

HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
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**THE “IRANIAN FACTOR’S” ROLE
IN SHAPING THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA:
HISTORIOGRAPHIC ASPECT**

Working Paper WP21/2021/02

Series WP21

International Relations
and Regional Studies

Moscow
2021

Editor of the Series WP21
“International Relations and Regional Studies”
Ivan Krivushin

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The “Iranian Factor’s” Role in Shaping the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Armenia: Historiographic Aspect : Working Paper WP21/2021/02 / E. Ruban ; National Research University Higher School of Economics. — Electronic text data (520 Kb). — Moscow : Higher School of Economics Publ. House, 2021. — 31 p. (Series WP21 “International Relations and Regional Studies”).

The paper analyzes publications in Russian, English, Armenian and Persian devoted to such a political phenomenon as the “Iranian factor” and its role and influence on the formation of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia. The author concludes that there is a significant gap in understanding of this important issue.

Keywords: “Iranian factor”; Armenia; foreign policy; historiography

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To the date, in Russian, English, Iranian and Armenian historiography there have been no studies on the influence of the “Iranian factor” on the formation of Armenia’s foreign policy after 1991.

The “Iranian factor” in this paper refers to the set of Iran’s relations with regional and global powers that influence Armenia’s foreign policy. Thus, the phrase the “Iranian factor” is broader than the expression “Iran’s influence”. It does not include only Iran’s foreign policy interests vis-à-vis Armenia. The “Iranian factor” implies the influence of Iran as a member of the system of international relations on Armenia. The “Iranian factor” is the foreign policy behavior of Iran, caused by the influence of other states on it. The term “Iranian factor” covers Iran’s foreign policy interests in Armenia, as well as the complex of Iran’s relations with the countries of the West, Russia and regional states.

The study of the influence of the “Iranian factor” on the foreign policy of Armenia is important for the following reasons: a) both states have a common land border; b) under the Western sanctions against Iran, Armenia as a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and as a partner of the European Union (EU) in the program “Eastern Partnership” constitutes Iran’s entry into the EU and EEU markets; c) under the bilateral blockade by Turkey from the West and Azerbaijan from the East, Iran for Armenia is something like a “window” to the outside world; d) the absence of any territorial disputes between Armenia and Iran and the fact that the Armenian community minority in Iran is not discriminated neither on religious nor on national grounds reinforces stability of the relations between the two states [Բալթոլիդյան, 2012, էջ: 32]; e) Iran acts as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The purpose of this paper is to find out to what extent in domestic and foreign historiography the question of influence of the “Iranian factor” on the formation of the Armenian foreign policy in the period from 1992 to 2020 has been studied.

The most common approach to studying the foreign policy of small states, such as Armenia, is the realist paradigm of international relations. Kenneth Waltz’s fundamental work “Theory of International Politics” [Waltz, 1979] explains the foreign policy of states from the perspective of system and structure. The system is the global habitat of the structure. It includes the entire global political environment with all its participants. The structure is how system members are positioned within a system in relation to each other. Armenia shapes its foreign policy within the international political system. Armenia’s relations with global and regional

states, on the one hand, and the “Iranian factor”, on the other, determine the structure in which the “Iranian factor” influences Armenia’s foreign policy-making.

Most contemporary Iranian researchers studying the foreign policy of the South Caucasus and, in particular, Armenia’s foreign policy, use the theory of neorealism. Thus, Reza Mahmud Ogli and Amir Hossein Rastami, using Waltz’s neorealism concept, analyze Armenia’s geopolitical position and Russia’s role in the South Caucasus. The authors attempt to answer the question about the security threats facing Russian-Armenian relations in the South Caucasus region [اوغلی، رستمی، 2018].

In an article by Iranian researchers Mohammad Arjamand and Keihosrov Dowlatyari [ارجمند، دولتیاری، 2012], Armenia’s foreign policy is interpreted in terms of the geopolitical theory of Thomas Anderson, who studied foreign policy of Caribbean states [Anderson, 1994]. According to Arjamand and Dowlatyari, Armenia has characteristics similar to those of the Caribbean countries, because Armenia: 1) is a small state, 2) has recently become independent. Therefore, Anderson’s approach can be applied to the analysis of the foreign policy of Armenia.

Russian political scientist Andrey Suzdaltsev studies the foreign policy behavior of the states formed as a result of the collapse of the USSR. The foreign policy of the post-Soviet countries towards Russia and the West represent a “limitrophe policy” [Suzdaltsev, 2006; 2007]. A.I. Suzdaltsev highlighted the characteristic features of the “limitrophe policy” of the post-Soviet states, which can be divided into two groups based on: a) economic preferences which they receive from Russia; b) their maneuvering between Russia and the Western countries. Armenia is not an exception. In its foreign policy towards Russia and the West, one can see the characteristic features of the “limitrophe policy”.

The issue of the foreign policy behavior of small states is addressed in the works of Nikolai Kaveshnikov [Kaveshnikov, 2008] and Irina Kudryashova [Kudryashova, 2008]. Nikolai Kaveshnikov, responding to the question of how small countries survive among great and regional powers, proposed two models of survival strategies for small states: integration and isolation.

Andrey Kondratov [Kondratov, 2011] compared three closely related, but not identical notions: “foreign policy behavior”, “foreign policy of a state”, “foreign policy”.

Andrey Skriba [Skriba, 2014] analyzed balancing and bandwagoning strategies of small states considering the cases of two integration grouping: the EU and the EEU.

The geopolitical aspect of the “Iranian factor” influence on the formation of the foreign policy of Armenia is investigated in the works by J. Zarifyan, M. Arjamand and K. Dowlatyari, B. Shaffer, Sh. Hunter, D. Menashri, A. Iskandaryan.

French researcher of Armenian origin Julien Zarifyan [Zarifyan, 2008; 2009] refutes the assumption of Samuel Huntington about the clash of Western and non-Western civilizations, citing as evidence the friendly relations between Armenia and Iran, which differ from each other culturally and religiously. Zarifyan underlines the fact that there is no conflict of any kind between the two neighbors. He concludes that pragmatic interests outweigh cultural and religious differences. Armenia and Iran separately have strained relations with other states in the region.

Geopolitical component of relations between the states of the South Caucasus is revealed in the article by Brenda Shaffer [Shaffer, 2010]. According to the results of her study, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia build relationships with their diasporas in various countries differently. This depends on the policy of the parent state towards the recipient state. For instance, Yerevan supports the policy of annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory where the bulk of population is Armenians. At the same time, the Armenian government refrains from making any territorial claims the Georgian province Javakheti where Armenians make up the ethnic majority. For, this would lead to the severance with Georgia, through whose territory pass all the communications of Armenia with Russia.

Shirin Hunter [Hunter, 2003], David Menashri [Menashri, 2007] and Alexander Iskandaryan [2018, اسکندریان] confirm the primacy of the state interests of Iran over confessional interests, which is important for Christian Armenia. In these papers the foreign policy priorities of Iran referring to Armenia, and the South Caucasus as a whole, were discussed.

Vahan Baiburdyan compares how Iran’s geopolitical security changed before and after the collapse of the USSR, and how this affected the Islamic Republic of Iran’s foreign policy towards the Armenia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran and Russia lost their common land border. In the territory between Iran and Russia, the “southern belt” emerged, consisted of the newly formed republics of the South Caucasus and Central Asia [Բալբուրդյան, 2017, էջ: 20–21; 2004, էջ: 143]. This space can also be conventionally called the “safety belt” between Iran and Russia. Iran’s strategic foreign policy objective after 1991 was to establish friendly relations with the newly formed republics, including Armenia. The reason for this is that good-neighborly relations with the states of the “southern belt” guaranteed Iran a way out of isolation.

R.M. Ogli and A.H. Rastami consider the geopolitical situation of Armenia since 1991 and its relationship with Russia from the perspective of Iran's interests. They take the view that Russia benefits from inter-ethnic conflicts in the territories of the former Soviet republics, including Nagorno-Karabakh. Because, it helps Russia to maintain its influence in the region and limit access to the region of the Western countries [209، 196، ص. 2018، رستمی، اوغلی].

Iranian political scientists criticize the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for its ineffectiveness in regard to other member states, except Russia. The establishment of the official relations between independent Armenia and Iran coincided with another escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At that time, both newly formed states, Armenia and Azerbaijan, were members of the CSTO. However, this did not help to stop the war between them [Ibid, p. 207].

Mohammad Arjamand and Ehsan Falahi discuss Armenia's role in Iran's foreign and security policy. According to the authors, Iran is interested in friendly relations with Armenia for two main reasons: prevention of Turkey's expansionist policy in the South Caucasus; and the use of Armenia as leverage against Azerbaijan to prevent Azerbaijan from threatening the territorial integrity of Iran [215، ص. 2016، فلاحی، ارجمند].

Besides that, Soroush Amiri and M.J. Arjamand, E. Falahi agree that, owing to the absence of territorial and inter-ethnic conflicts between Iran and Armenia, Armenian delegations in international organizations abstain from voting against the IRI nuclear program, as well as the imposition of sanctions against the IRI. This plays an important role in the stability of Armenian-Iranian relations [144، ص. 2019، امیری، 215، ص. 2016، فلاحی، ارجمند].

A significant geopolitical aspect that forms the "Iranian factor" appears to be the situation around the Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Under the government of the Soviet Union, the problem of the Karabakh was reduced to a minimum, as this territory was in one single entity — the USSR. But, after its breakup in 1993 the Karabakh question took on a new twist. No clear delimitation and demarcation lines were drawn. The overwhelming majority of the population of the Karabakh were Armenians. However, formally this territory was ceded to Azerbaijan.

The problem of the Karabakh conflict is addressed in the study by Arjamand and Dowlatyari [2012، دولتیاری، ارجمند]. The authors write about Iran's perception of the Karabakh conflict, on the one hand as a threat to national security and, on the other hand, as an Azerbaijani opposite to Iranian foreign policy stance in regards rapprochement with the West.

Iranian researchers Yashar Zaki and Ahad Pashalu [ذکی، پاشالو، 2017 ص. 139] identify two strategic axes of the participants directly or indirectly involved in the Karabakh conflict. The first axis is horizontal — “East-West”. It includes Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Israel and the USA. The second axis is vertical — “South-North”. It includes Iran, Armenia, and Russia. Moreover, J. Zaki and A. Pashalu, analyzing Iran’s stance on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, speak about the existence of two levels of policy: “internal requirements” and “external circumstances” [Ibid, p. 144].

Amid Qafari, Amidali Wisinajad, and Mohammad Takkipur [غفاری، ویسی نژد، تقی پور، 2012 ص. 106–107] consider the Karabakh conflict as a threat to Iran’s national security. They compare the Karabakh conflict with the civil war in Tajikistan in 1993. And they note that, from Iran’s security perspective, the Karabakh war was incomparably more dangerous than the civil war in Tajikistan. The authors cite the main causes of Iran’s concern for its national security due to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict: the common border with the warring states and the involvement of third countries in the region to settle it.

In addition, they identify another circumstance threatening the internal security of Iran: protests among the Azerbaijani population of the Islamic Republic and Azeri refugees. During the Armenian-Azerbaijani war of 1991–1994, Azeri refugees flowed from the neighboring territory of the Karabakh to Iran. The fact that Iran patronizes Armenia and acts as a reliable guarantee of an “exit” outside the blockade for Armenia caused a series of protests by Azeri-speaking population of Iran. Azerbaijani protests within the IRI escalated into pressure on the Iranian government to support Azeris in the Karabakh war. Thus, the war for Karabakh threatens the internal security of the IRI. In order to stop the flow of Azeri refugees and ease internal protests, the Iranian authorities were forced to allocate funds for the construction of a tent camp for Azeri refugees from the Karabakh in the territory of Azerbaijan adjacent to Iran [غفاری، ویسی نژد، تقی پور، 2012 ص. 107].

The basics of the Armenia’s foreign policy are explained in the works by A. Iskandaryan, V. Baiburdyan, Ogli and Rastami, Arjamand and Falahi, S. Amiri, A. Shirian, A. Terzyan, Girakosyan, and S. Minasyan.

In his article “Political changes in Armenia: an impact of their consequences on the region and the country’s foreign policy”, Alexander Iskandaryan [اسکندریان، 2018] considered the approaches of Iranian and Armenian experts to the study of Armenia’s foreign policy after 2018. Iskandaryan stresses the influence of the Armenian diaspora and lobby on Armenia’s foreign policy. In his article, he quotes Iranian political scientist Elaheh Koolae who underlines Russia’s

important role in the South Caucasus geopolitical space and the need for Iran to follow closely Russia's position in the region. Elaheh Koolaei, answering the question why the internal changes in Armenia after Nikol Pashinyan came to power have not led to visible changes in its foreign policy, refers to Armenia's geopolitical constraints and its dependence on three powerful political actors — Russia, the USA and the EU.

Anait Shirinyan [Shirinyan, 2019] considers the prospects of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia after the Velvet revolution. In her opinion, there is a dependence of the international and regional status of Armenia, as well as prospects for expanding contacts with other partners, on the ability of Yerevan to limit Russia's excessive influence on the republic. She singled out three partner countries of Armenia — Iran, Georgia, China, the deepening of relations with which is a priority on the agenda of Pashinyan's government. The strengthening of Armenia's relations with these states will make it possible to reduce the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West with regard to Armenia.

Garik Keryan [Թեղյան, 2006] links the choice of the foreign policy direction of independent Armenia with which party is in power. Armenia's foreign policy was shaped under the influence of the political course of the current leader of the country and his fellow party on such issues as 1) regional territorial conflicts between Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia and Ossetia, and the Karabakh dispute; 2) international recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Aram Terzyan [Terzyan, 2016] comes to the conclusion that the first three presidents of the Republic of Armenia built their foreign policy with the goal of strengthening the Armenian identity, although all three, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan, and Serge Sargsyan, held different views on the importance of the issue of national identity (especially in connection with the struggle for the worldwide recognition of the Armenian genocide) to Armenia's foreign policy. According to another Terzyan's study, the personal factor, i.e. the individual attitudes of a decision-maker, is crucial to the formation of the foreign policy of a small state. In the case of Armenia, it is a head of the state.

Tigran Kocharyan [Թոփալյան, 2011] considers the main task of Armenia's foreign policy to ensure regional security. Today, Territorial conflicts between Georgia ,Abkhazia and South Ossetia and between Armenia and Azerbaijan continue in the South Caucasus. Their neutralization determines the framework of the regional security system.

Political scientist Alen Gevondyan considers Armenia's foreign policy from a similar position [Դևոնդյան, 2011]. In his monograph "The main issue of the Armenia's national

interests in ensuring the security of the primary international environment”, Gevondyan refers the established formulas of Armenia’s foreign policy: “good-neighborly relations with all neighboring states”, “no eternal friends and no eternal interests” [Դևոնդյան, 2011, էջ: 114]. The author acknowledges the existence of the two poles in the political class of Armenia: pro-Russian and Euro-Atlantic. The Armenian government was trying to maintain a balance between those poles in order to ensure national security and achieve economic goals. Constantly balancing the pro-Russian and Euro-Atlantic poles, Yerevan relegates its national and foreign policy interests to the background [Դևոնդյան, 2011, էջ: 117].

Analytical papers of researchers from such think-tanks as the Armenian foundation “Noravank”, the Center for Iranian and Eurasian studies, the American-Armenian foundation “Armenian international policy research group”, and the European foundation “European strategic intelligence and security center” tries to identify the principles of the Armenian foreign policy. Sergey Minasyan [Minasyan, 2009], a researcher from the “Noravank” foundation, analyzed approaches of Armenian presidents, starting with L. Ter-Petrosyan, to the foreign policy. He comes to the conclusion about the dominance of the doctrine of “complementarity” in the Armenian foreign policy.

Reha Yulmaz [Yulmaz, 2009] in his article makes a comparison of the foreign policy of L. Ter-Petrosyan with that of R. Kocharyan. According to R. Yulmaz, Ter-Petrosyan’s policy was characterized by greater pragmatism towards the Karabakh conflict. Ter-Petrosyan called on the Armenians to give up their claims to the territory of Karabakh in order to establish relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan. R. Kocharyan held the diametrically opposite stance.

The works of Vahan Baiburdyan [Բայբուրդյան, 2017] and Alexander Iskandaryan [2018, اسکندریان] consider the interests of Armenia in the South Caucasus region in the context of relations with neighboring countries.

Rafael Avetisyan [Avetisyan, 2011] has analyzed structural factors that influenced the formation of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia. In his dissertation, he considered the system of international relations that developed in the South Caucasus region after the collapse of the USSR. The main focus of attention is on the pressure of the structure of world politics on Armenia’s foreign policy shaping. The study was carried out within the framework of the theory of neorealism as well as geopolitical concepts. The author argues that the formation of Armenia’s foreign policy depends on the nature of its relations with neighboring states. On the basis of the analysis of the 2007 National Security Strategy, R.S. Avetisyan concludes that national security remains a fundamental priority in Armenia’s foreign policy. Guided by the concept of

complementarity, the Armenian leadership combines cooperation with the West and cooperation with Russia. The second chapter of his dissertation examines Armenia's relations with neighboring countries. The author emphasizes the importance of Iran for Armenia as an economic partner. Iran appears as a "window" for Armenia into the external environment. According to Avetisyan, future relations between Armenia and Iran will depend on the situation in the structure of world politics.

Arsen Akopyants [Akopyants, 2013] studied the resource base of Armenia's foreign policy, based on the following concepts: a) the "Second world" by P. Hanna, b) historical geopolitical positioning projects by A.A. Ulunyan and c) coordinate systems of the global community by A.I. Neclessa. The author considers the effectiveness of Armenia's foreign policy through the prism of its resource base. He identifies the main intangible and material resources of Armenia. Armenia's intangible resource base includes the democratization process, the transnational Armenian diaspora and internal political mobilization. Material resources include geographical, demographic and economic potential of the country. In the case of Armenia, the lack of material resources is compensated by intangible ones.

The analysis of the influence of Armenia's resource base on its role in the world political process, on the example of its relations with Iran, is of the greatest interest for us in Akopyants' 2013 dissertation. The Armenian community in Iran is a "bridge" between the two countries, while differences in ideology seem to be a divisive factor. However, ideological differences are reimbursed with joint socio-cultural programs.

Dynamics of bilateral Armenian-Iranian relations after 1991 is analyzed in the works of Azerbaijani researcher Elnur Kelbizadeh [Kelbizadeh, 2019; 2020], as well as Iranian political scientists Mehnaz Goudarzi and Nora Qeisari [2009, گودرزی، قیصری]. Kelbizadeh gave an overview of Armenian-Iranian relations, using periodization based on Armenian presidential administrations from L. Ter-Petrosyan's up to N. Pashinyan's. M. Goudarzi reviewed the main areas of cooperation between Armenia and Iran. He also analyzed the factors contributing to and impeding the development of cooperation between two states.

In 2013, a comprehensive analysis of Armenian-Iranian relations was published by researchers Claude Monique and William Rasimora [Moniquete, Racimora, 2013]. This analytical work describes not only Armenian-Iranian relations, but also the role of the United States in relations between Armenia and Iran, the role of Iran in relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the mediation role of Iran in the Karabakh conflict resolution.

Following Iran's recognition of the newly formed Republic of Armenia on December 25, 1991, mutual interest in development of trade and economic relations arose. Articles by Lucine Petrosyan [Պետրոսյան, 2008] and Goar Iskandaryan [Իսկանդարյան, 2016] review the development of economic relations between Armenia and Iran after Armenia gained independence.

The study of Iranian interests in the South Caucasus region is the subject of research by both Iranian, Armenian, and Western political scientists. In the foreign policy sphere, Iran's interests can be loosely divided into two areas: the countries of the nearest neighborhood and the Muslim countries over which Iran has been exerting ideological influence. Armenia geographically and historically is a part of the IRI's zone of interests. Iranian researchers Mohammad Reza Majidi and Hossein Zahmatkesh [2013, مجیدی، زحمتکش] note that the Soviet Union during its existence was viewed by Iran as a potential security threat. After the disintegration of the USSR, this threat has gone away. Iran has been able to pursue its interests in Armenia, mainly through cultural ties and economic partnership.

In 1990, with the support of Armenia, a campaign to secede from Azerbaijan began in the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region. These developments have affected the relations between Armenia and Turkey. Official contacts between the states have been terminated. In October of 2009 in Zurich, Armenia and Turkey signed two protocols: the first on the establishment of bilateral relations and the second on the establishment of diplomatic relations. Since Armenia is part of the zone of Iran's geopolitical interests, Iran is closely following the changes in the Armenia-Turkey relations.

Iranian authors Elaheh Koolae and Mehnaz Goudarzi [2015, کولای، گودرزی], in their article "The influence of changes in Armenian-Turkish relations on Armenian-Iranian relations", raises a research question: will the resumption of Armenian-Turkish relations affect Iran-Armenia relations? To answer this question, the study has been divided into two parts. In its first part, Armenian-Turkish relations in the framework of the policy of Turkish foreign minister Ahmed Davutoglu are analyzed. In 2014, Davutoglu, referring to Turkey's relations with Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, put forward the concept of "Just Memory" [Davutoglu, 2014]. The second part of paper deals with the role of Turkey in Iranian-Armenian relations. As a hypothesis, the authors suggested that changes in Armenian-Turkish relations would not have a negative impact on Armenian-Iranian ones. The study is based on the neorealist theory of Kenneth Waltz.

Sorush Amiri [2019، امیری] analyzed Iran's economic ties with Armenia on the basis of statistics and research literature. In her opinion, Armenia appears as a “bridge” connecting Iran with the Eurasian countries' markets.

Alexander Matveev, in his dissertation [Matveev, 2013], examined the strategy of the Iran's foreign policy in the South Caucasus under the presidency of M. Ahmadinejad (2005–2013). The author introduces his own notion an “impulse of influence of a country on a region”. This refers to the degree of influence of a country on other actors in the region. Depending on a number of factors, such as its size, its level of economic development, its degree of economic integration with other countries in the region, and its possession of military power, the strength of its influence is determined. In the third chapter of his dissertation, A.S. Matveev attempted to analyze Iran's foreign policy strategy towards Armenia.

Mohammad Reza Djalili [Djalili, 2002] writes about the rivalry between Iran and Turkey for ideological dominance over the South Caucasus that emerged after the collapse of the USSR. He noted the fact that, despite religious differences, Iran had cooperated with Russia, Armenia and Greece. The author contrasts the Iran-Russia-Armenian-Greece union to a political and economic cooperation of Turkey with the United States, Israel and Azerbaijan.

The corpus of research works on Iran's position in the system of international relations includes studies on Iran's bilateral relations with Russia, the United States, the European Union, Turkey, and Azerbaijan. First of all, scholars are trying to find out what the “Iranian factor” is.

Russian researchers Vladimir Sazhin [Sazhin, 1997; 2001] and Marianna Arunova [Arunova, 2001] share a common view on the main directions of contemporary Russian-Iranian relations. They single out the following: the joint agenda of the two states on Afghanistan, Iran's position on the Russian North Caucasus and the spread of the ideological influence of the IRI over Central Asian countries, mainly in regards of Tajikistan.

For decades, the US' policy towards Iran has been based on sanctions and international isolation. It was studied by Russian analysts on US-Iran relations — R.Y. Kortoev [Kortoev, 2013], M.G. Nosov [Nosov, 2003], A. S. Safonov [Safonov, 2008; 2011], M. Fofanova [Fofanova, 2007].

Relations between Armenia and the United States in the period 2009–2018 are discussed in Goar Iskandaryan's article [Իսկանդարյան, 2018]. She compares the US policy towards Iran's nuclear program under the president Barack Obama (2009–2017) with that of his successor Donald Trump (2017–2021). Obama's presidency was linked with the hopes for a reconciliation

of American-Iranian relations. And there were grounds for that. Under B. Obama, a historic agreement, the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), was concluded between Iran and five nuclear-weapon countries, including the USA. However, according to the author, the president Obama deliberately delayed the submission of the JCPOA to the Congress for approval, because he was afraid that the Republican majority would reject it. As a result, the submission of the JCPOA to Congress took place only under the next US president, Donald Trump [Իսկանդարյան, 2018. էջ: 37].

Relations between Iran and the EU are studied by E.V. Dunaeva [Dunaeva, 2001], A.K. Ivanova [Ivanova, 2017], and A.A. Trofimov [Trofimov, 2003]. In 1992, in Edinburgh, EU leaders decided on a European policy towards Iran, to change the policy of confrontation to that of “critical dialogue”. The policy of “critical dialogue” implied criticism of Iran’s terrorist activities against Iranian opponents living in Western countries, but at the same time the restoration of trade and economic relations. From now on, the EU policy is at odds with the US hardline stance on Iran.

There are few studies of the Iranian-Azerbaijani relations. One of them is the dissertation of the Azerbaijani political scientist Mirmehdi Aghazada, devoted to the development of the Iranian-Azerbaijani relations from 2003 up to 2018 [Aghazada, 2020]. The author notes that under the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), relations between Iran and Azerbaijan have deteriorated. The situation began to improve after the election of the new president of Iran, Hassan Rowhani, in 2015. Considering the origins of the period described in his dissertation, the author refers to an earlier period. In 1990, there were contradictions between the two countries on a number of issues: oil extraction from the Caspian Sea, Iranian mediation in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and an increased flow of Western investments into Azerbaijan, which are still relevant today. However, according to the author, the neighbors are united by religious, historical and ethnic affinity.

M. Aghazada proposed his own periodization of the Iranian-Azerbaijani relations within the studied chronological framework. He raised the issue of joint participation of Iran and Azerbaijan in international global and regional organizations. Prospects for cooperation between them in the field of the extraction of energy resources was separately highlighted.

However, in the study of M. Aghazada there are also significant shortcomings. Neither primary sources nor research literature in Persian are used. In addition, the author added the Constitution of Azerbaijan and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the source review without explaining the need to analyze the basic laws of the republics.

Existing ethno-territorial issue impedes Iran-Azerbaijan relations. Indeed, the majority of ethnic Azeris live in Iran. Vladimir Mesamed [Mesamed, 2011] notes that there were periods in the history of Iranian-Azerbaijani relations when the issue of the restoration of the Great Azerbaijan was raised. For Iran, this meant an attempt of violating its territorial integrity.

To sum up, it is obvious that in both Russian and foreign historiography there has been gained a certain experience of the research studies indirectly affecting the issue of the survival of the Republic of Armenia in the context of neighboring countries-regional leaders — Iran and Turkey. There are a number of studies on bilateral Armenian-Iranian relations and Iran's role in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. However, Neither in Russian nor in foreign historiography there are no works analyzing the formation of the foreign policy of independent Armenia from the point of view of the influence of Iran's foreign policy on it.

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Рубан, Э. Е.

Роль «иранского фактора» в формировании внешней политики Республики Армения: историографический аспект [Электронный ресурс] : препринт WP21/2021/02 / Э. Е. Рубан ; Нац. исслед. ун-т «Высшая школа экономики». — Электрон. текст. дан. (520 Кб). — М. : Изд. дом Высшей школы экономики, 2021. — 31 с. (Серия WP21 «Международные отношения и зарубежные региональные исследования»). (На англ. яз.)

В работе анализируются отечественные и зарубежные (англоязычные, армяно- и персоязычные) исследования, посвященные такому политическому феномену, как «иранский фактор», его роли и влиянию на формирование внешней политики Республики Армения. Автор приходит к выводу, что как в отечественной, так и в зарубежной литературе существует пробел знаний о влиянии Ирана на внешнюю политику независимой Армении.

Ключевые слова: «Иранский фактор»; Армения; внешняя политика; историография

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Препринт WP21/2021/02
Серия WP21
Международные отношения
и зарубежные региональные исследования

Рубан Эмилия Евгеньевна

**Роль «иранского фактора» в формировании
внешней политики Республики Армения:
историографический аспект**
(на английском языке)

Изд. № 2494