not only periods of large-scale decline and progress, but also situational, short-term fluctuations within the bilateral relationship.

- ✓ For the first time, the influence of the religious factor on the foreign policy and mutual relations of the two states has been established as a distinct area of research. It has been proven on the basis of the facts reflected in reliable sources that the slogan of "protection of Muslims in the world" declared as one of the main principles of the Iranian state and the close mutual relations established with Armenia contradict each other.
- ✓ It was revealed that Iran uses Armenia and Armenians not only to influence the processes in the Caucasus, but also the processes in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon and Syria.
- ✓ The chronological periodization of bilateral relations was carried out according to a five-stage system, the stages were named according to their characteristic features.
- ✓ For the first time, the subject of parliamentary diplomacy between the two countries was included in the study as a special direction. It was determined that the level of interparliamentary relations lags behind the level of relations between executive structures. However, in many cases, the opinions that the heads of states cannot express are expressed through the representatives of individual political groups in the parliaments.
- ✓ The reasons for the failure of Iran's attempts to create a number of multilateral economic platforms over Armenia (the transformation of Armenia into an economic and transport-communication dead end; both political and economic dependence on a third country (the Russian Federation) for many years) have been identified.
- ✓ It has been proven that although the European Union supports the export of Iranian gas to the European market through Armenia, the USA and Russia tried to hinder this process. This is one of the rare situations in world geopolitics where the positions of the EU

and the United States collide, and the interests of the United States and Russia coincide.

**The theoretical and practical significance of the research.** The findings presented in this dissertation can serve as a foundation for future scholarly works in this area, facilitating scientific and theoretical forecasting of bilateral relations and their trajectories. It is possible to use the obtained results in the preparation of monographs, textbooks and teaching aids on international relations, Caucasus and the Middle East studies. Regarding the practical implications of this research, it is noteworthy that the data and insights contained within the dissertation, along with the findings, hold potential applications in the realm of practical diplomacy. In this regard, the study possesses significant relevance for diplomats engaged with Iran and Armenia.

**Approbation and implementation.** The main contributions and results of the dissertation work is reflected in the applicant's monographs and books published in Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye, as well as in scholarly articles published in foreign countries such as Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Russia, Austria, Czech Republic, Chile, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, and in his proceedings at international and republican scientific conferences.

**The organization where the dissertation work was performed.** The dissertation work was performed out at the Department of International Relations and Human Rights of the Institute of Law and Human Rights under Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and at the Department of International Relations of Baku State University.

**The structure and scope of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an Introduction (35.469 characters), five chapters divided into paragraphs (Chapter I - 4 paragraphs - 92.959; Chapter II - 4 paragraphs - 92.801; Chapter III - 3 paragraphs - 93.343; Chapter IV - 5 paragraphs - 80.476; Chapter V - 3 paragraphs - 58.123 characters), conclusion (23.698 characters), list of used literature, appendices, list of abbreviations and conventional signs. The total character count of the text portion of the work is 476,869 characters.

## MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

The **Introduction** of the dissertation provides a justification for the relevance of the topic, outlines the degree of development in the field, and delineates the goals and objectives of the research. It also identifies the research object, methods employed, theoretical foundations, and the key propositions being defended. Additionally, the section discusses the scientific innovations presented, the theoretical and practical significance of the work, as well as the approval and structure of the research.

The **first chapter** of the thesis, titled "**Establishment and Development Stages of Relations**", consists of four paragraphs. Within the initial paragraph of this chapter, entitled "**Political-Theoretical Problems of the Study of Relations**", it is noted that an analysis of the relations between Armenia and Iran cannot be effectively conducted from a single theoretical perspective. This is due to both the complexity of the nature of interstate relations in the modern era and the characteristics of the foreign policy of the two states. Neither the Islamic Republic of Iran nor the Republic of Armenia are traditional western model nation-states. Although Iran looks like a republic in terms of structure, it has a unique political system. The religious-spiritual elite has special mechanisms of control over republican institutions. Foreign policy issues are not solely determined by the political inclinations of the President or foreign policy institutions; rather, the supreme religious leader embodies the considerable influence of the religious-spiritual elite over foreign policy matters. This political framework prevents those who lead the state's political institutions from opposing the directives of this elite.

Another pertinent issue pertains to the foreign policy line established since the declaration of the Islamic Republic in Iran. Iran has articulated the principle of "*neither East nor West, only the Islamic Republic*," which serves as a cornerstone of its foreign policy orientation.<sup>46</sup> Through this principle, the IRI has sought to alter the established norms of the international relations system throughout its

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<sup>46</sup> İbrahimov, Ə.G. İran İslam Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas prioritetləri // –Bakı: Qafqazşünaslıq jurnalı, –2021. № 1, –s. 83.

existence. This perspective complicates the evaluation of its foreign policy within the framework of the international political system that emerged after World War II. Although the Islamic Republic has publicly renounced the legacy of the Shah regime it replaced, it simultaneously invokes Iran's 5,000-year history of statehood. This invocation reflects a continuity of Persian diplomatic traditions that are deeply rooted in history. Consequently, Iran's diplomacy is characterized by a multi-vector approach that is both intricate and complex.

Armenia also has a very complex and hypocritical character, both due to the characteristics of its formation and the national characteristics of Armenians. Religion exerts a significant influence on the state in Armenia, as well as in Iran. Historically, the traditions of Armenian diplomacy have been established by ecclesiastical figures. Additionally, Armenia's foreign policy is influenced by the Armenian diaspora and various lobby organizations operating abroad.

Considering the mentioned points, it is necessary to refer to the principles of several theories for the study of Armenian-Iranian relations. In this regard, the main theories referred to when studying the relations between the two countries are realism and constructivism.

This paragraph also explains the essence of the indicators method, which was used for the first time in the study of Armenian-Iranian relations. Features and application possibilities of this method are shown. Emphasis has been placed on the use of the indicators method during research in various fields of science, and the attempts of I.Mikheyev<sup>47</sup>, M.Timofeyeva<sup>48</sup>, M.Vlasova<sup>49</sup>, N.Bystrov<sup>50</sup> and others to apply this method in social sciences. It was concluded that the

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<sup>47</sup> Михеев, И. М. Применение математических методов при исследовании системы международных отношений с использованием функциональных пространств: / Ученой степени доктора физико-математических наук, дис. / -Москва, -1997, -312 с.

<sup>48</sup> Тимофеева, М.А. Опыт политического прогнозирования в США и России: ученой степени кандидата политических наук, Автореферат диссертации. / - Санкт-Петербург, 2005 -с. 14

<sup>49</sup> Власова, М.Г. Прогнозирование в разведке: метод индикаторов в современных условиях // -Москва: Вестник РУДН, серия Международные отношения, -сентябрь 2015. Том 15, № 3, -с. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Быстров, Н. Методика оценки могущества государства // -Москва: Зарубежное военное обозрение, -1981. №9, -с. 12-15.

application of the indicator method to the relations between the two countries allows to reveal a number of non-traditional features of the relations between these states, and to determine the periods of short-term decline and progress in the relations.

In the **second paragraph of the first chapter** entitled **"Factors affecting relations"**, it is emphasized that political relations between Armenia and Iran are influenced by geographical, historical, demographic, geopolitical, security and economic factors.

Some of these factors have shaped the establishment of relations, while others have influenced the nature of those relations. The geographic proximity and physical borders play a crucial role in determining both the establishment and the continuity of relations between Armenia and Iran. Iran's geographical and geopolitical position and economic opportunities make it one of the important countries for Armenia. Although Iran is trying to turn Armenia into a corridor for access to Europe, this is not possible due to geopolitical factors. Iran views Armenia as a key means of sustaining its influence in the South Caucasus.

The historical factor enhances Iran's influence over Armenia while simultaneously prompting a cautious approach due to certain issues that have left a significant mark on the state's collective memory.

Iran uses the demographic factor - the presence of the Armenian community in this country for improving its state image in the international community, to gain economic advantages, and to benefit from the power of the Armenian lobby in American and European countries. Armenia, on the other hand, uses the demographic factor more for the purpose of aggression and economic interests.

One of the key factors influencing the development of political relations is the presence of the Armenian community in Iran. This community serves not only as a tool of leverage in Iran's relations with Azerbaijan but also as a means for the Islamic Republic of Iran to foster a positive international image by emphasizing the existence of an Armenian community with significant autonomous rights within its borders. Iranian Armenians play a vital role in facilitating and regulating

relations between Iran and Armenia.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the Armenian community ensures Iran's connection with Armenian lobby organizations and political groups that have influence in different countries of the world, including the USA, France, Lebanon, and Syria.

While geopolitical dynamics have generally drawn the two countries closer, they have occasionally led to situational crises. The security factor also strengthens their political relations. Iran, which unequivocally opposes the expanding influence of powers such as the United States, Türkiye, and Israel in the Caucasus, aims to keep Armenia within its sphere of control and influence. Developments in the South Caucasus, particularly in Armenia, which functions as a key component of Iran's security perimeter, may pose potential security risks to Iran. Iran acts as a security provider for Armenia, especially in economic terms. Factors influencing bilateral political relations include Iran's efforts to export hydrocarbon resources to Europe through alternative routes, its pursuit of markets for its products, and Armenia's efforts to break free from its geo-economic isolation.

The **third paragraph of the first chapter** is called "**Assessment of relations in terms of foreign policy concepts**". It is clear from the research that in the period after 1979, there were 4 theoretical approaches to foreign policy issues in the Islamic Republic of Iran: realist, ideological, pragmatic and reformist.<sup>52</sup> The years when Armenia declared independence coincided with Iran's withdrawal from ideological approach in foreign policy. At this time, Iran's new regional foreign policy was based purely on national interests due to the geopolitical processes taking place, and expanding the revolution was no longer a top priority. At the present stage, Iran's Caucasus policy is mostly not ideological, but realistic and pragmatic.

While Armenia is a secular state in terms of its political system, it occasionally employs ideological tools. In its relations with Iran, however, Armenia adopts a more realistic-pragmatic approach rather than an ideological stance. This suggests that Armenia's foreign policy

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<sup>51</sup> لیزاده، ا. ، علی زاده، ش. دیاسپورای ارمنی: فرصت ها و تهدیدهای پیش روی ایران// تهران: فصلنامه سیاست،-1394. دوره ۴۵، شماره ۴، ص.1088.

<sup>52</sup> Soltani, F. Foreign Policy of Iran after Islamic Revolution // Journal of Politics and Law, -September 2010. Vol. 3, №2, -p. 199.



exhibits a hypocritic nature.

In the **fourth paragraph of the first chapter** entitled **"Establishment and stages of political-diplomatic relations"**, the chronological stage division of the development of Armenian-Iranian relations is proposed. The following stages are distinguished:

1. the stage of establishment and definition of primary directions (1991–1997);
2. the phase of interconnected evolution (1998–2008);
3. the period of rapprochement in response to geopolitical threats (2008–2018);
4. the phase of ambivalent or duplicitous diplomacy (2018–2020);
5. the post-2020 stage.

The period from 1991 to 1997 marked a phase of relationship building and rapprochement, aligned with shifting geopolitical dynamics.<sup>53</sup> At that time, Armenia initiated military aggression and a war of expansion against Azerbaijan. Armenia actually committed genocides and bloody actions against Azerbaijanis - Muslims in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, destroyed Muslim religious monuments, and subjected them to insults. The aggressor country has attempted to frame its occupation of Karabakh as a "sacred cause," promoting it among Christian countries as a "liberation movement" for oppressed Christian Armenians from perceived oppression by Muslim Turks.

In order to create a positive image in the Islamic world, Armenia emphasized his relations with Iran. Of course, the IRI, which borders Armenia and the ex-occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was aware of the processes taking place near the northern borders. Iran made several attempts to stabilize the situation in the region until the adoption of the Bishkek protocol on the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in May 1994, and the discussions on the complete ceasefire between the defense ministers of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow on May 16.<sup>54</sup> But these attempts were unsuccessful. After the

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<sup>53</sup> Kalbizada, E.H. Armenian policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran after 1991: geopolitical conditions and realities // –Vienna: Austrian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, –2020. № 5-6, –p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Əhmədov, E.İ. Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü: Beynəlxalq təşkilatların və böyük dövlətlərin siyasəti: [3 cildə] / E.İ.Əhmədov. –Bakı: ARPEİF, –2015. –c. III, –s. 48-49.

agreements reached with the mediation of the IRI, Armenia carried out more bloody operations and occupied new territories.

During those years, there were no major political, economic, religious, or ethnic crises between Iran and Armenia; however, some minor misunderstandings occurred. The political leadership of the two countries evaluated all opportunities for strengthening relations, and a number of projects were implemented, especially in the field of transport and energy.<sup>55</sup>

The second stage coincided with the reign of the second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008). These years are characterized by a number of researchers as a period of "interconnected evolution" in the foreign policy of Armenia.<sup>56</sup> At this stage, Armenia sought to gradually enhance its relations with both the Russian-Iranian partnership in the region and with the United States and European states; however, it was unable to fully escape Moscow's influence. In response to the evolving regional dynamics, Iran aimed to strengthen its ties with Armenia. Notably, in the years following 2001, Iran's efforts in this regard intensified significantly.

It is clear from the conducted analyzes that in those years, in some cases, Armenia's non-support of the US and European countries' sanctions against Iran was not due to the country's loyalty to Iran or its policy of solidarity with its neighbors. In such important and tense moments, Russia made the decision instead of Armenia in accordance with its geopolitical interests. Some authors consider the sanctions imposed on Iran as a threat to Armenia's economic security.<sup>57</sup> From this perspective, the adverse repercussions of international political and economic sanctions imposed on Iran have manifested significantly

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<sup>55</sup> Kalbizada, E.H. New Caucasus policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran after 1991 and Armenia // V Міжнародній конференції «Весняні наукові читання», – Київ: Центр наукових публікацій, –30 квітня, –2020. 2 частина, –с. 41.

<sup>56</sup> Talıblı, S.Ə. İranın Qafqaz siyasətində Ermənistan (1991-2006-cı illər): [Elektron resurs] / Blogcatalog, –28 oktyabr, 2016. URL: [www.blogcatalog.com/s-ubhan-talibli-iranin-qafqaz/](http://www.blogcatalog.com/s-ubhan-talibli-iranin-qafqaz/).

<sup>57</sup> Markarov, A. The main dimensions and issues of Armenia's foreign security policy // Values and identity as sources of foreign policy in Armenia and Georgia / A.Markarov, N.Galstyan, G.Hayrapetyan. –Tbilisi: Universal PH, – 2016. –p. 109-110.

in Armenia.

The analysis of Armenian-Iranian relations during these years reveals that regional geopolitical shifts fostered a strengthening of bilateral ties. Exclusion from large-scale regional and global initiatives spurred Armenia and Iran to pursue alternative projects to assert their strategic autonomy. Concurrently, Russia's growing influence over Armenia further shaped the dynamics of Iran-Armenia relations, with Armenia's stance on sanctions against Iran largely aligning with Russian policy positions.

In the third stage covering the years 2008-2018, the geopolitical processes led to the further strengthening of the relations between the two states. Thus, the military conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 had a negative impact on the economic and transit relations established by Armenia through Georgia.<sup>58</sup>

Examining the political relations between the two states during this phase of rapprochement in response to geopolitical threats yields several insights. Unlike the initial stages of diplomatic establishment and interconnected evolution, the trajectory of relations at this stage was not consistently upward. However, shaped by shifting geopolitical conditions, this period marked the elevation of Armenian-Iranian relations to a level of strategic partnership. The years 2012 and 2014 entered the history of Armenian-Iranian relations as situational crisis years. Correlation relationship between Azerbaijan-Iran and Armenia-Iran relations has clearly shown itself in this chronological framework.

**The second chapter, entitled "Current state of political relations, institutional ties and problems",** consists of four paragraphs. The first paragraph, **titled "Current State and Problems of Political Relations,"** observes that the phase of Armenian-Iranian relations post-2018 could be characterized as an "insincere rapprochement" or a phase of hypocritical foreign policy. At this stage, Armenia paid more attention to relations with the United States and European countries than to relations with Iran. Nikol Pashinyan, who came to power as a result of the "velvet coup" in Armenia in 2018, tried

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<sup>58</sup> Kelbizadeh, E.H. The Dynamics of the development of Armenian-Iranian relations in the post-soviet period // –Махачкала: История, археология и этнография Кавказа, –2019. Т. 15, № 4, –с. 644.

to get the support of Western countries, including the United States, and made a number of changes in strategic relations with Russia, which also affected relations with Iran. After coming to power, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held his first meeting with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, in the USA - in New York.<sup>59</sup>

After the heavy defeat of Armenia in the 44-day war that took place between Armenia and Azerbaijan in September-November 2020, and the change in geopolitical conditions in the region, a new stage in Armenia-Iran relations has begun. The rapid rise of Azerbaijan's power and influence seriously worried a number of political forces in Iran as well as Armenia, especially supporters of the conservative line. Iran was strongly opposed to the opening of transport and communication lines in a corridor format - the creation of the Zangezur corridor - which Armenia had pledged to open under the November 10 trilateral statement. A number of political groups in Iran believed that the opening of this corridor could deprive Iran of many economic benefits, it could lead to the direction of international transit routes in this direction, and the loss of importance of certain routes passing through Iran. Those groups call the opening of the Zangezur Corridor an "Israeli Project", deliberately distorting this process and presenting it as a violation of Armenia's sovereignty and the seizure of territories important for the relations between Iran and Armenia.

After a while, Armenia's re-strengthening of its Western-leaning foreign policy, especially its joint military exercises with the United States, caused serious dissatisfaction not only with Russia, but also with Iran.

Iran's stance on several issues within the evolving geopolitical landscape of the region aligns notably with France, which seeks to expand its influence in the region, potentially even surpassing that of Russia. This alignment marks a significant shift. Like Russia and Türkiye, Iran opposes an increased U.S. presence in the region, including Armenia, and regards with reservation the initiatives undertaken by Armenia's current authorities in this direction.

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<sup>59</sup> Kəlbizadə E.H. Ermənistan İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində /E.H.Kəlbizadə, Y.Ü.Baxşıyeva, Ə.Ə.Əzimov; -Bakı:MTM İnnovation, -2019. - s. 157-158.

Simultaneously, Iran is concerned about the growing influence of Türkiye and Azerbaijan and seeks to counterbalance it through diplomatic-political means, as well as by providing military support to Armenia. Iran's designation of Armenia's borders as its "red line" reflects its opposition to the proposed "Middle Corridor" (the Zangezur Corridor, which constitutes a segment of it) that would traverse its own territory. Russia, on the other hand, is interested in opening the corridor from Zangezur and having its own control over this part of the "Middle Corridor" in order to ensure its influence on the "Middle Road" which is an alternative to the Northern Road passing through its territory. In this regard, Iran has even made a number of alternative proposals to Azerbaijan. However, Ibrahim Raisi, who had been rapidly fortifying ties with Armenia and actively pursuing measures to alleviate the diplomatic chill with Azerbaijan during April-May 2024, met a mysterious fate in a helicopter crash.

The ascension of Masoud Pezeshkian, a representative of Azerbaijanis and reformists, to power in early elections precipitated notable shifts in Iran-Armenia relations. Despite the attempts by conservative factions within the Iranian state apparatus to bolster ties with Armenia, Pezeshkian maintains a rather distant and cold stance towards the country. This sentiment was evident during his meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who visited Tehran for the swearing-in ceremony on July 30, 2024, where Pezeshkian remarked that he would only enhance bilateral relations "as much as possible".<sup>60</sup>

**The second paragraph of the second chapter** is entitled "**Security and defense ties**". It is noted in the paragraph that Armenia, which partially cooperates with NATO and closely cooperated with the Collective Security Treaty Organization to ensure its military security after declaring its independence, has tried to benefit from the opportunities of the IRI in this direction. After the 44-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020, tensions in Azerbaijan-Iran relations strengthened Tehran-Yerevan cooperation in the field of military and security. Iran, which previously declared

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<sup>60</sup> Iran's Policy On Armenia Unchanged, Says New FM: [Digital resource] / Azatutyun, -August 23, 2024. URL: [www.azatutyun.am/a/33090278.html](http://www.azatutyun.am/a/33090278.html)

that its cooperation with Armenia is not directed against a third country, and emphasized that this cooperation is only related to general military equipment issues, has completely changed its policy in this direction. During the war, the active use of the UAVs manufactured in Türkiye and Israel by the Azerbaijani army led to the strengthening of cooperation in this field between Armenia and Iran.

This assertion is supported by the fact that in August 2022, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) attracted military experts from Belarus and Russia to the two-week unmanned aerial vehicle training held in Kashan.<sup>61</sup> It should be noted that in October 2022, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, the former commander of the IRGC and adviser to Iran's supreme religious leader on military affairs, named Armenia first among the 22 countries that officially applied for the purchase of Iranian-made military drones.<sup>62</sup> Interest in Iranian drones, especially Shahed-136 UAVs, increased after their use in the Russian-Ukrainian war. According to another information, at that time SEPAH gave Armenia 500 units of Dehlabieh anti-tank missile system and 100 units of Almas system.<sup>63</sup> Following Masoud Pezeshki's ascension to power, notable shifts occurred in the realm of military cooperation. Notably, on November 24-25, 2024, the "Araz Joint Military Exercises" were conducted in the Aslanduz settlement of Ardabil Province, featuring the participation of special forces from the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Despite some recent developments the military and security interests of Iran and Armenia in the South Caucasus exhibit considerable overlap. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of

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<sup>61</sup> Iran Hosts Drone Tournament with Russia, Belarus and Armenia: [Digital resource] / Iran Watch, – August 15, 2022. URL: [www.iranwatch.org/news-brief/iran-hosts-drone-tournament-russia-belarus-armenia](http://www.iranwatch.org/news-brief/iran-hosts-drone-tournament-russia-belarus-armenia).

<sup>62</sup> 22 countries requested to purchase Iran military drones, official says: [Digital resource] / Middle East Monitor, –October 16, 2022. URL: [www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221019-22-countries-requested-to-purchase-iran-military-drones-official-says/?fbclid=iwar3jl0zul2lzs\\_ubsxtomro64zceqln8jjylpwv\\_csl\\_vomjibzm6v-wsskfm0](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221019-22-countries-requested-to-purchase-iran-military-drones-official-says/?fbclid=iwar3jl0zul2lzs_ubsxtomro64zceqln8jjylpwv_csl_vomjibzm6v-wsskfm0)

<sup>63</sup> Huseynov, V. Armenia and Iran combine forces against Azerbaijan: [Digital resource] / –Modern diplomacy, –December 11, 2022. URL: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/12/11/armenia-and-iran-combine-forces-against-azerbaijan/>

Iran (IRI) in the Caucasus is predicated on a defense realism approach concerning military and security matters. In the current situation, Iran realizes that it is deprived of the opportunity to become the only hegemonic power in Armenia. Therefore, it tries to maintain its power and influence over this country. Armenia, on the other hand, evaluates Iran's approach to the security issue and its concerns, and tries to use it for its own interests.

In the **third paragraph of the second chapter**, titled **"Cooperation within the Framework of International Organizations and Multilateral Platforms,"** it is noted that the only international organization in which both Iran and Armenia hold full membership is the United Nations. Within the framework of international organizations, Armenia has in some cases shown support to Iran in matters related to its nuclear program.<sup>64</sup> The Eurasian Economic Union was the organization in which both countries actively participated for a long time. Armenia is a full member of the organization. Iran has observer status in the organization and actively cooperates with it.

It is known that Iran, facing sanctions from the United States and European countries, and Armenia, which has been excluded from regional projects due to its prolonged occupation of Azerbaijani territories, have intermittently sought alternative multilateral cooperation platforms. Notable examples include the Turkmenistan-Iran-Armenia, Greece-Armenia-Iran, and Armenia-Iran-India initiatives, through which both nations have aimed to foster collaboration. However, following the events of 2020, the foundations of cooperation under the Turkmenistan-Iran-Armenia framework have been significantly undermined by various factors, notably the influence of Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The Greek-Armenian-Iranian platform represents an effort to cultivate cooperation rooted in a shared opposition to turks. The strengthening of the influence of the USA on Greece, the problems that have arisen between Iran and Greece regarding oil tankers have also blocked the development of cooperation

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<sup>64</sup> Месамед, В.И. Иран и немусульманские страны Южного Кавказа (Армения и Грузия) / В.И. Месамед. –Москва, –2015. –с. 82.

within the framework of this platform.<sup>65</sup>

In recent years, the Armenia-Iran-India cooperation platform has attracted more attention. India is trying to form a new route as an alternative to China-Central Asia-Azerbaijan-Georgia (Armenia) Türkiye route (Middle Corridor). This is the India-Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Black Sea line. In terms of military security, the Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Türkiye axis is being formed against the India-Iran-Armenia axis.

Both Iran and Armenia are interested in cooperation in the 3+3 (Türkiye, Iran, Russia + Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) format proposed by Azerbaijan and Türkiye after the 2020 war.

**The fourth paragraph of the second chapter** is about **"Interparliamentary relations"**. This paragraph focuses on two main directions - parliamentary diplomacy and the activities of Armenian deputies in the Islamic Consultative Assembly. The formation of inter-parliamentary relations mainly coincides with the second half of the 90s of the 20th century. One of the first visits of parliamentary delegations from Iran to Armenia was in August 1995. Currently, inter-parliamentary friendship groups operate in the parliaments of both countries. The Armenian-Iranian inter-parliamentary friendship group formed after the extraordinary parliamentary elections held in Armenia in 2021 consists of 18 members. The group is chaired by Gevorg Papoyan from the "Citizen Contract" faction.<sup>66</sup>

The Iranian-Armenian inter-parliamentary friendship group also operates in the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran. The group includes 13 members. Ramazan Ali Sobhanifar was the chairman of the friendship group at the 10th convocation of the Assembly. He was elected to the parliament from Razavi province of

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<sup>65</sup> Iran urges Greece to resolve oil tanker crisis without US involvement: [Digital resource] The Cradle, -2022. URL: <https://thecradle.co/articles-id/3854>.

<sup>66</sup> Friendship Groups of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. Friendship Group Armenia-Iran: [Digital resource] / The official site of National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, -2020. URL: [www.parliament.am/international.php?id=4&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/international.php?id=4&lang=eng)



Khorasan.<sup>67</sup> Karen Khanlari, the representative of the Armenians of North Iran in the parliament, and Georgek Abramyan, the representative of the Armenians of South Iran, were included in the group.

The researches prove that the views and statements that both countries are unable to express or do not want to express at the level of the political leaderships are revealed and declared precisely through the members of the parliament. Armenian deputies in Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly play the role of a "shield" in the pressures directed against Iran from abroad regarding national and religious issues. The presence of Armenian deputies is shown as counter-evidence against the opinions expressed about the violation of the rights of various national and religious groups. One of the special activities of the Armenian representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly is the implementation of propaganda activities against Azerbaijan and Türkiye. From this point of view, Armenian representatives periodically raise the issue of fake "genocide".<sup>68</sup>

Recently, there has been a notable increase in initiatives aimed at enhancing inter-parliamentary relations. In October 2024, Iran and Armenia formalized an agreement to expand their inter-parliamentary cooperation across various levels, thereby strengthening the activities of friendship groups and specialized committees within the parliaments of both states.<sup>69</sup> Analyses show that after the reformist and Azerbaijani president Masoud Pezeshkian came to power in Iran, the development of relations with the Iranian parliament, where conservatives are strong, is no coincidence. It should not be forgotten that the chairman of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, was one of the two main opponents of Masoud Pezeshkian in the last presidential elections.

The **third chapter** of the dissertation is titled "**Main Directions**,

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<sup>67</sup>Sobhanifar Ramazan Ali: [Digital resource] / The official site of Islamic Parliament of Iran, –2020. URL: [https://en.parliran.ir/eng/en/Content/\\_/Sobhanifar-Ramezan-ali54684](https://en.parliran.ir/eng/en/Content/_/Sobhanifar-Ramezan-ali54684).

<sup>68</sup> Kalbizada, E.H. İslâmî Şûra Meclisi Ermeni Milletvekillerinin Sözde "Ermeni Soykırımı"nı Tanıtma Girişimlerinin İran'ın İç ve Dış Politikasına Etkisi // XIX. Türk Tarih Kongresi, –Ankara: TTK, –3-7 Ekim, 2022, –2024, –s. 729-744.

<sup>69</sup> Iran, Armenia agree to strengthen parliamentary cooperation // The Tehran Times, -October 06, 2024. –s. 1-2.

**Current Situation, and Prospects of Trade and Economic Cooperation".** The first section of this chapter, titled **"Establishment of Trade and Economic Relations,"** highlights that the main factors determining cooperation in the economic field between the two countries were the desire to get rid of sanctions and isolation, transit opportunities, attraction of foreign investments and so on. Armenia is trying to achieve several goals by developing its economic relations with Iran. One of the first goals is to provide access to the world ocean through the Persian Gulf. Exporting a number of products produced in Armenia to the Iranian market and supplying the missing products through these markets also increases the need for Armenia to establish economic relations with Iran. Also, Armenia is trying to learn and benefit from Iran's experience of development in isolation. Iran is one of the leading countries in the field of investing in Armenia's economy. This is used as a tool to keep Armenia under influence. At the same time, Iran is trying to attract foreign investments from other countries by using the Armenians living in the country and the influence of Armenia.<sup>70</sup> Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has established economic relations with Armenia in various fields, it has approached the issue of investment relatively cautiously, and for this, it has put forward the importance of carrying out reforms related to economic control mechanisms in Armenia as a precondition.

In the **second paragraph of the third chapter** entitled **"The Main Directions of Economic Cooperation"**, it is noted that the issues of energy cooperation between the two countries mainly meet the interests of Armenia. The main goal of Iran's energy cooperation with Armenia is to transport the natural gas it produces to European countries through Armenia and Georgia. However, the Iran-Armenia-Georgia gas corridor has no prospects in the current geopolitical conditions. Because even if the natural gas is transported to Georgia, there are three possible options for sending it to Europe, the implementation of which is beyond the current possibilities. In the first option, a very expensive gas pipeline should be built under the Black Sea. In the current conditions, neither Iran, nor Armenia, nor

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ولیزاده، ا. ، علی زاده، ش. دیاسپورای ارمانی :فرصت ها وتحدیدهای پیش روی ایران// -تهران: 70 فصلنامه سیاست،-1394. دوره ۴۵، شماره ۴، صص. 1085-1086

Georgia have sufficient financial opportunities for this. In the second option, that pipeline should be connected to the gas transport infrastructure of Russia. This does not seem possible. Russia, which has sufficient gas resources, does not need additional gas, its goal is to transport its gas to Europe as a monopoly. Due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, it has become impossible to transport Russian natural gas to Europe. Russia itself is trying to take advantage of the opportunities of alternative countries to export its gas to the world market. In the third option, infrastructure for converting natural gas into liquefied natural gas (LNG) should be created in one of Georgia's Black Sea ports, which is prohibitively expensive. Even if liquefied gas is obtained, its transportation by ships and tankers should take place through the Bosphorus of Istanbul. This poses a threat to both ecological security and strategic interests of Türkiye. It is clear that the opinions expressed by Iran, Armenia and even in some cases Georgia regarding the Iran-Armenia-Georgia gas pipeline are not economically important, but are used for political conjuncture.

The study of the state of cooperation in the fields of industry, agriculture and tourism also reveals a number of interesting issues. The gradual loss of Russia's influence over Armenia, which started a war with Ukraine in 2022, has led to a number of changes from an economic point of view. Iranian companies evaluated this moment as an opportunity and quickly started to enter the Armenian market. In a short time, the number of companies operating in Armenia based on Iranian investments has increased. According to this indicator, Iran has risen to the second place after Russia. Only in the first half of 2023, about 300 companies with Iranian capital were established in Armenia. Currently, the annual trade turnover between the two countries is close to 800 million dollars.<sup>71</sup>

One of the main directions in which the two countries want to

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<sup>71</sup> About 300 companies with Iranian capital opened in Armenia in the first half of 2023 – minister: [Digital resource] / –Yerevan: Arkanews, –August 25, 2023. URL: [https://arka.am/en/news/business/about\\_300\\_companies\\_with\\_iranian\\_capital\\_opened\\_in\\_armenia\\_in\\_the\\_first\\_half\\_of\\_2023\\_minister/](https://arka.am/en/news/business/about_300_companies_with_iranian_capital_opened_in_armenia_in_the_first_half_of_2023_minister/)

deepen cooperation is the high-tech industry. An Iranian exhibition dedicated to high technologies and startups was held in Yerevan on February 17, 2021, where the Ambassador of Iran to Armenia, Abbas Zohouri, speaking here, said that his country wants to deepen cooperation with Armenia in this field.<sup>72</sup>

Relations in the agricultural sector are well-developed. Following the imposition of stringent international economic sanctions against Iran, there has been a noticeable increase in the export of livestock products, particularly sheep, from Iran to Armenia.

Most individuals from the Islamic Republic of Iran travel to Armenia not for tourism but primarily as a transit country. In other words, they utilize Armenia's territory as a transit route to access third countries. Another issue is related to the United States, which the Islamic Republic of Iran considers an enemy. Iranian citizens who want to go to the USA get visas through the embassy of the USA in Armenia. Armenia shows such persons as tourists in official statistics. The second group that visited Armenia from Iran is Iranian Armenians. Their visits to the territories of Armenia for the purpose of tourism were mainly in the first years after the declaration of independence of Armenia. There is also a special point that attracts a group of non-Armenian citizens of Iran to Armenia. This special point is the creation of comfortable conditions in Armenia for some types of activities that are prohibited in Muslim countries or not accepted by the population.

Since 1991, the development of trade relations has been one of the main directions of negotiations between Armenia and Iran. Armenia has always felt the need to strengthen transport and communication relations through two countries - Iran and Georgia. For a long time, Armenia's border with its southern neighbor, Iran, was considered the only reliable border. Armenia is connected to the Trans-Eurasia fiber optic line precisely through Iran.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Armenia, Iran aim at deepening cooperation in high-tech industry: [Digital resource] / –Yerevan: Armenpress, –February 17, 2021. URL: <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1043699>.

<sup>73</sup> Ermənistan Respublikası (məlumat sorğu kitabçası) / Redaktorlar E.Əliyev və Y.Yaqubov. –Bakı: Qesam, Bölgə silsiləsindən I buraxılış. –s. 9.

Significant measures have been implemented to establish border crossing points, free trade zones, and to eliminate transit and visa restrictions between Armenia and Iran. Armenia is increasingly positioned as an attractive market for a variety of Iranian products, particularly those from the chemical industry.

**The third paragraph of the third chapter**, entitled “**Iranian Investments in the Armenian Economy**,” notes that although the Islamic Republic of Iran has established economic relations with Armenia in various fields, it has been relatively cautious in the issue of investment. This was also due to objective factors. The analyses conducted allow us to identify these factors as follows:

1. The Iranian economy itself needed / has serious investment.
2. There was / is a problem of obsolescence / wear of fixed assets in Iran.
3. The Iranian side directs its investment policy purely to political / geopolitical projects. An analysis of Iran's activities in Syria and Iraq once again proves this point.
4. The Iranian economy, including the financial and banking sector, is concentrated in state and quasi-state institutions. This has a serious impact on investment policy. Usually, state-guaranteed investment schemes are developed. Although private capital in this country is superior in small and medium-sized businesses, especially in the trade sector, its investment potential is not of great importance in terms of volume.
5. The transfer of sectors that may be of interest to Iran to Russian management in Armenia had / is having a serious impact on the investment environment.

The analyses presented in this chapter lead to the conclusion that efforts to enhance economic relations predominantly serve Armenia's interests. Armenia, due to both its limited economic capacity and the small scale of its market, lacks intrinsic appeal for Iran as an investment partner. The Iranian perspective acknowledges that regional initiatives it seeks to pursue via Armenia are either economically unviable or infeasible, constrained by both objective and subjective factors.

**The fourth chapter** of the dissertation, titled “**Cooperation in**

**the Fields of Science, Education, Health, and Culture,"** opens with an exploration of **"Cooperation in Humanitarian Fields."** The initial paragraph highlights a range of initiatives and measures undertaken by both countries to advance collaborative efforts within the humanitarian domain.

The Iranian government places significant emphasis on promoting Persian language education in Armenia, where Persian is currently taught in approximately ten secondary schools.<sup>74</sup> Armenians who have mastered the Persian language are later used for a variety of purposes. Armenia is also interested in the issues of teaching the Armenian language in Iran. Although the problem of native-language schools for representatives of the nations with a population of millions in Iran has not been solved, these opportunities have been created for Armenians.

Armenian-language schools are operational in several Iranian cities, including Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Urmia, and Khoy, among others.<sup>75</sup> In the early 2000s, the number of Armenian schools in Iran was more than 30.<sup>76</sup> There are 25 Armenian schools in the Iranian capital alone, with approximately 7,000 students.<sup>77</sup> Currently, the Aharonian Armenian Kindergarten and Elementary School (8th district, Zarringabayi Street), Armenian Ararat School (Isna-ashari Street), Shant Armenian School (8th district, Rahmati Street), Maryamiyan School (8th district, Rahmati Street), Araks Armenian Girls' School (Abdeh), Gohar Armenian School (4th Street) operate in Tehran; Asadi Armenian School (Church Alley, Baron Avak Street) in Tabriz; Isfahan Armenian School, Surb Vartan Elementary School operate in the Shahinshahr district of Isfahan.

Iranian citizens frequently choose Armenia as a destination for studies in fields such as medicine, music, and the arts. Documents

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<sup>74</sup> نظام آبادی، م. روابط فرهنگی ایران و ارمنستان: ظرفیتها و پتانسیلها // تهران: فصلنامهانجمن ایرانی مطالعات فرهنگی و ارتباطات، -1395، سال دوازدهم، شماره ۱۴۴، ص. 78.

<sup>75</sup> Onullahi, S.M. *Erməni millətçiləri və İran* / S.Onullahi. –Bakı: Maarif, –2002. –s. 29.

<sup>76</sup> İftixari, A.H. *İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasəti (1991-2005-ci illər): / tarix elmləri namizədi dis.* / –Bakı, 2007. –s. 85.

<sup>77</sup> Kelbizadeh, E.H. *Armenian community and diaspora factor in Iran-Armenia relations* // –Baku: Caucasus studies, –2020, № 1, –p. 20.

forming the legal basis of science and education diplomacy have been signed between the countries. Armenians pay special attention to the promotion of propaganda about the fake "Armenian genocide" in Iranian society through literary works, and a number of Iranian translators also assist them in this work.

In Armenia, several dedicated centers focus on Iranian studies. Iranian studies research centers have been established at Armenian universities.<sup>78</sup> One of the organizations that played a special role in the development of cultural and scientific relations between the countries was the Armenian-Iranian Cultural Center - "Mihr". It should be noted that in the first years after the establishment of the Armenian SSR, Oriental Studies and Iranian Research Centers were established in a number of higher educational institutions in this country. In these centers, Persian classics, including the works of Firdovsi, Hafez, etc., were translated into Armenian, and the works of Armenian poets and writers into Persian. Some researchers from Iran were also involved in this process. Armenia is trying to spread propaganda about the fake "Armenian genocide" and territorial claims against the Republic of Azerbaijan in Iranian society through literary works. It should be noted that even before the 1979 revolution, the author from Iran - Ismail Raen (1920-1979) conducted 'scientific research' on fictional events and published a book called '*Gatleam-e Armanian*' ('*The Massacre of Armenians*') consisting of five chapters.<sup>79</sup> Another author who has dedicated a work to the fictional "genocide" is Mahammad Rza Dabiri, a researcher in the field of political science and diplomacy. His work '*Koshtar-o kuch ejbari Armaneh: neselkeshi ya zarvarat jangi?*' ('*The Murder and Forced Transfer of Armenians. Conspiracy or the Force of War?*') is dedicated to the mentioned topic.<sup>80</sup>

At present, there are two prominent centers in Armenia engaged in research on Iran. One is the Department of Iranian Studies within

<sup>78</sup> دفتر مطالعات سیاسی و بین المللی. کتاب سبز ارمنستان / تهران: موسسه چاپ و انتشارات وزرات امور خارجی، ۱۳۸۸-، ۱۷۱ ص.

اسماعیل ر.، قتل عام ارمنیان / ر. اسماعیل. - تهران: امیر کابیر، ۱۳۵۷، ۲۸۴ ص

<sup>79</sup> دبیری، م. کشتار و کوچ اجباری ارمنه: نسل‌کشی یا ضرورت جنگی؟ [منبع الکترونیکی] \\\ تهران: ۸۰ بهمن ۱۳۹۷.

URL: <https://hoosk.ir/کشی-یا-ض%8C%80%82%E2%کشتار-و-کوچ-اجباری-ارمنه-نسل/>

the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State University, while the other is the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Armenian Academy of Sciences.

Prior to the establishment of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State University in 1968, studies related to Iran were predominantly conducted within the Faculty of Philology. The inaugural head of the independent Department of Iranian Studies was Professor Gevorg Nalbandyan. Since 2014, Vardan Voskanyan has served as the head of the Department. The research focus of the Department of Iranian Studies encompasses a range of areas, including the study of both contemporary and historical Iranian languages and dialects—such as Persian, Afghan, Kurdish, Talysh, Tat, Parthian, Middle Persian, and Old Persian—alongside the history and geography of Iran and regions populated by Iranian-speaking communities. Additional areas of inquiry include the literature and culture of these ethnic groups, as well as contemporary political issues concerning Iran and the broader Middle East region.

The journals 'Iran and Caucasus' and 'Iranian Linguistics,' which are indexed in international databases, are under the supervision of this department. The Armenian government seeks to maintain control over such journals in order to present fabricated theses as credible scientific facts. Additionally, the department plays an active role in organizing international Persian language courses for non-Persian speakers.

The staff of the department regularly conduct professional trainings both in Armenia and abroad. Many of them are involved in international and local grant programs. The Department of Iranian Studies has established cooperative relations with the universities of Tehran, Isfahan, Yazd, 'Jundishapur', Nishapur and Tabriz. According to the memorandum signed between Yerevan State University and Tehran State University in June 2023, an agreement was reached on the participation of researchers from the Center for Caucasus Studies of Tehran University in the activities of the Department of Iranian Studies in Yerevan and the development of joint bachelor's and master's programs.

The Iranian Studies Department of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, along with history, domestic politics, agrarian



relations, and current issues of the Islamic Revolution, studies various problems of the ethnic-cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Iranian peoples, and classical and modern Persian literature.

There are a large number of research centers operating in Iran that study the Caucasus, Armenia, and Armenians. The main feature that unites these research centers is that they assess the processes in the Caucasus mostly from the ideological position of the Iranian state. Research centers perform two functions in this regard. First of all, they conduct research to shape the policy of the Iranian state regarding the Caucasus, including Armenia, and these studies are used by official state agencies. On the other hand, they prepare materials with propaganda purposes to strengthen Iran's influence in Armenia and the Caucasus region in general.

Both sides are cooperating in the field of healthcare. The poor and needy Armenian population is trying to benefit from Iran's cheap healthcare services. At the same time, the Iranian side has tried to learn from Armenia's experience in certain areas of medicine. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the healthcare systems of both countries have been subjected to serious tests and crises. In this area, Armenia has also tried to receive certain assistance from Iran.<sup>81</sup>

**The second paragraph of the fourth chapter, titled "Cooperation in the Cultural Sphere,"** highlights the diverse areas of cultural collaboration between the two nations, spanning the "restoration" of monuments, music, literature, cinema, and book publishing. Notably, there have been ongoing efforts to "Armenianize" Christian monuments in Iran and to reinterpret Muslim religious monuments in Armenia as examples of Persian cultural heritage. In the field of music, Armenian initiatives to reframe the music of the peoples of the Caucasus as Armenian in Iran are particularly prominent. Through film screenings during cultural weeks, Armenia also seeks to reinforce its fabricated narratives within Iranian public opinion. Additionally, Armenia actively pursues the translation and publication of works by Armenian authors into Persian as a form of propaganda,

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<sup>81</sup> در تماس تلفنی دکتر روحانی با نخست وزیر ارمنستان مطرح شد؛ [منبع الکترونیکی] \ -تهران: سایت رسمی رئیس جمهور جمهوری اسلامی ایران، 9 اردیبهشت 1399.

URL: [www.president.ir/fa/115001/printable](http://www.president.ir/fa/115001/printable)

enlisting the support of various Iranian intellectuals in this endeavor.

**The third paragraph of the fourth chapter, titled “Cooperation and Relations in the Religious Sphere,”** observes that, despite their differing religious affiliations, Iran and Armenia have maintained interactions between religious organizations. Since 1991, relations have developed between religious institutions in Iran and Armenia. Notably, in August 1994, a delegation of high-ranking Iranian religious figures visited Armenia to honor the passing of Vazgen I, the Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. A similar delegation from Iran attended the enthronement ceremony of the new Catholicos, Karekin I (Nshan Akopi Sargsyan), in April 1995.

Among the more significant religious exchanges between Armenia and Iran were two high-level visits in 2015. In June, Seyyed Ali Ghazi Askar, representative of the Supreme Leader of Iran for Hajj affairs, met with Catholicos Karekin II (Ktrij Grigori Nersessian) to discuss joint initiatives in cultural and religious education. Later, in November, Ayatollah Hassan Akhtari, Secretary General of Iran's International Assembly of the Ahl al-Bayt, visited Yerevan at the invitation of Karekin II, where he toured the Blue Mosque and Uckilse (Matenadaran), underscoring the depth of religious and cultural ties between the two states.<sup>82</sup>

Iran leverages the influence of the Armenian Church to enhance its propagandistic reach within the Christian world. Concurrently, Armenia seeks to portray its conflict with Azerbaijanis and Turks—often framed in religious terms—as not universally targeting Muslims, thereby attempting to distance itself from accusations of Islamophobia.

**The fourth paragraph of the fourth chapter, titled “The Role of the Media in the Development of Relations and Main Directions of Activity,”** highlights that Armenians, who have held the status of the most privileged non-Muslim community in Iran since the Islamic Revolution, have actively engaged in anti-Turkish propaganda, a campaign that persists subtly in the modern era. This

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<sup>82</sup>Симонян А. «Иран и Армения – один народ, но два государства»: [Электронный ресурс] / –Баку: Haqqin.az, 07 декабря, 2015. <https://haqqin.az/news/58627>.

activity not only harms the Islamic Republic of Iran's standing in the broader Islamic world but also significantly strains its relations with religiously aligned and economically significant neighbors, Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Armenian-language media, such as the newspapers *Alik* and *Araks*, Armenian-operated websites, and Armenian radio, play key roles in sustaining this anti-Turkish narrative within Iran.

The largest and most historically significant Armenian-language newspaper in Iran is *Alik*, meaning “Wave” in Armenian. Notably, *Alik* is recognized as the second-oldest continuously published newspaper in Iran, following *Ettela'at*, which has been in circulation in Persian since 1926.<sup>83</sup>

The anti-Turkish narrative advanced within the pages of *Alik* is crafted to align with Iran's sensitivities and strategic concerns. For instance, an article published on May 27, 2018, titled 'Türkiye: Israel Discusses the Armenian Massacre as a 'Genocide,' focused on Türkiye's relations with Israel, incorporating statements from Turkish officials. The nuanced intent behind such coverage is to amplify tensions in Israeli-Turkish relations, which aligns with both Iranian and Armenian interests. Articles of this nature, designed to subtly exacerbate Türkiye's regional challenges, appear regularly in *Alik*.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, the newspaper's pages often feature historical-style articles that attempt to justify Armenian claims from a historical perspective.

Another Armenian-language newspaper currently in publication in the Islamic Republic of Iran is the weekly *Araks (Araz)*. Azerbaijani researcher Seyidagha Onullahi has described this newspaper as a propagandist outlet for the Dashnaktsutyun (Dashnaks) party.<sup>85</sup> Since its founding in 1988, *Araks* has been published monthly in Tehran,

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<sup>83</sup> Estukyan, V. İran'daki Ermeni toplumunun sesi: [Dijital kaynak] / –Tahran: Alik gazetesi, –08 Aralık, 2017. URL: [www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/19845/irandaki-ermeni-toplumunun-sesi-alik](http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/19845/irandaki-ermeni-toplumunun-sesi-alik).

<sup>84</sup> ترکیه: اسرائیل با "نسل کشی" خواندن کشتار ارمنه خودش را زیر سوال می‌برد: [منبع الکترونیکی] / روزنامه آلیک، -06 خرداد 1397،

ترکیه-اسرائیل-با-نسل-کشی--6018/item/سیاسی/ <http://alikonline.ir/fa/news/political/سیاسی/item/6018> خواندن کشتار ارمنه خودش را زیر سوال می‌برد

<sup>85</sup> Onullahi, S.M. Erməni millətçiləri və İran / S.Onullahi. –Bakı: Maarif, –2002. –s. 12.

predominantly featuring articles on cultural and literary topics. However, despite its cultural focus, *Araks* also engages in activities that reflect territorial claims on the Republics of Azerbaijan and Türkiye. While Armenians in Iran are citizens of the Islamic Republic and officially recognize and support the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, *Araks* nonetheless disseminates articles that propagate subversive narratives against Azerbaijan.

**The fifth paragraph of the fourth chapter** is called “**The Armenian community in Iran, its organizations and their impact on bilateral relations.**” This paragraph states that Iran is one of the countries with the strongest Armenian community in the world. Iran ranks fourth in terms of the number of members of Armenian community after the Russian Federation, the United States and France. The Armenian community in this country has been engaged in espionage activities since the Safavid era and has acted as a defender of the interests of Christian Europe. Research shows that this activity continued in subsequent periods.

Armenians in the Islamic Republic of Iran are recognized as a religious minority as Christians of the Gregorian sect. The Iranian constitution grants them extensive rights, approaching near-autonomy in internal, cultural, and religious affairs. In accordance with this constitutional framework, Christian Armenians are permitted to perform their religious ceremonies, enjoy autonomy over personal status matters, and maintain freedom in religious education, adhering to their distinct cultural and religious rituals.

The information about the number of Armenians living in Iran at the modern stage is controversial. The latest estimates suggest that in fact the number of the Armenian community does not exceed 100 thousand people. Currently, the Armenian community is settled in three major cities of Iran - the capital Tehran, Isfahan and Tabriz. In addition, Urmia and Arak are also among the cities with a large number of Armenians. According to religious dioceses, the Armenian community in Iran is divided into three parts:

1. Central-Tehran diocese;
2. Southern Iran-India (Isfahan) diocese;
3. Azerbaijan (Tabriz) diocese.

Armenians, who are well aware of the sensitivity of the international community to possible pressure on other religious minorities, take advantage of this. They try to realize their goals by exploiting this weak point of Iran. They create many social and economic organizations, open schools and theaters that actually function as secret propaganda centers, and publish their newspapers.

**The fifth chapter** of the dissertation is called **“Iran's attitude to the occupation of Armenia and the terrorist activities of Armenians”**. **The first paragraph** of the chapter, entitled **“The activities of Armenian terrorist organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran”**, states that, Historically, Armenians, who have strengthened their positions by demonstrating false loyalty to the rulers of the countries they lived in, and organized themselves, have dealt a blow to those states at crucial moments for the sake of their own goals.

During the Islamic Revolution, various foreign states actively used Armenians in espionage activities against the newly established Iranian government. The fact that the Holy Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon (Church of Antilias), to which the Armenian dioceses in Iran were subordinate, was under the control of the US CIA played an important role in this matter. There were close ties between the intelligence agencies of the US and some other Western countries and the main ultra-nationalist political organization of Armenians, Dashnaktsutyun.

The analysis of the activities of Armenian political-terrorist organizations in Iran at the modern stage shows that the activities of these organizations are not directed only against Türkiye and Azerbaijan. For the sake of the implementation of the pan-Armenian cause, Armenian terrorist-political organizations do not hesitate to commit terrorist acts against the IRI, companies and representations of states such as France and Switzerland.

As for Iran's approach to Armenian terrorist-political organizations, this attitude is mixed in nature and has manifested itself in different ways at different times. In the 80s of the 20th century, the Iranian internal security forces took a tough stance against Armenian terrorist organizations that organized terrorist attacks in Iran, and significantly limited the activities of the Iranian branch of the Armenian

Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun. However, since the 90s of the 20th century, this attitude has changed and at different times allegations have emerged that Iran supports some of these terrorist-political organizations.

**The second paragraph of the fifth chapter, entitled “Iran’s attitude to the so-called “Armenian genocide” claims,”** notes that the issue of the 1915 so-called “Armenian genocide,” artificially raised in the period after the 1960s of the 20th century, is one of the main ideological fabrications that unites the Armenian community in Iran, as well as throughout the world. One of the main factors in the organization of the Armenian diaspora and communities in various countries of the world is the psychology of hatred of Turks and their views on Türkiye. This approach, in turn, forms the basis of the ideology that organizes Armenians and ensures their unity as a diaspora.

Most Armenian churches operating in Iran are rich in symbols reminiscent of the fictional events of 1915.<sup>86</sup> Iran is the Muslim country with the highest number of monuments commemorating the so-called “genocide”. There are seven fake “genocide” memorials in the country.

This issue has remained prominent on the agenda since Armenia declared its independence. It has been a topic of discussion in the Iranian parliament on multiple occasions, and various Iranian presidents who have visited Armenia have included a visit to the fabricated “genocide” monument in Tsitsernakaberd as part of their itinerary.

Following the 44-day war and Armenia's significant defeat, Armenians residing in Iran intensified their propaganda portraying themselves as an “oppressed people.” In April, coinciding with the anniversary of the fabricated “genocide” events, they organized various rallies across Iran. These gatherings not only served to commemorate the alleged “genocide” but also featured participants donning masks representing the “flag” of the former puppet military junta regime that

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رسولی، م. نگاهی به روابط برون گروهی دیاسپورای ارمنی با تکیه بر مفهوم «حافظه جمعی» (مطالعه ای انسان‌شناختی در ارمنه ایران) ۱۱- تهران: فصلنامه علوم اجتماعی. - پاییز ۱۳۹۴. سال ۲۵، شماره ۷۰، ص. 341.

was established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.<sup>87</sup> However, during the war waged by Azerbaijan to liberate its territories from occupation in September-November 2020, the “Karabakh support” actions held by ethnic Azerbaijanis in various cities of Iran were prevented. However, the Iranian state has not taken substantive measures to curb such provocative propaganda by Armenians. Official authorities have characterized these events as activities conducted by the Armenian community in accordance with its rights to internal self-governance. Despite the efforts and initiatives of Armenian representatives in the Iranian parliament since the 1979 revolution, Iran has not officially recognized the so-called and fake “Armenian genocide”.

**The third paragraph of the fifth chapter, titled “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resulting from Armenia’s Military Aggression Against Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran,”** indicates that the concerns of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the outbreak of the Karabakh conflict were primarily focused on the following issues:

- The potential for political instability along Iran's northern borders, particularly in the context of the Soviet Union's collapse, which could threaten the stability of the Islamic Republic.
- The risk that the Azerbaijani-Turkish populations in Iran’s Azerbaijani provinces (such as Ardabil, East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, and Zanjan) may align themselves with their counterparts in the conflict and become involved in hostilities.
- The anticipated influx of refugees and internally displaced persons from conflict zones into Iran, along with the associated socio-economic repercussions.
- The possibility of intervention by non-regional states, especially the United States, in the processes in the South Caucasus in the event of an escalation of the conflict, etc.

In this context, from the outset of the conflict, Iran endeavored

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<sup>87</sup> Հայոց Յեղասպանության 106-րդ տարելիցը՝ Թեհրանում: [Elektron resurs] / «Ալիք» թերթը՝ առցանց, -25 սալիի, 2021 թ. URL: <https://alikonline.ir/news/community/tehran/item/68038-հայոց-ցեղասպանության-106-րդ-տարելիցը-թեհրանում/>

to assume the role of mediator for its resolution. However, this mediation effort of the Islamic Republic of Iran ultimately proved unsuccessful for various reasons. Subsequently, the strengthening of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and countries with which the IRI competes regionally, such as the United States and Israel, sparked unfounded concerns and unjustified protests from Iran. In response to this situation, the IRI undertook several measures to bolster its relations with Armenia in an effort to exert influence over Azerbaijan. These actions were naturally aimed at ensuring the continued economic viability of Armenia.

Throughout the conflict, the IRI officially asserted its recognition of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, affirming that the mountainous region of Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, there were instances at the practical level that did not align with this officially stated position.

During the 44-day war in 2020, geopolitical dynamics led the Islamic Republic of Iran to adopt a largely neutral stance in the initial days of the conflict. However, this neutral position could not be regarded as equitable, as it implied an equal treatment of both the aggressor and the aggrieved party. The Iranian Foreign Minister, who contacted the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the events of September 27, only “expressed concern about the situation” and called on the parties to “exercise restraint, immediately cease hostilities, as well as to begin negotiations within the framework of international law.”<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, even the neutral position adopted by official Tehran was intricately linked to its own political interests. The presence of Nikol Pashinyan's government in Armenia significantly influenced Iran's stance. In this context, the prospect of sanctioning the Pashinyan regime aligned with the interests of both Russia and Iran. Pashinyan's ascent to power was marked by slogans advocating for European integration and active cooperation with the United States, which raised considerable concerns for Iran.

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<sup>88</sup> گفتگوی تلفنی جداگانه دکتر ظریف با وزیر امور خارجه آذربایجان و ارمنستان: [منبع الکترونیکی] - \ ۰۶/۰۷/۱۳۹۹- تهران: سایت وزارت امور خارجه جمهوری اسلامی ایران،

URL: <https://mfa.gov.ir/portal/newsview/611897>



Only the growing demands of the ethnic Azerbaijani population of the Iran, as well as the victories of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the front, caused the Iranian side to make certain statements. Concurrently, following the outbreak of the war, various claims circulated in the media regarding the alleged transit of weapons to Armenia via Iranian territory. Additionally, the protest actions undertaken by Iranian Azerbaijanis indicated that Iran could not remain entirely disengaged from the conflict.

At the end of September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a statement addressing these concerns, asserting that the country was diligently monitoring and controlling the process of transferring and transiting goods to other states. The ministry emphasized that it does not permit the use of Iranian territory for the transfer of weapons and ammunition. Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, categorically denied claims of weapons transit from Iran to Armenia, asserting that only civilian goods were being transported.<sup>89</sup>

As a result of the war, the long-occupied border region between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran was ultimately reclaimed. In relation to the military efforts undertaken by Republic of Azerbaijan to liberate its territories from prolonged occupation of Armenia, on October 6, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, called to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to convey Iran's concerns regarding the persistence of hostilities along the Armenia-Azerbaijan contact line. President Rouhani further expressed a desire for a prompt and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Providing information about the ongoing military operations, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev brought to the attention of the Iranian head of state that part of the occupied territory of the Iran-Azerbaijan state border had passed under Azerbaijani control and it was planned to soon deploy Azerbaijani

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نگوی وزارت امور خارجه ادعاهای مطرح شده در انتساب دروغ ترانزیت ادوات نظامی از مسیر خاک ایران به ارمنستان را رد کرد: [منبع الکترونیکی] \ - تهران: سایت وزارت امور خارجه جمهوری اسلامی ایران، - ۱۳۹۹، مهر ۸

URL: <https://mfa.gov.ir/portal/newsview/612084>

border troops and border infrastructure in the liberated territories along the border.<sup>90</sup>

Iran had considerable difficulty adapting to the new geopolitical configuration that had formed in the region in the post-war period. On the one hand, Iran, which declared its support for regional cooperation in the 3+3 format proposed by Azerbaijan and Türkiye and conducted a regional tour at the level of the Foreign Minister in this regard, on the other hand, tried to prevent Türkiye's growing influence in the region and took a non-constructive position on the issue of the Zangezur corridor, which is one of the important elements of regional cooperation. This position is shaped by multiple influencing factors. First of all, Iran understands that the opening of the Zangezur corridor means the implementation of the Middle Corridor project, which is considered an important route for transporting goods from China to Europe, without Iran's participation. Therefore, Iran, which opposes the Zangezur corridor, gladly agrees to the creation of an alternative road in the direction of Aghband - Iranian Julfa - Nakhchivan. On the other hand, Iran believes that the implementation of the Zangezur corridor means the transfer of the Iran-Armenia border under the control of external forces.

In the **Conclusion** of the dissertation, scientific and theoretical generalizations were made on the research. It was noted that although the relations between Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran seem close and strong, in reality a number of problems underlying these relations do not promise positive prospects.

The first of these issues is the constructed narrative surrounding the supposed historical existence of a "Greater Armenia." Numerous Armenian organizations and the official historiography of Armenia promote this notion, which encompasses territories belonging to Azerbaijan, Eastern Anatolia, Southern Georgia, as well as the northwestern provinces and districts of present-day Iran, within the baseless concept of "Greater Armenia." This narrative is frequently illustrated on various fabricated maps

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<sup>90</sup> İran İslam Respublikasının Prezidenti Həsən Ruhani İlham Əliyevə telefonla zəng edib: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin internet saytı, –06 oktyabr, 2020. URL: <https://president.az/articles/41980>.

designed to support such claims.

Another issue that will cause ideological problems is the unfounded claims made by some statesmen and politicians in Iran regarding the 17 cities of the Caucasus. In fact, this claim, which is made against Azerbaijan from time to time at various levels, also targets Armenia itself. The claim that “the 17 cities of the Caucasus belong to Iran” is also attributed to the city of Yerevan, which historically belonged to Azerbaijan and is currently the capital of Armenia. In general, the idea of returning the Caucasus to Iran, which is often put forward by conservative groups, also calls into question the state independence of Armenia.

Thirdly, the current Armenian regime's tendency towards Western integration and cooperation with the United States does not bode well for relations with Iran. The current situation shows that the intensified relations with Iran stem from Armenia's desperation. It should not be forgotten that there have been attempts in Armenia to transfer a number of strategic facilities to the control of the United States.

The trajectory of future relations may unfold along several possible scenarios:

1) The continuation of the current religious-conservative regime in Iran, while Armenia develops its relations with the US and European countries to get out of the critical situation it finds itself in, may lead to a weakening of relations.

2) If a regime change occurs in Iran or if relations between Iran and the West develop in any way, this country's influence on Armenia will increase, and Armenia will become a convenient route for Iran to reach Europe.

3) Russia's complete weakening in the Ukrainian war and its focus on its internal problems may further strengthen Iran's attempts to fill the vacuum in Armenia.

4) Armenia's acceptance of the new geopolitical realities in the region and its choice of cooperation proposed by Azerbaijan and Türkiye will confront Iran with new realities in the South Caucasus and may give impetus to the strengthening of regional integration tendencies.

**The core content and key provisions of the dissertation are delineated in the subsequent articles and theses:**

1. Ermənistan İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində / E.H.Kəlbizadə, Y.Ü.Bağşiyeva, Ə.Ə.Əzimov. –Bakı: MTM Innovation, –2019. –360 s.
2. Ermənistan: daxili sosial-iqtisadi və siyasi şərait / Q.Ə.Naciyev, E.H.Kəlbizadə, A.M.Eyvazov [və b.]. –Bakı: MTM Innovation MMC, –2019. – 352 s.
3. The dynamics of the development of Armenian-Iranian relations in the post-soviet period // –Махачкала: Журнал «История, археология и этнография Кавказа», –2019. т. 15, № 4, –с. 639-651. **(Russia).**
4. Robert Koçaryan'ın Cumhurbaşkanlığı döneminde Ermenistan-İran ilişkileri // –Ankara: “Ermeni araştırmaları” dergisi, –2019. № 62, –s. 73-94. **(Türkiye).**
5. 2018 Devrimi Sonrası Ermenistan-İran İlişkilerinin Analizi // –Ankara: “TÜDEV” dergisi, –2019. №7. –s. 171-190. **(Türkiye).**
6. İran İslam Respublikasının kütləvi informasiya vasitələrində Ermənistan-Azərbaycan Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsi // –Bakı: Sosial elmlər, –2019. №2, –s.102-108.
7. İran İslam Respubikası və erməni terror təşkilatları // “Qafqazda terror” respublika elmi konfransı, –Bakı: MTM Innovation, – 28 noyabr, –2019. –s.54-56.
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The defense will be held on 20 February 2025 at 11<sup>00</sup> at the meeting of the Dissertation council BED 2.30/1 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Address: AZ 1001, Baku city, Lermontov street, 74.

Dissertation is accessible at the scientific library of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Electronic versions of the dissertation and its abstract are available on the official website of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Abstract was sent to the required addresses on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Signed for print: 10.01.2025

Paper format: A5

Volume: 80258

Number of hard copies: 30